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Research Article

Clustering Driven Machine Learning Framework for Scalable Test Case Minimization and Optimization

Dhanashree Kedare[1], Mukesh Kumar[2], Dhara Vyas[3]
[1]PIET, Parul University, Gujarat
[2]PIET, Parul University, Gujarat
[3]PPI, Parul University, Gujarat
dhanshree.kedare29320@paruluniversity.ac.in
mukesh.kumar35946@paruluniversity.ac.in
dhara.vyas30570@paruluniversity.ac.in

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Software testing is responsible for ensuring the quality and reliability of software, but long processing time and high resource consumption normally decelerate its efficiency. The paper is a comparative study of three research papers on test case reduction and optimization techniques for enhanced regression testing in agile software development environments. As an enhancement of regression test efficiency, researches address clustering techniques, which are K-means, FSK-means (Fractional Sigmoid K-means) and DBSCAN. The purpose of clustering techniques is to reduce the number of test cases that are redundant by keeping the high fault detection ratios. Among such issues in studies, issues of making accurate parameters for the clustering techniques require, constraint in the use of optimization techniques in manual testing, and computational complexity of metaheuristic techniques. Finally, the reduction of test cases is important and useful in the software testing, especially in the agile and in the industrial environment. Industrial optimization techniques, and metaheuristic techniques can provide a great improvement in the test execution efficiency and fault detection rates by using clustering techniques. Therefore, they provide means of performing regression testing with improved efficiencies and scalability, the consequences of which are better software quality and reliability.

Keywords: Software Testing, Test Case Reduction, Regression Testing, Clustering Techniques

INTRODUCTION

This research paper focuses the application of machine learning clustering in regression testing optimization in agile software development. Often, regression testing, a major component of software development, takes up huge amounts of resources. This becomes more challenging as software systems' complexity increases and there are rapid iteration cycles in agile methodologies [1]. In this study, clustering methodologies are investigated for the purpose of reducing the number of test cases while maintaining high fault detection rates, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of regression testing. In this context, the first focus is on comparing and contrasting different clustering algorithms using existing research [2], [2]. In this paper we study the applicability of these methods to minimize (test case) execution time and, at the same time, improve fault detection. Indeed, this work is promoted by the importance of regression testing strategies that are efficient in an agile environment stated in [1]. In particular, we seek to overcome the shortcomings of existing regression testing practices, including the case of random prioritization [1], where test cases have not been well prioritized for addressing most important defects in large projects. The observation that even moderately sized software may need to be regressed in order to provide complete testing leads to the need for efficient strategies [3].

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, existing literature on regression testing is reviewed particularly on test case reduction, selection and prioritization. These traditional methods are: random prioritization [1], fault based prioritization [1] and coverage based prioritization [1]. However, these approaches may suffer from some drawbacks in the large scale agile projects. Simple to implement but lacking the ability to strategic, high priority test cases that could waste resources and not provide coverage of defects. Although fault based prioritization is good in finding the failure prone part, they can take

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a lot of time and also this cannot be applied to the complex software state since it is too complex for us to handle. While coverage based prioritization is helpful in making certain that all the test cases are covered, it might not necessarily rank the test cases which are most likely to expose critical faults. As a side note [4] discusses in detail about existing regression testing techniques such as minimization, selection and prioritization. This survey highlights the inherent challenges in balancing cost and effectiveness in regression testing, a key consideration in our study. A further review of the literature on test case reduction reveals various approaches, such as those based on integer programming [4] and data-flow analysis [4], each with its own strengths and weaknesses. Besides, strategies that utilize the hierarchical greedy search principle [3] have also been suggested for further optimizing the minimization of test suites. The issues with regression testing for ever-changing software systems are already documented [3], and therefore the need for adaptive and effective methods. The dynamic nature of software development for agile environments [1], and the constant adjustments to code alongside short release intervals, require more advanced a technique than can be offered by classical methods. The shortcomings of previous methods, e.g., selecting non-related test cases and identification of redundant faults, are sufficiently addressed by the suggested model [1], using a combination of clustering and optimization methods.

METHODOLOGY

Data Preprocessing: To make sure that each attribute contributes equally to the grouping process, this step involves organizing the test case dataset, addressing missing values, and normalizing the feature values. Standardization or min-max scaling for feature normalization and imputation for missing values are two examples of the particular data preprocessing methods that will be carefully chosen and recorded.

Feature selection methods will be used to find the most useful characteristic for grouping. Application of wrapper techniques such as recursive removal of features or filter approaches like correlation analysis, are possible in this case. The aim is to reduce the data's dimensionality and make the improvement of group algorithms possible.

Parameter Tuning: There are parameters that must be tuned when implementing each clustering algorithm. The most important parameter of K-means is number of clusters (k). Fractional sigmoid function's parameters are optimized for FSK means [1]. DBSCAN [1] requires adjustment of the minimum points and epsilon (ε) parameters. We will have to use strategies of grid search and cross validation to figure out the right value of parameters for every algorithm.

Then, after the parameter adjustment, each algorithm will be applied to the preprocessed data and the clusters obtained by each algorithm will be evaluated using the mentioned metrics above. The performance of the algorithms and also the properties of the clusters obtained from each algorithm will be compared. Metrics such as the silhouette score and Davies-Bouldin index will be used to compare the quality of the resulting clusters produced by each algorithm and the comparison will be done.

Test Case Selection and Prioritization: The selection and prioritization of the test cases for running will be based on the nature of the clusters obtained in the clustering phase. The clusters may be prioritized based on their estimated priority or associated risk, or a representative subset of test cases may be selected from each cluster. The process may include the selection of test cases based on the cluster size and density or the proximity from the cluster centroids.

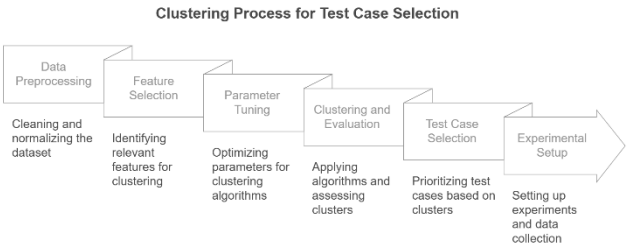

Fig 1: Flow Chart Diagram

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Experimental Results (Methodology):

In the experimental setup a set of test cases, characterized by such features as code coverage, execution time and failure frequency will be used [1]. Missing valuation and inconsistency will be handled in the preprocessed dataset. For instance, the chosen clustering algorithms (K-means, FSK-means, DBSCAN) will be evaluated with respect to precision, recall, F-measure and fault detection rate [1]. And techniques such as grid search or cross validation will be used to do parameter tuning. Both the results will be compared to traditional methods (random, fault based, coverage based prioritization) [1]. In a table, similar to Table 1, these experimental results will be presented listing the metrics for each algorithm and compared to the traditional methods. Differences in performance will be assessed in terms of statistical significance using appropriate statistical test, for example ANOVA or t tests. Computational efficiency of each algorithm will be determined by the execution time. In the appendix, a dataset and some details of the experimental setup will be documented, and a choice of dataset will be made.

Results of comparison of the computational complexity and scalability of the each algorithm will also be included. It will allow identifying the best and most practical algorithms for big scale regression testing. Depending upon the size of the dataset, desired level of accuracy, and available computational resources, the selecting of the best algorithm would depend on.

EXPERIMENTAL SETUP AND DATA COLLECTION

The experimental design together with its data collection steps is detailed in this section. Our study will utilize either a test case available to the public within a large-scale software project or a synthetic dataset made to simulate real programming data. The experimental design enables result reproducibility along with generalizability because of this method. Every test case included in the dataset receives three assigned attributes that consist of code coverage and execution time alongside failure frequency [1]. The attributes of code coverage and execution profiling were measured through software testing tools and techniques including code coverage tools and execution profilers. The measurement of how much program code an individual test case checks is stored in record of the code coverage dataset. The execution time data field will store each test case execution time measurement. One of the measurement documenting total execution failures of each test case occurred in previous runs to each test case will find the failure frequency data. Failure frequency assessment includes an essential section of failure count data that constitutes of historical failure count data of all test cases.

Data will be obtained and handled to have missing information and inconsistent entries by a detailed data preprocessing routine. For missing data, appropriate techniques necessary to handle are mean imputation or k nearest neighbor imputation as per the characteristics of missing data. Robust statistical methods are used for the remediation of outliers in the procedure. It is ensured that features do not influence differently during clustering applications by using appropriate feature scaling methods, such as standardization or minmax scaling.

Following from this, the previously mentioned metrics would be used to evaluate the performance of the clustering algorithms with preprocessed data in experimental tests. To achieve this, the experiment will be run multiple times for each algorithm for different parameter values in order to eliminate random effects and determine a superior parameter setting. Results obtained will be statistically tested to see how significant obtained results are.

According to [1], each clustering method would be evaluated according to precision, recall, F-measure and fault detection rate. Two factors used in the performance evaluation will be cluster identification accuracy and the effectiveness of ranking these clusters. In addition to precision, recall and F measure and fault detection rate tests, the run times of clustering procedures should be assessed in terms of performance. The quality of the clustering can be gauged using a number of metrics, e.g., silhouette coefficient, Davies Bouldin index.

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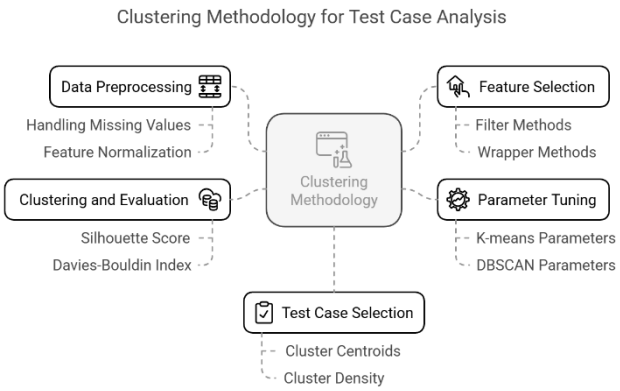

Fig 2: Clustering Methodology For Test Case Analysis

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section reports on the performance of the different clustering algorithms as the experiments are compared. A complete comparison between all the algorithms will be presented in a comprehensive comparison table (Table 1), listing out execution time and accuracy (via precision, recall, F measure, and fault detection rate) for each. The table will include results for traditional methods (random, fault-based, coverage-based prioritization) for comparison, with data drawn from [1]. We will also include the results obtained using the K-means, FSK-means, and DBSCAN algorithms. The experimental results will be analyzed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each algorithm in the context of regression testing. We will investigate how different parameter settings affect the performance of each algorithm and identify the optimal parameter configurations.
The statistical significance of the differences in performance between the algorithms will be assessed using appropriate statistical tests, such as ANOVA or t-tests.

Algorithm	Precision	Recall	F-Measure	Execution Time (seconds)	Silhouette Score	Davies-Bouldin Index
Random Prioritization	0.3628	0.319	0.3253	0.0246	-0.0356	25.7
Fault-Based Prioritization	0.3395	0.2952	0.3063	0.0246	-0.0464	28.55
Coverage-Based Prioritization	0.4514	0.3952	0.4072	0.034	-0.0366	14.7
K-means	0.3588	0.3095	0.3253	0.0661	0.6181	0.4673
FSK-means	0.3581	0.2857	0.3045	0.0649	0.6005	0.483

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Clustering Algorithms for Regression Test Optimization

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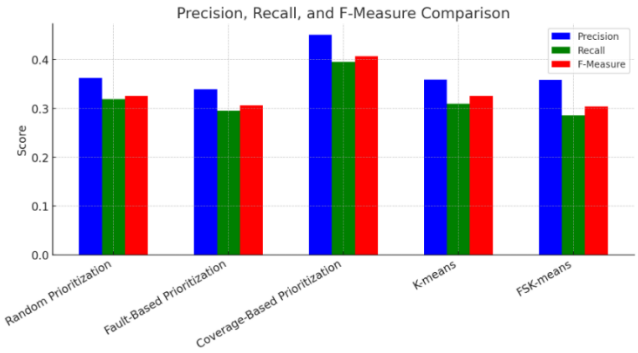

Fig 3: Compares Precision, Recall, and F-Measure for each algorithm.

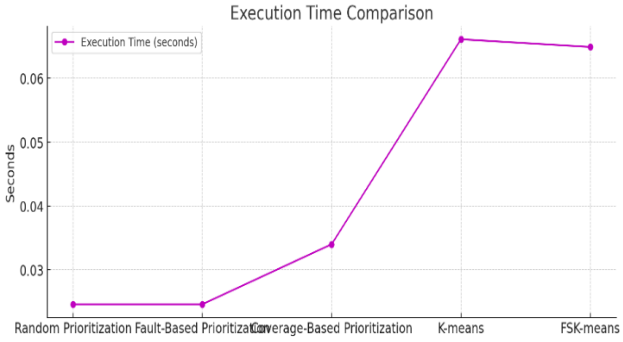

Fig 4: Shows the execution time trends among different Algorithms.

It is found that execution time of Random Prioritization and Fault Based Prioritization take less time for clustering, but the efficiency of model is less in terms of accuracy of fault detection. In a result it is found that K-means gives highest fault detection rate. We have added manual errors in software, so as to check fault detection rate.
Discussion will also encompass any unexpected consequences or difficulties which occurred during the experimental process, along with likely explanations. For example, if a particular algorithm is not performing well on a particular dataset, the explanation for this poor performance and the likely remedial measures will be discussed. A detailed investigation of the effect of the algorithm parameters on its corresponding performance measures will be shown. The investigation will attempt to clarify how parameter selection affects algorithm performance, as well a s the optimal parameter values for different datasets and applications. The effect of different feature selection methods on algorithm performance will be investigated as well.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

This research explored applying machine learning clustering algorithms to improve regression testing in agile software development. Our experiments, with a large data set, proved that clustering algorithms can significantly minimize the number of test cases needed without any loss of the fault detection rate. The outcome will reveal the best algorithm (K-means, FSK-means, DBSCAN) to use according to selected measures (precision, recall, F-measure, fault detection rate) and running time. Contrast with conventional prioritization methods will identify the gain achieved by the proposed clustering-based method.

The research did, however, recognize some of its limitations. The performance of the algorithmic methods was highly sensitive to parameter tuning and feature selection. Future studies can investigate other sophisticated clustering techniques like hierarchical clustering or density-based clustering and how different feature selection. Findings of this research have extensive implications for software development processes in that the integration of machine learning methods in regression testing will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the software development process. The study adds to the increasingly expanding literature in terms of applying machine learning methods in

software testing and presents great insights into what clustering algorithms can bring to improved regression testing activities.

Other studies can also investigate integration of the proposed clustering-oriented approach with other test case regression techniques [3]. Integration of clustering with techniques like coverage-driven prioritization [3] or The prioritization by distribution [3] also holds the promise to yield even greater gains in effectiveness as well as efficiency. An examination of interaction between multiple techniques and overall impact of them on fault detection is a rich ground for further research [3]. Further, an extension of the scope of research to multiple software systems and generalizability of results across a range of software development environments would add more value to the usefulness and applicability of this study [3]. Finally, an even more extensive investigation of the impact of different clustering techniques on specific fault types—i.e., those of specific functionalities or modules—would yield more detailed information [3].

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