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Anytime Subgroup Discovery in Numerical Domains with Guarantees

Aimene Belfodil *,1,2, Adhene Belfodil*,1, and Mehdi Kaytoue1,3

1 Univ Lyon, INSA Lyon, CNRS, LIRIS UMR 5205, F-69621, LYON, France
2 Mobile Devices Ingénierie, 100 Avenue Stalingrad, 94800, Villejuif, France
3 Infologic, 99 avenue de Lyon, 26500 Bourg-Lès-Valence, France
firstname.surname@insa-lyon.fr

Abstract. Subgroup discovery is the task of discovering patterns that accurately discriminate a class label from the others. Existing approaches can uncover such patterns either through an exhaustive or an approximate exploration of the pattern search space. However, an exhaustive exploration is generally unfeasible whereas approximate approaches do not provide guarantees bounding the error of the best pattern quality nor the exploration progression (“How far are we of an exhaustive search”). We design here an algorithm for mining numerical data with three key properties w.r.t. the state of the art: (i) It yields progressively interval patterns whose quality improves over time; (ii) It can be interrupted anytime and always gives a guarantee bounding the error on the top pattern quality and (iii) It always bounds a distance to the exhaustive exploration. After reporting experimentations showing the effectiveness of our method, we discuss its generalization to other kinds of patterns.

Keywords: Subgroup discovery, Anytime algorithms, Discretization

1 Introduction

We address the problem of discovering patterns that accurately discriminate one class label from the others in a numerical dataset. Subgroup discovery (SD) [29] is a well established pattern mining framework which strives to find out data regions uncovering such interesting patterns. When it comes to numerical attributes, a pattern is generally a conjunction of restrictions over the attributes, e.g., pattern \( 50 \leq age < 70 \wedge smoke_{per\_day} \geq 3 \) fosters lung cancer incidence. To look for such patterns (namely interval patterns), various approaches are usually implemented. Common techniques perform a discretization transforming the numerical attributes to categorical ones in a pre-processing phase before using the wide spectrum of existing mining techniques [2,22,24,3]. This leads, however, to a loss of information even if an exhaustive enumeration is performed on the transformed data [2]. Other approaches explore the whole search space of all restrictions either exhaustively [19,15,16] or heuristically [25,15]. While an exhaustive enumeration is generally unfeasible in large data, the various state-of-the-art

* Both authors contributed equally to this work.
algorithms that heuristically explore the search space provide no provable guarantee on how they approximate the top quality patterns and on how far they are from an exhaustive search. Recent techniques set up a third and elegant paradigm, that is direct sampling approaches \[3,4,14\]. Algorithms falling under this category are non-enumerative methods which directly sample solutions from the pattern space. They simulate a distribution which rewards high quality patterns with respect to some interestingness measure. While \[3,4\] propose a direct two-step sampling procedure dedicated for categorical/boolean datasets, authors in \[14\] devise an interesting framework which add a third step to handle the specificity of numerical data. The proposed algorithm addresses the discovery of dense neighborhood patterns by defining a new density metric. Nevertheless, it does not consider the discovery of discriminant numerical patterns in labeled numerical datasets. Direct sampling approaches abandon the completeness property and generate only approximate results. In contrast, anytime pattern mining algorithms \[5,17\] are enumerative methods which exhibits the anytime feature \[31\], a solution is always available whose quality improves gradually over time and which converges to an exhaustive search if given enough time, hence ensuring completeness. However, to the best of our knowledge, no existing anytime algorithm in SD framework, makes it possible to ensure guarantees on the patterns discriminative power and the remaining distance to an exhaustive search while taking into account the nature of numerical data.

To achieve this goal, we propose a novel anytime algorithm, RefineAndMine, tailored for discriminant interval patterns discovery in numerical data. It starts by mining interval patterns in a coarse discretization, followed by successive refinements yielding increasingly finer discretizations highlighting potentially new interesting patterns. Eventually, it performs an exhaustive search, if given enough time. Additionally, our method gives two provable guarantees at each refinement. The first evaluates how close is the best found pattern so far to the optimal one in the whole search space. The second measures how already found patterns are diverse and cover well all the interesting regions in the dataset.

The outline is as follows. We recall in Sec. 2 basic definitions. Next, we define formally the problem in Sec. 3. Subsequently We introduce in Sec. 4 our mining algorithm before formulating the guarantees it provides in Sec. 5. We empirically evaluate the efficiency of RefineAndMine in Sec. 6 and discuss its potential improvements in Sec. 7. Additional materials are available in our companion page\(^4\). For more details and proofs, please see the appendix A-E.

2 Preliminaries

Input. A labeled numerical dataset \((\mathcal{G}, \mathcal{M})\) is given by a finite set (of objects) \(\mathcal{G}\) partitioned into two subsets \(\mathcal{G}^+\) and \(\mathcal{G}^-\) enclosing respectively positive (target) and negative instances; and a sequence of numerical attributes \(\mathcal{M} = (m_i)_{1 \leq i \leq p}\) of size \(p = |\mathcal{M}|\). Each attribute \(m_i\) is an application \(m_i : \mathcal{G} \to \mathbb{R}\) that associates

\[^4\]https://github.com/Adnene93/RefineAndMine
to each object \( g \in \mathcal{G} \) a value \( m_i(g) \in \mathbb{R} \). We can also see \( \mathcal{M} \) as a mapping \( \mathcal{M} : \mathcal{G} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^p, g \rightarrow (m_i(g))_{1 \leq i \leq p} \). We denote \( m_i[\mathcal{G}] = \{ m_i(g) \mid g \in \mathcal{G} \} \) (More generally, for a function \( f : \mathcal{E} \rightarrow \mathcal{F} \) and a subset \( A \subseteq \mathcal{E} \), \( f[A] = \{ f(e) \mid e \in A \} \)).

Fig. 1 (left table) presents a 2-dimensional labeled numerical dataset and its representation in the Cartesian plane (filled dots represent positive instances).

**Interval patterns and their extents.** When dealing with numerical domains in SD, we generally consider for intelligibility interval patterns [19]. An Interval pattern is a conjunction of restrictions over the numerical attributes; i.e. a set of conditions \( \preceq v \) with \( \preceq \in \{=,\leq,<,>\} \). Geometrically, interval patterns are axis-parallel hyper-rectangles. Fig. 1 (center-left) depicts pattern (non-hatched rectangle) \( c_2 = (1 \leq m_1 \leq 4) \land (0 \leq m_2 \leq 3) \triangleq [1,4] \times [0,3] \).

Interval patterns are naturally partially ordered thanks to “hyper-rectangle inclusion”. We denote the infinite partially ordered set (poset) of all interval patterns by \((D, \sqsubseteq)\) where \( \sqsubseteq \) (same order used in [19]) denotes the dual order \( \supseteq \) of hyper-rectangle inclusion. That is pattern \( d_1 \sqsubseteq d_2 \) iff \( d_1 \) encloses \( d_2 \) \( (d_1 \supseteq d_2) \).

It is worth mentioning that \((D, \sqsubseteq)\) forms a complete lattice [28]. For a subset \( S \subseteq D \), the join \( \bigvee S \) (i.e. smallest upper bound) is given by the rectangle intersection. Dually, the meet \( \bigwedge S \) (i.e the largest lower bound) is given by the smallest hyper-rectangle enclosing all patterns in \( S \). Note that the top (resp. bottom) pattern in \((D, \sqsubseteq)\) is given by \( T = \emptyset \) (resp. \( \perp = \mathbb{R}^p \)). Fig. 1 (right) depicts two patterns (hatched) \( e_1 = [1,5] \times (1,4] \) and \( e_2 = [0,4] \times [2,6] \), their meet (non-hatched) \( e_1 \cap e_2 = [0,5] \times (1,6] \) and their join (black) \( e_1 \cup e_2 = [1,4] \times [2,4] \).

A pattern \( d \in D \) is said to cover an object \( g \in \mathcal{G} \) iff \( \mathcal{M}(g) \in d \). To use the same order \( \sqsubseteq \) to define such a relationship, we associate to each \( g \in \mathcal{G} \) its corresponding pattern \( \delta(g) = \{ \mathcal{M}(g) \} = \bigwedge_{i=1}^{p} \left[ m_i(g), m_i(g) \right] \). The cover relationship becomes \( d \sqsubseteq \delta(g) \). The extent of a pattern is the set of objects supporting it. Formally, there is a function \( \text{ext} : D \rightarrow \wp(\mathcal{G}), d \mapsto \{ g \in \mathcal{G} \mid d \sqsubseteq \delta(g) \} \) (where \( \wp(\mathcal{G}) \) denotes the set of all subsets of \( \mathcal{G} \)). Note that if \( d_1 \sqsubseteq d_2 \) then \( \text{ext}(d_2) \subseteq \text{ext}(d_1) \). We define also the positive (resp. negative) extent as follows: \( \text{ext}^+(d) = \text{ext}(d) \cap \mathcal{G}^+ \) (resp. \( \text{ext}^-(d) = \text{ext}(d) \cap \mathcal{G}^- \)). With the mapping \( \delta : \mathcal{G} \rightarrow D \) and the complete lattice \((D, \sqsubseteq)\), we call the triple \( \mathcal{P} = (\mathcal{G}, (D, \sqsubseteq), \delta) \) the interval pattern structure [19][11].

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**Fig. 1:** (left to right) (1) a labeled numerical dataset. (2) closed \( c_1 \) vs non-closed \( c_2 \) interval patterns. (3) \( \text{cotp} \ d_1 \) vs non \( \text{cotp} \ d_2 \). (4) meet and join of two patterns.
Measuring the discriminative power of a pattern. In SD, a quality measure $\phi: \mathcal{D} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is usually defined to evaluate at what extent a pattern well-discriminates the positive instances in $\mathcal{G}^+$ from those in $\mathcal{G}^-$. Two atomic measures are generally employed to quantify the quality of a pattern $d$: the true positive rate $\text{tpr}: d \rightarrow |\text{ext}^+(d)|/|\mathcal{G}^+|$ and the false positive rate $\text{fpr}: d \rightarrow |\text{ext}^-(d)|/|\mathcal{G}^-|$. Several measures exist in the literature \cite{13,23}. A measure is said to be objective or probability based \cite{13} if it depends solely on the number of co-occurrences and non co-occurrences of the pattern and the target label. In other words, those measures can be defined using only $\text{tpr}$, $\text{fpr}$ and potentially other constants (e.g. $|\mathcal{G}|$). Formally, $\exists \phi^*: [0,1]^2 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ s.t. $\phi(d) = \phi^*(\text{tpr}(d), \text{fpr}(d))$. Objective measures depends only on the pattern extent. Hence, we use interchangeably $\phi(\text{ent}(d))$ and $\phi(d)$. An objective quality measure $\phi$ is said to be discriminant if its associated measure $\phi^*$ is increasing with $\text{tpr}$ ($\text{fpr}$ being fixed) and decreasing with $\text{fpr}$ ($\text{tpr}$ being fixed). For instance, with $\alpha^- = |\mathcal{G}^+|/|\mathcal{G}|$ and $\alpha^+ = |\mathcal{G}^-|/|\mathcal{G}|$ denoting labels prevalence, $\text{wracc}^*(\text{tpr}, \text{fpr}) = \alpha^+ \cdot \alpha^- \cdot (\text{tpr} - \text{fpr})$ and $\text{informedness}^*(\text{tpr}, \text{fpr}) = \text{tpr} - \text{fpr}$ are discriminant measures.

Compressing the set of interesting patterns using closure. Since discriminant quality measures depend only on the extent, closed patterns can be leveraged to reduce the number of resulting patterns \cite{11}. A pattern $d \in \mathcal{D}$ is said to be closed (w.r.t. pattern structure $\mathcal{P}$) if and only if it is the most restrictive pattern (i.e. the smallest hyper-rectangle) enclosing its extent. Formally, $d = \text{int}(\text{ent}(d))$ where $\text{int}$ mapping (called intent) is given by: $\text{int} : \varphi(\mathcal{G}) \rightarrow \mathcal{D}, A \mapsto \bigcap_{g \in A} \delta(g) = x_{\text{min}_{g \in A} m_i(g), \text{max}_{g \in A} m_i(g)}$. Fig. \ref{fig:1} (center-left) depicts the closed interval pattern (hatched rectangle) $c_1 = [1,2] \times [1,3]$ which is the closure of $c_2 = [1,4] \times [0,3]$ (non hatched rectangle). Note that since $\mathcal{G}$ is finite, the set of all closed patterns is finite and is given by $\text{int}(\varphi(\mathcal{G}))$.

A more concise set of patterns using Relevance theory. Fig. \ref{fig:1} (center-right) depicts two interval patterns, the hatched pattern $d_1 = [1,2] \times [1,3]$ and the non-hatched one $d_2 = [1,4] \times [1,4]$. While both patterns are closed, $d_1$ has better discriminative power than $d_2$ since they both cover exactly the same positive instances $\{g_1, g_2, g_3\}$; yet, $d_2$ covers more negative instances than $d_1$. Relevance theory \cite{12} formalizes this observation and helps us to remove some clearly uninteresting closed patterns. In a nutshell, a closed pattern $d_1 \in \mathcal{D}$. is said to be more relevant than a closed pattern $d_2 \in \mathcal{D}$ iff $\text{ext}^+(d_2) \subseteq \text{ext}^+(d_1)$ and $\text{ext}^-(d_1) \subseteq \text{ext}^-(d_2)$. For $\phi$ discriminant, if $d_1$ is more relevant than $d_2$ then $\phi(d_1) \geq \phi(d_2)$. A closed pattern $d$ is said to be relevant iff there is no other closed pattern $c$ that is more relevant than $d$. It follows that if a closed pattern is relevant then it is closed on the positive (cotp for short). An interval pattern is said to be cotp if any smaller interval pattern will at least drop one positive instance (i.e. $d = \text{int}(\text{ext}^+(d))$). Interestingly, $\text{int} \circ \text{ext}^+$ is a closure operator on $(\mathcal{D}, \subseteq)$. Fig. \ref{fig:1} (center-right) depicts a non cotp pattern $d_2 = [1,4] \times [1,4]$ and its closure on the positive $d_1 = \text{int}(\text{ext}^+(d_2)) = [1,2] \times [1,3]$ which is relevant. Note that not all cotp are relevant. The set of cotp patterns is given by $\text{int} (\varphi(\mathcal{G}^+))$. We call relevant (resp. cotp) extent, any set $A \subseteq \mathcal{G}$ s.t. $A = \text{ext}(d)$ with $d$ is a relevant (resp. cotp) pattern. The set of relevant extents is denoted by $\mathcal{R}$. 
3 Problem Statement

**Correct enumeration of relevant extents.** First, consider the (simpler) problem of enumerating all relevant extents in \( \mathbb{R} \). For a (relevant extents) enumeration algorithm, three properties need generally to hold. An algorithm which output is the set of solutions \( S \) is said to be (1) *complete* if \( S \supseteq \mathbb{R} \), (2) *sound* if \( S \subseteq \mathbb{R} \) and (3) *non redundant* if each solution in \( S \) is outputted *only once*. It is said to be *correct* if the three properties hold. Guyet et al. [16] proposed a *correct algorithm* that enumerate relevant extents induced by the *interval pattern structure* in two steps: (1) Start by a *DFS complete* and *non redundant* enumeration of all *cotp* patterns (extents) using *MinIntChange* algorithm [19]; (2) Post-process the found *cotp* patterns by removing non relevant ones using [12] characterization (this step adds the *soundness* property to the algorithm).

**Problem Statement.** Given a discriminant objective quality measure \( \phi \), we want to design an *anytime enumeration algorithm* such that: (1) given enough time, outputs all relevant extents in \( \mathbb{R} \), (2) when interrupted, provides a guarantee bounding the difference of quality between the top-quality found extent and the top possible quality w.r.t. \( \phi \); and (3) outputs a second guarantee ensuring that the resulting patterns are diverse.

Formally, let \( S_i \) be the set of outputted solutions by the anytime algorithm at some step (or instant) \( i \) (at \( i+1 \) we have \( S_i \subseteq S_{i+1} \)). We want that (1) when \( i \) is big enough, \( S_i \supseteq \mathbb{R} \) (only *completeness* is required). For (2) and (3), we define two metrics\(^5\) to compare the results in \( S_i \) with the ones in \( \mathbb{R} \). The first metric, called *accuracy* (eq. 1), evaluates the difference between top pattern quality \( \phi \) in \( S_i \) and \( \mathbb{R} \) while the second metric, called *specificity* (eq. 2), evaluates how diverse and complete are patterns in \( S_i \).

\[
\text{accuracy}_\phi(S_i, \mathbb{R}) = \sup_{A \in \mathbb{R}} \phi(A) - \sup_{B \in S_i} \phi(B) \quad (1)
\]

\[
\text{specificity}(S_i, \mathbb{R}) = \sup_{A \in \mathbb{R}} \inf_{B \in S_i} \left( \frac{|A \Delta B|}{|G|} \right) \quad (2)
\]

The idea behind *specificity* is that each extent \( A \) in \( \mathbb{R} \) is “approximated” by the most similar extent in \( S_i \); that is the set \( B \in S_i \) minimizing the *metric distance* \( A, B \mapsto |A \Delta B|/|G| \) in \( \phi(G) \). The *specificity\(^6\)* is then the highest possible distance (pessimistic). Note that *specificity*(\( S_i, \mathbb{R} \)) = 0 is equivalent to \( S_i \supseteq \mathbb{R} \). Clearly, the lower these two metrics are, the closer we get to the desired output \( \mathbb{R} \). While *accuracy* and *specificity* can be evaluated when a complete exploration of \( \mathbb{R} \) is possible, our aim is to *bound* the two aforementioned measures independently from \( \mathbb{R} \) providing a *guarantee*. In other words, the anytime algorithm need to output additionally to \( S_i \), the two following measures: (2) *accuracy*\(^5\) and (3) *specificity*\(^5\) s.t. *accuracy*\(^5\)(\( S_i, \mathbb{R} \)) \leq *accuracy*\(^5\)(\( S_i \)) and *specificity*\(^5\)(\( S_i, \mathbb{R} \)) \leq *specificity*\(^5\)(\( S_i \)). These two bounds need to decrease overtime providing better information on \( \mathbb{R} \) through \( S_i \).

\(^5\)The metrics names fall under the taxonomy of [31] for anytime algorithms.

\(^6\)The *specificity* is actually a directed Hausdorff distance [18] from \( \mathbb{R} \) to \( S_i \).
4 Anytime Interval Pattern Mining

**Discretizations and pattern space.** Our algorithm relies on the enumeration of a chain of discretization from the coarsest to the finest. A discretization of $\mathbb{R}$ is any partition of $\mathbb{R}$ using intervals. In particular, let $C = \{c_i\}_{1 \leq i \leq |C|} \subseteq \mathbb{R}$ be a finite set with $c_i < c_{i+1}$ for $i \in \{1,...,|C| - 1\}$. Element of $C$ are called cut points or cuts. We associate to $C$ a finite discretization denoted by $dr(C)$ and given by $dr(C) = \{(-\infty, c_1) \cup \{c_i, c_{i+1}\} | i \in \{1,...,|C| - 1\}\} \cup \{[c_i, +\infty)\}$.

Generally speaking, let $p \in \mathbb{N}^*$ and let $C = \{C_k\}_{1 \leq k \leq p} \subseteq \wp(\mathbb{R})^p$ representing sets of cut points associated to each dimension $k$ (i.e. $C_k \subseteq \mathbb{R}$ finite $\forall k \in \{1,...,p\}$). The partition $dr(C)$ of $\mathbb{R}^p$ is given by: $dr(C) = \bigwedge_{k=1}^p dr(C_k)$. Fig. 2 depicts two discretizations. Discretizations are ordered using the natural order between partitions. Moreover, cut-points sets are ordered by $\leq$ as follows: $C_1 \leq C_2 \equiv \forall k \in \{1,...,p\} C_{1_k} \subseteq C_{2_k}$ with $C_i = \{C_k\}_{1 \leq k \leq p}$. Clearly, if $C_1 \leq C_2$ then discretization $dr(C_1)$ is coarser than $dr(C_2)$.

Let $C = \{C_k\}_{1 \leq k \leq p}$ be the cut-points. Using the elementary hyper-rectangles (i.e. cells) in the discretization $dr(C)$, one can build a (finite) subset of descriptions $\mathcal{D}_C \subseteq \mathcal{D}$ which is the set of all possible descriptions (hyper-rectangles) that can be built using these cells. Formally: $\mathcal{D}_C = \{\bigwedge S | S \subseteq dr(C)\}$. Note that $\top = \emptyset \in \mathcal{D}_C$ since $\bigwedge \emptyset = \bigcup \mathcal{D} = \top$ by definition. Proposition 1 states that $(\mathcal{D}_C, \sqsubseteq)$ is a complete sub-lattice of $(\mathcal{D}, \sqsubseteq)$.

**Proposition 1.** $(\mathcal{D}_C, \sqsubseteq)$ is a finite (complete) sub-lattice of $(\mathcal{D}, \sqsubseteq)$ that is: $\forall d_1, d_2 \in \mathcal{D}_C : d_1 \sqcup d_2 \in \mathcal{D}_C$ and $d_1 \sqcap d_2 \in \mathcal{D}_C$. Moreover, if $C' \leq C^2$ are two cut-points sets, then $(\mathcal{D}_{C'}, \sqsubseteq)$ is a (complete) sub-lattice of $(\mathcal{D}_{C^2}, \sqsubseteq)$.

**Finest discretization for a complete enumeration of relevant extents.** There exist cut points $C \subseteq \wp(\mathbb{R})^p$ such that the space $(\mathcal{D}_C, \sqsubseteq)$ holds all relevant extents (i.e. $\text{ext}[\mathcal{D}_C] \supseteq R$). For instance, if we consider $C = (m_k[G])_{1 \leq k \leq p}$, the description space $(\mathcal{D}_C, \sqsubseteq)$ holds all relevant extents. However, is there coarser discretization that holds all the relevant extents? The answer is affirmative. One can show that the only interesting cuts are those separating between positive and negative instances (called boundary cut-points by [9]). We call such cuts, relevant cuts. They are denoted by $C^{rel} = (C_k^{rel})_{1 \leq k \leq p}$ and we have $\text{ext}[\mathcal{D}_{C^{rel}}] \supseteq R$. Formally, for each dimension $k$, a value $c \in m_k[G]$ is a relevant cut in $C_k^{rel}$ for attribute $m_k$ iff: $(c \in m_k[G^+]$ and $\text{prev}(c, m_k[G]) \in m_k(G^-])$ or $(c \in m_k[G^-]$ and $\text{prev}(c, m_k[G]) \in m_k(G^+)]$ where $\text{next}(c, A) = \inf\{a \in A | c < a\}$ (resp. $\text{prev}(c, A) = \sup\{a \in A | a < c\}$) is the following (resp. preceding) element of $c$ in $A$. Finding relevant cuts $C_k^{rel}$ is of the same complexity of sorting $m_k[G]$.

In the dataset depicted in Fig. 1 relevant cuts are given by $C^{rel} = \{(2,3,4,5),\{4,5\}\}$. Discretization $dr(C_2^{rel})$ is depicted in Fig. 2 (center).

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7Let $E$ be a set, a partition $P_2$ of $E$ is finer than a partition $P_1$ (or $P_1$ is coarser than $P_2$) and we denote $P_1 \leq P_2$ if any subset in $P_1$ is a subset of a subset in $P_2$. 
Fig. 2: (left) Discretization $dr((C_1, C_2))$ in $\mathbb{R}^2$ with $C_1 = \{2, 3\}$ and $C_2 = \{4, 5\}$ and (right) discretization $dr((C_2))$ in $\mathbb{R}$. Adding a cut point in any $C_k$ will create finer discretization.

Anytime enumeration of relevant extents. We design an anytime and interruptible algorithm dubbed RefineAndMine. This method, presented in Algorithm 1, relies on the enumeration of a chain of discretizations on the data space, from the coarsest to the finest. It begins by searching relevant cuts in pre-processing phase (line 2). Then, it builds a coarse discretization (line 3) containing a small set of relevant cut-points. Once the initial discretization built, cotp patterns are mined thanks to MinIntChange Algorithm (line 4) [19]. Then as long as the algorithm is not interrupted (or within the computational budget), we add new cut-points (line 6) building finer discretizations. For each added cut-point (line 8), only new interval patterns are searched for (mined descriptions $d$ are new but their extents $\text{ext}(d)$ are not necessarily new). That is cotp patterns which left or right bound is cut on the considered attribute $\text{attr}$ (i.e. $d.I_{\text{attr}} \in \{[\text{cut}, a], [\text{cut}, +\infty), [a, \text{cut}), (-\infty, \text{cut}) \mid a \in C_{\text{cur}}^{\text{attr}}\}$ with $d.I_{\text{attr}}$ is the $\text{attr}^{th}$ interval of $d$). This can be done by a slight modification of MinIntChange method. RefineAndMine terminates when the set of relevant cuts is exhausted (i.e. $C_{\text{cur}} = C_{\text{rel}}$) ensuring a complete enumeration of relevant extents $\mathcal{R}$.

The initial discretization (Line 3) can be done by various strategies (see [30]). A simple, yet efficient, choice is the equal frequency discretization with a fixed number of cuts. Other strategies can be used, e.g. [9]. Adding new cut-points (Line 6) can also be done in various ways. One strategy is to add a random relevant cut on a random attribute to build the next discretization. Section 5.3 proposes another more elaborated strategy that heuristically guide RefineAndMine to rapidly find good quality patterns (observed experimentally).

Algorithm 1: RefineAndMine

```
Input: $(G, M)$ a numerical datasets with $\{G^+, G^-\}$ partition of $G$
1 procedure RefineAndMine()
2 Compute relevant cuts $C_{\text{rel}}$
3 Build an initial set of cut-points $C_{\text{cur}} \leq C_{\text{rel}}$
4 Mine cotp patterns in $D_{C_{\text{cur}}}$ (and their extents) using MinIntChange
5 while $C_{\text{cur}} \neq C_{\text{rel}}$ and within computational budget do
6   Choose the next relevant cut $(\text{attr}, \text{cut})$ with $\text{cut} \in C_{\text{attr}} \setminus C_{\text{cur}}$
7   Add the relevant cut $\text{cut}$ to $C_{\text{cur}}$
8   Mine new cotp patterns (and their extents) in $D_{C_{\text{cur}}}$
```

5 Anytime Interval Pattern Mining with Guarantees

Algorithm RefineAndMine starts by mining patterns in a coarse discretization. It continues by mining more patterns in increasingly finer discretizations until the search space is totally explored (final complete lattice being $({\mathcal{D}}_{C_{r=1}}, \sqsubseteq)$).

According to Proposition 1, the description spaces built on discretizations are complete sub-lattices of the total description space. A similar idea involves performing successive enumeration of growing pattern languages (projections) \[11\].

In our case, it is a successive enumeration of growing complete sub-lattices. For the sake of generality, in the following of this section, we show how RefineAndMine can be adapted to efficiently compute these two bounds for the case of interval patterns.

Similarly to the interval pattern structure \[11\], we define in the general case a pattern structure $\mathcal{P} = (\mathcal{G}, (\mathcal{D}, \sqsubseteq), \delta)$ on the complete lattice $(\mathcal{D}, \sqsubseteq)$ where $\mathcal{G}$ is a nonempty finite set (partitioned into $\{\mathcal{G}^+, \mathcal{G}^−\}$) and $\delta : \mathcal{G} \rightarrow \mathcal{D}$ is a mapping associating to each object its description (recall that in interval pattern structure, $\delta$ is the degenerated hyper-rectangle representing a single point). The extent $\text{ext}$ and intent $\text{int}$ operators are then respectively given by $\text{ext} : \mathcal{D} \rightarrow \psi(\mathcal{G}), d \mapsto \{g \in \mathcal{G} | d \sqsubseteq \delta(g)\}$ and $\text{int} : \psi(\mathcal{G}) \rightarrow \psi(\mathcal{G}), A \mapsto \bigcap_{g \in A} \delta(g)$ with $\bigcap$ represents the meet operator in $(\mathcal{D}, \sqsubseteq)$ \[11\].

5.1 Approximating descriptions in a complete sub-lattice

**Upper and lower approximations of a pattern.** We start by approximating each pattern in $\mathcal{D}$ using two patterns in $\mathcal{D}_i$. Consider for instance Fig. 3 where $\mathcal{D}$ is the space of interval patterns in $\mathbb{R}^2$ while $\mathcal{D}_C$ is the space containing only rectangles that can be built over discretization $dr(C)$ with $C = \{(1, 4, 6, 8), (1, 3, 5, 6)\}$. Since the hatched rectangle $d = [3, 7] \times [2, 5.5] \in \mathcal{D}$ does not belong to $\mathcal{D}_C$, two descriptions in $\mathcal{D}_C$ can be used to encapsulate it. The first one, depicted by a gray rectangle, is called the upper approximation of $d$. It is given by the smallest rectangle in $\mathcal{D}_C$ containing $d$. Dually, the second approximation represented as a black rectangle and coined lower approximation of $d$, is given by the greatest rectangle in $\mathcal{D}_C$ enclosing $d$. This two denominations comes from Rough Set Theory \[27\] where lower and upper approximations form together a rough set and try to capture the undefined rectangle $d \in \mathcal{D}\setminus\mathcal{D}_C$.

**Definition 1.** The upper approximation mapping $\overline{\psi}_i$ and lower approximation mapping $\underline{\psi}_i$ are the mappings defined as follows:

- $\overline{\psi}_i : \mathcal{D} \rightarrow \mathcal{D}_i, d \mapsto \bigcup \{c \in \mathcal{D}_i | c \sqsubseteq d\}$
- $\underline{\psi}_i : \mathcal{D} \rightarrow \mathcal{D}_i, d \mapsto \bigcap \{c \in \mathcal{D}_i | d \sqsubseteq c\}$
The existence of these two mappings is ensured by the fact that \((\mathcal{D}_i, \sqsubseteq)\) is a complete sublattice of \((\mathcal{D}, \sqsubseteq)\). Theorem 4.1 in \cite{cite} provides more properties for the two aforementioned mappings. Proposition \ref{prop:2} restates an important property.

**Proposition 2.** \(\forall d \in \mathcal{D} : \overline{\psi_i}(d) \subseteq d \subseteq \psi_i(d)\). The term lower and upper-approximation here are reversed to fit the fact that in term of extent we have \(\forall d \in \mathcal{D} : \text{ext}(\overline{\psi_i}(d)) \subseteq \text{ext}(d) \subseteq \text{ext}(\psi_i(d))\).

A projected pattern structure. Now that we have the upper-approximation mapping \(\psi_i\), one can associate a new pattern structure \(P_i = (\mathcal{G}, \mathcal{D}_i, \sqsubseteq), \psi_i \circ \delta_i \mathcal{P}^8\) to the pattern space \((\mathcal{D}_i, \sqsubseteq)\). It is worth mentioning, that while extent mapping associated to \(P_i\) is equal to \(\text{ext}\), the intent \(\int_i\) of \(P_i\) is given by \(\int_i : \varphi(\mathcal{G}) \rightarrow \mathcal{D}_i, A \mapsto \overline{\psi_i}(\text{int}(A))\). Note that, the set of \(\text{cotp}\) patterns associated to \(P_i\), are given by \(\int_i[\varphi(\mathcal{G}^+)] = \overline{\psi_i}[\text{int}[\varphi(\mathcal{G}^+)]]\). That is, the upper approximation of a \(\text{cotp}\) pattern in \(\mathcal{P}\) is a \(\text{cotp}\) pattern in \(P_i\).

**Encapsulating patterns using their upper-approximations.** We want to encapsulate any description by knowing only its upper-approximation. Formally, we want some function \(f : \mathcal{D}_i \rightarrow \mathcal{D}_i\) such that \((\forall d \in \mathcal{D}) \overline{\psi_i}(d) \subseteq d \subseteq f(\overline{\psi_i}(d))\). Proposition \ref{prop:3} define such a function \(f\) (called core) and states that the core is the tightest \(\text{w.r.t.} \sqsubseteq\) possible function \(f\).

**Proposition 3.** The function \(\text{core}_i\) defined by:

\[
\text{core}_i : \mathcal{D}_i \rightarrow \mathcal{D}_i, c \mapsto \text{core}(c) = \psi_i \left( \bigcup \left\{ d \in \mathcal{D} \mid \overline{\psi_i}(d) = c \right\} \right)
\]

verifies the following property: \(\forall d \in \mathcal{D} : \overline{\psi_i}(d) \subseteq d \subseteq \psi_i(d) \subseteq \text{core}_i(\overline{\psi_i}(d))\). Moreover, for \(f : \mathcal{D}_i \rightarrow \mathcal{D}_i, (\forall d \in \mathcal{D}) d \subseteq f(\overline{\psi_i}(d)) \Leftrightarrow (\forall c \in \mathcal{D}_i) \text{core}_i(c) \subseteq f(c)\).

Note that, while the core operator definition depends clearly on the complete lattice \((\mathcal{D}, \sqsubseteq)\), its computation should be done independently from \((\mathcal{D}, \sqsubseteq)\).

We show here how to compute the core in RefineAndMine. In each step and for cut-points \(C = (C_k) \subseteq \varphi(\mathbb{R})^p\), the finite lattice \((\mathcal{D}_C, \sqsubseteq)\) is a sub-lattice of the finest finite lattice \((\mathcal{D}_{C^\text{rel}}, \sqsubseteq)\) (since \(C \leq C^\text{rel}\)). Thereby, the core is computed according to this latter as follows: Let \(d \in \mathcal{D}_C\) with \(d.I_k = [a_k, b_k]\) for all

---

\[\text{Fig. 3: Description } d = [3, 7] \times [2, 5.5] \text{ in } \mathcal{D} \text{ (hatched) and } C = \{(1, 4, 6, 8), (1, 3, 5, 6)\}. \text{ Upper approximation of } d \text{ in } \mathcal{D}_C \text{ is } \overline{\psi_c}(d) = [1, 8] \times [1, 6] \text{ (gray rectangle) while lower approximation of } d \text{ is } \psi_c(d) = [4, 6] \times [3, 5] \text{ (black rectangle)}.\]
$k \in \{1, \ldots, p\}$. The left (resp. right) bound of $\text{core}_C(d)I_k$ for any $k$ is equal to $\text{next}(a_k, C_k)$ (resp. $\text{prev}(b_k, C_k)$) if $\text{next}(a_k, C_k^\text{rel}) \not\in C_k$ (resp. $\text{prev}(b_k, C_k^\text{rel}) \not\in C_k$). Otherwise, it is equal to $a_k$ (resp. $b_k$). Consider the step $C = \{(2, 3), \{4, 5\}\}$ in $\text{RefineAndMine}$ (its associated discretization is depicted in Fig. 2 (left)) and recall that the relevant cuts set is $C^\text{rel} = \{(2, 3, 4, 5), \{4, 5\}\}$. The core of the bottom pattern $\perp = \mathbb{R}^2$ at this step is $\text{core}_{C^\text{cur}}(\perp) = (-\infty, 3) \times \mathbb{R}$. Indeed, there is three descriptions in $D_{C^\text{rel}}$ which upper approximation is $\perp$, namely $\perp$, $c_1 = (-\infty, 4) \times \mathbb{R}$ and $c_2 = (-\infty, 5) \times \mathbb{R}$. Their lower approximations are respectively $\perp$, $(-\infty, 3) \times \mathbb{R}$ and $(-\infty, 3) \times \mathbb{R}$. The join (intersection) of these three descriptions is then $\text{core}_{C^\text{cur}}(\perp) = (-\infty, 3) \times (-\infty, +\infty)$. Note that particularly for interval patterns, the core has monotonicity, that is $(\forall c, d \in D_C)c \sqsubseteq d \Rightarrow \text{core}_C(c) \sqsubseteq \text{core}_C(d)$.

### 5.2 Bounding accuracy and specificity metrics

At the $i^{\text{th}}$ step, the outputted extents $S_i$ contains the set of cotp extents in $P_i$. Formally, $\text{int}_{i}[S_i] \supseteq \text{int}_{i}([\phi(\mathcal{G}^+)])$. Theorem 1 and Theorem 2 gives respectively the bounds $\text{accuracy}_\phi$ and $\text{specificity}$.

**Theorem 1.** Let $\phi : \mathcal{D} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be a discriminant objective quality measure. The accuracy metric is bounded by:

$$\text{accuracy}_\phi(S_i) = \sup_{c \in \text{int}_i[S_i]} \left[ \phi^+ (\text{tpr}(c), \text{fpr}(\text{core}_i(c))) - \phi^+ (\text{tpr}(c), \text{fpr}(c)) \right]$$

Moreover $\text{accuracy}_\phi(S_{i+1}) \leq \text{accuracy}_\phi(S_i)$.

**Theorem 2.** The specificity metric is bounded by:

$$\text{specificity}(S_i) = \sup_{c \in \text{int}_i[S_i]} \left( |\text{ext}(c)| - |\text{ext}(\text{core}_i^+(c))|/\left(2 \cdot |\mathcal{G}|\right) \right)$$

where $\text{core}_i^+(c) = \text{int}_i(\text{ext}^+(\text{core}_i(c)))$, that is $\text{core}_i^+(c)$ is the closure on the positive of $\text{core}_i(c)$ in $P_i$. Moreover $\text{specificity}(S_{i+1}) \leq \text{specificity}(S_i)$.

### 5.3 Computing and updating bounds in RefineAndMine

We show below how the different steps of the method $\text{RefineAndMine}$ (see Algorithm 1) should be updated in order to compute the two bounds $\text{accuracy}$ and $\text{specificity}$. For the sake of brevity, we explain here a naive approach to provide an overview of the algorithm. Note that here, $\text{core}$ (resp. $\text{core}^+$) refers to $\text{core}_{C^\text{cur}}$ (resp. $\text{core}_{C^\text{cur}}^+$).

**Compute the initial bounds (line 4).** As $\text{MinIntChange}$ enumerates all cotp patterns $d \in D_{C^\text{cur}}$, $\text{RefineAndMine}$ stores in a key-value structure (i.e. map) called $\text{BoundPerPosExt}$ the following entries:

$\text{ext}^+(d) : (\phi(d), \phi^+ (\text{tpr}(d), \text{fpr}(\text{core}(d)))$, $(|\text{ext}(d)| - |\text{ext}(\text{core}^+(d))|)/\left(2 \cdot |\mathcal{G}|\right)$

The error-bounds $\text{accuracy}_\phi$ and $\text{specificity}$ are then computed at the end by a single pass on the entries of $\text{BoundPerPosExt}$ using Theorems 1 and 2.
**Update the bounds after adding a new cut-point (line 8).** In order to compute the new error-bounds accuracy\(\phi\) and specificity which decrease according to theorems 1 and 2 one need to add/update some entries in the structure BoundPerPosExt. For that, only two types of patterns should be looked for:

1. The new \texttt{cotp} patterns mined by \texttt{RefineAndMine}, that is those which left or right bound on attribute \texttt{attr} is the added value \texttt{cut}. Visiting these patterns will add potentially new entries in \texttt{BoundPerPosExt} or update ancient ones.

2. The old \texttt{cotp} which core changes (i.e. becomes less restrictive) in the new discretization. One can show that these patterns are those which left bound is prev(\texttt{cut}, \texttt{C}_{\text{cur}attr}) or right bound is next(\texttt{cut}, \texttt{C}_{\text{cur}attr}) on attribute \texttt{attr}. Visiting these patterns will only update ancient entries of \texttt{BoundPerPosExt} by potentially decreasing both second and third value.

**Adding a new cut-point (line 7).** We have implemented for now a strategy which aims to decrease the accuracy\(\phi\). For that, we search in \texttt{BoundPerPosExt} for the description \texttt{d} having the maximal value \(\phi^* (tpr(d), fpr(\text{core}(d)))\). In order to decrease accuracy\(\phi\), we increase the size of \text{core}(d) (to potentially increase \(fpr(\text{core}(d))\)). This is equivalent to choose a cut-point in the border region \(C_{\text{cur}attr}\backslash C_{\text{cur}attr}\) for some attribute \texttt{attr} such that \texttt{cut} \(\in d.I_{\text{attr}}\backslash \text{core}(d).I_{\text{attr}}\). Consider that we are in the step where the current discretization \(C_{\text{cur}attr}\) is the one depicted in Fig. 2. Imagine that the bottom pattern \(\bot = \mathbb{R}\) is the one associated to the maximal value \(\phi^* (tpr(\bot), fpr(\text{core}(\bot)))\). The new cut-point should be chosen in \{4, 5\} for \texttt{attr} = 1 (recall that \text{core}(\bot) = (-\infty, 3) \times (-\infty, +\infty)). Note that if for such description there is no remaining relevant cut in its border regions for all \texttt{attr} \(\in \{1, ..., p\}\) then \text{core}(d) = \texttt{d} ensuring that \texttt{d} is the top pattern.

### 6 Empirical Study

In this section we report quantitative experiments over the implemented algorithms. For reproducibility purpose, the source code is made available in our companion page\footnote{Companion page: \url{https://github.com/Adnene93/RefineAndMine}} which also provide a wider set of experiments. Experiments were carried out on a variety of datasets (Tab. 1) involving ordinal or continuous numerical attributes from the UCI repository.

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<th>intervals</th>
<th>class</th>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0.33</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>666 3 x (\times 10^5)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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**Table 1:** Benchmark datasets and their characteristics: number of numerical attributes, number of rows, number of all possible intervals, the considered class and its prevalence.
First, we study the effectiveness of RefineAndMine in terms of the speed of convergence to the optimal solution, as well as regarding the evolution over time of the accuracy of the provided bounding quality’s guarantee. To this end, we report in Fig. 4 the behavior of RefineAndMine (i.e. quality and bounding guarantee) according to the execution time to evaluate the time/quality trade-off of the devised approach. accuracy as presented in Theorem 1 is the difference between the quality and its bounding measure. The experiments were conducted by running both RefineAndMine and the exhaustive enumeration algorithm (MinIntChange performed considering $D_{Crel}$) on the benchmark datasets using informedness measure. The exhaustive algorithm execution time enables the estimation of the computational overhead incurred by RefineAndMine. We interrupt a method if its execution time exceeds two hours. Note that, in the experiments, we choose to disable the computation of specificity since the latter is only optional and does not affect the effectiveness of the algorithm. This in contrast to the quality bound computation which is essential as it guides RefineAndMine in the cut-points selection strategy. The experiments give evidence of the effectiveness of RefineAndMine both in terms of finding the optimal solution as well as in providing stringent bound on the top quality pattern in a prompt manner. Two important milestones achieved by RefineAndMine during its execution are highlighted in Fig. 4. The first one, illustrated by the green dotted line, points out the required time to find the best pattern. The second milestone (purple line) is reached when the quality’s and the bound’s curves meet, this ensures that the best quality was already found by RefineAndMine. Interestingly, we observe that for most configurations the second milestone is attained by RefineAndMine promptly and well before the exhaustive method termination time. This is explained by the fact that the adopted cut points selection strategy aims to decrease as early as possible the accuracy metric. Finally, RefineAndMine requires in average 2 times of the requested execution time (red dotted line) by the exhaustive algorithm. This overhead is mostly incurred by the quality guarantee computation.

**Fig. 4:** Evolution over time of top pattern quality and its bounding guarantee provided by RefineAndMine. Execution time is reported in log scale. The last figure reports that the exhaustive enumeration algorithm was not able to finish within 2 hours.
We illustrate in Fig. 5 the behavior of RefineAndMine in terms of finding diverse set of high quality patterns covering different parts of the dataset. To evaluate how quickly the devised approach finds a diverse patterns set, we run the exhaustive approach over the benchmark datasets to constitute a top-k diverse patterns set heuristically as following: the patterns extracted by the exhaustive search algorithm are sorted according to the quality measure and the best pattern is kept in the returned top-k list. Next, the complete patterns list are iterated over, and the top-k list is augmented by a pattern if and only if its similarity with all the patterns of the current content of the top-k list is lower than a given threshold (a Jaccard index between extents). This process is interrupted if the desired number of patterns of the top-k list is reached or no remaining dissimilar pattern is available. Similar post-processing techniques were used by [22,5]. Once this ground truth top-k list is constituted over some benchmark dataset, we run RefineAndMine and measure the specificity quantity of the obtained results set $Sol$ with the top-k list. Specificity metric is rewritten in eq. 3 to accommodate the desired evaluation objective of these experiments. Still, it remains upper-bounded by the general formula of specificity given in Theorem 2.

To evaluate at what extent the visited patterns by RefineAndMine well-cover the ground-truth patterns which are scattered over different parts of some input dataset. We report in Fig. 5 both specificity and its bounding guarantee specificity, as well as, a diversity metric defined in eq. 4. Such a metric was defined in [5] to evaluate the ability of an approximate algorithm to retrieve a given ground-truth (i.e. diversified top-k discriminant patterns set). This diversity metric relies on a similarity rather than a distance (as in specificity), and is equal to 1 when all patterns of the top-k list are fully discovered.

$$\text{specificity}(\text{top-k}, Sol) = \sup_{d \in \text{top-k}} \inf_{c \in Sol} \frac{|\text{ext}(d) \Delta \text{ext}(c)|}{|G|}$$ (3)

$$\text{diversity}(\text{top-k}, Sol) = \text{avg}_{d \in \text{top-k}} \sup_{c \in Sol} (\text{Jaccard}(\text{ext}(d), \text{ext}(c)))$$ (4)

Fig. 5: Efficiency of RefineAndMine in terms of retrieving a diverse patterns set. Execution time is reported in log scale. The ground-truth for each benchmark dataset corresponds to the obtained Top10 diversified patterns set with a similarity threshold of 0.25 and a minimum $tpr$ of 15%.
In most configurations, we notice that \texttt{RefineAndMine} is able to uncover approximately 80% (given by \textit{diversity}) of the ground truth’s patterns in less than 20% of the time required by the exhaustive search algorithm. For instance, in ABALONE\_02\_M, we observe that after 2 seconds (12% of the required time for the exhaustive algorithm), the patterns outputted by \texttt{RefineAndMine} approximate 92% of the ground truth. Moreover, we observe that the specificity and \textit{specificity} decrease quickly with time, guaranteeing a high level of diversity.

For a comparative study, we choose to compare \texttt{RefineAndMine} with the closest approach following the same paradigm (anytime) in the literature, that is the recent \texttt{MCTS4DM} technique \cite{5}. \texttt{MCTS4DM} is depicted by the authors as an algorithm which enables the anytime discovery of a diverse patterns set of high quality. While \texttt{MCTS4DM} ensures interruptibility and an exhaustive exploration if given enough time and memory budget, it does not ensures any theoretical guarantees on the distance from optimality and on the diversity. We report in Fig. 6 a comparative evaluation between the two techniques. To realize this study, we investigate the ability of the two methods in retrieving the ground truth patterns, this by evaluating the quality of their respective diversified top-k lists against the ground truth using the diversity metric (eq. 4). We observe that \texttt{RefineAndMine} outperforms \texttt{MCTS4DM} both in terms of finding the best pattern, and of uncovering diverse patterns set of high qualities. This is partially due to the fact that our method is specifically tailored for mining discriminant patterns in numerical data, in contrast to \texttt{MCTS4DM} which is agnostic of the interestingness measure and the description language. Note that, to enable a fair comparison of the two approaches, we report the full time spent by the methods including the overhead induced by the post-computation of the diversified top-k patterns set.

![Graphs showing comparative experiments between RefineAndMine (R&M) and MCTS4DM. Execution time is reported in log scale. The ground-truth for each benchmark dataset corresponds to the obtained Top10 diversified patterns set with a similarity threshold of 0.25 and no minimum support size threshold.](image-url)
7 Discussions and Conclusion

We introduced a novel anytime pattern mining technique for uncovering discriminant patterns in numerical data. We took a close look to discriminant interestingness measures to focus on hyper-rectangles in the dataset fostering the presence of some class. By leveraging the properties of the quality measures, we defined a guarantee on the accuracy of RefineAndMine in approximating the optimal solution which improves over time. We also presented a guarantee on the specificity of RefineAndMine—which is agnostic of the quality measure—ensuring its diversity and completeness. Empirical evaluation gives evidence of the effectiveness both in terms of finding the optimal solution (w.r.t. the quality measure $\phi$) and revealing local optimas located in different parts of the data.

This work paves the way for many improvements. RefineAndMine can be initialized with more sophisticated discretization techniques [219]. We have to investigate additional cut-points selection strategies. While we considered here discriminant pattern mining, the enumeration process (i.e. successive refinement of discretizations) can be tailored to various other quality measures in subgroup discovery. For example, the accuracy bound guarantee definition can be extended to handle several other traditional measures such as Mutual Information, $\chi^2$ and Gini split by exploiting their (quasi)-convexity properties w.r.t. $tpr$ and $fpr$ variables [261]. Other improvements include the adaptation of RefineAndMine for high-dimensional datasets and its generalization for handling additional types of attributes (categorical, itemsets, etc.). The latter is facilitated by the generic notions from Section 5 and the recent works of Buzmakov et al. [6].

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References

A Appendix - Proofs

A.1 Proof of Proposition 1

Proof. By construction, \((D_C, \sqsubseteq)\) is a closure system (preserve meet) on \((D, \sqsubseteq)\).

Indeed, let \(d_1\) and \(d_2\) be in \(D_C\) we have \(\exists S_1, S_2 \subseteq d(C)\) such that \(d_1 = \bigsqcup S_1\) and \(d_2 = \bigsqcup S_2\). Thus:

\[
d_1 \sqcap d_2 = (\bigsqcup S_1) \sqcap (\bigsqcup S_2) = \bigsqcup (S_1 \sqcup S_2) \in D_C
\]

since \(S_1 \sqcup S_2 \subseteq d(C)\).

Let us show now that \((D_C, \sqsubseteq)\) is also a kernel system (preserve join) on \((D, \sqsubseteq)\).

We have \(C = (C_k)_1 \leq k \leq p\). Consider the following case of \(d_1\) and \(d_2\):

\[
d_j = \prod_{k=1}^p I^j_k \text{ with } I^j_k = [a^j_k, b^j_k], j \in \{1, 2\} \text{ and } a^j_k < b^j_k \in C_k
\]

We have:

\[
d_1 \sqcup d_2 = \prod_{k=1}^p (\sup(a^1_k, a^2_k), \inf(b^1_k, b^2_k))
\]

Clearly, \(d_1 \sqcup d_2 \in D_C\), since the left bound \(\sup(a^1_k, a^2_k)\) and the right bound \(\inf(b^1_k, b^2_k)\) remains in \(C^k\) for all \(k \in p\). Note that if \(\sup(a^1_k, a^2_k) > \inf(b^1_k, b^2_k)\) for at least one \(k \in \{1..p\}\), then \(d_1 \sqcup d_2 = \top = \emptyset \in D_C\). The two remaining cases of interval where we use \(+\infty\) and \(-\infty\) can be handled in, almost, the same way.

We conclude that \((D_C, \sqsubseteq)\) is a finite (complete) sub-lattice of \((D, \sqsubseteq)\) (since any finite lattice is by definition complete).

The second part of the proposition is straight-forward since both posets \((D_{C1}, \sqsubseteq)\) and \((D_{C2}, \sqsubseteq)\) are complete sub-lattice of the same complete lattice \((D, \sqsubseteq)\) and \(D_{C1} \subseteq D_{C2}\) \((d(C_1) \subseteq d(C_2)\) since \(C_1 \subseteq C_2)\).

\[\square\]

A.2 Proof of Proposition 2

Proof. Proposition 2 is a small result from Theorem 4.1. Since \((D_i, \sqsubseteq)\) is a complete sub-lattice of \((D, \sqsubseteq)\) then the mappings \(\psi^*_i\) and \(\overline{\psi^*_i}\) defined below

\[
\psi^*_i(d) : D \rightarrow D, d \mapsto \psi^*_i(d) \quad \text{and} \quad \overline{\psi^*_i}(d) : D \rightarrow D, d \mapsto \overline{\psi^*_i}(d)
\]

are respectively join-preserving closure (thus extensive \(d \sqsubseteq \psi^*_i(d)\)) and meet-preserving kernel (thus contractive \(\overline{\psi^*_i}(d) \sqsubseteq d\)) operators on \((D, \sqsubseteq)\) such that they ranges in \(D_C\) (i.e. \(\psi^*_i[D] = \{\psi^*_i(d) \mid d \in D_i\} = D_i\) and \(\overline{\psi^*_i}[D] = D_i\)). Note that \(D_i\) is the set of fix-points of both mappings according to Theorem 4.1.

Recalling that \(\text{ext}\) is order-reversing concludes the proof.

\[\square\]
A.3 Proof of Proposition 3

Proof. Let \( f : \mathcal{D}_i \to \mathcal{D}_i \) be a function. We want to show the following property:

\[
(\forall d \in \mathcal{D}) \ d \sqsubseteq f(\overline{\psi_i}(d)) \iff (\forall c \in \mathcal{D}_i) \ \text{core}_i(c) \sqsubseteq f(c)
\]

We start by implication (\( \iff \Rightarrow \)). Let \( d \in \mathcal{D} \), we have:

\[
\text{core}_i(\overline{\psi_i}(d)) = \overline{\psi_i} \left( \bigsqcup \left\{ x \in \mathcal{D} \mid \overline{\psi_i}(x) = \overline{\psi_i}(d) \right\} \right)
\]

Clearly, we have \( d \in \bigsqcup \left\{ x \in \mathcal{D} \mid \overline{\psi_i}(x) = \overline{\psi_i}(d) \right\} \) by reflexivity of equality. Thus,

\[
d \sqsubseteq \overline{\psi_i}(d) \sqsubseteq \overline{\psi_i} \left( \bigsqcup \left\{ x \in \mathcal{D} \mid \overline{\psi_i}(x) = \overline{\psi_i}(d) \right\} \right) = \text{core}_i(\overline{\psi_i}(d))
\]

Since from the hypothesis \( \text{core}_i(\overline{\psi_i}(d)) \sqsubseteq f(\overline{\psi_i}(d)) \), we conclude that \( d \sqsubseteq f(\overline{\psi_i}(d)) \).

It remains to show the other implication (\( \iff \Leftarrow \)). Let \( c \in \mathcal{D}_i \) and let be the set \( S_c = \{ x \in \mathcal{D} \mid \overline{\psi_i}(x) = c \} \). Since, from the hypothesis, \( \forall x \in S_c : x \sqsubseteq f(\overline{\psi_i}(x)) = f(c) \) then \( f(c) \) is an upper bound of \( S_c \) and the join is the smallest upper bound by definition):

\[
\bigsqcup S_c \sqsubseteq f(c)
\]

Since \( f(c) \in \mathcal{D}_i \) we have \( \overline{\psi_i}(f(c)) = f(c) \). We obtain by monotonicity of \( \overline{\psi_i} \):

\[
\text{core}_i(c) = \overline{\psi_i} \left( \bigsqcup S_c \right) \sqsubseteq \overline{\psi_i}(f(c)) = f(c)
\]

This concludes the demonstration. \( \Box \)

A.4 Proof of Theorem 1

Before giving the proof of the theorem, we formulate below the following three Lemmas:

**Lemma 1.** The richer \((\mathcal{D}_i, \sqsubseteq)\) is, the more constraining are the surrounding approximations. Formally: \( \forall d \in \mathcal{D} : \overline{\psi_i}(d) \sqsubseteq \overline{\psi_{i+1}}(d) \sqsubseteq d \sqsubseteq \psi_{i+1}(d) \sqsubseteq \psi_i(d) \).

Generally speaking: \( \overline{\psi_i} \circ \psi_{i+1} = \overline{\psi_i} \) and \( \psi_i \circ \psi_{i+1} = \psi_i \).

**Proof.** Without loss of generality, let \( i = 1 \). Let us show before that \( \overline{\psi_1}(\overline{\psi_2}(d)) = \overline{\psi_1}(d) \) and \( \overline{\psi_1}(\psi_2(d)) = \psi_1(d) \) for all \( d \in \mathcal{D} \).

Since \( \mathcal{D}_1 \subseteq \mathcal{D}_2 \) then for all \( x \in \mathcal{D}_1 \) and for all \( d \in \mathcal{D} \) we have (since \( \overline{\psi_2} \) and \( \psi_2 \) come respectively from kernel and closure operators - See previous proof):

\[
x \sqsubseteq \overline{\psi_2}(d) \iff x \sqsubseteq d \quad \text{and} \quad \overline{\psi_2}(d) \sqsubseteq x \iff d \sqsubseteq x
\]
Thus:
\[
\psi_1(\psi_2(d)) = \bigcup \left\{ x \in D_1 \mid x \subseteq \psi_2(d) \right\} = \bigcup \left\{ x \in D_1 \mid x \subseteq d \right\} = \psi_1(d) \\
\psi_1(\psi_2(d)) = \bigcap \left\{ x \in D_1 \mid \psi_2(d) \subseteq x \right\} = \bigcap \left\{ x \in D_1 \mid d \subseteq x \right\} = \psi_1(d)
\]

The first part of the proposition is a straightforward corollary of the first properties. Indeed, since \( \psi_1 \) and \( \psi_2 \) are respectively contractive and extensive, we conclude:
\[
\psi_1(d) = \psi_1(\psi_2(d)) \subseteq \psi_2(d) \quad \text{and} \quad \psi_2(d) \subseteq \psi_1(\psi_2(d)) = \psi_1(d)
\]

Thus:
\[
\psi_1(d) \subseteq \psi_2(d) \subseteq d \subseteq \psi_2(d) \subseteq \psi_1(d).
\]

\textbf{Lemma 2.} \( \forall d \in D : \operatorname{core}_{i+1}(\psi_{i+1}(d)) \subseteq \operatorname{core}_i(\psi_i(d)) \). That is, the core of the upper approximation is less restrictive in richer spaces.

\textit{Proof.} Without loss of generality, let \( i = 1 \). Let \( d \in D \), we need to show that \( \operatorname{core}_2(\psi_2(d)) \subseteq \operatorname{core}_1(\psi_1(d)) \). According to Lemma 1 we have \( \psi_1 \circ \psi_2 = \psi_1 \), thus:
\[
\left\{ x \in D \mid \psi_2(x) = \psi_2(d) \right\} \subseteq \left\{ x \in D \mid \psi_1(x) = \psi_1(d) \right\}
\]

Thus:
\[
\bigcup \left\{ x \in D \mid \psi_2(x) = \psi_2(d) \right\} \subseteq \bigcup \left\{ x \in D \mid \psi_1(x) = \psi_1(d) \right\}
\]

Since \( \psi_2 \) is monotonic, we obtain:
\[
\psi_2 \left( \bigcup \left\{ x \in D \mid \psi_2(x) = \psi_2(d) \right\} \right) \subseteq \psi_2 \left( \bigcup \left\{ x \in D \mid \psi_1(x) = \psi_1(d) \right\} \right)
\]

Since \( \psi_1 \) is extensive and \( \psi_1 \circ \psi_2 = \psi_1 \), we obtain:
\[
\psi_2 \left( \bigcup \left\{ x \in D \mid \psi_2(x) = \psi_2(d) \right\} \right) \subseteq \psi_1 \left( \bigcup \left\{ x \in D \mid \psi_1(x) = \psi_1(d) \right\} \right)
\]

We conclude that:
\[
\operatorname{core}_2(\psi_2(d)) \subseteq \operatorname{core}_1(\psi_1(d))
\]

This ends the demonstration. \( \Box \)

\textbf{Lemma 3.} Using the same notation of Theorem 1, we have:
\[
\forall d \in D : \phi(d) \leq \phi^* \left( \text{tp} \left( \psi_1(d) \right), \text{fpr} \left( \operatorname{core}_i(\psi_i(d)) \right) \right)
\]

\textit{Proof.} By application of Proposition 3 we have with \( c = \psi_i(d) \in D_i \):
\[
c \subseteq d \subseteq \operatorname{core}_i(c)
\]
Thus, since $\text{ext}$ operator is order-reversing we obtain:

$$\text{ext}(\text{core}_i(c)) \subseteq \text{ext}(d) \subseteq \text{ext}(c)$$

Thus, since $\text{tpr}$ and $\text{fpr}$ increase with the extent. We conclude that:

$$\text{tpr}(\text{core}_i(c)) \leq \text{tpr}(d) \leq \text{tpr}(c)$$

$$\text{fpr}(\text{core}_i(c)) \leq \text{fpr}(d) \leq \text{fpr}(c)$$

Since $\phi$ is an objective discriminant quality measure we conclude that:

$$\phi(d) = \phi^*(\text{tpr}(d), \text{fpr}(d)) \leq \phi^*(\text{tpr}(c), \text{fpr}(d)) \leq \phi^*(\text{tpr}(c), \text{fpr}(\text{core}_i(c)))$$

This ends the demonstration. $\square$

**Theorem 1 proof.** Below the proof. Without loss of generality $i = 1$:

*Proof.* According to lemma 3 and by considering $d$ a $\text{cotp}$ pattern in $\text{int}(|\psi(G^+)|$, we have:

$$\phi(d) \leq \phi^*\left(\text{tpr}\left(\overline{\psi_1}(d)\right), \text{fpr}\left(\text{core}_1\left(\overline{\psi_1}(d)\right)\right)\right)$$

Since $\overline{\psi_1}(d)$ is a $\text{cotp}$ pattern induced by $(D_1, \subseteq)$, we have:

$$\sup_{d \in \text{int}[|\psi(G^+)|]} \phi(d) \leq \sup_{c \in \text{int}[|\psi(G^+)|]} \phi^*\left(\text{tpr}\left(c\right), \text{fpr}\left(\text{core}_1\left(c\right)\right)\right)$$

The set $\overline{\psi_1}[\text{int}[|\psi(G^+)|]]$ represent the set of $\text{cotp}$ patterns in $D_1$, that is $\text{int}_1[S_1]$ ($S_1$ represents the set of $\text{cotp}$ extents induced by $D_1$), we obtain:

$$\sup_{d \in \text{int}[|\psi(G^+)|]} \phi(d) \leq \sup_{c \in \text{int}_1[S_1]} \phi^*\left(\text{tpr}\left(c\right), \text{fpr}\left(\text{core}_1\left(c\right)\right)\right)$$

Thus, since the left quantity is the same as $\sup_{A \in R} \phi(A)$, we subtract from both side the quantity $\sup_{B \in S_1} \phi(B) = \sup_{c \in \text{int}_1[S_1]} \phi^*(\text{tpr}(c), \text{fpr}(c))$. Hence:

$$\sup_{A \in R} \phi(A) - \sup_{B \in S_1} \phi(B) \leq \sup_{c \in \text{int}_1[S_1]} \left[\phi^*(\text{tpr}(c), \text{fpr}(\text{core}_1(c))) - \phi(c)\right]$$

That is:

$$\text{accuracy}_\phi(S_1) = \sup_{c \in \text{int}_1[S_1]} \left[\phi^*(\text{tpr}(c), \text{fpr}(\text{core}_1(c))) - \phi^*(\text{tpr}(c), \text{fpr}(c))\right]$$

It remains to show that $\text{accuracy}$ is “order-reversing”. From Lemma 1 and Lemma 2 we have for all $d \in D$:

$$\overline{\psi_1}(d) \sqsubseteq \overline{\psi_2}(d) \sqsubseteq d \sqsubseteq \text{core}_2(\overline{\psi_2}(d)) \sqsubseteq \text{core}_1(\overline{\psi_1}(d))$$
We conclude that:

\[
\phi^*(\text{tp}r(\bar{\psi}_2(d)), \text{fpr}(\text{core}_2(\bar{\psi}_2(d)))) \leq \phi^*(\text{tp}r(\bar{\psi}_1(d)), \text{fpr}(\text{core}_1(\bar{\psi}_1(d))))
\]

Particularly, for \(c \in \mathcal{D}_2\) (\(c\) is a fix-point for \(\bar{\psi}_2\)) we have:

\[
\phi^*(\text{tp}r(c), \text{fpr}(\text{core}_2(c))) \leq \phi^*(\text{tp}r(\bar{\psi}_1(c)), \text{fpr}(\text{core}_1(\bar{\psi}_1(c))))
\]

We conclude that:

\[
\sup_{c \in \text{int}_2[S_2]} \phi^*(\text{tp}r(c), \text{fpr}(\text{core}_2(c))) \leq \sup_{c \in \text{int}_1[S_1]} \phi^*(\text{tp}r(c), \text{fpr}(\text{core}_1(c)))
\]

On the other hand, since \(\mathcal{D}_1 \subseteq \mathcal{D}_2\), we have:

\[-\sup_{c \in \mathcal{D}_2} \phi(c) \leq -\sup_{c \in \mathcal{D}_1} \phi(c)\]

that is:

\[-\sup_{c \in \text{int}_2[S_2]} \phi(c) \leq -\sup_{c \in \text{int}_1[S_1]} \phi(c)\]

We conclude that:

\[
\text{accuracy}_{\phi}(S_2) \leq \text{accuracy}_{\phi}(S_1)
\]

This concludes the demonstration. \(\square\)

### A.5 Proof of Theorem 2

Before giving a demonstration to the theorem, below a necessary lemma:

**Lemma 4.** Using the same notation of Theorem 2, we have:

\[
\forall d \in \text{int}_{\phi}(\mathcal{G}^+) : \inf_{c \in \text{int}_1[S_1]} \left( \frac{|\text{ext}(d) \Delta \text{ext}(c)|}{|\mathcal{G}|} \right) \leq \frac{|\text{ext}(\bar{\psi}_1(d)) - |\text{ext}(\text{core}_1^+(\bar{\psi}_1(d)))|}{2 \cdot |\mathcal{G}|}
\]

*Proof.* Since the upper approximations (which is a \(\text{cotp}\) in \(\mathbb{P}_i\) and thus is in \(\text{int}_1[S_1]\)) and the closure of the positive of the core (it is in \(\text{int}_1[S_1]\)) are already good approximations for \(d\) (but not necessarily the bests), let \(u = \bar{\psi}_1(d)\), we have \(\text{ext}(d) \subseteq \text{ext}(u)\). On the other hand, since \(d \subseteq \text{core}_1(u) \subseteq \text{core}_1^+(u)\) (Proposition 3), we have \(\text{ext}(\text{core}_1^+(u)) \subseteq \text{ext}(d)\). Thus, we have \(|\text{ext}(d) \Delta \text{ext}(u)| = |\text{ext}(u)| - |\text{ext}(d)|\) and in the other hand \(|\text{ext}(d) \Delta \text{ext}(\text{core}_1^+(u))| = |\text{ext}(d)| - |\text{ext}(\text{core}_1^+(u))|\). We obtain:

\[
\inf_{c \in \text{int}_1[S_1]} |\text{ext}(d) \Delta \text{ext}(c)| \leq |\text{ext}(u)| - |\text{ext}(d)|
\]

\[
\inf_{c \in \text{int}_1[S_1]} |\text{ext}(d) \Delta \text{ext}(c)| \leq |\text{ext}(d)| - |\text{ext}(\text{core}_1^+(u))|
\]
We conclude:

\[ 2 \times \inf_{c \in \text{int}_i(S_i)} |\text{ext}(d) \Delta \text{ext}(c)| \leq |\text{ext}(u)| - |\text{ext}(\text{core}_i^+(u))| \]

Since \(|G|\) is a constant, we obtain (with \(u = \overline{\psi}_i(d)\)):

\[ \inf_{c \in \text{int}_i(S_i)} \left( \frac{|\text{ext}(d) \Delta \text{ext}(c)|}{|G|} \right) \leq \frac{|\text{ext}(u)| - |\text{ext}(\text{core}_i^+(u))|}{2 \cdot |G|} \]

This ends the demonstration. \(\square\)

**Theorem 2 proof.** Without loss of generality, let \(i = 1\).

*Proof.* According to Lemma 4, we have for a relevant (thus \text{cotp}) extent \(A \in \mathcal{R} (\text{int}_1(A) \in \text{int}_1[\psi(G^+)])\) and thus \(\text{int}_1(A) \in \text{int}_1[S_1]\):

\[ \inf_{B \in S_1} \left( \frac{|A \Delta B|}{|G|} \right) \leq \frac{|\text{ext}(\text{int}_1(A))| - |\text{ext}(\text{core}_1^+(\text{int}_1(A)))|}{2 \cdot |G|} \]

We conclude thus:

\[ \sup_{A \in \mathcal{R}} \inf_{B \in S_1} \left( \frac{|A \Delta B|}{|G|} \right) \leq \sup_{c \in \text{int}_1(S_1)} \frac{|\text{ext}(c)| - |\text{ext}(\text{core}_1^+(c))|}{2 \cdot |G|} \]

That is to say:

\[ \text{specificity}(S_1) = \sup_{c \in \text{int}_1(S_1)} \frac{|\text{ext}(c)| - |\text{ext}(\text{core}_1^+(c))|}{2 \cdot |G|} \]

It remains to show that \(\text{specificity}\) is also \text{order reversing}. From Lemma 1 and Lemma 2, we have for all \(d \in \mathcal{D}\):

\[ \overline{\psi}_1(d) \subseteq \overline{\psi}_2(d) \subseteq d \subseteq \text{core}_2(\overline{\psi}_2(d)) \subseteq \text{core}_1(\overline{\psi}_1(d)) \]

We can conclude directly using Lemma 4 (recall that \(\text{ext}\) is an order reversing) that for all \(d \in \mathcal{D}\):

\[ \frac{|\text{ext}(\overline{\psi}_2(d))| - |\text{ext}(\text{core}_2(\overline{\psi}_2(d)))|}{2 \cdot |G|} \leq \frac{|\text{ext}(\overline{\psi}_1(d))| - |\text{ext}(\text{core}_1(\overline{\psi}_1(d)))|}{2 \cdot |G|} \]

Particularity, for \(c \in \mathcal{D}_2\) (\(c\) is a fix-point for \(\overline{\psi}_2\)) we obtain:

\[ \frac{|\text{ext}(c)| - |\text{ext}(\text{core}_2(c))|}{2 \cdot |G|} \leq \frac{|\text{ext}(\overline{\psi}_1(c))| - |\text{ext}(\text{core}_1(\overline{\psi}_1(c)))|}{2 \cdot |G|} \]

We conclude that:

\[ \sup_{c \in \text{int}_2[S_2]} \frac{|\text{ext}(c)| - |\text{ext}(\text{core}_2^+(c))|}{2 \cdot |G|} \leq \sup_{c \in \text{int}_1(S_1)} \frac{|\text{ext}(c)| - |\text{ext}(\text{core}_1^+(c))|}{2 \cdot |G|} \]

In other word:

\[ \overline{\text{specificity}}(S_2) \leq \overline{\text{specificity}}(S_1) \]

This concludes the demonstration. \(\square\)
Additional Experiments

This section provides additional materials on the performed empirical study to evaluate the effectiveness of our proposed method. For the purpose of reproducibility, we maintain a companion page \(^1\) which includes all scripts utilized for experiments. For \textsc{MCTS4DM} scripts please refer to its corresponding companion page \(^2\).

Note that, for some datasets (CMC and AUTOS), we observe that the exhaustive algorithm execution ends before \textsc{RefineAndMine} guarantees the retrieval of the optimal solution (i.e., second milestone), this stems from the fact that we considered mainly ordinal attributes (i.e., having a small number of dif-

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Dataset & num rows & intervals & class & \(\alpha\) & Dataset & num rows & intervals & class & \(\alpha\) \\
\hline
ABALONE\_02\_M & 2 & 4177 & 56 \times 10^6 & M & 0.37 & CREDITA\_02\_+ & 2 & 666 & 1 \times 10^9 & + & 0.45 \\
ABALONE\_03\_M & 3 & 4177 & 74 \times 10^6 & M & 0.37 & CREDITA\_03\_+ & 3 & 666 & 11 \times 10^12 & + & 0.45 \\
ABALONE\_04\_M & 4 & 4177 & 220 \times 10^{15} & M & 0.37 & CREDITA\_04\_+ & 4 & 666 & 3 \times 10^{15} & + & 0.45 \\
ABALONE\_05\_M & 5 & 4177 & 252 \times 10^{21} & M & 0.37 & GLASS\_02\_1 & 2 & 214 & 161 \times 10^9 & 1 & 0.33 \\
AUTOS\_05\_0 & 5 & 199 & 46 \times 10^{12} & 0 & 0.32 & GLASS\_04\_1 & 4 & 214 & 5 \times 10^{15} & 1 & 0.33 \\
AUTOS\_06\_0 & 6 & 199 & 786 \times 10^{15} & 0 & 0.32 & GLASS\_06\_1 & 4 & 214 & 97 \times 10^{21} & 1 & 0.33 \\
BREAST\_07\_4 & 7 & 683 & 1 \times 10^{12} & 4 & 0.35 & HABERMAN\_03\_2 & 3 & 306 & 47 \times 10^9 & 2 & 0.26 \\
BREAST\_09\_4 & 9 & 683 & 3 \times 10^{15} & 4 & 0.35 & SONAR\_03\_R & 3 & 208 & 4 \times 10^{12} & R & 0.47 \\
CMC\_05\_1 & 4 & 1473 & 7 \times 10^6 & 1 & 0.43 & SONAR\_04\_R & 4 & 208 & 78 \times 10^{15} & R & 0.47 \\
CMC\_06\_1 & 5 & 1473 & 21 \times 10^6 & 1 & 0.43 & SONAR\_05\_R & 5 & 208 & 1 \times 10^{21} & R & 0.47 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Benchmark datasets and their characteristics: number of numerical attributes, number of rows, number of all possible intervals, the considered class and its prevalence} \end{table}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\begin{subfigure}{0.45\textwidth}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{time_abalone_02_m}
\end{subfigure} \hfill
\begin{subfigure}{0.45\textwidth}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{time_abalone_03_m}
\end{subfigure}
\caption{Evolution over time of top pattern quality and its bounding guarantee provided by \textsc{RefineAndMine} (Part I).}
\end{figure}

\(^1\)https://github.com/Adnene93/RefineAndMine
\(^2\)https://github.com/guillaume-bosc/MCTS4DM
ferent values) in the above datasets. Hence involving a small number of relevant cuts making the exhaustive algorithm already a good option, since the latter makes use of the preprocessing phase computing the relevant cuts.

\[\text{Fig. 8: Evolution over time of top pattern quality and its bounding guarantee provided by \texttt{RefineAndMine} (Part II).}\]
Fig. 9: Efficiency of **RefineAndMine** in terms of retrieving a diverse patterns set.
Fig. 10: Comparative experiments between RefineAndMine ($R&M$) and MCTS4DM
C Preliminary Notions on Order Theory

This appendix, largely inspired by [28] and [10] books, gives basic definitions and results from order theory. For any set \( P \), \( \mathcal{P}(P) \) denotes the powerset of \( P \). For a function \( f : E \to F \), the image of set \( A \subseteq E \) is denoted \( f[A] = \{ f(a) \mid a \in A \} \).

C.1 Basic definitions

Definition 2 (Poset). A partial order on a non-empty set \( P \) is a binary relation \( \leq \) on \( P \) that is reflexive (\( \forall x \in P : x \leq x \)), transitive (\( \forall x, y, z \in P : x \leq y, y \leq z \Rightarrow x \leq z \)), and antisymmetric (\( \forall x, y \in P : x \leq y \) and \( y \leq x \Rightarrow x = y \)). The pair \( (P, \leq) \) is called a partially ordered set or poset. Two elements \( x \) and \( y \) from \( P \) are said to be comparable if \( x \leq y \) or \( y \leq x \). Otherwise, they are said to be incomparable and we denote \( x \parallel y \).

Note 1. In what follows \( (P, \leq) \) denotes a poset and \( S \subseteq P \) denotes an arbitrary subset of \( P \).

Definition 3 (Direct neighbor). Let \( a, b \in P \), element \( a \) is said to be direct lower neighbor of element \( b \) (dually, element \( b \) is called direct upper neighbor of element \( a \)) and we write \( a \prec b \) iff:

\[
 a < b \quad \text{and} \quad \nexists c \in P : a < c < b
\]

Note that \( < \) is simply the relation \( \leq \) from which we omit reflexivity (i.e. \( a < b \iff a \leq b, a \neq b \)).

Note 2. Any finite poset \( (P, \leq) \) can be represented by a line diagram (Hasse diagram) where:

- Elements of \( P \) are represented by small symbols in the plane.
- If \( a, b \in P \) and \( a \prec b \) (a lower neighbor of \( b \)), the symbol corresponding to \( a \) is depicted below the symbol corresponding to \( b \) (order is read bottom-up) and a segment of line is drawn between them.

Fig. 11 (1) depicts the Hasse diagram of the poset \( (\mathcal{P}(\{a, b, c\}), \subseteq) \).

Definition 4 (Upper and Lower bound). Let \( p \) be an element in \( P \). \( p \) is said to be an upper bound of \( S \) if \( \forall s \in S : s \leq p \). Dually, \( p \) is said to be a lower bound of \( S \) if \( \forall s \in S : p \leq s \). The set of all upper (resp. lower) bounds of \( S \) in \( P \) is denoted by \( S^u \) (resp. \( S^l \)). They are given by:

\[
 S^u = \{ p \in P \mid (\forall s \in S) s \leq p \} \quad S^l = \{ p \in P \mid (\forall s \in S) p \leq s \}
\]

Note that, particularly, \( \emptyset^l = \emptyset^u = P \).
Definition 5 (Smallest and Greatest element). An element \( s^* \in S \) is said to be the \textbf{smallest} element in \( S \) iff
\[
\forall s \in S : s^* \leq s
\]
Dually, An element \( s^* \in S \) is said to be the \textbf{greatest} element in \( S \) iff
\[
\forall s \in S : s \leq s^*
\]
The smallest and the greatest elements in \( S \) are unique if they exist.

Definition 6 (Supremum and infimum). If the set of upper bounds \( S^u \) has it smallest element it is called the \textbf{supremum} or the \textbf{join} of \( S \) and it is denoted by \( \sup(S) \) or \( \vee S \) (\( = \bigwedge S^u \)). Dually, if the set of lower bounds \( S^l \) has the greatest element, it is called the \textbf{infimum} or the \textbf{meet} of \( S \) and it is denoted by \( \inf(S) \) or \( \bigwedge S \) (\( = \bigvee S^l \)).

Definition 7 (Lattice). A poset \((P, \leq)\) is said to be a \textbf{meet-semilattice} (resp. \textbf{join-semilattice}) if for all \( x, y \in P \) the \textbf{infimum} (resp. \textbf{supremum}) of \( \{x, y\} \) exists in \( P \). A poset \( P \) is said to be a \textbf{lattice} if it is both \textbf{meet-semilattice} and \textbf{join-semilattice}. A \textbf{lattice} \((P, \leq)\) is said to be \textbf{complete} if for any subset \( S \subseteq P \) has it meet \( \bigwedge S \) \( \in S \), and a join \( \bigvee S \) \( \in P \) (including the empty set).

Note 3. Any \textbf{finite lattice} is by definition \textbf{complete}. Moreover, any \textbf{complete lattice} \((P, \leq)\) is \textbf{bounded}. That is the bottom element \( \bigwedge P = \bigvee \emptyset = \bot \) and \( \bigvee P = \bigwedge \emptyset = \top \) exists in \( P \). Note also that for \( a, b \in P \) with \((P, \leq)\) a lattice, \( \wedge\{a, b\} = a \wedge b \) and \( \vee\{a, b\} = a \vee b \) are seen as \textbf{associative}, \textbf{commutative} and \textbf{idempotent} binary operator (i.e. lattice are seen also as algebraic structures).

Note 4. For any (finite or infinite) set \( E \), the poset \((\wp(E), \subseteq)\) is a \textbf{complete lattice} and it is called the \textbf{Boolean lattice}. The \textbf{meet} is the set \textbf{intersection} while the \textbf{join} is the set \textbf{union}. For instance, Fig. 11 (1) depicts the Hasse diagram of the boolean lattice \((\wp(\{a, b, c\}), \subseteq)\). We have \( \{\{a, c\}, \{a, b\}\}^u = \emptyset, \{a\} \) and \( \{\{a, c\}, \{a, b\}\}^l = \{\{a, b, c\}\} \). Therefore \( \bigwedge\{\{a, c\}, \{a, b\}\} = \{a\} \) while \( \bigvee\{\{a, c\}, \{a, b\}\} = \{a, b, c\} \).

C.2 Closure and Kernel Systems

For any subset \( S \subseteq P \), \((S, \leq)\) forms a \textbf{sub-poset} of \((P, \leq)\) (where the relationship \( \leq \) is restricted in \( S \)). However, not any sub-poset \((S, \leq)\) keeps properties of it parent poset \((P, \leq)\). That is, a sub-poset of a lattice could be arbitrary (not a lattice). Moreover, even if \((S, \leq)\) is a complete lattice. It could have different meet and join than its parent poset. Fig. 11 shows three examples of sub-poset of the boolean lattice \((\wp(\{a, b, c, d\}), \subseteq)\) (from the second left to the right). The second (2) is a sub-poset that is clearly neither a meet-semilattice nor a join-semilattice. The third (3) is a sub-poset that is a lattice, however the new meet and the new join are different from set intersection and set union. Indeed, \( \{a, b\} \wedge \{b, c\} = \emptyset \) and \( \{a, b\} \vee \{b, c\} = \{a, b, c, d\} \). Finally, the forth (4) sub-poset inherit both meet and join. We say that such the sub-poset is a \textbf{sub-lattice}. 
Definition 8 (Closure and Kernel System). Let \((P, \leq)\) be a complete lattice such that its meet is \(\bigwedge P\) and its join is \(\bigvee P\). Let \(S \subseteq P\) be a subset. Poset \((S, \leq)\) is said to be a:

- **Closure system** or a meet-structure on \((P, \leq)\) iff:

  \[
  \forall A \subseteq S : \bigwedge_P A \in S
  \]

  Poset \((S, \leq)\) is a **complete lattice** where the meet and the join are given by:

  \[
  \forall A \subseteq S : \bigvee_S A = \bigwedge_P \left\{ s \in S \mid (\forall a \in A) a \leq s \right\} \\
  \bigwedge_S A = \bigwedge_P A \quad \top_P \in S
  \]

- **Kernel system** or a join-structure on \((P, \leq)\) iff:

  \[
  \forall A \subseteq S : \bigvee_P A \in S
  \]

  Poset \((S, \leq)\) is a **complete lattice** where the meet and the join are given by:

  \[
  \forall A \subseteq S : \bigwedge_S A = \bigvee_P \left\{ s \in S \mid (\forall a \in A) s \leq a \right\} \\
  \bigvee_S A = \bigvee_P A \quad \bot_P \in S
  \]

- **Complete sublattice** of \((P, \leq)\) if it is both closure and kernel system. That is both arbitrary meets and arbitrary joins are preserved. Note that top and bottom elements of \(P\) \((\top_P, \bot_P)\) are also in \(S\).

Note 5. Reconsider Fig. 11 (1) where now \((\wp(\{a, b, c\}, \subseteq))\) is seen as a sub-poset of \((\wp(\{a, b, c, d\}, \subseteq))\). Clearly, for almost all subsets \(S \subseteq \wp(\{a, b, c\})\) the intersection and the union are preserved. However, the \((\wp(\{a, b, c\}, \subseteq))\) cannot be seen as a closure system in \((\wp(\{a, b, c, d\}, \subseteq))\). Indeed, \(\top = \{a, b, c, d\} \notin \wp(\{a, b, c\})\). Thus, \((\wp(\{a, b, c\}, \subseteq))\) is only a **kernel system** in \((\wp(\{a, b, c, d\}, \subseteq))\) but not a sub-lattice.
Definition 9 (Mapping properties in a poset). A function \( f : P \rightarrow P \) is said to be:

- **Extensive.** if \((\forall a \in P) a \leq f(a)\).
- **Contractive.** if \((\forall a \in P) f(a) \leq a\).
- **Monotonic.** if \((\forall a, b \in P) a \leq b \Rightarrow f(a) \leq f(b)\).
- **Idempotent.** if \((\forall a \in P) f(f(a)) = f(a)\).

The set of fix-points of a function \( f \) is given by \( \{ a \in P \mid f(a) = a \} \). A function \( f \) is said to be a *closure operator* if it is extensive, monotonic and idempotent.

Dually, it is said to be a *kernel operator* if it is contractive, monotonic and idempotent.

**Note 6.** Note that there is a strong relationship between closure (resp. kernel) systems and closure (resp. kernel) operators. For instance, if \( f \) is closure (resp. kernel) operator in a complete lattice \((P, \leq)\) then \((f[P], \leq)\) is a closure (resp. kernel) system in \((P, \leq)\). Moreover, \( f[P] \) is the set of **fix-points** of \( f \), that is \( f[P] = \{ p = f(p) \mid p \in P \} \) (if \( f \) is a closure operator, elements of \( f[P] \) are called **closed elements**). On the other hand, one can always associates a closure operator to a closure system \((S, \leq)\). Indeed, the function

\[
\phi : P \rightarrow P, P \mapsto \phi(p) = \bigwedge \{ s \in S \mid p \leq s \}
\]

is a closure operator in \((P, \leq)\) with \( \phi[P] = S \). Dually, one can also associates a kernel operator to a kernel system \((S, \leq)\). The function

\[
\psi : P \rightarrow P, P \mapsto \psi(p) = \bigvee \{ s \in S \mid s \leq p \}
\]

is a kernel operator in \((P, \leq)\) with \( \psi[P] = S \).

There is an elegant theorem (see theorem 3) when \((S, \leq)\) is a complete sub-lattice of \((P, \leq)\). This theorem is the base one we use in the current paper.

**Theorem 3 (Theorem 4.1 in [8]).** Let \((P, \leq)\) be a complete lattice and let \((S, \leq)\) be a complete sub-lattice of \((P, \leq)\). Let be the two functions:

\[
\phi : P \rightarrow P, P \mapsto \phi(p) = \bigwedge \{ s \in S \mid p \leq s \}
\]

\[
\psi : P \rightarrow P, P \mapsto \psi(p) = \bigvee \{ s \in S \mid s \leq p \}
\]

Operators \( \phi \) and \( \psi \) are respectively **join-preserving closure operator** and **meet-preserving kernel operator**. That is, for all \( A \subseteq P \), we have:

\[
\phi \left( \bigvee A \right) = \bigvee \phi [A] \quad \psi \left( \bigwedge A \right) = \bigwedge \psi [A]
\]

Moreover, the set of fix-points is \( S = \phi[P] = \psi[P] \).

**Note 7.** Please note that the closure (resp. kernel) operator is, still, **not necessarily** meet-preserving (resp. join-preserving). For instance consider the complete sub-lattice of \((\phi(\{a, b, c, d\}), \subseteq)\) depicted in Fig. 14 (4). One can show that the associated closure operator is **not meet-preserving**. Indeed, we have \( \phi(\{a, b\}) = \{a, b, d\} \) and \( \phi(\{b, c\}) = \{b, c, d\} \), but: \( \phi(\{a, b\} \cap \{b, c\}) = \phi(\{b\}) = \{b\} \neq \{b, d\} = \{a, b, d\} \cap \{b, c, d\} = \phi(\{a, b\}) \cap \phi(\{b, c\}) \)
D Complete lattice of p-dimensional hyper-rectangles

Definition 10. An interval $I \subseteq \mathbb{R}$ is a convex subset of $\mathbb{R}$, that is:

$$\forall x, y \in I, \forall z \in \mathbb{R} : x \leq z \leq y \implies z \in I$$

The partially ordered set (poset) of all intervals in $\mathbb{R}$ is denoted $(\mathcal{C}(\mathbb{R}), \subseteq)$ [10] and is a closure-system in $(\wp(\mathbb{R}), \subseteq)$. That is, the intersection $\bigcap$ of arbitrary set of intervals is an interval in $\mathcal{C}(\mathbb{R})$.

The poset $(\mathcal{C}(\mathbb{R}), \subseteq)$ of intervals is a complete lattice where the meet $\bigwedge$ is the set intersection $\bigcap$ while the join $\bigvee$ is the convex hull of there union, formally:

$$\forall S \subseteq \mathcal{C}(\mathbb{R}) : \bigwedge S \triangleq \bigcap S$$
$$\bigvee S = \bigcap \left\{ X \in \mathcal{C}(\mathbb{R}) \mid \bigcup S \subseteq X \right\} = \text{ch} \left( \bigcup S \right)$$

There is different types of intervals in $\mathcal{C}(\mathbb{R})$. For example: $(-\infty, a]$, $(-\infty, a)$, $(a, b)$, $[a, b)$, $[a, b]$, $[a, b)\ldots$ with $a, b \in \mathbb{R}$. Note that the top (greatest) element of $(\mathcal{C}(\mathbb{R}), \subseteq)$ is $\mathbb{R}$ while the bottom (smallest) element is $\emptyset$. For two intervals $[a_1, b_1]$ and $[a_2, b_2]$ in $(\mathcal{C}(\mathbb{R}), \subseteq)$ with $a < b$, we have:

$$[a_1, b_1] \cap [a_2, b_2] = [\text{sup}(a_1, a_2), \text{inf}(b_1, b_2)]$$
$$[a_1, b_1] \cup [a_2, b_2] = [\text{inf}(a_1, a_2), \text{sup}(b_1, b_2)]$$

With sup and inf refer to the greatest and smallest element in $\mathbb{R}$ wrt. natural order $\leq$. This computation of $\wedge$ and $\vee$ is generalizable for other types of intervals.

Definition 11. Let $p \in \mathbb{N}^*$, an p-dimensional hyper-rectangle $H \subseteq \mathbb{R}^p$ is the result of the product of $m$ intervals in $\mathcal{C}(\mathbb{R})$. Formally:

$$H = \prod_{k=1}^{p} I_k \text{ with } \forall k \in \{1..m\} : I_k \in \mathcal{C}(\mathbb{R})$$

The set $\mathcal{H}_p$ denotes the set of all possible $m$-dimensional hyper-rectangles in $\mathbb{R}^p$. The poset $(\mathcal{H}_p, \subseteq)$ is again a closure-system in $(\wp(\mathbb{R}^p), \subseteq)$.

The fact of $(\mathcal{H}_p, \subseteq)$ is a complete lattice which meet is set-intersection is “inherited” [12] from the direct product of $m$ complete lattice $(\mathcal{C}(\mathbb{R}), \subseteq)$ (the direct product of $m$ complete lattice is a complete lattice [10] p. 130]). We have:

$$\forall S \subseteq \mathcal{H}_p : \bigwedge S \triangleq \bigcap S$$
$$\bigvee S = \bigcap \left\{ X \in \mathcal{H}_p \mid \bigcup S \subseteq X \right\}$$

\footnote{\textit{In fact, one can use an order-embedding } f : (\mathcal{C}(\mathbb{R})^p, \subseteq) \to (\wp(\mathbb{R}^p), \subseteq) \text{ (where } \subseteq \text{ is the product order [28] p. 3} \text{) such that } f((I_k)_{1 \leq k \leq p}) = \prod_{k=1}^{p} I_k \text{ to build properly the complete lattice } f[\mathcal{C}(\mathbb{R})^p] = \mathcal{H}_p.}
Thus, the meet $\land$ and the join $\lor$ are formed component-wise. For instance, for hyper-rectangles $H_j = \prod_{k=1}^p I_k^j$ with $j \in \{1, 2\}$ and $I_k^j = [a_k^j, b_k^j]$ we have:

$$H_1 \land H_2 = \prod_{k=1}^p (I_k^1 \land I_k^2) = \prod_{k=1}^p [\sup(a_k^1, a_k^2), \inf(b_k^1, b_k^2)]$$

$$H_1 \lor H_2 = \prod_{k=1}^p (I_k^1 \lor I_k^2) = \prod_{k=1}^p [\inf(a_k^1, a_k^2), \sup(b_k^1, b_k^2)]$$

Clearly, $\emptyset$ and $\mathbb{R}^p$ are respectively bottom and top element in $(\mathcal{H}_p, \subseteq)$.

Remark 1. In this paper, we deal with the dual lattice of $(\mathcal{H}_p, \subseteq)$ denoted $(\mathcal{H}_p, \sqsupseteq)$. The order $\sqsupseteq$ is given by the inverse order $\supseteq$ while the meet $\lor \triangleq \lor$ and the join $\land \triangleq \land$ are inverted. The top element become $\top \triangleq \emptyset$ while the bottom element become $\bot \triangleq \mathbb{R}^p$. 
E Closed Interval Pattern Mining

Algorithm 2 describe the closed interval pattern mining algorithm as proposed in [19]. We slightly change the method to compute the closed on the positives (cotp for short) intervals patterns. Please refer to [20, 19] for more details.

Algorithm 2: MinIntChange

**Input:** $\langle G, M \rangle$ a numerical datasets with $\{G^+, G^-\}$ partition of $G$ and $|M| = p$

$C = \langle C_k \rangle_{1 \leq k \leq p}$ cut points sets per dimension

**Output:** cotp patterns $c \in D_C$ verifying $d \subseteq c$

1. procedure MinIntChange$_C(d, i, f)$

2. \[ \text{yield}(d) \] // yield cotp pattern

3. for $j \in \{i, ..., p\}$ do

4. \[ f_{\text{start}} \leftarrow 0 \text{ if } j > i \text{ else } f \]

5. for $f_{\text{new}} \in \{f_{\text{start}}, 1\}$ do

6. \[ d_{\text{new}} \leftarrow \text{minChange}_C(d, j, f_{\text{new}}) \]

7. \[ c \leftarrow \text{int}_C \left\{ \{g \in \text{ext}(d_{\text{new}}) \cap G^+ \mid M(g) \in d\} \right\} \]

8. if $c \neq \top$ and ($\forall k \in \{1, ..., j - 1\}$) $c.I_k = d.I_k$ then

9. MinIntChange$_C(c, j, f_{\text{new}})$

10. function minChange$_C(d, j, f_{\text{new}})$

11. \[ d_{\text{new}} \leftarrow d \] // $d = \Pi_{1 \leq i \leq k}[a_k, b_k] \in D_C$

12. if $f = 0$ then

13. \[ d_{\text{new}}.I_j \leftarrow \text{next}(a_j, C_j, b_j) \] // $\text{next}(a_j, C_j, b_j) = \inf\{c \in C_j \mid a_j < c\}$

14. else

15. \[ d_{\text{new}}.I_j \leftarrow \text{prev}(b_j, C_j) \] // $\text{prev}(b_j, C_j) = \sup\{c \in C_j \mid c < b_j\}$

16. return $d_{\text{new}}$ // $d_{\text{new}}.I_j$ could be empty (i.e. $d_{\text{new}} = \top = \emptyset$)

17. function int$_C(S)$

18. for $k \in 1, ..., p$ do

19. \[ a_k \leftarrow \sup\{c \in C \mid c \leq \inf\{m_k(g) \mid g \in S\}\} \] // $\sup(\emptyset) = -\infty$

20. \[ b_k \leftarrow \inf\{c \in C \mid c > \sup\{m_k(g) \mid g \in S\}\} \] // $\inf(\emptyset) = +\infty$

21. \[ d.I_k \leftarrow [a_k, b_k] \text{ if } a_k \in C \text{ else } (-\infty, b_k) \]

22. return $d$

23. MinIntChange$_C(d, 1, 0)$ // Start by a minLeftChange on the 1$^{st}$ attribute