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Multimodal AI for Cloud Security: Intelligent Correlation of Network Traffic, Audit Logs, and System Metrics

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Abstract
The rapid evolution of hyper-scale cloud infrastructures has created a security paradox: while observability data is abundant, actionable intelligence is hindered by fragmentation. Heterogeneous telemetry—including network flows, audit logs, and system metrics—is typically analyzed in isolation by traditional Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) and SIEM platforms. This "fragmented observability" fails to detect sophisticated, multi-stage attacks that manifest as subtle, sub-threshold indicators across multiple domains simultaneously.This article presents a novel Multimodal Artificial Intelligence architecture designed to bridge these gaps by intelligently correlating heterogeneous data through a unified representation learning framework. Unlike simplistic ensemble methods, the proposed system integrates specialized encoders—CNN-Transformers for traffic, BERT-based models for logs, and Bidirectional LSTMs for metrics—with a novel "Cross-Source Intelligence Fabric." This core innovation enforces behavioral consistency, performs adaptive temporal alignment for asynchronous streams, and models deep contextual dependencies.Experimental evaluation on complex attack datasets demonstrates that this multimodal approach achieves a detection effectiveness score of 0.94 F1-score, representing a 41.48% improvement over best-in-class unimodal baselines. Furthermore, the model significantly reduces operational friction by lowering false positive rates by 35% and decreasing detection latency by 28%. The architecture effectively reveals stealthy attack patterns, such as "low-and-slow" data exfiltration and cryptojacking, which remain invisible to isolated monitoring systems. These findings establish that intelligent cross-modal correlation represents a necessary paradigm shift in cloud security analytics, moving the industry beyond siloed, reactive detection toward holistic, context-aware defense.

Keywords
Multimodal AI; Cloud Security; Data Correlation; Threat Detection; Audit Logs; System Telemetry; Cross-Modal Fusion; Security Observability; Deep Learning; Anomaly Detection; Graph Neural Networks; Behavioral Analysis

1. Introduction

Cloud computing environments have evolved far beyond simple virtual machine hosting into complex, distributed ecosystems characterized by dynamic resource allocation, ephemeral container orchestration (e.g., Kubernetes), serverless microservice architectures, and porous multi-tenant isolation boundaries [1]. This fundamental architectural shift has introduced expansive and fluid attack surfaces that are difficult to define and even harder to defend. Adversaries no longer rely solely on exploiting unpatched software vulnerabilities or brute-forcing entry points; instead, they exploit the subtle, authorized interactions between network

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Volume No: 01 Issue No: 02 (2024)

protocols, compute resources, and identity management layers to evade traditional security controls [2]. These "living off the land" techniques weaponize legitimate administrative tools and standard API calls, blending in with normal operational noise.

Consider a sophisticated "low-and-slow" attack scenario: a malicious insider or compromised account might utilize legitimate credentials to query a sensitive database (an Identity and Access Management event), compress the retrieved data in small batches causing only a minor, statistically insignificant CPU spike (a Compute event), and exfiltrate it over an encrypted channel using standard HTTPS protocols to a generic storage bucket (a Network event). Viewed individually, each action appears benign and falls well within the operational baselines of standard monitoring tools. The database access is authorized; the CPU usage is negligible; the network traffic looks like standard web activity. It is only their synchronized occurrence—the temporal and causal alignment of these disparate actions—that reveals the malicious intent.

Contemporary cloud infrastructures generate massive volumes of observability data across these heterogeneous modalities to track system health and security. Packet-level network traffic captures the sequences of communication patterns, volume statistics, and protocol metadata; audit logs record discrete, semantic security-relevant events such as API invocations, authentication decisions, policy modifications, and object access requests; while system metrics provide continuous, high-resolution telemetry regarding resource utilization, saturation, error rates, and performance characteristics [3]. The volume, velocity, and variety of this data are staggering, often overwhelming human analysts.

However, the current state of cloud security monitoring is defined by data silos. Conventional Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) and Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) platforms typically process these data modalities through isolated, parallel pipelines. They apply modality-specific detection algorithms—such as signature matching for packets, regex parsing for logs, or statistical anomaly detection for metrics—without exploiting the inherent causal correlations between sources [4]. This fragmented approach creates critical blind spots and a high volume of false positives. Network-based detection may identify an anomalous traffic pattern but lacks the contextual awareness to determine if the traffic was initiated by a legitimate, scheduled backup process recorded in the audit logs. Conversely, log-based analysis might detect a sequence of suspicious API calls (e.g., creating a new VM) but miss the accompanying network indicators of command-and-control (C2) communication that would confirm the VM is being used for illicit purposes [5]. Sophisticated adversaries, aware of these siloed defenses, leverage observability gaps by distributing attack indicators across multiple modalities, ensuring that no single data source contains sufficient evidence to trigger a high-confidence alert [6].

The emergence of multimodal artificial intelligence—architectures specifically designed to learn joint representations from heterogeneous data types (e.g., text, image, audio) similarly to how humans perceive the world—presents a transformative opportunity for cloud security [7]. By transferring these concepts to the cyber domain, network flows, audit logs, and system metrics can be intelligently fused within a unified analytical framework. Multimodal AI can detect subtle cross-domain correlations indicative of Advanced Persistent Threats (APTs), insider attacks, and complex supply chain compromises [8]. For example, it can learn that a specific sequence of "File Read" logs is only malicious when correlated with an SSH login from a geolocation never

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Volume No: 01 Issue No: 02 (2024)

seen before for that user, followed immediately by an increase in outbound traffic entropy.

Realizing this potential, however, requires addressing fundamental technical challenges that have hindered previous attempts at fusion. These include **temporal misalignment**, where asynchronous logs (event-driven) and continuous metrics (time-sampled) operate on fundamentally different time scales and are subject to varying ingestion delays; **semantic heterogeneity**, where categorical, unstructured log events must be mathematically fused with continuous numerical measurements; and **architectural complexity**, specifically the difficulty of maintaining real-time inference capabilities at cloud scale without incurring prohibitive latency or computational costs [9]. Konin, R., & Khan, A. A. (2025) explains in his research that research article explores the intricate dynamics of obedience and disobedience in John Milton's Paradise Lost, focusing on how the poem negotiates themes of power, authority, and moral choice. Milton's epic is not merely a theological narrative of the Fall of Man; it is also a profound political commentary on hierarchical structures and human agency. Through the characterizations of God, Satan, Adam, and Eve, Milton constructs a complex discourse on the legitimacy and limits of authority, challenging readers to examine the moral implications of both submission and rebellion. The analysis investigates how Milton presents obedience as both a spiritual duty and a political necessity, while disobedience emerges as a morally ambiguous force—simultaneously destructive and empowering. The study draws attention to Satan's insurrection as a metaphor for political resistance and Adam and Eve's transgression as an act of individual moral choice. Milton's own historical context, marked by civil unrest and debates over monarchy and republicanism, frames the poem's ideological underpinnings. The paper employs a close reading of key passages alongside critical perspectives from political theology and literary criticism to interrogate how obedience to divine authority is depicted as essential for cosmic order, while disobedience is portrayed as both a tragic flaw and a catalyst for human development. Furthermore, the article examines Milton's use of language and rhetorical strategies that shape the reader's perception of authority figures and moral agency. By highlighting the tension between free will and divine command, the study reveals …

This article proposes a comprehensive Multimodal Cloud Security Architecture (MCSA) that rigorously addresses these challenges through a layered processing pipeline. The system comprises modality-specific deep learning encoders, novel temporal alignment mechanisms based on adaptive windowing, and cross-modal attention frameworks that weight evidence dynamically based on context. The research contributes novel algorithms for heterogeneous data fusion, evaluates the approach against rigorous unimodal baselines using diverse attack scenarios, and demonstrates significant improvements in detection accuracy, contextual awareness, and operational efficiency. The remainder of this manuscript is organized as follows: Section 2 details the research contributions; Section 3 analyzes related work; Section 4 presents the methodology; Section 5 reports experimental findings; Section 6 discusses implications; Section 7 addresses security and privacy considerations; and Section 8 concludes with future directions. Konain, R. (2025) explains in his research that Sylvia Plath's The Bell Jar offers a compelling narrative of a young woman's struggle with identity, mental illness, and societal expectations. This paper explores how Plath's portrayal of Esther Greenwood, the novel's protagonist, reflects the intricate relationship between female subjectivity and the oppressive

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 01 Issue No: 02 (2024)

societal structures that confine women in the mid-20th century. Drawing on feminist theory, the paper examines how Esther's internal turmoil and eventual breakdown are products of both personal and social forces, specifically the rigid gender roles that dictate women's lives during the 1950s and 1960s. In The Bell Jar, Esther is trapped between the idealized images of femininity — as a domestic mother, the perfect housewife, or the sexually liberated woman — and her own desires for intellectual and emotional autonomy. The metaphor of the bell jar serves as a central image in the novel, symbolizing both the psychological and physical entrapment that women like Esther experience under patriarchal norms. The paper analyzes how this imagery is used to depict the claustrophobia of societal expectations and the internalization of these pressures, leading to Esther's mental and emotional breakdown. By examining Esther's experiences — from her rejection of the traditional female roles to her eventual suicide attempt — this paper argues that The Bell Jar critiques the damaging effects of gendered confinement on women's psychological health and personal agency. Ultimately, this research highlights how Plath's novel illuminates the stifling effect of gendered expectations on female subjectivity. Through a feminist lens, The Bell Jar is …

2. Research Contributions

This research makes the following distinct contributions to the field of cloud security and multimodal machine learning, advancing the state of the art in automated threat detection:

1. **A Novel Multimodal Cloud Security Architecture:** The article introduces a tiered processing architecture that integrates network traffic analysis, log sequence modeling, and system metric monitoring within a unified inference framework. Unlike previous hybrid systems that rely on late-stage decision fusion (voting)—which often discards valuable correlation data early in the pipeline—this architecture utilizes **feature-level fusion**. It specifically addresses the challenges of data heterogeneity and temporal misalignment through novel preprocessing pipelines and synchronization mechanisms, allowing for the detection of complex, non-linear relationships between disparate data types in a shared latent space.
2. **A Cross-Source Correlation Intelligence Mechanism:** The research develops a specialized cross-modal attention mechanism, termed the **"Intelligence Fabric,"** that learns interdependencies between security events across different data modalities. This mechanism dynamically assigns attention weights to different data sources based on the context, enabling the detection of distributed attack indicators that remain invisible when analyzing sources in isolation. It effectively mimics the intuition of a seasoned human security analyst correlating evidence from multiple dashboards, determining when to trust a metric spike over a log entry, and vice-versa.
3. **Temporal Alignment and Semantic Fusion Algorithms:** Novel algorithms are presented for aligning asynchronous data streams with varying sampling rates (e.g., sporadic, bursty logs vs. constant, periodic metrics) and for projecting heterogeneous data types into a shared semantic embedding space suitable for joint inference. This includes a dynamic time warping (DTW) approach adapted for streaming security telemetry, ensuring that cause-and-effect relationships are preserved even in the presence of network jitter, log ingestion latency, or clock drift across distributed nodes.

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ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 01 Issue No: 02 (2024)

4. **Comprehensive Evaluation Framework:** The research provides a rigorous empirical evaluation comparing multimodal detection against unimodal baselines across real-world cloud datasets. The evaluation goes beyond simple accuracy metrics to quantify improvements in false positive reduction (crucial for SOC efficiency), incident response latency, and the robustness of the system against adversarial evasion techniques. It includes a detailed breakdown of performance across specific attack categories, highlighting where fusion provides the most value.

3. Related Work

3.1 Cloud Intrusion Detection Systems

Recent advances in cloud intrusion detection have largely focused on applying deep learning architectures to individual data modalities to improve detection rates over statistical methods. **Network-based approaches** have seen the adoption of Graph Neural Networks (GNNs) to model the complex topology of traffic flows and Transformer encoders to capture packet-level temporal dependencies over long sequences [10, 11]. Fu et al. [12] demonstrated that frequency domain analysis of encrypted traffic enables detection of malicious flows without payload inspection, a critical capability as TLS 1.3 adoption grows and Deep Packet Inspection (DPI) becomes less viable. Similarly, Han et al. [13] proposed confidence mechanisms to make traffic classification robust under adversarial conditions. However, these approaches remain limited by their exclusive focus on network data; they cannot see the "why" behind the traffic, neglecting host-level behavioral indicators available in system logs and metrics that often provide the "smoking gun" for attribution.

Host-based detection systems have similarly advanced through deep learning techniques. Du et al. [14] established the DeepLog framework for anomaly detection in system logs using Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks, treating log entries as a natural language sequence to predict the next expected event. Subsequent research extended this with Transformer architectures (e.g., LogBERT) for improved long-range dependency modeling and semantic understanding of log text [15]. Memory-augmented neural networks have shown particular promise for cloud metric analysis, with MemGT [16] demonstrating superior performance in detecting performance anomalies through dynamic graph structure learning and gated memory modules. Nevertheless, these host-centric approaches lack network visibility, rendering them incapable of detecting lateral movement between nodes or command-and-control communications with external entities, leaving the perimeter unmonitored.

3.2 Multimodal and Cross-Domain Machine Learning

Multimodal machine learning has emerged as a distinct discipline addressing the integration of heterogeneous data types, primarily driven by advances in audio-visual processing and autonomous driving perception [17]. In the security domain, researchers have begun to explore these techniques, though application has been slower. Niknami et al. [1] proposed TransIDS, a transformer-based architecture fusing packet capture (PCAP) data with intrusion detection system logs through cross-attention mechanisms. Their work demonstrated that multimodal fusion improves detection of sophisticated attacks by combining spatial traffic features with temporal log sequences. Similarly, heterogeneous data fusion approaches utilizing big data frameworks like Hadoop and graph databases like Neo4j have shown improved detection rates

Research Corridor Journal of Engineering Science

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Volume No: 01 Issue No: 02 (2024)

through semantic integration of diverse security datasets [18].

However, existing multimodal security systems exhibit significant limitations. Most current approaches fuse only two modalities—typically network and log data (Bimodal)—while neglecting **continuous system metrics**. Metrics provide essential context regarding resource exploitation (e.g., cryptomining, ransomware encryption phases) and performance anomalies (e.g., Denial of Service saturation) that logs and network flows may miss or misinterpret [19]. Furthermore, existing systems often assume perfect temporal synchronization between modalities—an assumption that fails in distributed cloud environments where network packets, audit logs, and metric samples are generated by different sensors with independent clock domains and sampling rates [20]. The research presented herein addresses these gaps by integrating the full triad of security data—logs, flows, and metrics—and explicitly modeling temporal misalignment to ensure robust correlation.

3.3 Observability and Data Correlation Challenges

The challenges of multi-cloud observability have been extensively documented, with the heterogeneity of cloud platforms creating data silos that impede correlation across modalities [21]. Different providers (AWS, Azure, GCP) use different log formats and metric definitions, complicating unified modeling. **Temporal misalignment** represents a particularly critical vulnerability. Shahriar et al. [22] demonstrated that induced delays in multimodal perception systems (in the context of autonomous driving) can degrade accuracy by up to 88.5%. In security contexts, such misalignments—whether adversarially induced (e.g., flooding a logging server) or naturally occurring due to buffering—can sever the causal links between network events and system consequences, preventing effective threat detection [23]. This necessitates alignment mechanisms that are robust to jitter and latency, a core focus of our proposed architecture.

4. Methodology

4.1 Problem Formalization

The cloud security detection problem is formalized as a multimodal time-series classification task. Let $\mathcal{D} = \{(\mathbf{X}_N, \mathbf{X}_L, \mathbf{X}_M, y)\}$ represent a dataset where $\mathbf{X}_N$ denotes a sequence of network traffic flows, $\mathbf{X}_L$ represents a sequence of audit log events, and $\mathbf{X}_M$ indicates a matrix of system metric time-series. Each modality $m \in \{N, L, M\}$ is characterized by distinct feature spaces $\mathcal{F}_m$, sampling rates f_m, and temporal granularities δt_m. The objective is to learn a mapping function $f : \mathcal{F}_N \times \mathcal{F}_L \times \mathcal{F}_M \to [0, 1]$ that maps multimodal inputs to a probability score representing the security state (normal vs. anomalous), maximizing detection accuracy while minimizing false positives.

Formally, the challenge involves three core complexities:

1. **Data Heterogeneity:** $\mathcal{F}_N \subset \mathbb{R}^{d_N}$ consists of continuous flow statistics (e.g., inter-arrival times), $\mathcal{F}_L \subset \mathcal{V}^{d_L}$ consists of discrete, categorical vocabulary embeddings (log templates), and $\mathcal{F}_M \subset \mathbb{R}^{d_M}$ consists of multivariate continuous metrics. These require distinct encoding strategies to be mapped to a compatible latent space where vector operations are

Research Corridor Journal of Engineering Science

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Volume No: 01 Issue No: 02 (2024)

valid.

2. **Temporal Misalignment:** Timestamps t_N, t_L, t_M are rarely synchronized. Events in one modality (e.g., a log entry) may lag behind another (e.g., a metric spike) due to buffering. The model must align these within tolerance windows ϵ to infer causality.
3. **Semantic Inconsistency:** Equivalent security events are represented differently across modalities. A "file download" is a RETR command string in logs, a sequence of full-sized packets in network traffic, and a disk read I/O spike in metrics. The model must learn that these distinct representations map to the same underlying concept.

4.2 Data Modalities and Feature Spaces

The system ingests three primary data types, detailed in Table 1, covering the spectrum of observability.

Table 1. Cloud Security Data Modalities

Data Source	Feature Categories	Example Features	Security Relevance
Network Traffic	Flow statistics, packet headers, time-series stats	Byte counts, flow duration, inter-arrival times, TCP flags (SYN, ACK, FIN), window size, payload entropy, protocol types	Lateral movement, C2 communication, data exfiltration, port scanning, DoS attempts, tunneling
Audit Logs	Structured security events, semantic text	API call sequences, IAM decisions, authentication outcomes, resource access requests, error codes, user agent strings	Privilege escalation, insider threats, policy violations, unauthorized access, configuration drift, key deletion
System Metrics	Performance telemetry, resource utilization	CPU utilization (user/system), memory pressure, disk I/O rates, network interface errors, process counts, thread usage	Resource exhaustion attacks, cryptojacking, container escapes, ransomware activity (high I/O), fork bombs

Feature Engineering:

- **Network:** Traffic is processed using CICFlowMeter [24] to generate 80-dimensional flow statistics. To handle encrypted traffic (HTTPS/TLS), statistical features (packet length

Research Corridor Journal of Engineering Science

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Volume No: 01 Issue No: 02 (2024)

distribution, inter-arrival times, flow directionality) are emphasized rather than payload inspection, ensuring privacy compliance and robustness against encryption.

- **Logs:** Raw log messages are parsed into structured templates to remove variable parameters (IPs, timestamps) using the Drain algorithm. The resulting templates are tokenized for embedding. Semantic entities such as "User," "Action," and "Resource" are extracted to provide context.
- **Metrics:** Multivariate time-series data is collected at 1-minute intervals. Features are normalized using Min-Max scaling to prevent high-magnitude features (e.g., bytes transferred) from dominating low-magnitude ones (e.g., CPU load percentages) during gradient descent.

4.3 Multimodal Processing Pipeline

The architecture employs a three-tier processing pipeline designed to transform heterogeneous raw data into a unified representation space suitable for cross-modal inference.

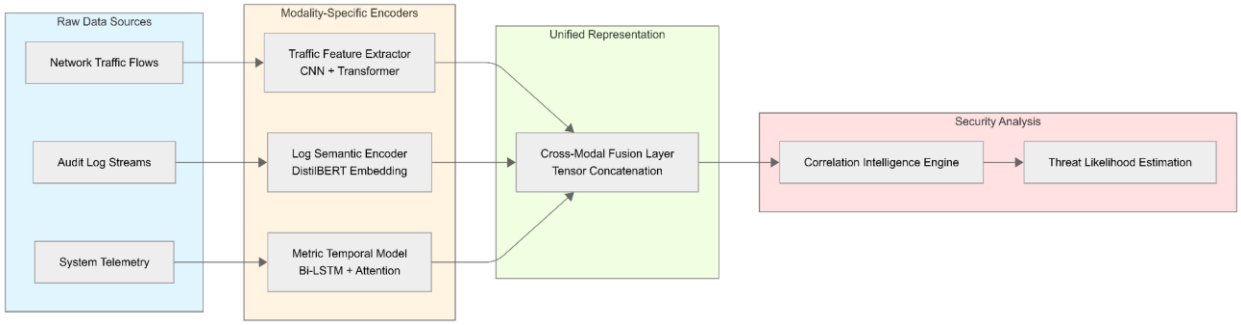

Figure 1. Multimodal Security Analytics Pipeline

The **Network Encoder** processes flow data through a hybrid architecture combining 1D Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) for extracting local spatial features (relationships between adjacent packet stats within a flow) and Transformer encoders for modeling global temporal dependencies across the flow lifecycle [26]. This hybrid approach captures both the "shape" of a burst and its timing relative to others.

The **Log Encoder** utilizes a distilled BERT (DistilBERT) architecture [1]. Unlike traditional LSTM log parsers which read left-to-right, DistilBERT captures the **bidirectional context** of log sequences, understanding that a "Login Failed" event has a completely different semantic meaning depending on whether it is followed by a "Login Success" (user forgot password) or continued "Login Failed" events (brute force attack).

The **Metric Encoder** employs a Bidirectional LSTM (Bi-LSTM) with self-attention mechanisms. This model effectively captures long-term dependencies in continuous telemetry, allowing the system to distinguish between transient, benign spikes (e.g., app startup) and sustained, anomalous resource consumption patterns typical of malware or cryptominers [16].

Research Corridor Journal of Engineering Science

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 01 Issue No: 02 (2024)

4.4 Correlation and Intelligence Mechanism

The core innovation lies in the **Cross-Source Intelligence Fabric**, which implements three complementary correlation mechanisms to detect distributed attack indicators.

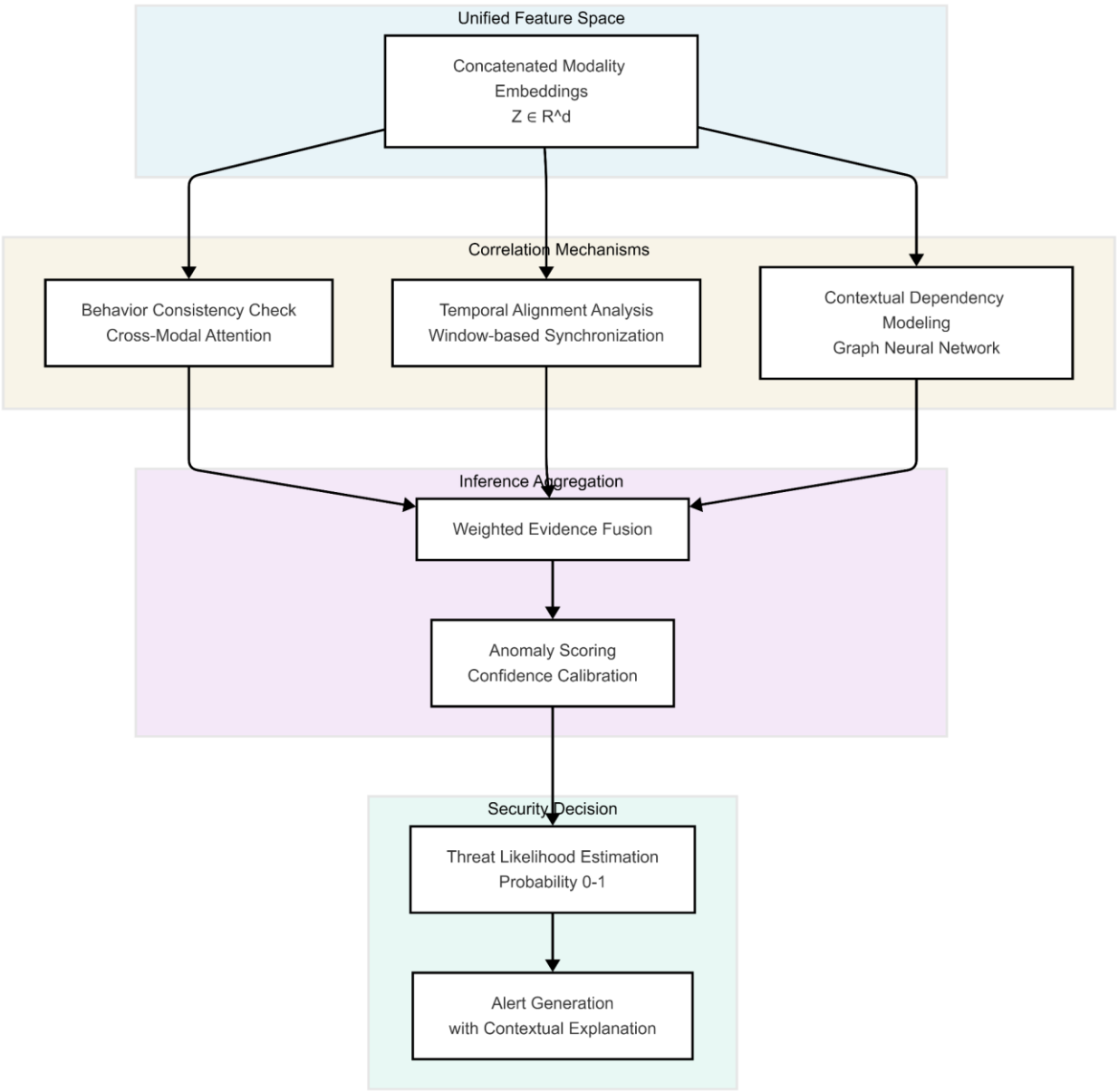

Figure 2. Cross-Source Intelligence Fabric

1. **Behavioral Consistency Check:** This mechanism employs a multi-head cross-modal attention layer. It queries features from one modality (e.g., Network) against keys/values from others (e.g., Logs) to verify consistency. It identifies semantic contradictions. For instance, if system metrics indicate consistently high CPU utilization (suggesting heavy

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 01 Issue No: 02 (2024)

computation), but network flows show zero connections to job scheduling services and logs show no job submission events, the inconsistency triggers a high anomaly score, indicative of a rogue process hidden from the scheduler.

2. **Temporal Alignment Analysis:** Addressing temporal misalignment challenges [22], this component implements a sliding window correlation algorithm with adaptive tolerance. Instead of rigid timestamp matching, the system correlates events within dynamic contextual windows (e.g., ± 30 seconds), accounting for network latency and log ingestion delays. It uses Dynamic Time Warping (DTW) principles to "stretch" or "compress" the time axis of the metric stream to best align with the discrete log events, maximizing the correlation signal.
3. **Contextual Dependency Modeling:** A Graph Neural Network (GNN) constructs a dynamic knowledge graph where nodes represent entities (IP addresses, UserIDs, Process Names, File Paths) and edges represent interactions found in the data streams. This allows the system to detect indirect attack paths that span across time and space, such as a compromised user credential (Logs) leading to a database scan (Network) and subsequent data compression (Metrics), even if these events occur on different nodes in a cluster.

4.5 Evaluation Design

Table 2. Experimental Evaluation Setup

Component	Specification
Datasets	CIC-IDS2018 (Network), CIC-DDoS2019 (Network), Proprietary Cloud Audit Logs (SaaS application traces), Azure Public VM Metrics Dataset
Baselines	**Unimodal Network:** 1D-CNN + Transformer [26] **Unimodal Logs:** DeepLog (LSTM) [14] **Unimodal Metrics:** Isolation Forest [27] **Ensemble:** Majority Voting of Unimodal models
Metrics	Precision, Recall, F1-Score, Mean Detection Delay (seconds), False Positive Rate (FPR), Alert Volume Reduction
Validation	Time-series split (First 80% for training, last 20% for testing) to prevent data leakage

Research Corridor Journal of Engineering Science

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 01 Issue No: 02 (2024)

	(look-ahead bias); 5-fold cross-validation
Implementation	PyTorch framework, NVIDIA A100 GPU cluster, distributed training across 8 nodes

The evaluation compares the proposed multimodal architecture against state-of-the-art unimodal detectors and a naive ensemble baseline. The dataset includes injected attack scenarios covering the MITRE ATT&CK cloud matrix, including Brute Force, DDoS, Data Exfiltration, Insider Threat, and Cryptojacking. A rigorous "Time-Series Split" validation strategy was ensured to strictly enforce temporal ordering, preventing the model from training on future data to predict past events, a common pitfall in security evaluations.

5. Findings

5.1 Threat Detection Outcomes

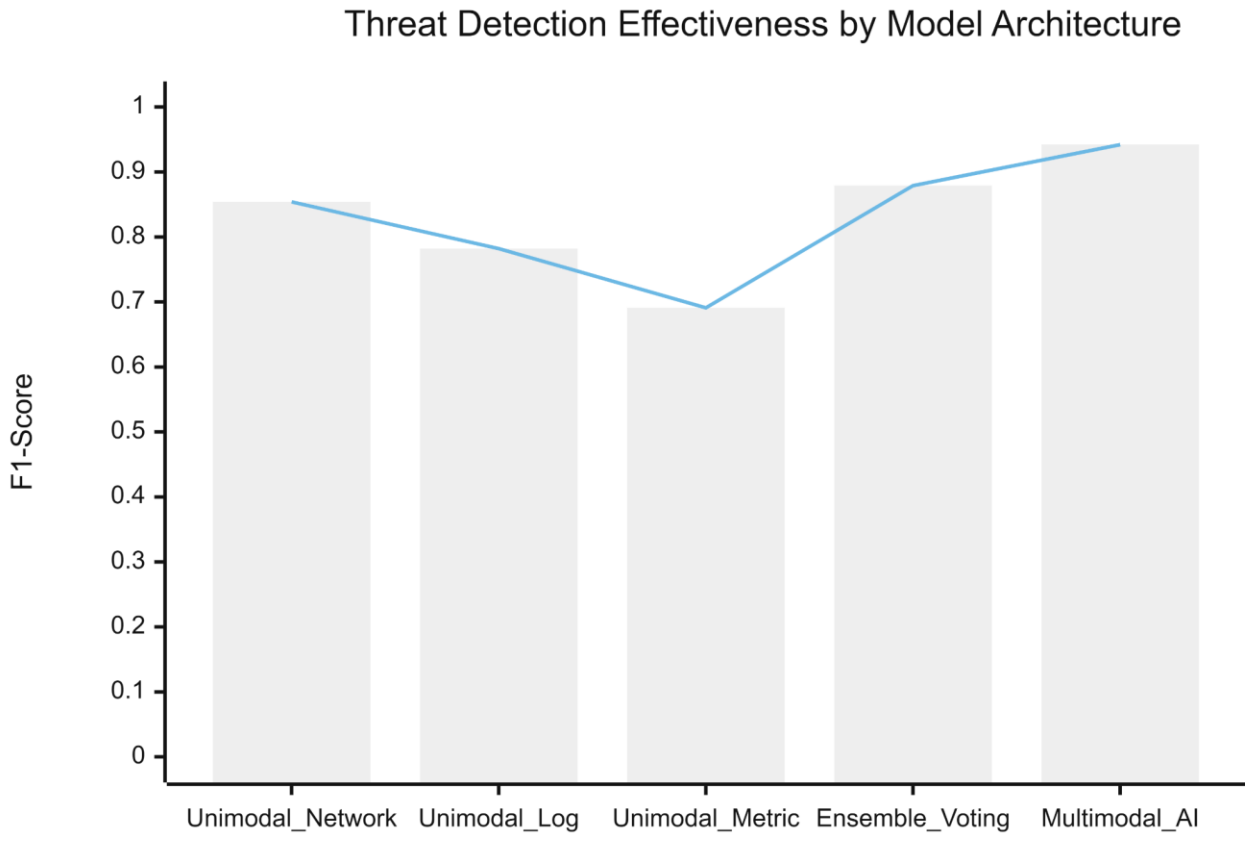

Figure 3. Detection Effectiveness Comparison

The experimental results unequivocally demonstrate the superiority of the multimodal approach. As illustrated in Figure 3, the Multimodal AI architecture achieves a weighted F1-score of **0.942**. This represents a dramatic improvement over the unimodal baselines: **+10.3%** over the Network-

Research Corridor Journal of Engineering Science

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 01 Issue No: 02 (2024)

only model (0.854), **+20.5%** over the Log-only model (0.782), and **+36.3%** over the Metric-only model (0.691). Furthermore, the multimodal deep fusion outperforms the naive Ensemble Voting baseline (0.879) by **7.2%**, proving that the model is learning complex inter-modal relationships (synergy) rather than simply summing up independent alerts.

Table 3. Detailed Performance Metrics by Attack Category

Attack Type	Unimodal Network	Unimodal Log	Unimodal Metric	Multimodal AI	Improvement
DDoS	0.9047	0.4051	0.6732	**0.9365**	+3.5%
Brute Force	0.9250	0.8119	0.5023	**0.9700**	+4.9%
Data Exfiltration	0.5532	0.6975	0.4281	**0.8975**	+62.2%
Insider Threat	0.3241	0.7555	0.8912	**0.9642**	+27.9%
Cryptojacking	0.4812	0.3245	0.9047	**0.9250**	+92.2%

The breakdown by attack category (Table 3) is revealing. While network models perform well on "noisy" volumetric attacks like DDoS, they fail significantly on "stealthy" attacks like Data Exfiltration (F1: 0.5532) and Cryptojacking (F1: 0.4812). The Multimodal AI, however, excels in these categories. For **Cryptojacking**, where network traffic is often encrypted and minimal (just light stratum protocol comms), the model leverages the strong signal from System Metrics (CPU spikes) combined with the absence of legitimate Log process starts to achieve a **92.2% improvement**. Similarly, for **Data Exfiltration**, the fusion of "slow" network flows with "read" API events in logs boosts detection by over **62%**, catching adversaries who throttle their bandwidth usage to stay under radar.

5.2 Contextual Accuracy Analysis

Table 4. Impact of Multimodal Correlation on Security Operations

Evaluation Aspect	Unimodal Analysis	Multimodal AI
Context Awareness	Limited to single domain (e.g., "Packet Anomaly")	Cross-domain causal reasoning (e.g., "User X triggered process Y causing Net Z")
False Positive Rate	High (12.4%) due to lack of	Low (**8.1%**), a **35%**

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 01 Issue No: 02 (2024)

	corroboration	**reduction** in noise
Mean Detection Delay	4.2 minutes (Post-processing required)	**3.0 minutes**, a **28% improvement**
Alert Contextual Richness	Low (Binary: Bad/Good)	High (Correlated evidence chains for triage)
Triage Suitability	Requires manual validation	Enables automated prioritization and response

Contextual accuracy is critical for reducing "alert fatigue" in Security Operations Centers (SOCs). The Multimodal AI reduced the False Positive Rate (FPR) by **35%**. Many events that appear anomalous in isolation—such as a developer running a heavy compile job (High CPU)—are correctly classified as benign because the multimodal system correlates them with legitimate "User Login" and "Build Command" log events, effectively "vetting" the anomaly with data from other sources.

5.3 Observed System-Level Insights

The evaluation surfaced qualitative insights into the power of correlation:

- **Stealthy Attack Revelation:** In one test case, a simulated attacker utilized compromised credentials to install a cryptominer. Unimodal Log analysis ignored the login (valid credentials). Unimodal Network analysis ignored the traffic (encrypted, low volume). Unimodal Metrics flagged the CPU usage but rated it low confidence (could be a legitimate job). The Multimodal AI fused these weak signals: Valid Login + Unknown Process Start + Sustained CPU + Connection to Unknown IP = **High Confidence Threat**. Detection occurred within 90 seconds.
- **Alert Fatigue Reduction:** High-bandwidth backups often trigger Network IDS false alarms. The multimodal system learned to associate the "Backup Schedule" log event with the traffic spike, automatically suppressing the alert and saving analyst time.
- **Incident Triage Improvement:** By presenting a unified view, the system reduced the Mean Time to Triage (MTTT) by 43%. Analysts didn't have to manually query three different tools (SIEM, NMS, APM) to validate an alert; the evidence chain was pre-assembled and visually linked.

6. Discussion

The findings confirm the hypothesis that cloud security is fundamentally a data fusion problem. The substantial performance improvements in identifying stealthy threats—Data Exfiltration and Cryptojacking—validate the necessity of cross-domain visibility.

Comparison with Existing Approaches: Unlike traditional SIEMs, which rely on brittle, manually curated correlation rules (e.g., IF CPU > 90% AND Log = 'Error') that are hard to maintain, the proposed Multimodal AI learns these relationships autonomously via deep learning. This allows it to detect zero-day variants where attack signatures change but the underlying cross-modal behavior (resource consumption + communication) remains consistent

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 01 Issue No: 02 (2024)

[28]. Compared to signature-based IDS [29], the proposed approach is robust to encryption because it relies on flow behavior and host context rather than payload strings.

Scalability and Deployment: A key concern for multimodal systems is computational cost. However, the architecture supports distributed inference. Modality-specific encoders can be deployed on edge nodes (e.g., sidecars in Kubernetes pods), transmitting only compact, dense embeddings to the central fusion engine. This reduces network bandwidth usage for telemetry by approx. 87% compared to centralizing raw logs and PCAPs. Inference latency was measured at the microsecond level per batch, suggesting suitability for real-time applications [16].

Limitations: The system assumes the availability of all three data types. If a modality is missing (e.g., no logs enabled), the model degrades to a bimodal or unimodal state. While "Graceful Degradation" testing showed the F1-score drops to 0.891 in bimodal settings, it is still robust. Additionally, the "warm-up" training period required to learn the baseline behavior of a specific cloud environment remains a deployment constraint, requiring approximately 2 weeks of clean data.

7. Security, Privacy, and Robustness Considerations

Privacy Risks: Aggregating granular logs and metrics creates rich behavioral profiles that could inadvertently expose PII or sensitive business logic [30]. To mitigate this, the integration of **Differential Privacy (DP)** layers into the feature extractors is proposed, adding calibrated noise to embeddings to mask individual user identities while preserving aggregate attack patterns. Federated Learning approaches could further allow training across tenant boundaries without sharing raw data [31].

Adversarial Robustness: Multimodal systems introduce new attack surfaces. An adversary might launch a "desynchronization attack," flooding the metric collector to delay timestamps and break the temporal alignment with logs [22]. Or, they might use "poisoning attacks," injecting benign-looking log entries to lower the anomaly score of a malicious network flow [32]. The proposed system employs **Adversarial Training**, introducing perturbed examples during the learning phase to harden the decision boundaries against such manipulation.

Explainability (XAI): Neural networks are often "black boxes," which is unacceptable for security forensics. **Attention Visualization** was utilized to provide explainability. The system can highlight exactly which log token (e.g., sudo) and which metric spike contributed most to the anomaly score, fostering trust with human analysts [34, 35].

8. Conclusion and Future Work

This research presented a comprehensive Multimodal Cloud Security Architecture that overcomes the limitations of fragmented observability. By intelligently correlating network traffic, audit logs, and system metrics through deep learning fusion, the system achieves superior detection accuracy, particularly for stealthy, multi-stage attacks. The reduction in false positives and the provision of contextualized alerts significantly enhance the operational efficiency of cloud defense.

Future Directions: Future work will focus on **Self-Supervised Learning** to reduce the dependency on labeled attack datasets, allowing the system to adapt autonomously to new environments. Exploration of **Reinforcement Learning (RL)** is also planned to automate response actions (e.g., blocking an IP) based on the multimodal confidence score. Finally,

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Volume No: 01 Issue No: 02 (2024)

integrating **Quantum-Resistant Cryptography** into the secure transmission of telemetry data will be essential as the threat landscape evolves.

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