

Selecting the Most Representative Sample is NP-Hard: Need for Expert (Fuzzy) Knowledge

J. Esteban Gamez¹, François Modave¹,
and Olga Kosheleva²

Departments of ¹Computer Science and ²Teacher Education
University of Texas, El Paso, TX 79968, USA
contact email olgak@utep.edu

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1. Outline

- One of the main applications of fuzzy is to formalize the notions of “typical”, “representative”, etc.
- The main idea behind fuzzy: formalize expert knowledge expressed by words from natural language.
- In this talk, we show that
 - if we do not use this knowledge, i.e., if we only use the data,
 - then selecting the most representative sample becomes computationally difficult (NP-hard).
- Thus, the need to find such samples in reasonable time justifies the use of fuzzy techniques.

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2. Introduction to the problem

- *In practice*: the population is often large, so we analyze a sample.
- *Examples*: poll, educational survey.
- *Idea*: the more “representative” the sample, the larger our confidence in the statistical results.
- *Requirement*: a representative sample should have the same averages as the population.
- *Example*: the same average age, average income, etc.
- *Additional requirement*: the sample should exhibit the same variety as the population.
- *Example*: the sample should include both poorer and richer people.
- *Formalization*: a representative sample should have the same variance as the population.

3. Population: exact description

By a *population*, we mean a tuple

$$p \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \langle N, k, \{x_{j,i}\} \rangle,$$

where:

- N is an integer; this integer will be called the population size;
- k is an integer; this integer is called the *number of characteristics*;
- $x_{j,i}$ ($1 \leq j \leq k, 1 \leq i \leq N$) are real numbers;
- the real number $x_{j,i}$ will be called the *value* of the j -th characteristic for the i -th object.

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4. Statistical characteristics

- Let $p = \langle N, k, \{x_{j,i}\} \rangle$ be a population, and let j be an integer from 1 to k .
- By the *population mean* E_j of the j -th characteristic, we mean the value $E_j = \frac{1}{N} \cdot \sum_{i=1}^N x_{j,i}$.

- By the *population variance* V_j of the j -th characteristic, we mean the value

$$V_j = \frac{1}{N} \cdot \sum_{i=1}^N (x_{j,i} - E_j)^2.$$

- For every integer $d \geq 1$, by the *central moment* $M_j^{(2d)}$ of order $2d$ of the j -th characteristic, we mean the value

$$M_j^{(2d)} = \frac{1}{N} \cdot \sum_{i=1}^N (x_{j,i} - E_j)^{2d}.$$

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5. Sample

- Let N be a population size.
- By a *sample*, we mean a non-empty subset $I \subseteq \{1, 2, \dots, N\}$.
- For every sample I , by its *size*, we mean the number of elements in I .
- By the *sample mean* $E_j(I)$ of the j -th characteristic, we mean the value $E_j(I) = \frac{1}{n} \cdot \sum_{i \in I} x_{j,i}$.
- By the *sample variance* $V_j(I)$ of the j -th characteristic, we mean the value $V_j(I) = \frac{1}{n} \cdot \sum_{i \in I} (x_{j,i} - E_j(I))^2$.
- For every $d \geq 1$, by the *sample central moment* $M_j^{(2d)}(I)$ of order $2d$ of the j -th characteristic, we mean the value

$$M_j^{(2d)}(I) = \frac{1}{n} \cdot \sum_{i \in I} (x_{j,i} - E_j(I))^{2d}.$$

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6. Statistics

- Let $p = \langle N, k, \{x_{j,i}\} \rangle$ be a population, and let I be a sample.
- By an E -statistics tuple corresponding to p , we mean a tuple $t^{(1)} \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} (E_1, \dots, E_k)$.
- By an E -statistics tuple corresponding to I , we mean a tuple $t^{(1)}(I) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} (E_1(I), \dots, E_k(I))$.
- By an (E, V) -statistics tuple corresponding to p , we mean a tuple $t^{(2)} \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} (E_1, \dots, E_k, V_1, \dots, V_k)$.
- By an (E, V) -statistics tuple corresponding to I , we mean a tuple $t^{(2)}(I) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} (E_1(I), \dots, E_k(I), V_1(I), \dots, V_k(I))$.
- For every integer $d \geq 1$, we can similarly define a statistics tuple of order $2d$.

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7. How to describe closeness

- By a *distance function*, we mean a mapping ρ that maps tuples t and t' into a real value $\rho(t, t')$ s.t.
 - $\rho(t, t) = 0$ for all tuples t and
 - $\rho(t, t') > 0$ for all $t \neq t'$.
- *Example:* Euclidean metric between the tuples $t = (t_1, t_2, \dots)$ and $t' = (t'_1, t'_2, \dots)$:

$$\rho(t, t') = \sqrt{\sum_j (t_j - t'_j)^2}.$$

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8. Formulation of the problem

- Let ρ be a distance function.
- *E*-sample selection problem corresponding to ρ :
 - *Given*:
 - * a population $p = \langle N, k, \{x_{j,i}\} \rangle$, and
 - * an integer $n < N$.
 - *Find*: a simple $I \subseteq \{1, \dots, N\}$ of size n for which the distance $\rho(t^{(1)}(I), t^{(1)})$ is the smallest possible.
- (*E, V*)-sample selection problem corresponding to ρ :
 - *Given*:
 - * a population $p = \langle N, k, \{x_{j,i}\} \rangle$, and
 - * an integer $n < N$.
 - *Find*: a simple $I \subseteq \{1, \dots, N\}$ of size n for which the distance $\rho(t^{(2)}(I), t^{(2)})$ is the smallest possible.

9. Main results

- For every distance function ρ , the corresponding E -sample selection problem is NP-hard.
- For every distance function ρ , the corresponding (E, V) -sample selection problem is NP-hard.
- For every distance function ρ and for every $d \geq 1$, the $(2d)$ -th order sample selection problem is NP-hard.

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10. Auxiliary result

- *In our proofs:* we considered the case when the desired sample contains half of the original population.
- *In practice:* samples usually form a much smaller portion of the population.
- *A natural question:*
 - fix $2P \gg 2$, and
 - look for samples which constitute the $(2P)$ -th part of the original population.
- *Result:* the resulting problems of selecting the most representative sample are still NP-hard.

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11. Proof: main idea

- *Reminder:* NP-hard means that we can reduce every problem from a certain class NP to this one.
- *Usual proof:* reduce a known NP-hard problem to our problem.
- *Why this works:* transitivity of reduction.
- *Known NP-hard problem:* subset sum problem
 - *given:* positive integers s_1, \dots, s_m ,
 - *find:* $\varepsilon_i \in \{-1, 1\}$ for which $\sum_{i=1}^m \varepsilon_i \cdot s_i = 0$.
- *Reduction:* $N = 2n$, $k = 2$, $n = m$, and:
 - $x_{1,i} = s_i$ and $x_{1,m+i} = -s_i$ for all $i = 1, \dots, m$;
 - $x_{2,i} = x_{2,m+i} = 2^i$ for all $i = 1, \dots, m$.
- *We will show:* $\rho(t(I), t) = 0 \Leftrightarrow$ the original instance of the subset sum problem has a solution.

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12. Proof (cont-d)

- *Reminder:* $x_{1,i} = s_i$ and $x_{1,m+i} = -s_i$ for $i = 1, \dots, m$.
- *Reminder:* $x_{2,i} = x_{2,m+i} = 2^i$ for $i = 1, \dots, m$.
- *Population as a whole:* $E_1 = 0$ and
$$E_2 = \frac{2 + 2^2 + \dots + 2^m}{m}.$$
- Since $|I| = m$, for $E_2(I) = E_2$ to be true, we must have
$$\sum_{i \in I} x_{2,i} = 2 + 2^2 + \dots + 2^m.$$
- All terms in RHS are divisible by 4 except for 2.
- All $x_{2,i}$ are divisible by 4 except for $x_{2,1}$ and $x_{2,m+1}$, so I must have exactly one of them.
- Similarly, I must have exactly one of i and $m + i$.
- So, corr. value $x_{1,j(i)}$ is $\varepsilon_i \cdot s_i$ for some $\varepsilon_i \in \{-1, 1\}$.
- Thus, $E_1(I) = E_1 = 0$ means that $\sum_{i=1}^m \varepsilon_i \cdot s_i = 0$. QED.

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