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The Unbiased Estimator

Let X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n be a random sample of size n from a population with probability density function $f(x; \theta)$. An estimator $\hat{\theta}$ of θ is a function of the random variables X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n which is free of the parameter θ .

An estimate is a realized value of an estimator that is obtained when a sample is actually taken.

Definition: An estimator $\hat{\theta}$ of θ is said to be an unbiased estimator of θ if and only if

$$E(\hat{\theta}) = \theta$$

If $\hat{\theta}$ is not unbiased, then it is called a biased estimator of θ .

An estimator of a parameter may not equal to the actual value of the parameter for every realization of the sample X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n , but if it is unbiased then on an average it will equal to the parameter.

Example: Let X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n be a random sample from a normal population with mean μ and variance $\sigma^2 > 0$. Is the sample mean \bar{X} an unbiased estimator of the parameter μ ?

Solution: Since, each $X_i \sim N(\mu, \sigma^2)$, we have $\bar{X} \sim N(\mu, \frac{\sigma^2}{n})$.

That is, the sample mean is normal with mean μ and variance $\frac{\sigma^2}{n}$.

Thus $E(\bar{X}) = \mu$. Therefore, the sample mean \bar{X} is an unbiased estimator of μ .

Example: Let X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n be a random sample from a population with mean μ and variance $\sigma^2 > 0$,

Is the sample variance S^2 an unbiased estimator of the population variance σ^2 ?

Solution: Note that the distribution of the population is not given. However, we are given $E(\bar{X}) = \mu$ and $E[(X_1 - \mu)^2] = \sigma^2$.

In order to find $E(S^2)$, we need find $E(\bar{X})$ and $E(\bar{X}^2)$. Thus we proceed to find these two expected values .

$$\begin{aligned} E(\bar{X}) &= E\left(\frac{X_1 + X_2 + \cdots + X_n}{n}\right) \\ &= \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n E(X_i) = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n \mu = \mu \end{aligned}$$

Similarly:

$$Var(\bar{X}) = Var\left(\frac{X_1 + X_2 + \cdots + X_n}{n}\right) = \frac{1}{n^2} \sum_{i=1}^n Var(X_i) = \frac{1}{n^2} \sum_{i=1}^n \sigma^2 = \frac{\sigma^2}{n}$$

Therefore

$$E(\bar{X}^2) = Var(\bar{X}) + E(\bar{X})^2 = \frac{\sigma^2}{n} + \mu^2$$

Consider

$$\begin{aligned} E(S^2) &= E\left[\frac{1}{n-1} \sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2\right] \\ &= \frac{1}{n-1} E\left[\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i^2 - 2\bar{X}X_i + \bar{X}^2)\right] \\ &= \frac{1}{n-1} E\left[\sum_{i=1}^n X_i^2 - n\bar{X}^2\right] \\ &= \frac{1}{n-1} \left\{ \sum_{i=1}^n E[X_i^2] - E[n\bar{X}^2] \right\} \\ &= \frac{1}{n-1} \left[n(\sigma^2 + \mu^2) - n\left(\mu^2 + \frac{\sigma^2}{n}\right) \right] \\ &= \frac{1}{n-1} [(n-1)\sigma^2] \\ &= \sigma^2 . \end{aligned}$$

Therefore , the sample variance S^2 is an unbiased estimator of the population variance σ^2 .

Example: If $X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n \sim N(\mu, \sigma^2)$ and let S_1^2, S_2^2 are estimators of σ^2 , Show that S_1^2 is unbiased estimators of σ^2 and S_2^2 is biased estimator of σ^2 . Such that :

$$S_1^2 = \frac{1}{n-1} \sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2 \text{ and } S_2^2 = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2$$

Solution:

$$Z = \frac{(n-1)S^2}{\sigma^2} \sim \chi^2(n-1) \rightarrow E(Z) = (n-1)$$

$$\therefore Z_1 = \frac{(n-1)S_1^2}{\sigma^2} \sim \chi^2(n-1) \rightarrow E(Z_1) = (n-1) \text{ _____(1)}$$

$$E(Z_1) = E\left(\frac{(n-1)S_1^2}{\sigma^2}\right) = \frac{(n-1)}{\sigma^2} E(S_1^2) \text{ _____(2)}$$

From (1) and (2)

$$\frac{(n-1)}{\sigma^2} E(S_1^2) = (n-1) \rightarrow E(S_1^2) = \sigma^2$$

$\therefore S_1^2$ is an unbiased estimator of σ^2 .

$$Z_2 = \frac{nS_2^2}{\sigma^2} \sim \chi^2(n-1) \rightarrow E(Z_2) = (n-1) \text{ _____(3)}$$

$$E(Z_2) = E\left(\frac{nS_2^2}{\sigma^2}\right) = \frac{n}{\sigma^2} E(S_2^2) \text{ _____(4)}$$

$$\text{From (3) and (4)} \quad \frac{n}{\sigma^2} E(S_2^2) = n-1 \rightarrow E(S_2^2) = \frac{(n-1)}{n} \sigma^2$$

S_2^2 is on biased estimator of σ^2 .

Example: Let X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n be a random sample from a benes popliation with parameter , show that \bar{X}_n is an unbiased estimator.

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}
 E(\bar{X}_n) &= \frac{1}{n} E\left(\sum_{i=1}^n X_i\right) = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (E(X_i)) = \frac{1}{n} \left(\sum_{i=1}^n p\right) \\
 &= \frac{1}{n} np = p
 \end{aligned}$$

Then $\hat{p} = \bar{X}_n$ is an unbiased estimator for p .

Example: Let X_1, X_2 and X_3 be a sample of size $n = 8$ from a distribution with unknown mean $-\infty < \mu < \infty$ the variance σ^2 is a known positive number, show that both $\hat{\theta}_1 = \bar{X}$ and $\hat{\theta}_2 = \frac{1}{8}(2X_1 + X_2 + 5X_3)$ are unbiased estimator for μ . Compare the variance of $\hat{\theta}_1$ and $\hat{\theta}_2$

Solution :

$$E(\hat{\theta}_1) = E(\bar{X}) = E\left(\frac{1}{3} \sum_{i=1}^3 X_i\right) = \frac{1}{3} 3\mu = \mu$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 E(\hat{\theta}_2) &= \frac{1}{8} E(2X_1 + X_2 + 5X_3) = \frac{1}{8} [2E(X_1) + E(X_2) + 5E(X_3)] \\
 &= \frac{1}{8} (2\mu + \mu + 5\mu) = \frac{1}{8} (8\mu) = \mu
 \end{aligned}$$

$\therefore \hat{\theta}_1, \hat{\theta}_2$ are unbiased estimators.

$$\begin{aligned}
 Var(\hat{\theta}_1) &= V\left(\frac{1}{3} \sum_{i=1}^3 X_i\right) = \frac{1}{9} [V(X_1) + V(X_2) + V(X_3)] \\
 &= \frac{1}{9} [\sigma^2 + \sigma^2 + \sigma^2] = \frac{1}{9} 3\sigma^2 = \frac{1}{3} \sigma^2 \\
 Var(\hat{\theta}_2) &= V\left[\frac{1}{8} (2X_1 + X_2 + 5X_3)\right] \\
 &= \frac{1}{64} [V(2X_1 + X_2 + 5X_3)]
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
&= \frac{1}{64} [4V(X_1) + V(X_2) + 25V(X_3)] \\
&= \frac{1}{64} (4\sigma^2 + \sigma^2 + 25\sigma^2) = \frac{1}{64} (30\sigma^2) \\
&= \frac{15}{32} \sigma^2
\end{aligned}$$

Factorization (jointly sufficient statistics)

Theorem : Let X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n be a random sample of size n from the density $f(.; \theta)$, where the parameter θ may be a vector . A set of statistics

$$S_1 = \sigma_1(X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n), \dots, S_r = \sigma_r(X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n).$$

Is jointly sufficient if and only if the joint density of X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n can be factored as $f_{X_1, \dots, X_n}(X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n; \theta)$

$$\begin{aligned}
&= g(\sigma_1(X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n), \dots, \sigma_r(X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n); \theta) \\
&= g(S_1, \dots, S_r; \theta) h(X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n),
\end{aligned}$$

where the function $h(X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n)$ is nonnegative and does not involve the parameter θ and the function $g(S_1, \dots, S_r; \theta)$ is nonnegative and depends on (X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n) only through the functions $\sigma_1(. , \dots, .), \dots, \sigma_r(. , \dots, .)$.

Note that , according to Theorem . There are many possible sets of sufficient statistics. The above two theorems give us a relatively easy method for judging whether a certain statistic is sufficient or a set of statistics is jointly sufficient .

However , the method is not the complete answer since a particular statistic may be sufficient yet the user may not be clever enough to factor the joint density .

The theorems may also be useful in discovering sufficient statistics . Actually , the result of either of the above factorization theorems is intuitively evident if one notes the following:

- 1- If the joint density factors as indicated , then the likelihood function is proportional to $g(S_1, \dots, S_r; \theta)$, which depends on the observations X_1, \dots, X_n only through $\sigma_1, \dots, \sigma_r$ [the likelihood function is viewed as a function of θ , so $h(X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n)$ is just a proportionality constant] , which means that the information about θ that the likelihood function contains is embodied in the statistics

$$\sigma_1(\cdot, \dots, \cdot), \dots, \sigma_r(\cdot, \dots, \cdot) .$$

Example: $\sum_{i=1}^n X_i$ is sufficient to μ , $X_i \sim (\mu, \sigma^2)$ by using factorization theorem .

Solution:

$$f[X_1, \dots, X_n, \mu] = f(X_1, \mu) \cdot f(X_2, \mu) \cdot \dots \cdot f(X_n, \mu)$$

Since $X_i \sim (\mu, \sigma^2)$

$$\therefore f(X) = \left\{ \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{X-\mu}{\sigma}\right)^2} \right\} \quad \text{for } -\infty < X < \infty$$

$$f[X_1, \dots, X_n, \mu] = f(X_1, \mu) \cdot f(X_2, \mu) \cdot \dots \cdot f(X_n, \mu)$$

$$\sum \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{X-\mu}{\sigma}\right)^2} \cdot \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{X-\mu}{\sigma}\right)^2} \cdot \dots \cdot \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{X-\mu}{\sigma}\right)^2}$$

$$= \left(\frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} \right)^n \cdot e^{-\frac{1(\sum X_i - \mu)^2}{2\sigma^2}}$$

$$= \left(\frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} \right)^n \cdot e^{\frac{[(\sum X_i)^2 - 2\mu \sum X_i + \mu^2]}{2\sigma^2}}$$

$$= \left(\frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} \right)^n \cdot e^{-\frac{(\sum X_i)^2}{2\sigma^2}} \cdot e^{\frac{-(-2\mu \sum X_i + \mu)}{2\sigma^2}}$$

$$h(X) = \left(\frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} \right)^n \cdot e^{\frac{-(\sum X_i)^2}{2\sigma^2}},$$

$$g(t(X), \theta) = e^{\frac{-(-2\mu \sum X_i + \mu)}{2\sigma^2}}$$

$\therefore \sum X_i$ is sufficient statistic to μ .

Example: $\sum_{i=1}^n X_i$ is sufficient statistic to 1 $X \sim (1, \sigma^2)$ by using factorization theorem

Solution:

$$X_i \sim N(1, \sigma^2)$$

$$f(X) = \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} \cdot e^{\frac{-1(X-1)^2}{2\sigma^2}}$$

Since X_i is i.i.d

$$f(X_1, \dots, X_n, 1) = f(X_1, 1) \cdot f(X_2, 1) \cdot \dots \cdot f(X_n, 1)$$

$$f(X_1, \dots, X_n, 1) = \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} \cdot e^{\frac{-1(X-1)^2}{2\sigma^2}} \dots \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} \cdot e^{\frac{-1(X-1)^2}{2\sigma^2}}.$$

$$f(X_1, \dots, X_n, 1) = \left[\frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} \right]^n \cdot e^{\frac{-1(\sum X_i - 1)^2}{2\sigma^2}}$$

$$f(X_1, \dots, X_n, 1) = \left[\frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} \right]^n \cdot e^{\frac{-1[(\sum X_i)^2 - 2\sum X_i + 1]}{2\sigma^2}}$$

$$f(X_1, \dots, X_n, 1) = \left[\frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} \right]^n \cdot e^{\frac{-1(\sum X_i)^2}{2\sigma^2}} \cdot e^{\frac{-(-2\sum X_i + 1)}{2\sigma^2}}$$

$$h(X) = \left[\frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} \right]^n \cdot e^{\frac{-1(\sum X_i)^2}{2\sigma^2}},$$

$$g(t(x), \theta) = e^{\frac{-(-2\sum X_i + 1)}{2\sigma^2}}$$

$\therefore \sum_{i=1}^n X_i$ is sufficient statistic to 1.

Example: $\sum_{i=1}^n X_i$ is sufficient statistic to γ ,

$X_i \sim \text{pio}(\gamma)$ by using factorization.

Solution:

Since $X_i \sim \text{pio}(\gamma)$

$$f(X) = \left\{ \frac{\gamma^X e^{-\gamma}}{X!} \quad \text{for } X = 0, 1, \dots, \infty \right\}$$

Since X_i is i.i.d

$$f[X_1, \dots, X_n, \gamma] = f(X_1, \gamma) \cdot f(X_2, \gamma) \cdot \dots \cdot f(X_n, \gamma)$$

$$f[X_1, \dots, X_n, \gamma] = \frac{\gamma^{X_1} e^{-\gamma}}{X_1!} \cdot \frac{\gamma^{X_2} e^{-\gamma}}{X_2!} \cdot \dots \cdot \dots$$

$$f[X_1, \dots, X_n, \gamma] = \frac{\gamma^{\sum_{i=1}^n X_i} e^{-\gamma}}{\sum_{i=1}^n X_i!}$$

$$f[X_1, \dots, X_n, \gamma] = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^n X_i!} \cdot (\gamma^{\sum_{i=1}^n X_i} e^{-\gamma})$$

$$h(X) = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^n X_i!} \quad ,$$

$$g(t(X), \theta) = (\gamma^{\sum_{i=1}^n X_i} e^{-\gamma})$$

$\therefore \sum_{i=1}^n X_i$ is sufficient statistic to γ .