

Behrens-Fisher Problem from a Model Selection Point of View[†]

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ABSTRACT

Behrens-Fisher problem is viewed from a model selection approach. Normal distribution is regarded as an approximating model. A criterion, called TIC, is derived and is compared with selection criteria such as AIC and a bootstrap estimator. Stochastic approximation is used since no closed form expression is available for the bootstrap estimator.

Key Words : Model Selection, Approximating Model, Operating Model, AIC, TIC, Bootstrap, Stochastic Approximation

1. Introduction

Let X_1, \dots, X_m be an independent and identically distributed random variables with distribution function F_1 such that the mean of F_1 , μ_1 and the variance of F_1 , σ_1^2 exist. Also let Y_1, \dots, Y_n be independent and identically distributed random variables with distribution function F_2 such that the mean of F_2 , μ_2 and the variance of F_2 , σ_2^2 exist. It is known that $\sigma_1^2 \neq \sigma_2^2$. We want to know whether $\mu_1 = \mu_2$ or not. When F 's are specified as normally distributed, this problem reduces to Behrens-Fisher problem.

This kind of problem occurs when, for instance, a treatment that increases mean response may increase the variance of the response, but we may still want to compare the mean responses. If we use the model selection terminology, F 's are regarded as operating models and the normal distributions are regarded as approximating models. Linhart and Zucchini(1986) gives an excellent introduction to the model selection idea.

In this paper a model selection approach is used to find out which submodel among the approximating models gives the best fit to the observed values. The problem is to choose the best fitting submodel using some widely used selection criteria among the followings :

$$\text{Model(3)} : X \sim N(\mu, \sigma_1^2), Y \sim N(\mu, \sigma_2^2) \quad (\mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu),$$

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$$\text{Model(4)} : X \sim N(\mu_1, \sigma_1^2), Y \sim N(\mu_2, \sigma_2^2) \quad (\mu_1 \neq \mu_2),$$

where the number in the parentheses indicates the number of parameters of the model. Let $N=m+n$ denote the total number of observations obtained.

Among the selection criteria, AIC, introduced by Akaike(1973), is given by

$$(1.1) \quad -2 \max(\log\text{-likelihood}) + 2p,$$

where p denotes the number of parameters to be estimated from the observations. We are to choose the submodel which gives the smallest AIC.

Assume further that the fourth moments of X 's and Y 's exist. This condition is necessary to get the trace version of the selection criterion. An asymptotic criterion called TIC, which is derived and fully explained in Linhart and Zucchini(1986) is given by

$$(1.2) \quad -2 \max(\log\text{-likelihood}) + 2 \text{tr}(\Omega_N^{-1} \Sigma_N),$$

where Ω_N , and Σ_N will be explained in section 2.2.

A bootstrap version of the criterion will be explained in section 2.3. Since no closed form expression is available in this case, a stochastic approximation version will be given as well. If we denote the parameters of the approximating model by θ , and their maximum likelihood estimators by $\hat{\theta}$ respectively, then a key idea in using the bootstrap method is to use $\hat{\theta}^*$, \hat{F}_1 and \hat{F}_2 in place of $\hat{\theta}$, F_1 and F_2 , respectively, where $\hat{\theta}^*$ is a bootstrap version of $\hat{\theta}$ computed from the bootstrap sample and \hat{F}_1 and \hat{F}_2 are the empirical cumulative functions based on X_1, \dots, X_m and Y_1, \dots, Y_n respectively.

2. The Selection Criteria

In this section each criterion will be derived explicitly for each submodel. For the bootstrap estimators, stochastic approximation algorithms are fully explained since no closed form expression is available. In addition to the above two submodels we may consider the case with the same variance at the same time. But in this paper our attention will be restricted to the unequal variance case only.

Note that when $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$ the observed $-2 \times \log\text{-likelihood}$ under the specified submodel in the approximating family is given by,

$$(2.1) \quad N \log 2\pi + m \log \sigma_1^2 + n \log \sigma_2^2 + \sum (x_i - \mu_1)^2 / \sigma_1^2 + \sum (y_j - \mu_2)^2 / \sigma_2^2.$$

Similarly, when $\mu_1 = \mu_2$, $-2 \times \log\text{-likelihood}$ is given by,

$$(2.2) \quad N \log 2\pi + m \log \sigma_1^2 + n \log \sigma_2^2 + \sum (x_i - \mu)^2 / \sigma_1^2 + \sum (y_j - \mu)^2 / \sigma_2^2.$$

Throughout, maximum likelihood estimator refers to the one that minimizes this expression.

2.1 AIC

Chapter 7 of Sakamoto, et. al.(1986) gives explicit formulae. Let $\hat{\mu}_1$, $\hat{\mu}_2$, $\hat{\sigma}_1^2$ and $\hat{\sigma}_2^2$ be

the maximum likelihood estimators of μ_1 , μ_2 , σ_1^2 and σ_2^2 respectively. That is,

$$(2.2.1) \quad \hat{\mu}_1 = \Sigma X_i / m, \quad \hat{\sigma}_1^2 = \Sigma (X_i - \hat{\mu}_1)^2 / m, \\ \hat{\mu}_2 = \Sigma Y_j / n, \quad \hat{\sigma}_2^2 = \Sigma (Y_j - \hat{\mu}_2)^2 / n.$$

Then the following table gives a short summary of AIC.

Table 2.1. Table of AIC

Model(p)	$-2 \max(\log\text{-likelihood}) + 2p$
p=3	$N \log 2\pi + m \log \hat{\sigma}_1^2 + n \log \hat{\sigma}_2^2 + N + 2 \times 3$
p=4	$N \log 2\pi + m \log \hat{\sigma}_1^2 + n \log \hat{\sigma}_2^2 + N + 2 \times 4$

Here $\hat{\sigma}_1^2$ and $\hat{\sigma}_2^2$ are the maximum likelihood estimators of σ_1^2 and σ_2^2 when $\mu_1 = \mu_2$, respectively. If we denote the maximum likelihood estimator of $\mu = \mu_1 = \mu_2$ by $\tilde{\mu}$, then $\tilde{\mu}$, $\hat{\sigma}_1^2$ and $\hat{\sigma}_2^2$ can be obtained by solving the following simultaneous equations :

$$(2.2.2) \quad \mu^3 - A\mu^2 + B\mu - C = 0, \\ \sigma_1^2 = (\mu - \hat{\mu})^2 + \hat{\sigma}_1^2, \\ \sigma_2^2 = (\mu - \hat{\mu})^2 + \hat{\sigma}_2^2,$$

where A, B and C are defined by

$$A = (1 + m/N) \hat{\mu}_2 + (1 + n/N) \hat{\mu}_1, \\ B = 2\hat{\mu}_1 \hat{\mu}_2 + m \Sigma y_j^2 / nN + n \Sigma x_i^2 / mN, \\ C = \hat{\mu}_1 m \Sigma y_j^2 / nN + \hat{\mu}_2 n \Sigma x_i^2 / mN,$$

respectively.

2.2 TIC

In order to derive the asymptotic criterion of the form (1.2), we just have to put the trace term in place of p in the above table. To get the trace term which, in some sense, is equivalent to the number of parameters, the results from one sample case can be used. Lee(1991) presents the details regarding the trace version of the selection criterion.

When $\mu_1 = \mu_2$, it can be argued that

$$(2.2.3) \quad \text{tr}(\Omega_N^{-1} \Sigma_N) = \tilde{\mu}_{1.4} / 2\hat{\sigma}_1^4 + \tilde{\mu}_{2.4} / 2\hat{\sigma}_2^4,$$

where $\tilde{\mu}_{1.4} = \Sigma (X_i - \tilde{\mu})^4 / m$ and $\tilde{\mu}_{2.4} = \Sigma (Y_j - \tilde{\mu})^4 / n$, respectively.

Therefore the criterion is given by

$$(2.2.4) \quad N \log 2\pi + m \log \hat{\sigma}_1^2 + n \log \hat{\sigma}_2^2 + N + \tilde{\mu}_{1.4} / \hat{\sigma}_1^4 + \tilde{\mu}_{2.4} / \hat{\sigma}_2^4.$$

Note that the trace term is approximately the number of parameters if the approximating family is really close to the operating family.

When $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$, it can be checked that

$$(2.2.5) \quad \text{tr}(\Omega_N^{-1} \Sigma_N) = 1 + \hat{\mu}_{1.4}/2\hat{\sigma}_1^4 + \hat{\mu}_{2.4}/2\hat{\sigma}_2^4,$$

where $\hat{\mu}_{1.4} = \Sigma(X_i - \hat{\mu}_1)^4 / m$ and $\hat{\mu}_{2.4} = \Sigma(Y_j - \hat{\mu}_2)^4 / n$, respectively. Therefore the criterion is given by

$$(2.2.6) \quad N \log 2\pi + m \log \hat{\sigma}_1^2 + n \log \hat{\sigma}_2^2 + N + 2 + \hat{\mu}_{1.4}/\hat{\sigma}_1^4 + \hat{\mu}_{2.4}/\hat{\sigma}_2^4.$$

Note again that the trace term is approximately the number of parameters if the operating family is really close to the approximating family.

2.3 Bootstrap Version of the Criterion

A key idea in using the bootstrap method is to put the consistent estimators in place of unknown parameters. It is important to remember that F_1 and F_2 , the distributions of future observations Z_1 and Z_2 respectively, are independent of X 's and Y 's respectively in the expression (2.2.1). This implies that F_1 and F_2 are independent of $\hat{\theta} = \hat{\theta}(X_1, \dots, X_m, Y_1, \dots, Y_n)$. This idea will be explicit while we construct the bootstrap version of the selection criterion for each submodel.

When $\mu_1 = \mu_2$, a bootstrap version of the criterion is given by

$$(2.3.1) \quad E_{\hat{\theta}^*} \{ N \log 2\pi + m \log \tilde{\sigma}_1^{*2} + n \log \tilde{\sigma}_2^{*2} \\ + \Sigma(x_i - \tilde{\mu}^*)^2 / \tilde{\sigma}_1^{*2} + \Sigma(y_j - \tilde{\mu}^*)^2 / \tilde{\sigma}_2^{*2} \},$$

where the starred estimators are calculated from the bootstrap sample, say, $(X_1^*, \dots, X_m^*, Y_1^*, \dots, Y_n^*)$. These bootstrap samples are drawn in a parametric way from the fitted model of the approximating family. That is, draw X_1^*, \dots, X_m^* from $N(\tilde{\mu}, \tilde{\sigma}_1^2)$ and Y_1^*, \dots, Y_n^* from $N(\tilde{\mu}, \tilde{\sigma}_2^2)$, respectively.

It is easy to see that no closed form expression for (2.3.1) is available. One of the nice features of doing bootstrap is that a stochastic approximation is always available. By repeating the basic resampling procedure for a large number of times, say, B times, we may obtain B independent copies of the terms inside the curly bracket of (2.3.1). The average of these will approximate (2.3.1). Furthermore, the empirical cumulative distribution function of these will approximate the sampling distribution of the criterion. We may express the stochastic approximation to (2.3.1) as follows ;

$$(2.3.2) \quad 1/B \sum_{k=1}^B \{ N \log 2\pi + m \log \tilde{\sigma}_{1,k}^{*2} + n \log \tilde{\sigma}_{2,k}^{*2} \\ + \Sigma(x_i - \tilde{\mu}_k^*)^2 / \tilde{\sigma}_{1,k}^{*2} + \Sigma(y_j - \tilde{\mu}_k^*)^2 / \tilde{\sigma}_{2,k}^{*2} \}.$$

Similarly, when $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$, a bootstrap version of the criterion is given by

$$(2.3.3) \quad E_{\hat{\theta}^*} \{ N \log 2\pi + m \log \hat{\sigma}_1^{*2} + n \log \hat{\sigma}_2^{*2} \\ + \Sigma(x_i - \hat{\mu}_1^*)^2 / \hat{\sigma}_1^{*2} + \Sigma(y_j - \hat{\mu}_2^*)^2 / \hat{\sigma}_2^{*2} \},$$

where the starred estimators are calculated from the bootstrap sample, say, $(X_1^*, \dots, X_m^*, Y_1^*, \dots, Y_n^*)$. These bootstrap samples are drawn in a parametric way from the fitted model of the approximating family. That is, draw X_1^*, \dots, X_m^* from $N(\hat{\mu}_1, \hat{\sigma}_1^2)$ and Y_1^*, \dots, Y_n^* from $N(\hat{\mu}_2, \hat{\sigma}_2^2)$, respectively.

Again, no closed form expression for (2.3.3) is available. By repeating the basic resampling procedure for a large number of times, say, B times, we may obtain B of the terms inside the curly bracket of (2.3.3). The average of these will approximate (2.3.3). Furthermore, the empirical cumulative distribution function of these will approximate the sampling distribution of the criterion. We may express the stochastic approximation to (2.3.3) as follows :

$$(2.3.4) \quad 1/B \sum_{k=1}^B \{N \log 2\pi + m \log \hat{\sigma}_{1,k}^{*2} + n \log \hat{\sigma}_{2,k}^{*2} \\ + \sum (x_i - \hat{\mu}_{1,k}^*)^2 / \hat{\sigma}_{1,k}^{*2} + \sum (y_j - \hat{\mu}_{2,k}^*)^2 / \hat{\sigma}_{2,k}^{*2}\}.$$

Note. We may draw the bootstrap sample in a nonparametric way, that is, by drawing with replacement from the original sample. But as Lee(1991) shows, it often generates identical bootstrap sample in small sample cases to give unsatisfactory results. Therefore our attention will be restricted to parametric bootstrap.

3. Numerical Study

In this section a Monte Carlo study is provided to compare the selection criteria previously discussed. Normal distributions are selected as operating families. Sample sizes are set at (5, 5), (5, 10), (10, 10), (20, 10), (20, 20), and μ 's are set at (0, 0) and (0, 2). To set up an unequal variance situation, σ_1/σ_2 is set at 2 and 4.

When $\mu_1 = \mu_2$, Lehmann(1983) states that the combined estimator, say, $\bar{\mu} = (m \hat{\mu}_1 + n \hat{\mu}_2)/N$ is also an asymptotically efficient estimator. Therefore, in addition to the maximum likelihood estimator, $\hat{\mu}$, which is obtained from solving the simultaneous equation, $\bar{\mu}$, will also be used for comparison.

To compare the performance, the number of times each criterion selects the correct submodel will be computed. The average values and standard errors are also recorded to assess the overall sampling variation.

This simulation study is run on Micro Vax II, and the total CPU time used is about 20 hours. The number of bootstrap samples are set at 100, and the total number of replications are set at 1000. IMSL library function, *ggnml* is used to generate the normal random numbers. To solve the cubic equation in (2.2.2) the exact solution formula from a mathematical handbook is used, since Newton-Raphson type iterative method sometimes fails to converge.

Table 1 and 2 give the results when the actual means are the same with different standard deviations as the sample sizes vary. Table 3, 4 and 5 give the results when the actual means are different in addition.

Table 1 shows the results when $\mu_1 = \mu_2$, $\sigma_1 = 1$, $\sigma_2 = 2$. Hence it is expected that the average values of the criteria for Model(3) will be smaller than those for Model(4). It can be observed that $\bar{\mu}$ gives more satisfactory results than $\hat{\mu}$ for most of the cases. Exceptions are the cases of bootstrap version with sample sizes (5, 5) and (5, 10). Regarding the average values $\bar{\mu}$

Tables

Note. Standard errors are around 0.2~0.3. PCS denotes the percentage of correct selection out of 1000 replications.

Table 1. Average value of the criterion and the percentage of correct selection from 1000 replications when $(\mu_1, \mu_2, \sigma_1, \sigma_2) = (0, 0, 1, 2)$.

(m, n)	criterion	p=3, $\hat{\mu}$	p=3, $\bar{\mu}$	p=4	PCS($\hat{\mu}$)	PCS($\bar{\mu}$)
(5, 5)	AIC	38.87	38.77	38.59	78.8%	63.6%
	TIC	36.06	37.01	36.57	70.1%	57.3%
	Bootstrap	43.88	40.51	45.80	87.4%	92.0%
(5, 10)	AIC	58.98	59.63	59.70	79.4%	65.4%
	TIC	57.59	58.20	58.16	74.5%	60.6%
	Bootstrap	61.51	59.72	62.59	80.9%	84.1%
(10, 10)	AIC	73.58	74.33	74.41	80.9%	68.9%
	TIC	72.56	73.35	73.34	79.2%	66.9%
	Bootstrap	72.83	73.43	73.54	78.8%	66.2%
(20, 10)	AIC	101.86	102.37	102.73	81.9%	71.9%
	TIC	101.08	101.59	101.88	78.7%	71.0%
	Bootstrap	100.12	100.89	100.83	78.8%	64.6%
(20, 20)	AIC	143.71	145.07	144.71	83.6%	74.0%
	TIC	143.09	144.55	144.06	83.0%	72.8%
	Bootstrap	141.61	143.30	141.94	74.9%	53.9%

Note : This table is based on 100 bootstrap samples and 1000 total number of replications when the true models are $N(0, 1)$ and $N(0, 2^2)$, respectively.

Table 2. Average value of the criterion and the percentage of correct selection from 1000 replications when $(\mu_1, \mu_2, \sigma_1, \sigma_2) = (0, 0, 1, 4)$.

(m, n)	criterion	p=3, $\hat{\mu}$	p=3, $\bar{\mu}$	p=4	PCS($\hat{\mu}$)	PCS($\bar{\mu}$)
(5, 5)	AIC	44.82	47.54	45.45	77.6%	40.3%
	TIC	43.01	45.71	43.41	69.4%	36.1%
	Bootstrap	49.80	49.61	52.53	90.7%	75.1%
(5, 10)	AIC	73.00	75.00	73.76	80.0%	46.7%
	TIC	71.55	73.50	72.23	76.9%	41.6%
	Bootstrap	75.70	75.74	76.54	80.2%	64.6%
(10, 10)	AIC	87.45	89.75	88.23	79.7%	48.4%
	TIC	86.35	88.62	87.09	77.7%	46.9%
	Bootstrap	86.53	90.04	87.25	78.8%	26.2%
(20, 10)	AIC	115.99	118.51	116.85	80.6%	48.9%
	TIC	115.24	117.67	116.04	79.3%	48.2%
	Bootstrap	114.12	118.62	114.98	80.3%	15.6%
(20, 20)	AIC	171.60	174.25	172.38	78.4%	49.8%
	TIC	171.01	173.60	171.77	77.5%	48.8%
	Bootstrap	169.44	174.36	169.58	70.6%	3.8%

Note : This table is based on 100 bootstrap samples and 1000 total number of replications when the true models are $N(0, 1)$ and $N(0, 4^2)$, respectively.

Table 3. Average value of the criterion and the percentage of correct selection from 1000 replications when $(\mu_1, \mu_2, \sigma_1, \sigma_2) = (0, 2, 1, 2)$.

(m, n)	criterion	p=3, $\bar{\mu}$	p=3, $\bar{\mu}$	p=4	PCS($\bar{\mu}$)	PCS($\bar{\mu}$)
(5, 5)	AIC	40.84	43.60	38.41	72.8%	82.8%
	TIC	38.99	41.77	36.41	76.1%	86.1%
	Bootstrap	46.46	45.19	45.58	53.5%	44.5%
(5, 10)	AIC	66.86	66.16	59.86	90.6%	93.2%
	TIC	65.18	64.47	58.33	90.6%	93.0%
	Bootstrap	68.61	66.03	63.04	83.4%	71.5%
(10, 10)	AIC	80.52	83.55	74.82	93.1%	95.3%
	TIC	79.40	82.28	73.79	92.4%	95.0%
	Bootstrap	79.70	82.35	73.85	93.5%	94.9%
(20, 10)	AIC	108.55	114.35	102.33	94.7%	97.7%
	TIC	107.51	113.37	115.53	93.8%	97.4%
	Bootstrap	106.77	112.86	100.48	94.6%	98.3%
(20, 20)	AIC	157.20	163.19	145.41	99.5%	99.9%
	TIC	156.42	162.21	144.86	99.6%	99.8%
	Bootstrap	155.05	161.12	142.61	99.9%	100.0%

Note : This table is based on 100 bootstrap samples and 1000 total number of replications when the true models are $N(0, 1)$ and $N(2, 2^2)$, respectively.

Table 4. Average value of the criterion and the percentage of correct selection from 1000 replications when $(\mu_1, \mu_2, \sigma_1, \sigma_2) = (0, 2, 1, 4)$.

(m, n)	criterion	p=3, $\bar{\mu}$	p=3, $\bar{\mu}$	p=4	PCS($\bar{\mu}$)	PCS($\bar{\mu}$)
(5, 5)	AIC	45.91	49.69	45.40	42.4%	72.0%
	TIC	44.05	47.76	43.40	48.7%	74.6%
	Bootstrap	51.03	51.74	52.75	23.9%	39.2%
(5, 10)	AIC	75.24	79.05	73.65	55.6%	82.0%
	TIC	73.75	77.35	72.09	57.8%	93.1%
	Bootstrap	77.90	79.39	76.54	54.7%	65.8%
(10, 10)	AIC	89.73	96.13	88.28	59.1%	83.3%
	TIC	88.67	94.77	87.19	60.8%	83.0%
	Bootstrap	88.78	95.90	87.29	60.0%	92.0%
(20, 10)	AIC	117.74	125.93	116.37	57.0%	82.1%
	TIC	116.93	125.06	115.53	59.2%	82.1%
	Bootstrap	115.84	125.64	114.43	57.8%	94.1%
(20, 20)	AIC	176.34	187.98	172.96	76.5%	93.9%
	TIC	175.72	187.06	172.40	76.9%	93.8%
	Bootstrap	174.17	187.05	170.18	84.1%	99.8%

Note : This table is based on 100 bootstrap samples and 1000 total number of replications when the true models are $N(0, 1)$ and $N(2, 4^2)$, respectively.

Table 5. Average value of the criterion and the percentage of correct selection from 1000 replications when the parameter values are given by $(\mu_1, \mu_2, \sigma_1, \sigma_2) = (0, 1, 1, 2)$ and $(\mu_1, \mu_2, \sigma_1, \sigma_2) = (0, 1, 1, 4)$

$(\mu_1, \mu_2, \sigma_1, \sigma_2)$	(m, n)		$p=3,$	$p=4$	PCS
$(0, 1, 1, 2)$	$(5, 10)$	AIC	61.06	59.72	49.2%
		TIC	59.58	58.12	53.4%
		Bootstrap	63.27	62.75	42.9%
	$(20, 10)$	AIC	103.86	102.36	57.5%
		TIC	103.10	101.60	58.7%
		Bootstrap	102.12	100.48	59.2%
$(0, 1, 1, 4)$	$(5, 10)$	AIC	73.54	73.76	30.0%
		TIC	72.07	72.23	33.5%
		Bootstrap	76.47	77.03	29.2%
	$(20, 10)$	AIC	116.79	116.98	30.7%
		TIC	116.07	116.25	31.9%
		Bootstrap	114.95	115.12	31.4%

gives more consistent results than $\bar{\mu}$. The only exception is observed for the case of AIC with sample sizes $(5, 5)$. With $\bar{\mu}$, bootstrap gives somewhat consistent results but its behaviour gets worse as the sample sizes increase. Among the three criteria it is not easy to tell which one gives the best performance. But the performance of bootstrap with $\bar{\mu}$ in small samples is notable.

Table 2 shows the results when $\mu_1 = \mu_2$, $\sigma_1 = 1$, $\sigma_2 = 4$. With larger variance of Y values, it is observed that $\bar{\mu}$ gives worse results than the previous case. The case of the bootstrap criterion with sample sizes $(20, 20)$ gives surprisingly poor result, only 3.8% of correct selection! Again, it is noted that the performance of bootstrap with $\bar{\mu}$ gets worse as the sample sizes increase. Regarding the average values of the criteria, similar comments to the previous one can be made.

Table 3 and 4 shows the results when $\mu_1 = 0$, $\mu_2 = 2$. σ_1 is still 1 and σ_2 is set at 2 and 4 respectively. It is expected that the average values of the criteria for Model(4) will be smaller than those for Model(3). It is observed that the overall performance gets better as the sample sizes increase. Now $\bar{\mu}$ outperforms $\bar{\mu}$ in many a case.

What if μ_2 is closer to μ_1 than before? Table 5 gives some results when μ_1 is still 0 but μ_2 is now 1 instead of 2. The overall performance gets worse than before. As σ_2 gets larger the performance gets even worse.

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