

Article

Weighted Mean Squared Deviation Feature Screening for Binary Features

Gaizhen Wang¹ and Guoyu Guan^{2,*} 

¹ School of Mathematics and Statistics, Northeast Normal University, Changchun 130000, China; wanggz828@nenu.edu.cn

² Key Laboratory for Applied Statistics of the MOE, School of Economics and Management, Northeast Normal University, Changchun 130000, China

* Correspondence: guangy599@nenu.edu.cn

Received: 22 February 2020; Accepted: 13 March 2020; Published: 14 March 2020



Abstract: In this study, we propose a novel model-free feature screening method for ultrahigh dimensional binary features of binary classification, called weighted mean squared deviation (WMSD). Compared to Chi-square statistic and mutual information, WMSD provides more opportunities to the binary features with probabilities near 0.5. In addition, the asymptotic properties of the proposed method are theoretically investigated under the assumption $\log p = o(n)$. The number of features is practically selected by a Pearson correlation coefficient method according to the property of power-law distribution. Lastly, an empirical study of Chinese text classification illustrates that the proposed method performs well when the dimension of selected features is relatively small.

Keywords: Chi-square statistic; feature screening; mutual information; Pearson correlation coefficient; power-law distribution; weighted mean squared deviation

1. Introduction

Feature screening is a practical and powerful tool in data analysis and statistical modeling of ultrahigh dimensional data, such as genomes, biomedical images and text data. In supervised learning, features of data often satisfy the sparsity assumption, i.e., only a small number of features are relevant to the response in a large amount of features. Therefore, Fan and Lv [1] proposed a sure independence screening method based on correlation learning for linear model and theoretically proved the screening consistency. Subsequently, a series of model-free feature screening methods were proposed, which did not require model specification [2–7]. These methods learned the marginal relationships between the response and features, and filtered out the features with weak relationships to response.

In this study, we focus on feature screening of binary classification with ultrahigh dimensional binary features. The purpose of feature screening in classification is to filter out a large amount of irrelevant features that are unhelpful for the discrimination of class labels. Both computational speed and classification accuracy are also expected to be taken into account. For categorical features, statistical test (e.g., Chi-square test) [8,9], information theory (e.g., information gain, mutual information, cross entropy) [10–13], and Bayesian methods [14,15] are usually used for feature screening, especially in the field of text classification. In this study, we propose a novel model-free feature screening method called weighted mean squared deviation (WMSD), which can be considered as a simplified version of Chi-square statistic and mutual information. Next, according to the property of power-law distribution [16,17], a Pearson correlation coefficient method is developed to select the number of the relevant features. Lastly, the proposed method is applied to Chinese text classification. It outperforms Chi-square statistic and mutual information when a small number of words are selected.

The rest of this article is organized as follows. In Section 2.1, we introduce the weighted mean squared deviation feature screening method and investigate its asymptotic properties. In Section 2.2, a Pearson correlation coefficient method is developed based on the property of power-law distribution for model selection. In Section 2.3, the relationships between Chi-square statistic, mutual information and WMSD are discussed. In Section 3, the outstanding performance of the proposed method is numerically confirmed on both simulated and empirical datasets. Lastly, some conclusions of this study are given in Section 4. Some derivations and theoretical proofs are shown in the in the Appendixs A and B.

2. Methodology

2.1. Weighted Mean Squared Deviation

As an general classification task, let $(X_i, Y_i)_{1 \leq i \leq n}$ be n independent identically distributed observations. For i -th observation, $X_i = (X_{i1}, \dots, X_{ip})^T \in \{0, 1\}^p$ is the associated p -dimensional binary feature, and $Y_i \in \{0, 1\}$ is the corresponding binary class label. Denote all necessary parameters as follows, $P(Y_i = 1) = \pi$, $P(X_{ij} = 1|Y_i = 1) = \theta_{1j}$, $P(X_{ij} = 1|Y_i = 0) = \theta_{0j}$, $P(X_{ij}Y_i = 1) = \mu_{1j} = \pi\theta_{1j}$, $P(X_{ij}(1 - Y_i) = 1) = \mu_{0j} = (1 - \pi)\theta_{0j}$ and $P(X_{ij} = 1) = \theta_j = \pi\theta_{1j} + (1 - \pi)\theta_{0j}$, for $1 \leq i \leq n$ and $1 \leq j \leq p$. Under the model-free feature screening framework, we need to filter out the features that irrelevant (or independent) of class label, i.e., $\theta_{1j} = \theta_{0j} = \theta_j$. Intuitively, feature X_{ij} is independent of Y_i , if and only if $\omega_j = \pi(\theta_{1j} - \theta_j)^2 + (1 - \pi)(\theta_{0j} - \theta_j)^2 = \pi(1 - \pi)(\theta_{1j} - \theta_{0j})^2 = 0$. Note that, the probabilities of two classes are considered as weights in ω_j . In contrast, j -th feature is relevant, if and only if $\omega_j \neq 0$. Then we define the true model as $\mathcal{T} = \{j : \omega_j \neq 0, 1 \leq j \leq p\}$ with model size $|\mathcal{T}| = d_0$ and the full model as $\mathcal{F} = \{1, \dots, p\}$.

Next, the Laplace smoothing method [18] is adopted for parameter estimation, to make all estimators bounded away from 0 and 1. The parameter estimators are denoted as $\hat{\pi} = (2 + \sum_{i=1}^n Y_i)/(n + 4)$, $\hat{\mu}_{1j} = (1 + \sum_{i=1}^n Y_i X_{ij})/(n + 4)$ and $\hat{\mu}_{0j} = (1 + \sum_{i=1}^n (1 - Y_i) X_{ij})/(n + 4)$, for $1 \leq j \leq p$. It is easy to represent that $\hat{\theta}_{1j} = \hat{\mu}_{1j}/\hat{\pi}$, $\hat{\theta}_{0j} = \hat{\mu}_{0j}/(1 - \hat{\pi})$ and $\hat{\theta}_j = \hat{\mu}_{1j} + \hat{\mu}_{0j}$, for $1 \leq j \leq p$. Then, a model-free feature screening statistic is constructed, called weighted mean squared deviation (WMSD), i.e.,

$$\hat{\omega}_j = \hat{\pi}(1 - \hat{\pi})(\hat{\theta}_{1j} - \hat{\theta}_{0j})^2, \tag{1}$$

which is an estimator of ω_j . It is expected that, the features far away from independency should be selected. Intuitively, those features with larger $\hat{\omega}_j$ values are more likely to be relevant. In contrast, those with smaller $\hat{\omega}_j$ values are less likely. Consequently, an estimated model is defined as $\widehat{\mathcal{M}} = \{j : \hat{\omega}_j > c, j \in \mathcal{F}\}$, where c is a positive critical value. The following theorem provides the asymptotic properties of the WMSD method under the assumption of ultrahigh dimension.

Theorem 1. Assume $\log p = o(n)$ and there exists a positive constant $\epsilon < 1/3$, such that $\epsilon \leq \pi \leq 1 - \epsilon$, $\epsilon \leq \theta_{kj} \leq 1 - \epsilon$ for any $k \in \{0, 1\}$ and $j \in \mathcal{F}$, and $|\theta_{1j} - \theta_{0j}| \geq \epsilon$ for $j \in \mathcal{T}$. We have the following two results:

- (1) $\max_{j \in \mathcal{F}} |\hat{\omega}_j - \omega_j| = O_P(\sqrt{\log p/n})$;
- (2) there exists $0 < c < (1 - \epsilon)e^3$, such that $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} P(\widehat{\mathcal{M}} = \mathcal{T}) = 1$.

Note that, the conditions $\epsilon \leq \pi \leq 1 - \epsilon$, $\epsilon \leq \theta_{kj} \leq 1 - \epsilon$ imply all parameters are bounded away from 0 and 1, and the condition $|\theta_{1j} - \theta_{0j}| \geq \epsilon$ implies $P(X_{ij} = 1|Y_i = 1) \neq P(X_{ij} = 1|Y_i = 0)$ for $j \in \mathcal{T}$. Theorem 1 states that (1) $\hat{\omega}_j$ is a consistent estimator of ω_j and (2) $\widehat{\mathcal{M}}$ is a consistent estimator of \mathcal{T} as long as the critical value c lies between 0 and $(1 - \epsilon)e^3$, which is the strong screening consistency of WMSD. However, the lower bound ϵ is unknown in real applications. To this end, a practicable method is proposed in the next section. The proof of this theorem is left into Appendix A.

2.2. Feature Selection Via Pearson Correlation Coefficient

While the true model \mathcal{T} can be theoretically selected by Theorem 1, it strongly depends on the critical value c . However, c is not given beforehand in empirical studies, and it always varies with the data. In order to solve this problem, the following strategy is developed for feature selection. Firstly, without loss of generality, it could be assumed that the features have been appropriately reordered such that $\hat{\omega}_1 > \hat{\omega}_2 > \dots > \hat{\omega}_p$, then all candidate models can be given by $\mathbb{M} = \{\mathcal{M}_{(d)} : 1 \leq d \leq p\}$ with $\mathcal{M}_{(d)} = \{1, \dots, d\}$ for $1 \leq d \leq p$, which is a finite set with a total of p nested candidate models. Thus, the original problem of determination for critical value c from $(0, +\infty)$ is converted into a model selection problem with respect to the model set \mathbb{M} . Next, according to our best knowledge of text classification, the relatively large ω_j s of irrelevant features approximatively follow a power-law distribution. Meanwhile, both ω_j s of relevant features and relatively small ω_j s of irrelevant features can not fit the power-law distribution well. The density function of power-law distribution can be represented as,

$$p(x) = \frac{\alpha - 1}{x_0} \left(\frac{x}{x_0}\right)^{-\alpha}, \quad (2)$$

where the power parameter $\alpha > 1$ and the lower bound parameter $x_0 > 0$. A typical property of power-law distribution is that it obeys $\log p(x) = \alpha \log x + C$, i.e., it follows a straight line on a doubly logarithmic plot, where C is a constant dependent on parameters α and x_0 . Therefore, a common way to probe for the power-law behavior is to construct the frequency distribution histogram of data, and plot the histogram on doubly logarithmic axes. If the doubly logarithmic histogram approximatively falls on a straight line, the data can be considered to follow a power-law distribution [16]. This inspires us to use Pearson correlation coefficient of doubly logarithmic histogram of $\hat{\omega}_j$ s to find an optimal model from \mathbb{M} . The Pearson correlation coefficient of sequences $\{\log j\}_{1 \leq j \leq m}$ and $\{\log \hat{\omega}_j\}_{d \leq j \leq d+m-1}$ can be represented as,

$$r_d = \frac{m \sum_{j=1}^m \log j \log \hat{\omega}_{j+d-1} - (\sum_{j=1}^m \log j)(\sum_{j=1}^m \log \hat{\omega}_{j+d-1})}{\sqrt{m \sum_{j=1}^m (\log j)^2 - (\sum_{j=1}^m \log j)^2} \sqrt{m \sum_{j=1}^m (\log \hat{\omega}_{j+d-1})^2 - (\sum_{j=1}^m \log \hat{\omega}_{j+d-1})^2}}, \quad (3)$$

for $1 \leq d \leq p - m + 1$, where m is the number of points when calculating Pearson correlation coefficient. Obviously, the absolute value of r_d can be used to measure the approximate level of sequence $\{\hat{\omega}_j\}_{d \leq j \leq d+m-1}$ to power-law distribution. Thus, the best model is selected as $\hat{\mathcal{M}} = \mathcal{M}_{(\hat{d})}$, with

$$\hat{d} = \operatorname{argmax}_{d_{\min} \leq d \leq d_{\max}} |r_d| - 1, \quad (4)$$

where d_{\min} and d_{\max} are the smallest and largest true model sizes to be considered. In other words, if the sequence $\{\hat{\omega}_j\}_{\hat{d}+1 \leq j \leq \hat{d}+m}$ fits the power-law distribution best over all candidate continuous subsequences of $\{\hat{\omega}_j\}_{1 \leq j \leq p}$, then the features in model $\{\hat{d} + 1 \leq j \leq \hat{d} + m\}$ are more likely to be irrelevant and the features in model $\{1 \leq j \leq \hat{d}\}$ are more likely to be relevant. As a result, the Pearson correlation coefficient method is adopted to determine the model size estimated by WMSD. In numerical studies, parameters m , d_{\min} and d_{\max} must be artificially given beforehand by empirical experience. The performance of numerical studies suggests that the feature selection method works quite well both on simulated and empirical data.

2.3. The Relationships between Chi-Square Statistic, Mutual Information and WMSD

As we know, Chi-square statistic and mutual information are two popularly used feature screening methods for discrete features. Next, the relationships between these two feature screening methods

and WMSD will be investigated. According to the definitions of parameter estimators above, the Chi-square statistic can be represented as,

$$\chi_j^2 = \frac{n\{n_{1j}(n - n_{1.} - n_{.j} + n_{1j}) - (n_{.j} - n_{1j})(n_{1.} - n_{1j})\}^2}{n_{.j}n_{1.}(n - n_{.j})(n - n_{1.})} \approx n\hat{\theta}_j^{-1}(1 - \hat{\theta}_j)^{-1}\hat{\omega}_j, \quad (5)$$

where $n_{1.} = \sum_{i=1}^n Y_i$, $n_{.j} = \sum_{i=1}^n X_{ij}$, and $n_{1j} = \sum_{i=1}^n X_{ij}Y_i$ for $1 \leq j \leq p$. Formula (5) shows the relationship between Chi-square statistic and WMSD (see Appendix B.1 for detailed derivation). Thus, WMSD can be considered as a simplified version of Chi-square statistic.

In a similar way, the mutual information can be represented as,

$$\begin{aligned} MI_j &= \frac{n_{1j}}{n} \log \frac{nn_{1j}}{n_{1.}n_{.j}} + \frac{n_{1.} - n_{1j}}{n} \log \frac{n(n_{1.} - n_{1j})}{n_{1.}(n - n_{.j})} + \frac{n_{.j} - n_{1j}}{n} \log \frac{n(n_{.j} - n_{1j})}{n_{.j}(n - n_{1.})} \\ &\quad + \frac{n - n_{1.} - n_{.j} + n_{1j}}{n} \log \frac{n(n - n_{1.} - n_{.j} + n_{1j})}{(n - n_{1.})(n - n_{.j})} \\ &\approx n^{-1}\chi_j^2 \approx \hat{\theta}_j^{-1}(1 - \hat{\theta}_j)^{-1}\hat{\omega}_j, \end{aligned} \quad (6)$$

for $1 \leq j \leq p$, Formula (6) shows the relationship among mutual information, Chi-square statistic and WMSD (see Appendix B.2 for detailed derivation). Chi-square statistic and mutual information are asymptotic equivalent for feature screening of binary classification with binary features, if the sample size n is ignored.

Remark 1. From Formulas (5) and (6), compared to Chi-square statistic and mutual information, WMSD provides more opportunities to the features with probabilities (i.e., θ_j) near 0.5. For an example, if $n = 100$, $\hat{\theta}_1 = 0.2$, $\hat{\theta}_2 = 0.1$, $MI_1 = 0.2$ and $MI_2 = 0.3$, then $\chi_1^2 \approx 20$, $\chi_2^2 \approx 30$, $\hat{\omega}_1 \approx 0.032$ and $\hat{\omega}_2 \approx 0.027$. It is obviously that, $MI_1 < MI_2$ and $\chi_1^2 < \chi_2^2$, but $\hat{\omega}_1 > \hat{\omega}_2$. This property is also confirmed in the following empirical study of Chinese text classification.

3. Numerical Studies

3.1. Simulation Study

To evaluate the finite sample performance of WMSD feature screening method for binary classification with binary features, two standard feature selection methods are considered as competitors, i.e., Chi-square statistic (Chi2) and mutual information (MI). In addition, to investigate the robustness of the proposed method under different classifiers, two popular used classification methods are considered, i.e., naive Bayes (NB) and logistic regression (LR). To generate the simulated data, a multi-variate Bernoulli model [19] with both relevant and irrelevant binary features is considered. Moreover, different sample sizes of training set (i.e., $n = 1000, 2000, 5000$), different feature dimensions (i.e., $p = 500, 1000$), and different true model sizes (i.e., $d_0 = 20, 50$) are considered in parameter setup. For each fixed parameter setting, a total of 1000 simulation replications are conducted. For each simulated dataset, three feature screening methods are adopted, i.e., Chi2, MI and WMSD. Subsequently, the false positive rate (FPR), that is $FPR = |\mathcal{T} \setminus \widehat{\mathcal{M}}| / |\mathcal{T}|$, of WMSD is calculated. In the same way, the false negative rate (FNR), that is $FNR = |(\mathcal{F} \setminus \mathcal{T}) \cap \widehat{\mathcal{M}}| / |\mathcal{F} \setminus \mathcal{T}|$, of WMSD is also calculated. Average FPR and FNR values over 1000 replications are reported. Lastly, in order to evaluate the performance of classification, another 1000 independent observations as testing sample are generated for each replication. Then, the area under the receiver operating characteristic curve (AUC) is adopted to evaluate the out-of-sample prediction accuracy. The AUC values of NB and LR on three estimated models (separately selected by Chi2, MI and WMSD) are calculated on the testing sample and averaged over 1000 replications.

For the given simulation model and parameter setup, the simulated data is generated as follows. Firstly, generate the class label $Y_i \in \{0, 1\}$ with probability $P(Y_i = 1) = \pi = 0.5$ for balanced case and $\pi = 0.8$ for unbalanced case. Next, given Y_i , the j -th binary feature X_{ij} is generated from a multi-variate Bernoulli model with probability $P(X_{ij} = 1|Y_i = 1) = \theta_{1j} = 0.05\{j^{-0.2}p^{0.2} + I(1 \leq j \leq 0.5d_0)j^{-0.5}d_0^{0.5}\}$ and $P(X_{ij} = 1|Y_i = 0) = \theta_{0j} = 0.05\{j^{-0.2}p^{0.2} + I(0.5d_0 + 1 \leq j \leq d_0)j^{-0.5}d_0^{0.5}\}$ for $j \in \{1, \dots, p\}$, where $I(\cdot)$ is the indicator function. Note that, without loss of generality, we set $\mathcal{T} = \{1, \dots, d_0\}$, that is, the first d_0 features are relevant. Moreover, in this simulation, the parameters in Formulas (3) and (4) are set to be $m = 100$, $d_{min} = 10$ and $d_{max} = 100$.

The detailed simulation results are given in Table 1. In balanced case (i.e., $\pi = 0.5$), the following results could be obtained. First, if both p and n are fixed, a larger true model size d_0 leads to a larger AUC. Because the more relevant features are involved, the better we can predict. Second, if both d_0 and n are fixed, a larger feature dimension p leads to worse performance in terms of AUC. This is reasonable because the larger feature dimension leads to more challenge for feature selection and then a worse prediction. Third, if both p and d_0 are fixed, a larger sample size n leads to a larger AUC and a smaller FPR. This is expected because the larger sample size leads to a more accurate estimator and then a better prediction. Forth, in almost all parameter settings, the AUC values of WMSD are larger than that of Chi2 and MI, which states that WMSD performs better than the other two methods on the simulated data. Last, for all parameter settings, the FNR values are relatively small, which indicates that WMSD can filter out most irrelevant features. The results of unbalanced case (i.e., $\pi = 0.8$) are similar to that of balanced case. For any parameter setting, FPR values are larger than that of balanced case, which implies that feature selection is harder in unbalanced case.

Table 1. Results of simulation study. The averaged area under the receiver operating characteristic curve (AUC) values of naive Bayes (NB) and logistic regression (LR) based on three estimated models (Chi-square statistic (Chi2), mutual information (MI) and weighted mean squared deviation (WMSD)) are reported, and the averaged false positive rate (FPR) and false negative rate (FNR) values of WMSD are also reported, over 1000 replications.

d_0	p	n	AUC of NB			AUC of LR			FPR	FNR	
			Chi2	MI	WMSD	Chi2	MI	WMSD			
$\pi = 0.5$											
20	500	1000	0.7238	0.7233	0.7318	0.6966	0.6960	0.7033	0.4188	0.0001	
		2000	0.7610	0.7609	0.7625	0.7411	0.7411	0.7428	0.1930	0.0000	
		5000	0.7778	0.7778	0.7779	0.7673	0.7673	0.7676	0.0108	0.0013	
	1000	1000	0.7145	0.7135	0.7303	0.6849	0.6839	0.7007	0.4014	0.0001	
		2000	0.7545	0.7543	0.7591	0.7335	0.7332	0.7399	0.1599	0.0001	
		5000	0.7693	0.7693	0.7697	0.7584	0.7584	0.7592	0.0024	0.0010	
	50	500	1000	0.8936	0.8935	0.8973	0.8463	0.8460	0.8499	0.2976	0.0008
			2000	0.9102	0.9102	0.9110	0.8837	0.8837	0.8850	0.1058	0.0001
			5000	0.9165	0.9165	0.9165	0.8998	0.8998	0.8998	0.0096	0.0005
1000		1000	0.8789	0.8787	0.8851	0.8239	0.8233	0.8313	0.3408	0.0004	
		2000	0.9014	0.9013	0.9031	0.8717	0.8716	0.8748	0.1106	0.0001	
		5000	0.9097	0.9097	0.9098	0.8921	0.8921	0.8923	0.0017	0.0007	
$\pi = 0.8$											
20	500	1000	0.6372	0.6502	0.6883	0.6422	0.6545	0.6905	0.4796	0.0007	
		2000	0.7206	0.7237	0.7303	0.7203	0.7239	0.7307	0.3413	0.0001	
		5000	0.7692	0.7692	0.7696	0.7658	0.7659	0.7664	0.0706	0.0001	
	1000	1000	0.6171	0.6329	0.6908	0.6268	0.6405	0.6936	0.4833	0.0007	
		2000	0.7183	0.7210	0.7328	0.7190	0.7216	0.7330	0.3214	0.0001	
		5000	0.7642	0.7640	0.7658	0.7614	0.7613	0.7627	0.0406	0.0002	
	50	500	1000	0.8636	0.8665	0.8746	0.8537	0.8542	0.8594	0.4739	0.0017
			2000	0.9018	0.9022	0.9043	0.8930	0.8923	0.8935	0.2115	0.0005
			5000	0.9149	0.9149	0.9150	0.9107	0.9107	0.9107	0.0442	0.0000
		1000	1000	0.8428	0.8468	0.8583	0.8326	0.8337	0.8425	0.5433	0.0008
			2000	0.8894	0.8899	0.8943	0.8790	0.8783	0.8821	0.2291	0.0004
			5000	0.9075	0.9074	0.9079	0.9028	0.9027	0.9034	0.0295	0.0001

3.2. An Application in Chinese Text Classification

The dataset is downloaded from CNKI (www.cnki.net), which is one of the largest academic literature platform in China. It contains $n = 14,473$ abstracts of articles published in CSSCI (Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index) journals of economics and management fields in 2018. The abstracts are composed of $p = 2385$ Chinese words (ignored the words with frequencies less than 10). Our purpose is to classify the articles into different fields (economics or management) according to their abstracts, and select a small number of feature words which are helpful for classification. Economics or management is considered as class 1 (i.e., $Y_i = 1$) and the other is considered as class 0 (i.e., $Y_i = 0$), respectively. In summary, there are 8570 abstracts from economics and 5903 from management. To this end, naive Bayes and logistic regression are both considered as standard classification methods. Then, Chi-square statistic, mutual information and WMSD are considered as feature screening methods and the performances of them are compared based on the two classification methods. It is noted that, the results of these feature selection methods are invariable when class 1 and class 0 are exchanged.

Next, we sample 10,000 abstracts as the training set and the others as the testing set randomly. For comparison of feature screening methods, different numbers of selected words d (from 10 to 100 by 10) are considered. The AUC values of two classification methods with different numbers of selected words are calculated for evaluating feature screening methods. For each setting, a total of 200 random replications are conducted. The averaged AUC values of two classifiers (i.e., NB and LR) over 200 replications for three feature screening methods (i.e., Chi2, MI and WMSD) with different

number of selected words, when economics and management are considered as class 1 respectively, are reported in Figure 1. Panel (1) of Figure 1 shows that when naive Bayes classifier is applied and economics is considered as class 1, AUC values based on three estimated models (separately selected by Chi2, MI and WMSD) increase as d becomes larger. Obviously, WMSD far outperforms other methods when $d < 50$, and they perform similarly when $d \geq 50$. Panel (2) shows a similar result as panel (1) when logistic regression is applied. Panels (3) and (4) of Figure 1 show that, WMSD also far outperforms Chi2 and MI when $d < 50$, if the classes are exchanged.

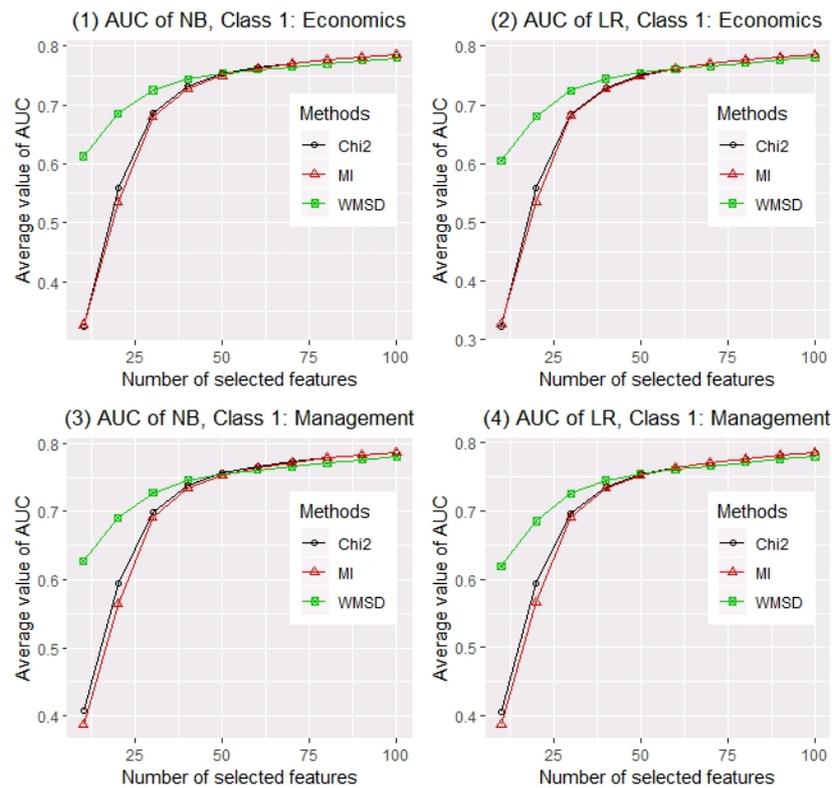


Figure 1. Averaged AUC values of NB and LR on three models ranked by Chi2, MI and WMSD with different model sizes (from 10 to 100 by 10), when economics and management are considered as class 1, over 200 replications.

Furthermore, the Pearson correlation coefficient method is used to determine the estimated model size of WMSD. To calculate \hat{d} , the parameters in Formulas (3) and (4) are set to be $m = 100$, $d_{min} = 20$ and $d_{max} = 100$. The averaged \hat{d} is 25.86 over 200 replications. In each replication, for the same \hat{d} , AUC values of NB and LR based on three estimated models by Chi2, MI, WMSD are calculated separately. Figure 2 shows the boxplots of AUC for six situations (i.e., NB+Chi2, NB+MI, NB+WMSD, LR+Chi2, LR+MI and LR+WMSD) over 200 replications. It could be observed that, when the estimated model size is relatively small (actually, averaged \hat{d} is 25.86), WMSD performs more accurate and robust than Chi2 and MI in terms of AUC, whether economics or management is considered as class 1.

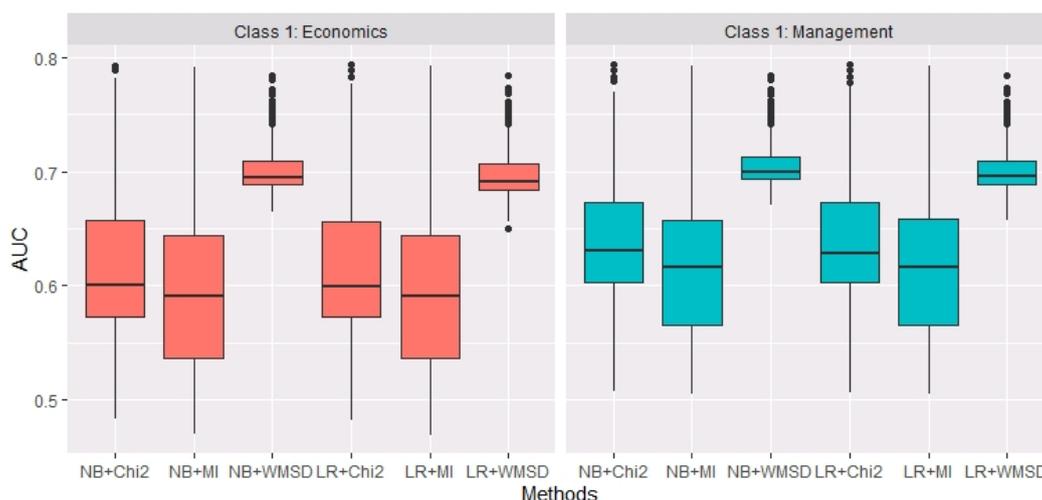


Figure 2. The boxplots of AUC values of NB and LR based on three estimated models by Chi2, MI and WMSD, when economics and management are considered as class 1, over 200 replications.

Lastly, the probabilities of top 10 words ranked by three feature screening methods are also calculated separately, based on all $n = 14,473$ abstracts. It can be seen from Table 2 that the probabilities of top 10 words ranked by WMSD are larger than that of other two methods. It states that WMSD provides more opportunities to high frequency words (with probabilities near 0.5). Because the word frequencies of almost all words are less than 0.5, the word frequencies of high frequency words are closer to 0.5. It validates the property of WMSD mentioned in Section 2.3.

Table 2. The probabilities of top 10 words ranked by three feature screening methods, Chi2, MI and WMSD.

Methods	Probabilities of Top 10 Words									
Chi2	0.285	0.034	0.133	0.029	0.043	0.047	0.012	0.014	0.022	0.017
MI	0.285	0.133	0.034	0.029	0.022	0.043	0.026	0.019	0.012	0.047
WMSD	0.285	0.133	0.541	0.211	0.223	0.203	0.034	0.235	0.047	0.043

4. Conclusions

In this study, a novel model-free feature screening method called weighted mean squared deviation is proposed especially for ultrahigh dimensional binary features of binary classification, which is a measure of dependence between each feature and the class label. WMSD can be considered as a simplified version of Chi-square statistic and mutual information, which can provide more opportunities to the features with probabilities near 0.5. Furthermore, the strong screening consistency of WMSD is investigated theoretically, the number of features is determined by a Pearson correlation coefficient method practically, and the performance of WMSD is numerically confirmed both on simulated data and an real example of Chinese text classification. Three potential directions are also proposed for future studies. First, for multi-class classification with categorical features, the corresponding WMSD statistics need to be theoretically and numerically investigated. Second, the feature selection method via the Pearson correlation coefficient has not been theoretically verified, which is an important problem to be solved. Last, in order to further confirm the outstanding performance of WMSD in empirical research, it may make sense to investigate specifically the observations for which other methods give a probability near 0.5 (i.e., it is hard to predict their class labels) in future studies.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, G.W.and G.G.; methodology, G.G.; software, G.W.; validation, G.G.; formal analysis, G.W. and G.G.; investigation, G.W.; resources, G.G.; data curation, G.W.; writing original draft

preparation, G.W. and G.G.; writing review and editing, G.W. and G.G.; visualization, G.W.; supervision, G.G.; project administration, G.G.; funding acquisition, G.G. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: The research is supported by National Social Science Fund of China, grant number 19CTJ013.

Acknowledgments: The authors thank all the anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments. The authors also thank Ningzhen Wang and Chao Wu from University of Connecticut for correcting the English writing.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A. Proof of Theorem 1

According to the definitions of $\hat{\pi}$, $\hat{\mu}_{1j}$ and $\hat{\mu}_{0j}$, we know that they all lie between $(n + 4)^{-1}$ and $1 - (n + 4)^{-1}$. In addition, by the conditions of Theorem 1, it is also known that π , θ_{1j} and θ_{0j} are all bounded away from 0 and 1 for $j \in \mathcal{F}$. Then μ_{1j} and μ_{0j} are also bounded away from 0 and 1 for $j \in \mathcal{F}$. By the conclusions of Lemma 1 in [12], for any $\varepsilon > 0$ and sufficiently large n , we have $P(|\hat{\pi} - \pi| > \varepsilon) \leq 2 \exp(-2n\varepsilon^2)$, and $P(|\hat{\mu}_{kj} - \mu_{kj}| > \varepsilon) \leq 2 \exp(-2n\varepsilon^2)$, for $k = 0, 1$ and $1 \leq j \leq p$. In addition, ω_j and $\hat{\omega}_j$ can also be rewritten as

$$\begin{aligned} \omega_j &= \pi(1 - \pi)\{\pi^{-1}\mu_{1j} - (1 - \pi)^{-1}\mu_{0j}\}^2, \\ \hat{\omega}_j &= \hat{\pi}(1 - \hat{\pi})\{\hat{\pi}^{-1}\hat{\mu}_{1j} - (1 - \hat{\pi})^{-1}\hat{\mu}_{0j}\}^2. \end{aligned}$$

Then, by the conclusion of Lemma 2 in [12], for any $\varepsilon > 0$, we have $P(|\hat{\omega}_j - \omega_j| > \varepsilon) \leq C_1 \exp(-C_2 n \varepsilon^2)$, where C_1 and C_2 are some positive constants. Next, by Bonferroni’s inequality [20],

$$\begin{aligned} P\left(\max_{j \in \mathcal{F}} |\hat{\omega}_j - \omega_j| > \sqrt{2/C_2} \sqrt{\log p/n}\right) &\leq \sum_{j=1}^p P\left(|\hat{\omega}_j - \omega_j| > \sqrt{2/C_2} \sqrt{\log p/n}\right) \\ &\leq p C_1 \exp\{-C_2(2/C_2) \log p\} = C_1 \exp(-\log p) \rightarrow 0. \end{aligned}$$

Consequently, we know that $\max_{j \in \mathcal{F}} |\hat{\omega}_j - \omega_j| = O_P(\sqrt{\log p/n})$.

By the condition of Theorem 1, $\varepsilon \leq \pi \leq 1 - \varepsilon$ and $|\theta_{1j} - \theta_{0j}| \geq \varepsilon$ for $j \in \mathcal{T}$, we have $\omega_j = \pi(1 - \pi)(\theta_{1j} - \theta_{0j})^2 \geq (1 - \varepsilon)\varepsilon^3$ for $j \in \mathcal{T}$ and $\omega_j = 0$ for $j \notin \mathcal{T}$. For $0 < c < (1 - \varepsilon)\varepsilon^3$ and $\log p = o(n)$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} P(\widehat{\mathcal{M}} = \mathcal{T}) &= P\left(\min_{j \in \mathcal{T}} \hat{\omega}_j > c, \max_{j \notin \mathcal{T}} \hat{\omega}_j < c\right) \\ &\geq P\left(\min_{j \in \mathcal{T}} \hat{\omega}_j > c\right) + P\left(\max_{j \notin \mathcal{T}} \hat{\omega}_j < c\right) - 1 \\ &\geq P\left(\max_{j \in \mathcal{T}} |\hat{\omega}_j - \omega_j| < (1 - \varepsilon)\varepsilon^3 - c\right) + P\left(\max_{j \notin \mathcal{T}} |\hat{\omega}_j - \omega_j| < c\right) - 1. \end{aligned}$$

Hence $P(\widehat{\mathcal{M}} = \mathcal{T}) \rightarrow 1$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$. The proof is completed.

Appendix B. Some Necessary Derivations

Appendix B.1. Derivation of the Relationship between Chi-Square Statistic and WMSD

Denote $n_{1.} = \sum_{i=1}^n Y_i$, $n_{.j} = \sum_{i=1}^n X_{ij}$, and $n_{1j} = \sum_{i=1}^n X_{ij}Y_i$. According to the definitions of estimators, we have $\hat{\pi} \approx n_{1.}/n$, $\hat{\theta}_j \approx n_{.j}/n$, $\hat{\theta}_{1j} \approx n_{1j}/n_{1.}$ and $\hat{\theta}_{0j} \approx (n_{.j} - n_{1j})/(n - n_{1.})$. Then we have

$$\begin{aligned} \chi_j^2 &= \frac{n\{n_{1j}(n - n_{1.} - n_{.j} + n_{1j}) - (n_{.j} - n_{1j})(n_{1.} - n_{1j})\}^2}{n_{.j}n_{1.}(n - n_{.j})(n - n_{1.})} \\ &\approx n\hat{\theta}_j^{-1}(1 - \hat{\theta}_j)^{-1}\hat{\pi}(1 - \hat{\pi})(\hat{\theta}_{1j} - \hat{\theta}_{0j})^2 \\ &= n\hat{\theta}_j^{-1}(1 - \hat{\theta}_j)^{-1}\hat{\omega}_j. \end{aligned}$$

It is the relationship between Chi-square statistic and WMSD.

Appendix B.2. Derivation of the Relationship between Mutual Information and WMSD

Based on the notations used in Appendix B.1 and according to the Taylor's theorem, we have

$$\begin{aligned}
 MI_j &= \frac{n_{1j}}{n} \log \frac{nn_{1j}}{n_{1.}n_{.j}} + \frac{n_{1.} - n_{1j}}{n} \log \frac{n(n_{1.} - n_{1j})}{n_{1.}(n - n_{.j})} + \frac{n_{.j} - n_{1j}}{n} \log \frac{n(n_{.j} - n_{1j})}{n_{.j}(n - n_{1.})} \\
 &\quad + \frac{n - n_{1.} - n_{.j} + n_{1j}}{n} \log \frac{n(n - n_{1.} - n_{.j} + n_{1j})}{(n - n_{1.})(n - n_{.j})} \\
 &= \hat{\pi} [\hat{\theta}_{1j} \log(\hat{\theta}_{1j}/\hat{\theta}_j) + (1 - \hat{\theta}_{1j}) \log\{(1 - \hat{\theta}_{1j})/(1 - \hat{\theta}_j)\}] \\
 &\quad + (1 - \hat{\pi}) [\hat{\theta}_{0j} \log(\hat{\theta}_{0j}/\hat{\theta}_j) + (1 - \hat{\theta}_{0j}) \log\{(1 - \hat{\theta}_{0j})/(1 - \hat{\theta}_j)\}] \\
 &\approx \hat{\pi} [\hat{\theta}_{1j}(\hat{\theta}_{1j}/\hat{\theta}_j - 1) + (1 - \hat{\theta}_{1j})\{(1 - \hat{\theta}_{1j})/(1 - \hat{\theta}_j) - 1\}] \\
 &\quad + (1 - \hat{\pi}) [\hat{\theta}_{0j}(\hat{\theta}_{0j}/\hat{\theta}_j - 1) + (1 - \hat{\theta}_{0j})\{(1 - \hat{\theta}_{0j})/(1 - \hat{\theta}_j) - 1\}] \\
 &= \hat{\pi}(1 - \hat{\pi})(\hat{\mu}_{1j} + \hat{\mu}_{0j})^{-1}(1 - \hat{\mu}_{1j} - \hat{\mu}_{0j})^{-1} \{ \hat{\pi}^{-1} \hat{\mu}_{1j} - (1 - \hat{\pi})^{-1} \hat{\mu}_{0j} \}^2 \\
 &= n^{-1} \chi_j^2.
 \end{aligned}$$

As a result, we know that $MI_j \approx \hat{\theta}_j^{-1}(1 - \hat{\theta}_j)^{-1} \hat{\omega}_j$. It is the relationship between mutual information and WMSD.

References

1. Fan, J.; Lv, J. Sure independence screening for ultrahigh dimensional feature space. *J. R. Stat. Soc. B* **2008**, *70*, 849–911. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
2. Zhu, L.; Li, L.; Li, R.; Zhu, L. Model-free feature screening for ultrahigh dimensional data. *J. Am. Stat. Assoc.* **2011**, *106*, 1464–1475. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
3. Li, R.; Zhong, W.; Zhu, L. Feature screening via distance correlation learning. *J. Am. Stat. Assoc.* **2012**, *107*, 1129–1139. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
4. Cui, H.; Li, R.; Zhong, W. Model-free feature screening for ultrahigh dimensional discriminant analysis. *J. Am. Stat. Assoc.* **2015**, *110*, 630–641. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
5. Yu, Z.; Dong, Y.; Zhu, L. Trace Pursuit: A general framework for model-free variable selection. *J. Am. Stat. Assoc.* **2016**, *111*, 813–821. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
6. Lin, Y.; Liu, X.; Hao, M. Model-free feature screening for high-dimensional survival data. *Sci. China Math.* **2018**, *61*, 1617–1636. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
7. Pan, W.; Wang, X.; Xiao, W.; Zhu, H. A generic sure independence screening procedure. *J. Am. Stat. Assoc.* **2019**, *114*, 928–937. [[CrossRef](#)]
8. An, B.; Wang, H.; Guo, J. Testing the statistical significance of an ultra-high-dimensional naive Bayes classifier. *Stat. Interface* **2013**, *6*, 223–229. [[CrossRef](#)]
9. Huang, D.; Li, R.; Wang, H. Feature screening for ultrahigh dimensional categorical data with applications. *J. Bus. Econ. Stat.* **2014**, *32*, 237–244. [[CrossRef](#)]
10. Lee, C.; Lee, G.G. Information gain and divergence-based feature selection for machine learning-based text categorization. *Inform. Process. Manag.* **2006**, *42*, 155–165. [[CrossRef](#)]
11. Pascoal, C.; Oliveira, M.R.; Pacheco, A.; Valadas, R. Theoretical evaluation of feature selection methods based on mutual information. *Neurocomputing* **2017**, *226*, 168–181. [[CrossRef](#)]
12. Guan, G.; Shan, N.; Guo, J. Feature screening for ultrahigh dimensional binary data. *Stat. Interface* **2018**, *11*, 41–50. [[CrossRef](#)]
13. Dai, W.; Guo, D. Beta Distribution-Based Cross-Entropy for Feature Selection. *Entropy* **2019**, *21*, 769. [[CrossRef](#)]
14. Feng, G.; Guo, J.; Jing, B.; Hao, L. A Bayesian feature selection paradigm for text classification. *Inform. Process. Manag.* **2012**, *48*, 283–302. [[CrossRef](#)]
15. Feng, G.; Guo, J.; Jing, B.; Sun, T. Feature subset selection using naive Bayes for text classification. *Pattern Recogn. Lett.* **2015**, *65*, 109–115. [[CrossRef](#)]

16. Clauset, A.; Shalizi, C.R.; Newman, M.E. Power-law distributions in empirical data. *SIAM Rev.* **2009**, *51*, 661–703. [[CrossRef](#)]
17. Stumpf, M.P.; Porter, M.A. Critical Truths About Power Laws. *Science* **2012**, *335*, 665–666. [[CrossRef](#)]
18. Murphy, K.P. *Machine Learning: A Probabilistic Perspective*; The MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, USA, 2012. [[CrossRef](#)]
19. Mccallum, A.; Nigam, K. A comparison of event models for naive Bayes text classification. In Proceedings of the AAAI-98 Workshop on Learning for Text Categorization, Madison, WI, USA, 26–31 July 1998; pp. 41–48. [[CrossRef](#)]
20. Galambos, J.; Simonelli, I. *Bonferroni-Type Inequalities with Applications*; Springer: New York, NY, USA, 1996. [[CrossRef](#)]



© 2020 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).