Another polynomial-time estimation algorithm

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Assumption 1 ($\sqrt{d}$-Decomposable tensor)**.** Let Θ be an order-3 tensor. We use $f\colon [d]\to\mathbb{R}$ to denote the distance function, in the sense of matrix spectral norm $\|\mathcal{M}(\cdot)\|_{\text{sp}}$, between Θ and its rank-r projection,

$$f(r)=\inf\{\|\mathcal{M}(\Theta-\mathcal{A})\|_{\text{sp}}\colon \text{Rank}(\mathcal{A})\leq (r,r,r)\}.$$

The tensor Θ is called $\sqrt{d}$-decomposable, if the intersection between two curves $f(r)$ and r is smaller than $\sqrt{d}$; that is, $f(\sqrt{d})\leq\sqrt{d}$.

Equivalently, Θ admits the decomposition

$$\Theta=\mathcal{A}+\mathcal{A}^{\perp},\quad \text{s.t.}\quad \text{Rank}(\mathcal{A})\leq(\sqrt{d},\sqrt{d},\sqrt{d}),\quad \text{and}\quad \|\text{Unfold}(\mathcal{A}^{\perp})\|_{\text{sp}}\leq\sqrt{d}. \tag{1}$$

Proposition 1 (Smooth matrix)**.** Every Lipschitz smooth matrix is $\sqrt{d}$-decomposable.

Proof of Proposition 1. Let Θ be a Lipschitz smooth matrix. Set $\mathcal{A}=\text{Block}(\Theta,\sqrt{d})$ and $\mathcal{A}^{\perp}=\Theta-\text{Block}(\Theta,\sqrt{d})$. Then, by approximation theorem,

$$\|\text{Unfold}(\mathcal{A}^{\perp})\|_{\text{sp}}\leq\|\mathcal{A}^{\perp}\|_F\leq\sqrt{\frac{d^2}{d}}=\sqrt{d}.$$

Since $\mathcal{A}$ is of rank at most $\sqrt{d}$, the decomposition satisfies the condition (1). □

Conjecture 1 (Higher-order spectral algorithm)**.** Suppose Θ is $\sqrt{d}$-decomposable, order-3 tensor. Then, the rank-$\sqrt{d}$ higher-order spectral algorithm [1] yields the estimate $\hat{\Theta}$ with error bound

$$\mathcal{R}(\hat{\Theta},\Theta)\lesssim d^{-1}.$$

Intuition: We decompose the error into estimation error and approximation bias

$$\begin{aligned}\|\hat{\Theta}-\Theta\|_F^2 &\leq \|\hat{\Theta}-\mathcal{A}\|_F^2+\|\mathcal{A}^{\perp}\|_F^2\\ &\lesssim \underbrace{(d^{3/2}r+dr^2+r^3)}_{\text{by Proposition 1 in [1]}}+\underbrace{d\|\text{Unfold}(\mathcal{A}^{\perp})\|_{\text{sp}}^2}_{\leq d^2 \text{ by Assumption 1}}\\ &\lesssim d^2 \text{ if } r\asymp\sqrt{d}.\end{aligned}$$

Delicate analysis is needed though, e.g. additive Gaussian model vs. Bernoulli, comparison with SBM, etc. Also, the rank choice $\asymp\sqrt{d}$ is meaningful only in asymptotical sense. In practice, we should choose rank $C\sqrt{d}$ where the constant C may depend on actual Θ, noise, etc.

SBM (HOS+iteration)	sort-and-smoothing	square spectral	higher-order spectral (HOC)
$d^{-6/5}$	$d^{-6/5}$ (for monotonic degree)	$d^{-2/3}$	d^{-1}

Table 1: Convergence rate for order-3 tensor.

Remark 2. In fact, the $\sqrt{d}$-decomposable assumption (1) can be relaxed to

$$\|\mathcal{A}^{\perp}\|_{\text{sp}}\leq\sqrt{d},\quad \text{and}\quad \|\text{Unfold}(\mathcal{A}^{\perp})\|_{\text{sp}}\leq d^{3/4}. \tag{2}$$

We did not present this form because it does not seem to have an intuitive interpretation. Note that (2) implies (1) because $\|\mathcal{A}^{\perp}\|_{\text{sp}}\leq\|\text{Unfold}(\mathcal{A}^{\perp})\|_{\text{sp}}$.

Unlike matrices, not every order-3 smooth tensor is $\sqrt{d}$-decomposable. How large is the order-3 tensor family that satisfy (1) and (2)?

References

[1] Rungang Han, Yuetian Luo, Miaoyan Wang, and Anru R Zhang, *Exact clustering in tensor block model: Statistical optimality and computational limit*, arXiv preprint arXiv:2012.09996 (2020).