

Principal Components Analysis Notes

Alexander Yuan

August 31 2025

1 Background

1.1 History

Principal Components Analysis (PCA) goes all the way back to Harold Hotelling in the 1933 when the cutting edge topics in statistics at the time were the multivariate methods we know today. It was first introduced as a technique for obtaining a smaller set of orthogonal linear projections of a single collection of correlated variables where the projections are ordered by decreasing variance. Note that it is also called the *Karhunen-Loève transform* in communications theory and *empirical orthogonal functions* in atmospheric science.

1.2 Eigendecomposition

Let \mathbf{A} be a square n by n matrix with n linearly independent eigenvectors e_i for $i = 1, \dots, n$. Then \mathbf{A} can be factored as

$$\mathbf{A} = \mathbf{E}\mathbf{\Lambda}\mathbf{E}^{-1}$$

where \mathbf{E} is the square n by n matrix whose i 'th column is the eigenvector e_i of \mathbf{A} and $\mathbf{\Lambda}$ is the diagonal matrix whose diagonal elements are the corresponding eigenvalues i.e $\mathbf{\Lambda}_{i,i} = \lambda_i$.

2 References

Hastie, T., Tibshirani, R., Friedman, J. (2009). The elements of statistical learning: Data mining, inference, and prediction (2nd ed.). Springer

Ma, Y., & Fu, Y. (Eds.). (2011). Manifold Learning Theory and Applications. CRC Press.