

The University of Texas at Austin

IN-CLASS WORK 8

M378K Introduction to Mathematical Statistics

February 22, 2026

Transformations of random variables.

Problem 8.1. Let X be a continuous random variable with the cumulative distribution function denoted by F_X and the probability density function denoted by f_X .

Let the random variable $Y = 2X$ have the p.d.f. denoted by f_Y . Then,

- a. $f_Y(x) = 2f_X(2x)$
- b. $f_Y(x) = \frac{1}{2}f_X(\frac{x}{2})$
- c. $f_Y(x) = f_X(2x)$
- d. $f_Y(x) = f_X(\frac{x}{2})$
- e. None of the above

Solution. (b)

For every $x \in \mathbb{R}$, the cumulative distribution function is

$$F_Y(x) = \mathbb{P}[Y \leq x] = \mathbb{P}[2X \leq x] = \mathbb{P}[X \leq x/2] = F_X(x/2).$$

As for the probability density function, we have that for all x ,

$$f_Y(x) = F'_Y(x) = f_X(x/2)/2.$$

Problem 8.2. If the continuous random variable X has the distribution function F_X , then the distribution function of the random variable $Y = |X|$ equals

$$F_Y(y) = ?$$

Solution.

$$F_Y(y) = \mathbb{P}[Y \leq y] = \mathbb{P}[|X| \leq y] = \mathbb{P}[-y \leq X \leq y] = F_X(y) - F_X(-y).$$

Remark. The goal is to figure out the distribution of the random variable

$$X = g(Y_1, Y_2, \dots, Y_n)$$

where $Y_i, i = 1, \dots, n$ are a **random sample** with a common density f_Y .

Our program is:

- Identify the objective: We want f_X .
- Realize: $f_X = F'_X$
- Recall the definition: $F_X(x) = \mathbb{P}[X \leq x] = \mathbb{P}[g(Y_1, \dots, Y_n) \leq x]$
- Identify the region A_x in \mathbb{R}^n where

$$g(y_1, \dots, y_n) \leq x$$

for every x , i.e., express

$$A_x = \{(y_1, \dots, y_n) : g(y_1, \dots, y_n) \leq x\}$$

- Calculate

$$F_X(x) = \int \dots \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} 1_{A_x}(y_1, \dots, y_n) f_Y(y_1) \dots f_Y(y_n) dy_1 \dots dy_n.$$

- Differentiate: $f_X = F'_X$.
- Pat yourself on the back!

Problem 8.3. One-to-one transformations: Step-by-step Let Y be a random variable with density f_Y . Let $g : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be a strictly increasing differentiable function. Define $\tilde{Y} = g(Y)$. What is the density function $f_{\tilde{Y}}$ of \tilde{Y} expressed in terms of f_Y and g ?

- Identify the objective: We want $f_{\tilde{Y}}$.
- Realize: $f_{\tilde{Y}} = F'_{\tilde{Y}}$
- Recall the definition:

$$F_{\tilde{Y}}(x) =$$

Solution.

$$\mathbb{P}[\tilde{Y} \leq x] = \mathbb{P}[g(Y) \leq x]$$

- The function g is assumed to be **strictly increasing**. In which way can you modify the inequality in the probability you obtained above to *separate* the random variable Y from the transformation g ?

Solution. If g is strictly increasing, then it is one-to-one and $h = g^{-1}$ exists (and it is also **increasing**). So,

$$\mathbb{P}[\tilde{Y} \leq x] = \mathbb{P}[g(Y) \leq x] = \mathbb{P}[Y \leq h(x)].$$

Note that the direction of the inequality remains unchanged.

- Express your result from above in terms of the c.d.f. F_Y of the r.v. Y .

Solution.

$$F_{\tilde{Y}}(x) = F_Y(h(x))$$

- Differentiate: $f_{\tilde{Y}} = F'_{\tilde{Y}}$.

Solution. The inverse h^{-1} is differentiable since h is differentiable. So,

$$f_{\tilde{Y}}(x) = \frac{d}{dx} h(x) f_Y(h(x)).$$

Problem 8.4. The time T that a manufacturing distribution system is out of operation is modeled by a distribution with the following c.d.f.

$$F_T(t) = (1 - (2/t)^2) \mathbb{1}_{(2,\infty)}(t)$$

The resulting cost to the company is $Y = T^2$. Find the probability density function f_Y of the r.v. Y .

Solution. In this problem

$$f_T(t) = 8/t^3 \mathbb{1}_{(2,\infty)}(t)$$

and

$$g(x) = x^2, x > 2 \Rightarrow h(x) = \sqrt{x}, x > 4.$$

The derivative:

$$\frac{d}{dx} h(x) = \frac{1}{2\sqrt{x}} x > 4.$$

Finally,

$$f_Y(y) = \frac{1}{2\sqrt{y}} \times \frac{8}{(\sqrt{y})^3} = \frac{4}{y^2} y > 4.$$

Problem 8.5. What if h is strictly decreasing?

Solution.

$$F_{\tilde{Y}}(y) = 1 - F_Y(h(y))$$

So,

$$f_{\tilde{Y}}(y) = -\frac{d}{dy} h(y) f_Y(y)$$

Problem 8.6. The unifying formula?

Solution.

$$f_{\tilde{Y}}(y) = \left| \frac{d}{dy} h(y) \right| f_X(y)$$

Remark. Do not forget: it always makes sense to simply attack a problem without giving it a “label” Just look at the following problem:

Problem 8.7. Let T_1 and T_2 be independent shifted geometric random variables with parameters $p_1 = 1/2$ and $p_2 = 1/3$. Compute $\mathbb{E}[\min(T_1, T_2)]$.

Solution. By the assumption, for $k \geq 1$, we have

$$\mathbb{P}[T_1 \geq k] = \sum_{i=k}^{\infty} (1-p_1)^{i-1} p_1 = (1-p_1)^{k-1} = \frac{1}{2^{k-1}}.$$

Similarly, we have $\mathbb{P}[T_2 \geq k] = (1-p_2)^{k-1} = (2/3)^{k-1}$, and so

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbb{P}[\min(T_1, T_2) \geq k] &= \mathbb{P}[T_1 \geq k \text{ and } T_2 \geq k] \\ &= \mathbb{P}[T_1 \geq k] \times \mathbb{P}[T_2 \geq k] \\ &= \frac{1}{3^{k-1}} = \left(1 - \frac{2}{3}\right)^{k-1}.\end{aligned}$$

It follows that $\min(T_1, T_2)$ has a shifted geometric distribution with $p = 2/3$, and so $\mathbb{E}[\min(T_1, T_2)] = 3/2$.