

Prediction of accident frequency for road transport of dangerous goods using cluster analysis

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Received: May 27, 2005 Accepted: December 14, 2005

Abstract

Since the traffic accidents cause serious damage to human lives and economical activity, the transportation risk assessment of dangerous goods is a valuable and useful methodology for the decision making of accident prevention and damage reduction. This paper describes the prediction method of the accident frequency, which is one of the factors of the transportation risk analysis, with the road attributes using the cluster analysis technique. The cluster analysis of motor highway in Kanto area was performed based on the statistical data of motor highway accidents in Japan. The result of cluster analysis was applied to the motor highway of Yokohama city, and the validity of the method was examined using the Mann-Whitney's U-test. It was found that the predicted accident frequency showed a good agreement with the actual accident frequency data.

Keywords: Transportation risk assessment, Dangerous goods, Accident frequency, Cluster analysis

1. Introduction

Chemical transportation accidents make a serious damage on human lives, local infrastructures and the social economy. Risk assessment, therefore is an effective and important methodology for the decision making of accident prevention and damage reduction. A reasonable discussion and judgment as a result of the risk assessment are needed for the traffic control of the vehicles which loads dangerous goods. Although the risk assessment has a long history in many industrial fields, hazardous material transportation have more difficulty in defining properties of hazard source which moves time to time than static facilities such as chemical or nuclear plants¹⁾⁻¹³⁾.

Risk is defined as a combination of the probability (or frequency) of the event and its consequence¹⁾. Since transportation risk assessment of dangerous goods also consists of two elements such as the frequency of the accident and its consequence, predicting the traffic accident frequency is indispensable to calculate the frequency of vehicles which loads dangerous goods.

Frequency of each event is calculated as the product of the frequency of the traffic accident and the probability of the possible outcome case which follows the release. The

frequency of the accident is usually given as a function of the type of road, such as highway, local etc., which can be easily identified for a given route based on the statistical data¹⁴⁾. However when examine the accident frequency of the road without accident data or the road under design one must predict or estimate the frequency from the existed statistics. This paper describes the prediction method of the traffic accident frequency with the cluster analysis technique using the road attributes such as the number of vehicle, the travel speed, the number of lanes, lane width etc.. The cluster analysis of motor highway in Kanto area was firstly carried out based on the statistical data of motor highway accidents in Japan. Then the result of cluster analysis was applied to the motor highway of Yokohama city, and the validity of the method was examined using the Mann-Whitney's U-test and the predicted accident frequency was compared with the actual accident frequency data.

2. Prediction procedure of accident frequency of dangerous goods transportation

Since the major cause of the accident of chemical transportation is derived from traffic accidents. Especially on

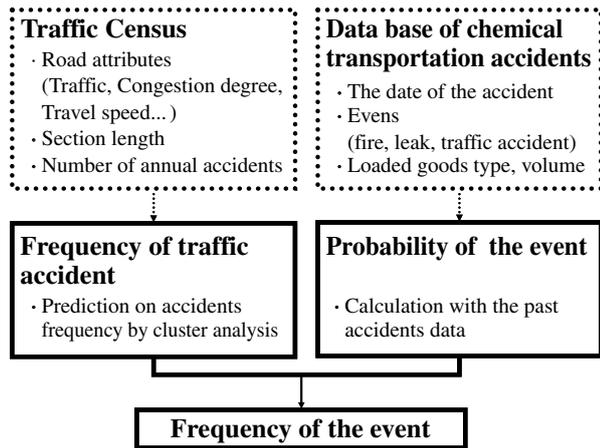


Fig. 1 Prediction scheme of the frequency of dangerous goods transportation.

the motor highway, 87 % of traffic accidents of vehicles which load dangerous goods is caused by the traffic accidents¹⁵⁾.

In this study, it is assumed that final events such as leakage, fire or explosion are derived when the vehicles encounter the accidents. Figure 1 shows the prediction procedure of the frequency of events. Frequency of each final event is estimated as the product of the frequency of the traffic accident and the probability of each final event.

3. Probability of final event

According to the dangerous goods classification system of United Nations, the probability of each event that was derived from traffic accidents was calculated based on the dangerous goods accident statistics on the motor highway in Japan from 1965 to 2004¹⁵⁾. Table 1 shows the number of accident and its probability.

Within 169 cases of the collected accident data there was

Table 1 Event probability for each class of dangerous goods in motor highway in Japan. (1965 - 2004)

UN Transport Code: classification of substances	Class 1 Explosives		Class 2 Gases		Class 3 Flammable liquids		Class 4 Flammable solids	
	accidents	probability	accidents	probability	accidents	probability	accidents	probability
Traffic accidents	1	1.00	5	0.33	12	0.13	1	0.33
Leak	0	0.00	7	0.47	56	0.63	1	0.33
Fire	0	0.00	3	0.20	20	0.22	1	0.33
Explosion	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.01	0	0.00
Total	1	1.00	15	1.00	89	1.00	3	1.00

UN Transport Code: classification of substances	Class 5 Oxidizing substances Organic peroxides		Class 6 toxic and infection substances		Class 8 Corrosive substances		Class 9 Miscellaneous dangerous substances	
	accidents	probability	accidents	probability	accidents	probability	accidents	probability
Traffic accidents	2	1.00	2	0.17	4	0.25	0	-
Leak	0	0.00	8	0.67	11	0.69	0	-
Fire	0	0.00	2	0.17	1	0.06	0	-
Explosion	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	-
Total	2	1.00	12	1.00	16	1.00	0	-

UN Transport Code: classification of substances	Miscellaneous		Total	
	accidents	probability	accidents	probability
Traffic accidents	2	0.14	29	0.19
Leak	10	0.71	93	0.61
Fire	2	0.14	29	0.19
Explosion	0	0.00	1	0.01
Total	14	1.00	152	1.00

Table 2 Road attributes and transformational functions.

Road attribute [X]	Transformational function	R ²	W _i
Reduced lane widths [m]	Y = 9.93 E-8 exp (-2.77 E-2·X)	0.12	1
Congestion degree [-]	Y = 8.02 E-8 exp (3.41 E-1·X)	0.12	1
Central reserve ratio [-]	Y = 9.99 E-8 exp (3.37 E-1·X)	0.15	2
24 hour traffic [vehicles day ⁻¹]	Y = 7.26 E-8 exp (5.59 E-6·X)	0.35	4
Lane widths[m lane ⁻¹]	Y = 1.09 E-6 exp (-6.61 E-1·X)	0.36	4
Peak hour traffic [vehicles h ⁻¹]	Y = 7.07 E-8 exp (9.56 E-5·X)	0.48	5
Peak hour average travel speed [km h ⁻¹]	Y = 3.06 E-7 exp (-1.52 E-2·X)	0.59	6
Speed limit [km h ⁻¹]	Y = 1.15 E-6 exp (-3.05 E-2·X)	0.79	8
Number of lane [-]	Y = 7.41 E-8 exp (6.66 E-2·X)	0.97	10
Accidents frequency[events vehicle ⁻¹ km ⁻¹]	Y = X	1.00	10

no data of the leakage, fire or explosion due to the loaded explosives, and the explosion of the high pressure gas was also not found among them. Using these data with the accident frequency described below the frequency of the final event is calculated.

4. Prediction of accident frequency using cluster analysis

Cluster analysis is the method to evaluate the similarity between intended objects and to classify large number of samples into several categories. As the classification can be used to predict the variable, the method that enables to classify the roads using their attributes and to predict on traffic accidents frequency was investigated. The road attributes used in this analysis were as follows; the reduced lane widths, the congestion degree, the ratio of the central reserve, the traffic volume during 24 hours, the width of lane, the traffic volume at peak hour, the average travel speed at peak hour, the official speed limit, the number of lane and the accident frequency. First, each of the roads attributes of 232 sections of motor highways in Kanto area were obtained¹⁴⁾. Since the differences in units and ranges of each attribute influence the similarity among intended objects, the attributes were transformed to non-dimensional form and were normalized. The approximate fitting curve was used to obtain the transformational functions based on the relation between each attribute and the average frequency of the accidents of 1219 sections of motor highways in Japan. Table 2 shows the road attributes, the transformational functions and the determination coefficients; R².

The similarities between objects were evaluated by the similarity coefficient. In this study, the Euclidean distance coefficient e_{jk} ¹⁶⁾ was used as the similarity coefficient.

$$e_{jk} = \left[\sum_{i=1}^n W_i (X_{ij} - X_{ik})^2 \right]^{1/2} \quad (1)$$

Where, W_i is the weight of i th attribute, X_{ij} is the i th attribute of object j, and n is the number of attributes. e_{jk} can give weight to each attribute according to the strength of the influence of the attribute on the accident

frequency. W_i is decided based on the determination coefficients of the fitting curve. Then the Euclidean distances were calculated with each pair of the object. The smaller the Euclidean distance is, the higher the similarity of two objects is. Each object exists in a separate cluster at the first stage, and they were merged with the object which has the similarity. This step was repeated until the cluster became the optimum number with UPGA (unweighted pair-group method using arithmetic averages) clustering method. UPGA clustering method where the distance between clusters is defined to be the distance between the cluster means. In this study, Beale's pseudo F number was used to decide the adequate number of clusters¹⁷⁾.

$$F = \frac{(S_2 - S_1)}{S_1} \frac{(N - c_1)k_1}{(N - c_2)k_2 - (N - c_1)k_1} \quad (2)$$

where c₁ is the number of the total clusters in the first clustering, c₂ is the number of total clusters in the second clustering, S₁ and S₂ are the sum of squares within cluster distances calculated from the first and second cluster means respectively, and k₁ and k₂ are equal to c₁^{-2/p} and c₂^{-2/p} respectively and p is the number of the original variables. The cluster mergence process is drawn in a hierarchical tree diagram¹⁸⁾. Figure 2 shows the clustering process of motor highway in Kanto area.

It was identified that the roads which accident frequencies were unknown belong to the cluster. For Identification that the object belong to the cluster, the similarities between the unknown object and each cluster were calculated by the same similarity coefficient used for classification and by the same clustering method used for classification. Either of a complete set or the set that reduced only for a main attribute of an attribute of objects were used for identification. In this study, the similarities were calculated by Euclidean distance and UPGA with 9 attributes except accident frequency. When the road which accident frequency was unknown belonged to the particular cluster, the accident frequency was predicted to be the average accident frequency of the roads included in the belonging cluster. According to Beale's F number calculation, the optimum number of clusters of roads in Yokohama city

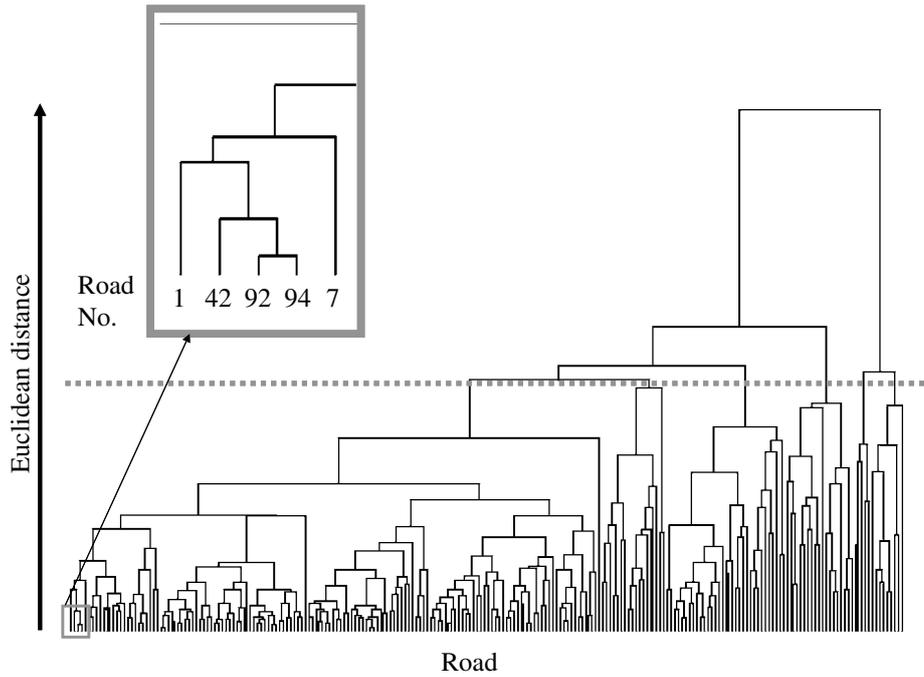


Fig. 2 Hierarchical tree diagram of traffic accident of Kanto area as a result of cluster analysis.

was calculated to be six and the result of cluster analysis of accident frequency for Kanto area is shown in Fig. 3. The normalized attribute values of each cluster are shown in Fig. 4, which shows the characteristics of six final clusters.

Table 3 shows the final result of the cluster analysis of 23 sections of the motor highway in Yokohama city. In Table 3 the predicted frequency values of each cluster are shown with the actual frequency of each road, and also with the significance probabilities determined by the Mann-Whitney's U-test¹⁹⁾.

For verifying prediction validity, the difference between distributions of Yokohama city roads accident frequency and accident frequency of roads belong to the cluster was tested by the Mann-Whitney's U-test. According to the Mann-Whitney's U-test, when the significant probability

was no less than 0.1, it was judged that there was no significant difference in the actual value and the predicted value. From the U-test results, it was concluded that the appropriate predictions were performed for the clusters (1), (3), (4) and (5), i.e. 19 roads out of 23 cases.

From the result of the cluster analysis of each road attribute in the classified each cluster, it was found that the degree of congestion had an influence on the accident frequency. Moreover, the accident frequency of the roads which the traffic was extremely little also showed high value. We hope that the result of this work will be a help when one intent to apply accident data to the road control and the risk management of the dangerous goods transportation.

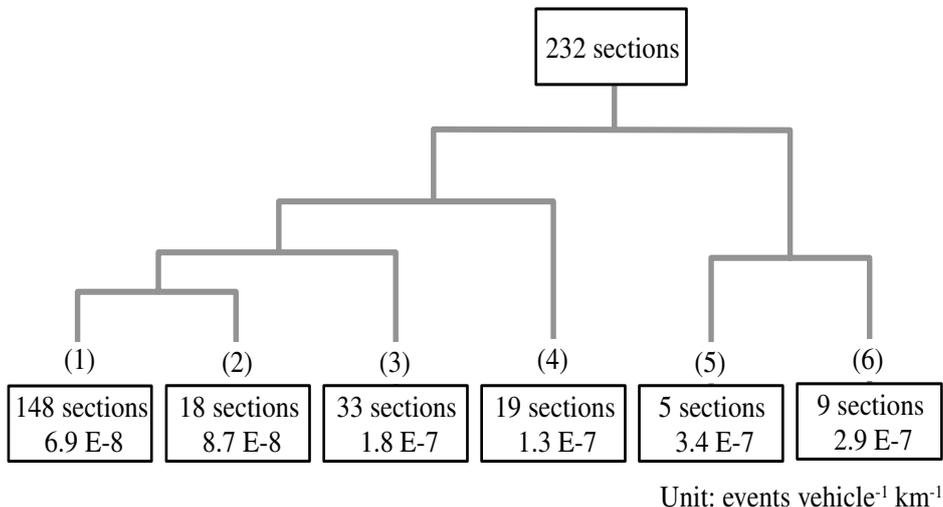


Fig. 3 Result of cluster analysis of accident frequency for roads of Kanto area.

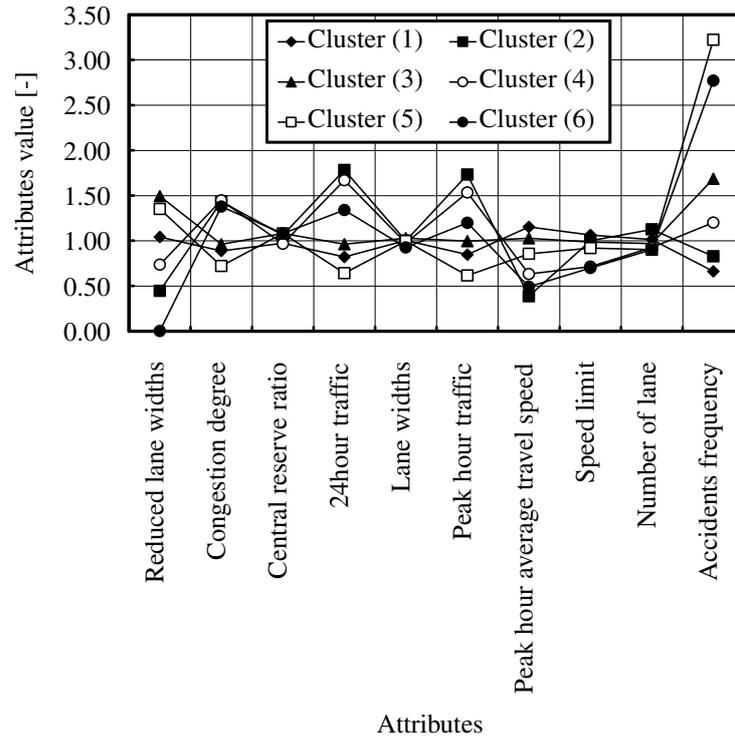


Fig. 4 Normalized attribute values of each cluster.

Table 3 Results of cluster analysis of accident frequency for roads of Yokohama.

Cluster No.	Accident frequency predicted value [event vehicle ⁻¹ km ⁻¹]	Yokohama road No.	Accident frequency observed value [event vehicle ⁻¹ km ⁻¹]	M-W U-test
(1)	6.9 E-08	233	6.6 E-08	0.32
		234	7.2 E-08	
		235	1.6 E-07	
(2)	8.7 E-08	236	7.8 E-08	0.02
		241	1.9 E-07	
		248	3.3 E-07	
		249	3.7 E-07	
(3)	1.8 E-07	237	1.8 E-07	0.17
		244	5.7 E-08	
		245	9.3 E-08	
		246	1.2 E-07	
		247	1.5 E-07	
		250	6.2 E-08	
		251	3.3 E-07	
		253	2.4 E-07	
		254	1.8 E-07	
255	9.9 E-08			
(4)	1.3 E-07	238	6.8 E-08	0.94
		239	1.1 E-07	
		240	2.1 E-07	
(5)	3.4 E-07	242	3.7 E-07	0.18
		243	2.9 E-07	
		252	1.5 E-07	

5. Conclusion

The predicting method of the traffic accident frequency with the roads attribute values was investigated by using the cluster analysis technique. The cluster analysis of motor highways in Kanto area was performed based on the accidents data analysis of the motor highways in Japan. The result of the cluster analysis was applied to the prediction of the accident frequency of the motor highways in Yokohama City, and the validity of the methodology was examined with the Mann-Whitney's U-test. It was found that the predicted accident frequency showed a good agreement with the actual accident frequency data.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported by a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research from the Japan Ministry of Education, Sports, Culture, Science and Technology, and also by a Grant-in-Aid from the Foundation for the Promotion of the Industrial Explosives Technology of Japan.

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クラスター分析を用いた危険物道路輸送における 事故発生頻度予測手法の検討

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危険物道路輸送中の事故は人命、経済活動に重大な被害を与えるため、リスクアセスメントは事故防止や被害抑制の意思決定のための有効かつ重要な方法である。危険物輸送時のリスクは事故発生頻度とその被害の2つの要素から成るが、危険物積載車両の事故発生頻度を推測するためには、交通事故の発生頻度を推測することが必要である。そこで本稿では、危険物道路輸送における事故頻度について、クラスター分析を用い、道路の属性値から交通事故頻度を推測する手法について検討した。全国自動車専用道路における事故事例解析を基に、関東地方の自動車専用道路についてクラスター分析を行った。クラスター分析の結果を横浜市の自動車専用道路に適用し、Mann-WhitneyのU検定により手法の妥当性について検証した。その結果、クラスター分析を基に推定した事故頻度と実測値に基づく検定は良好な一致を示した。

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