

# Package ‘mnlfa’

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**Type** Package

**Title** Moderated Nonlinear Factor Analysis

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**Description** Conducts moderated nonlinear factor analysis (e.g., Curran et al., 2014, <[doi:10.1080/00273171.2014.889594](https://doi.org/10.1080/00273171.2014.889594)>).

Regularization methods are implemented for assessing non-invariant items.

Currently, the package includes dichotomous items and unidimensional item response models. Extensions will be included in future package versions.

**Depends** R (>= 3.1)

**Imports** CDM (>= 7.0-4), stats, utils

**LinkingTo** Rcpp, RcppArmadillo

**Enhances** aMNLFA, GPCMIasso, sirt

**URL** <https://github.com/alexanderrobitzsch/mnlfa>,  
<https://sites.google.com/view/alexander-robitzsch/software>

**License** GPL (>= 2)

**NeedsCompilation** yes

**Repository** CRAN

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 mnlfa-package

 Moderated Nonlinear Factor Analysis
 

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### Description

Conducts moderated nonlinear factor analysis (e.g., Curran et al., 2014, <doi:10.1080/00273171.2014.889594>). Regularization methods are implemented for assessing non-invariant items. Currently, the package includes dichotomous items and unidimensional item response models. Extensions will be included in future package versions.

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### References

Curran, P. J., McGinley, J. S., Bauer, D. J., Hussong, A. M., Burns, A., Chassin, L., Sher, K., & Zucker, R. (2014). A moderated nonlinear factor model for the development of commensurate measures in integrative data analysis. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 49(3), 214-231. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00273171.2014.889594>

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 data.mnlfa01

 Example Datasets for **mnlfa** Package
 

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### Description

Example datasets for **mnlfa** package.

### Usage

```
data(data.mnlfa01)
```

### Format

- data.mnlfa01  
A data frame with 1000 observations for 12 items and 2 covariates.  
'data.frame': 1000 obs. of 14 variables:  
\$ female: num 0.5 -0.5 0.5 -0.5 0.5 -0.5 0.5 -0.5 0.5 -0.5 ...  
\$ age : num 0.79 0.36 0.22 0.79 0.22 -0.34 -0.76 -0.06 0.22 0.65 ...  
\$ I1 : int 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 0 1 1 ...  
\$ I2 : int 0 0 1 1 1 0 1 1 1 1 ...  
\$ I3 : int 1 0 1 0 0 1 0 1 1 1 ...  
\$ I4 : int 1 0 0 1 1 0 1 1 0 1 ...  
\$ I5 : int 1 0 0 0 0 1 1 0 0 1 ...

```

$I6 : int 1 0 1 1 1 0 1 0 0 1 ...
$I7 : int 1 0 1 1 0 1 1 1 1 1 ...
$I8 : int 0 0 1 0 1 0 1 1 1 1 ...
$I9 : int 1 0 0 1 1 0 0 0 1 0 ...
$I10 : int 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 ...
$I11 : int 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 ...
$I12 : int 0 0 0 0 0 1 1 0 1 0 ...

```

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mnlfa

*Moderated Nonlinear Factor Analysis*


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### Description

General function for conducting moderated nonlinear factor analysis (Curran et al., 2014). Item slopes and item intercepts can be modeled as functions of person covariates.

Parameter regularization is allowed. For categorical covariates, group lasso can be used for regularization.

### Usage

```

mnlfa(dat, items, item_type="2PL", formula_int=~1, formula_slo=~1, formula_mean=~0,
      formula_sd=~0, theta=NULL, parm_list_init=NULL, parm_trait_init=NULL, prior_init=NULL,
      regular_lam=c(0, 0), regular_type=c("none", "none"), maxit=1000, msteps=4, conv=1e-05,
      conv_mstep=1e-04, h=1e-04, parms_regular_types=NULL, parms_regular_lam=NULL,
      parms_iterations=NULL, center_parms=NULL, center_max_iter=6, L_max=.07,
      verbose=TRUE)

```

```

## S3 method for class 'mnlfa'
summary(object, file=NULL, ...)

```

### Arguments

dat	Data frame with item responses
items	Vector containing item names
item_type	String or vector of item types. Currently, only item types "1PL" or "2PL" can be chosen.
formula_int	String or list with formula for item intercepts
formula_slo	String or list with formula for item slopes
formula_mean	Formula for mean of the trait distribution
formula_sd	Formula for standard deviation of the trait distribution
theta	Grid of $\theta$ values used for approximation of normally distributed trait
parm_list_init	Optional list of initial item parameters
parm_trait_init	Optional list of initial parameters for trait distribution

prior_init	Optional matrix of prior distribution for persons
regular_lam	Vector of length two containing two general regularization parameters for item intercepts and item slopes
regular_type	Type of regularization method. Can be "none", "lasso", "scad" or "mcp".
maxit	Maximum number of iterations
msteps	Maximum number of M-steps
conv	Convergence criterion with respect to parameters
conv_mstep	Convergence criterion in M-step
h	Numerical differentiation parameter
parms_regular_types	Optional list containing parameter specific regularization types
parms_regular_lam	Optional list containing parameter specific regularization parameters
parms_iterations	Optional list containing sequence of parameter indices used for updating
center_parms	Optional list indicating which parameters should be centered during initial iterations.
center_max_iter	Maximum number of iterations in which parameters should be centered.
L_max	Majorization parameter used in regularization
verbose	Logical indicating whether output should be printed
object	Object of class mnlfa
file	Optional file name
...	Further arguments to be passed

## Details

The moderated factor analysis model for dichotomous responses defined as

$$P(X_{pi} = 1|\theta_p) = \text{invlogit}(a_{pi}\theta_p - b_{pi})$$

The trait distribution  $\theta_p \sim N(\mu_p, \sigma_p^2)$  allows a latent regression of person covariates on the mean with  $\mu_p = \mathbf{X}_p\boldsymbol{\gamma}$  (to be specified in formula\_mean) and the logarithm of the standard deviation  $\log \sigma_p = \mathbf{Z}_p\boldsymbol{\delta}$  (to be specified in formula\_sd). Item intercepts and item slopes can be moderated by person covariates, i.e.  $a_{pi} = \mathbf{W}_{pi}\boldsymbol{\alpha}_i$  and  $b_{pi} = \mathbf{V}_{pi}\boldsymbol{\beta}_i$ . Regularization on (some of) the  $\boldsymbol{\alpha}_i$  or  $\boldsymbol{\beta}_i$  parameters is allowed.

The model is estimated using an EM algorithm with the coordinate descent method during the M-step (Sun et al., 2016).

## Value

List with model results including

item	Summary table for item parameters
trait	Summary table for trait parameters

## References

Curran, P. J., McGinley, J. S., Bauer, D. J., Hussong, A. M., Burns, A., Chassin, L., Sher, K., & Zucker, R. (2014). A moderated nonlinear factor model for the development of commensurate measures in integrative data analysis. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, *49*(3), 214-231. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00273171.2014.889594>

Sun, J., Chen, Y., Liu, J., Ying, Z., & Xin, T. (2016). Latent variable selection for multidimensional item response theory models via L1 regularization. *Psychometrika*, *81*(4), 921-939. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11336-016-9529-6>

## See Also

See also the **aMNLFA** package for automatized moderated nonlinear factor analysis which provides convenient wrapper functions for automatized analysis in the *Mplus* software.

See the **GPCMIasso** package for the regularized generalized partial credit model.

## Examples

```
#####
# EXAMPLE 1: Dichotomous data, 1PL model
#####

data(data.mnlfa01, package="mnlfa")

dat <- data.mnlfa01
# extract items from dataset
items <- grep("I[0-9]", colnames(dat), value=TRUE)
I <- length(items)

# maximum number of iterations (use only few iterations for the only purpose of
# providing CRAN checks)
maxit <- 10

#***** Model 1: 1PL model without moderating parameters and without covariates for traits

# no covariates for trait
formula_mean <- ~0
formula_sd <- ~1
# no item covariates
formula_int <- ~1
formula_slo <- ~1

mod1 <- mnlfa::mnlfa( dat=dat, items, item_type="1PL", formula_int=formula_int,
                    formula_slo=formula_slo, formula_mean=formula_mean, formula_sd=formula_sd,
                    maxit=maxit )
summary(mod1)

#***** Model 2: 1PL model without moderating parameters and with covariates for traits

# covariates for trait
formula_mean <- ~female + age
```

```

formula_sd <- ~1

mod2 <- mnlfa::mnlfa( dat=dat, items, item_type="1PL", formula_int=formula_int,
                    formula_slo=formula_slo, formula_mean=formula_mean, formula_sd=formula_sd)
summary(mod2)

##### Model 3: 1PL model with moderating parameters and with covariates for traits
### Regularization method 'mcp'

# covariates for trait
formula_mean <- ~female + age
formula_sd <- ~1
# moderation effects for items
formula_int <- ~1+female+age
formula_slo <- ~1

# center parameters for female and age in initial iterations for improving convergence
center_parms <- list( rep(2,I), rep(3,I) )

# regularization parameters for item intercept and item slope, respectively
regular_lam <- c(.06, .25)
regular_type <- c("mcp","none")

mod3 <- mnlfa::mnlfa( dat=dat, items, item_type="1PL", formula_int=formula_int,
                    formula_slo=formula_slo, formula_mean=formula_mean, formula_sd=formula_sd,
                    center_parms=center_parms, regular_lam=regular_lam, regular_type=regular_type )
summary(mod3)

##### Model 4: 1PL model with selected moderated item parameters

## trait distribution
formula_mean <- ~0+female+age
formula_sd <- ~1

## formulas for item intercepts
formula_int <- ~1
formula_int <- mnlfa::mnlfa_expand_to_list(x=formula_int, names_list=items)
mod_items <- c(4,5,6,7)
for (ii in mod_items){
  formula_int[[ii]] <- ~1+female+age
}
formula_slo <- ~1

mod4 <- mnlfa::mnlfa( dat=dat, items, item_type="1PL", formula_int=formula_int,
                    formula_slo=formula_slo, formula_mean=formula_mean, formula_sd=formula_sd)
mod4$item
mod4$trait
summary(mod4)

```

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mnlfa\_expand\_to\_list *Expands Input Into a List*

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**Description**

Expands an input into a list.

**Usage**

```
mnlfa_expand_to_list(x, names_list)
```

**Arguments**

x	An R object
names_list	Names of the list

**Value**

A list

**Examples**

```
#####  
# EXAMPLE 1: Test example  
#####  
  
formula_int <- ~1+female+age  
items <- paste0("I",1:12)  
formula_int <- mnlfa::mnlfa_expand_to_list(x=formula_int, names_list=items)  
formula_int[[1]] <- ~0
```

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