

Journal of Experimental Agriculture International

Volume 46, Issue 12, Page 277-285, 2024; Article no.JEAI.124720 ISSN: 2457-0591 (Past name: American Journal of Experimental Agriculture, Past ISSN: 2231-0606)

Estimation of Genetic Diversity for Yield and Yield Components in **Pearl Millet**

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: https://doi.org/10.9734/jeai/2024/v46i123134

Open Peer Review History:

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/124720

Original Research Article

Received: 15/08/2024 Accepted: 17/10/2024 Published: 14/12/2024

ABSTRACT

Pearl millet [Pennisetum glaucum (L.) R. Br.] is one of the most significant cultivated cereals. It demonstrates remarkable genetic diversity due to its wide distribution across the globe and its adaptability to harsh environmental conditions. A multi-location experiment was conducted in Srikakulam (Location 1), Vizianagaram (Location 2), and Patancheru (Location 3) during Kharif 2021 to investigate genetic diversity in a world diversity panel of pearl millet based on grain yield

Cite as: Deva, Prasanna Angel, M Lal Ahamed, Y Satish, K Kiran Prakash, TSSK Patro, and Rakesh K Srivastava. 2024. "Estimation of Genetic Diversity for Yield and Yield Components in Pearl Millet". Journal of Experimental Agriculture International 46 (12):277-85. https://doi.org/10.9734/jeai/2024/v46i123134.

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and its component traits using principal component analysis (PCA). The PCA revealed that first three principal components with eigen values greater than one accounted for about 69% of the total variation in location 1, 66% in location 2, and two components accounted for 62% in location 3. The first principal component showed high positive loadings for HI and PHI in locations 1 and 2 and for PWT and GYLD in location 3. Traits such as TGWT, PH, and PL contributed positively to the total variation in all three locations. This genetic variability can thus be effectively utilized in pearl millet breeding programs.

Keywords: Pearl millet; principal component analysis; biplot; scree plot; eigen values.

1. INTRODUCTION

Pearl millet [Pennisetum glaucum (L.) R.Br.], ranked as the sixth most important cereal crop after wheat, rice, maize, barley, and sorghum, and is predominantly cultivated in Africa and the Indian subcontinent. India leads in production. with 10.36 million tonnes harvested from 7.54 million hectares (INDIASTAT, 2021). As one of the oldest domesticated cereals (Manning et al., 2011), pearl millet plays a crucial role in ensuring food security, nutritional benefits, and economic stability for smallholder farmers (Srivastava et al., 2020). It is rich in nutrients, boasting 8-19% protein, significant amounts of starch, fiber, Bcomplex vitamins, and high levels of iron and zinc (Velu et al., 2007; (Govindaraj et al., 2013). Additionally, pearl millet serves as a valuable forage crop, offering high levels of protein, calcium, and phosphorus while containing lower levels of hydrocyanic acid, fiber, and lignin, making it superior to sorghum in forage quality. The rising demand for pearl millet is attributed to its remarkable adaptability to various climatic conditions (Tako et al., 2015). However, recent studies suggest that pearl millet yields have stagnated over years, highlighting the need to break this plateau to meet the ever-increasing food demands. Hence, there is a need to evaluate the huge variability present in the gene banks for their effective utilization in plant breeding programmes.

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is a widely used technique for assessing genetic variation and aids in the identification of key traits that differentiate genotypes based on similarities in one or more characteristics. This method is also useful in identifying the minimal number of components that capture the maximum variability within a dataset (Anderson, 1972; (Morrison, 1978) and ranks genotypes according to PCA scores. These components are typically derived from either a correlation or covariance matrix. Thus, in the present study, PCA was employed to examine the huge diversity of pearl millet genotypes concerning grain yield and related traits in the Pearl Millet Inbred Germplasm Association Panel (PMiGAP) of ICRISAT. The objective of this study is to evaluate genotype divergence that can be used for further crop modification.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study, 350 entries, including 345 PMiGAP lines and 5 check varieties (ICMR 11003, ICMR 11009, AIMP 92901-S1-183-2-2-B-P08, ICMR 100895 and ICMR 100845), were evaluated across three locations i.e., Srikakulam (Location 1), Agricultural Research Station, Vizianagaram (Location 2), and ICRISAT, Patancheru (Location 3) during kharif, 2021. The experiment was laid in alpha lattice design with two replications across 35 blocks. The genotypes were grown in two rows of 2m length with 60x10 cm spacing. All recommended management practices were followed to maintain good crop standard. Observations were recorded on five plants per replication per genotype for plant height (PH) (cm), panicle length (PL) (cm), thousand-grain weight (TGWT) (g), panicle weight (PWT) (kg/ha), harvest index (HI) (%), and panicle harvest index (PHI) (%). Days to 50% flowering was recorded plot basis. Grain yield (GYLD) was recorded for five plants and then converted to kilograms per hectare. Principal component analysis was performed on the mean of each trait determine the quantitative traits to that contributed most to the observed variations among the genotypes. The analyses were conducted using the Factoextra package of R software version 4.4.0.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Principal component analysis (PCA) is a powerful tool for assessing the significance and contribution of each component to the overall variability, as well as to understand the degree to which each original variable contributes to each principal component. This approach retains all essential information from the original dataset and helps to minimize redundancy in experimental data (Amy & Pritts, 1991). As a multivariate analysis technique, PCA reduces complex datasets to lower dimensions, providing insights into the importance and contribution of each component to the total variance.

In this study, PCA was conducted on eight quantitative traits of pearl millet genotypes. Among the principal components, first three principal components (PCs) had eigen values greater than 1.0, accounting for 68.71% of the total variability in location 1, 65.70% in location 2, while, first two principal components accounted for 62.19% of the total variability in location 3 (Fig. 1). The first principal component (PC1) was the most significant, accounting for 34.9%, 34.6%, and 42.2% of the variation in locations 1, 2. and 3. respectively. The primary contributors to the variation observed in PC1 were PL, TGWT, and PWT in location 1; PH, GYLD, HI, and PHI in location 2; and all traits in location 3. Variances of 16.9% and 13.5% were extracted from the second and third principal components in locations 1 and 17.4% and 13.5% from location2, respectively. A variance of 19.9% was extracted from the second PC in location 3. The variations in PC2 were primarily due to PH, PL, TGWT, and PHI in locations 1 and 2, while DFF, PH, PL, and PWT contributed to the variation in location 3. Similarly, the main contributors to the variation observed in PC3 were DFF, PH, TGWT, PWT, GYLD, and HI in location 1; DFF, PH, TGWT in location 2; and PL, PWT, GYLD, and HI in location 3 (Tables 1, 2).

PC1 emerged as the most critical component, with eigen values of 2.799, 2.77, and 3.376 in locations 1, 2, and 3, respectively. PC2 had eigen values of 1.356, 1.398, and 1.598 in locations 1, 2, and 3, respectively, while PC3 had eigen values of 1.082 and 1.087 in locations 1 and 2, respectively. These results highlight the specific traits contributing most to genetic divergence, helping to discriminate between pearl millet genotypes. The findings of this study are consistent with the PCA analyses conducted by (Animasaun et al., 2017), (Sangwan et al., 2019) and (Kumar et al., 2020) in pearl millet. Similar results were also reported by (Rasitha et al., 2020) and observed 63.81% of total variability by the first three PCs.

Location	Component	Eigen values	Variance explained (%)	Cumulative (%)	
Location1	PC1	2.799	34.997	34.997	
	PC2	1.356	16.960	51.957	
	PC3	1.082	13.527	65.485	
Location2	PC1	2.770	34.630	34.630	
	PC2	1.398	17.485	52.116	
	PC3	1.087	13.596	65.712	
Location3	PC1	3.376	42.207	42.207	
	PC2	1.598	19.986	62.193	

Table 1. Eigen values and contribution of variability for the principal components

Table 2. Factor loadings (Eigen vectors) for yield and its component traits for the principal
components from three locations

	Traits	PC1	PC2	PC3	PC4	PC5	PC6	PC7	PC8
LOC1	DFF	-0.0362	-0.2680	0.7308	-0.2442	0.4926	0.2987	-0.0248	-0.0265
	PH	-0.0382	0.6439	0.1122	-0.0433	-0.2665	0.7056	0.0141	0.0189
	PL	0.0521	0.5484	-0.1758	0.2148	0.7682	-0.1657	-0.0433	0.0079
	TGWT	0.1139	0.4266	0.5983	-0.0207	-0.3014	-0.5922	-0.0716	0.0094
	PWT	0.4189	-0.1266	0.1510	0.6669	-0.0571	0.1502	-0.0928	-0.5536
	GYLD	-0.4487	-0.0557	0.1972	0.5866	-0.0211	0.0031	0.5408	0.3459
	HI	-0.5364	-0.0413	0.0411	0.2617	-0.0398	0.0171	-0.7958	0.0722
	PHI	-0.5631	0.1002	-0.0338	-0.1862	0.0088	-0.1093	0.2402	-0.7533
LOC2	DFF	-0.0123	-0.1702	0.8005	-0.2536	0.4372	-0.2707	0.0227	-0.0277
	PH	0.0592	0.6412	0.0823	0.1840	-0.2265	-0.7022	-0.0143	0.0059
	PL	-0.0409	0.5312	-0.3194	-0.2627	0.7245	0.1413	0.0120	-0.0078
	TGWT	-0.1033	0.4684	0.4880	0.3754	-0.1177	0.6119	0.0399	0.0309
	PWT	-0.4213	-0.1708	-0.0908	0.5899	0.2970	-0.1499	0.0872	-0.5646

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	Traits	PC1	PC2	PC3	PC4	PC5	PC6	PC7	PC8
	GYLD	0.4486	-0.1343	-0.0212	0.5165	0.3225	-0.0420	-0.5360	0.3469
	HI	0.5364	-0.0582	-0.0286	0.2264	0.1318	-0.0103	0.7978	0.0538
	PHI	0.5635	0.0880	0.0513	-0.1608	-0.0958	0.1216	-0.2573	-0.7457
LOC3	DFF	0.1448	0.0980	-0.9414	-0.2198	0.0956	0.1602	-0.0050	0.0020
	PH	0.3093	0.4978	-0.0769	0.2167	-0.0929	-0.6936	-0.3373	-0.0160
	PL	0.2426	0.5066	0.1810	0.1592	0.6996	0.3401	0.1410	-0.0379
	TGWT	0.3633	-0.0416	-0.0691	0.6691	-0.4314	0.4628	-0.1160	0.0087
	PWT	0.4674	0.0871	0.1941	-0.4614	-0.1908	0.1357	-0.0425	0.6832
	GYLD	0.4855	-0.0006	0.1587	-0.4067	-0.2087	0.0721	0.0904	-0.7188
	HI	0.2842	-0.5706	0.0230	0.0169	0.4467	-0.0352	-0.6256	-0.0239
	PHI	0.3969	-0.3886	-0.0831	0.2305	0.1648	-0.3723	0.6720	0.1190







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Fig. 1. Scree plot diagram of principal components of PMiGAP panel in (A) Location1 (B) Location2 and (C) Location3

A scree plot was created using the percentage of explained variances for each principal component, as shown in Fig. 1. In this plot, the black line represents the cumulative variability percentage from PC1 to PC8. The graph clearly illustrates that the maximum variance was captured by PC1 and PC2 across all locations. Additionally, a biplot was generated between





Fig. 2. Biplot against PC1 and PC2 for studied characters of PMiGAP from (A) Location1 (B) Location2 and (C) Location3

PC1 and PC2 using the variability of all agromorphological traits to examine the interaction between these two components. The biplot graph confirmed the grouping of genotypes based on PC1 and PC2 (Fig. 2). This biplot analysis, focused on the two major principal components (PC1 and PC2), accounted for 52%, 52.1%, and 62.2% of the total variability in locations 1, 2, and 3, respectively. The results of this study align with the findings of Kumar et al. (Kumar et al., 2015), (Ramya et al., 2017) and (Triki et al., 2023). A correlation matrix of the eight yield and yieldcontributing traits against the eight principal components is presented in Fig. 3. The first principal component (PC1) exhibited high positive loadings for HI and PHI in locations 1 and 2, and for PWT and GYLD in location 3, making them the primary contributor towards variability. The second principal component (PC2) showed high loadings for PH in locations 1 and 2, and for HI in location 3. PC3 had high loadings for DFF across all three locations.



Fig. 3. Biplot against PC1 and PC2 for studied characters of PMiGAP (A) Location1 (B) Location2 and (C) Location3

4. CONCLUSION

Principal component analysis (PCA) is commonly used to assess the contribution of different quantitative traits to total variability. In the current study, PCA reduced a dataset of eight variables into three principal components, explaining 65.4% and 65.7% of the cumulative variability in locations 1 and 2, respectively. In location 3, the eight variables were reduced to two principal components, accounting for 62.1% of the cumulative variability. The key traits identified within each principal component as significant contributors towards total variability tend to cluster together, making them effective for selection in crop breeding programs. Across all three locations, traits such as TGWT, PH, and PL contributed positively to the total variation, indicating their potential utility in selection in pearl millet breeding programs.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of this manuscript.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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