

**Combining ability of nine white maize (*Zea mays* L.) inbred lines in diallel crosses and stability parameters of their single crosses**

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**ABSTRACT**

Combining ability is the ultimate factor determining future usefulness of inbred lines for hybrids development. The objectives of this study were to estimate combining ability of nine inbred lines; i.e Sk6016, Sk8014, Sk5069, Sk5028, Sk5142, Sk7001, Sk5216, Sd7 and Nu 49 and stability parameters for their respective single crosses under different environments. A number of 36 single crosses obtained from crossing nine inbred lines in a half diallel system in addition to two check hybrids were evaluated in a randomized complete block design, with four replications, at three locations; i.e. Sakha, Gemmeiza and Sids Research Stations during the summer seasons of 2008. The combined analysis of variance was performed for data collected on: number of days to 50% silking, plant height, grain yield and ear length. Stability analysis was performed for grain yield according to Eberhart and Russell (1966). Estimates of combining ability effects were determined according to Griffing (1956) Method 4 Model 1. Both additive and non-additive gene action were found to be important in controlling all studied traits. However the additive gene action was more important than the non-additive gene action in the expression of days to 50% silking and plant height. While the non-additive gene action was primary type of gene action operating in the crosses for grain yield and ear length. Also, the results showed that the non-additive gene action was more influenced by change of environments than the additive gene action for all studied traits. The best parental inbred lines for GCA effects were Sk6016, Sk7001, Sk5216 and Nu 49 for number of days to 50% silking; Sk6016 and Sk7001 for plant height; Sd 7 for grain yield; Sk8014 and Sk5028 for ear length. The most superior crosses based on their SCA effects were Sk5028 x Nu49 for number of days to 50% silking and grain yield; Sk5069 x Sd7 for plant height; and Sk 6016 x Sk5028 for ear length

Three single crosses; i.e. Sk5028 x Sd7, Sk5028 x Nu 49 and Sd 7x Sk5216 were stable for grain yield. Moreover, they gave similar grain yield to those of the two commercial hybrids; i.e. SC10 and SC128. These new crosses are recommended for further testing in the hybrid development program.

### INTRODUCTION

The nature and magnitude of gene action is an important factor in developing an effective breeding program. Combining ability analysis is useful to assess the potential inbred lines and also, help in identifying the nature of gene action involved in various quantitative characters. This information is helpful to plant breeders for formulating hybrid breeding programs. The diallel cross technique as developed by Sprague and Tatum (1942) and Griffing (1956) provided information on gene action and combining ability of parental lines. According to them, the general combining ability effects (GCA) were due to additive types of gene action, whereas specific combining ability effects (SCA) were due to non-additive types of gene action. Hallauer *et al.* (1988) stated that most of the traits in maize have a quantitative inheritance. Nevado and Cross (1990), Zelleke (2000), Mahto and Ganguly (2001), Mosa (2006), Motawei (2006) and Alam *et al.* (2008) found that both GCA and SCA were significant for silking date, plant height, grain yield and ear length. However, Odemah (1973), Nawar *et al.* (1979), Pajic (1986), El-Hosary (1988), Crossa *et al.* (1990), Abd El-Maksoud (1997) and Mosa (2003) found that non-additive gene effects was more important for inheritance of grain yield and ear length. While, Katta *et al.* (1975), Nawar *et al.* (1979), Gonzalez (1988), El-Shamarka *et al.* (1994), and El-Shenawy (2006) reported that additive gene effects played an important role in the expression of silking date and plant height. Stability analysis is an important tool for plant breeders in predicting response of various genotypes over changing environments. Vargas *et al.* (1999) stated that multi-environment trials play an important role in selecting the best cultivars to be used in future years at different locations and in assessing a cultivars stability across environments before its commercial release. This study aimed to: estimate general and specific combining abilities and their interaction with environment, to

identify new single crosses superior to the best commercial hybrids and determine the adaptability of these crosses for cultivation in different environments.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Nine white inbred lines of maize; i.e. Sk6016, Sk8014, Sk5069, Sk5028, Sk5142, Sk7001, Sk5216, Sd7 and Nu 49; which were developed at Sakha (Sk), Sids (Sd) and Nubaria (Nu) maize Research Stations were used in this study. All possible cross combinations excluding the reciprocals were made among the nine inbreds at Sakha Agricultural Research Station in 2007 summer season. Resulting 36 single crosses in addition to two white commercial hybrids SC10 and SC128 were evaluated in a randomized complete block design experiment, with four replications, carried out at Sakha, Gemmeiza and Sids Research Stations in 2008 summer season. Each experimental plots consisted of one row 6 m long, the spacing between row to row was 80 cm, plant to plant was 25cm and one plant per hill was maintained after thinning. All other cultural practices were carried out according to the standard commercial recommendations for maize. Data were recorded for grain yield ard/fed (1 ardab = 140kg, 1 feddan = 4200 m<sup>2</sup>) adjusted to 15.5% moisture content, ear length (cm), plant height (cm) and number of days from planting date to date of 50% silking emergence. Analysis of variance of the data was performed separately for each location and when homogeneity of error mean squares were proved a combined analysis over three locations was done according to Steel and Torrie (1980). The hybrids effect was considered to be fixed while the locations effect was considered random in the analysis of variance. The stability analysis for grain yield across the three locations was done according to Eberhart and Russell (1966). Variation among 36 hybrids was partitioned to GCA and SCA and their interactions with locations according to Griffing (1956) for Method-4 Model-1.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The analysis of variance Table 1, showed that the differences among locations were highly significant, indicating that the three locations differed in their environmental conditions. Variance attributable to general (GCA) and specific (SCA) combining ability effects were either significant or highly significant for all studied

traits, indicating that both additive and non-additive gene action were important in controlling all the studied traits. These results are in agreement with those obtained by Nawar *et al.* (1979) and Alam *et al.* (2008) for days to 50% silking, El-Hosary (1988) and Shafiullah and Baitullah (1999) for plant height, Amer (2003) for ear length and Mosa (2006) for grain yield. However the additive gene action ( $k^2$ GCA) appeared to play a more important role than the non-additive gene action ( $k^2$ SCA) in the expression of days to 50% silking and plant height. Whereas the non-additive gene action was the primary type of gene action operating in the expression of both grain yield and ear length Table 2. These results support the findings of Gonzalez (1988) for days to 50% silking, Fan Xingming *et al.* (2001) for plant height, Huang *et al.* (1983) and Shafiullah and Baitullah (1999) for grain yield and El-Shenawy (2005) for ear length.

Table 1: Mean squares of diallel analysis of 9 inbred lines combined over three locations for four traits.

S.O.V	d.f	Days to 50% silking	Plant height	Grain yield	Ear length
Locations (L)	2	298.05**	130312.50**	18502.428**	356.238**
Rep/loc	9	11.311	1186.605	19.246	2.237
GCA	8	154.684**	8239.009**	200.259*	25.261**
SCA	27	5.151**	438.308*	68.628**	20.743**
GCA x L	16	8.153**	927.210**	77.02**	5.036**
SCA x L	54	2.058**	260.07**	29.862**	3.387
Error	333†	0.772	141.47	9.029	2.609

\*,\*\* significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of probability, respectively.

† including check varieties.

Table 2: Estimates of genetic and genetic x environment and environment parameters for four traits over three locations.

Trait	Statistical estimates			
	K <sup>2</sup> GCA	K <sup>2</sup> SCA	$\sigma^2$ GCA x L	$\sigma^2$ SCA x L
Days to 50% silking	1.74	0.257	0.263	0.321
Plant height	87.04	14.853	28.062	29.65
Grain yield	1.46	3.23	2.428	5.208
Ear length	0.24	1.446	0.086	0.194

Regarding Table 1, mean squares of interaction between GCA x locations and SCA x locations were highly significant for all traits except that of SCA x locations for ear length. The magnitude of the interaction for  $\sigma^2$ SCA x locations was higher than that of  $\sigma^2$  GCA x locations for all studied traits, Table 2, indicating that the non-additive gene action was much more influenced by the change in environments than the additive gene action. These results are in agreement with those previously attained by Mosa (2003) for days to 50% silking and ear length, Abdel- Sattar *et al.* (1999) for grain yield, and El-Shenawy (2006) for plant height.

Mean performance over three locations of the 36 single crosses and the two check cultivars SC 10 and SC128 for four traits are shown in Table 3. The best single crosses for earliness were Sk6016 x Sk7001, Sk6016 xSk5216, Sk6016 x Nu 49, Sk7001 x Sk5216, Sk7001 x Nu 49, Sk5126 x Nu 49 and SC128. Single crosses Sk6016 x Sk7001, Sk6016 x Sk5216, Sk8014 x Sd 7 and Sk5142 x SK7001 were the best crosses for short plant height compared to the shorter check SC128. 14 new single crosses addition to two check hybrids given grain yield over 30 ard/fed, the best crosses from them were Sk6016 x Sk 5069 (32.88 ard/fed), Sk5069 x Sd7(34.94 ard/fed), Sk5028 xSd7(32.48 ard/fed) , Sk5028 xNu 49(32.42 ard/fed), Sk5142 x Sd 7(32.37 ard/fed) , Sd7 x Sk 7001(32.77 ard/fed), Sd7 x Sk5216(32.78 ard/fed) andSC128(32.39 ard/fed). While the best single crosses for ear length were Sk6016 x Sk5028, Sk8014 x Sk5028, Sk8014 x Sd7, Sk5069 x Sd 7, Sk5069 x Sk5216, Sk5069 x Nu 49 andSC10.

Table 3: Mean performance of 36 single crosses and two check cultivars combined over three locations for four traits.

Cross	Days to 50% silking (days)	Plant height (cm)	Grain yield (ard/fed)	Ear length (cm)
Sk6016xSk8014	60.41	268.08	27.71	18.78
Sk6016xSk5069	60.19	268.25	32.88	19.51
Sk6016xSk5028	61.00	263.75	24.13	20.10
Sk6016xSk5142	61.08	252.91	29.19	17.83
Sk6016xSd7	60.16	277.58	31.99	18.53
Sk6016xSk7001	59.08	243.33	28.36	18.41
Sk6016xSk5216	59.75	250.41	23.07	18.96
Sk6016xNu 49	59.25	263.58	30.28	17.55
Sk8014xSk5069	64.83	271.25	30.49	19.80
Sk8014xSk5028	63.25	279.75	26.20	20.33
Sk8014xSk5142	62.19	273.66	28.49	18.26
Sk8014xSd 7	62.58	247.33	29.61	20.43
Sk8014xSk7001	60.16	257.25	27.66	18.48
Sk8014xSk5216	60.58	276.66	31.57	19.86
Sk8014xNu 49	61.08	284.0	28.23	19.26
Sk5069xSk5028	65.83	275.83	28.82	18.93
Sk5069xSk5142	64.08	257.50	27.83	16.53
Sk5069xSd7	63.58	268.58	34.94	20.20
Sk5069xSk7001	62.83	261.66	30.83	19.10
Sk5069xSk5216	61.83	261.50	26.50	20.13
Sk5069x Nu 49	61.16	273.66	30.38	20.06
Sk5028xSk5142	64.50	274.91	27.0	18.03
Sk5028xSd 7	64.66	295.58	32.48	19.45
Sk5028xSk7001	62.58	271.50	27.24	19.20
Sk5028xSk5216	62.14	276.16	27.34	19.93
Sk5028xNu 49	60.16	276.33	32.42	19.83
Sk5142xSd7	63.33	288.91	32.37	18.46
Sk5142xSk7001	61.66	245.00	28.18	18.20
Sk5142xSk5216	61.75	257.25	27.32	18.28
Sk5142xNu 49	61.58	268.33	28.29	18.31
Sd7 x Sk7001	61.58	278.0	32.77	19.81
Sd7 x Sk5216	61.0	293.91	32.78	18.28
Sd7 x Nu 49	61.66	287.41	30.82	19.91
Sk7001xSk5216	59.50	254.25	28.42	19.38
Sk7001x Nu49	58.58	254.66	22.13	17.53
Sk5216 x Nu 49	58.83	266.66	28.54	19.20
SC 10 check	62.66	303.50	31.14	20.83
SC 128 check	59.76	268.50	32.39	19.86
L.S.D 0.05	1.51	16.95	5.20	1.54
0.01	2.01	22.46	6.89	2.04

Estimates of general combining ability effects of the nine inbred lines for four traits over three locations are presented in Table 4. The parental inbred lines Sk6016, Sk7001, Sk5216 and Nu 49 exhibited significantly negative estimates for days to 50% silking. Therefore, these four inbred lines can be used as donor parents for earliness in hybridization programs. The parental inbred lines Sk6016 and Sk7001 showed desirable values of GCA effects for plant height, indicating that these two inbred lines could be considered as good combiners for developing short stalk genotypes. The inbred line Sd 7 exhibited significant positive GCA effects for grain yield. This inbred can be used for developing higher yielding hybrids. Inbred lines Sk8014 and Sk5028 showed significantly positive GCA effects for ear length. They can be used to breed for long ear hybrids, consequently improving productivity since ear length is important yield component.

Table 4: Estimates of general combining ability effects of nine inbred lines for four traits over three locations.

Inbred line	Days to 50% silking	Plant height	Grain yield	Ear length
Sk 6016	-1.674*	-10.154*	-0.665	-0.371
Sk 8014	0.349	7.00*	-0.423	0.440*
Sk 0069	1.670*	-2.964	1.497	0.293
Sk 0028	1.575*	7.833*	-1.018	0.520*
Sk 0142	1.075*	-5.785	-0.609	-1.184*
Sd 7	0.742*	18.333*	3.548*	0.410
Sk7001	-1.055*	-13.333*	-1.037	-0.298
Sk5216	-1.103*	-3.166	-1.031	0.260
Nu 49	-1.579*	2.238	-0.262	-0.070
L.S.D <sub>g</sub> 0.05	0.622	6.64	1.91	0.440

\*, Significant from zero at the 0.05 level of probability.

Estimates of specific combining ability effects of 36 crosses for four traits combined over three locations are given in Table 5. The most desirable specific combining ability effects were obtained for days to 50% silking; in the crosses, Sk6016 xSk5069, Sk8014 x Sk7001 and Sk5028 x Nu 49, for plant height; in the cross, Sk5069

x Sd 7, for grain yield; in the crosses, Sk 6016 x Sk5069, Sk8014 x Sk5216 and Sk5028 x Nu 49, for ear length; in the cross Sk 6016 x Sk5028. These crosses can be used for improving earliness, shorter plant height and high grain yield.

Table 5: Estimates of specific combining ability of 36 crosses for four traits over three locations.

Cross	Days to 50% silking	Plant height	Grain yield	Ear length
Sk6016xSk8014	0.068	1.36	-0.321	-0.314
Sk6016xSk5069	-0.753*	11.49*	3.596*	0.555
Sk6016xSk5028	-0.574	-3.80	-3.298*	0.913*
Sk6016xSk5142	0.009	-1.02	1.347	0.351
Sk6016xSd7	-0.574	-0.47	-0.009	-0.545
Sk6016xSk7001	0.140	-3.05	0.947	0.048
Sk6016xSk5216	0.854*	-6.14	-4.349*	0.039
Sk6016xNu 49	0.830*	1.63	2.087	-1.047*
Sk8014xSk5069	1.140*	-2.66	0.304	0.048
Sk8014xSk5028	-0.348	-4.96	-1.473	0.355
Sk8014xSk5142	-0.182	2.58	0.402	-0.007
Sk8014xSd 7	-0.182	2.13	-2.626	0.565
Sk8014xSk7001	-0.801*	-6.29	0.007	-0.676
Sk8014xSk5216	-0.336	2.96	3.909*	0.148
Sk8014xNu 49	0.640	4.89	-0.200	-0.121
Sk5069xSk5028	0.914*	1.09	-0.772	-0.910*
Sk5069xSk5142	-0.336	-3.63	-2.180	-1.604*
Sk5069xSd7	-0.503	-16.66*	0.773	0.467
Sk5069xSk7001	0.545	8.09*	1.333	0.077
Sk5069xSk5216	-0.408	-2.24	-3.084*	0.551
Sk5069x Nu 49	-0.598	4.52	0.031	0.815
Sk5028xSk5142	0.176	2.99	-0.488	-0.330
Sk5028xSd 7	0.676	-0.46	0.836	-0.509
Sk5028xSk7001	0.390	7.13	0.176	-0.049
Sk5028xSk5216	0.271	1.63	0.436	0.124
Sk5028xNu 49	-1.503*	-3.61	4.584*	0.405
Sk5142xSd7	-0.158	6.49	0.317	0.213
Sk5142xSk7001	-0.027	-5.76	0.709	0.655
Sk5142xSk5216	0.104	-3.67	-0.155	0.179
Sk5142xNu 49	0.414	2.01	0.048	0.543
Sd7 x Sk7001	0.223	3.13	1.139	0.677
Sd7 x Sk5216	-0.313	8.88*	1.151	-1.416*
Sd7 x Nu 49	0.830*	-3.03	-1.581	0.548
Sk7001/8xSk5216	-0.015	0.88	1.375	0.393
Sk7001/8x Nu49	-0.455	-4.11	-5.685*	-1.126*
Sk5126 x Nu 49	-0.158	-2.28	0.717	-0.018
L.S.D $S_{ij}$ 0.05	0.717	8.06	2.70	0.91

\*, Significant from zero at the 0.05 level of probability.



Stability parameters of the 36 single crosses evaluated at different locations are presented in Table 6. According to the definition of Eberhart and Russell (1966) genotype with high mean grain yield (than grand mean) combined with a regression coefficient equal to the unity ( $b_i=1$ ) and small deviations from regression ( $S^2_d=0$ ) are considered stable. Nine new single crosses were stable for grain yield, the best crosses from them: Sk5028 x Sd7, Sk5028 x Nu 49 and Sd7 x Sk5216 were stable for grain yield. Moreover these three single crosses not significantly outyielded than the two checks SC10 and SC128. These three hybrids should undergo further testing in the hybrid development program.

Table 6: Stability parameters of grain yield (ard/fed) for 36 single crosses evaluated at different locations.

Cross	$\bar{X}$	$b_1$	$S^2d$
Sk6016xSk8014	27.71	0.959	0.047
Sk6016xSk5069	32.88	0.545*	5.177
Sk6016xSk5028	24.13	0.860	-2.008
Sk6016xSk5142	29.19	0.696*	-1.513
Sk6016xSd7	31.99	1.214	11.615*
Sk6016xSk7001	28.36	1.062	-1.32
Sk6016xSk5216	23.07	0.742	3.362
Sk6016xNu 49	30.28	0.940	-2.263
Sk8014xSk5069	30.49	0.935	-0.22
Sk8014xSk5028	26.20	0.555*	-1.85
Sk8014xSk5142	28.49	0.802	1.215
Sk8014xSd 7	29.61	1.006	4.602
Sk8014xSk7001	27.66	0.886	4.10
Sk8014xSk5216	31.57	0.930	-0.438
Sk8014xNu 49	28.23	1.037	-0.468
Sk5069xSk5028	28.82	1.142	7.74*
Sk5069xSk5142	27.83	1.062	4.585
Sk5069xSd7	34.94	1.309*	0.19
Sk5069xSk7001	30.83	1.313*	22.795**
Sk5069xSk5216	26.50	0.860	2.147
Sk5069x Nu 49	30.38	0.993	2.252
Sk5028xSk5142	27.00	1.113	-1.775
Sk5028xSd 7	32.48	1.276	3.157
Sk5028xSk7001	27.24	1.033	-2.31
Sk5028xSk5216	27.34	1.207	9.612*
Sk5028xNu 49	32.42	1.021	-1.285
Sk5142xSd7	32.37	1.183	6.625*
Sk5142xSk7001	28.18	0.953	0.985
Sk5142xSk5216	27.32	0.867	3.967
Sk5142xNu 49	28.29	1.084	-1.27
Sd7 x Sk7001	32.77	1.411*	5.595
Sd7 x Sk5216	32.78	1.038	1.997
Sd7 x Nu 49	30.82	1.152	-0.795
Sk7001xSk5216	28.42	1.010	6.045
Sk7001x Nu49	22.13	0.861	2.402
Sk5216 x Nu 49	28.54	0.793	4.26
SC 10	31.14	1.078	-2.305
SC128	32.39	1.069	-1.875

\*, \*\*Significant at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels of probability, respectively.

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### الملخص العربي

#### القدرة على الائتلاف لتسعة سلالات بيضاء من الذرة الشامية في تهجينات تبادلية وتقدير الثبات للهجن الفردية الناتجة منها

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حيث ان القدرة على الائتلاف تكون عامل محدد للاستفادة من السلالات في تكوين الهجن لذلك تهدف هذه الدراسة لمعرفة القدرة على الائتلاف لتسعة سلالات و هي سخا ٦٠١٦ وسخا ٨٠١٤ و سخا ٥٠٦٩ و سخا ٥٠٢٨ و سخا ٥١٤٢ و سخا ٧٠٠١ و سخا ٥٢١٦ و سدس ٧ و نوبارية ٤٩ ومعرفة قدره الهجن الناتجة منها على الثبات تحت ظروف بيئية مختلفة. تم تقييم ٣٦ هجينا فرديا ناتجة من التهجين بين ٩ سلالات من الذرة الشامية البيضاء بنظام التهجين التبادلي مع استبعاد التزاوجات العكسية بالإضافة الى هجينين تجاريين في تصميم القطاعات الكاملة العشوائية في أربع مكررات في ثلاث مواقع بحثية بسخا والجيزة وسدس في موسم صيف ٢٠٠٨. تم عمل التحليل المشترك للثلاث مواقع للصفات التالية تاريخ ظهور حرائر ٥٠% من النورات المؤنثة وارتفاع النبات ومحصول الحبوب وطول الكوز. كذلك تم تحليل الثبات لصفه المحصول

بطريقة (Eberhart and Russell 1966) وتقدير القدرة على الائتلاف طبقاً للطريقة الرابعة للنموذج الأول عن (Griffing 1956).

أظهرت النتائج ان كل من الفعل الوراثي المضيف وغير المضيف للجين له دورا مهم في وراثه جميع الصفات. و كان الفعل الوراثي المضيف للجين الأكثر اهميه من الفعل الوراثي غير المضيف في وراثه صفات تاريخ ظهور حرائر 50% من النورات المؤنثة وارتفاع النبات بينما الفعل الوراثي غير المضيف كان اكثر اهمية في وراثه صفات محصول الحبوب وطول الكوز. أظهرت النتائج أيضا ان الفعل الوراثي غير المضيف للجين كان أكثر تأثيرا بالبيئة من الفعل الوراثي المضيف لجميع الصفات. القيم المرغوبة المتحصل عليها لتأثيرات القدرة العامة على الائتلاف كانت فى سلالات سخا 6.16 و سخا 7.01 و سخا 5.16 ونوبارية 4.9 لصفة ظهور حرائر 50% من النورات المؤنثة وسلالات سخا 6.16 و سخا 7.01 لارتفاع النبات وسلاله سدس 7 لمحصول الحبوب وسلالات سخا 8.14 و سخا 5.28 لطول الكوز. الهجن المرغوبة لتأثيرات القدرة الخاصة على الائتلاف هى سخا 5.28 × نوبارية 4.9 لصفة ظهور حرائر 50% من النورات المؤنثة ومحصول الحبوب و سخا 5.69 × سدس 7 لصفة ارتفاع النبات و سخا 6.16 × سخا 5.28 لصفة طول الكوز. اظهرت الهجن الفردية سخا 5.28 × سدس 7 و سخا 5.28 × نوبارية 4.9 و سدس 7 × سخا 5.16 نباتا لصفة المحصول تحت الظروف البيئة المختلفة. كما اعطت محصول لا يختلف عن محصول الهجن التجارية هـف 10 او هـف 128 ولذلك توصى الدراسة باستخدام هذه الهجن للاختبارات الاخرى المتقدمة فى برنامج بحوث الذرة الشامية.