Search for anomalous electroweak production of WW/WZ in association with a high-mass dijet system in pp collisions at root S=8 TeV with the ATLAS detector

Aaboud, M.; Aad, G.; Abbott, B.; Abdallah, J.; Abdinov, O.; Abeloos, B; Aben, R.; AbouZeid, O.S.; Abraham, NL; Abramowicz, H.; Abreu, H.; Abreu, R.; Abulaiti, Y.; Acharya, B.S.; Adachi, Shin-ichi; Adamczyk, L.; Adams, David L.; Adelman, J P; Adye, T.; Affolder, A. A.; Dam, Mogens; Hansen, Jørn Dines; Hansen, Jørgen Beck; Xella, Stefania; Hansen, Peter Henrik; Petersen, Troels Christian; Løvschall-Jensen, Ask Emil; Alonso Diaz, Alejandro; Monk, James William; Pedersen, Lars Egholm; Wiglesworth, Graig; Galster, Gorm Aske Gram Krohn; Stark, Simon Holm; Besjes, Geert-Jan; Thiele, Fabian Alexander Jürgen; de Almeida Dias, Flavia

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I. INTRODUCTION

One of the main goals of the LHC experiments is to elucidate the mechanism of electroweak symmetry breaking (EWSB). In the Standard Model (SM), EWSB is explained by the Brout–Englert–Higgs mechanism [1–3]. Although many measurements have been made of the properties of the Higgs boson, more information is needed for a complete picture of EWSB. Vector-boson scattering (VBS) is a key probe of EWSB, since it is sensitive to the properties of the Higgs boson, more information is needed for a complete picture of EWSB. Vector-boson scattering (VBS) is a key probe of EWSB. In the Standard Model (SM), EWSB is elucidate the mechanism of electroweak symmetry breaking (EWSB). In the Standard Model (SM), EWSB is elucidate the mechanism of electroweak symmetry breaking (EWSB). In the Standard Model (SM), EWSB is elucidate the mechanism of electroweak symmetry breaking (EWSB).

ATLAS and CMS have recently presented results of VBS searches [4–6], and although the searches in the $W^\pm W^\pm$ channel are reaching sensitivity to the Standard Model (SM) VBS process, an observation has not yet been claimed. However, even without an observation of the SM process, these analyses have been able to constrain physics beyond the SM (BSM).

A common way of parametrizing BSM physics in VBS is through a low-energy effective theory [7]. Such an approach avoids having to choose a specific BSM theory and is particularly well suited if the energy scale of the BSM physics is too high for the new resonances of the theory to be observed directly. In this kind of framework, VBS can be modified by anomalous quartic gauge couplings (aQGCs). Searches for aQGCs have been performed by the LEP experiments [8–13], D0 [14], and the LHC experiments [4–6,15–20]. A typical prediction of aQGCs is an enhancement of the VBS cross section at high transverse momentum ($p_T$) of the vector bosons and at high invariant mass of the diboson system.

Experimentally, VBS is characterized by the presence of a pair of vector bosons ($W$, $Z$, or $\gamma$) and two forward jets with a large separation in rapidity and a large dijet invariant mass. Previous searches for aQGCs in VBS have focused on channels involving leptonic boson decays ($W(\ell\nu)$ and $Z(\ell^+\ell^-)$) [1] and photons. The $V(qq')W(\ell\nu)$ channel ($V = W, Z$), however, offers some interesting advantages. The $V(qq')$ branching fractions are much larger than the leptonic branching fractions. Also, the kinematics of $V(qq')W(\ell\nu)$ are easier to reconstruct than $W(\ell\nu)W(\ell\nu)$ because there is one less neutrino in the final state, which enhances the sensitivity to aQGC-dependent kinematic effects. In addition, the use of jet substructure techniques allows good reconstruction efficiency in the high-$p_T$ region, which is the most sensitive to aQGCs. The main challenge of the $V(qq')W(\ell\nu)$ channel is the presence of large backgrounds from $W +$ jets and $t\bar{t}$ events. These backgrounds make a SM VBS measurement in this channel very challenging because it is difficult to achieve a favorable signal-to-background ratio. On the other hand, an aQGC search is less sensitive to these backgrounds because it is possible to find regions of phase space where the aQGC signal is greatly enhanced over the SM processes, resulting in large signal-to-background ratios. This motivates a search for aQGCs in the $V(qq')W(\ell\nu)$ channel.

In this analysis, the approach used in Ref. [21] is adopted, which parametrizes aQGCs by adding two new operators to the SM.

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1Unless otherwise noted, $\ell = e, \mu$ in this paper.
where the $V_{µ}$ field is related to the gauge boson fields. The SM (including the Higgs boson) is recovered when $\alpha_4 = \alpha_5 = 0$. This model, with the simple addition of two aQGC parameters to the SM, is not an ultraviolet-complete theory, and it must be modified to prevent unitarity violation at high energies. In this analysis, the $K$-matrix unitarization method [21] is applied in order to ensure that the aQGCs do not lead to the violation of unitarity. This aQGC parametrization and unitarization method was also adopted in Refs. [4,6]. Both the $\alpha_4$ and $\alpha_5$ parameters lead to similar modifications of the VBS phenomenology; an increase in the cross section and changes in the kinematics, most notably an enhancement of VBS at high $VV$ invariant mass.

This paper presents a study of the production of $V(qq')W(\ell\nu)$ accompanied by a high-mass dijet system, in a phase space optimized for sensitivity to aQGCs. The $V(qq')$ system is reconstructed in two different ways: as two small-radius jets, or as a single large-radius jet making use of jet substructure. A search for aQGC effects is performed using the transverse-mass distribution of the diboson system.

II. ATLAS DETECTOR

The ATLAS detector [22] has a cylindrical geometry and consists of several layers of subdetectors around the interaction point. The innermost layer, the inner detector (ID) provides charged-particle tracking for $|\eta| < 2.5$. The ID is surrounded by a superconducting solenoid providing a 2 T magnetic field, and the solenoid in turn is surrounded by a liquid-argon (LAr) electromagnetic (EM) calorimeter that provides coverage in the range $|\eta| < 3.2$. A scintillatortile calorimeter provides hadronic measurements for $|\eta| < 1.7$ and LAr calorimeters in the forward region provide additional EM and hadronic measurements up to $|\eta| = 4.9$. A muon spectrometer (MS) surrounds the calorimeters and makes use of a toroidal magnetic field. The MS provides tracking capabilities for $|\eta| < 2.7$ and triggering for $|\eta| < 2.4$. Events are selected for off-line processing using a three-level trigger system.

III. DATA AND MONTE CARLO SAMPLES

This analysis uses 20.2 ± 0.4 fb$^{-1}$ [23] of 8 TeV $pp$ collision data recorded by the ATLAS detector in 2012. Events used in this analysis are required to pass one of several single-lepton triggers. One set of triggers requires an isolated electron or muon with $p_T > 24$ GeV. Another set of triggers requires an electron (muon) with $p_T > 60(36)$ GeV, without the isolation requirement.

This analysis searches for anomalous contributions to electroweak (EWK) production of two vector bosons plus two jets, which is hereafter referred to as “EWK $VV$.” The EWK $VV$ process is modeled with Monte Carlo (MC) samples that include $V(qq')\ell\nu + 2$ parton and $V(qq')\ell^+\ell^- + 2$ parton production, and include all the purely electroweak [i.e., $O(\alpha_4^2\alpha_5^2)$] tree-level diagrams that contribute to these final states. The EWK $VV$ process definition includes both the VBS and non-VBS diagrams because the VBS-only process cannot be defined in a gauge-invariant way [24]. One example of the EWK $VV$ diagrams is shown in Fig. 1. Production of $V(qq')\ell\nu + 2$ parton and $V(qq')\ell^+\ell^- + 2$ parton can also occur through diagrams that are $O(\alpha_4^2\alpha_5^2)$ at tree level, but such processes are not affected by quartic gauge couplings and are not considered as EWK $VV$, but rather are included in the diboson background described below. In the EWK $VV$ MC sample definition, “$\ell$” includes tau leptons, in order to account for contributions from $\tau \rightarrow (e/\mu) + X$ decays that could pass the event selection.

The EWK $VV$ process is modeled with WHIZARD v2.1.1 [25,26], complemented by the PYTHIA 8 [27] parton shower, fragmentation, and hadronization modeling, and using the CT10 parton distribution function (PDF) set [28]. WHIZARD is used to generate both the SM samples and samples with nonzero aQGC values. The samples use dynamic factorization and renormalization scales equal to the diboson invariant mass. The SM and aQGC samples are normalized using the leading-order (LO) cross sections from WHIZARD.

FIG. 1. A VBS diagram that contributes to EWK $VV$ production. This analysis searches for modifications of the quartic gauge couplings.
The $W + \text{jets}$ and $Z + \text{jets}$ backgrounds are modeled using SHERPA v1.4.1 \cite{29-32}, with up to four partons in the matrix element. The CT10 PDF set is used. These samples are normalized using next-to-next-to leading-order (NNLO) inclusive cross sections obtained from FEWZ \cite{33}. These samples do not contain electroweak production of $W + \text{jets}$ (for example, $W$-production through vector-boson fusion), which is modeled separately with SHERPA v1.4.3 and the CT10 PDF set.

Backgrounds from $t\bar{t}$ events and single-top-quark events in the $Wt$- and $s$-channels are generated with POWHEG BOX [34–38] using the CT10 PDF set. Parton showering is done with PYTHIA v6.426 \cite{39} using the P2011C set of tuned parameters (P2011C tune) \cite{40}. The $t$-channel single-top-quark process is modeled with AcerMC \cite{41} plus PYTHIA v6.426 with the P2011C tune and the CTEQ6L1 PDF set \cite{42}. The $t\bar{t}$ samples are normalized using the NNLO cross section including resummation of next-to-next-to-leading logarithmic (NNLL) soft gluon terms, calculated with top++v2.0 \cite{43–49}. The single-top-quark samples are normalized using NLO + NNLL calculations \cite{50–52}.

Backgrounds from diboson ($WW$, $WZ$, and $ZZ$) production are modeled with SHERPA v1.4.3 using the CT10 PDF set. These samples are normalized using NLO cross sections \cite{53}. These background samples do not overlap with the EWK $WV$ samples, since the former do not include purely electroweak production of dibosons in association with two jets.

The $W\gamma$ background is modeled with ALPGEN \cite{54} interfaced with HERWIG v6.520.2 \cite{55} and JIMMY \cite{56}, using the CTEQ6L1 PDF set and AUET2 tune \cite{57}. The $Z\gamma$ background is modeled with SHERPA v1.4.1 and the CT10 PDF set.

The MC samples are passed through the ATLAS detector simulation \cite{58}, which is based on GEANT4 \cite{59}. Some of the samples are passed through a fast simulation that uses a parametrization of the electromagnetic and hadronic calorimeters. The simulated hard-scattering processes are overlaid with minimum-bias events, in order to model additional $pp$ interactions in the events (pileup). The simulated events are reweighted in order to better match the number of interactions per bunch crossing observed in data.

IV. OBJECT SELECTION

The analysis selects events with exactly one lepton (either an electron or muon), missing transverse momentum, and either four small-radius jets or two small-radius jets and one large-radius jet.

“Loose” electron candidates are reconstructed by matching energy deposits in the EM calorimeter to tracks in the ID. They must have transverse energy $E_T > 15$ GeV and $|\eta| < 2.47$, excluding the transition region between the barrel and end cap calorimeters $1.37 < |\eta| < 1.52$. Their longitudinal impact parameter with respect to the primary vertex, $z_0$, must satisfy $|z_0 \sin \theta| < 0.5$ mm, and their transverse impact parameter $d_0$ must satisfy $|d_0|/\sigma_d < 5$, where $\sigma_d$ is the uncertainty in $d_0$. This reduces electron candidates from heavy-flavor decays. Also, they must satisfy “medium” cut-based identification criteria from Ref. \cite{60} that are based on the calorimeter shower shape and track variables, and which are designed to reduce fake electron candidates from backgrounds such as jets. The candidates are rejected if they are within $\Delta R = \sqrt{(\Delta \eta)^2 + (\Delta \phi)^2} = 0.1$ of a “good” muon, defined below.

“Loose” muon candidates are found by combining tracks from the ID with tracks from the MS. They must have a transverse momentum $p_T > 15$ GeV, $|\eta| < 2.4$, and $|z_0 \sin \theta| < 0.5$ mm. They are also required to have a certain number of hits in each layer of the ID.

“Good” lepton candidates are a subset of loose lepton candidates that satisfy additional criteria. Good electrons must satisfy the “tight” cut-based identification criteria from Ref. \cite{60}. Good muons must have $|d_0/\sigma_d| < 3$. Electrons and muons must both pass isolation requirements, in order to reduce contributions from jets misconstructed as electrons, or from leptons originating from heavy-flavor hadronic decays. Electrons (muons) must have $R^{\text{iso}}_\text{cal} < 0.14(0.07)$ and $R^{\text{iso}}_\text{ID} < 0.07(0.07)$. Here $R^{\text{iso}}_\text{cal}$ is the scalar sum of the $E_T$ of energy deposits in the calorimeter within a cone of size $\Delta R = 0.3$ around the lepton candidate (excluding the lepton candidate itself), divided by the electron $E_T$ or muon $p_T$. The quantity $R^{\text{iso}}_\text{ID}$ is calculated as the scalar sum of the $p_T$ of the tracks within $\Delta R = 0.3$ of the lepton candidate (but excluding the leptonic candidate), divided by the electron $E_T$ or muon $p_T$.

Small-radius jets (hereafter “small-$R$” jets) are reconstructed using the anti-$k_t$ algorithm \cite{61} with radius parameter 0.4. Small-$R$ jets must have $p_T > 30$ GeV and $|\eta| < 4.5$, and must be separated from lepton candidates by at least $\Delta R = 0.3$. Small-$R$ jets with $p_T < 50$ GeV and $|\eta| < 2.4$ must also have a “jet vertex fraction” \cite{62} with absolute value greater than 0.5, in order to reject jets from other simultaneous $pp$ collisions.

Large-radius (“large-$R$”) jets are reconstructed using the Cambridge–Aachen algorithm \cite{63} with radius 1.2 and are “groomed” using a mass-drop filtering algorithm \cite{64} with filtering criteria $\mu_{\text{frac}} < 0.67$ and $y_f > 0.09$. This algorithm selects jets that contain substructure consistent with a two-body decay. Large-$R$ jets must have $p_T > 200$ GeV and $|\eta| < 1.2$, and be separated from lepton candidates by at least $\Delta R = 1.2$.

The missing transverse momentum $E_T^\text{miss}$ is calculated as the negative vector sum of the $p_T$ of all the objects in the events. The $p_T$ of electrons, muons, photons, and jets are taken from reconstructed objects, and a “soft term” accounting for the transverse energy of calorimeter clusters not associated with any reconstructed object is also included \cite{65}.
V. EVENT SELECTION

In order to ensure that selected events are due to proton–proton collisions, each event is required to have at least one reconstructed vertex with at least three tracks having $p_T > 400$ MeV. Events must have exactly one “good” electron or muon with $p_T(\ell^\pm) > 30$ GeV, and events containing any additional “loose” electrons or muons are vetoed. The $E_T^{miss}$ in the event must be greater than 30 GeV. The leptonically decaying $W$ candidate, $W_{lep}$, is formed by the four-momentum sum of the lepton and the missing momentum, where the $z$-component of the missing momentum is inferred by requiring the invariant mass of $W_{lep}$ to be equal to the nominal $W$ mass of 80.4 GeV [66].

For reconstructing the hadronic portion of the event, two different selection criteria are used. A “resolved” selection is developed that reconstructs the hadronically decaying $W/Z$ candidate ($V_{had}$) as two small-$R$ jets ($V \rightarrow jj$), whereas a “merged” selection reconstructs the $V_{had}$ as a single large-$R$ jet ($V \rightarrow J$).

For the resolved selection, the event must have at least four small-$R$ jets. The $V_{had}$ candidate is formed from the two jets that have $m_{jj}$ closest to the nominal $W$ mass, unless there are multiple jet pairs with $m_{jj}$ within 15 GeV of the $W$ mass, in which case $V_{had}$ is chosen from among these jet pairs, using an algorithm that favors jet pairs with two high-$p_T$ jets. From the remaining small-$R$ jets, the two that have the highest $m_{jj}$ are chosen as the “tagging” jets.

For the merged selection, the event must have at least one large-$R$ jet, which represents the $V_{had}$ candidate. In the case of multiple large-$R$ jets, the one with mass closest to the nominal $W$ mass is taken as the $V_{had}$ candidate. The event must also have at least two small-$R$ jets that each have $\Delta R(j, V_{had}) > 1.2$. Among these small-$R$ jets, the two with the highest $m_{jj}$ are chosen as the tagging jets.

In both the resolved and merged selections, the $V_{had}$ candidate must have $64 < m(V_{had}) < 96$ GeV, and the invariant mass of the tagging jets must be $m_{jj,tag} > 500$ GeV. The requirement on $m(V_{had})$ favors the $WW$ component of the EWK $WV$ process over the $WZ$ component; however, the latter is only expected to contribute 10%–15% of the total EWK $WV$ events in the phase space of this analysis, both for the SM and for aQGC contributions.

In order to reduce the amount of background from $t\bar{t}$ and single-top-quark processes, a restriction is placed on the number of $b$-tagged jets in the event. Small-$R$ jets are tagged as $b$-jets using the “MV1” algorithm [67,68] with a $b$-tag efficiency of 85%. In the resolved selection, the event is vetoed if (a) both of the jets associated with the $V_{had}$ candidate are $b$-tagged, or (b) if any other jet in the event is $b$-tagged. The reason for not vetoing events that have only a single $b$-tagged $V_{had}$-jet is to prevent EWK $WV$ events with a $W \rightarrow cs$ decay from being vetoed due to a mistagged $c$-jet. In the merged selection, the event is vetoed if any small-$R$ jet with $\Delta R(j, V_{had}) > 0.4$ is $b$-tagged.

The aforementioned event selection is designed to give a phase space with characteristics typical of VBS events and is referred to as the “loose VBS” selection stage. On top of the loose VBS selection, additional selection criteria are applied that increase the sensitivity to aQGCs. The minimum $m_{jj,tag}$ value is increased to 900 GeV in both the resolved and merged selections. In addition, events are required to have $\zeta_V > 0.9$, where $\zeta_V$ is the boson centrality, defined as

$$\zeta_V = \min\{\Delta \eta_-; \Delta \eta_+\},$$

where $\Delta \eta_- = \min\{\eta(V_{had}), \eta(W_{lep})\} - \min\{\eta_{jtag1}, \eta_{jtag2}\}$ and $\Delta \eta_+ = \max\{\eta_{jtag1}, \eta_{jtag2}\} - \max\{\eta(V_{had}), \eta(W_{lep})\}$. In these equations, $j_{tag1}$ and $j_{tag2}$ refer to the two tagging jets. The variable $\zeta_V$ has large values when the tagging jets have large separation in $\eta$, and when the two boson candidates are between the tagging jets in $\eta$. The requirement $\zeta_V > 0.9$ implicitly forces $|\Delta \eta(j_{tag1}, j_{tag2})|$ to be greater than 1.8. Furthermore, the $p_T$ of the $W_{lep}$ candidate is required to be greater than 150 GeV.

For the merged selection, the $p_T$-balance $A_{WV}$ must be less than 0.30, where

$$A_{WV} = \frac{|p_T(V_{had}) - p_T(W_{lep})|}{p_T(V_{had}) + p_T(W_{lep})}.$$  

This requirement is based on the fact that the aQGC events are expected to have two bosons produced roughly back-to-back. For the resolved selection, it is required that $\cos(\theta^*_j) < 0.50$, where $\theta^*_j$ is defined as the angle between the $V_{had}$ direction and one of the jets from the $V_{had}$ candidate. In this calculation, the $V_{had}$-jet direction is measured in the rest frame of the $V_{had}$, the $V_{had}$ direction is measured in the $WV$ rest frame, and the $V_{had}$-jet used in this calculation is chosen to be whichever jet gives $\cos(\theta^*_j) > 0$. This $\cos(\theta^*_j)$ requirement further improves aQGC sensitivity because aQGCs enhance the longitudinal polarization of the vector bosons at high $p_T$. The thresholds for $m_{jj,tag}$, $\zeta_V$, $A_{WV}$, and $\cos(\theta^*_j)$ were optimized for the best expected sensitivity to aQGCs.

To remove overlap between the resolved and merged selections, events that pass both selections are put in the resolved category. The search for aQGCs is performed by using the transverse mass of the diboson system, defined as

$$m_T(WV) = \sqrt{(E_T(V_{had}) + E_T(W_{lep}))^2 - (p_x(V_{had}) + p_x(W_{lep}))^2 - (p_y(V_{had}) + p_y(W_{lep}))^2},$$  

for which

$$m_T(WV) = \sqrt{(E_T(V_{had}) + E_T(W_{lep}))^2 - (p_x(V_{had}) + p_x(W_{lep}))^2 - (p_y(V_{had}) + p_y(W_{lep}))^2},$$

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Vi. Background Estimation

The main backgrounds in this analysis are due to $W + \text{jets}$ and $t\bar{t}$ processes, with additional backgrounds from single-top-quark, nonelectroweak diboson, $Z + \text{jets}$, and multijet events. All background predictions are taken from MC simulation, except for the multijet background, which uses a data-driven prediction, and the $W + \text{jets}$ background, which uses a MC prediction to which a data-driven scale factor is applied, as explained below.

About half of the background events in this analysis are from $W + \text{jets}$ production. Its modeling is checked using a control region (“loose $W + \text{jets}$ CR”) defined using the “loose VBS” selection criteria, except that the $m(V_{\text{had}})$

$$E_T(V_{\text{had}}) = E(V_{\text{had}}) / (m(V_{\text{had}})^{1/3})$$

and $E_T(W_{\text{lep}}) = E_T(\ell^c) + E_T^{\text{miss}}$. The merged category probes higher values of $m_T(WV)$ than the resolved category. The signal efficiency of the resolved selection drops off rapidly over the range $600 < m_T(WV) < 800$ GeV, and the merged selection efficiency surpasses the resolved selection efficiency for $m_T(WV) > 700$ GeV.

Events are split up into three categories: $e^+$ and $\mu^+$ (resolved selection), $e^-$ and $\mu^-$ (resolved selection), and the merged selection. The resolved category is split up by charge because the $W + \text{jets}$ background and the aQGC signal are charge-asymmetric. The merged category is not split up by lepton charge, because of the small expected event yield in this category.
selection is inverted: \(36 < m(V_{\text{had}}) < 64 \text{ GeV} \) or \(m(V_{\text{had}}) > 96 \text{ GeV} \) for the resolved selection, and \(40 < m(V_{\text{had}}) < 64 \text{ GeV} \) or \(m(V_{\text{had}}) > 96 \text{ GeV} \) for the merged selection. The background prediction is larger than the data in this region, which is attributed to an overestimate of the \(W+\text{jets} \) background by the MC simulation. An average scale factor of 0.82 is derived for \(W+\text{jets} \) from this region, after subtracting the predictions for non-\(W+\text{jets} \) events. This constant scale factor is applied to the \(W+\text{jets} \) prediction in all three event categories. The \(W+\text{jets} \) modeling is cross-checked in a validation region (“\(W+\text{jets} \text{VR} \)” defined using the same selection as the signal region, except inverting the \(m(V_{\text{had}}) \) selection. The modeling of \(m_T(WV) \) in this validation region is shown in Figs. 2(a) and 2(b). The largest systematic uncertainties in the \(W+\text{jets} \text{ VR} \) are jet uncertainties and uncertainties in the MV1 algorithm is used with a \(b\)-tag efficiency of 60%. The data–MC comparison in the top VR is shown in Figs. 2(c) and 2(d). The largest systematic uncertainties in the top VR are jet uncertainties and uncertainties in the modeling of the \(W+\text{jets} \) process, which are described in Sec. VII.

Top-pair and single-top-quark production are the other major backgrounds in this analysis. Their modeling is checked in a validation region (“top VR”) that uses the same selection as the signal region, except that the requirements on the number of \(b\)-tagged jets are inverted. The definition of a \(b\)-tagged jet is tightened for the top VR; the MV1 algorithm is used with a \(b\)-tag efficiency of 60%. The data–MC comparison in the top VR is shown in Figs. 2(c) and 2(d). The largest systematic uncertainties in the top VR are jet uncertainties and uncertainties in the modeling of the \(t\bar{t} \) process. In both the \(W+\text{jets} \) VR and top VR, the predicted event yields and \(m_T(WV) \) distribution shapes are consistent with those observed in data, within the systematic uncertainties.

Multijet processes are a fairly small background in this analysis. They can pass the event selection if a lepton from the decay of a heavy-flavor hadron passes the lepton selection. In the electron channel, multijet events can also contribute due to jets misreconstructed as electrons. They are modeled using a data-driven estimate as described below.

First, control regions are defined by event selections similar to those for the signal regions, but with modified lepton identification criteria, in order to enrich the control regions in multijet backgrounds. Leptons that satisfy the modified identification criteria are referred to as “bad” leptons. For the muon channel, the impact-parameter criterion is inverted: \(|d_0|/\sigma_{d_0} > 3 \). For the electron channel, the electron candidate must fail the “tight” cut-based identification but satisfy the “medium” cut-based identification criteria from Ref. [60]. In addition, for both the electron and muon channels, the isolation criteria are modified: \(R_{\text{cal}}^{\text{iso}} > 0.04 \) and \(R_{\text{id}}^{\text{iso}} < 0.5 \). The shapes of the kinematic distributions \([m_T(WV), p_T(W_{\text{lep}}), E_T^{\text{miss}}] \) of the multijet background are obtained from the data in these control regions, after subtracting the MC predictions for the nonmultijet backgrounds.

### TABLE I. The expected number of events passing the final event selection, together with the number of events observed in data. The expected EWK \(WV \) contributions for a representative point in the aQGC parameter space \((\alpha_t = 0.1, \alpha_s = 0) \) and for the SM \((\alpha_t = \alpha_s = 0) \) are shown for comparison. The quoted errors include all systematic uncertainties in the expected yields. The error in the total background is computed including correlations between the various background components.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Backgroung</th>
<th>Resolved channel ( e^+ ) and ( \mu^+ )</th>
<th>Resolved channel ( e^- ) and ( \mu^- )</th>
<th>Merged channel ( e ) and ( \mu )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(W+\text{jets} )</td>
<td>92 ± 37</td>
<td>51 ± 29</td>
<td>19.4 ± 9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(t\bar{t} )</td>
<td>59 ± 18</td>
<td>63 ± 35</td>
<td>6.8 ± 2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-top</td>
<td>10.0 ± 5.6</td>
<td>5.5 ± 3.2</td>
<td>2.2 ± 1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diiboson</td>
<td>8.6 ± 5.7</td>
<td>10.8 ± 6.4</td>
<td>1.6 ± 1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Z+\text{jets} )</td>
<td>4.5 ± 1.5</td>
<td>3.4 ± 2.4</td>
<td>0.58 ± 0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multijet</td>
<td>16 ± 16</td>
<td>12 ± 12</td>
<td>1.8 ± 1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total background</td>
<td>190 ± 53</td>
<td>145 ± 54</td>
<td>32 ± 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EWK (WV) (SM)</td>
<td>3.66 ± 0.82</td>
<td>2.34 ± 0.56</td>
<td>0.54 ± 0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EWK (WV) ((\alpha_t = 0.1, \alpha_s = 0) )</td>
<td>21.0 ± 4.2</td>
<td>9.2 ± 1.9</td>
<td>15.1 ± 4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The multijet event yield is estimated by first performing a fit to the \(E_T^{\text{miss}} \) distribution of the data that pass the final event selection, but with the \(E_T^{\text{miss}} > 30 \text{ GeV} \) and \(p_T(W_{\text{lep}}) > 150 \text{ GeV} \) criteria removed. The final multijet yield estimate is then obtained by scaling this fit result by the efficiency for multijet events to pass the \(E_T^{\text{miss}} > 30 \text{ GeV} \) and \(p_T(W_{\text{lep}}) > 150 \text{ GeV} \) requirements. That efficiency is also estimated from a bad-lepton control region. The multijet estimate was cross-checked with an alternative method that first applies the \(p_T(W_{\text{lep}}) > 150 \text{ GeV} \) selection, and then obtains the multijet yield from a fit to the \(E_T^{\text{miss}} \) distribution.

Remaining backgrounds originate from \(Z+\text{jets} \) and diboson processes, and are estimated with MC samples. The final estimates for all backgrounds are given in Table I, along with the expected signal.

The background modeling is further cross-checked in Fig. 3, which shows data–MC comparisons of the \(p_T(W_{\text{lep}}) \) and boson centrality distributions. In these plots, all of the signal-region selection criteria are applied, except for the selection criterion for the variable \([p_T(W_{\text{lep}}) \text{ or boson centrality}] \) being plotted. The data agree with the predictions within the systematic uncertainty bands.

### VII. SYSTEMATIC UNCERTAINTIES

A variety of sources of systematic uncertainty are considered. The effect of systematic uncertainties in the background and signal rates, and in the shape of the \(m_T(WV) \) distribution of background and signal events, are accounted for.
Systematic uncertainties in the jet energy scale (JES) and jet energy resolution (JER) are calculated separately for small-$R$ jets and large-$R$ jets. For the large-$R$ jets, uncertainties in the jet mass scale and jet mass resolution are included and account for uncertainty in the modeling of the jet substructure. The large-$R$ jet energy and mass scale uncertainties are derived from ratios of calorimeter-jets to track-jets and from $\gamma + \text{jet}$ balance studies. The large-$R$ jet energy and mass resolution uncertainties are estimated by applying a smearing factor so that the resolutions increase by a factor of 20%; this uncertainty is based on previous studies of large-$R$ jets [71,72]. The jet-related uncertainties are the most significant detector-related uncertainties in the analysis.

Uncertainties in lepton reconstruction and identification, soft terms entering the $E_T^{\text{miss}}$ calculation, and $b$-tagging are accounted for and have a minor effect. The uncertainty in the integrated luminosity is also included [23].

Systematic uncertainties in the signal model are taken into account, including variations in the model of fragmentation, parton shower, and hadronization; factorization and renormalization scales; and the PDFs. Uncertainties in the $W=Z+\text{jets}$ background model are accounted for by varying the factorization and renormalization scales, and the scale for matching matrix elements to parton showers [30]. The full difference between the data-driven $W+\text{jets}$ scale factor and 1.00 is also included as an uncertainty: $0.82 \pm 0.18$; this scale factor is varied independently in each of the three event categories. Uncertainties in the $t\bar{t}$ modeling are estimated by varying the matrix-element generator, the fragmentation/parton-shower/hadronization
model, and the amount of initial-state and final-state radiation. A 100% uncertainty is applied to the multijet background prediction, and covers uncertainties in the data-driven estimation procedure. For the single-top-quark, diboson, and electroweak $W + \text{jets}$ predictions, instead of computing separate modeling uncertainties from individual sources, an overall normalization uncertainty of 50% is applied, which is taken as an estimate of their modeling uncertainties based on studies of other background processes. The uncertainties in the multijet, single-top-quark, diboson, and electroweak $W + \text{jets}$ backgrounds only increase the overall background uncertainty by about 2%–3%.

There is also a statistical uncertainty in the expected number of background and signal in each bin of $m_T(WV)$. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Fractional uncertainty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$W/Z + \text{jets modeling}$</td>
<td>0.13 0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$t\bar{t}$ modeling</td>
<td>0.14 0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multijet yield</td>
<td>0.06 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor background yields</td>
<td>0.04 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jet reconstruction</td>
<td>0.21 0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other detector/luminosity</td>
<td>0.04 0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited stats in MC or CR</td>
<td>0.02 0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0.29 0.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$TABLE II.$ Summary of the fractional uncertainty in the total background yields in the signal region, broken down into different categories of systematic uncertainties.

$FIG. 4.$ The observed $m_T(WV)$ distribution, overlaid with background and EWK $WV$ prediction, after applying the full selection. The expected enhancements due to aQGC values of $(\alpha_4 = 0.1, \alpha_5 = 0)$ and $(\alpha_4 = 0.05, \alpha_5 = 0)$ are also shown. The plotted regions are (a) the resolved ($V \rightarrow \text{jj}$) region, $e^+$ and $\mu^+$ combined; (b) the resolved region, $e^-$ and $\mu^-$ combined; and (c) the merged ($V \rightarrow J$) region, $e^+$, $e^-$, $\mu^+$, and $\mu^-$ combined. The last bin includes overflow.
due to the size of the MC samples and the numbers of events in the multijet control regions.

The uncertainties in the total background are dominated by jet uncertainties and \( WZ + \text{jets} \) modeling, and are summarized in Table II. The uncertainty in the signal yield is about 20% (30%) in the resolved (merged) categories and is dominated by the signal model variations and the jet uncertainties.

### VIII. RESULTS

A search for aQGC contributions is performed by examining the \( m_{T}(W) \) distribution of events that satisfy the full selection. The \( m_{T}(W) \) distribution of events is shown in Fig. 4, split up into the three categories defined in Sec. V. The enhancements of EWK \( WZ \) expected for different aQGC values are shown for comparison. No evidence of an aQGC is observed in the data, so the allowed 95% confidence intervals are computed for the aQGC parameters \( \alpha_4 \) and \( \alpha_5 \).

![FIG. 5. The observed 2D confidence region (solid black contour) for \( \alpha_4 \) and \( \alpha_5 \), at 95% CL. The expected 2D confidence region (dotted black contour) is also shown, computed using the Asimov data set [73]. Results from this analysis (in black) are compared to observed and expected confidence regions from previous ATLAS analyses of \( W^{\pm}W^{\pm} \) [17] (in red) and \( WZ \) [6] (in cyan) VBS production.](image)

The confidence intervals on \( \alpha_4 \) and \( \alpha_5 \) are calculated by using a binned profile-likelihood [73] fit to the \( m_{T}(W) \) distribution in the three event categories. Systematic uncertainties are incorporated into the fit using 28 nuisance parameters. The frequentist 95% confidence level (CL) intervals are computed using pseudoexperiments. For each aQGC point, the ratio of the likelihood to the likelihood of the best-fit aQGC point is calculated. An aQGC point is excluded at 95% CL if at least 95% of the random pseudoexperiments have a profile-likelihood ratio greater than the observed one. At 95% CL, the observed confidence intervals are \(-0.024 < \alpha_4 < 0.030\) and \(-0.028 < \alpha_5 < 0.033\), where the confidence interval on each parameter is calculated while fixing the other parameter to zero. The expected 95% confidence intervals are \(-0.060 < \alpha_4 < 0.062\) and \(-0.084 < \alpha_5 < 0.080\). The observed confidence intervals are stronger than expected; under the SM hypothesis, there is a 12%–15% probability of obtaining confidence intervals more stringent than the observed ones. The expected and observed confidence intervals are summarized in Table III. This table also shows the 1– and 2-sigma uncertainty bands on the expected confidence intervals. These uncertainty bands show that the measured confidence intervals can vary significantly from pseudoexperiment to pseudoexperiment; this behavior is expected since most of the sensitivity to the aQGC parameters comes from high-\( m_{T}(W) \) bins with few events and large uncertainties. The two-dimensional (2D) confidence region for \( \alpha_4 \) and \( \alpha_5 \) is shown in Fig. 5. The observed \( \alpha_4 \) and \( \alpha_5 \) confidence intervals are more stringent than existing confidence intervals for these parameters, which are obtained from VBS \( W^{\pm}W^{\pm} \rightarrow \ell\nu\ell\nu \) [17] and \( WZ \rightarrow \ell\nu\ell\nu \) [6] measurements from ATLAS.

The use of the “merged” category of events significantly improves the aQGC sensitivity of the analysis because most of the aQGC sensitivity comes from the highest-\( m_{T}(W) \) bins, where the merged category is powerful. The expected aQGC confidence intervals are about 40% more stringent when including this category than when only using the resolved events.

### IX. CONCLUSIONS

A search is performed for anomalous quartic gauge couplings in \( WW \) and \( WZ \) production via vector-boson...
scattering. The analysis is performed with 20.2 fb\(^{-1}\) of ATLAS data from \(\sqrt{s} = 8\) TeV \(pp\) collisions at the LHC.

The search is based on a signature of \(W(\ell\nu)V(qq')\) plus two jets with a high dijet invariant mass. The \(V(qq')\) system is reconstructed either as two separate jets or as a single, large-radius jet, making use of jet substructure techniques. A search phase space is used that is designed to be particularly sensitive to aQGCs and is based on event topology, the \(V\) decay angle, and high transverse momentum.

No excess is seen in the data, and so limits are placed on aQGC parameters by fitting the diboson transverse-mass distribution. At 95\% CL, the observed limits are \(-0.024 < \alpha_4 < 0.030\) and \(-0.028 < \alpha_5 < 0.033\). These limits are more stringent than the previous constraints on these parameters, obtained in searches for vector-boson scattering in the \(W^\pm W^\pm \rightarrow \ell\nu\ell\nu\) and \(WZ \rightarrow \ell\nu\ell\ell\) channels. This result demonstrates that a semileptonic channel can have strong experimental sensitivity to new physics contributions to vector-boson scattering.

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17 Department of Physics, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany
18 Albert Einstein Center for Fundamental Physics and Laboratory for High Energy Physics, University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland
19 School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom
20a Department of Physics, Bogaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey
20b Department of Physics Engineering, Gaziantep University, Gaziantep, Turkey
20c Istanbul Bilgi University, Faculty of Engineering and Natural Sciences, Istanbul, Turkey
20d Bahcesehir University, Faculty of Engineering and Natural Sciences, Istanbul, Turkey
21 Centro de Investigaciones, Universidad Antonio Narino, Bogota, Colombia
22a INFN Sezione di Bologna, Italy
22b Dipartimento di Fisica e Astronomia, Università di Bologna, Bologna, Italy
23 Physikalisches Institut, University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany
24 Department of Physics, Boston University, Boston Massachusetts, USA
25 Department of Physics, Brandeis University, Waltham Massachusetts, USA
26a Universidade Federal do Rio De Janeiro COPPE/EE/IF, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
26b Electrical Circuits Department, Federal University of Juiz de Fora (UFJF), Juiz de Fora, Brazil
26c Federal University of Sao Joao del Rei (UFJF), Sao Joao del Rei, Brazil
26d Instituto de Fisica, Universidade de Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil
27 Physics Department, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton New York, USA
28a Transilvania University of Brasov, Brasov, Romania
28b Horia Hulubei National Institute of Physics and Nuclear Engineering, Bucharest, Romania
28c National Institute for Research and Development of Isotopic and Molecular Technologies, Physics Department, Cluj Napoca, Romania
28d University Politehnica Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania
28e West University in Timisoara, Timisoara, Romania
29 Departamento de Física, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Argentina
30 Cavendish Laboratory, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom
31 Department of Physics, Carleton University, Ottawa Ontario, Canada
32 CERN, Geneva, Switzerland
33 Enrico Fermi Institute, University of Chicago, Chicago Illinois, USA
34a Departamento de Física, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile
34b Departamento de Física, Universidad Técnica Federico Santa Maria, Valparaiso, Chile
35 Institute of High Energy Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China
35a Department of Physics, Nanjing University, Jiangsu, China
35b Department of Physics, Tsinghua University, Beijing 100084, China
36 Laboratoire de Physique Corpusculaire, Université Clermont Auvergne, Université Blaise Pascal, CNRS/IN2P3, Clermont-Ferrand, France
37 Nevis Laboratory, Columbia University, Irvington New York, USA
38 Niels Bohr Institute, University of Copenhagen, København, Denmark
39a INFN Gruppo Collegato di Cosenza, Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati, Italy
39b Dipartimento di Fisica, Università della Calabria, Rende, Italy
40a AGH University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Physics and Applied Computer Science, Krakow, Poland
40b Marian Smoluchowski Institute of Physics, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland
41 Institute of Nuclear Physics Polish Academy of Sciences, Krakow, Poland
42 Physics Department, Southern Methodist University, Dallas Texas, USA
43 Physics Department, University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson Texas, USA
44 DESY, Hamburg and Zeuthen, Germany
45 Lehrstuhl für Experimentelle Physik IV, Technische Universität Dortmund, Dortmund, Germany
46 Institut für Kern- und Teilchenphysik, Technische Universität Dresden, Dresden, Germany
47 Department of Physics, Duke University, Durham North Carolina, USA
48 SUPA - School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom
49 INFN Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati, Frascati, Italy
50 Fakultät für Mathematik und Physik, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg, Germany
51 Department de Physique Nucleaire et Corpusculaire, Université de Genève, Genève, Switzerland
52a INFN Sezione di Genova, Italy
52b Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Genova, Genova, Italy
53a E. Andronikashvili Institute of Physics, Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia
53b High Energy Physics Institute, Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia
54a II Physikalisches Institut, Justus-Liebig-Universität Giessen, Giessen, Germany

032001-21
SUPA - School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom
II Physikalisches Institut, Georg-August-Universität, Göttingen, Germany
Laboratoire de Physique Subatomique et de Cosmologie, Université Grenoble-Alpes, CNRS/IN2P3, Grenoble, France
Laboratory for Particle Physics and Cosmology, Harvard University, Cambridge Massachusetts, USA
Department of Modern Physics, University of Science and Technology of China, Anhui, China
Kirchhoff-Institut für Physik, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany
Physikalisches Institut, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany
ZITI Institut für technische Informatik, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Mannheim, Germany
Faculty of Applied Information Science, Hiroshima Institute of Technology, Hiroshima, Japan
Department of Physics, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, New Territories, Hong Kong, China
Department of Physics, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China
Department of Physics and Institute for Advanced Study, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Clear Water Bay, Kowloon, Hong Kong, China
Department of Physics, Indiana University, Bloomington Indiana, USA
Institut für Astro- und Teilchenphysik, Leopold-Franzens-Universität, Innsbruck, Austria
University of Iowa, Iowa City Iowa, USA
Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, JINR Dubna, Dubna, Russia
KEK, High Energy Accelerator Research Organization, Tsukuba, Japan
Graduate School of Science, Kobe University, Kobe, Japan
Faculty of Science, Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan
Kyoto University of Education, Kyoto, Japan
Department of Physics, Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan
Instituto de Física La Plata, Universidad Nacional de La Plata and CONICET, La Plata, Argentina
Physics Department, Lancaster University, Lancaster, United Kingdom
INFN Sezione di Lecce, Italy
Dipartimento di Matematica e Fisica, Università del Salento, Lecce, Italy
Oliver Lodge Laboratory, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom
Department of Experimental Particle Physics, Jožef Stefan Institute and Department of Physics, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia
School of Physics and Astronomy, Queen Mary University of London, London, United Kingdom
Department of Physics, Royal Holloway University of London, Surrey, United Kingdom
Department of Physics and Astronomy, University College London, London, United Kingdom
Louisiana Tech University, Ruston Louisiana, USA
Laboratoire de Physique Nucléaire et de Hautes Energies, UPMC and Université Paris-Diderot and CNRS/IN2P3, Paris, France
Fysiska institutionen, Lunds universitet, Lund, Sweden
Departamento de Física Teorica C-15, Universidad Autonoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain
Institut für Physik, Universität Mainz, Mainz, Germany
School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom
CPPM, Aix-Marseille Université and CNRS/IN2P3, Marseille, France
Department of Physics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst Massachusetts, USA
Department of Physics, McGill University, Montreal Québec, Canada
School of Physics, University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
Department of Physics, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor Michigan, USA
Department of Physics and Astronomy, Michigan State University, East Lansing Michigan, USA
INFN Sezione di Milano, Italy
Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Milano, Milano, Italy
B.I. Stepanov Institute of Physics, National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Minsk, Republic of Belarus
Research Institute for Nuclear Problems of Byelorussian State University, Minsk, Republic of Belarus
Group of Particle Physics, University of Montreal, Montreal Québec, Canada
P.N. Lebedev Physical Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia
Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics (ITEP), Moscow, Russia
National Research Nuclear University MEPhI, Moscow, Russia
D.V. Skobeltsyn Institute of Nuclear Physics, M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia
Fakultät für Physik, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, München, Germany
Max-Planck-Institut für Physik (Werner-Heisenberg-Institut), München, Germany
School of Physics, Shandong University, Shandong, China
Department of Physics and Astronomy, Key Laboratory for Particle Physics, Astrophysics and Cosmology, Ministry of Education; Shanghai Key Laboratory for Particle Physics and Cosmology, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Shanghai(also at PKU-CHEP); China
Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom
Department of Physics, Shinshu University, Nagano, Japan
Fachbereich Physik, Universität Siegen, Siegen, Germany
Department of Physics, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby British Columbia, Canada
SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, Stanford California, USA
Faculty of Mathematics, Physics & Informatics, Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovak Republic
Department of Subnuclear Physics, Institute of Experimental Physics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Kosice, Slovak Republic
Department of Physics, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa
Department of Physics, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa
School of Physics, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
Department of Physics, Stockholm University, Sweden
The Oskar Klein Centre, Stockholm, Sweden
Physics Department, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden
Departments of Physics & Astronomy and Chemistry, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook New York, USA
Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdom
School of Physics, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia
Institute of Physics, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan
Department of Physics, Technion: Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa, Israel
Raymond and Beverly Sackler School of Physics and Astronomy, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel
Department of Physics, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece
International Center for Elementary Particle Physics and Department of Physics, The University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan
Graduate School of Science and Technology, Tokyo Metropolitan University, Tokyo, Japan
Department of Physics, Tokyo Institute of Technology, Tokyo, Japan
Tomsk State University, Tomsk, Russia, Russia
Department of Physics, University of Toronto, Toronto Ontario, Canada
INFN-TIFPA, Italy
University of Trento, Trento, Italy, Italy
TRIUMF, Vancouver British Columbia, Canada
Department of Physics and Astronomy, York University, Toronto Ontario, Canada
Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences, and Center for Integrated Research in Fundamental Science and Engineering, University of Tsukuba, Tsukuba, Japan
Department of Physics and Astronomy, Tufts University, Medford Massachusetts, USA
Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of California Irvine, Irvine California, USA
INFN Gruppo Collegato di Udine, Sezione di Trieste, Udine, Italy
ICTP, Trieste, Italy
Dipartimento di Chimica, Fisica e Ambiente, Università di Udine, Udine, Italy
Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Uppsala, Uppsala, Sweden
Department of Physics, University of Illinois, Urbana Illinois, USA
Instituto de Física Corpuscular (IFIC) and Departamento de Física Atómica, Molecular y Nuclear and Departamento de Ingeniería Electrónica and Instituto de Microelectrónica de Barcelona (IMB-CNM), University of Valencia and CSIC, Valencia, Spain
Department of Physics, University of British Columbia, Vancouver British Columbia, Canada
Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Victoria, Victoria British Columbia, Canada
Department of Physics, University of Warwick, Coventry, United Kingdom
Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan
Department of Particle Physics, The Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot, Israel
Department of Physics, University of Wisconsin, Madison Wisconsin, USA
Fakultät für Physik und Astronomie, Julius-Maximilians-Universität, Würzburg, Germany
Fakultät für Mathematik und Naturwissenschaften, Fachgruppe Physik, Bergische Universität Wuppertal, Wuppertal, Germany
Department of Physics, Yale University, New Haven Connecticut, USA
Yerevan Physics Institute, Yerevan, Armenia
Deceased.  
\(^{1}\)Also at Department of Physics, King’s College London, London, United Kingdom.  
\(^{2}\)Also at Institute of Physics, Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, Baku, Azerbaijan.  
\(^{3}\)Also at Novosibirsk State University, Novosibirsk, Russia.  
\(^{4}\)Also at TRIUMF, Vancouver BC, Canada.  
\(^{5}\)Also at Department of Physics & Astronomy, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY, USA.  
\(^{6}\)Also at Physics Department, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine.  
\(^{7}\)Also at Department of Physics, California State University, Fresno CA, USA.  
\(^{8}\)Also at Department of Physics, University of Fribourg, Fribourg, Switzerland.  
\(^{9}\)Also at Department de Fisica de la Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain.  
\(^{10}\)Also at Departamento de Fisica e Astronomia, Faculdade de Ciencias, Universidade do Porto, Portugal.  
\(^{11}\)Also at Tomsk State University, Tomsk, Russia, Russia.  
\(^{12}\)Also at The Collaborative Innovation Center of Quantum Matter (CICQM), Beijing, China.  
\(^{13}\)Also at Universita di Napoli Parthenope, Napoli, Italy.  
\(^{14}\)Also at Institute of Particle Physics (IPP), Canada.  
\(^{15}\)Also at Horia Hulubei National Institute of Physics and Nuclear Engineering, Bucharest, Romania.  
\(^{16}\)Also at Department of Physics, St. Petersburg State Polytechnical University, St. Petersburg, Russia.  
\(^{17}\)Also at Department of Physics, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor MI, USA.  
\(^{18}\)Also at Centre for High Performance Computing, CSIR Campus, Rosebank, Cape Town, South Africa.  
\(^{19}\)Also at Louisiana Tech University, Ruston LA, USA.  
\(^{20}\)Also at Institutio Catalana de Recerca i Estudis Avancats, ICREA, Barcelona, Spain.  
\(^{21}\)Also at Graduate School of Science, Osaka University, Osaka, Japan.  
\(^{22}\)Also at Department of Physics, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan.  
\(^{23}\)Also at Institute for Mathematics, Astrophysics and Particle Physics, Radboud University Nijmegen/Nikhef, Nijmegen, Netherlands.  
\(^{24}\)Also at Department of Physics, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin TX, USA.  
\(^{25}\)Also at CERN, Geneva, Switzerland.  
\(^{a}\)Also at Georgian Technical University (GTU),Tbilisi, Georgia.  
\(^{b}\)Also at Ochadai Academic Production, Ochanomizu University, Tokyo, Japan.  
\(^{c}\)Also at Manhattan College, New York, NY, USA.  
\(^{d}\)Also at Academia Sinica Grid Computing, Institute of Physics, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan.  
\(^{e}\)Also at School of Physics, Shandong University, Shandong, China.  
\(^{f}\)Also at Departamento de Fisica Teorica y del Cosmos and CAPPE, Universidad de Granada, Granada, Spain.  
\(^{g}\)Also at Department of Physics, California State University, Sacramento CA, USA.  
\(^{h}\)Also at Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology State University, Dolgoprudny, Russia.  
\(^{i}\)Also at Departement de Physique Nucleaire et Corpusculaire, Université de Genève, Geneva, Switzerland.  
\(^{j}\)Also at Eotvos Lorand University, Budapest, Hungary.  
\(^{k}\)Also at Departments of Physics & Astronomy and Chemistry, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook NY, USA.  
\(^{l}\)Also at International School for Advanced Studies (SISSA), Trieste, Italy.  
\(^{m}\)Also at Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of South Carolina, Columbia SC, USA.  
\(^{n}\)Also at Institut de Física d’Altes Energies (IFAE), The Barcelona Institute of Science and Technology, Barcelona, Spain.  
\(^{o}\)Also at School of Physics, Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, China.  
\(^{p}\)Also at Institute for Nuclear Research and Nuclear Energy (INRNE) of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria.  
\(^{q}\)Also at Faculty of Physics, M.V.Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia.  
\(^{r}\)Also at Institute of Physics, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan.  
\(^{s}\)Also at National Research Nuclear University MEPhI, Moscow, Russia.  
\(^{t}\)Also at Department of Physics, Stanford University, Stanford CA, USA.  
\(^{u}\)Also at Institute for Particle and Nuclear Physics, Wigner Research Centre for Physics, Budapest, Hungary.  
\(^{v}\)Also at Flensburg University of Applied Sciences, Flensburg, Germany.  
\(^{w}\)Also at CPPM, Aix-Marseille Université and CNRS/IN2P3, Marseille, France.  
\(^{x}\)Also at University of Malaya, Department of Physics, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
\(^{y}\)Also at LAL, Univ. Paris-Sud, CNRS/IN2P3, Université Paris-Saclay, Orsay, France.