



The unimodality of a polynomial coming from a rational integral. Back to the original proof



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ABSTRACT

A sequence of coefficients that appeared in the evaluation of a rational integral has been shown to be unimodal. An alternative proof is presented.

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1. Introduction

The polynomial

$$P_m(a) = \sum_{\ell=0}^m d_\ell(m) a^\ell \tag{1.1}$$

with

$$d_\ell(m) = 2^{-2m} \sum_{k=\ell}^m 2^k \binom{2m-2k}{m-k} \binom{m+k}{m} \binom{k}{\ell} \tag{1.2}$$

made its appearance in [1] in the evaluation of the quartic integral

$$\int_0^\infty \frac{dx}{(x^4 + 2ax^2 + 1)^{m+1}} = \frac{\pi}{2^{m+3/2}(a+1)^{m+1/2}} P_m(a). \tag{1.3}$$

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Properties of the sequence of numbers $\{d_\ell(m)\}$ are discussed in [10]. Among them is the fact that this is a unimodal sequence. Recall that a sequence of real numbers $\{x_0, x_1, \dots, x_m\}$ is called *unimodal* if there exists an index $0 \leq j \leq m$ such that $x_0 \leq x_1 \leq \dots \leq x_j$ and $x_j \geq x_{j+1} \geq \dots \geq x_m$. The sequence is called *logconcave* if $x_j^2 \geq x_{j-1}x_{j+1}$ for $1 \leq j \leq m - 1$. It is easy to see that if a sequence is logconcave then it is unimodal [14].

The sequence $\{d_\ell(m)\}$ was shown to be unimodal in [2] by an elementary argument and it was conjectured there to be logconcave. This conjecture was established by M. Kauers and P. Paule [9] using four recurrence relations found using a computer algebra approach. W.Y. Chen and E.X.W. Xia [6] introduced the notion of *ratio-monotonicity* for a sequence $\{x_m\}$:

$$\frac{x_0}{x_{m-1}} \leq \frac{x_1}{x_{m-2}} \leq \dots \leq \frac{x_i}{x_{m-1-i}} \leq \dots \leq \frac{x_{\lfloor \frac{m}{2} \rfloor - 1}}{x_{m - \lfloor \frac{m}{2} \rfloor}} \leq 1. \tag{1.4}$$

The results in [6] show that $\{d_\ell(m)\}$ is a ratio-monotone sequence and, as can be easily checked, this implies the logconcavity of $\{d_\ell(m)\}$. The logconcavity of $\{d_\ell(m)\}$ also follows from the *minimum conjecture* stated in [11]: let $b_\ell(m) = 2^{2m}d_\ell(m)$. The function

$$(m + \ell)(m + 1 - \ell)b_{\ell-1}^2(m) + \ell(\ell + 1)b_\ell^2(m) - \ell(2m + 1)b_{\ell-1}(m),$$

defined for $1 \leq \ell \leq m$, attains its minimum at $\ell = m$ with value $2^{2m}m(m + 1)\binom{2m}{m}^2$. This has been proven in [7], providing an alternative proof of the logconcavity of $\{d_\ell(m)\}$.

Further study of the sequence $\{d_\ell(m)\}$ are defined in terms of the operator

$$\mathfrak{L}(\{x_k\}) = \{x_k^2 - x_{k-1}x_{k+1}\}. \tag{1.5}$$

For instance, $\{x_k\}$ is logconcave simply means $\mathfrak{L}(\{x_k\})$ is a nonnegative sequence. The sequence is called *i-logconcave* if $\mathfrak{L}^j(\{x_k\})$ is a nonnegative sequence for $0 \leq j \leq i$. A sequence that is *i-logconcave* for every $i \in \mathbb{N}$ is called *infinitely logconcave*.

Conjecture 1.1. *The sequence $\{d_\ell(m)\}$ is infinitely logconcave.*

There is a strong connection between the roots of a polynomial $P(x)$ and ordering properties of its coefficients. For instance, if $P(x)$ has only real negative zeros, then P is logconcave (see [14] for details). Therefore, the expansion of $(x + 1)^n$ shows that the binomial coefficients form a logconcave sequence. P. Brändén [3] showed that if $P(x) = a_0 + a_1x + \dots + a_nx^n$, with $a_j \geq 0$ has only real and negative roots, then the same is true for

$$P_1(x) = a_0^2 + (a_1^2 - a_0a_2)x + \dots + (a_{n-1}^2 - a_{n-2}a_n)x^n. \tag{1.6}$$

This implies that the binomial coefficients are infinitely logconcave. This approach fails with the sequence $\{d_\ell(m)\}$ since the polynomial $P_m(a)$ has mostly non-real zeros. On the other hand, Brändén conjectured and W.Y.C. Chen et al. [5] proved that $Q_m(x) = \sum_{\ell=0}^m \frac{d_\ell(m)}{\ell!}x^\ell$ and $R_m(x) = \sum_{\ell=0}^m \frac{d_\ell(m)}{(\ell+2)!}x^\ell$ have only real zeros. These results imply that $P_m(a)$ in (1.1) is 3-logconcave.

The goal of this paper is to present an improved version of the original proof of the theorem

Theorem 1.2. *The sequence $\{d_\ell(m)\}$ is unimodal.*

The proof of Theorem 1.2 given in [2] is based on the difference

$$\Delta d_\ell(m) = d_{\ell+1}(m) - d_\ell(m). \tag{1.7}$$

A simple calculation shows that

$$\Delta d_\ell(m) = \frac{1}{2^{2m}} \binom{m+\ell}{m} \sum_{k=\ell}^m 2^k \binom{2m-2k}{m-k} \binom{m+k}{m+\ell} \times \frac{k-2\ell-1}{\ell+1}. \quad (1.8)$$

For $\lfloor \frac{m}{2} \rfloor \leq \ell \leq m-1$, the inequality

$$k-2\ell-1 \leq k-2 \left\lfloor \frac{m}{2} \right\rfloor - 1 \leq k-m \leq 0 \quad (1.9)$$

shows that $\Delta d_\ell(m) < 0$ since the term for $k = \ell$ has a strictly negative contribution. In the range $0 \leq \ell < \lfloor \frac{m}{2} \rfloor$, the difference $\Delta d_\ell(m) > 0$. This is equivalent to

$$\sum_{k=\ell}^{2\ell} 2^k (2\ell+1-k) \binom{2m-2k}{m-k} \binom{m+k}{m+\ell} < \sum_{k=2\ell+2}^m 2^k (k-2\ell-1) \binom{2m-2k}{m-k} \binom{m+k}{m+\ell}. \quad (1.10)$$

This establishes the following result.

Lemma 1.1. *The inequality (1.10) implies Theorem 1.2.*

The required inequality (1.10) is valid in an even stronger form, obtained by replacing $k-2\ell-1$ on the right hand side of (1.10) by 1 to produce

$$\sum_{k=\ell}^{2\ell} 2^k (2\ell+1-k) \binom{2m-2k}{m-k} \binom{m+k}{m+\ell} < \sum_{k=2\ell+2}^m 2^k \binom{2m-2k}{m-k} \binom{m+k}{m+\ell}, \quad (1.11)$$

and then made even stronger by replacing the sum on the right hand side of (1.11) by its last term. Therefore, if

$$\sum_{k=\ell}^{2\ell} 2^k (2\ell+1-k) \binom{2m-2k}{m-k} \binom{m+k}{m+\ell} < 2^m \binom{2m}{m+\ell}, \quad (1.12)$$

then $\Delta d_\ell(m) > 0$. This last inequality is now written as

$$S_{m,\ell} := \sum_{k=\ell}^{2\ell} \binom{m-\ell}{m-k} \binom{m+k}{2k} \binom{2m}{2k}^{-1} \times \frac{2\ell+1-k}{2^{m-k}} < 1. \quad (1.13)$$

This proves the following statement.

Lemma 1.2. *The inequality (1.13) implies Theorem 1.2.*

In [2], the proof of (1.13) is divided into two parts: first

Theorem 1.3. *For fixed $m \in \mathbb{N}$ and $0 \leq \ell < \lfloor \frac{m}{2} \rfloor$, the sum $S_{m,\ell}$ is increasing in ℓ*

and then

Theorem 1.4. *The maximal sum $S_{m, \lfloor \frac{m-1}{2} \rfloor}$ is strictly less than 1. For m even, the maximal sum $S_{2m, m-1}$ is given by*

$$T_m := S_{2m,m-1} = \sum_{r=2}^{m+1} \binom{2r}{r} \binom{m+1}{r} \frac{(r-1)}{2^r \binom{4m}{r}}, \tag{1.14}$$

with a similar expression for m odd.

Note. It is clear that [Theorems 1.3 and 1.4](#) imply [\(1.13\)](#). [Lemma 1.2](#) then completes the proof of [Theorem 1.2](#).

[Theorems 1.3 and 1.4](#) were established in [\[2\]](#) by some elementary estimates. The goal of the present work is to present a new proof of [Theorem 1.4](#). This is given in [Section 2](#). [Section 3](#) contains a proof based on a hypergeometric representation of T_m . [Section 4](#) shows that T_m converges to the value

$$\lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} \sum_{r=2}^{m+1} \binom{2r}{r} \binom{m+1}{r} \frac{(r-1)}{2^r \binom{4m}{r}} = 1 - \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \sim 0.292893. \tag{1.15}$$

This limit was *incorrectly* conjectured in [\[2\]](#) to be $1 - \ln 2 \sim 0.306853$. The authors have failed to produce a proof of [Theorem 1.3](#) by the automatic techniques developed in [\[12\]](#). These methods yield recurrences for the summands in [\(1.13\)](#), but it is not possible to conclude from them that $S_{m,\ell}$ is increasing. These automatic methods do succeed in producing a proof that the sequence $\{T_m : m \geq 2\}$ is increasing. The details are presented in the last section.

2. The bound on T_m

The result stated in [Theorem 1.4](#) is equivalent to the bound

$$T_m := \sum_{r=2}^{m+1} \binom{2r}{r} \binom{m+1}{r} \frac{(r-1)}{2^r \binom{4m}{r}} < 1, \quad \text{for all } m \geq 1. \tag{2.1}$$

A direct proof of this result is given next. [Section 3](#) presents a proof based on a hypergeometric representation of T_m .

Theorem 2.1. *The inequality $T_m < 1$ holds for $m \geq 1$.*

Proof. First, it is shown by induction that for m fixed and $2 \leq r \leq m + 1$

$$a_m(r) := \binom{2r}{r} \binom{m+1}{r} \leq b_m(r) := \binom{4m}{r}. \tag{2.2}$$

If $r = 2$: $b_m(2) - a_m(2) = 5m(m - 1) \geq 0$. Now observe that

$$\frac{b_m(r+1)}{b_m(r)} - \frac{a_m(r+1)}{a_m(r)} = \frac{4m-r}{r+1} - \frac{2(2r+1)(m+1-r)}{(r+1)^2} = \frac{2(m-1) + 3r(r-1)}{(r+1)^2} > 0.$$

This gives the inductive step written as

$$b_m(r) \frac{b_m(r+1)}{b_m(r)} > a_m(r) \frac{a_m(r+1)}{a_m(r)}.$$

The inequality $a_m(r) < b_m(r)$ now yields

$$T_m = \sum_{r=2}^{m+1} \frac{a_m(r)}{b_m(r)} \frac{r-1}{2^r} < \sum_{r=2}^{m+1} \frac{r-1}{2^r} = 1 - \frac{m+2}{2^{m+1}} < 1. \quad \square$$

3. A hypergeometric representation of T_m

This section provides a hypergeometric representation of

$$T_m = \sum_{r=2}^{m+1} \binom{2r}{r} \binom{m+1}{r} \frac{(r-1)}{2^r \binom{4m}{r}} \tag{3.1}$$

and an alternative proof of [Theorem 1.4](#).

Proposition 3.1. *The sequence T_m is given by*

$$T_m = 1 - {}_2F_1\left(\frac{1}{2}, -1-m \mid 2\right) + \frac{m+1}{4m} {}_2F_1\left(\frac{3}{2}, -m \mid 2\right). \tag{3.2}$$

Proof. Since $\binom{m}{k} = \frac{(-1)^k (-m)_k}{k!}$, it follows that $\frac{\binom{m+1}{r}}{\binom{4m}{r}} = \frac{(-1-m)_r}{(-4m)_r}$. This relation and $(\frac{1}{2})_r = (2r)! / (2^{2r} r!)$ give

$$T_m = \sum_{r=2}^{m+1} \frac{(\frac{1}{2})_r}{r!} \frac{(r-1)2^r (-1-m)_r}{(-4m)_r}. \tag{3.3}$$

Therefore

$$\begin{aligned} T_m &= - \sum_{r=2}^{m+1} \frac{(\frac{1}{2})_r (-1-m)_r 2^r}{(-4m)_r r!} + \sum_{r=2}^{m+1} \frac{(\frac{1}{2})_r (-1-m)_r 2^r}{(r-1)! (-4m)_r} \\ &= 1 + \frac{m+1}{4m} - \sum_{r=0}^{m+1} \frac{(\frac{1}{2})_r (-1-m)_r 2^r}{(-4m)_r r!} + \frac{m+1}{4m} \sum_{r=2}^{m+1} \frac{(\frac{1}{2})_r (-1-m)_r 2^r}{(-4m)_r (r-1)!} \frac{4m}{m+1} \\ &= 1 - \sum_{r=0}^{m+1} \frac{(\frac{1}{2})_r (-1-m)_r 2^r}{(-4m)_r r!} + \frac{m+1}{4m} \left\{ 1 + \sum_{r=2}^{m+1} \frac{(\frac{1}{2})_r 2^r}{(r-1)!} \frac{4m}{m+1} \frac{(-1-4m)_r}{(-4m)_r} \right\} \\ &= 1 - {}_2F_1\left(\frac{1}{2}, -1-m \mid 2\right) + \frac{m+1}{4m} \sum_{r=2}^{m+1} \frac{(\frac{1}{2})_r 2^r}{(r-1)!} \frac{4m}{m+1} \frac{(-1-m)_r}{(-4m)_r} \\ &= 1 - {}_2F_1\left(\frac{1}{2}, -1-m \mid 2\right) + \frac{m+1}{4m} \sum_{r=0}^m \frac{(\frac{3}{2})_r}{r!} \frac{2^r (-m)_r}{(1-4m)_r} \\ &= 1 - {}_2F_1\left(\frac{1}{2}, -1-m \mid 2\right) + \frac{m+1}{4m} {}_2F_1\left(\frac{3}{2}, -m \mid 2\right). \quad \square \end{aligned}$$

The next result provides an integral representation for T_m .

Proposition 3.2. *The sequence T_m is given by*

$$T_m = \frac{3(m+1)}{16(4m-1)} \int_0^2 t {}_2F_1\left(\frac{5}{2}, 1-m \mid t\right) dt. \tag{3.4}$$

Proof. Integrate by parts and use

$$\frac{d}{dt} {}_2F_1\left(\begin{matrix} a, b \\ c \end{matrix} \mid t\right) = \frac{ab}{c} {}_2F_1\left(\begin{matrix} a+1, b+1 \\ c+1 \end{matrix} \mid t\right) \tag{3.5}$$

to produce

$$\int_0^2 t {}_2F_1\left(\frac{5}{2}, 1-m \mid t\right) dt = \frac{4(4m-1)}{3m} {}_2F_1\left(\frac{3}{2}, -m \mid 2\right) - \frac{2(4m-1)}{3m} \int_0^2 {}_2F_1\left(\frac{3}{2}, -m \mid t\right) dt.$$

The last integral is evaluated using (3.5) to write

$${}_2F_1\left(\frac{3}{2}, -m \mid t\right) = \frac{8m}{m+1} \frac{d}{dt} {}_2F_1\left(\frac{1}{2}, -1-m \mid t\right)$$

and the result follows. \square

The next result provides a bound for the integrand in Proposition 3.2.

Proposition 3.3. *Let $n \in \mathbb{N}$, $n \geq 2$ and $0 \leq t \leq 2$. Then*

$$\left| {}_2F_1\left(\frac{5}{2}, 1-m \mid t\right) \right| \leq 9\sqrt{3}(3-t)^{-5/2}.$$

Proof. The hypergeometric function is given by

$${}_2F_1\left(\frac{5}{2}, 1-m \mid t\right) = \sum_{k=0}^{m-1} \binom{5}{2}_k \frac{(1-m)_k}{(2-4m)_k}.$$

The bound

$$\frac{(1-m)_k}{(2-4m)_k} \leq \frac{1}{3^k} \tag{3.6}$$

follows directly from the observation that $b_k(m) = 3^k(1-m)_k/(2-4m)_k$ satisfies $b_0(m) = 1$ and it is decreasing in k . Indeed,

$$\frac{b_{k+1}(m)}{b_k(m)} = \frac{3(1-m+k)}{2-4m+k} < 1. \tag{3.7}$$

Then (3.6) gives

$$\begin{aligned} {}_2F_1\left(\frac{5}{2}, 1-m \mid t\right) &\leq \sum_{k=0}^{m-1} \binom{5}{2}_k \frac{t^k}{3^k k!} \\ &\leq \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \binom{5}{2}_k \frac{(t/3)^k}{k!} \\ &= {}_1F_0\left(\frac{5}{2} \mid \frac{t}{3}\right). \end{aligned}$$

The evaluation of the final hypergeometric sum comes from the binomial theorem

$${}_1F_0\left(\frac{a}{-} \mid z\right) = (1-z)^{-a}, \quad \text{for } |z| < 1. \quad \square \tag{3.8}$$

The bound in Theorem 1.4 is now obtained.

Corollary 3.4. *For $m \in \mathbb{N}$, the sequence T_m satisfies $T_m < 1$.*

Proof. It is easy to compute that $T_1 = \frac{1}{4}$. For $m \geq 2$, observe that

$$\frac{3(m+1)}{16(4m-1)} = \frac{3}{16} \left(\frac{1}{4} + \frac{5/4}{4m-1} \right) \leq \frac{9}{112} \tag{3.9}$$

and thus

$$T_m \leq \frac{9}{112} \int_0^2 \frac{9\sqrt{3}t \, dt}{(3-t)^{5/2}} = \frac{27}{28} < 1. \quad \square \tag{3.10}$$

Note 3.5. This inequality completes the proof that $\{d_\ell(m)\}$ is unimodal.

4. The limiting behavior of T_m

This section is devoted to establish that $T_m \rightarrow 1 - 1/\sqrt{2}$ as $m \rightarrow \infty$. Section 5 proves that this convergence is monotone increasing, thus improving the bound in Theorem 2.1 to $T_m < 1 - 1/\sqrt{2} < 3/10$.

Theorem 4.1. *The sequence T_m satisfies*

$$\lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} T_m = 1 - \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}. \tag{4.1}$$

The arguments will employ the classical Tannery theorem. This is stated next, a proof appears in [4], page 136.

Theorem 4.2 (Tannery). *Assume $\alpha_k := \lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} \alpha_k(m)$ satisfies $|\alpha_k(m)| \leq M_k$ with $\sum_{k=0}^\infty M_k < \infty$. Then $\lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} \sum_{k=0}^m \alpha_k(m) = \sum_{k=0}^\infty \alpha_k$.*

Three proofs of Theorem 4.1 are presented here. In each one of them, the argument reduces to an exchange of limits. The first one is based on the integral representation of T_m and it uses bounded convergence theorem and Tannery’s theorem. The second one deals directly with the hypergeometric sums and it employs Tannery’s theorem for passing to the limit in a series. A similar argument can be employed in the third proof.

Proposition 4.3. *Assume $0 \leq t < 4$ is fixed. Then*

$$\lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} {}_2F_1 \left(\begin{matrix} \frac{5}{2}, 1-m \\ 2-4m \end{matrix} \middle| t \right) = {}_1F_0 \left(\begin{matrix} \frac{5}{2} \\ - \end{matrix} \middle| \frac{t}{4} \right) = \frac{32}{(4-t)^{5/2}}. \tag{4.2}$$

First proof. Start with

$${}_2F_1 \left(\begin{matrix} \frac{5}{2}, 1-m \\ 2-4m \end{matrix} \middle| t \right) = \sum_{k=0}^{m-1} \frac{(\frac{5}{2})_k (1-m)_k t^k}{(2-4m)_k k!} \tag{4.3}$$

and observe that

$$\frac{(1-m)_k}{(2-4m)_k} = \prod_{j=0}^{k-1} \frac{m-1-j}{4m-2-j} \rightarrow \frac{1}{4^k} \tag{4.4}$$

as $m \rightarrow \infty$. Therefore

$$\lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} {}_2F_1\left(\frac{5}{2}, 1 - m \mid t\right) = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \frac{(\frac{5}{2})_k}{k!} \left(\frac{t}{4}\right)^k = {}_1F_0\left(\frac{5}{2} \mid \frac{t}{4}\right). \tag{4.5}$$

The hypergeometric sum is now evaluated using (3.8).

The passage to the limit in (4.5) uses Tannery’s theorem. In this case

$$\alpha_k(m) = \frac{(\frac{5}{2})_k (1 - m)_k t^k}{(2 - 4m)_k k!} \tag{4.6}$$

satisfies

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} \alpha_k(m) &= \lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} \left(\frac{5}{2}\right)_k \frac{t^k}{k!} \frac{(\frac{1}{m} - 1)(\frac{2}{m} - 1) \cdots (\frac{k}{m} - 1)}{(\frac{2}{m} - 4)(\frac{3}{m} - 1) \cdots (\frac{1+k}{m} - 4)} \\ &= \left(\frac{5}{2}\right)_k \frac{t^k}{k! 4^k} \end{aligned}$$

exists. This limit is denoted by α_k .

The result now follows from the bound

$$|\alpha_k(m)| \leq M_k := \left(\frac{5}{2}\right)_k \frac{t^k}{k! 3^k}, \tag{4.7}$$

and the sum

$$\sum_{k=0}^{\infty} M_k = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \left(\frac{5}{2}\right)_k \frac{t^k}{k! 3^k} = \left(1 - \frac{t}{3}\right)^{-5/2} \tag{4.8}$$

valid for $0 \leq t \leq 2$. Tannery’s theorem gives

$$\lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} \sum_{k=0}^{m-1} \alpha_k(m) = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \alpha_k = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \left(\frac{5}{2}\right)_k \frac{t^k}{k! 4^k} = \left(1 - \frac{t}{4}\right)^{-5/2}. \tag{4.9}$$

The expression in Proposition 3.2, the bound (3.6) and Proposition 3.3 give, via the dominated convergence theorem, the value

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} T_m &= \lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} \frac{3(m+1)}{16(4m-1)} \int_0^2 {}_2F_1\left(\frac{5}{2}, 1 - m \mid t\right) t dt \\ &= \frac{3}{64} \int_0^2 {}_1F_0\left(\frac{5}{2} \mid \frac{t}{4}\right) dt \\ &= \frac{3}{64} \int_0^2 \frac{32t}{(4-t)^{5/2}} dt \\ &= 1 - \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}. \end{aligned} \tag{4.10}$$

This completes the first proof. \square

Second proof. The limiting value of T_m is now obtained using the hypergeometric representation (3.2). It amounts to proving

$$\lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} {}_2F_1\left(\frac{1}{2}, -1-m \mid -4m \mid 2\right) - \frac{m+1}{4m} {}_2F_1\left(\frac{3}{2}, -m \mid 1-4m \mid 2\right) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}. \quad (4.11)$$

The contiguous relation [13], page 28,

$${}_2F_1\left(\begin{matrix} a+1, b \\ c \end{matrix} \mid z\right) = {}_2F_1\left(\begin{matrix} a, b \\ c \end{matrix} \mid z\right) + \frac{bz}{c} {}_2F_1\left(\begin{matrix} a+1, b+1 \\ c+1 \end{matrix} \mid z\right) \quad (4.12)$$

is used with $a = \frac{1}{2}$, $b = -1 - m$, $c = -4m$ and $z = 2$ to obtain

$${}_2F_1\left(\frac{3}{2}, -1-m \mid -4m \mid 2\right) = {}_2F_1\left(\frac{1}{2}, -1-m \mid -4m \mid 2\right) + \frac{m+1}{2m} {}_2F_1\left(\frac{3}{2}, -m \mid 1-4m \mid 2\right)$$

and this gives

$$\frac{(m+1)}{4m} {}_2F_1\left(\frac{3}{2}, -m \mid 1-4m \mid 2\right) = \frac{1}{2} \left({}_2F_1\left(\frac{3}{2}, -1-m \mid -4m \mid 2\right) - {}_2F_1\left(\frac{1}{2}, -1-m \mid -4m \mid 2\right) \right). \quad (4.13)$$

Thus it suffices to prove

$$\lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} 3 {}_2F_1\left(\frac{1}{2}, -1-m \mid -4m \mid 2\right) - {}_2F_1\left(\frac{3}{2}, -1-m \mid -4m \mid 2\right) = \sqrt{2}. \quad (4.14)$$

A direct calculation shows that

$$3 {}_2F_1\left(\frac{1}{2}, -1-m \mid -4m \mid 2\right) - {}_2F_1\left(\frac{3}{2}, -1-m \mid -4m \mid 2\right) = \sum_{k=0}^{m+1} \alpha_k(m)$$

with

$$\alpha_k(m) = \sum_{k=0}^{m+1} \frac{[3\left(\frac{1}{2}\right)_k - \left(\frac{3}{2}\right)_k](-1-m)_k 2^k}{(-4m)_k k!}. \quad (4.15)$$

The question is now reduced to justifying passing to the limit in

$$\lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} \sum_{k=0}^{m+1} \alpha_k(m) = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} \alpha_k(m) \quad (4.16)$$

since

$$\lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} \alpha_k(m) = \left(3 \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)_k - \left(\frac{3}{2}\right)_k \right) \frac{1}{k! 2^k} \quad (4.17)$$

and

$$\sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} \alpha_k(m) = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \left(3 \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)_k - \left(\frac{3}{2}\right)_k \right) \frac{1}{k! 2^k}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= 3 \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \frac{\left(\frac{1}{2}\right)_k 2^{-k}}{k!} - \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \frac{\left(\frac{3}{2}\right)_k 2^{-k}}{k!} \\
 &= 3(1 - 1/2)^{-1/2} - (1 - 1/2)^{-3/2} \\
 &= \sqrt{2}.
 \end{aligned}$$

The last step is justified using Tannery’s theorem. In the present case $\alpha_k(m)$, given in (4.15), satisfies

$$|\alpha_k(m)| \leq \left(3 \binom{1}{2}_k + \binom{3}{2}_k\right) \frac{2^k (-1 - m)_k}{k! (-4m)_k}. \tag{4.18}$$

The proof of the inequality

$$\frac{(-1 - m)_k}{(-4m)_k} \leq \frac{1}{3^k}, \tag{4.19}$$

is similar to the proof of (3.6). This is then used to verify that the hypothesis of Tannery’s theorem are satisfied. The details are omitted. \square

Third proof. This is based on the analysis of a function that resembles the formula for T_m . \square

Proposition 4.4. For $0 \leq x < 1$ define

$$W_m(x) = \sum_{r=0}^{m+1} \binom{2r}{r} \binom{m+1}{r} \binom{4m}{r}^{-1} x^r. \tag{4.20}$$

Then

$$\lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} W_m(x) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{1-x}} \quad \text{and} \quad \lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} \frac{d}{dx} W_m(x) = \frac{1}{2(1-x)^{3/2}}. \tag{4.21}$$

Proof. Note that the sum defining $W_m(x)$ can be extended to infinity since $\binom{m+1}{r}$ has compact support. The proof now follows from

$$W_m(x) = \sum_{r=0}^{\infty} \binom{2r}{r} \left(\frac{x}{4}\right)^r \prod_{i=1}^r \left(\frac{1 - \frac{i-2}{m}}{1 - \frac{i-1}{m}}\right) \rightarrow \sum_{r=0}^{\infty} \binom{2r}{r} \left(\frac{x}{4}\right)^r = \frac{1}{\sqrt{1-x}},$$

as $m \rightarrow \infty$. The passage to the uniform limit is justified by Weierstrass M-test or dominated convergence theorem. The second assertion is immediate. \square

Corollary 4.5. The sequence T_m satisfies

$$\lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} T_m = 1 - \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}. \tag{4.22}$$

Proof. This follows from the identity

$$T_m = \lim_{x \rightarrow 1/2} \frac{1}{2} \frac{d}{dx} W_m(x) - W_m(x) + 1. \quad \square \tag{4.23}$$

Note 4.6. The function $W_m(x)$ can be expressed in hypergeometric form as

$$W_m(x) = {}_2F_1\left(\frac{1}{2}, -1 - m \mid 4x\right). \tag{4.24}$$

5. The monotonicity of T_m

This last section describes the convergence of $T(m)$ to its limit given in (4.1).

Theorem 5.1. *The sequence T_m is monotone increasing.*

Proof. Let

$$F(r, m) = \binom{2r}{r} \binom{m+1}{r} \frac{r-1}{2^r \binom{4m}{r}}. \tag{5.1}$$

The proof is based on a recurrence involving $F(r, m)$ that is obtained by the WZ-technology as developed in [12]. Input the hypergeometric function $F(k, m)$ into WZ-package with summing range from $r = 2$ to $r = n + 1$. The recurrence relations that come as the output is

$$a_n T_n - b_n T_{n+1} + c_n T_{n+2} + d_n = 0, \tag{5.2}$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} a_n &= 7\,195\,230 + 87\,693\,273n + 448\,856\,568n^2 + 1\,263\,033\,897n^3 + 2\,147\,597\,568n^4 \\ &\quad + 2\,279\,791\,176n^5 + 1\,502\,157\,312n^6 + 586\,779\,648n^7 + 121\,208\,832n^8 + 9\,732\,096n^9 \\ b_n &= 9\,661\,680 + 123\,557\,904n + 651\,005\,760n^2 + 1\,865\,031\,680n^3 + 3\,206\,772\,480n^4 \\ &\quad + 3\,428\,727\,552n^5 + 2\,272\,235\,520n^6 + 894\,167\,040n^7 + 187\,269\,120n^8 + 15\,499\,264n^9 \\ c_n &= 3\,265\,920 + 41\,472\,576n + 217\,055\,232n^2 + 618\,806\,528n^3 + 1\,062\,162\,432n^4 \\ &\quad + 1\,139\,030\,016n^5 + 762\,052\,608n^6 + 305\,528\,832n^7 + 66\,060\,288n^8 + 5\,767\,168n^9 \\ d_n &= -799\,470 - 5\,607\,945n - 14\,906\,040n^2 - 16\,808\,745n^3 - 2\,987\,520n^4 + 9\,906\,360n^5 \\ &\quad + 8\,025\,600n^6 + 1\,858\,560n^7. \end{aligned}$$

Note that $b_n = a_n + c_n + d_n$, then (5.2) becomes

$$a_n T_n - (a_n + c_n + d_n) T_{n+1} + c_n T_{n+2} + d_n = 0, \tag{5.3}$$

which is written as

$$a_n (T_n - T_{n+1}) + d_n (1 - T_{n+1}) = c_n (T_{n+1} - T_{n+2}). \tag{5.4}$$

Theorem 2.1 shows that $T_n < 1$ and Lemma 5.2 below states that $d_n \geq 0$. Therefore

$$a_n (T_n - T_{n+1}) \leq c_n (T_{n+1} - T_{n+2}). \tag{5.5}$$

Assume T is not monotone. Define N as the smallest positive integer such that

$$T_N > T_{N+1}. \tag{5.6}$$

Then (5.5) implies

$$a_N (T_N - T_{N+1}) \leq c_N (T_{N+1} - T_{N+2}) \tag{5.7}$$

and since $a_N > 0, c_N > 0$, it follows that $T_{N+1} > T_{N+2}$. Iteration of this argument shows that the sequence $\{T_n : n \geq N\}$ is monotonically decreasing.

Let $\delta_N = T_N - T_{N+1} > 0$, then (5.7) yields

$$T_{N+1} - T_{N+2} \geq \frac{a_N}{c_N} \delta_N. \tag{5.8}$$

Iterating this procedure gives

$$T_{N+p} - T_{N+p+1} > \delta_N \prod_{i=0}^{p-1} \frac{a_{N+i}}{c_{N+i}}, \quad \text{for every } p \in \mathbb{N}. \tag{5.9}$$

This inequality is now impossible as $p \rightarrow \infty$, since the left-hand side converges to 0 in view of (4.1) and

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{a_n}{c_n} = \frac{27}{16} \tag{5.10}$$

showing that the right-hand side blows up. \square

It remains to establish the sign of d_m . This is done next.

Lemma 5.2. *The sequence d_m is nonnegative for $m \geq 2$.*

Proof. Simply observe that

$$\begin{aligned} d_{n+2} = & 814\,627\,800 + 2\,803\,521\,195n + 3\,780\,146\,130n^2 + 2\,680\,435\,095n^3 \\ & + 1\,098\,008\,880n^4 + 262\,332\,600n^5 + 34\,045\,440n^6 + 1\,858\,560n^7 \end{aligned}$$

is a polynomial with positive coefficients. \square

The proof of monotonicity of T_m is complete.

6. An inequality for hypergeometric functions

The hypergeometric representation for the sequence T_m and the monotonicity of T_m give using (4.13),

$$\begin{aligned} & {}_2F_1\left(\frac{3}{2}, -m-2 \mid 2\right) - {}_2F_1\left(\frac{3}{2}, -m-1 \mid 2\right) \\ & > 3 \left[{}_2F_1\left(\frac{1}{2}, -m-2 \mid 2\right) - {}_2F_1\left(\frac{1}{2}, -m-1 \mid 2\right) \right]. \end{aligned}$$

This is the special case $x = \frac{1}{2}$ of the inequality given below.

Theorem 6.1. *The inequality*

$$\begin{aligned} & {}_2F_1\left(\frac{3}{2}, -m-2 \mid 4x\right) - {}_2F_1\left(\frac{3}{2}, -m-1 \mid 4x\right) \\ & > 3 \left[{}_2F_1\left(\frac{1}{2}, -m-2 \mid 4x\right) - {}_2F_1\left(\frac{1}{2}, -m-1 \mid 4x\right) \right] \end{aligned}$$

holds for $x \geq \frac{1}{2}$.

An automatic proof of this result is given in [8]. A traditional proof has escaped the authors.

7. Conclusion

A sequence of numbers, originally found in the evaluation of a rational integral, had been shown to be unimodal. A crucial point in the original proof consisted of establishing an upper bound of an associated sequence $\{T_m\}$. Several arguments are given for the validity of this bound. Moreover, it is shown that T_m is a monotone sequence.

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