

## Proving dualities for $q$ MZVs with connected sums

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**Abstract:** This paper gives an application of so-called connected sums, introduced recently by Seki and Yamamoto [SY]. Special about our approach is that it proves a duality for the Schlesinger–Zudilin and the Bradley–Zhao model of  $q$ MZVs simultaneously. The latter implies the duality for MZVs and the former can be used to prove the shuffle product formula for MZVs. Furthermore, the  $q$ -Ohno relation, a generalization of Bradley–Zhao duality, is also obtained.

**Key words:** Multiple zeta values;  $q$ -multiple zeta values; duality; connected sums.

**1. Notation and definitions.** For an *admissible index*  $\mathbf{k} = (k_1, \dots, k_r) \in \mathbf{N}^r$ , i.e.,  $r \geq 0$  and  $k_1 \geq 2$ , its *multiple zeta value* (MZV) is defined as

$$\zeta(\mathbf{k}) := \sum_{m_1 > \dots > m_r > 0} \frac{1}{m_1^{k_1}} \cdots \frac{1}{m_r^{k_r}}.$$

To understand the algebraic structure of MZVs better on the one hand and to get connections to holomorphic functions, in particular, modular forms (see [GKZ], [Bac]), on the other hand, it is useful to introduce  $q$ -analogs of MZVs. There are several models of  $q$ -analogs. We focus in this paper on two of them: the Bradley–Zhao model and the Schlesinger–Zudilin model. For further details on these and other models, we refer to [Zha], [Bri]. In this note  $q$  will be a formal variable or a real number with  $0 < q < 1$ .

The Bradley–Zhao model is defined as follows: Set  $\zeta_q^{\text{BZ}}(\emptyset) := 1$  and for  $\mathbf{k} = (k_1, \dots, k_r)$  an admissible index define

$$\zeta_q^{\text{BZ}}(\mathbf{k}) := \sum_{m_1 > \dots > m_r > 0} \frac{q^{m_1(k_1-1)}}{(1-q^{m_1})^{k_1}} \cdots \frac{q^{m_r(k_r-1)}}{(1-q^{m_r})^{k_r}}.$$

Similarly, we define Schlesinger–Zudilin  $q$ MZVs via  $\zeta_q^{\text{SZ}}(\emptyset) := 1$  and for every *SZ-admissible index*  $\mathbf{k}$ , i.e.,  $\mathbf{k} \in \mathbf{N}_0^r$  for some  $r \geq 0$  with  $k_1 \geq 1$ , we set

$$\zeta_q^{\text{SZ}}(\mathbf{k}) := \sum_{m_1 > \dots > m_r > 0} \frac{q^{m_1 k_1}}{(1-q^{m_1})^{k_1}} \cdots \frac{q^{m_r k_r}}{(1-q^{m_r})^{k_r}}.$$

**2. Dualities.** Write an admissible index  $\mathbf{k}$  in the shape  $\mathbf{k} = (k_1 + 1, \{1\}^{d_1-1}, \dots, k_r + 1, \{1\}^{d_r-1})$  with  $k_j, d_j \geq 1$  unique ( $\{1\}^d$  means that 1 is repeated  $d$ -times). For the next two theorems, we need the *dual index*,

$$\mathbf{k}^\vee := (d_r + 1, \{1\}^{k_r-1}, \dots, d_1 + 1, \{1\}^{k_1-1}).$$

**Theorem 1** (MZV-Duality, [Zag, §9]). *For every admissible index  $\mathbf{k}$ , we have  $\zeta(\mathbf{k}) = \zeta(\mathbf{k}^\vee)$ .*

The next theorem can be seen as a  $q$ -analog of MZV-duality since MZV-duality follows immediately from it (cf. the proof):

**Theorem 2** (BZ-Duality, [Bra, Thm. 5]). *We have  $\zeta_q^{\text{BZ}}(\mathbf{k}) = \zeta_q^{\text{BZ}}(\mathbf{k}^\vee)$  for every admissible index  $\mathbf{k}$ .*

A generalization of BZ-duality is the so-called  $q$ -Ohno relation, of which BZ-duality is the special case  $c = 0$ :

**Theorem 3** ( $q$ -Ohno relation, [Bra, Thm. 5]). *For any admissible index  $\mathbf{k} = (k_1, \dots, k_r)$  and any  $c \in \mathbf{N}_0$  we have*

$$\sum_{|\mathbf{c}|=c} \zeta_q^{\text{BZ}}(\mathbf{k} + \mathbf{c}) = \sum_{|\mathbf{c}'|=c} \zeta_q^{\text{BZ}}(\mathbf{k}^\vee + \mathbf{c}'),$$

where we sum on the left over all  $\mathbf{c} = (c_1, \dots, c_r) \in \mathbf{N}_0^r$  with  $|\mathbf{c}| := c_1 + \dots + c_r = c$  and on the right we sum over all  $\mathbf{c}' = (c'_1, \dots, c'_{r'}) \in \mathbf{N}_0^{r'}$  with  $|\mathbf{c}'| = c$  where  $r'$  is the depth of  $\mathbf{k}^\vee$ . The addition of indices is to be understood componentwise.

For the SZ-model, we write an SZ-admissible index, with  $k_j, d_j \geq 0$  unique, in the shape  $\mathbf{k} = (k_1 + 1, \{0\}^{d_1}, \dots, k_r + 1, \{0\}^{d_r})$  and define the *SZ-dual index*,

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$$\mathbf{k}^\dagger := (d_r + 1, \{0\}^{k_r}, \dots, d_1 + 1, \{0\}^{k_1}).$$

**Theorem 4** (SZ-Duality, [Zha, Thm. 8.3]). *For all  $\mathbf{k}$  SZ-admissible, we have  $\zeta_q^{\text{SZ}}(\mathbf{k}) = \zeta_q^{\text{SZ}}(\mathbf{k}^\dagger)$ .*

Note that BZ- and SZ-duality on algebraic level look the same, both can be obtained by the same anti-automorphism on the non-commutative free algebra in two variables (see, e.g., [Bri, Thm. 3.5, Thm. 3.16]). But they imply different things. BZ-duality gives direct duality for MZVs, while SZ-duality does not. However, SZ-duality implies another important result in the theory of MZVs, namely the shuffle product formula (cf. [EMS], [Sin], for details [Bri, Thm. 3.46]).

For some calculations in the next section we need the connection between admissible and SZ-admissible index: An index  $\mathbf{k}$  is admissible if and only if  $\mathbf{k} - \mathbf{1}$  is SZ-admissible ( $\mathbf{k} + \mathbf{1}$  is the index, which is  $\mathbf{k}$  with every entry increased by 1; similar for  $\mathbf{k} - \mathbf{1}$ ). Furthermore, we have for  $\mathbf{k}$  admissible

$$(2.1) \quad (\mathbf{k} - \mathbf{1})^\dagger = \mathbf{k}^\vee - \mathbf{1}.$$

**3. Connected sums & proof of dualities.**

As a new tool for proving identities among ( $q$ -)multiple zeta values, Seki and Yamamoto introduced the concept of so-called connected sums (this notion is independent of connected sums in topology). With connected sums, they have proven, e.g., the duality of MZVs, Hoffman’s identity, and the  $q$ -analog of Ohno’s relation, cf. [Sek] or [SY].

Using connected sums, we give a proof of the duality of Schlesinger–Zudilin  $q$ MZVs, the duality of Bradley–Zhao  $q$ MZVs and the usual duality of MZVs. It turns out that the connected sum defined below has the power to prove all three statements at once. As a by-product, we also get a proof for the  $q$ -Ohno relation. The proof is inspired by the one of Seki and Yamamoto ([SY]), where the authors proved  $q$ -Ohno’s relation for non-modified Bradley–Zhao  $q$ MZVs and hence, in particular, also BZ-duality. We work with modified  $q$ MZVs, which will be here the reason that we can prove all the mentioned dualities at the same time. In Remark 6 (v), we refer to Seki–Yamamoto’s connected sum.

**Definition 5** (Connected sum). Let be  $r, s \geq 0$ ,  $\mathbf{k} = (k_1, \dots, k_r) \in \mathbf{N}_0^r$ ,  $\boldsymbol{\ell} = (\ell_1, \dots, \ell_s) \in \mathbf{N}_0^s$  and  $x \in [0, 1)$ . Define the connected sum as

$$Z_q(\mathbf{k}; \boldsymbol{\ell}; x)$$

$$\begin{aligned} &:= \sum_{\substack{m_1 > \dots > m_r > m_{r+1} = 0 \\ n_1 > \dots > n_s > n_{s+1} = 0}} \prod_{i=1}^r \frac{q^{m_i k_i}}{(1 - q^{m_i} x)(1 - q^{m_i})^{k_i}} \\ &\times \prod_{j=1}^s \frac{q^{n_j \ell_j}}{(1 - q^{n_j} x)(1 - q^{n_j})^{\ell_j}} \\ &\times \frac{q^{m_1 m_1} f_q(m_1; x) f_q(n_1; x)}{f_q(m_1 + n_1; x)}, \end{aligned}$$

where  $f_q(m; x) := \prod_{h=1}^m (1 - q^h x)$ .

**Remark 6.** (i) The connected sum  $Z_q$  is symmetric in  $\mathbf{k}$  and  $\boldsymbol{\ell}$  by definition.

(ii) Notice that the connected sum is well-defined in the sense that it is a series over positive real numbers and hence either a positive real number (if convergent) or  $+\infty$  (if not convergent).

(iii) If  $k_1 \geq 1$ , then  $Z_q(\mathbf{k}; \emptyset; 0) = \zeta_q^{\text{SZ}}(\mathbf{k})$ .

(iv) If  $k_1 \geq 1$ , then  $\lim_{x \rightarrow 1} Z_q(\mathbf{k}; \emptyset; x) = \zeta_q^{\text{BZ}}(\mathbf{k} + \mathbf{1})$ .

(v) In [SY], the authors define also a connected sum. Call it  $Z_q^{\text{SY}}(\mathbf{k}; \boldsymbol{\ell}; x)$  and assume that the indices are in reversed order than there. Then  $Z_q$  and  $Z_q^{\text{SY}}$  are connected via

$$Z_q(\mathbf{k} - \mathbf{1}; \boldsymbol{\ell} - \mathbf{1}; x) = \frac{1}{(1 - q)^{|\mathbf{k}| + |\boldsymbol{\ell}|}} Z_q^{\text{SY}}(\mathbf{k}; \boldsymbol{\ell}; y)$$

with  $x = 1 + (1 - q)y$ , where  $|\cdot|$  denotes the sum of entries of the corresponding index.

**Proposition 7** (Boundary conditions). *If  $k_1 \geq 1$ ,  $0 < q < 1$  and  $x \in [0, 1)$ , then  $Z_q(\mathbf{k}; \emptyset; x)$  is a well-defined real number.*

*Proof.* One has

$$\begin{aligned} &Z_q(\mathbf{k}; \emptyset; x) \\ &= \sum_{m_1 > \dots > m_{r+1} = 0} \prod_{i=1}^r \frac{q^{m_i k_i}}{(1 - q^{m_i} x)(1 - q^{m_i})^{k_i}} \\ &\leq \frac{1}{(1 - q)^r} \sum_{m_1 > \dots > m_{r+1} = 0} \prod_{i=1}^r \frac{q^{m_i k_i}}{(1 - q^{m_i})^{k_i}} \\ &= \frac{1}{(1 - q)^r} \zeta_q^{\text{SZ}}(k_1, \dots, k_r), \end{aligned}$$

which is well-defined since  $k_1 \geq 1$ , i.e.,  $(k_1, \dots, k_r)$  is SZ-admissible.  $\square$

After we have checked well-definedness of  $Z_q$ , we state and prove now distinguished relations among our connected sums.

**Theorem 8** (Transport relations). *Let be  $r, s \geq 0$  and  $k_1, \dots, k_r, \ell_1, \dots, \ell_s \geq 0$ . If  $s > 0$ ,*

$$(3.1) \quad Z_q((0, k_1, \dots, k_r); (\ell_1, \dots, \ell_s); x)$$

$$= Z_q((k_1, \dots, k_r); (\ell_1 + 1, \ell_2, \dots, \ell_s); x)$$

and if  $r > 0$ ,

$$(3.2) \quad \begin{aligned} Z_q((k_1 + 1, k_2, \dots, k_r); (\ell_1, \dots, \ell_s); x) \\ = Z_q((k_1, \dots, k_r); (0, \ell_1, \ell_2, \dots, \ell_s); x). \end{aligned}$$

*Proof.* The second equality follows from the first by symmetry and the first one is obtained from

$$\begin{aligned} & \sum_{a>m} \frac{1}{1-q^a x} \frac{q^{an} f_q(a; x) f_q(n; x)}{f_q(a+n; x)} \\ &= \frac{q^n}{1-q^n} \sum_{a>m} \left( \frac{q^{(a-1)n} f_q(a-1; x) f_q(n; x)}{f_q(a+n-1; x)} \right. \\ & \quad \left. - \frac{q^{an} f_q(a; x) f_q(n; x)}{f_q(a+n; x)} \right) \\ &= \frac{q^n}{1-q^n} \frac{q^{mn} f_q(m; x) f_q(n; x)}{f_q(m+n; x)} \end{aligned}$$

and setting  $m = m_1, n = n_1, a = m_0$ .  $\square$

**Remark 9.** Theorem 8 coincides with [SY, Thm. 2.2] under the identification of Remark 6 (v).

This theorem is the key of proving Theorems 1–4. Especially, the following corollary will be needed, together with the connection of  $Z_q$  with  $\zeta_q^{\text{BZ}}$  resp.  $\zeta_q^{\text{SZ}}$  (Remark 6).

**Corollary 10.** *For every SZ-admissible index  $\mathbf{k}$  and  $x \in [0, 1)$  we have*

$$Z_q(\mathbf{k}; \emptyset; x) = Z_q(\emptyset; \mathbf{k}^\dagger; x).$$

*Proof.* For all indices  $\mathbf{k}$  and  $\ell$  and  $k \geq 1, d \geq 0$  we obtain (by  $(k, \{0\}^d, \mathbf{k})$  we mean the concatenation of the indices  $(k, \{0\}^d)$  and  $\mathbf{k}$ ) by applying  $k$ -times (3.2) first and then  $(d+1)$ -times (3.1)

$$\begin{aligned} & Z_q((k, \{0\}^d, \mathbf{k}); \ell; x) \\ &= Z_q((\{0\}^{d+1}, \mathbf{k}); (\{0\}^k, \ell); x) \\ &= Z_q(\mathbf{k}, (d+1, \{0\}^{k-1}); \ell; x). \end{aligned}$$

Now, set  $\ell = \emptyset$  and write an SZ-admissible index  $\mathbf{k}$  in the form

$$\mathbf{k} = (k_1, \{0\}^{d_1}, \dots, k_r, \{0\}^{d_r}).$$

Then we obtain the corollary by induction on  $r$  and using the above calculation in the induction step.  $\square$

With the connection of  $Z_q$  and  $\zeta_q^{\text{SZ}}$  (Rem. 6 (iii)), SZ-duality follows directly:

*Proof of Theorem 4.* Take some SZ-admissible index  $\mathbf{k}$ . Using the symmetry of  $Z_q$  and setting

$x = 0$ , the claim follows by Corollary 10:

$$\begin{aligned} \zeta_q^{\text{SZ}}(\mathbf{k}) &= Z_q(\mathbf{k}; \emptyset; 0) = Z_q(\emptyset; \mathbf{k}^\dagger; 0) \\ &= Z_q(\mathbf{k}^\dagger; \emptyset; 0) = \zeta_q^{\text{SZ}}(\mathbf{k}^\dagger). \end{aligned}$$

$\square$

Analogously, we are able to prove BZ-duality: *Proof of Theorem 2.* For an admissible index  $\mathbf{k}$  we have, using Remark 6 and Corollary 10,

$$\begin{aligned} \zeta_q^{\text{BZ}}(\mathbf{k}) &= \lim_{x \rightarrow 1} Z_q(\mathbf{k} - \mathbf{1}; \emptyset; x) \\ &= \lim_{x \rightarrow 1} Z_q(\emptyset; (\mathbf{k} - \mathbf{1})^\dagger; x) \\ &= \lim_{x \rightarrow 1} Z_q((\mathbf{k} - \mathbf{1})^\dagger; \emptyset; x) \\ &= \zeta_q^{\text{BZ}}((\mathbf{k} - \mathbf{1})^\dagger + \mathbf{1}) = \zeta_q^{\text{BZ}}(\mathbf{k}^\vee). \end{aligned}$$

$\square$

**Example 11.** We give a concrete example of applying transport relations step by step to make clear what happens:

$$\begin{aligned} Z_q((1, 0); \emptyset; x) &= Z_q((0, 0); (0); x) \\ &= Z_q((0); (1); x) = Z_q(\emptyset; (2); x) \end{aligned}$$

By Remark 6 (iii) respectively (iv), we obtain  $\zeta_q^{\text{SZ}}(1, 0) = \zeta_q^{\text{SZ}}(2)$  respectively  $\zeta_q^{\text{BZ}}(2, 1) = \zeta_q^{\text{BZ}}(3)$ . We have  $(1, 0)^\dagger = (2)$  and  $(2, 1)^\vee = (3)$ , why these results indeed correspond to SZ-duality resp. BZ-duality.

We derive in the following the proof of MZV-duality, Theorem 1, from BZ-duality:

*Proof of Theorem 1.* Let  $\mathbf{k}$  be any admissible index. Denote by  $\text{wt}(\mathbf{k}) := k_1 + \dots + k_r$  the sum of all entries, the *weight* of  $\mathbf{k}$ . Obviously, one has  $\text{wt}(\mathbf{k}) = \text{wt}(\mathbf{k}^\vee)$ . We have

$$\begin{aligned} \zeta(\mathbf{k}) &= \lim_{q \rightarrow 1} (1-q)^{\text{wt}(\mathbf{k})} \zeta_q^{\text{BZ}}(\mathbf{k}) \\ &= \lim_{q \rightarrow 1} (1-q)^{\text{wt}(\mathbf{k}^\vee)} \zeta_q^{\text{BZ}}(\mathbf{k}^\vee) = \zeta(\mathbf{k}^\vee). \end{aligned}$$

$\square$

We give in the following a proof of Theorem 3 via connected sums  $Z_q$  defined in this paper. The main point of the proof is a Taylor series expansion at  $x = 1$ , which is under the correspondence of  $Z_q$  and  $Z_q^{\text{SY}}$  (Rem. 6 (v)) analogous to the one of  $Z_q^{\text{SY}}(\mathbf{k}; \emptyset; y)$  at  $y = 0$  in [SY].

Consider in the following connected sums of the form  $Z_q(\mathbf{k}; \emptyset; x)$  and the related one of the form  $Z_q(\emptyset; \ell; x)$  using transport relations. In both, we will develop all occurring terms as a Taylor series at  $x = 1$ , mainly we use that for all  $m \in \mathbf{N}$ , we have

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{1 - q^m x} &= \frac{1}{1 - q^m} \frac{1}{1 - \frac{q^m}{1 - q^m} (x - 1)} \\ &= \frac{1}{1 - q^m} \sum_{c \geq 0} \left( \frac{q^m}{1 - q^m} \right)^c (x - 1)^c \\ &= \sum_{c \geq 0} \frac{q^{mc}}{(1 - q^m)^{c+1}} (x - 1)^c. \end{aligned}$$

*Proof of Theorem 3.* Let  $\mathbf{k} = (k_1, \dots, k_r)$  be an admissible index. Then we have

$$\begin{aligned} Z_q(\mathbf{k} - \mathbf{1}; \emptyset; x) &= \sum_{m_1 > \dots > m_r > 0} \prod_{j=1}^r \frac{1}{1 - q^{m_j} x} \frac{q^{m_j(k_j-1)}}{(1 - q^{m_j})^{k_j-1}} \\ &= \sum_{m_1 > \dots > m_r > 0} \prod_{j=1}^r \left( \sum_{c_j \geq 0} \frac{q^{m_j c_j + k_j - 1}}{(1 - q^{m_j})^{c_j + k_j}} (x - 1)^{c_j} \right) \\ &= \sum_{\substack{c_1, \dots, c_r \geq 0 \\ m_1 > \dots > m_r > 0}} \left( \prod_{j=1}^r \frac{q^{m_j(k_j + c_j - 1)}}{(1 - q^{m_j})^{k_j + c_j}} \right) (x - 1)^{c_1 + \dots + c_r} \\ &= \sum_{c_1, \dots, c_r \geq 0} \zeta_q^{\text{BZ}}(\mathbf{k} + \mathbf{c})(x - 1)^{|\mathbf{c}|}. \end{aligned}$$

Since  $\mathbf{k}$  was an arbitrary admissible index and  $\mathbf{k}^\vee$  is admissible too, we get

$$Z_q(\emptyset; \mathbf{k}^\vee - \mathbf{1}; x) = \sum_{c_1, \dots, c_r \geq 0} \zeta_q^{\text{BZ}}(\mathbf{k}^\vee + \mathbf{c})(x - 1)^{|\mathbf{c}|},$$

with  $r'$  the depth of  $\mathbf{k}^\vee$ .

Now, since  $Z_q(\mathbf{k} - \mathbf{1}; \emptyset; x) = Z_q(\emptyset; \mathbf{k}^\vee - \mathbf{1}; x)$  for every admissible index  $\mathbf{k}$  by using the transport relations, the result follows by comparing the coefficient of  $(x - 1)^c$  on both sides.  $\square$

In the same way, we can consider  $Z_q(\mathbf{k} - \mathbf{1}; \emptyset; x)$  when developing  $\frac{1}{1 - q^m x}$  around some  $a \in \mathbf{R}$ , i.e.,

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{1 - q^m x} &= \frac{1}{1 - aq^m - q^m(x - a)} \\ &= \frac{1}{1 - aq^m} \frac{1}{1 - \frac{q^m}{1 - aq^m} (x - a)} \\ &= \sum_{c \geq 0} \frac{q^{mc}}{(1 - aq^m)^{c+1}} (x - a)^c. \end{aligned}$$

Then it is

$$\begin{aligned} Z_q(\mathbf{k}; \emptyset; x) &= \sum_{m_1 > \dots > m_r > 0} \prod_{j=1}^r \frac{1}{1 - q^{m_j} x} \frac{q^{m_j k_j}}{(1 - q^{m_j})^{k_j}} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} &= \sum_{m_1 > \dots > m_r > 0} \prod_{j=1}^r \sum_{c_j \geq 0} \frac{q^{m_j c_j}}{(1 - aq^{m_j})^{c_j+1}} \frac{q^{m_j k_j}}{(1 - q^{m_j})^{k_j}} \\ &\quad \times (x - a)^{c_j}. \end{aligned}$$

**Remark 12.** The series

$$\sum_{m_1 > \dots > m_r > 0} \prod_{j=1}^r \frac{q^{m_j c_j}}{(1 - aq^{m_j})^{c_j+1}} \frac{q^{m_j k_j}}{(1 - q^{m_j})^{k_j}}$$

for  $c_1, \dots, c_r \geq 0, k_1 \geq 2, k_2, \dots, k_r \geq 1$  and  $a \in [0, 1]$  can be seen as  $q$ -analog of MZVs: For  $a = 1$  we have seen already by proving the  $q$ -Ohno relation, how this works. For arbitrary  $a$ , it is not clear so far, whether we can prove more identities among  $q$ MZVs with this shape of the connected sum. This could be interesting for the future.

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