# DIVISIBILITY OF CERTAIN SUMS INVOLVING CENTRAL q-BINOMIAL COEFFICIENTS

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ABSTRACT. In this paper, we shall give a generalization of Ni and Pan's q-congruence, originally conjectured by Guo, on certain sums involving central q-binomial coefficients.

## 1. Introduction

In [12], Ramanujan obtained 17 curious convergent series concerning  $1/\pi$ . Actually, there are a number of similar representations for  $1/\pi$  which are not listed in [12] as well. For example, the identity

$$\sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \frac{4k+1}{(-64)^k} {2k \choose k}^3 = \frac{2}{\pi}$$
 (1.1)

was first proved by Bauer [1] in 1859. Nowadays, Ramanujan-type series for  $1/\pi$  has been developed greatly, partly because they play an important role in fast algorithms for computing decimal digits of  $\pi$ . Recently, Guillera [8] gave a new method to prove Ramanujan-type series.

In the last few years, the truncated Ramanujan-type series attracted many researchers' attentions. Van Hamme [13] conjectured 13 congruences on truncated Ramanujan-type series, such as

$$\sum_{k=0}^{(p-1)/2} \frac{4k+1}{(-64)^k} {2k \choose k}^3 \equiv p(-1)^{(p-1)/2} \pmod{p^3}, \tag{1.2}$$

where p is an odd prime. Now all of the 13 conjectures by Van Hamme have been confirmed by different methods. Some history of the development of Van Hamme's conjectures can be found in [5, 8, 15, 19], and we refer the reader to [9, 11, 14, 16-18, 20] for some other interesting q-congruences.

Recently, Ni and Pan [10] proved the following extension of (1.2): for any integers n and r with  $n \geq 2$  and  $r \geq 1$ ,

$$\sum_{k=0}^{n-1} (4k+1) {2k \choose k}^r (-4)^{r(n-k-1)} \equiv 0 \pmod{2^{r-2}n {2n \choose n}}.$$
 (1.3)

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They also gave a q-analogue of (1.3): for any integers n and r with  $n \ge 2$  and  $r \ge 2$ , modulo  $(1+q^{n-1})^{2r-2}[n]{2n-1 \brack n-1}$ ,

$$\sum_{k=0}^{n-1} (-1)^k q^{k^2 + (r-2)k} [4k+1] {2k \brack k}^{2r-1} (-q^{k+1}; q)_{n-k-1}^{4r-2} \equiv 0, \tag{1.4}$$

$$\frac{1}{1+q^{n-1}} \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} q^{(r-2)k} [4k+1] {2k \brack k}^{2r} (-q^{k+1}; q)_{n-k-1}^{4r} \equiv 0, \tag{1.5}$$

which were originally conjectured by Guo [4, Conjecture 5.4]. Here, the q-binomial coefficient is defined as

$$\begin{bmatrix} n \\ k \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} n \\ k \end{bmatrix}_q = \begin{cases} \frac{(q;q)_n}{(q;q)_k (q;q)_{n-k}}, & 0 \le k \le n; \\ 0, & \text{otherwise,} \end{cases}$$

with the q-shifted factorial  $(a;q)_0 = 1$ ,  $(a;q)_n = (1-a)(1-aq)\cdots(1-aq^{n-1})$  for  $n \in \mathbb{Z}^+$  and  $[n] = [n]_q = 1 + q + \cdots + q^{n-1}$  is the q-integer.

Recently, Guo and Wang [7] proved the following generalizations of (1.4) and (1.5): for any integers n, r and s with  $n \ge 2$ ,  $r \ge 1$  and  $s \ge 0$ , modulo  $(1 + q^{2n-2})^{2r-2}[n]_{q^2}{2n-1 \brack n-1}_{q^2}$ ,

$$\sum_{k=0}^{n-1} (-1)^k q^{2k^2 + (2r - 4s - 4)k} [4k + 1]^{2s} [4k + 1]_{q^2} \begin{bmatrix} 2k \\ k \end{bmatrix}_{q^2}^{2r - 1} (-q^{2k + 2}; q^2)_{n - k - 1}^{4r - 2} \equiv 0,$$

$$\frac{1}{1 + q^{2n - 2}} \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} q^{(2r - 4s - 4)k} [4k + 1]^{2s} [4k + 1]_{q^2} \begin{bmatrix} 2k \\ k \end{bmatrix}_{q^2}^{2r} (-q^{2k + 2}; q^2)_{n - k - 1}^{4r} \equiv 0.$$

Motivated by the work just mentioned, we shall establish another different generalizations of (1.4) and (1.5) as follows.

**Theorem 1.1.** For any integers n, r, m and l with  $n \ge 1$ ,  $r \ge 2$ ,  $0 \le m \le 2r - 3$  and  $0 \le l \le n - 1$ , modulo  $(1 + q^{n-1})^{2r - 3 - m} (1 + q^{n-l-1})^{1+m} [n] {2n-1 \brack n-1}$ ,

$$\sum_{k=l}^{n-1} (-1)^k q^{(k-l)^2 + (r-2)(k-l) - 2kml} [4k+1] \frac{(q;q^2)_k^{2r-2-m} (q;q^2)_{k+l}^{1+m} (-q;q)_{n-1}^{4r-2}}{(q^2;q^2)_k^{2r-2-m} (q^2;q^2)_{k-l}^{1+m} (q;q^2)_l^m} \equiv 0, \tag{1.6}$$

$$\frac{1}{1+q^{n-1}} \sum_{k=l}^{n-1} q^{l(l-2k-1)+(r-2)(k-l)-2kml} \left[4k+1\right] \frac{(q;q^2)_k^{2r-1-m}(q;q^2)_{k+l}^{1+m}(-q;q)_{n-1}^{4r}}{(q^2;q^2)_k^{2r-1-m}(q^2;q^2)_{k-l}^{1+m}(q;q^2)_l^m} \equiv 0. \quad (1.7)$$

Notice that

$$\frac{(q;q^2)_k}{(q^2;q^2)_k} = {2k \brack k} \frac{1}{(-q;q)_k^2},$$

therefore, (1.6) and (1.7) can be expressed in terms of q-binomial coefficients: modulo  $(1+q^{n-1})^{2r-3-m}(1+q^{n-l-1})^{1+m}[n]{2n-1 \brack n-1},$ 

$$\begin{split} \frac{1}{(q;q^2)_l^m} \sum_{k=l}^{n-1} (-1)^k q^{(k-l)^2 + (r-2)(k-l) - 2kml} [4k+1] \begin{bmatrix} 2k \\ k \end{bmatrix}^{2r-2-m} \begin{bmatrix} 2k-2l \\ k-l \end{bmatrix}^{1+m} \\ & \times (q^{2k-2l+1};q^2)_{2l}^{1+m} (-q^{k-l+1};q)_{n-k+l-1}^{2+2m} (-q^{k+1};q)_{n-k-1}^{4r-4-2m} \equiv 0, \end{split}$$

$$\frac{1}{(1+q^{n-1})(q;q^2)_l^m} \sum_{k=l}^{n-1} q^{l(l-2k-1)+(r-2)(k-l)-2kml} [4k+1] \begin{bmatrix} 2k \\ k \end{bmatrix}^{2r-1-m} \begin{bmatrix} 2k-2l \\ k-l \end{bmatrix}^{1+m} \times (q^{2k-2l+1};q^2)_{2l}^{1+m} (-q^{k-l+1};q)_{n-k+l-1}^{2+2m} (-q^{k+1};q)_{n-k-1}^{4r-2-2m} \equiv 0.$$

Obviously, (1.4) and (1.5) can be deduced from Theorem 1.1 just by taking l = 0.

The rest of the paper is arranged as follows. In Section 2, we shall present some useful preliminaries. The main proof of Theorem 1.1 will be shown in Section 3.

### 2. Preliminaries

To show the main results, we list some lemmas firstly. The following Lemma 2.1 is a special case of [10, Lemma 3.2].

**Lemma 2.1.** Let s, t be non-negative integers and d an odd integer with  $0 \le t \le d-1$ . Then

$$\frac{(q;q^2)_{sd+t}}{(q^2;q^2)_{sd+t}} \equiv \frac{1}{4^s} {2s \choose s} \frac{(q;q^2)_t}{(q^2;q^2)_t} \pmod{\Phi_d(q)}.$$

Here  $\Phi_n(q)$  stands for the *n*-th cyclotomic polynomial in q:

$$\Phi_n(q) = \prod_{\substack{1 \le k \le n \\ \gcd(n,k)=1}} (q - \zeta^k),$$

with  $\zeta$  an *n*-th primitive root of unity.

We now give some useful notations used earlier by Guo and Wang [7]. For any positive integer n, let

$$S(n) = \{d \ge 3 : d \text{ is odd and } \left\lfloor \frac{n - \frac{d+1}{2}}{d} \right\rfloor = \left\lfloor \frac{n}{d} \right\rfloor \},$$

where  $\lfloor x \rfloor$  denotes the greatest integer which does not exceed x. Notice that if d > 2n-1, the number (d+1)/2 is greater than n, as a result,  $d \notin S(n)$ , therefore, S(n) is a finite set actually. Let

$$A_n(q) = \prod_{\substack{d \in S(n) \\ d \text{ is odd}}} \Phi_d(q),$$

$$C_n(q) = \prod_{\substack{d \mid n, \ d > 1 \\ d \text{ is odd}}} \Phi_d(q).$$

It is easy to see that if  $d \mid n$ , then  $d \notin S(n)$ , which means the polynomials  $A_n(q)$  and  $C_n(q)$  are relatively prime due to the property of cyclotomic polynomial.

We now give the key lemma, which is a generalization of [7, Lemma 2.2].

**Lemma 2.2.** Let  $v_0(q), v_1(q), \ldots$  be a sequence of rational functions in q. For any positive odd integer d, positive integer n and l with  $0 \le l \le n-1$ , if  $v_0(q), v_1(q), \ldots$  satisfies the following conditions:

- (i)  $v_k(q)$  is  $\Phi_d(q)$ -integral for each  $k \geq 0$ , i.e. the denominator of  $v_k(q)$  is relatively prime to  $\Phi_d(q)$ :
  - (ii) For any non-negative integers s and t with  $0 \le t \le d-1$ ,

$$v_{sd+t}(q) \equiv u_s(q)v_t(q) \pmod{\Phi_d(q)},$$

where  $u_s(q)$  is a  $\Phi_d(q)$ -integral rational function only dependent on s; (iii)

$$\sum_{k=l}^{(d-1)/2-l} \frac{(q;q^2)_{k+l}}{(q^2;q^2)_{k-l}} v_k(q) \equiv 0 \pmod{\Phi_d(q)}.$$

Then, for any positive integer n,

$$\sum_{k=l}^{n-1} \frac{(q; q^2)_{k+l}}{(q^2; q^2)_{k-l}} v_k(q) \equiv 0 \pmod{A_n(q)C_n(q)}.$$
 (2.1)

*Proof.* For  $d \in S(n)$ , we can write n = ud + v with  $(d+1)/2 \le v \le d-1$ . Therefore, for any  $n \le k \le ud + d + l - 1$ ,  $(q; q^2)_{k+l}/(q^2; q^2)_{k-l}$  is divisible by  $\Phi_d(q)$ . As a result, we obtain

$$\sum_{k=l}^{n-1} \frac{(q;q^2)_{k+l}}{(q^2;q^2)_{k-l}} v_k(q)$$

$$\equiv \sum_{s=0}^{u} \sum_{t=l}^{d+l-1} \frac{(q;q^2)_{sd+t+l}}{(q^2;q^2)_{sd+t-l}} v_{sd+t}(q)$$

$$\equiv \sum_{s=0}^{u} \frac{1}{4^s} {2s \choose s} u_s(q) \sum_{t=l}^{d+l-1} \frac{(q;q^2)_{t+l}}{(q^2;q^2)_{t-l}} v_t(q) \equiv 0 \pmod{\Phi_d(q)},$$

where the second relation is due to Lemma 2.1, and in the last congruence, we have used the condition (iii) and the fact that  $(q;q^2)_{t+l}v_t(q)/(q^2;q^2)_{t-l}$  is congruent to 0 modulo  $\Phi_d(q)$  for  $(d+1)/2 - l \le t \le d+l-1$ . This proves that (2.1) is true modulo  $A_n(q)$ .

On the other hand, for  $d \mid n$ , we assume that u = n/d. Firstly, we need to prove that

$$\sum_{k=l}^{n-1} \frac{(q;q^2)_{k+l}}{(q^2;q^2)_{k-l}} v_k(q) \equiv \sum_{s=0}^{u-1} \sum_{t=l}^{d+l-1} \frac{(q;q^2)_{sd+t+l}}{(q^2;q^2)_{sd+t-l}} v_{sd+t}(q) \pmod{\Phi_d(q)},$$

which is trivial for l = 0. Now, we should to verify that for  $1 \le l \le n - 1$  and  $n \le k \le n + l - 1$ ,

$$\frac{(q; q^2)_{k+l}}{(q^2; q^2)_{k-l}} \equiv 0 \pmod{\Phi_d(q)}.$$

It can be easily seen that the numerator of  $(q;q^2)_{k+l}/(q^2;q^2)_{k-l}$  must have the factor  $(q;q^2)_{n+1}$ , and the denominator doesn't have the factor  $(q^2;q^2)_n$ . As a result, the reduced form of  $(q;q^2)_{k+l}/(q^2;q^2)_{k-l}$  is congruent to 0 modulo  $\Phi_d(q)$ .

Therefore, we obtain

$$\sum_{k=l}^{n-1} \frac{(q;q^2)_{k+l}}{(q^2;q^2)_{k-l}} v_k(q) \equiv \sum_{s=0}^{u-1} \sum_{t=l}^{d+l-1} \frac{(q;q^2)_{sd+t+l}}{(q^2;q^2)_{sd+t-l}} v_{sd+t}(q)$$

$$\equiv \sum_{s=0}^{u} \frac{1}{4^s} {2s \choose s} u_s(q) \sum_{t=l}^{d+l-1} \frac{(q;q^2)_{t+l}}{(q^2;q^2)_{t-l}} v_t(q) \equiv 0 \pmod{\Phi_d(q)}.$$

This proves that (2.1) is also true modulo  $C_n(q)$ . Now we complete the proof of this Lemma for the polynomials  $A_n(q)$  and  $C_n(q)$  are relatively prime.

We also need the following result, which is just a simple generalization of Guo and Schlosser [6, Lemma 3.1].

**Lemma 2.3.** Let d be a positive odd integer. Then, for any nonnegative integers l and k with  $l \le k \le (d-1)/2 - l$ , we have

$$\frac{(q;q^2)_{(d-1)/2-k+l}}{(q^2;q^2)_{(d-1)/2-k-l}} \equiv (-1)^{(d-1)/2} \frac{(q;q^2)_{k+l}}{(q^2;q^2)_{k-l}} q^{(d-1)^2/4+k-4kl-l} \pmod{\Phi_d(q)}. \tag{2.2}$$

*Proof.* Notice that

$$\frac{(q;q^2)_{(d-1)/2-k+l}}{(q^2;q^2)_{(d-1)/2-k-l}} = \frac{(q;q^2)_{(d-1)/2}}{(q^2;q^2)_{(d-1)/2}} \frac{(1-q^{d+1-2k-2l})\dots(1-q^{d-1})}{(1-q^{d-2k+2l})\dots(1-q^{d-2})} 
\equiv \frac{(q;q^2)_{(d-1)/2}}{(q^2;q^2)_{(d-1)/2}} \frac{(1-q^{2k+2l-1})\dots(1-q^1)}{(1-q^{2k-2l})\dots(1-q^2)} q^{-4kl+k-l} \pmod{\Phi_d(q)}.$$

Then (2.2) holds due to the fact that

$$\frac{(q;q^2)_{(d-1)/2}}{(q^2;q^2)_{(d-1)/2}} \equiv (-1)^{(d-1)/2} q^{(d-1)^2/4} \pmod{\Phi_d(q)}.$$

#### 3. Proof of Theorem 1.1

In order to make the proof of Theorem 1.1 clear, we present the following congruences firstly.

**Theorem 3.1.** For any integers n, r, m and l with  $n \ge 1$ ,  $r \ge 2$ ,  $0 \le m \le 2r - 3$  and  $0 \le l \le n - 1$ , modulo  $A_n(q)C_n(q)$ ,

$$\frac{1}{(q;q^2)_l^m} \sum_{k=l}^{n-1} (-1)^k q^{(k-l)^2 + (r-2)(k-l) - 2kml} [4k+1] \frac{(q;q^2)_k^{2r-2-m} (q;q^2)_{k+l}^{1+m}}{(q^2;q^2)_k^{2r-2-m} (q^2;q^2)_{k-l}^{1+m}} \equiv 0, \quad (3.1)$$

$$\frac{1}{(q;q^2)_l^m} \sum_{k=l}^{n-1} q^{l(l-2k-1)+(r-2)(k-l)-2kml} [4k+1] \frac{(q;q^2)_k^{2r-1-m} (q;q^2)_{k-l}^{1+m}}{(q^2;q^2)_k^{2r-1-m} (q^2;q^2)_{k-l}^{1+m}} \equiv 0.$$
 (3.2)

*Proof.* Here we only prove (3.1), for the reason that (3.2) can be verified by following the same steps used in the proof of (3.1).

For any integer k > 0, let

$$v_k(q) = (-1)^k q^{(k-l)^2 + (r-2)(k-l) - 2kml} [4k+1] \frac{(q;q^2)_k^{2r-2-m} (q;q^2)_{k+l}^m}{(q^2;q^2)_k^{2r-2-m} (q^2;q^2)_{k-l}^m (q;q^2)_l^m}.$$

We shall show that the sequence  $v_0(q), v_1(q), \ldots$  satisfies the requirements (i), (ii) and (iii) of Lemma 2.2.

Note that

$$(q;q^2)_{k+l} = (q;q^2)_{k-l}(q^{2k-2l+1};q^2)_{2l}$$

and

$$\frac{(q;q^2)_{k-l}}{(q^2;q^2)_{k-l}} = {2k-2l \brack k-l} \frac{1}{(-q;q)_{k-l}^2},$$

it is obviously that for  $l \leq k \leq n-1$ , the denominator of  $(q;q^2)_{k+l}/((q^2;q^2)_{k-l}(q;q^2)_l)$  with the reduced form is always relatively prime to  $\Phi_d(q)$ . Therefore, for any odd d, the rational function  $v_k(q)$  is  $\Phi_d(q)$ -integral, since the relation

$$\frac{(q;q^2)_k}{(q^2;q^2)_k} = {2k \brack k} \frac{1}{(-q;q)_k^2},$$

and  $(-q;q)_k$  is relatively prime to  $\Phi_d(q)$ .

By applying Lemma 2.1, we can get that for non-negative integers s and t with  $0 \le t \le d-1$ ,

$$v_{sd+t}(q) = (-1)^{sd+t} q^{(sd+t-l)^2 + (r-2)(sd+t-l) - 2(sd+t)ml} \frac{[4(sd+t)+1](q;q^2)_{sd+t}^{2r-2-m}(q;q^2)_{sd+t+l}^m}{(q^2;q^2)_{sd+t}^{2r-2-m}(q^2;q^2)_{sd+t-l}^m(q;q^2)_l^m}$$

$$\equiv (-1)^s \frac{1}{4^{(2r-2)s}} \binom{2s}{s}^{2r-2} v_t(q) \pmod{\Phi_d(q)}.$$

Apparently,  $(-1)^s {2s \choose s}^{2r-2}/4^{(2r-2)s}$  is a  $\Phi_d(q)$ -integral rational function only dependent on s.

We now start to verify the requirement (iii) of Lemma 2.2, i.e., modulo  $\Phi_d(q)$ ,

$$\sum_{k=l}^{(d-1)/2-l} (-1)^k q^{(k-l)^2 + (r-2)(k-l) - 2kml} [4k+1] \frac{(q;q^2)_k^{2r-2-m} (q;q^2)_{k-l}^{1+m}}{(q^2;q^2)_k^{2r-2-m} (q^2;q^2)_{k-l}^{1+m} (q;q^2)_l^m} \equiv 0.$$
 (3.3)

In fact, by Lemma 2.3, it can be easily shown that, for  $l \le k \le (d-1)/2 - l$ , the k-th and ((d-1)/2 - k)-th terms on the left-hand side of (3.3) cancel each other modulo  $\Phi_d(q)$ , because

$$\frac{(q;q^2)_{k+l}}{(q^2;q^2)_{k-l}}v_k(q) \equiv -\frac{(q;q^2)_{(d-1)/2-k+l}}{(q^2;q^2)_{(d-1)/2-k-l}}v_{(d-1)/2-k}(q) \pmod{\Phi_d(q)}.$$

This means (3.3) is true. So far, we have finished verifying all of the requirements of Lemma 2.2. Hence, we access to the conclusion that (3.1) is true modulo  $A_n(q)C_n(q)$ .  $\square$ 

Now we begin to prove Theorem 1.1.

Proof of Theorem 1.1. For  $l \leq k \leq n-2$ , the q-factorial  $(-q^{k+1};q)_{n-k-1}$  contains the factor  $1+q^{n-1}$ . For k=n-1, we have

$$\begin{bmatrix} 2k-2l \\ k-l \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 2n-2-2l \\ n-1-l \end{bmatrix} = (1+q^{n-1-l}) \begin{bmatrix} 2n-3-2l \\ n-2-l \end{bmatrix}.$$

Therefore, the left-hand sides of (1.6) and (1.7) are both divisible by  $(1+q^{n-1})^{2r-2-m}(1+q^{n-l-1})^{1+m}$ .

In what follows, we shall prove that the left-hand sides of (1.6) and (1.7) are both divisible by  $[n] {2n-1 \brack n-1}$ . From Chen and Hou's [2, Lemma 1] result

$$\begin{bmatrix} n \\ k \end{bmatrix}_q = \prod_{d \in D_{n,k}} \Phi_d(q), \quad \text{with} \quad D_{n,k} := \left\{ d \ge 2 : \left\lfloor \frac{k}{d} \right\rfloor + \left\lfloor \frac{n-k}{d} \right\rfloor < \left\lfloor \frac{n}{d} \right\rfloor \right\}$$

and the well known relation

$$[n] = \prod_{d>1, \ d|n} \Phi_d(q),$$

obviously, we have

$$[n] \begin{bmatrix} 2n-1 \\ n-1 \end{bmatrix} = A_n(q) C_n(q) \prod_{\substack{d \mid n, \ d > 1, \\ d \ is \ even}} \Phi_d(q) \cdot \prod_{\substack{d \in D_{2n-1, n-1} \\ d \ is \ even}} \Phi_d(q), \tag{3.4}$$

for  $1 < d \in D_{2n-1,n-1}$  is odd if and only if  $d \in S(n)$ .

By Theorem 3.1, the left-hand sides of (1.6) and (1.7) are congruent to 0 modulo  $A_n(q)C_n(q)$ . It remains to show that (1.6) and (1.7) also hold modulo

$$\prod_{\substack{d|n,\ d>1\\d\ is\ even}} \Phi_d(q) \cdot \prod_{\substack{d\in D_{2n-1,n-1}\\d\ is\ even}} \Phi_d(q).$$

For this proof, we refer the reader to Guo and Wang's similar proof of [7, Theorem 1.1].

By taking  $q^2 \to q$  in the equation at the top of page 8 of [7], we obtain

$$[n] \begin{bmatrix} 2n-1 \\ n-1 \end{bmatrix} = (1+q^{n-1})[2n-1] \begin{bmatrix} 2n-3 \\ n-2 \end{bmatrix}.$$

Notice that  $(1+q^{n-1})$  is relatively prime to  $[2n-1]{2n-3 \brack n-2}$ , the least common multiple of  $(1+q^{n-1})^{2r-2-m}(1+q^{n-l-1})^{1+m}$  and  $[n]{2n-1 \brack n-1}$  is  $(1+q^{n-1})^{2r-3-m}(1+q^{n-l-1})^{1+m}[n]{2n-1 \brack n-1}$ . Now we obtain that (1.6) and (1.7) hold modulo  $(1+q^{n-1})^{2r-3-m}(1+q^{n-l-1})^{1+m}[n]{2n-1 \brack n-1}$ . So we finish proving this theorem.

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