

## Research Article

# A Combinatorial Note for Harmonic Tensors

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We give another characterization of the annihilator of the space of (dual) harmonic tensors in the group algebra of symmetric group.

## 1. Introduction and Preliminaries

Let  $m, n \in \mathbb{N}$ . Let  $K$  be an infinite field and  $V$  a  $2m$ -dimensional symplectic vector space over  $K$  equipped with a skew bilinear form  $(\ , \ )$ . The symplectic group  $\text{Sp}(V)$  acts naturally on  $V$  from the left hand side, and hence on the  $n$ -tensor space  $V^{\otimes n}$ . Let  $B_n = B_n(-2m)$  be the Brauer algebra over  $K$  with canonical generators  $s_1, \dots, s_{n-1}, e_1, \dots, e_{n-1}$  subject to the following relations:

$$\begin{aligned}
 s_i^2 &= 1, & e_i^2 &= (-2m)e_i, & e_i s_i &= s_i e_i = e_i, & \forall 1 \leq i \leq n-1, \\
 s_i s_j &= s_j s_i, & s_i e_j &= e_j s_i, & e_i e_j &= e_j e_i, & \forall 1 \leq i < j-1 \leq n-2, \\
 s_i s_{i+1} s_i &= s_{i+1} s_i s_{i+1}, & e_i e_{i+1} e_i &= e_i, & e_{i+1} e_i e_{i+1} &= e_{i+1}, & \forall 1 \leq i \leq n-2, \\
 s_i e_{i+1} e_i &= s_{i+1} e_i, & e_{i+1} e_i s_{i+1} &= e_{i+1} s_i, & \forall 1 \leq i \leq n-2.
 \end{aligned} \tag{1.1}$$

Note that  $B_n$  is a  $K$ -algebra with dimension  $(2n-1)!! = (2n-1) \cdot (2n-3) \cdots 3 \cdot 1$ .

The Brauer algebra was first introduced by Brauer (see [1]) when he studied how the  $n$ -tensor space decomposes into irreducible modules over the orthogonal group or the symplectic group. There is a right action of  $B_n$  on  $V^{\otimes n}$  which we now recall. Let  $\delta_{ij}$  denote the

Kronecker delta. For each integer  $i$  with  $1 \leq i \leq 2m$ , set  $i' := 2m + 1 - i$ . We fix an ordered basis  $\{v_i\}_{i=1}^{2m}$  of  $V$  such that

$$(v_i, v_j) = 0 = (v_{i'}, v_{j'}), \quad (v_i, v_{j'}) = \delta_{ij} = -(v_{j'}, v_i), \quad \forall 1 \leq i, j \leq m. \quad (1.2)$$

For any  $i, j \in \{1, 2, \dots, 2m\}$ , let

$$\varepsilon_{i,j} := \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } i = j', i < j, \\ -1 & \text{if } i = j', i > j, \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases} \quad (1.3)$$

For any simple tensor  $v_{i_1} \otimes \dots \otimes v_{i_n} \in V^{\otimes n}$ , the right action of  $B_n$  on  $V^{\otimes n}$  is defined on generators by

$$\begin{aligned} (v_{i_1} \otimes \dots \otimes v_{i_n}) s_j &:= -\left(v_{i_1} \otimes \dots \otimes v_{i_{j-i}} \otimes v_{i_{j+1}} \otimes v_{i_j} \otimes v_{i_{j+2}} \otimes \dots \otimes v_{i_n}\right), \\ (v_{i_1} \otimes \dots \otimes v_{i_n}) e_j &:= \varepsilon_{i_j, i_{j+1}} v_{i_1} \otimes \dots \otimes v_{i_{j-1}} \otimes \left(\sum_{k=1}^m (v_{k'} \otimes v_k - v_k \otimes v_{k'})\right) \otimes v_{i_{j+2}} \otimes \dots \otimes v_{i_n}. \end{aligned} \quad (1.4)$$

The  $s_j$  acts as a signed transposition, and  $e_j$  acts as a signed contraction. It is well known that the centralizer of the image of the group algebra  $K\text{Sp}(V)$  in  $\text{End}_K(V^{\otimes n})$  is the image of  $B_n$  and vice versa. This fact is called Schur-Weyl duality (see [1–3]).

There is a variant of the above Schur-Weyl duality as we will describe. Let  $B_n^{(1)}$  be the two-sided ideal of  $B_n$  generated by  $e_1$ . We set

$$W_{1,n} := \left\{ v \in V^{\otimes n} \mid vx = 0, \forall x \in B_n^{(1)} \right\}. \quad (1.5)$$

We call  $W_{1,n}$  the subspace of *harmonic tensors* or *traceless tensors*. It should be pointed out that this definition coincides with that given in [4] and [11, Section 2.1] by [5, Corollary 2.6]. Note that  $B_n/B_n^{(1)} \cong K\mathfrak{S}_n$ , the group algebra of the symmetric group  $\mathfrak{S}_n$ . The right action of  $B_n$  on  $V^{\otimes n}$  gives rise to a right action of  $K\mathfrak{S}_n$  on  $W_{1,n}$ . We, therefore, have two natural  $K$ -algebra homomorphisms

$$\varphi : (K\mathfrak{S}_n)^{\text{op}} \longrightarrow \text{End}_{K\text{Sp}(V)}(W_{1,n}), \quad \psi : K\text{Sp}(V) \longrightarrow \text{End}_{K\mathfrak{S}_n}(W_{1,n}). \quad (1.6)$$

In [4], De Concini and Strickland proved that the dimension of  $W_{1,n}$  is independent of the field  $K$  and  $\varphi$  is always surjective. Moreover, they showed that  $\varphi$  is an isomorphism if  $m \geq n$ . When  $m < n$ , in [4, Theorem 3.5] they also described the kernel of  $\varphi$ , that is, the annihilator of  $W_{1,n}$  in the group algebra  $K\mathfrak{S}_n$ . In this paper, we give another combinatorial characterization of  $\text{Ker } \varphi$ .

For our aim, we need the notation of *dual harmonic tensors*. Maliakas in [6] proved that  $W_{1,n}^*$  has a good filtration when  $m \geq n$  by using the theory of rational representations of symplectic group. He claimed that it is also true for arbitrary  $m$ . This claim was proved by Hu

in [5] using representations of algebraic groups and canonical bases of quantized enveloping algebras. Furthermore, [5, Corollary 1.6] shows that

$$\frac{V^{\otimes n}}{V^{\otimes n}B_n^{(1)}} \cong W_{1,n}^* \tag{1.7}$$

and, thus, we call  $V^{\otimes n}/V^{\otimes n}B_n^{(1)}$  the space of dual harmonic tensors. Therefore, we will only characterize the annihilator of  $V^{\otimes n}/V^{\otimes n}B_n^{(1)}$  in the group algebra  $K\mathfrak{S}_n$ .

### 2. The Main Results

In this section, we will give an elementary combinatorial characterization of the annihilator of  $V^{\otimes n}/V^{\otimes n}B_n^{(1)}$  in the group algebra  $K\mathfrak{S}_n$ . Besides [4, Theorem 3.5], other characterizations of such annihilator can be found in [7, Theorem 4.2] and [8, Theorem 1.3]. We would like to point out that these approaches depend heavily on invariant theory [4] or representation theory [7, 8]. Therefore, the approach of this paper is more elementary and hence is of independent interest for studying the action of the Brauer algebra  $B_n(-2m)$  on  $n$ -tensor space  $V^{\otimes n}$ .

For convenience, we set

$$I(2m, n) := \{(i_1, \dots, i_n) \mid i_j \in \{1, 2, \dots, 2m\}, \forall j\}. \tag{2.1}$$

For any  $\underline{i} = (i_1, \dots, i_n) \in I(2m, n)$ , we write  $v_{\underline{i}} = v_{i_1} \otimes \dots \otimes v_{i_n}$ . For  $\underline{i} \in I(2m, n)$ , an ordered pair  $(s, t)$  ( $1 \leq s < t \leq n$ ) is called a *symplectic pair* in  $\underline{i}$  if  $i_s = i'_t$ . Two ordered pairs  $(s, t)$  and  $(u, v)$  are called disjoint if  $\{s, t\} \cap \{u, v\} = \emptyset$ . We define the *symplectic length*  $\ell_s(v_{\underline{i}})$  to be the maximal number of disjoint symplectic pairs  $(s, t)$  in  $\underline{i}$  (see [3, Page 198]). Without confusion, we will adopt the same symbol for the image of the canonical generator  $s_i$  of the Brauer algebra in the group algebra  $K\mathfrak{S}_n$ . More or less motivated by the work [9] of Härterich, we have the following proposition.

**Proposition 2.1.** *For any simple tensor  $v_{\underline{i}} \in V^{\otimes n}$  there is  $v_{\underline{i}}x_{m+1} \in V^{\otimes n}B_n^{(1)}$ , where  $x_{m+1} = \sum_{w \in \mathfrak{S}_{m+1}} w$ .*

*Proof.* If we have proved the proposition over the base field  $\mathbb{Q}$  of rational numbers, it can be restated as a result in  $\mathbb{Z}\mathfrak{S}_n$  by restriction since  $x_{m+1}$  is a  $\mathbb{Z}$ -linear combination of basis elements of  $\mathbb{Z}\mathfrak{S}_n$ . Applying the specialization functor  $K_{\otimes \mathbb{Z}}$ , we obtain the present statement. Therefore, we now assume we work on the base field  $\mathbb{Q}$ .

By the actions of Brauer algebras on  $n$ -tensor spaces defined in Section 1, we know that  $x_{m+1}$  only acts on the first  $m + 1$  components of  $v_{\underline{i}}$ . Hence, we can set  $n = m + 1$  without loss of the generality. Let  $v_{\underline{i}} = v_{i_1} \otimes v_{i_2} \otimes \dots \otimes v_{i_{m+1}}$ . If the  $(m + 1)$ -tuple  $(i_1, i_2, \dots, i_{m+1})$  has a repeated number, for instance,  $i_s = i_r$  with  $s < r$ , then obviously  $v_{\underline{i}}x_{m+1} = v_{\underline{i}}(s, r)x_{m+1} = -v_{\underline{i}}x_{m+1}$  and hence  $v_{\underline{i}}x_{m+1} = 0$ , where  $(s, r)$  is a transposition.

Then, we assume that  $i_1, i_2, \dots, i_{m+1}$  are different from each other. Noting that  $\dim_{\mathbb{Q}} V = 2m$ , there exists at least one symplectic pair in  $\underline{i}$ . We assume the symplectic length

$\ell_s(v_i) = s$  ( $1 \leq s \leq [(m+1)/2]$ ) and  $v_i = v_1 \otimes v_{2m} \otimes v_2 \otimes v_{2m-1} \otimes \cdots \otimes v_s \otimes v_{2m-s+1} \otimes v_{s+1} \otimes \cdots \otimes v_{m-s+1}$  without loss of the generality. Then

$$\begin{aligned}
 v_i x_{m+1} &= v_1 \otimes v_{2m} \otimes v_2 \otimes v_{2m-1} \otimes \cdots \otimes v_s \otimes v_{2m-s+1} \\
 &\quad \otimes v_{s+1} \otimes \cdots \otimes v_{m-s+1} x_{m+1} \\
 &= \frac{1}{2} (v_1 \otimes v_{1'} - v_{1'} \otimes v_1) \otimes v_2 \otimes v_{2'} \otimes \cdots \otimes v_s \otimes v_{s'} \\
 &\quad \otimes v_{s+1} \otimes \cdots \otimes v_{m-s+1} x_{m+1} \\
 &\equiv \frac{1}{2} \left( \sum_{j=2}^m v_{j'} \otimes v_j - v_j \otimes v_{j'} \right) \otimes v_2 \otimes v_{2'} \otimes \cdots \otimes v_s \otimes v_{s'} \\
 &\quad \otimes v_{s+1} \otimes \cdots \otimes v_{m-s+1} x_{m+1} \pmod{V^{\otimes(m+1)} B_{m+1}^{(1)}} \\
 &= \left( \sum_{j=m-s+2}^m v_{j'} \otimes v_j \right) \otimes v_2 \otimes v_{2'} \otimes \cdots \otimes v_s \otimes v_{s'} \\
 &\quad \otimes v_{s+1} \otimes \cdots \otimes v_{m-s+1} x_{m+1}.
 \end{aligned} \tag{2.2}$$

In the following, the notation  $\equiv$  always means equivalence mod  $V^{\otimes(m+1)} B_{m+1}^{(1)}$ . We abbreviate  $w_j$  for  $v_{j'} \otimes v_j$ , noting that  $w_j(1, 2) = -v_j \otimes v_{j'}$ . By the same procedures, we obtain

$$v_i x_{m+1} \equiv w_{1'} \otimes \cdots \otimes w_{(k-1)'} \otimes \left( \sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j \right) \otimes w_{(k+1)'} \otimes \cdots \otimes w_{s'} \otimes v_{s+1} \otimes \cdots \otimes v_{m-s+1} x_{m+1}, \tag{2.3}$$

where  $1 \leq k \leq s$ .

Now we assume for  $1 < l \leq s$  that

$$\begin{aligned}
 ((l-1)!) v_i x_{m+1} &\equiv w_{1'} \otimes \cdots \otimes \left( \sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j \right) \otimes w_{k_1'} \otimes \cdots \otimes \left( \sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j \right) \otimes w_{k_2'} \\
 &\quad \otimes \cdots \otimes \left( \sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j \right) \otimes w_{k_{(l-1)}'} \otimes \cdots \otimes w_{s'} \\
 &\quad \otimes v_{s+1} \otimes \cdots \otimes v_{m-s+1} x_{m+1},
 \end{aligned} \tag{2.4}$$

where the  $l - 1$  summands  $\sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j$  appear at the  $(k_1 - 1)$ -th,  $(k_2 - 1)$ -th,  $\dots$ ,  $(k_{l-1} - 1)$ -th positions ( $1 \leq k_1 - 1 < k_2 - 1 < \dots < k_{l-1} - 1 \leq s$ ), respectively. We want to prove that

$$\begin{aligned}
 (l!)v_l x_{m+1} &\equiv w_{1'} \otimes \dots \otimes \left( \sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j \right) \otimes w_{k_1'} \otimes \dots \otimes \left( \sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j \right) \otimes w_{k_2'} \\
 &\otimes \dots \otimes \left( \sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j \right) \otimes w_{k_l'} \otimes \dots \otimes w_{s'} \\
 &\otimes v_{s+1} \otimes \dots \otimes v_{m-s+1} x_{m+1},
 \end{aligned} \tag{2.5}$$

where the  $l$  summands  $\sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j$  appear at the  $(k_1 - 1)$ -th,  $(k_2 - 1)$ -th,  $\dots$ ,  $(k_l - 1)$ -th positions ( $1 \leq k_1 - 1 < k_2 - 1 < \dots < k_l - 1 \leq s$ ), respectively. Without loss of the generality, we only need to prove it for the case  $1 \leq k_1 - 1 < k_2 - 1 < \dots < k_l - 1 \leq l$ . In fact, we have

$$\begin{aligned}
 (2(l-1)!)v_l x_{m+1} &\equiv v_1 \otimes v_{1'} \otimes \left( \sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j \right) \otimes \dots \otimes \left( \sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j \right) \otimes v_{(l+1)} \otimes v_{(l+1)'} \\
 &\otimes \dots \otimes v_s \otimes v_{s'} \otimes v_{s+1} \otimes \dots \otimes v_{m-s+1} x_{m+1} \\
 &+ \left( \sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j \right) \otimes \dots \otimes \left( \sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j \right) \otimes v_l \otimes v_{l'} \\
 &\otimes \dots \otimes v_s \otimes v_{s'} \otimes v_{s+1} \otimes \dots \otimes v_{m-s+1} x_{m+1} \\
 &= (v_1 \otimes v_{1'} + v_l \otimes v_{l'}) \otimes \left( \sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j \right) \otimes \dots \otimes \left( \sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j \right) \\
 &\otimes v_{(l+1)} \otimes v_{(l+1)'} \otimes \dots \otimes v_s \otimes v_{s'} \otimes v_{s+1} \otimes \dots \otimes v_{m-s+1} x_{m+1} \\
 &\equiv \left( \sum_{j=2}^{l-1} w_j + \sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j \right) \otimes \left( \sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j \right) \otimes \dots \otimes \left( \sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j \right) \\
 &\otimes v_{(l+1)} \otimes v_{(l+1)'} \otimes \dots \otimes v_s \otimes v_{s'} \otimes v_{s+1} \otimes \dots \otimes v_{m-s+1} x_{m+1} \\
 &\equiv -(l-2)((l-1)!)v_l x_{m+1} + \left( \sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j \right) \otimes \dots \otimes \left( \sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j \right) \\
 &\otimes v_{(l+1)} \otimes v_{(l+1)'} \otimes \dots \otimes v_s \otimes v_{s'} \otimes v_{s+1} \otimes \dots \otimes v_{m-s+1} x_{m+1},
 \end{aligned} \tag{2.6}$$

where the last equivalence follows from the induction hypothesis and the fact  $w_j(1,2) = -v_j \otimes v_{j'}$ . Hence, we have proved what we desired.

As a consequence, we immediately get that

$$(s!)v_i x_{m+1} \equiv \left( \sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j \right) \otimes \cdots \otimes \left( \sum_{j=m-s+2}^m w_j \right) \otimes v_{s+1} \otimes \cdots \otimes v_{m-s+1} x_{m+1}. \quad (2.7)$$

However,  $m - (m - s + 1) = s - 1$ , there must exist a repeated  $w_j$  in the right hand side of the above equivalence when written as a linear combination of simple tensors. Therefore,  $v_i x_{m+1} \equiv 0$ .  $\square$

**Theorem 2.2.** *The annihilator of the space  $V^{\otimes n}/V^{\otimes n}B_n^{(1)}$  of dual harmonic tensors in the group algebra  $K\mathfrak{S}_n$  is the principal ideal  $\langle x_{m+1} \rangle$ .*

*Proof.* We denote  $\text{Ann}(V^{\otimes n}/V^{\otimes n}B_n^{(1)})$  as the annihilator of the space  $V^{\otimes n}/V^{\otimes n}B_n^{(1)}$  of dual harmonic tensors in the group algebra  $K\mathfrak{S}_n$ . It follows from Proposition 2.1 that

$$\langle x_{m+1} \rangle \subseteq \text{Ann}\left(\frac{V^{\otimes n}}{V^{\otimes n}B_n^{(1)}}\right). \quad (2.8)$$

On the other hand, by the work of [10], we know that

$$\langle x_{m+1} \rangle = K - \text{Span}\left\{ m_{s,t}^\lambda \mid \lambda \vdash n, \ell(\lambda) > m, s, t \in \text{Std}(\lambda) \right\}, \quad (2.9)$$

where each  $m_{s,t}^\lambda$  is the Murphy basis element in [10], and  $\text{Std}(\lambda)$  denotes the set of standard  $\lambda$ -tableaux with entries in  $\{1, 2, \dots, n\}$ . In particular, [5, Theorem 1.8] shows that (see also [4])

$$\begin{aligned} \dim_K \langle x_{m+1} \rangle &= \sum_{\lambda \vdash n, \ell(\lambda) > m} (\dim_K S^\lambda)^2 \\ &= \dim_{\mathbb{Q}} \mathbb{Q}\mathfrak{S}_n - \text{End}_{\mathbb{Q}\text{Sp}(V)}\left(\frac{V^{\otimes n}}{V^{\otimes n}B_n^{(1)}}\right) \\ &= \dim_K K\mathfrak{S}_n - \text{End}_{K\text{Sp}(V)}\left(\frac{V^{\otimes n}}{V^{\otimes n}B_n^{(1)}}\right) \\ &= \dim_K \text{Ann}\left(\frac{V^{\otimes n}}{V^{\otimes n}B_n^{(1)}}\right), \end{aligned} \quad (2.10)$$

where  $S^\lambda$  denotes the Specht module of  $K\mathfrak{S}_n$  associated to  $\lambda$ . This completes the proof of the theorem.  $\square$

Let  $B_n^{(f)}$  be the two-sided ideal of  $B_n$  generated by  $e_1 e_3 \cdots e_{2f-1}$  with  $1 \leq f \leq [n/2]$ . Let  $X_{m+1} \in B_n$  be the element defined in [7, Page 2912]. We end this note by a conjecture which is connected with the invariant theory of classical groups (see [11, 12]).

**Conjecture 2.3.** *The annihilator of the space  $V^{\otimes n}/V^{\otimes n}B_n^{(f)}$  of dual partially harmonic tensors of valence  $f$  in the algebra  $B_n/B_n^{(f)}$  is the principal ideal  $\langle X_{m+1} + B_n^{(f)} \rangle$ .*

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