

On the Number of Singular Vector Tuples of Hyper-Cubical Tensors

By Shalosh B. EKHAD and Doron ZEILBERGER

Added May 23, 2016: The Conjecture at the end of this article has been brilliantly solved by Jay Pantone. See his article “The Asymptotic Number of Simple Singular Vector Tuples of a Cubical Tensor”, available from <http://arxiv.org/abs/1605.06099>.

A week ago, Bernd Sturmfels [St] gave a fascinating Colloquium talk, here at Rutgers, where, among many other interesting facts, he mentioned the following theorem of Shmuel Friedland and Giorgio Ottaviani ([FO]).

Theorem ([F0], Theorem 1). The number of simple singular vector tuples of a generic $m_1 \times \cdots \times m_d$ (d -dimensional) tensor equals the coefficient of $\prod_{i=1}^d t_i^{m_i-1}$ in the polynomial

$$\prod_{i=1}^d \frac{\hat{t}_i^{m_i} - t_i^{m_i}}{\hat{t}_i - t_i} \quad , \quad \hat{t}_i = \left(\sum_{j=1}^d t_j \right) - t_i \quad .$$

Let's call this number $c(m_1, \dots, m_d)$.

We first observe that the generating function of this d -dimensional multi-sequence is a nice rational function.

Proposition 1. Let $e_i(x_1, \dots, x_d)$ be the elementary symmetric function of the indeterminates x_1, \dots, x_d , of degree i . We have:

$$\sum_{m_1=0}^{\infty} \cdots \sum_{m_d=0}^{\infty} c(m_1, \dots, m_d) x_1^{m_1} \cdots x_d^{m_d} = \prod_{i=1}^d x_i \left(\prod_{i=1}^d (1 - x_i) \right)^{-1} \left(1 - \sum_{i=2}^d (i-1) e_i(x_1, \dots, x_d) \right)^{-1} \quad .$$

Proof: Since

$$\frac{\hat{t}_i^{m_i} - t_i^{m_i}}{\hat{t}_i - t_i} = \sum_{k_i=0}^{m_i-1} \hat{t}_i^{k_i} t_i^{m_i-1-k_i} \quad ,$$

$c(m_1, \dots, m_k)$ is the coefficient of $\prod_{i=1}^d t_i^{m_i-1}$ in

$$\sum_{k_1=0}^{m_1-1} \cdots \sum_{k_d=0}^{m_d-1} \prod_{i=1}^d \hat{t}_i^{k_i} t_i^{m_i-1-k_i} \quad .$$

Hence

$$c(m_1, \dots, m_d) = \sum_{k_1=0}^{m_1-1} \cdots \sum_{k_d=0}^{m_d-1} \text{ConstantTermOf} \prod_{i=1}^d \hat{t}_i^{k_i} t_i^{-k_i} \quad .$$

Let

$$f(k_1, \dots, k_d) := \text{ConstantTermOf} \prod_{i=1}^d \hat{t}_i^{k_i} t_i^{-k_i} = \text{CoeffOf} \prod_{i=1}^d t_i^{k_i} \text{ in } \prod_{i=1}^d \left(\sum_{j=1}^{i-1} t_j + \sum_{j=i+1}^d t_j \right)^{k_i} .$$

By the celebrated **MacMahon Master Theorem** ([M], Section III, Chapter II, p. 93ff) (with the $d \times d$ matrix that is all 1's except 0 in the diagonal), we have

$$\sum_{k_1=0}^{\infty} \dots \sum_{k_d=0}^{\infty} f(k_1, \dots, k_d) x_1^{k_1} \dots x_d^{k_d} = \left(1 - \sum_{i=2}^d (i-1) e_i(x_1, \dots, x_d) \right)^{-1} .$$

Since

$$c(m_1, \dots, m_d) = \sum_{k_1=0}^{m_1-1} \dots \sum_{k_d=0}^{m_d-1} f(k_1, \dots, k_d) ,$$

the proposition follows by straightforward generatingfunctionology.

The fact that the generating function of $c(m_1, \dots, m_d)$ is a rational function is equivalent to it satisfying a certain partial linear recurrence with constant coefficients, easily deduced from the generating function. Combined with the fact that both $c(m_1, \dots, m_d)$ and $f(k_1, \dots, k_d)$ are symmetric, enabled us to efficiently compute many values. It also follows (for example using Wilf-Zeilberger algorithmic proof theory, efficiently implemented in [AZ]) that the diagonal sequences

$$C_d(n) := c(n, \dots, n) \quad [n \text{ repeated } d \text{ times}] ,$$

are **holonomic**, alias **P-recursive**, that means that for each d , the sequence $C_d(n)$ satisfies *some* homogeneous linear recurrence with polynomial coefficients. While one can use the method of [AZ], it is more efficient, since we know *a priori* that such a recurrence exists, to generate sufficiently many terms and then **guess** the recurrence. Using this method, we got the following proposition.

Proposition 2. The sequence $C_3(n) = c(n, n, n)$ satisfies the following fifth-order linear recurrence equation with polynomial coefficients.

$$\begin{aligned} & 2(n+2)(245n^4 + 3094n^3 + 14447n^2 + 29474n + 22100)(n+1)^2 C_3(n) \\ & - (n+2)(21805n^6 + 330981n^5 + 2012733n^4 + 6230951n^3 + 10263446n^2 + 8425060n + 2639760) C_3(n+1) \\ & + (-13230n^7 - 249641n^6 - 1998705n^5 - 8785333n^4 - 22847777n^3 - 35069178n^2 - 29331496n - 10279296) \cdot \\ & \quad C_3(n+2) \\ & + (21560n^7 + 413637n^6 + 3343917n^5 + 14735333n^4 + 38132651n^3 + 57777574n^2 + 47273504n + 16026528) \cdot \\ & \quad C_3(n+3) \\ & - (n+4)(4410n^6 + 70147n^5 + 452903n^4 + 1516515n^3 + 2769127n^2 + 2601986n + 975888) C_3(n+4) \\ & + (n+5)(n+4)(n+3)(245n^4 + 2114n^3 + 6635n^2 + 8882n + 4224) C_3(n+5) = 0 , \end{aligned}$$

subject to the initial conditions

$$C_3(1) = 1 \quad , \quad C_3(2) = 6 \quad , \quad C_3(3) = 37 \quad , \quad C_3(4) = 240 \quad , \quad C_3(5) = 1621 \quad .$$

Using the methods of [WZ] and [Z], we found the following asymptotic formula.

Proposition 3.

$$C_3(n) \sim \frac{2}{\sqrt{3}\pi} 8^n \cdot n^{-1}.$$

$$\left(1 - \frac{13}{3} n^{-1} + \frac{1477}{27} n^{-2} - \frac{93707}{81} n^{-3} + \frac{8343061}{243} n^{-4} - \frac{2866730137}{2187} n^{-5} + \frac{1204239422533}{19683} n^{-6} + O(n^{-7}) \right) .$$

We observe that the “connective constant”, 8, is *sub-dominant*. With any other initial conditions it would have been 9. This is a very rare phenomenon in combinatorics.

The sequence $C_3(n)$ is sequence A271905 in the On-Line Encyclopedia of Integer Sequences [Sl]. For the record, here are the first few terms:

1, 6, 37, 240, 1621, 11256, 79717, 572928, 4164841, 30553116, 225817021, 1679454816, 12556853401, 94313192616, 711189994357, 5381592930816, 40848410792017, 310909645663332, 2372280474687277, 18141232682656320, 139010366280363601, 1067160872528170536, 8206301850166625797, 63203453697218605440.

We tried to find a recurrence for $C_4(n)$, but, since 160 terms did not suffice, we gave up. Nevertheless, using numerics, it is extremely likely that

$$C_4(n) \sim \alpha 81^n \cdot n^{-\frac{3}{2}} \quad ,$$

for some constant α , but we are unable to conjecture its value. For the record, here are the first few terms:

1, 24, 997, 51264, 2940841, 180296088, 11559133741, 765337680384, 51921457661905, 3590122671128664, 252070718210663749, 17922684123178825536, 1287832671004683373753, 93368940577497932331288, 6821632357294515590873917, 501741975445243527381995520, 37121266623211130111114816929, 2760712710223967190110979892824, 206267049696409355312012281872181.

The first few terms of $C_5(n)$ are: 1, 120, 44121, 23096640, 14346274601, 9859397817600, 7244702262723241, 5582882474985676800.

The first few terms of $C_6(n)$ are: 1, 720, 2882071, 18754813440, 153480509680141, 1435747717722810960.

Using reliable numeric estimates we are confident in making the following conjecture.

Conjecture:

$$C_d(n) \sim \alpha_d \cdot ((d-1)^d)^n \cdot n^{-(d-1)/2} \quad ,$$

for a constant α_d .

One of us (DZ) is pledging \$100 dollars to the OEIS Foundation in honor of the first prover, and an additional \$25 for an explicit expression for α_d in terms of d and π .

Readers are welcome to explore further using the Maple package `SVT.txt` available from <http://www.math.rutgers.edu/~zeilberg/mamarim/mamarimhtml/svt.html>, where there are many more terms of the sequences $C_d(n)$ for $3 \leq d \leq 6$.

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Doron Zeilberger, Department of Mathematics, Rutgers University (New Brunswick), Hill Center-Busch Campus, 110 Frelinghuysen Rd., Piscataway, NJ 08854-8019, USA.
zeilberg at math dot rutgers dot edu ; <http://www.math.rutgers.edu/~zeilberg/> .

Shalosh B. Ekhad, c/o D. Zeilberger, Department of Mathematics, Rutgers University (New Brunswick), Hill Center-Busch Campus, 110 Frelinghuysen Rd., Piscataway, NJ 08854-8019, USA.

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