Measurement of EPR-type flavour entanglement in $\Upsilon(4S) \to B^0\bar{B}^0$ decays

A. Go,²² A. Bay,¹⁶ K. Abe,⁷ H. Aihara,⁴³ D. Anipko,¹ V. Aulchenko,¹ T. Aushev,¹⁶,¹² A. M. Bakich,⁸ E. Barberio,¹⁹ K. Belous,¹¹ U. Bitenc,¹³ I. Bizjak,¹³ S. Blyth,²² A. Bozek,²⁵ M. Bračko,⁷,¹³,¹⁸ T. E. Browder,⁶ P. Chang,²⁴ Y. Chao,²⁴ A. Chen,²² K.-F. Chen,²⁴ W. T. Chen,²² B. G. Cheon,⁵ R. Chistov,¹² Y. Choi,¹⁷ Y. K. Choi,³⁷ S. Cole,³⁸ J. Dalen,¹⁹ M. Danilov,¹² M. Dash,⁴⁷ A. Drutskoy,² S. Eidelman,¹ D. Epifanov,¹ S. Fratina,¹³ N. Gabyshev,¹ T. Gershon,² G. Gokhroo,³⁰ B. Golob,¹⁷,¹³ A. Gorišek,¹³ H. Ha,¹⁴ N. C. Hastings,⁴³ K. Hayasaka,²⁰ H. Hayashii,²¹ M. Hazumi,⁷ D. Heffernan,³⁰ T. Hikasa,¹³ K. Hiyama,¹ Y. Hoshino,¹¹ S. Hou,²² W.-S. Hou,²⁴ T. Iijima,²⁹ K. Ikado,²⁰ A. Imoto,²¹ K. Inami,²⁰ A. Ishikawa,⁴³ H. Ishino,⁴⁴ R. Itoh,⁷ M. Iwasaki,⁴³ Y. Iwasaki,⁷ C. Jacoby,¹⁶ J. H. Kang,⁴⁶ N. Katayama,⁷ T. Kawasaki,²⁷ H. R. Khan,⁴⁴ H. Kichimi,⁷ H. J. Kim,¹⁵ S. K. Kim,³⁵ Y. J. Kim,⁴ K. Kinoshita,² S. Korpar,¹⁸,¹³ P. Križan,¹⁷,¹³ P. Krokovnå,⁷ R. Kulasiri,² R. Kumar,³¹ C. C. Kuo,²² A. Kuzmin,¹ Y.-J. Kwon,⁴⁸ J. S. Lange,³ J. Lee,³⁵ M. J. Lee,³⁵ T. Lesiak,²⁵ A. Limosani,⁷ S.-W. Lin,²⁴ Y. Liu,⁴ D. Liventsev,¹² T. Matsumoto,⁴⁵ A. Matyja,²⁵ S. McOnie,³⁸ W. Mitaroff,¹⁰ H. Miyake,³⁰ H. Miyata,²⁷ Y. Miyazaki,²⁰ R. Mizuk,¹² T. Mori,²⁰ E. Nakano,²⁹ M. Nakao,⁷ Z. Natkaniec,²⁵ S. Nishida,⁷ O. Ninot,⁴⁶ S. Ogawa,⁴⁰ T. Ohshima,²⁰ S. L. Olsen,⁶ Y. Onuki,³³ P. Pakhlova,¹² G. Pakhlova,¹² H. Palka,²³ C. W. Park,³⁷ H. Park,¹⁵ L. S. Peak,³⁸ R. Pestotnik,¹³ M. Peters,⁶ L. E. Piilonen,⁴⁷ H. Sahoo,⁶ Y. Sakai,⁷ N. Satoyama,³⁶ T. Schietinger,¹⁶ O. Schneider,¹⁶ J. Schimann,²³ A. J. Schwartz,² R. Seidl,⁸,³³ K. Senyo,²⁰ M. Shapkin,¹¹ H. Shibuya,⁴⁰ B. Shwartz,¹ J. B. Singh,³¹ A. Somov,² N. Soni,³¹ S. Stanič,²⁸ M. Starič,¹³ H. Stoeck,³⁸ T. Sumiyoshi,⁴⁵ F. Takasaka,⁷ M. Tanaka,⁷ G. N. Taylor,¹⁹ Y. Teramoto,²⁹ X. C. Tian,³² I. Tikhomirov,¹² K. Trabelsi,⁶ T. Tsuboyama,⁷ T. Tsukamoto,⁷ S. Uehara,⁷ T. Uglov,¹² K. Ueno,²⁴ Y. Uno,⁵ S. Uno,⁷ G. Varner,⁶ S. Villa,¹⁶ C. C. Wang,²⁴ C. H. Wang,²³ M.-Z. Wang,²⁴ Y. Watanabe,⁴⁴ J. Wicht,¹⁶ E. Won,¹⁴ Q. L. Xie,⁹ B. D. Yabsley,³⁸ A. Yamaguchi,¹² Y. Yamashita,²⁶ M. Yamashita,⁷ Z. P. Zhang,³⁴ V. Zhilich,¹ and A. Zupanc¹³

(The Belle Collaboration)

¹Budker Institute of Nuclear Physics, Novosibirsk
²University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio 45221
³Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen, Gießen
⁴The Graduate University for Advanced Studies, Hayama
⁵Hanyang University, Seoul
⁶University of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822
⁷High Energy Accelerator Research Organization (KEK), Tsukuba
⁸University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, Illinois 61801
⁹Institute of High Energy Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing
¹⁰Institute of High Energy Physics, Vienna
¹¹Institute of High Energy Physics, Protvino
¹²Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics, Moscow
¹³J. Stefan Institute, Ljubljana
¹⁴Korea University, Seoul
¹⁵Kyungpook National University, Taegu
¹⁶Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale Lausanne, Lausanne
¹⁷University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana
¹⁸University of Maribor, Maribor
¹⁹University of Melbourne, Victoria
²⁰Nagoya University, Nagoya
²¹Nara Women’s University, Nara
²²National Central University, Chung-li
²³National United University, Miaoli
²⁴Department of Physics, National Taiwan University, Taipei
²⁵H. Niewodniczanski Institute of Nuclear Physics, Krakow
²⁶Nippon Dental University, Niigata
²⁷Niigata University, Niigata
²⁸University of Nova Gorica, Nova Gorica
²⁹Osaka City University, Osaka
³⁰Osaka University, Osaka
³¹Panjab University, Chandigarh
³²Peking University, Beijing
³³RIKEN BNL Research Center, Upton, New York 11973
The neutral $B$-meson pair produced at the $\Upsilon (4S)$ should exhibit a non-local correlation of the type discussed by Einstein, Podolski, and Rosen. We measure this correlation using the time-dependent flavour asymmetry of semileptonic $B^0$ decays, which we compare with predictions from quantum mechanics and two local realistic models. The data are consistent with quantum mechanics, and inconsistent with the other models. Assuming that some $B$ pairs disentangle to produce $B^0$ and $\bar{B}^0$ with definite flavour, we find a decoherent fraction of $0.029 \pm 0.057$, consistent with no decoherence.

PACS numbers: 03.65.Ud, 03.65.Yz, 13.25.Hw

Decays occurring at the same proper time are fully correlated: the flavour-specific decay of one meson fixes the (previously undetermined) flavour $B^0/\bar{B}^0$ of the other meson. Given (1), the time-dependent rate for decay $\Gamma = e^{-\Delta t/\tau_{\beta}}/(4\tau_{\beta})\{1 \pm \cos(\Delta m_d \Delta t)\}$ for opposite flavour $(B^0/\bar{B}^0)$ and same flavour $(B^0/B^0 \otimes \bar{B}^0/\bar{B}^0) - , i = \text{SF}$ decays. $\Delta t \equiv |t_1 - t_2|$ is the proper-time difference of the decays, and $\Delta m_d$ the mass difference between the two $B^0, \bar{B}^0$ mass eigenstates. We have assumed a lifetime difference $\Delta \tau = 0$ and neglected the effects of $CP$ violation in mixing, which are $O(10^{-4})$ or less.

Thus in QM the time-dependent asymmetry $A(\Delta t) \equiv (R_{\text{SF}} - R_{\beta})/(R_{\text{OF}} + R_{\text{SF}}) = \cos(\Delta m_d \Delta t)$, is a function of $\Delta t$ but not the individual times $t_{1,2}$. This is a manifestation of entanglement. By contrast, we can consider Spontaneous Disentanglement (SD), an extreme case of decoherence, in which the $B$-meson pair immediately separates into a $B^0$ and $\bar{B}^0$ with well-defined flavour, which then evolve independently $\text{[10]}$. The asymmetry becomes

$$A_{\text{SD}}(t_1, t_2) = \cos(\Delta m_d t_1) \cos(\Delta m_d t_2)$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} [\cos(\Delta m_d (t_1 + t_2)) + \cos(\Delta m_d \Delta t)],$$

depending on $t_1 + t_2$ in addition to $\Delta t$. Because of the large uncertainty on the $\Upsilon (4S)$ decay point, it is difficult to measure individual decay times $t_{1,2}$; only $\Delta t$ is measured in this analysis. If we first integrate the OF and
Asymmetry

\[ A_{PS}^{\text{max}} (t_1, t_2) = 1 - |\{1 - \cos(\Delta m_d \Delta t)\} \cos(\Delta m_d t_{\text{min}}) + \sin(\Delta m_d \Delta t) \sin(\Delta m_d t_{\text{min}})|, \]

and

\[ A_{PS}^{\text{min}} (t_1, t_2) = 1 - \min(2 + \Psi, 2 - \Psi), \]

where

\[ \Psi = \begin{cases} 1 + \cos(\Delta m_d \Delta t), & \cos(\Delta m_d t_{\text{min}}) \\ -\sin(\Delta m_d \Delta t) \sin(\Delta m_d t_{\text{min}}). & \end{cases} \]

Note the additional \( t_{\text{min}} = \min(t_1, t_2) \) dependence. After integration for fixed values of \( \Delta t \) we obtain the asymmetry curves \( PS_{\text{max}} \) and \( PS_{\text{min}} \) shown in Fig. 1.

To determine the asymmetry, we use \( 152 \times 10^6 \) \( BB \) pairs collected by the Belle detector at the \( \Upsilon(4S) \) resonance at the KEKB asymmetric-energy (3.5 GeV on 8.0 GeV) \( e^+e^- \) collider \[ 17 \]. The Belle detector \[ 18 \] is a large-solid-angle spectrometer consisting of a silicon vertex detector (SVD), central drift chamber (CDC), aerogel Cherenkov counters (ACC), time-of-flight counters (TOF), and a CsI(Tl) electromagnetic calorimeter (ECL) inside a 1.5T superconducting solenoid. The flux return is instrumented to detect \( K^0 \) and identify muons (KLM). The \( \Upsilon(4S) \) is produced with \( \beta \gamma = 0.425 \) close to the \( z \) axis (defined as anti-parallel to the positron beam line). As the \( B \) momentum is low in the \( \Upsilon(4S) \) center-of-mass system (CMS), \( \Delta t \) can be determined from the \( z \)-displacement of \( B \)-decay vertices: \( \Delta t \approx \Delta z / \beta \gamma c \).

We use an event selection similar to that of a previous Belle analysis \[ 14 \ \[ 20 \], but optimised for theoretical model discrimination; in particular we use more stringent criteria on the flavour tag purity than the previous analysis. To enable direct comparison of the result with different models, we subtract both background and mistagged-flavour events from the data, and then correct for detector effects by deconvolution.

We determine the flavour of one neutral \( B \) by reconstructing the decay \( B^0 \to D^+ \ell^- \nu \), with \( D^+ \to D^0 \pi^- \) and \( D^0 \to K^+ \pi^- (\pi^0) \), where \( D^+ \pi^- \pi^+ \pi^- \) (charge-conjugate modes are included throughout this Letter). Charged particles (except the “slow pion” \( \pi_s \)) are chosen from tracks with associated SVD hits and radial impact parameter \( dr < 0.2 \) cm, and required to satisfy kaon/pion identification criteria using combined TOF, ACC and CDC \( (dE/dx) \) information \[ 21 \]. \( \pi^0 \to \gamma \gamma \) candidates are selected with \( |M_{\gamma \gamma - m_{\text{geo}}}| < 11 \) MeV/c\(^2 \) and momenta \( p_{\pi} > 0.2 \) GeV/c; the photons must have energies \( E_\gamma > 80 \) MeV. We select \( D^0 \) candidates with \( (M_{K\pi\pi} - m_{D^0}) \in [-13,13] \) MeV/c\(^2 \) for \( K\pi\pi \) and \( [-37,23] \) MeV/c\(^2 \) for \( K\pi^0 \). A \( D^* \) candidate is formed by constraining a \( D^0 \) and slow pion (having opposite charge to the lepton) to a common vertex. We require a mass difference \( M_{\text{diff}} = M_{K\pi\pi} - M_{K\pi} \in [144.4,146.4] \) MeV/c\(^2 \), and CMS momentum \( p_{D^*} < 2.6 \) GeV/c, consistent with \( B \)-decay. Electron identification uses momentum and \( dE/dx \) information, ACC response, and energy deposition in the ECL. Muon identification is based on penetration depth and matching of hits in the KLM to the extrapolated track. The efficiency is about 92% (84%) for electrons (muons) in the relevant momentum region, from 1.4 to 2.4 GeV/c in the CMS; hadrons pass this selection with an efficiency of 0.2% (1.1%). We require that the CMS angle between the \( D^* \) and lepton be greater than 90°. From the relation \( M_{\ell^+\ell^-} = (E_{D^*} - E_{D^*\ell})^2 - |p_{\ell}^*|^2 = |p_{D^*\ell}\|^2 + 2|p_{D^*\ell}|\cos(\theta_{D^*\ell}) \), where \( \theta_{D^*\ell} \) is the angle between \( p_{D^*\ell} \) and \( p_{D^*\ell}^* \), we can reconstruct \( \cos(\theta_{D^*\ell}) \) by assuming a vanishing neutrino mass. We require \( |\cos(\theta_{D^*\ell})| < 1.1 \). The neutral \( B \) decay position is determined by fitting the lepton track and \( D^0 \) trajectory to a vertex, constrained to lie in the \( e^+e^- \) interaction region (smeared in the \( r - \phi \) plane to account for the \( B \) flight length); we require \( \chi^2/n_{\text{dof}} < 75 \).

The remaining tracks are used to determine the second \( B \) decay vertex and its flavour, using the method of Ref. \[ 21 \ \[ 22 \]. Events are classified into six subsets according to the purity of the tag. In this analysis we use only leptonic tags from the highest purity subset.

In total, 8565 events are selected (6718 OF, 1847 SF). A GEANT-based Monte Carlo (MC) sample assuming QM correlation, with five times the number of events, was analysed with identical criteria; its \( \Delta z \) and \( D^* \) mass dis-
tributions were tuned to those of the data. This sample was used for consistency checks, background estimates and subtraction, and to build deconvolution matrices.

To compensate for the rapid fall in event rate with $\Delta t$, the time-dependent distributions are histogrammed in 11 variable-size bins (Table D). Background subtraction is then performed bin-by-bin; systematic errors are likewise determined by estimating variations in the OF and SF distributions, and calculating the effect on the asymmetry. Terms due to event selection are estimated by comparing data and MC distributions for each quantity, and converting discrepancies into yield variations: effects due to each selection are added in quadrature. Estimation of the remaining terms is described below.

Four types of background events have been considered: $e^+e^- \rightarrow q\bar{q}$ continuum, non-$D^*$ events, wrong $D^*$-lepton combinations, and $B^+ \rightarrow \overline{D}^{(*)0}\ell^+\nu$ events. Off-resonance data (8.3 fb$^{-1}$) were used to estimate the continuum background, which was found to be negligible.

The background to the $D^0$ sample, and misassigned slow pions, produce a background under the $D^*$ peak in $M_{\text{hiss}}$. As a correction, we subtract 126 $\pm$ 6 (54 $\pm$ 4) such OF (SF) events based on scaled yields from the sideband $M_{\text{hiss}} \in [156.0, 164.0]$ MeV/c$^2$. The corresponding systematic uncertainty is estimated by considering statistical fluctuations, and moving cuts by $\pm 0.02$ MeV/c$^2$ (the estimated mis-calibration in $M_{\text{hiss}}$). Alternate sidebands [152.0, 156.0] and [164.0, 168.0] MeV/c$^2$ are also used: the difference from default results (consistent with statistical fluctuations) is conservatively included in the systematic error.

The wrong $D^*$–lepton combination background is mainly due to the combination of a $D^*$ from one $B$, with a true lepton from the other $B$, with a smaller fraction due to misidentified leptons, and from charm decay. To estimate this background, for each selected lepton which forms a CMS angle to the $D^*$ less than 90$^\circ$, we reverse its CMS momentum labelling the modified lepton $\ell'$, and require $|\cos(\theta_{B,D^*\ell'})| < 1.1$. This procedure, intended to reject correlated $D^*$ leptons pairs while selecting events with no angular correlation, has been validated on MC events where true $B^0 \rightarrow D^{*-}\ell^+X\nu$ combinations have been excluded. (The correlated background from charm decays is negligible.) We obtain 78 $\pm 9$ OF and 237 $\pm 15$ SF events, which are then subtracted. Contributions to the systematic error are obtained by considering the statistical fluctuations and by moving cuts by $\pm 0.1$ to account for possible data-MC discrepancies.

After these subtractions, three main types of events remain: $B^0 \rightarrow D^{*-}\ell^+\nu$, the signal; $B^0 \rightarrow D^{*-}\ell^+\nu$, which we retain because it undergoes mixing; and $B^+ \rightarrow \overline{D}^{(*)0}\ell^+\nu$ background. MC shapes for the signal and the sum of the $D^{*+}$ channels are used in a two-parameter fit to the $\cos(\theta_{B,D^*\ell})$ distribution to find the total $D^{*+}$ contribution ($\chi^2/\text{ndof} = 56/46$), and its $B^+$ component is then estimated using MC fractions. We find 255.5 $\pm$ 16.0 events (254.0 OF and 1.5 SF), which we subtract from the data. The systematic uncertainty is estimated by adding in quadrature the fit error (6%) and variations obtained by moving the fit region (3%) and changing to a single parameter fit with forced normalisation (2%). We also assign a 20% uncertainty on the ratio of branching fractions of $B^0 \rightarrow D^{*-}\ell^+\nu$ to $B^+ \rightarrow \overline{D}^{(*)0}\ell^+\nu$.

We correct for wrong flavour assignments using OF and SF distributions from wrongly-tagged MC events. The mistag fraction 0.015 $\pm$ 0.001 (stat) is consistent with that in data [20]; we assign a systematic error of $\pm 0.005$.

Remaining reconstruction effects (e.g. resolution in $\Delta t$, selection efficiency) are corrected by deconvolution, treating the SF and OF distributions separately. The method is based on Deconvolution with Singular Value Decomposition (DSVD) [22]. 11 $\times$ 11 response matrices are built separately for SF and OF events, using MC $D^*\ell\nu$ events indexed by generated and reconstructed $\Delta t$ values. The procedure has been optimised by a Toy Monte Carlo (TMC) technique where sets of several hundred simulated experiments are generated with data and MC samples identical in size to those of the real experiment, but assuming different true asymmetries $A_{\text{QM}}, A_{\text{SD}},$ and $A_{\text{PS}}$. In particular the following points have been studied:

1. (The effective matrix rank was reduced from 11 to 5 (6) for the OF (SF) sample, to minimize the total error. (The statistical precision of some singular values is poor.)

2. (The MC events used to fill the response matrix, and provide an a priori to the regularization algorithm, introduce a potential bias: e.g. the first $\Delta t$ bin contains few SF events for QM, but is well-populated for SD. We therefore replace SF and OF samples with mixtures SF + $s \times$ OF and OF + $s \times$ SF, choosing $s = 0 = 0.2$ to minimize systematic effects; the exact values are not critical.

3. (After DSVD, measured differences from input values are averaged (over QM, SD, and PS) and subtracted bin-by-bin from the asymmetry, to reduce the potential bias against any one model. The maximal absolute deviation of the corrected distribution from the three models is assigned as the systematic error in each $\Delta t$ bin.

4. (A $46 \mu$m Gaussian smearing term, inferred from the difference between MC and data vertex-fit errors, is used to tune the MC $\Delta z$ distribution to the data. (The average $\Delta z$ resolution is $\approx 100 \mu$m). This term was varied by its $\pm 35 \mu$m uncertainty, and the resulting bin-by-bin difference in the asymmetry taken as the systematic error.

Terms from (3) and (4) are added in quadrature to give the total systematic error due to deconvolution. We test the consistency of the method by fitting the $B^0$ decay time distribution (summing OF and SF samples), leaving the $B^0$ lifetime as a free parameter. We obtain $1.532 \pm 0.017($stat)$)$ ps, consistent with the world average [24]. We also repeat the deconvolution procedure using events with better vertex fit quality, and hence more precise $\Delta t$ values: consistent results are obtained.

The final results, which may be directly compared with
theoretical models, are shown in Table I; addition in quadrature is used to combine the various error terms.

We perform weighted least-squares fits to $A(\Delta t)$, including a term taking the world-average $\Delta m_d$ into account. To avoid bias we discard BaBar and Belle measurements, which assume QM correlations: this yields $\langle \Delta m_d \rangle = (0.496 \pm 0.014) \text{ ps}^{-1}$.

In fits to the QM, SD, and PS predictions, we obtain $\Delta m_d = 0.501 \pm 0.009$, $0.419 \pm 0.008$, and $0.447 \pm 0.010 \text{ ps}^{-1}$ with $\chi^2$ of 5.2, 174, and 31.3 respectively, for eleven degrees of freedom: see Fig. 2. The data favour QM over the SD model at $13\sigma$, and QM over the PS model at $5.1\sigma$. As noted above, $CP$ violation in mixing can be neglected. Introducing a lifetime difference $\Delta \Gamma_d = 0.009 \pm 0.037 \text{ ps}^{-1}$ has a negligible effect on the fit. As a consistency check, the time-dependent asymmetry before deconvolution is compared to MC predictions for QM and (via reweighting) the SD and PS models: QM is strongly favoured.

Following other phenomenological studies of decoherence (e.g. Ref. 9) we also fit the data with the function $(1 - \zeta_{B^0\overline{B}^0}) A_{QM} + \zeta_{B^0\overline{B}^0} A_{SD}$: this is equivalent to modifying the interference term in the $B^0\overline{B}^0$ basis, or to assuming that only a fraction of the neutral $B$ pairs from $\Upsilon(4S)$ decays disentangle immediately into a $B^0$ and a $\overline{B}^0$. We find $\zeta_{B^0\overline{B}^0} = 0.029 \pm 0.057$, consistent with no decoherence.

In summary, we have analysed neutral $B$ pairs produced by $\Upsilon(4S)$ decay, determined the time-dependent asymmetry due to flavour oscillations, and corrected for experimental effects by deconvolution: the results can be directly compared to theoretical models. Any local realistic model including the assumptions of Pompili and Selleri is strongly disfavoured compared to quantum mechanics. Immediate disentanglement, in which definite-time evolution propagates independently, is ruled out; if a fraction of $B$-pairs is assumed to decay incoherently, we find a decoherent fraction consistent with zero.

We thank P. Eberhard, G. Garbarino, B. Hiesmayr, A. Pompili, and F. Selleri for insightful discussions, the KEKB group for excellent operation of the accelerator, the KEK cryogenics group for efficient solenoid opera-

### Table I: Time-dependent asymmetry in $\Delta t$ bins, corrected for experimental effects, with statistical and systematic uncertainties. Contributions from event selection, background subtraction, wrong tag correction, and deconvolution are also shown.

| $\Delta t$ bin | window [ps] | $A$ and total error | Statistical error | Systematic errors |
|----------------|-------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|
|                |             |                     |                  | total | event sel. | bkgd sub. | wrong tags | deconvolution |
| 1              | 0.0 – 0.5   | 1.013 ± 0.028       | 0.020            | 0.019 | 0.005     | 0.006     | 0.010     | 0.014 |
| 2              | 0.5 – 1.0   | 0.916 ± 0.022       | 0.015            | 0.016 | 0.006     | 0.007     | 0.010     | 0.009 |
| 3              | 1.0 – 2.0   | 0.699 ± 0.038       | 0.029            | 0.024 | 0.013     | 0.005     | 0.009     | 0.017 |
| 4              | 2.0 – 3.0   | 0.339 ± 0.056       | 0.047            | 0.031 | 0.008     | 0.005     | 0.007     | 0.029 |
| 5              | 3.0 – 4.0   | −0.136 ± 0.075      | 0.060            | 0.045 | 0.009     | 0.009     | 0.007     | 0.042 |
| 6              | 4.0 – 5.0   | −0.634 ± 0.084      | 0.062            | 0.057 | 0.021     | 0.014     | 0.013     | 0.049 |
| 7              | 5.0 – 6.0   | −0.961 ± 0.077      | 0.060            | 0.048 | 0.020     | 0.017     | 0.012     | 0.038 |
| 8              | 6.0 – 7.0   | −0.974 ± 0.080      | 0.060            | 0.053 | 0.034     | 0.025     | 0.020     | 0.025 |
| 9              | 7.0 – 9.0   | −0.675 ± 0.109      | 0.092            | 0.058 | 0.041     | 0.027     | 0.022     | 0.022 |
| 10             | 9.0 – 13.0  | 0.089 ± 0.193       | 0.161            | 0.107 | 0.067     | 0.063     | 0.038     | 0.039 |
| 11             | 13.0 – 20.0 | 0.243 ± 0.435       | 0.240            | 0.363 | 0.145     | 0.226     | 0.080     | 0.231 |
tions, and the KEK computer group and the NII for valuable computing and Super-SINET network support. We acknowledge support from MEXT and JSPS (Japan); ARC and DEST (Australia); NSFC and KIP of CAS (China); DST (India); MOEHRD, KOSEF and KRF (Korea); KBN (Poland); MIST (Russia); ARRS (Slovenia); SNSF (Switzerland); NSC and MOE (Taiwan); and DOE (USA).

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