

Measurement of the electroweak production of $W\gamma$ in association with two jets in proton-proton collisions at $\sqrt{s}=13$ TeV

A. Tumasyan *et al.*^{*}

(CMS Collaboration)



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A measurement is presented for the electroweak production of a W boson, a photon (γ), and two jets (j) in proton-proton collisions. The leptonic decay of the W boson is selected by requiring one identified electron or muon and large missing transverse momentum. The two jets are required to have large invariant dijet mass and large separation in pseudorapidity. The measurement is performed with the data collected by the CMS detector at a center-of-mass energy of 13 TeV, corresponding to an integrated luminosity of 138 fb^{-1} . The cross section for the electroweak $W\gamma jj$ production is $23.5^{+4.9}_{-4.7}$ fb, whereas the total cross section for $W\gamma jj$ production is 113 ± 13 fb. Differential cross sections are also measured with the distributions unfolded to the particle level. All results are in agreement with the standard model expectations. Constraints are placed on anomalous quartic gauge couplings (aQGCs) in terms of dimension-8 effective field theory operators. These are the most stringent limits to date on the aQGCs parameters $f_{M,2-5}/\Lambda^4$ and $f_{T,6-7}/\Lambda^4$.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The discovery of the Higgs boson at the CERN LHC [1–3] was made about 10 years ago. Now, it is of great interest to examine in depth the mechanism of electroweak (EW) symmetry breaking using rare EW processes. Vector-boson scattering (VBS) processes play an independent and complementary role in understanding the EW symmetry breaking. The non-Abelian nature of gauge interactions in the standard model (SM) leads to a large variety of VBS processes with unique features and opportunities to probe new physics beyond the SM (BSM).

The center-of-mass energy of the proton-proton (pp) collisions and the integrated luminosity accumulated by the LHC experiments present an opportunity to measure many rare VBS processes. For example, the observed (expected) significance for the EW production of $W\gamma + 2$ jets reported by CMS is 5.3 (4.8) standard deviations (SD) combining Run 1 data and Run 2 data collected in 2016 [4].

This paper presents a measurement of the EW $W\gamma jj$ production at $\sqrt{s}=13$ TeV based on the complete Run 2 data collected during 2016–2018, superseding the previous CMS result [4]. A complete set of tabulated results of this analysis is available in the HEPData database [5].

In addition to increased integrated luminosity, our new results include: (i) an updated fiducial region requiring jets with $p_T > 50$ GeV; (ii) the removal of the missing transverse momentum requirement from the fiducial region definition; (iii) the treatment of the interference term between the EW- and quantum chromodynamics (QCD)-induced processes as a background component; and (iv) the treatment of the out-of-fiducial signal contribution as a background component.

The EW signal includes both VBS and non-VBS diagrams, such as the contributions depicted in Figs. 1(a)–1(c). The QCD-induced production of $W\gamma jj$, in which both jets originate from QCD interaction, occurs at a much higher rate and is depicted in Fig. 1(d). The interference among the VBS diagrams ensures the unitarity of the VBS cross section in the SM at high energy. An interference is also expected between the EW- and QCD-induced processes [6,7]. The interference is regarded as a background when measuring the EW process. The cross section for the EW $W\gamma jj$ production and the total cross section for the $W\gamma jj$ production that includes both the EW- and QCD-induced processes are determined in the same restricted fiducial region. The measurements are based on a two-dimensional fit in the invariant mass $m_{\ell\gamma}$ of the lepton and the photon and the invariant mass m_{jj} of the two jets. Differential cross sections unfolded to the particle level are also measured.

In addition, BSM couplings, such as anomalous triple and quartic gauge couplings (aTGCs and aQGCs), are predicted in BSM theories [8] and would affect the $W\gamma jj$ production. The aTGCs are well constrained by processes such as Higgs boson and diboson production, whereas the

^{*}Full author list given at the end of the article.

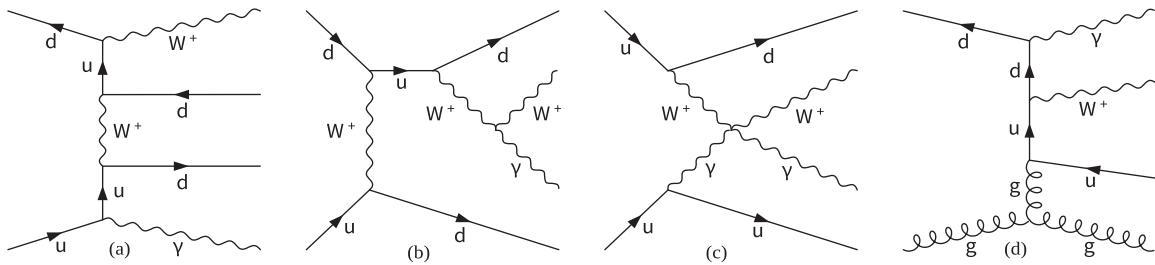


FIG. 1. Representative Feynman diagrams for $W\gamma jj$ production at the LHC: EW (a), EW through triple (b) and quartic (c) gauge boson couplings, and QCD-induced (d).

aQGCs can be better constrained by VBS measurements. In this analysis, constraints are placed on aQGCs in terms of dimension-8 effective field theory operators.

The data set used in this analysis corresponds to an integrated luminosity of 138 fb^{-1} collected in Run 2 with the CMS detector [9] at the LHC. The final state is characterized by an isolated electron or muon with high transverse momentum (p_T), large missing transverse momentum (p_T^{miss}) from the leptonic decay of the W boson, a high- p_T isolated photon, and two jets. Exploiting the VBS $W\gamma jj$ topology, the two jets are required to have a large invariant mass m_{jj} and a large separation in pseudorapidity $|\Delta\eta_{jj}|$. This selection effectively suppresses the contamination from the QCD-induced production of $W\gamma jj$, as well as the non-VBS EW contribution [Figs. 1(a) and 1(b)].

II. THE CMS DETECTOR

The central feature of the CMS [9] apparatus is a superconducting solenoid of 6 m internal diameter, providing a magnetic field of 3.8 T. Within the solenoid volume are a silicon pixel and strip tracker, a lead tungstate crystal electromagnetic calorimeter (ECAL), and a brass and scintillator hadron calorimeter (HCAL), each composed of a barrel and two end-cap sections. Forward calorimeters extend the coverage provided by the barrel and end-cap detectors up to a pseudorapidity of $|\eta| = 5$. Muons are detected in gas-ionization chambers embedded in the steel flux-return yoke outside the solenoid. Events of interest are selected using a two-tiered trigger system [10,11]. The first level, composed of specialized hardware processors, uses information from the calorimeters and muon detectors to select events at a rate of around 100 kHz within a fixed latency of about 4 μs . The second level, the high-level trigger, consists of a farm of processors running a version of the full event reconstruction software optimized for fast processing that reduces the event rate to around 1 kHz before data storage. A more detailed description of the CMS detector, together with a definition of the coordinate system and kinematic variables, is reported in Ref. [9].

III. SIGNAL AND BACKGROUND SIMULATION

The signal and background processes are simulated using the `MadGraph5_aMC@NLO` (MG5) Monte Carlo (MC) generator [12]. The EW $W\gamma jj$ signal is simulated at leading order (LO) using MG5 version 2.6.0. The dominant background from the QCD-induced production of $W\gamma jj$ is simulated with up to one additional jet in the matrix element calculations at next-to-leading order (NLO) with MG5 version 2.4.2, using the FxFx scheme [13] to merge jets from matrix elements and from parton showering. The interference term between the EW- and QCD-induced processes, of order $\mathcal{O}(\alpha^4\alpha_S)$ at tree level, is estimated with a full simulation and is treated as a part of the QCD-induced $W\gamma jj$ contribution. The contribution of the interference is calculated as the difference between the total $W\gamma jj$ production, which contains the interference term, and the sum of the individual EW- and QCD-induced $W\gamma jj$ contributions as simulated by MG5. The interference term ranges from 1% to 3% of the expected EW signal in the signal region (defined in Sec. V), varying with m_{jj} bin.

Other background contributions include diboson processes ($VV = WW, WZ, ZZ$) simulated at LO with PYTHIA8.212 [14], top-quark processes ($t\bar{t}$ and single top) simulated at NLO with POWHEG2.0 [15–19], $t\bar{t}\gamma$ production simulated at NLO with MG5 using the FxFx jet merging scheme, and $Z\gamma$ simulated at NLO with MG5.

The PYTHIA 8 generator with the CUETP8M1 [20,21] tune for 2016 and the CP5 [22] tune for 2017–2018 is used for parton showering, hadronization, and underlying-event simulation. The NNPDF 3.0 (3.1) set [23] is used for the parton distribution functions (PDFs) for the simulated samples of the 2016 (2017–2018) data-taking periods. All simulated events are processed with Geant4 [24] for the CMS detector simulation. Correction factors evaluated with the tag-and-probe method [25] are used to account for differences between data and simulation in the trigger, reconstruction, and identification (ID) efficiencies. Additional simulated pp interactions (pileup, PU) are superimposed over the hard scattering interaction with a distribution matching that obtained from the collision data.

IV. OBJECT RECONSTRUCTION

The particle-flow (PF) algorithm [26] reconstructs and identifies individual particles in an event, through an optimized combination of information from the various components of the CMS detector. The energy of photons is obtained from the ECAL measurement. The energy of electrons is determined from a combination of the electron momentum at the primary interaction vertex from the tracker, the energy of the corresponding ECAL cluster, and the energy sum of all bremsstrahlung photons spatially compatible with originating from the electron track. The energy of muons is obtained from the curvature of the corresponding tracks. The energy of charged hadrons is determined from a combination of their momentum measured in the tracker and the matching ECAL and HCAL energy depositions, corrected for the response of the calorimeters to hadronic showers. The energy of neutral hadrons is obtained from the corresponding corrected ECAL and HCAL energies. The PF candidates are used for a variety of purposes in this analysis, such as evaluating electron, muon, and photon isolation variables, reconstructing jets, and computing the p_T^{miss} in the event, as described below.

The reconstructed vertex with the largest value of summed physics-object p_T^2 is taken as the primary pp interaction vertex [27]. The jets are clustered using the anti- k_T jet-finding algorithm [28,29] using tracks assigned to candidate vertices as inputs and the distance parameter is set to 0.4.

Electron candidates must satisfy $|\eta| < 2.5$ and $p_T > 35 \text{ GeV}$, excluding the ECAL transition region $1.444 < |\eta| < 1.566$. Electrons are also required to satisfy identification criteria [30]: a selection on the relative amount of energy deposited in the HCAL, a match of the trajectory in the tracker with the position of the ECAL cluster, requirements on the number of missing measurements in the tracker, the compatibility of the electron track and the primary vertex, and $\sigma_{\eta\eta}$, which quantifies the spread along η of the shower in the ECAL. Electrons identified as arising from photon conversions are removed [30,31]. The CMS cut-based tight ID is used to define tight electrons from W decays, whereas the CMS cut-based veto ID is used to define loose electrons to suppress events that contain additional leptons. An isolation requirement is applied to electrons. The isolation variable is defined relative to the electron p_T by summing the p_T of charged hadrons and neutral particles within geometrical cones of $\Delta R = \sqrt{(\Delta\eta)^2 + (\Delta\phi)^2} = 0.3$ around the electron momentum direction. To minimize PU effects, only charged hadrons originating from the primary vertex are included. For the neutral-hadron and photon components, an estimate of the expected PU contribution (p_T^{PU}) is subtracted [32]. For the tight (loose) electrons, the isolation variable is required to be less than $0.0287 + 0.506 \text{ GeV}/p_T$ ($0.198 + 0.506 \text{ GeV}/p_T$) if the pseudorapidity of the

ECAL cluster (η_{SC}) satisfies $|\eta_{\text{SC}}| < 1.479$, and less than $0.0445 + 0.963 \text{ GeV}/p_T$ ($0.203 + 0.963 \text{ GeV}/p_T$) if $1.479 < |\eta_{\text{SC}}| < 2.5$.

Muon candidates are required to satisfy $|\eta| < 2.4$ and $p_T > 35 \text{ GeV}$. They must satisfy ID criteria based on the number of measurements in the muon system and the tracker, the number of matched muon detector planes, the quality of the combined fit to the track, and the compatibility of the muon to originate from the primary vertex [33]. The CMS cut-based tight ID is used. An isolation requirement is applied to muons. The isolation variable is defined relative to the muon p_T by summing the p_T of charged hadrons and neutral particles within geometrical cones of $\Delta R = 0.4$. The PU suppression is performed in a similar way as for electrons. The isolation variable is required to be < 0.15 (0.25) to define tight (loose) muons. Tight muons are used to select signal events, whereas loose muons are used to veto events that feature additional leptons [33].

Photon candidates must satisfy $|\eta| < 2.5$ and $p_T > 25 \text{ GeV}$, excluding the ECAL transition region of $1.444 < |\eta| < 1.566$. To minimize the contribution of jets misidentified as photons, photon candidates must satisfy [34] criteria based on the distribution of energy deposited in the ECAL and HCAL, and criteria based on the isolation variables constructed from the kinematic inputs of the charged hadrons, neutral hadrons, and other photons near the photon of interest. The CMS cut-based medium ID defines tight photons and is used to identify prompt photons (i.e., not originating from hadron decays) in the final state, and the CMS cut-based loose ID defines loose photons and is used to identify nonprompt photons, which are mainly products of neutral pion decays [34]. An isolation requirement using a consistent definition as mentioned above for electrons and muons is applied with $\Delta R = 0.3$ for the three components separately, i.e., the charged hadron isolation must be less than 1.141 (1.051), the neutral hadron isolation must be less than $1.189 + 0.01512 p_T + 2.259 \times 10^{-5} p_T^2$ ($2.718 + 0.0117 p_T + 2.3 \times 10^{-5} p_T^2$) and the photon isolation component must be less than $2.08 + 0.004017 p_T$ ($3.867 + 0.0037 p_T$), for the tight photon candidates found in the barrel (end-cap) region, whereas the charged hadron isolation must be less than 1.694 (2.089), the neutral hadron isolation must be less than $24.032 + 0.01512 p_T + 2.259 \times 10^{-5} p_T^2$ ($19.722 + 0.0117 p_T + 2.3 \times 10^{-5} p_T^2$) and the photon isolation component must be less than $2.876 + 0.004017 p_T$ ($4.162 + 0.0037 p_T$), for the loose photon candidates found in the barrel (end-cap) region, where p_T is measured in GeV. The PU suppression is performed in a similar way as for electrons. An additional veto is applied on electrons reconstructed as photons.

Jets are required to have $|\eta| < 4.7$ and $p_T > 50 \text{ GeV}$. To reduce the contamination from PU, charged PF candidates within the tracker acceptance are excluded from the jet

clustering when they are associated with PU vertices [26]. The contribution from neutral PU particles to the jet energy is corrected based on the projected area of the jet onto the front face of the calorimeter [35]. A jet energy correction, similar to the one developed for 8-TeV collisions [36], is obtained from dedicated studies performed on both data and simulated events (typically involving dijet, $\gamma + \text{jet}$, $Z + \text{jet}$, and multijet production). Other residual corrections are applied to the data as functions of p_T and η to correct for small differences between data and simulation. Additional quality criteria are applied to jet candidates to remove spurious jet-like features originating from isolated noise patterns in the calorimeters or in the tracker [37].

The missing transverse momentum \vec{p}_T^{miss} is computed as the projection onto the plane perpendicular to the beam axis of the negative vector momentum sum of all PF candidates originating from the primary vertex in an event [38], and its magnitude is denoted as p_T^{miss} . The jet energy corrections are propagated to the \vec{p}_T^{miss} . Data-to-simulation efficiency ratios are used as scale factors to correct the simulated event yields.

V. EVENT SELECTION

Signal event candidates are collected with single lepton triggers and are selected by requiring exactly one electron (muon) with $p_T > 35$ GeV and $m_T^W > 30$ GeV, where m_T^W is the transverse mass of the W boson defined as $\sqrt{2p_T^\ell p_T^{\text{miss}}[1 - \cos(\Delta\phi_{\ell,p_T^{\text{miss}}})]}$, p_T^ℓ is the lepton p_T , and $\Delta\phi_{\ell,p_T^{\text{miss}}}$ is the azimuthal angle between the p_T^ℓ and the \vec{p}_T^{miss} directions. Events are required to contain a well-identified and isolated photon with $p_T^\gamma > 25$ GeV, $p_T^{\text{miss}} > 30$ GeV, and at least two jets, each with $|\eta| < 4.7$ and $p_T > 50$ GeV. A separation of $\Delta R > 0.5$ is required between any two selected objects (photon, lepton, jets), as detailed in Sec. IX. In the electron channel, we additionally require the invariant mass $m_{\ell\gamma}$ of the selected photon and electron to be inconsistent with the Z boson mass, $|m_{\ell\gamma} - m_Z| > 10$ GeV, to suppress the $Z \rightarrow e + e^-$ background where one electron is misidentified as a photon. Depending on the photon pseudorapidity, the electron and muon channels are each subdivided into a barrel region with $|\eta_\gamma| < 1.444$, and an end-cap region with $1.566 < |\eta_\gamma| < 2.5$. The nominal selection consists of all the above requirements.

The longitudinal component of the neutrino momentum is estimated by solving the quadratic equation that constrains the mass of the charged lepton and neutrino system to the world-average value of the W boson mass [39]. As described in Ref. [40], when there are multiple solutions, the one with the smallest longitudinal neutrino momentum component is chosen; if there are only complex solutions, the real part is chosen as the longitudinal momentum.

The signal region (SR) is defined as the above nominal selection with the additional requirements of $m_{jj} > 500$ GeV, $|\Delta\eta_{jj}| > 2.5$, $m_{W\gamma} > 100$ GeV, $|y_{W\gamma} - (y_{j1} + y_{j2})/2| < 1.2$ [41], and $|\phi_{W\gamma} - \phi_{jj}| > 2$, where $m_{W\gamma}$, $\phi_{W\gamma}$, and $y_{W\gamma}$ are the invariant mass, azimuthal angle, and the rapidity of the $W\gamma$ system, respectively, ϕ_{jj} is the azimuthal angle of the dijet system between the two p_T -leading jets, and $y_{j1(2)}$ is the rapidity of the p_T -leading (subleading) jet. The requirements on $|y_{W\gamma} - (y_{j1} + y_{j2})/2|$ and on $|\phi_{W\gamma} - \phi_{jj}|$ are intended to ensure that the momentum of the $W\gamma$ system is balanced by that of the dijet system, which is expected in the absence of additional QCD radiation. The selection thresholds are determined by scanning the expected significance of the EW signal to give the maximum sensitivity.

A control region (CR) is defined to validate the modeling from simulation and perform a background estimation derived from data. The CR uses the nominal selection mentioned above with the additional requirements of $200 < m_{jj} < 500$ GeV. The contamination from signal events in the CR is less than 1%.

VI. BACKGROUND ESTIMATION

In Fig. 2 the p_T^γ distributions for the unfit data and the estimated backgrounds in the CR are presented for the barrel (upper) and end cap (lower). This region is used to constrain the QCD $W\gamma jj$ background. The estimations of the backgrounds are described in this section.

Reconstructed photons or leptons that do not originate from the hard interaction are denoted as misidentified (misID) photons and leptons. This reducible background includes genuine photons or leptons, as well as photons or leptons of instrumental origin. Because of the variety of sources of these misID particles and the difficulty of modeling instrumental effects, their contribution is estimated using data in a signal-free region.

The main backgrounds arise from $W + \text{jets}$ and top-quark processes where the jet constituents are misidentified as a photon. The method used to estimate this background involves measuring the fraction of jets misidentified as photons in data and applying a per-photon extrapolation factor from the region with loose photons to the signal region with tight photons. The factors are extracted as functions of the photon p_T and η . The fraction of jets misidentified as photons is determined from a template fit to the photon $\sigma_{\eta\eta}$ observable, which is the lateral extension of the shower, defined as the energy-weighted spread within the 5×5 crystal matrix centered on the crystal with the largest energy deposit in the supercluster. The prompt photons are more populated in the small- $\sigma_{\eta\eta}$ region, while the nonprompt photons are enriched in the large- $\sigma_{\eta\eta}$ region. The fit template for the prompt photons uses MC, while the fit template for the nonprompt photons uses data from a sideband of the photon isolation distribution in $W + \text{jets}$ using the same method as that used in Ref. [42].

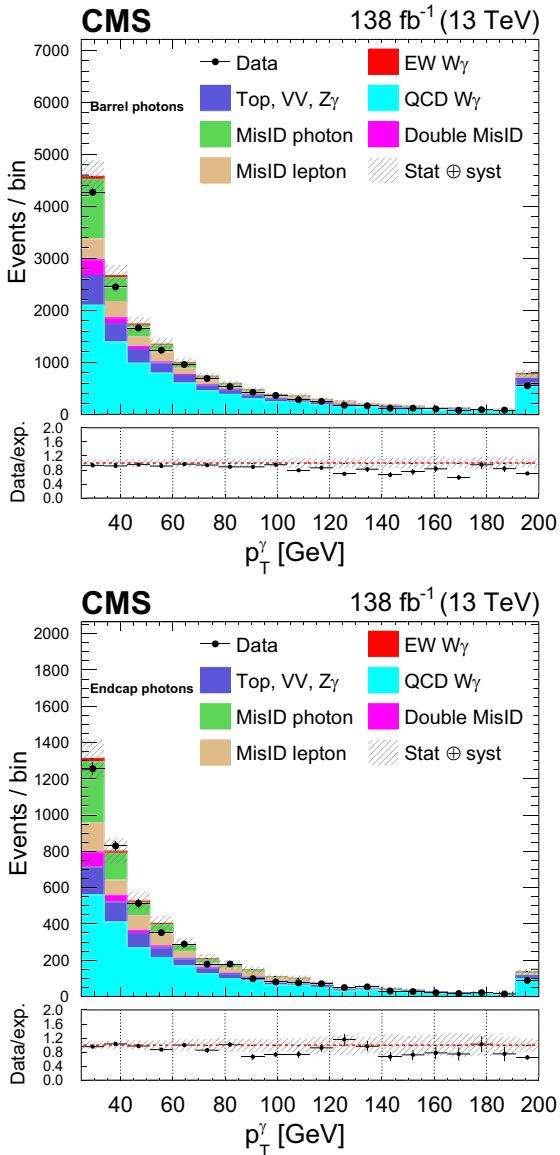


FIG. 2. p_T distributions for photons in the barrel (upper) and in the end caps (lower) in the control region for data and from background estimations before the fit to the data. The misID backgrounds are derived from data, whereas the remaining backgrounds are estimated from simulation. All events with a photon $p_T > 200$ GeV are included in the last bin. The hatched bands represent the combined statistical and systematic uncertainties on the predicted yields. The vertical bars on the data points represent the statistical uncertainties of data. The bottom panels show the ratios of the data to the predicted yields.

The background from jets misidentified as leptons (nonprompt leptons) is estimated in a similar way. The lepton misidentification rate f_ℓ is defined as the ratio of the number of misID leptons passing the tight lepton requirements to the number of leptons passing only the loose

lepton requirements. To extrapolate from loose- to tight-requirements leptons, an extrapolation factor is defined as $f_\ell/(1-f_\ell)$. To suppress additional contamination from genuine leptons, the $W + \text{jets}$ and $Z + \text{jets}$ contributions are subtracted from both the numerator and denominator using MC simulation. The extrapolation factor is measured as a function of the η and p_T of the lepton in a CR dominated by dijet events. This CR is defined by selecting one lepton, one jet well separated from the lepton, and $p_T^{\text{miss}} < 30$ GeV. More details are described in Ref. [43].

The double-misID background is defined as events containing both a misID photon and a misID lepton. Its yield is estimated using an event sample where both the photon and lepton are required to pass the loose lepton requirements and fail the tight lepton requirements. A weight is assigned to such events, equal to the product of the misID extrapolation factors of the photon and lepton. Double-misID events contaminate the single-misID background estimate since the second object is assumed to be genuine. Whenever a weight is added to the double-misID estimate, the same weight is subtracted from both the single-photon and -lepton estimates. In addition, events in which genuine photons and leptons pass the loose lepton requirements but fail the tight lepton requirements contaminate both the single- and double-misID estimates. This source of contamination is estimated and removed using simulation with reconstructed objects matched to generator-level objects.

Other background contributions that feature genuine photons and leptons in the final state, such as top quark, diboson and $Z\gamma$, are estimated from MC simulation and normalized to the integrated luminosity of the data set using their corresponding cross sections.

VII. SYSTEMATIC UNCERTAINTIES

Systematic uncertainties that affect the measurements arising from experimental inputs, such as detector effects and methods, and theoretical inputs such as the choice of the renormalization (μ_R) and factorization (μ_F) scales and the choice of PDF sets, are included. Each source of systematic uncertainty is quantified by evaluating its effect on the yield and on the distributions of relevant kinematic variables in the signal and background categories. The uncertainties are calculated bin-by-bin and propagated to the final distributions.

The uncertainties in jet energy scale (JES) and jet energy resolution (JER) are estimated by shifting or spreading the jet energies in the simulations up and down by one SD, and are then propagated to all relevant variables, including VBS jet kinematic observables and p_T^{miss} , and the impacts on the signal and background yields are evaluated. The uncertainties arising from the JES and JER correspond to various processes and various $m_{jj}-m_{\ell\gamma}$ [m_{jj} vs $m_{\ell\gamma}$ two-dimensional (2D) distribution] bins are in the ranges of 0.1–34% and 1.8–33%, respectively. The uncertainties in the lepton

trigger, reconstruction, and selection efficiencies, measured using a tag-and-probe technique, are 1.8–4.6% [30,33]. The uncertainties in the photon reconstruction and selection efficiencies are 1.9–4.3% [44]. The integrated luminosities have uncertainties in the 1.2–2.5% range [45–47], with an overall uncertainty for the 2016–2018 data set of 1.6%.

The statistical uncertainties arising from the limited size of both the simulated and data samples used in our background and signal predictions are estimated assuming a Poisson distribution. The uncertainties related to the limited number of simulated events or to the limited number of events in the data control samples are 1.2–11% for the EW $W\gamma jj$ signal, 2.1–48% for the QCD-induced $W\gamma jj$ background, 4.9–77% for the nonprompt-lepton background, and 2.1–45% for the nonprompt-photon background. Some of these statistical uncertainties increase with increasing m_{jj} and $m_{\ell\gamma}$. The largest values typically come from bins where the specific process is less important, and do not significantly impact the signal sensitivity. All the statistical uncertainties are uncorrelated across various processes and bins of any single distribution.

An overall systematic uncertainty in the nonprompt-photon background estimate is defined as the quadratic sum of the systematic uncertainties from three distinct sources. The uncertainty arising from the choice of the isolation variable sideband is evaluated by estimating the nonprompt-photon fraction with alternative choices of the sideband [48]. The statistical uncertainty in extracting the fake photon fraction is obtained from the template fits. The nonclosure uncertainty is defined by performing the nonprompt-photon fraction fits using simulated events and comparing the results with the predicted fractions from MC simulation. The nonclosure uncertainty in the end-cap region is larger than in the barrel region and increases with the photon p_T . The overall systematic uncertainty in

the nonprompt-photon background ranges from 7.8% to 12%, dominated by the nonclosure contribution.

Similarly, the uncertainty in the nonprompt-lepton estimate comes from the nonclosure that is obtained using MC samples. The same misidentified lepton method used in the analysis is applied to MC $\gamma + \text{jets}$ events, and the result is compared with the true number of $\gamma + \text{jets}$ events falling into the SR. The difference of the two quantifies the nonclosure. The selection used is the same as in the nominal event selection, except that the m_T^W and p_T^{miss} requirements are removed to increase the size of the selected sample. The uncertainty associated with the nonprompt-lepton background is 30%.

The effects of the choice of μ_R and μ_F in the theoretical calculation for signal and background cross sections are estimated by independently changing μ_R and μ_F up and down by a factor of 2 from their nominal values in each event, satisfying $1/2 < \mu_R/\mu_F < 2$. The uncertainties are defined as the maximal differences from the nominal values. The PDF uncertainties are evaluated according to the procedure described in Ref. [49] using the NNPDF set. For the signal, the scale uncertainty varies within 0.7–5.4% and the PDF uncertainty varies within 0.06–0.10% in the acceptance. The scale uncertainty in the QCD-induced $W\gamma jj$ process corresponds to a 0.08–12% uncertainty in the acceptance. It is constrained by the simultaneous fit to the data in the CR. The PDF uncertainty in the acceptance of the QCD-induced $W\gamma$ production is 0.05–1.40%.

A correction factor is applied to the simulated events to account for the first level trigger timing drift in 2016 and 2017 data [11]. This mistiming results in a loss of trigger efficiency in the data and is not modeled by the simulation. Uncertainties arising from these correction factors vary within 0.9–3.4%, and are treated as correlated across various processes and bins of the 2016 and 2017 data analysis.

TABLE I. Number of $W\gamma$ events from the fit to the data in the signal region. The signal predictions inside and outside the fiducial region defined in Sec. IX are shown. The contributions of various backgrounds are also shown. Statistical and systematic uncertainties are added in quadrature.

	Barrel	End cap
EW $W\gamma$ inside fiducial region	316 ± 16	90.2 ± 5.5
EW $W\gamma$ outside fiducial region	64.7 ± 2.0	20.4 ± 1.0
QCD $W\gamma$	1301 ± 28	362 ± 13
Top, VV , $Z\gamma$	402 ± 14	93.3 ± 7.2
Nonprompt photon	434 ± 13	120.2 ± 5.7
Nonprompt muon	134 ± 27	45 ± 11
Nonprompt electron	189 ± 20	86 ± 13
Nonprompt photon, nonprompt muon	43.0 ± 7.0	14.6 ± 3.4
Nonprompt photon, nonprompt electron	75.5 ± 5.5	25.0 ± 2.0
Total prediction	2960 ± 43	856 ± 21
Data	2959 ± 57	849 ± 32

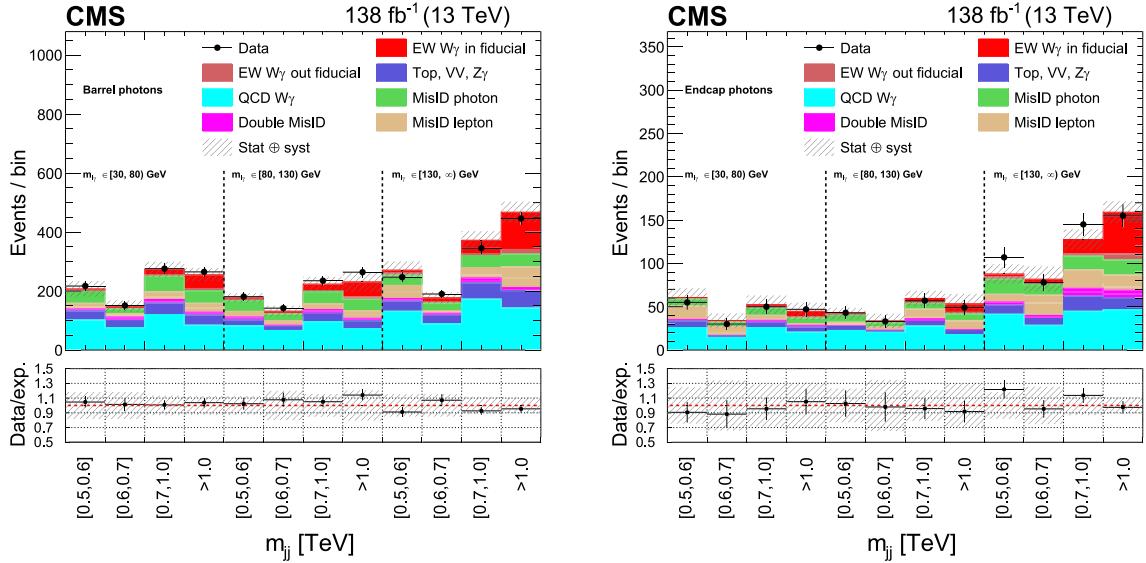


FIG. 3. 2D distributions used in the fit for the total EW $W\gamma$ cross section measurement. The hatched bands represent the combined statistical and systematic uncertainties in the predicted yields. The vertical bars on the data points represent the statistical uncertainties of data. The expectation is shown after the fit to the data. EW $W\gamma$ inside (outside) fiducial region stands for the events of EW $W\gamma$ falling inside (outside) the fiducial region defined in Sec. IX.

VIII. OBSERVATION OF EW $W\gamma$ PRODUCTION

The measurement of the total EW $W\gamma$ production rate is performed using a binned likelihood fit to the data of the 2D distribution in m_{jj} (four bins) and $m_{\ell\gamma}$ (three bins). Both m_{jj} and $m_{\ell\gamma}$ are highly discriminating variables between the EW signal and the QCD-induced $W\gamma jj$ background. Furthermore, the 2D analysis provides a larger expected significance than using either variable alone.

Data in the SR and CR are both included in the fits to constrain the dominant background (QCD-induced $W\gamma jj$). Table I shows the signal and background yields after the fit, as well as the observed data yields. Figure 3 shows the observed and expected distributions of m_{jj} – $m_{\ell\gamma}$ used in the total EW $W\gamma jj$ cross section measurement. The expectation is given after the fit to data.

The signal significance is quantified using a profile likelihood test statistic [50]. This test statistic involves the ratio of two Poisson likelihood functions, one in which the signal strength is fixed to zero and one in which the signal strength is allowed to have any positive value. The signal strength represents the ratio of observed to expected signal yields. Systematic uncertainties are included as nuisance parameters in the likelihood function that scale the relevant processes using log-normal probability density functions. The distribution of the test statistic is assumed to be in the asymptotic regime where there is a simple relationship between its value and the significance of the result [51]. The observed (expected) significance is 6.0 (6.8) SD for the EW $W\gamma$ processes.

IX. FIDUCIAL CROSS SECTION MEASUREMENT

The fiducial cross section measurement for the EW $W\gamma$ production at 13 TeV is extracted with the same 2D m_{jj} – $m_{\ell\gamma}$ binning used for the signal significance. The fiducial region is defined based on the particle-level (for leptons, photons, jets) quantities: one lepton with $p_T^\ell > 35$ GeV and $|\eta_\ell| < 2.4$, $p_T^{\text{miss}} > 30$ GeV, $p_T^\gamma > 25$ GeV, $|\eta_\gamma| < 1.444$ or $1.566 < |\eta_\gamma| < 2.5$, $\Delta R_{\ell\gamma} > 0.5$, $m_T^W > 30$ GeV, and two jets with $p_T^{j1(2)} > 50$ GeV, $|\eta_j| < 4.7$, $m_{jj} > 500$ GeV, $\Delta R_{jj} > 0.5$, $\Delta R_{j\ell} > 0.5$, $\Delta R_{j\gamma} > 0.5$, and $|\Delta\eta_{jj}| > 2.5$. The leptons are reconstructed at the particle level with fully recovered final-state radiation. The acceptance is defined as the fraction of the signal events passing the fiducial region selection, and is estimated using MG5. The theoretical uncertainty in the extrapolation between the fiducial and SR is negligible (<1%). We define the cross section as $\sigma_{\text{fid}}^{\text{fid}} = \sigma_g \hat{\mu} \alpha_{\text{gf}}$, where the cross section for the signal events is $\sigma_g = 0.776$ pb calculated with MG5 at LO in QCD [12], the observed signal strength parameter $\hat{\mu} = 0.88^{+0.19}_{-0.18}$, and the acceptance of the fiducial region, $\alpha_{\text{gf}} = 0.034$. The measured fiducial cross section is

$$\sigma_{\text{EW}}^{\text{fid}} = 23.5 \pm 2.8(\text{stat})^{+1.9}_{-1.7}(\text{theo})^{+3.5}_{-3.4}(\text{syst}) \text{ fb} = 23.5^{+4.9}_{-4.7} \text{ fb}. \quad (1)$$

The observed signal strength is compatible with unity within one SD, and the measured fiducial cross section agrees well with the SM prediction.

The cross section for the sum of the EW- and QCD-induced $W\gamma jj$ contributions is also measured. The fiducial region definition is identical to that used for the EW $W\gamma jj$ fiducial cross section measurement and the formula for the cross section is $\sigma_{\text{EW+QCD}}^{\text{fid}} = \mu(\sigma_g^{\text{EW}} \alpha_{\text{gf}}^{\text{EW}} + \sigma_g^{\text{QCD}} \alpha_{\text{gf}}^{\text{QCD}})$. The inputs used for the fit are similar to the ones for EW $W\gamma jj$ production, with the difference that EW- and QCD-induced $W\gamma jj$ contributions are combined as signal. The cross section for QCD-induced $W\gamma jj$ production is 192.3 pb calculated with MG5 at NLO in QCD [12], and $\alpha_{\text{gf}}^{\text{QCD}}$ is calculated to be 4.6×10^{-4} . The measured signal strength for the EW + QCD $W\gamma jj$ production is $0.98^{+0.12}_{-0.11}$ and the observed fiducial cross section is

$$\begin{aligned} \sigma_{\text{EW+QCD}}^{\text{fid}} &= 113 \pm 2.0(\text{stat})^{+2.5}_{-2.3}(\text{theo})^{+13}_{-13}(\text{syst}) \text{ fb} \\ &= 113 \pm 13 \text{ fb}. \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

The observed signal strength is compatible with unity within one SD, and the measured fiducial cross section agrees well with the SM prediction.

X. DIFFERENTIAL CROSS SECTION MEASUREMENTS

The differential cross sections for the EW only and for the EW + QCD $W\gamma jj$ production processes are measured for several characteristic variables using the same SR as defined in the fiducial cross section measurement. For each unfolded variable, its generator-level values are mapped to the reconstruction-level ones in binned histograms that account for the detector resolution effects. The efficiencies for selecting events from the generator level to the reconstruction level are calculated using the same binning as used in the fiducial region measurements, in order to recover the limited acceptance and selection efficiencies. Signal events outside the fiducial region are treated as background. Both the resolution and efficiency effects are evaluated using signal simulation. A bin-by-bin unfolding is performed to obtain differential distributions, in which the effects of detector resolution, limited acceptance, and selection efficiencies are corrected.

The unfolded variables include the transverse momentum of the lepton p_T^ℓ and of the photon p_T^γ ; the invariant masses of the lepton and the photon $m_{\ell\gamma}$; the transverse momentum of the leading jet (p_T ordered) p_T^{j1} ; the invariant mass of the two jets m_{jj} ; and the separation in pseudorapidity of the two jets $\Delta\eta_{\text{jj}}$. Since the ranges of some variables extend to infinity, the last bins accommodate all the events above the last bin boundaries, but the bin widths that are used in the denominator are finite and are (110, 400), (170, 200), (160, 1000), (250, 500), and (1500, 2000) GeV for p_T^ℓ , p_T^γ , $m_{\ell\gamma}$, p_T^{j1} , and m_{jj} , respectively.

The unfolded differential distributions are shown in Fig. 4 for the EW production and in Fig. 5 for EW + QCD

production. Comparisons are shown with the theoretical predictions from MG5. The predictions are in agreement with the unfolded data in general.

XI. LIMITS ON ANOMALOUS QUARTIC GAUGE COUPLINGS

The effects of BSM physics can be parametrized in a generic way through a set of linearly independent higher-dimensional operators in an effective field theory [8]. As mentioned above, VBS is particularly suitable to constrain aQGCs. The lowest-dimension operators that modify quartic gauge couplings but do not exhibit two or three weak gauge boson vertices are dimension-8. Reference [52] proposed nine independent charge-conjugate and parity-conserving dimension-8 effective operators by assuming the $SU(2) \times U(1)$ symmetry of the EW gauge field. The model includes a Higgs-field doublet to incorporate the presence of the SM Higgs boson. The operators affecting the $W\gamma jj$ channel can be divided into two categories. The operators $\mathcal{L}_{M,0}-\mathcal{L}_{M,7}$ contain an $SU(2)$ field strength, the $U(1)$ field strength, and the covariant derivative of the Higgs doublet field. The operators $\mathcal{L}_{T,0}-\mathcal{L}_{T,2}$ and $\mathcal{L}_{T,5}-\mathcal{L}_{T,7}$ contain only the two field strengths. The coefficient of the operator $\mathcal{L}_{X,Y}$ is denoted by $f_{X,Y}/\Lambda^4$, where Λ is the unknown scale of BSM physics.

A simulation is performed that includes the effects of aQGCs in addition to the SM EW $W\gamma jj$ production, as well as the interference between the two contributions. Since a contribution from aQGCs would enhance the production of events with large $W\gamma$ mass, we therefore use this observable to extract limits on the aQGC parameters. To obtain a continuous prediction for the signal as a function of each anomalous coupling, a quadratic fit is performed to the SM + aQGC yield as a function of the aQGC coefficient value, separately in each $m_{W\gamma}$ bin. In addition to the selection described in Sec. V, further requirements are applied to exploit the fact that the aQGC contributions arise from pure VBS diagrams, and are thus enhanced in the VBS phase space region, and the anomalous operators lead to more energetic final-state particles. These requirements are optimized to enhance the aQGC sensitivity, based on simulation studies, and are $m_{\text{jj}} > 800$ GeV, $|\Delta\eta_{\text{jj}}| > 2.5$, $m_{W\gamma} > 150$ GeV, and $p_T^\ell > 100$ GeV. As an example, Fig. 6 (upper) shows the resulting $m_{W\gamma}$ distribution in the muon channel.

We set two-sided limits on the operator coefficients through a limit-setting procedure that involves first obtaining the global maximum of the profile likelihood function, and then the maximum of the profile likelihood function at fixed coefficient values, which are compared with the global maximum and converted to confidence level (CL) intervals. Figure 6 (lower) shows the likelihood scan for the $f_{M,2}/\Lambda^4$ parameter in the calculation of the observed limits.

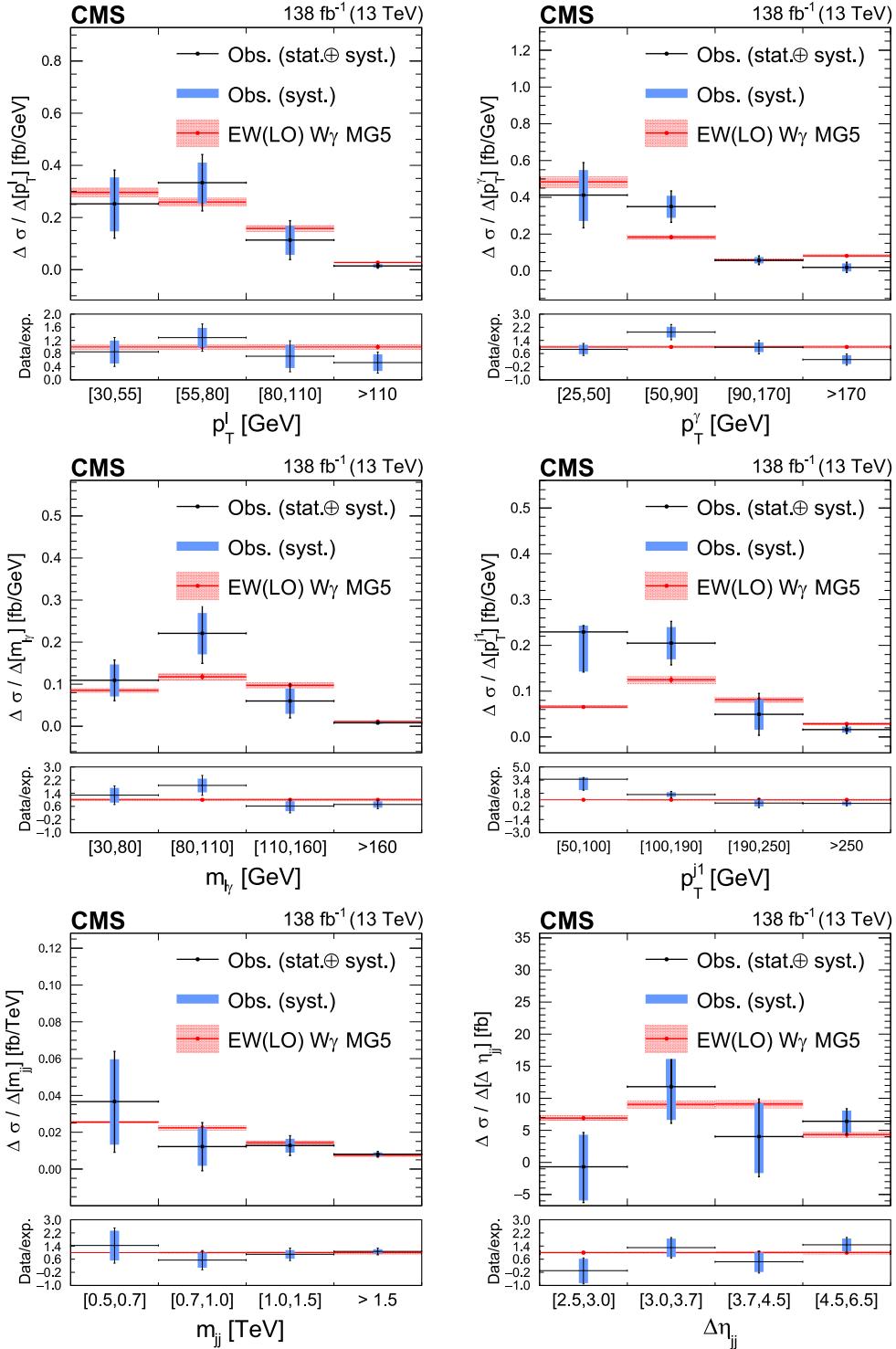


FIG. 4. Differential cross sections for the EW $W\gamma jj$ production as functions of p_T^l , p_T^γ , p_T^{j1} , $m_{\ell\gamma}$, m_{jj} , and $\Delta\eta_{jj}$. The highest bins in each plot have no upper bound and are normalized by the bin boundaries of (110, 400), (170, 200), (160, 1000), (250, 500), and (1500, 2000) GeV for p_T^l , p_T^γ , $m_{\ell\gamma}$, p_T^{j1} , and m_{jj} respectively. The blue bands stand for the systematic uncertainties and the black bands represent the total uncertainties.

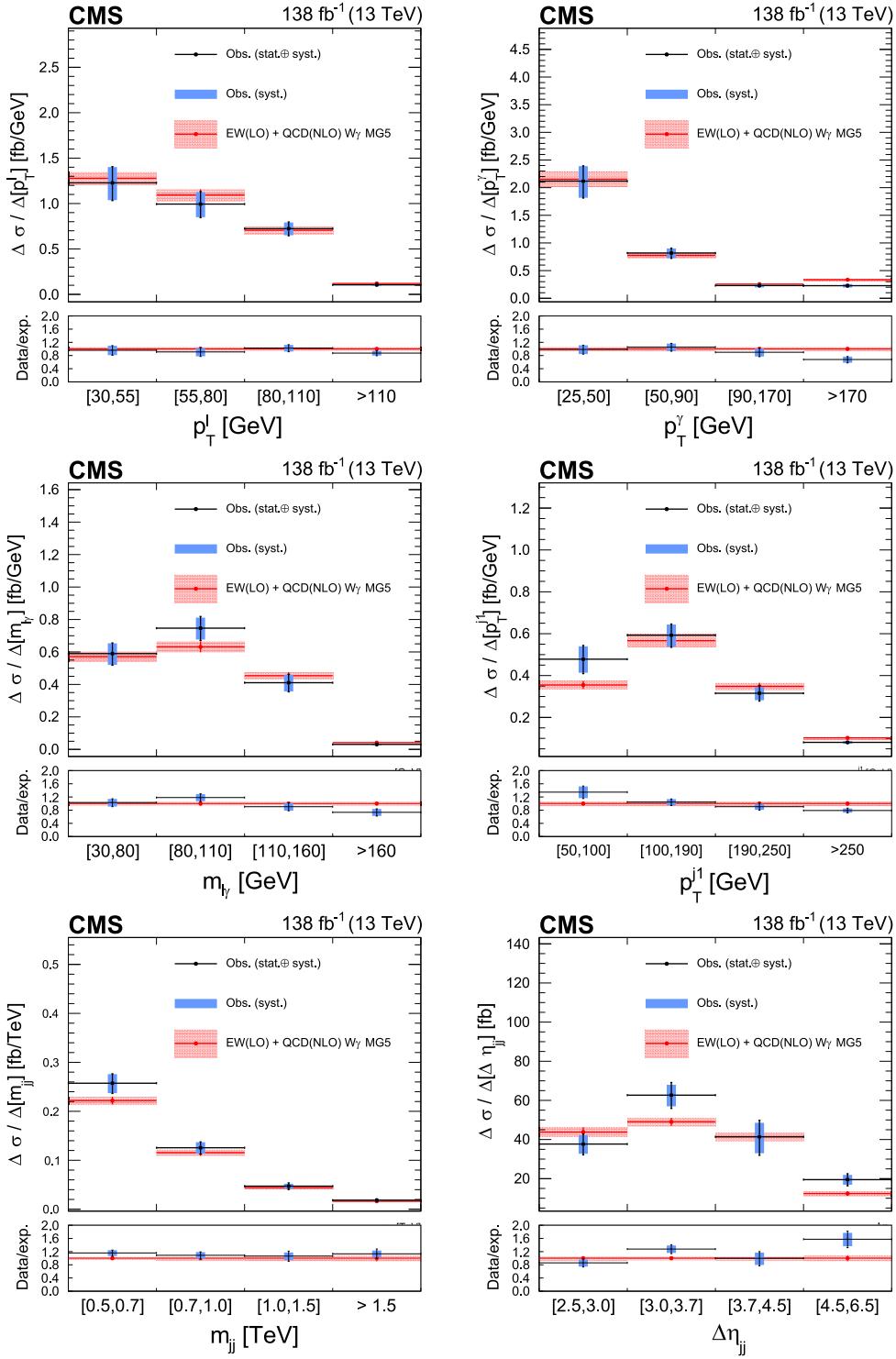


FIG. 5. Differential cross sections for the EW + QCD $W\gamma jj$ production as functions of p_T^l , p_T^γ , p_T^{j1} , $m_{\ell\gamma}$, m_{jj} , and $\Delta\eta_{jj}$. The highest bins in each plot have no upper bound and are normalized by the bin boundaries of (110, 400), (170, 200), (160, 1000), (250, 500), and (1500, 2000) GeV for p_T^l , p_T^γ , $m_{\ell\gamma}$, p_T^{j1} , and m_{jj} respectively. The blue bands stand for the systematic uncertainties and the black bands represent the total uncertainties.

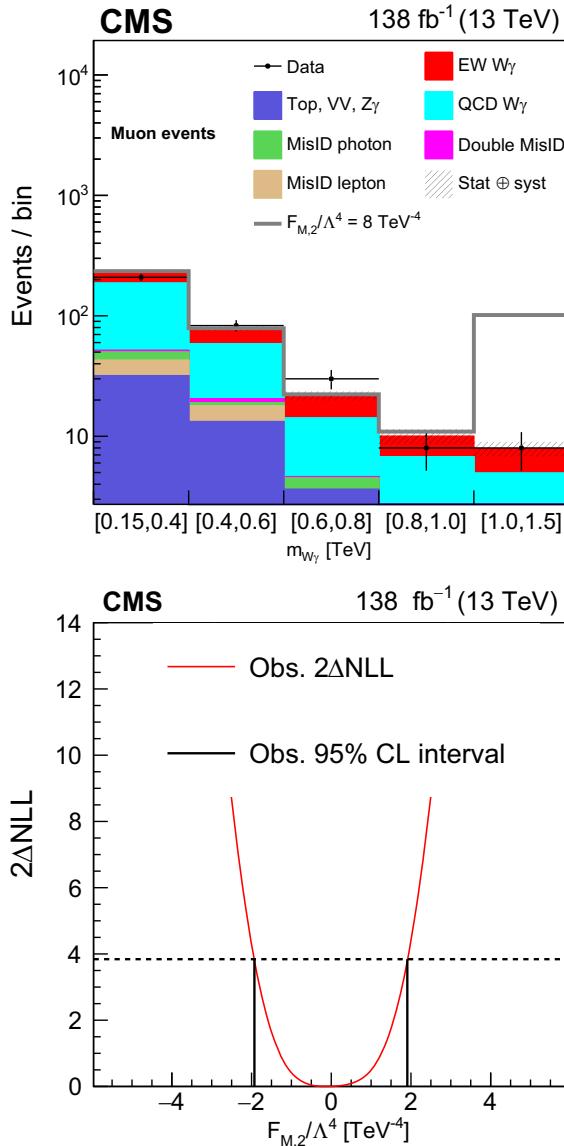


FIG. 6. Upper: $m_{W\gamma}$ distribution for muon events satisfying the aQGC region selection and used to set constraints on the anomalous gauge coupling parameters. Electron events, not shown here, are also used. The gray line represents a nonzero $f_{M,2}/\Lambda^4$ setting. Events with $m_{W\gamma} > 1500$ GeV are included in the last bin. The hatched bands represent the combined statistical and systematic uncertainties on the predicted yields. The vertical bars on the data points represent the statistical uncertainties of data. Lower: likelihood scan and the observed 95% CL interval for the aQGC parameter $f_{M,2}/\Lambda^4$.

The observed and expected 95% CL limits on the aQGC coefficients are summarized in Table II. These are the most stringent limits to date on the aQGC parameters $f_{M,2-5}/\Lambda^4$ and $f_{T,6-7}/\Lambda^4$.

TABLE II. Exclusion limits at the 95% CL for each aQGC coefficient, derived from the $m_{W\gamma}$ distribution, assuming all other coefficients are set to zero. Unitarity bounds corresponding to each operator are also listed. All coupling parameter limits are in TeV^{-4} , while U_{bound} values are in TeV.

Expected limit	Observed limit	U_{bound}
$-5.1 < f_{M,0}/\Lambda^4 < 5.1$	$-5.6 < f_{M,0}/\Lambda^4 < 5.5$	1.7
$-7.1 < f_{M,1}/\Lambda^4 < 7.4$	$-7.8 < f_{M,1}/\Lambda^4 < 8.1$	2.1
$-1.8 < f_{M,2}/\Lambda^4 < 1.8$	$-1.9 < f_{M,2}/\Lambda^4 < 1.9$	2.0
$-2.5 < f_{M,3}/\Lambda^4 < 2.5$	$-2.7 < f_{M,3}/\Lambda^4 < 2.7$	2.7
$-3.3 < f_{M,4}/\Lambda^4 < 3.3$	$-3.7 < f_{M,4}/\Lambda^4 < 3.6$	2.3
$-3.4 < f_{M,5}/\Lambda^4 < 3.6$	$-3.9 < f_{M,5}/\Lambda^4 < 3.9$	2.7
$-13 < f_{M,7}/\Lambda^4 < 13$	$-14 < f_{M,7}/\Lambda^4 < 14$	2.2
$-0.43 < f_{T,0}/\Lambda^4 < 0.51$	$-0.47 < f_{T,0}/\Lambda^4 < 0.51$	1.9
$-0.27 < f_{T,1}/\Lambda^4 < 0.31$	$-0.31 < f_{T,1}/\Lambda^4 < 0.34$	2.5
$-0.72 < f_{T,2}/\Lambda^4 < 0.92$	$-0.85 < f_{T,2}/\Lambda^4 < 1.0$	2.3
$-0.29 < f_{T,5}/\Lambda^4 < 0.31$	$-0.31 < f_{T,5}/\Lambda^4 < 0.33$	2.6
$-0.23 < f_{T,6}/\Lambda^4 < 0.25$	$-0.25 < f_{T,6}/\Lambda^4 < 0.27$	2.9
$-0.60 < f_{T,7}/\Lambda^4 < 0.68$	$-0.67 < f_{T,7}/\Lambda^4 < 0.73$	3.1

They are obtained by varying the coefficient of one operator at a time, with all others set to zero, i.e., the SM value. The yield of the EW signal in any bin is a quadratic function of the coefficient, whose minimum in general does not occur at a coefficient value of zero because of the interference with the SM operators. The constraints set on the aQGCs are compatible with the SM predictions of zero. The NLO EW corrections to VBS $W\gamma$ can be sizable and increase as a function of m_{jj} , which may bias the aQGC measurement. Although there is no NLO EW calculation available yet for VBS $W\gamma$ production, we have checked, using the numbers from same-sign WW scattering [53,54], that the effect on the aQGC limits is negligible. The unitarity bound (U_{bound}) is defined as the scattering energy at which the aQGC coupling strength, when set equal to the observed limit, would result in a scattering amplitude that violates unitarity. The value of U_{bound} is determined using the analytical formulas from Ref. [55].

XII. SUMMARY

Measurements of the EW production of a W boson, a photon, and two jets in proton-proton collisions at a center-of-mass energy of 13 TeV have been presented. The data correspond to an integrated luminosity of 138 fb^{-1} in Run 2 collected with the CMS detector. Events were selected by requiring one isolated lepton (electron or muon) with high transverse momentum (p_T), a moderate missing transverse momentum, one high- p_T isolated photon, and two jets with a large rapidity separation and a large dijet mass. The signal was observed for the first time at 13 TeV, with an observed (expected) significance of 6.0 (6.8) standard deviations, where the expectation is based on the standard model

predictions. In a restricted fiducial region, the cross section for the EW $W\gamma jj$ production is $23.5^{+4.9}_{-4.7}$ fb and the cross section for the total EW + QCD $W\gamma jj$ production is 113 ± 13 fb. Both measurements are consistent with standard model predictions. For the first time, differential cross sections for EW $W\gamma jj$ and for EW + QCD $W\gamma jj$ production were measured. Constraints placed on anomalous quartic gauge couplings in terms of dimension-8 effective field theory operators were extracted and are the most stringent limits to date on the aQGC parameters $f_{M,2-5}/\Lambda^4$ and $f_{T,6-7}/\Lambda^4$.

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- A. Cabrera²¹, C. Florez²¹, J. Fraga²¹, J. Mejia Guisao²², F. Ramirez²², M. Rodriguez²², J. D. Ruiz Alvarez²², D. Giljanovic²³, N. Godinovic²³, D. Lelas²³, I. Puljak²³, Z. Antunovic²⁴, M. Kovac²⁴, T. Sculac²⁴, V. Brigljevic²⁵, B. K. Chitroda²⁵, D. Ferencek²⁵, S. Mishra²⁵, M. Roguljic²⁵, A. Starodumov^{25,n}, T. Susa²⁵, A. Attikis²⁶, K. Christoforou²⁶, M. Kolosova²⁶, S. Konstantinou²⁶, J. Mousa²⁶, C. Nicolaou²⁶, F. Ptochos²⁶, P. A. Razis²⁶, H. Rykaczewski²⁶, H. Saka²⁶, A. Stepennov²⁶, M. Finger^{27,n}, M. Finger Jr.^{27,n}, A. Kveton²⁷, E. Ayala²⁸, E. Carrera Jarrin²⁹, A. A. Abdelalim^{30,o,p}, E. Salama^{30,q,r}, M. Abdullah Al-Mashad³¹, M. A. Mahmoud³¹, S. Bhowmik³², R. K. Dewanjee³², K. Ehataht³², M. Kadastik³², T. Lange³², S. Nandan³², C. Nielsen³², J. Pata³², M. Raidal³², L. Tani³², C. Veelken³², P. Eerola³³, H. Kirschenmann³³, K. Osterberg³³, M. Voutilainen³³, S. Bharthuar³⁴, E. Brücke³⁴, F. Garcia³⁴, J. Havukainen³⁴, M. S. Kim³⁴, R. Kinnunen³⁴, T. Lampén³⁴, K. Lassila-Perini³⁴, S. Lehti³⁴, T. Lindén³⁴, M. Lotti³⁴, L. Martikainen³⁴, M. Myllymäki³⁴, J. Ott³⁴, M. m. Rantanen³⁴, H. Siikonen³⁴, E. Tuominen³⁴, J. Tuominiemi³⁴, P. Luukka³⁵, H. Petrow³⁵, T. Tuuva³⁵, C. Amendola³⁶, M. Besancon³⁶, F. Couderc³⁶, M. Dejardin³⁶, D. Denegri³⁶, J. L. Faure³⁶, F. Ferri³⁶, S. Ganjour³⁶, P. Gras³⁶, G. Hamel de Monchenault³⁶, P. Jarry³⁶, V. Lohezic³⁶, J. Malcles³⁶, J. Rander³⁶, A. Rosowsky³⁶, M. Ö. Sahin³⁶, A. Savoy-Navarro^{36,s}, P. Simkina³⁶, M. Titov³⁶, C. Baldenegro Barrera³⁷, F. Beaudette³⁷, A. Buchot Perraguin³⁷, P. Busson³⁷, A. Cappati³⁷, C. Charlot³⁷, F. Damas³⁷, O. Davignon³⁷, B. Diab³⁷, G. Falmagne³⁷, B. A. Fontana Santos Alves³⁷, S. Ghosh³⁷, R. Granier de Cassagnac³⁷, A. Hakimi³⁷, B. Harikrishnan³⁷, G. Liu³⁷, J. Motta³⁷, M. Nguyen³⁷, C. Ochando³⁷, L. Portales³⁷, R. Salerno³⁷, U. Sarkar³⁷, J. B. Sauvan³⁷, Y. Sirois³⁷, A. Tarabini³⁷, E. Vernazza³⁷, A. Zabi³⁷, A. Zghiche³⁷, J.-L. Agram^{38,t}, J. Andrea³⁸, D. Apparue³⁸, D. Bloch³⁸, G. 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Milella⁴⁴, M. Mormile⁴⁴, A. Mussgiller⁴⁴, A. Nürnberg⁴⁴, Y. Otarid⁴⁴, D. Pérez Adán⁴⁴, A. Raspereza⁴⁴, B. Ribeiro Lopes⁴⁴, J. Rübenach⁴⁴, A. Saggio⁴⁴, A. Saibel⁴⁴, M. Savitsky⁴⁴, M. Scham^{44,x,bb}, V. Scheurer⁴⁴, S. Schnake^{44,x}, P. Schütze⁴⁴, C. Schwanenberger^{44,w}, M. Shchedrolosiev⁴⁴, R. E. Sosa Ricardo⁴⁴, D. Stafford⁴⁴, N. Tonon^{44,a}, M. Van De Klundert⁴⁴, F. Vazzoler⁴⁴, A. Ventura Barroso⁴⁴, R. Walsh⁴⁴, D. Walter⁴⁴, Q. Wang⁴⁴, Y. Wen⁴⁴, K. Wichmann⁴⁴, L. Wiens^{44,x}, C. Wissing⁴⁴, S. Wuchterl⁴⁴, Y. Yang⁴⁴, A. Zimermann Castro Santos⁴⁴, A. Albrecht⁴⁵, S. Albrecht⁴⁵, M. Antonello⁴⁵, S. Bein⁴⁵, L. Benato⁴⁵, M. Bonanomi⁴⁵, P. Connor⁴⁵, K. De Leo⁴⁵, M. Eich⁴⁵, K. El Morabit⁴⁵, F. Feindt⁴⁵, A. Fröhlich⁴⁵, C. Garbers⁴⁵, E. Garutti⁴⁵, M. Hajheidari⁴⁵, J. Haller⁴⁵, A. Hinzmann⁴⁵, H. R. Jabusch⁴⁵, G. Kasieczka⁴⁵, P. Keicher⁴⁵, R. Klanner⁴⁵, W. Korcari⁴⁵, T. Kramer⁴⁵, V. Kutzner⁴⁵, F. Labe⁴⁵, J. Lange⁴⁵, A. Lobanov⁴⁵, C. Matthies⁴⁵, A. Mehta⁴⁵, L. Moureaux⁴⁵, M. Mrowietz⁴⁵, A. 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Kokkas⁵⁰ P. G. Kosmoglou Kioceseoglou⁵⁰ N. Manthos⁵⁰ I. Papadopoulos⁵⁰ J. Strologas⁵⁰ M. Csanád⁵¹ K. Farkas⁵¹ M. M. A. Gadallah^{51,dd} S. Lökö^{51,ee} P. Major⁵¹ K. Mandal⁵¹ G. Pásztor⁵¹ A. J. Rádl^{51,ff} O. Surányi⁵¹ G. I. Veres⁵¹ M. Bartók^{52,gg} G. Bencze,⁵² C. Hajdu⁵² D. Horvath⁵² F. Sikler⁵² V. Veszpremi⁵² N. Beni⁵³ S. Czellar,⁵³ J. Karancsi^{53,gg} J. Molnar,⁵³ Z. Szillasi,⁵³ D. Teyssier⁵³ P. Raics,⁵⁴ B. Ujvari^{54,jj} T. Csorgo^{55,ff} F. Nemes⁵⁵ T. Novak⁵⁵ J. Babbar⁵⁶ S. Bansal⁵⁶ S. B. Beri,⁵⁶ V. Bhatnagar⁵⁶ G. Chaudhary⁵⁶ S. Chauhan⁵⁶ N. Dhingra^{56,kk} R. Gupta,⁵⁶ A. Kaur⁵⁶ A. Kaur⁵⁶ H. Kaur⁵⁶ M. Kaur⁵⁶ S. Kumar⁵⁶ P. Kumari⁵⁶ M. Meena⁵⁶ K. Sandeep⁵⁶ T. Sheokand,⁵⁶ J. B. Singh^{56,ll} A. Singla⁵⁶ A. K. Virdi⁵⁶ A. Ahmed⁵⁷ A. Bhardwaj⁵⁷ B. C. Choudhary⁵⁷ A. Kumar⁵⁷ M. Naimuddin⁵⁷ K. Ranjan⁵⁷ S. Saumya⁵⁷ S. Baradia⁵⁸ S. Barman^{58,mm} S. Bhattacharya⁵⁸ D. Bhowmik,⁵⁸ S. Dutta⁵⁸ S. Dutta⁵⁸ B. Gomber^{58,nn} M. Maity,^{58,mm} P. Palit⁵⁸ G. Saha⁵⁸ B. Sahu⁵⁸ S. Sarkar,⁵⁸ P. K. Behera⁵⁹ S. C. Behera⁵⁹ P. Kalbhor⁵⁹ J. R. Komaragiri^{59,oo} D. Kumar^{59,oo} A. Muhammad⁵⁹ L. Panwar^{59,oo} R. Pradhan⁵⁹ P. R. Pujahari⁵⁹ A. Sharma⁵⁹ A. K. Sikdar⁵⁹ P. C. Tiwari^{59,oo} S. Verma⁵⁹ K. Naskar^{60,pp} T. Aziz,⁶¹ I. Das⁶¹ S. Dugad,⁶¹ M. Kumar⁶¹ G. B. Mohanty⁶¹ P. Suryadevara,⁶¹ S. Banerjee⁶² R. Chudasama⁶² M. Guchait⁶² S. Karmakar⁶² S. Kumar⁶² G. Majumder⁶² K. Mazumdar⁶² S. Mukherjee⁶² A. Thachayath⁶² S. Bahinipati^{63,qq} A. K. Das,⁶³ C. Kar⁶³ P. Mal⁶³ T. Mishra⁶³ V. K. Muraleedharan Nair Bindhu^{63,rr} A. Nayak^{63,rr} P. Saha⁶³ S. K. Swain,⁶³ D. Vats^{63,rr} A. Alpana⁶⁴ S. Dube⁶⁴ B. Kansal⁶⁴ A. Laha⁶⁴ S. Pandey⁶⁴ A. Rastogi⁶⁴ S. Sharma⁶⁴ H. Bakhshiansohi^{65,ss,tt} E. Khazaie^{65,tt} M. Zeinali^{65,uu} S. Chenarani^{66,vv} S. M. Etesami⁶⁶ M. Khakzad⁶⁶ M. Mohammadi Najafabadi⁶⁶ M. Grunewald⁶⁷ M. Abbrescia^{68a,68b} R. Aly^{68a,68b,o} C. Aruta^{68a,68b} A. Colaleo^{68a} D. Creanza^{68a,68c} N. De Filippis^{68a,68c} M. De Palma^{68a,68b} A. Di Florio^{68a,68b} W. Elmetenawee^{68a,68b} F. Errico^{68a,68b} L. Fiore^{68a} G. Iaselli^{68a,68c} M. Ince^{68a,68b} G. Maggi^{68a,68c} M. Maggi^{68a} I. Margjeka^{68a,68b} V. Mastrapasqua^{68a,68b} S. My^{68a,68b} S. Nuzzo^{68a,68b} A. Pellecchia^{68a,68b} A. Pompili^{68a,68b} G. Pugliese^{68a,68c} R. Radogna^{68a} D. Ramos^{68a} A. Ranieri^{68a} G. Selvaggi^{68a,68b} L. Silvestris^{68a} F. M. Simone^{68a,68b} Ü. Sözbilir^{68a} A. Stamerra^{68a} R. Venditti^{68a} P. Verwilligen^{68a} G. Abbiendi^{69a} C. Battilana^{69a,69b} D. Bonacorsi^{69a,69b} L. Borgonovi^{69a} L. Brigliadori,^{69a} R. Campanini^{69a,69b} P. Capiluppi^{69a,69b} A. Castro^{69a,69b} F. R. Cavallo^{69a} M. Cuffiani^{69a,69b} G. M. Dallavalle^{69a} T. Diotalevi^{69a,69b} F. Fabbri^{69a} A. Fanfani^{69a,69b} P. Giacomelli^{69a} L. Giommi^{69a,69b} C. Grandi^{69a} L. Guiducci^{69a,69b} S. Lo Meo^{69a,ww} L. Lunerti^{69a,69b} S. Marcellini^{69a} G. Masetti^{69a} F. L. Navarria^{69a,69b} A. Perrotta^{69a} F. Primavera^{69a,69b} A. M. Rossi^{69a,69b} T. Rovelli^{69a,69b} G. P. Siroli^{69a,69b} S. Costa^{70a,70b,xx} A. Di Mattia^{70a} R. Potenza,^{70a,70b} A. Tricomi^{70a,70b,xx} C. Tuve^{70a,70b} G. Barbagli^{71a} G. Bardelli^{71a,71b} B. Camaiani^{71a,71b} A. Cassese^{71a} R. Ceccarelli^{71a,71b} V. Ciulli^{71a,71b} C. Civinini^{71a} R. D'Alessandro^{71a,71b} E. Focardi^{71a,71b} G. Latino^{71a,71b} P. Lenzi^{71a,71b} M. Lizzo^{71a,71b} M. Meschini^{71a} S. Paoletti^{71a} R. Seidita^{71a,71b} G. Sguazzoni^{71a} L. Viliani^{71a} L. Benussi⁷² S. Bianco⁷² S. Meola^{72,cc} D. Piccolo⁷² M. Bozzo^{73a,73b} P. Chatagnon^{73a} F. Ferro^{73a} R. Mulargia^{73a} E. Robutti^{73a} S. Tosi^{73a,73b} A. Benaglia^{74a} G. Boldrini^{74a} F. Brivio^{74a,74b} F. Cetorelli^{74a,74b} F. De Guio^{74a,74b} M. E. Dinardo^{74a,74b} P. Dini^{74a} S. Gennai^{74a} A. Ghezzi^{74a,74b} P. Govoni^{74a,74b} L. Guzzi^{74a,74b} M. T. Lucchini^{74a,74b} M. Malberti^{74a} S. Malvezzi^{74a} A. Massironi^{74a} D. Menasce^{74a} L. Moroni^{74a} M. Paganoni^{74a,74b} D. Pedrini^{74a} B. S. Pinolini,^{74a} S. Ragazzi^{74a,74b} N. Redaelli^{74a} T. Tabarelli de Fatis^{74a,74b} D. Zuolo^{74a,74b} S. Buontempo^{75a} F. Carnevali,^{75a,75b} N. Cavallo^{75a,75c} A. De Iorio^{75a,75b} F. Fabozzi^{75a,75c} A. O. M. Iorio^{75a,75b} L. Lista^{75a,75b,yy} P. Paolucci^{75a,cc} B. Rossi^{75a} C. Sciacca^{75a,75b} P. Azzi^{76a} N. Bacchetta^{76a,zz} D. Bisello^{76a,76b} P. Bortignon^{76a} A. Bragagnolo^{76a,76b} P. Checchia^{76a} T. Dorigo^{76a} F. Gasparini^{76a,76b} U. Gasparini^{76a,76b} G. Govi,^{76a} G. Grossi,^{76a}

- L. Layer,^{76a,aaa} E. Lusiani,^{76a} M. Margoni,^{76a,76b} A. T. Meneguzzo,^{76a,76b} J. Pazzini,^{76a,76b} P. Ronchese,^{76a,76b}
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 A. Zucchetta,^{76a,76b} G. Zumerle,^{76a,76b} S. Abu Zeid,^{77a,q} C. Aimè,^{77a,77b} A. Braghieri,^{77a} S. Calzaferri,^{77a,77b}
 D. Fiorina,^{77a,77b} P. Montagna,^{77a,77b} V. Re,^{77a} C. Riccardi,^{77a,77b} P. Salvini,^{77a} I. Vai,^{77a} P. Vitulo,^{77a,77b}
 P. Asenov,^{78a,bbb} G. M. Bilei,^{78a} D. Ciangottini,^{78a,78b} L. Fanò,^{78a,78b} M. Magherini,^{78a,78b} G. Mantovani,^{78a,78b}
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 A. Santocchia,^{78a,78b} D. Spiga,^{78a} T. Tedeschi,^{78a,78b} P. Azzurri,^{79a} G. Bagliesi,^{79a} V. Bertacchi,^{79a,79c}
 R. Bhattacharya,^{79a} L. Bianchini,^{79a,79b} T. Boccali,^{79a} E. Bossini,^{79a,79b} D. Bruschini,^{79a,79c} R. Castaldi,^{79a}
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 S. Parolia,^{79a,79b} G. Ramirez-Sanchez,^{79a,79c} A. Rizzi,^{79a,79b} G. Rolandi,^{79a,79c} S. Roy Chowdhury,^{79a} T. Sarkar,^{79a}
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 P. G. Verdini,^{79a} P. Barria,^{80a} M. Campana,^{80a,80b} F. Cavallari,^{80a} D. Del Re,^{80a,80b} E. Di Marco,^{80a} M. Diemoz,^{80a}
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 C. Biino,^{81a} N. Cartiglia,^{81a} M. Costa,^{81a,81b} R. Covarelli,^{81a,81b} N. Demaria,^{81a} M. Grippo,^{81a,81b} B. Kiani,^{81a,81b}
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 S. Lee,⁸⁸ J. Almond,⁸⁹ J. H. Bhyun,⁸⁹ J. Choi,⁸⁹ S. Jeon,⁸⁹ J. Kim,⁸⁹ J. S. Kim,⁸⁹ S. Ko,⁸⁹ H. Kwon,⁸⁹ H. Lee,⁸⁹
 S. Lee,⁸⁹ B. H. Oh,⁸⁹ S. B. Oh,⁸⁹ H. Seo,⁸⁹ U. K. Yang,⁸⁹ I. Yoon,⁸⁹ W. Jang,⁹⁰ D. Y. Kang,⁹⁰ Y. Kang,⁹⁰
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 I. J. Watson,⁹⁰ S. Yang,⁹⁰ S. Ha,⁹¹ H. D. Yoo,⁹¹ M. Choi,⁹² M. R. Kim,⁹² H. Lee,⁹² Y. Lee,⁹² Y. Lee,⁹²
 I. Yu,⁹² T. Beyrouthy,⁹³ Y. Maghrbi,⁹³ K. Dreimanis,⁹⁴ G. Pikurs,⁹⁴ M. Seidel,⁹⁴ V. Veckalns,⁹⁴ M. Ambrozias,⁹⁵
 A. Carvalho Antunes De Oliveira,⁹⁵ A. Juodagalvis,⁹⁵ A. Rinkevicius,⁹⁵ G. Tamulaitis,⁹⁵ N. Bin Norjoharuddeen,⁹⁶
 S. Y. Hoh,^{96,ccc} I. Yusuff,^{96,ccc} Z. Zolkapli,⁹⁶ J. F. Benitez,⁹⁷ A. Castaneda Hernandez,⁹⁷ H. A. Encinas Acosta,⁹⁷
 L. G. Gallegos Maríñez,⁹⁷ M. León Coello,⁹⁷ J. A. Murillo Quijada,⁹⁷ A. Sehrawat,⁹⁷ L. Valencia Palomo,⁹⁷
 G. Ayala,⁹⁸ H. Castilla-Valdez,⁹⁸ I. Heredia-De La Cruz,^{98,ddd} R. Lopez-Fernandez,⁹⁸ C. A. Mondragon Herrera,⁹⁸
 D. A. Perez Navarro,⁹⁸ A. Sánchez Hernández,⁹⁸ C. Oropeza Barrera,⁹⁹ F. Vazquez Valencia,⁹⁹ I. Pedraza,¹⁰⁰
 H. A. Salazar Ibarguen,¹⁰⁰ C. Uribe Estrada,¹⁰⁰ I. Bubanja,¹⁰¹ J. Mijuskovic,^{101,eee} N. Raicevic,¹⁰¹ A. Ahmad,¹⁰²
 M. I. Asghar,¹⁰² A. Awais,¹⁰² M. I. M. Awan,¹⁰² M. Gul,¹⁰² H. R. Hoorani,¹⁰² W. A. Khan,¹⁰² M. Shoaiib,¹⁰²
 M. Waqas,¹⁰² V. Avati,¹⁰³ L. Grzanka,¹⁰³ M. Malawski,¹⁰³ H. Bialkowska,¹⁰⁴ M. Bluj,¹⁰⁴ B. Boimska,¹⁰⁴
 M. Górski,¹⁰⁴ M. Kazana,¹⁰⁴ M. Szleper,¹⁰⁴ P. Zalewski,¹⁰⁴ K. Bunkowski,¹⁰⁵ K. Doroba,¹⁰⁵ A. Kalinowski,¹⁰⁵
 M. Konecki,¹⁰⁵ J. Krolikowski,¹⁰⁵ M. Araujo,¹⁰⁶ P. Bargassa,¹⁰⁶ D. Bastos,¹⁰⁶ A. Boletti,¹⁰⁶ P. Faccioli,¹⁰⁶
 M. Gallinaro,¹⁰⁶ J. Hollar,¹⁰⁶ N. Leonardo,¹⁰⁶ T. Niknejad,¹⁰⁶ M. Pisano,¹⁰⁶ J. Seixas,¹⁰⁶ J. Varela,¹⁰⁶
 P. Adzic,^{107,fff} M. Dordevic,¹⁰⁷ P. Milenovic,¹⁰⁷ J. Milosevic,¹⁰⁷ M. Aguilar-Benitez,¹⁰⁸ J. Alcaraz Maestre,¹⁰⁸
 A. Álvarez Fernández,¹⁰⁸ M. Barrio Luna,¹⁰⁸ Cristina F. Bedoya,¹⁰⁸ C. A. Carrillo Montoya,¹⁰⁸ M. Cepeda,¹⁰⁸
 M. Cerrada,¹⁰⁸ N. Colino,¹⁰⁸ B. De La Cruz,¹⁰⁸ A. Delgado Peris,¹⁰⁸ D. Fernández Del Val,¹⁰⁸
 J. P. Fernández Ramos,¹⁰⁸ J. Flix,¹⁰⁸ M. C. Fouz,¹⁰⁸ O. Gonzalez Lopez,¹⁰⁸ S. Goy Lopez,¹⁰⁸ J. M. Hernandez,¹⁰⁸
 M. I. Josa,¹⁰⁸ J. León Holgado,¹⁰⁸ D. Moran,¹⁰⁸ C. Perez Dengra,¹⁰⁸ A. Pérez-Calero Yzquierdo,¹⁰⁸
 J. Puerta Pelayo,¹⁰⁸ I. Redondo,¹⁰⁸ D. D. Redondo Ferrero,¹⁰⁸ L. Romero,¹⁰⁸ S. Sánchez Navas,¹⁰⁸ J. Sastre,¹⁰⁸
 L. Urda Gómez,¹⁰⁸ J. Vazquez Escobar,¹⁰⁸ C. Willmott,¹⁰⁸ J. F. de Trocóniz,¹⁰⁹ B. Alvarez Gonzalez,¹¹⁰
 J. Cuevas,¹¹⁰ J. Fernandez Menendez,¹¹⁰ S. Folgueras,¹¹⁰ I. Gonzalez Caballero,¹¹⁰ J. R. González Fernández,¹¹⁰

- E. Palencia Cortezon¹¹⁰, C. Ramón Álvarez¹¹⁰, V. Rodríguez Bouza¹¹⁰, A. Soto Rodríguez¹¹⁰, A. Trapote¹¹⁰, C. Vico Villalba¹¹⁰, J. A. Brochero Cifuentes¹¹¹, I. J. Cabrillo¹¹¹, A. Calderon¹¹¹, J. Duarte Campderros¹¹¹, M. Fernandez¹¹¹, C. Fernandez Madrazo¹¹¹, A. García Alonso¹¹¹, G. Gomez¹¹¹, C. Lasaosa García¹¹¹, C. Martinez Rivero¹¹¹, P. Martinez Ruiz del Arbol¹¹¹, F. Matorras¹¹¹, P. Matorras Cuevas¹¹¹, J. Piedra Gomez¹¹¹, C. Prieels¹¹¹, A. Ruiz-Jimeno¹¹¹, L. Scodellaro¹¹¹, I. Vila¹¹¹, J. M. Vizan Garcia¹¹¹, M. K. Jayananda¹¹², B. Kailasapathy^{112,ggg}, D. U. J. Sonnadara¹¹², D. D. C. Wickramarathna¹¹², W. G. D. Dharmaratna¹¹³, K. Liyanage¹¹³, N. Perera¹¹³, N. Wickramage¹¹³, D. Abbaneo¹¹⁴, J. Alimena¹¹⁴, E. Auffray¹¹⁴, G. Auzinger¹¹⁴, J. Baechler¹¹⁴, P. Baillon^{114,a}, D. Barney¹¹⁴, J. Bendavid¹¹⁴, M. Bianco¹¹⁴, B. Bilin¹¹⁴, A. Bocci¹¹⁴, E. Brondolin¹¹⁴, C. Caillol¹¹⁴, T. Camporesi¹¹⁴, G. Cerminara¹¹⁴, N. Chernyavskaya¹¹⁴, S. S. Chhibra¹¹⁴, S. Choudhury¹¹⁴, M. Cipriani¹¹⁴, L. Cristella¹¹⁴, D. d'Enterria¹¹⁴, A. Dabrowski¹¹⁴, A. David¹¹⁴, A. De Roeck¹¹⁴, M. M. Defranchis^b, M. Deile¹¹⁴, M. Dobson¹¹⁴, M. Dünser^b, N. Dupont¹¹⁴, F. Fallavollita^{114,hhh}, A. Florent^b, L. Forthomme¹¹⁴, G. Franzoni¹¹⁴, W. Funk¹¹⁴, S. Ghosh¹¹⁴, S. Giani¹¹⁴, D. Gigi¹¹⁴, K. Gill¹¹⁴, F. Glege¹¹⁴, L. Gouskos¹¹⁴, E. Govorkova¹¹⁴, M. Haranko¹¹⁴, J. Hegeman^b, V. Innocente^b, T. James^b, P. Janot¹¹⁴, J. Kaspar¹¹⁴, J. Kieseler¹¹⁴, N. Kratochwil¹¹⁴, S. Laurila¹¹⁴, P. Lecoq¹¹⁴, E. Leutgeb¹¹⁴, C. Lourenço¹¹⁴, B. Maier¹¹⁴, L. Malgeri¹¹⁴, M. Mannelli¹¹⁴, A. C. Marini¹¹⁴, F. Meijers¹¹⁴, S. Mersi¹¹⁴, E. Meschi¹¹⁴, F. Moortgat¹¹⁴, M. Mulders¹¹⁴, S. Orfanelli¹¹⁴, L. Orsini¹¹⁴, F. Pantaleo¹¹⁴, E. Perez¹¹⁴, M. Peruzzi¹¹⁴, A. Petrilli¹¹⁴, G. Petrucciani^b, A. Pfeiffer¹¹⁴, M. Pierini¹¹⁴, D. Piparo¹¹⁴, M. Pitt¹¹⁴, H. Qu¹¹⁴, T. Quast¹¹⁴, D. Rabady¹¹⁴, A. Racz¹¹⁴, G. Reales Gutierrez¹¹⁴, M. Rovere^b, H. Sakulin¹¹⁴, J. Salfeld-Nebgen¹¹⁴, S. Scarfi¹¹⁴, M. Selvaggi^b, A. Sharma¹¹⁴, P. Silva¹¹⁴, P. Sphicas^{114,iii}, A. G. Stahl Leiton¹¹⁴, S. Summers¹¹⁴, K. Tatar¹¹⁴, V. R. Tavolaro¹¹⁴, D. Treille^b, P. Tropea¹¹⁴, A. Tsirou¹¹⁴, J. Wanczyk^{114,iji}, K. A. Wozniak¹¹⁴, W. D. Zeuner¹¹⁴, L. Caminada^b, A. Ebrahimi¹¹⁵, W. Erdmann¹¹⁵, R. Horisberger¹¹⁵, Q. Ingram¹¹⁵, H. C. Kaestli¹¹⁵, D. Kotlinski¹¹⁵, C. Lange¹¹⁵, M. Missiroli^{115,kkk}, L. Noehte^{115,kkk}, T. Rohe¹¹⁵, T. K. Aarrestad¹¹⁶, K. Androsov^{116,iji}, M. Backhaus¹¹⁶, P. Berger¹¹⁶, A. Calandri¹¹⁶, K. Datta¹¹⁶, A. De Cosa¹¹⁶, G. Dissertori¹¹⁶, M. Dittmar¹¹⁶, M. Donegà¹¹⁶, F. Eble¹¹⁶, M. Galli¹¹⁶, K. Gedia¹¹⁶, F. Glessgen¹¹⁶, T. A. Gómez Espinosa¹¹⁶, C. Grab¹¹⁶, D. Hits¹¹⁶, W. Lustermann¹¹⁶, A.-M. Lyon¹¹⁶, R. A. Manzoni¹¹⁶, L. Marchese¹¹⁶, C. Martin Perez¹¹⁶, A. Mascellani^{116,iji}, F. Nesi-Tedaldi¹¹⁶, J. Niedziela¹¹⁶, F. Pauss¹¹⁶, V. Perovic¹¹⁶, S. Pigazzini¹¹⁶, M. G. Ratti¹¹⁶, M. Reichmann¹¹⁶, C. Reissel¹¹⁶, T. Reitenspiess¹¹⁶, B. Ristic¹¹⁶, F. Riti¹¹⁶, D. Ruini¹¹⁶, D. A. Sanz Becerra¹¹⁶, J. Steggemann^{116,iji}, D. Valsecchi^{116,cc}, R. Wallny¹¹⁶, C. Amsler^{117,III}, P. Bärtschi¹¹⁷, C. Botta¹¹⁷, D. Brzhechko¹¹⁷, M. F. Canelli¹¹⁷, K. Cormier¹¹⁷, A. De Wit¹¹⁷, R. Del Burgo¹¹⁷, J. K. Heikkilä¹¹⁷, M. Huwiler¹¹⁷, W. Jin¹¹⁷, A. Jofrehei¹¹⁷, B. Kilminster¹¹⁷, S. Leontsinis¹¹⁷, S. P. Liechti¹¹⁷, A. Macchiolo¹¹⁷, P. Meiring¹¹⁷, V. M. Mikuni¹¹⁷, U. Molinatti¹¹⁷, I. Neutelings¹¹⁷, A. Reimers¹¹⁷, P. Robmann¹¹⁷, S. Sanchez Cruz¹¹⁷, K. Schweiger¹¹⁷, M. Senger¹¹⁷, Y. Takahashi¹¹⁷, C. Adloff^{118,mmm}, C. M. Kuo¹¹⁸, W. Lin¹¹⁸, P. K. Rout¹¹⁸, S. S. Yu¹¹⁸, L. Ceard¹¹⁹, Y. Chao¹¹⁹, K. F. Chen¹¹⁹, P. s. Chen¹¹⁹, H. Cheng¹¹⁹, W.-S. Hou¹¹⁹, R. Khurana¹¹⁹, G. Kole¹¹⁹, Y. y. Li¹¹⁹, R.-S. Lu¹¹⁹, E. Paganis¹¹⁹, A. Psallidas¹¹⁹, A. Steen¹¹⁹, H. y. Wu¹¹⁹, E. Yazgan¹¹⁹, P. r. Yu¹¹⁹, C. Asawatangtrakuldee¹²⁰, N. Srimanobhas¹²⁰, D. Agyel¹²¹, F. Boran¹²¹, Z. S. Demiroglu¹²¹, F. Dolek¹²¹, I. Dumanoglu^{121,nnn}, E. Eskut¹²¹, Y. Guler¹²¹, E. Gurpinar Guler¹²¹, C. Isik¹²¹, O. Kara¹²¹, A. Kayis Topaksu¹²¹, U. Kiminsu¹²¹, G. Onengut¹²¹, K. Ozdemir^{121,ppp}, A. Polatoz¹²¹, A. E. Simsek¹²¹, B. Tali^{121,qqq}, U. G. Tok¹²¹, S. Turkcapar¹²¹, E. Uslan¹²¹, I. S. Zorbakir¹²¹, G. Karapinar^{122,rrr}, K. Ocalan^{122,sss}, M. Yalvac^{122,ttt}, B. Akgun¹²³, I. O. Atakisi¹²³, E. Gülmmez¹²³, M. Kaya^{123,uuu}, O. Kaya^{123,vvv}, S. Tekten^{123,www}, A. Cakir¹²⁴, K. Cankocak^{124,nnn}, Y. Komurcu¹²⁴, S. Sen^{124,nnn}, O. Aydilek¹²⁵, S. Cerci^{125,qqq}, B. Hacisahinoglu¹²⁵, I. Hos^{125,xxx}, B. Isildak^{125,yyy}, B. Kaynak¹²⁵, S. Ozkorucuklu¹²⁵, C. Simsek¹²⁵, D. Sunar Cerci^{125,qqq}, B. Grynyov¹²⁶, L. Levchuk¹²⁷, D. Anthony¹²⁸, E. Bhal¹²⁸, J. J. Brooke¹²⁸, A. Bundock¹²⁸, E. Clement¹²⁸, D. Cussans¹²⁸, H. Flacher¹²⁸, M. Glowacki¹²⁸, J. Goldstein¹²⁸, G. P. Heath¹²⁸, H. F. Heath¹²⁸, L. Kreczko¹²⁸, B. Krikler¹²⁸, S. Paramesvaran¹²⁸, S. Seif El Nasr-Storey¹²⁸, V. J. Smith¹²⁸, N. Stylianou^{128,zzz}, K. Walkingshaw Pass¹²⁸, R. White¹²⁸, A. H. Ball¹²⁹, K. W. Bell¹²⁹, A. Belyaev^{129,aaaa}, C. Brew¹²⁹, R. M. Brown¹²⁹, D. J. A. Cockerill¹²⁹, C. Cooke¹²⁹, K. V. Ellis¹²⁹, K. Harder¹²⁹, S. Harper¹²⁹, M.-L. Holmberg^{129,bbbb}, Sh. Jain¹²⁹, J. Linacre¹²⁹, K. Manolopoulos¹²⁹, D. M. Newbold¹²⁹, E. Olaiya¹²⁹, D. Petyt¹²⁹, T. Reis¹²⁹, G. Salvi¹²⁹, T. Schuh¹²⁹, C. H. Shepherd-Themistocleous¹²⁹, I. R. Tomalin¹²⁹, T. Williams¹²⁹, R. Bainbridge¹³⁰, P. Bloch¹³⁰, S. Bonomally¹³⁰, J. Borg¹³⁰, C. E. Brown¹³⁰, O. Buchmuller¹³⁰, V. Cacchio¹³⁰, V. Cepaitis¹³⁰, G. S. Chahal^{130,cccc}

- D. Colling¹³⁰, J. S. Dancu,¹³⁰ P. Dauncey¹³⁰, G. Davies¹³⁰, J. Davies,¹³⁰ M. Della Negra¹³⁰, S. Fayer,¹³⁰ G. Fedi¹³⁰, G. Hall¹³⁰, M. H. Hassanshahi¹³⁰, A. Howard,¹³⁰ G. Iles¹³⁰, J. Langford¹³⁰, L. Lyons¹³⁰, A.-M. Magnan¹³⁰, S. Malik,¹³⁰ A. Martelli¹³⁰, M. Mieskolainen¹³⁰, D. G. Monk¹³⁰, J. Nash^{130,dddd}, M. Pesaresi,¹³⁰
- B. C. Radburn-Smith¹³⁰, D. M. Raymond,¹³⁰ A. Richards,¹³⁰ A. Rose¹³⁰, E. Scott¹³⁰, C. Seez¹³⁰, R. Shukla¹³⁰, A. Tapper¹³⁰, K. Uchida¹³⁰, G. P. Uttley¹³⁰, L. H. Vage,¹³⁰ T. Virdee^{130,cc}, M. Vojinovic¹³⁰, N. Wardle¹³⁰, S. N. Webb¹³⁰, D. Winterbottom¹³⁰, K. Coldham,¹³¹, J. E. Cole¹³¹, A. Khan,¹³¹, P. Kyberd¹³¹, I. D. Reid¹³¹, S. Abdullin¹³², A. Brinkerhoff¹³², B. Caraway¹³², J. Dittmann¹³², K. Hatakeyama¹³², A. R. Kanuganti¹³², B. McMaster¹³², M. Saunders¹³², S. Sawant¹³², C. Sutantawibul¹³², J. Wilson¹³², R. Bartek¹³³
- A. Dominguez¹³³, R. Uniyal¹³³, A. M. Vargas Hernandez¹³³, S. I. Cooper¹³⁴, D. Di Croce¹³⁴, S. V. Gleyzer¹³⁴, C. Henderson¹³⁴, C. U. Perez¹³⁴, P. Rumerio^{134,eeee}, C. West¹³⁴, A. Akpinar¹³⁵, A. Albert¹³⁵, D. Arcaro¹³⁵, C. Cosby¹³⁵, Z. Demiragli¹³⁵, C. Erice¹³⁵, E. Fontanesi¹³⁵, D. Gastler¹³⁵, S. May¹³⁵, J. Rohlf¹³⁵, K. Salyer¹³⁵, D. Sperka¹³⁵, D. Spitzbart¹³⁵, I. Suarez¹³⁵, A. Tsatsos¹³⁵, S. Yuan¹³⁵, G. Benelli¹³⁶, B. Burke¹³⁶, X. Coubez,^{136,x}, D. Cutts¹³⁶, M. Hadley¹³⁶, U. Heintz¹³⁶, J. M. Hogan^{136,ffff}, T. Kwon¹³⁶, G. Landsberg¹³⁶, K. T. Lau¹³⁶, D. Li¹³⁶, J. Luo¹³⁶, M. Narain¹³⁶, N. Pervan¹³⁶, S. Sagir^{136,gggg}, F. Simpson¹³⁶, E. Usai¹³⁶, W. Y. Wong,¹³⁶, X. Yan¹³⁶, D. Yu¹³⁶, W. Zhang,¹³⁶, J. Bonilla¹³⁷, C. Brainerd¹³⁷, R. Breedon¹³⁷
- M. Calderon De La Barca Sanchez¹³⁷, M. Chertok¹³⁷, J. Conway¹³⁷, P. T. Cox¹³⁷, R. Erbacher¹³⁷, G. Haza¹³⁷, F. Jensen¹³⁷, O. Kukral¹³⁷, G. Mocellin¹³⁷, M. Mulhearn¹³⁷, D. Pellett¹³⁷, B. Regnery¹³⁷, Y. Yao¹³⁷, F. Zhang¹³⁷, M. Bachtis¹³⁸, R. Cousins¹³⁸, A. Datta¹³⁸, D. Hamilton¹³⁸, J. Hauser¹³⁸, M. Ignatenko¹³⁸, M. A. Iqbal¹³⁸, T. Lam¹³⁸, E. Manca¹³⁸, W. A. Nash¹³⁸, S. Regnard¹³⁸, D. Saltzberg¹³⁸, B. Stone¹³⁸, V. Valuev¹³⁸, R. Clare¹³⁹, J. W. Gary¹³⁹, M. Gordon,¹³⁹, G. Hanson¹³⁹, G. Karapostoli¹³⁹, O. R. Long¹³⁹, N. Manganelli¹³⁹, W. Si¹³⁹, S. Wimpenny¹³⁹, J. G. Branson¹⁴⁰, P. Chang¹⁴⁰, S. Cittolin¹⁴⁰, S. Cooperstein¹⁴⁰, D. Diaz¹⁴⁰, J. Duarte¹⁴⁰, R. Gerosa¹⁴⁰, L. Giannini¹⁴⁰, J. Guiang¹⁴⁰, R. Kansal¹⁴⁰, V. Krutelyov¹⁴⁰, R. Lee¹⁴⁰, J. Letts¹⁴⁰, M. Masciovecchio¹⁴⁰, F. Mokhtar¹⁴⁰, M. Pieri¹⁴⁰, B. V. Sathia Narayanan¹⁴⁰, V. Sharma¹⁴⁰, M. Tadel¹⁴⁰, E. Vourliotis¹⁴⁰, F. Würthwein¹⁴⁰, Y. Xiang¹⁴⁰, A. Yagil¹⁴⁰, N. Amin,¹⁴¹, C. Campagnari¹⁴¹, M. Citron¹⁴¹, G. Collura¹⁴¹, A. Dorsett¹⁴¹, V. Dutta¹⁴¹, J. Incandela¹⁴¹, M. Kilpatrick¹⁴¹, J. Kim¹⁴¹, A. J. Li¹⁴¹, P. Masterson¹⁴¹, H. Mei¹⁴¹, M. Oshiro¹⁴¹, M. Quinnan¹⁴¹, J. Richman¹⁴¹, U. Sarica¹⁴¹, R. Schmitz¹⁴¹, F. Setti¹⁴¹, J. Sheplock¹⁴¹, P. Siddireddy,¹⁴¹, D. Stuart¹⁴¹, S. Wang¹⁴¹, A. Bornheim¹⁴², O. Cerri,¹⁴², I. Dutta¹⁴², A. Latorre,¹⁴², J. M. Lawhorn¹⁴², N. Lu¹⁴², J. Mao¹⁴², H. B. Newman¹⁴², T. Q. Nguyen¹⁴², M. Spiropulu¹⁴², J. R. Vlimant¹⁴², C. Wang¹⁴², S. Xie¹⁴², R. Y. Zhu¹⁴², J. Alison¹⁴³, S. An¹⁴³, M. B. Andrews¹⁴³, P. Bryant¹⁴³, T. Ferguson¹⁴³, A. Harilal¹⁴³, C. Liu¹⁴³, T. Mudholkar¹⁴³, S. Murthy¹⁴³, M. Paulini¹⁴³, A. Roberts¹⁴³, A. Sanchez¹⁴³, W. Terrill¹⁴³, J. P. Cumalat¹⁴⁴, W. T. Ford¹⁴⁴, A. Hassani¹⁴⁴, G. Karathanasis¹⁴⁴, E. MacDonald,¹⁴⁴, F. Marini¹⁴⁴, A. Perloff¹⁴⁴, C. Savard¹⁴⁴, N. Schonbeck¹⁴⁴, K. Stenson¹⁴⁴, K. A. Ulmer¹⁴⁴, S. R. Wagner¹⁴⁴, N. Zipper¹⁴⁴, J. Alexander¹⁴⁵, S. Bright-Thonney¹⁴⁵, X. Chen¹⁴⁵, D. J. Cranshaw¹⁴⁵, J. Fan¹⁴⁵, X. Fan¹⁴⁵, D. Gadkari¹⁴⁵, S. Hogan¹⁴⁵, J. Monroy¹⁴⁵, J. R. Patterson¹⁴⁵, D. Quach¹⁴⁵, J. Reichert¹⁴⁵, M. Reid¹⁴⁵, A. Ryd¹⁴⁵, J. Thom¹⁴⁵, P. Wittich¹⁴⁵, R. Zou¹⁴⁵, M. Albrow¹⁴⁶, M. Alyari¹⁴⁶, G. Apollinari¹⁴⁶, A. Apresyan¹⁴⁶, L. A. T. Bauerdick¹⁴⁶, D. Berry¹⁴⁶, J. Berryhill¹⁴⁶, P. C. Bhat¹⁴⁶, K. Burkett¹⁴⁶, J. N. Butler¹⁴⁶, A. Canepa¹⁴⁶, G. B. Cerati¹⁴⁶, H. W. K. Cheung¹⁴⁶, F. Chlebana¹⁴⁶, K. F. Di Petrillo¹⁴⁶, J. Dickinson¹⁴⁶, V. D. Elvira¹⁴⁶, Y. Feng¹⁴⁶, J. Freeman¹⁴⁶, A. Gandrakota¹⁴⁶, Z. Gecse¹⁴⁶, L. Gray¹⁴⁶, D. Green,¹⁴⁶, S. Grünendahl¹⁴⁶, D. Guerrero¹⁴⁶, O. Gutsche¹⁴⁶, R. M. Harris¹⁴⁶, R. Heller¹⁴⁶, T. C. Herwig¹⁴⁶, J. Hirschauer¹⁴⁶, L. Horyn¹⁴⁶, B. Jayatilaka¹⁴⁶, S. Jindariani¹⁴⁶, M. Johnson¹⁴⁶, U. Joshi¹⁴⁶, T. Klijnsma¹⁴⁶, B. Klima¹⁴⁶, K. H. M. Kwok¹⁴⁶, S. Lammel¹⁴⁶, D. Lincoln¹⁴⁶, R. Lipton¹⁴⁶, T. Liu¹⁴⁶, C. Madrid¹⁴⁶, K. Maeshima¹⁴⁶, C. Mantilla¹⁴⁶, D. Mason¹⁴⁶, P. McBride¹⁴⁶, P. Merkel¹⁴⁶, S. Mrenna¹⁴⁶, S. Nahm¹⁴⁶, J. Ngadiuba¹⁴⁶, D. Noonan¹⁴⁶, V. Papadimitriou¹⁴⁶, N. Pastika¹⁴⁶, K. Pedro¹⁴⁶, C. Pena^{146,hhhh}, F. Ravera¹⁴⁶, A. Reinsvold Hall^{146,iii}, L. Ristori¹⁴⁶, E. Sexton-Kennedy¹⁴⁶, N. Smith¹⁴⁶, A. Soha¹⁴⁶, L. Spiegel¹⁴⁶, J. Strait¹⁴⁶, L. Taylor¹⁴⁶, S. Tkaczyk¹⁴⁶, N. V. Tran¹⁴⁶, L. Uplegger¹⁴⁶, E. W. Vaandering¹⁴⁶, I. Zoi¹⁴⁶, P. Avery¹⁴⁷, D. Bourilkov¹⁴⁷, L. Cadamuro¹⁴⁷, V. Cherepanov¹⁴⁷, R. D. Field,¹⁴⁷, M. Kim,¹⁴⁷, E. Koenig¹⁴⁷, J. Konigsberg¹⁴⁷, A. Korytov¹⁴⁷, K. H. Lo,¹⁴⁷, K. Matchev¹⁴⁷, N. Menendez¹⁴⁷, G. Mitselmakher¹⁴⁷, A. Muthirakalayil Madhu¹⁴⁷, N. Rawal¹⁴⁷, D. Rosenzweig¹⁴⁷, S. Rosenzweig¹⁴⁷, K. Shi¹⁴⁷, J. Wang¹⁴⁷, Z. Wu¹⁴⁷, T. Adams¹⁴⁸, A. Askew¹⁴⁸, R. Habibullah¹⁴⁸, V. Hagopian¹⁴⁸, T. Kolberg¹⁴⁸, G. Martinez,¹⁴⁸, H. Prosper¹⁴⁸, O. Viazlo¹⁴⁸, M. Wulansatiti¹⁴⁸

- R. Yohay¹⁴⁸ J. Zhang,¹⁴⁸ M. M. Baarmand¹⁴⁹ S. Butalla¹⁴⁹ T. Elkafrawy^{149,q} M. Hohlmann¹⁴⁹
 R. Kumar Verma¹⁴⁹ M. Rahmani,¹⁴⁹ F. Yumiceva¹⁴⁹ M. R. Adams¹⁵⁰ H. Becerril Gonzalez¹⁵⁰ R. Cavanaugh¹⁵⁰
 S. Dittmer¹⁵⁰ O. Evdokimov¹⁵⁰ C. E. Gerber¹⁵⁰ D. J. Hofman¹⁵⁰ D. S. Lemos¹⁵⁰ A. H. Merrit¹⁵⁰ C. Mills¹⁵⁰
 G. Oh¹⁵⁰ T. Roy¹⁵⁰ S. Rudrabhatla¹⁵⁰ M. B. Tonjes¹⁵⁰ N. Varelas¹⁵⁰ X. Wang¹⁵⁰ Z. Ye¹⁵⁰ J. Yoo¹⁵⁰
 M. Alhusseini¹⁵¹ K. Dilsiz^{151,jjjj} L. Emediato¹⁵¹ R. P. Gandrajula¹⁵¹ G. Karaman¹⁵¹ O. K. Köseyan¹⁵¹
 J.-P. Merlo,¹⁵¹ A. Mestvirishvili^{151,kkkk} J. Nachtman¹⁵¹ O. Neogi,¹⁵¹ H. Ogul^{151,III} Y. Onel¹⁵¹ A. Penzo¹⁵¹
 C. Snyder,¹⁵¹ E. Tiras^{151,mmmm} O. Amram¹⁵² B. Blumenfeld¹⁵² L. Corcodilos¹⁵² J. Davis¹⁵² A. V. Gritsan¹⁵²
 S. Kyriacou¹⁵² P. Maksimovic¹⁵² J. Roskes¹⁵² S. Sekhar¹⁵² M. Swartz¹⁵² T. Á. Vámi¹⁵² A. Abreu¹⁵³
 L. F. Alcerro Alcerro¹⁵³ J. Anguiano¹⁵³ P. Baringer¹⁵³ A. Bean¹⁵³ Z. Flowers¹⁵³ T. Isidori¹⁵³ J. King¹⁵³
 G. Krintiras¹⁵³ M. Lazarovits¹⁵³ C. Le Mahieu¹⁵³ C. Lindsey¹⁵³ J. Marquez¹⁵³ N. Minafra¹⁵³ M. Murray¹⁵³
 M. Nickel¹⁵³ C. Rogan¹⁵³ C. Royon¹⁵³ R. Salvatico¹⁵³ S. Sanders¹⁵³ C. Smith¹⁵³ Q. Wang¹⁵³
 J. Williams¹⁵³ G. Wilson¹⁵³ B. Allmond¹⁵⁴ S. Duric¹⁵⁴ A. Ivanov¹⁵⁴ K. Kaadze¹⁵⁴ D. Kim¹⁵⁴ Y. Maravin¹⁵⁴
 T. Mitchell,¹⁵⁴ A. Modak,¹⁵⁴ K. Nam,¹⁵⁴ D. Roy¹⁵⁴ F. Rebassoo¹⁵⁵ D. Wright¹⁵⁵ E. Adams¹⁵⁶ A. Baden¹⁵⁶
 O. Baron,¹⁵⁶ A. Belloni¹⁵⁶ A. Bethani¹⁵⁶ S. C. Eno¹⁵⁶ N. J. Hadley¹⁵⁶ S. Jabeen¹⁵⁶ R. G. Kellogg¹⁵⁶
 T. Koeth¹⁵⁶ Y. Lai¹⁵⁶ S. Lascio¹⁵⁶ A. C. Mignerey¹⁵⁶ S. Nabili¹⁵⁶ C. Palmer¹⁵⁶ C. Papageorgakis¹⁵⁶
 L. Wang¹⁵⁶ K. Wong¹⁵⁶ D. Abercrombie,¹⁵⁷ W. Busza¹⁵⁷ I. A. Cali¹⁵⁷ Y. Chen¹⁵⁷ M. D'Alfonso¹⁵⁷
 J. Eysermans¹⁵⁷ C. Freer¹⁵⁷ G. Gomez-Ceballos¹⁵⁷ M. Goncharov,¹⁵⁷ P. Harris,¹⁵⁷ M. Hu¹⁵⁷ D. Kovalskyi¹⁵⁷
 J. Krupa¹⁵⁷ Y.-J. Lee¹⁵⁷ K. Long¹⁵⁷ C. Mironov¹⁵⁷ C. Paus¹⁵⁷ D. Rankin¹⁵⁷ C. Roland¹⁵⁷ G. Roland¹⁵⁷
 Z. Shi¹⁵⁷ G. S. F. Stephans¹⁵⁷ J. Wang¹⁵⁷ Z. Wang¹⁵⁷ B. Wyslouch¹⁵⁷ T. J. Yang¹⁵⁷ R. M. Chatterjee,¹⁵⁸
 B. Crossman¹⁵⁸ A. Evans¹⁵⁸ J. Hiltbrand¹⁵⁸ B. M. Joshi¹⁵⁸ C. Kapsiak¹⁵⁸ M. Krohn¹⁵⁸ Y. Kubota¹⁵⁸
 J. Mans¹⁵⁸ M. Revering¹⁵⁸ R. Rusack¹⁵⁸ R. Saradhy¹⁵⁸ N. Schroeder¹⁵⁸ N. Strobbe¹⁵⁸ M. A. Wadud¹⁵⁸
 L. M. Cremaldi¹⁵⁹ K. Bloom¹⁶⁰ M. Bryson,¹⁶⁰ D. R. Claes¹⁶⁰ C. Fangmeier¹⁶⁰ L. Finco¹⁶⁰ F. Golf¹⁶⁰
 C. Joo¹⁶⁰ R. Kamalieddin,¹⁶⁰ I. Kravchenko¹⁶⁰ I. Reed¹⁶⁰ J. E. Siado¹⁶⁰ G. R. Snow,^{160,a} W. Tabb¹⁶⁰
 A. Wightman¹⁶⁰ F. Yan¹⁶⁰ A. G. Zecchinelli¹⁶⁰ G. Agarwal¹⁶¹ H. Bandyopadhyay¹⁶¹ L. Hay¹⁶¹ I. Iashvili¹⁶¹
 A. Kharchilava¹⁶¹ C. McLean¹⁶¹ M. Morris¹⁶¹ D. Nguyen¹⁶¹ J. Pekkanen¹⁶¹ S. Rappoccio¹⁶¹
 A. Williams¹⁶¹ G. Alverson¹⁶² E. Barberis¹⁶² Y. Haddad¹⁶² Y. Han¹⁶² A. Krishna¹⁶² J. Li¹⁶² J. Lidrych¹⁶²
 G. Madigan¹⁶² B. Marzocchi¹⁶² D. M. Morse¹⁶² V. Nguyen¹⁶² T. Orimoto¹⁶² A. Parker¹⁶² L. Skinnari¹⁶²
 A. Tishelman-Charny¹⁶² T. Wamorkar¹⁶² B. Wang¹⁶² A. Wisecarver¹⁶² D. Wood¹⁶² S. Bhattacharya¹⁶³
 J. Bueghly,¹⁶³ Z. Chen¹⁶³ A. Gilbert¹⁶³ K. A. Hahn¹⁶³ Y. Liu¹⁶³ N. Odell¹⁶³ M. H. Schmitt¹⁶³ M. Velasco,¹⁶³
 R. Band¹⁶⁴ R. Bucci,¹⁶⁴ M. Cremonesi,¹⁶⁴ A. Das¹⁶⁴ R. Goldouzian¹⁶⁴ M. Hildreth¹⁶⁴ K. Hurtado Anampa¹⁶⁴
 C. Jessop¹⁶⁴ K. Lannon¹⁶⁴ J. Lawrence¹⁶⁴ N. Loukas¹⁶⁴ L. Lutton¹⁶⁴ J. Mariano,¹⁶⁴ N. Marinelli,¹⁶⁴
 I. Mcalister,¹⁶⁴ T. McCauley¹⁶⁴ C. Mcgrady¹⁶⁴ K. Mohrman¹⁶⁴ C. Moore¹⁶⁴ Y. Musienko^{164,n} R. Ruchti¹⁶⁴
 A. Townsend¹⁶⁴ M. Wayne¹⁶⁴ H. Yockey¹⁶⁴ M. Zarucki¹⁶⁴ L. Zygalas¹⁶⁴ B. Bylsma,¹⁶⁵ M. Carrigan¹⁶⁵
 L. S. Durkin¹⁶⁵ B. Francis¹⁶⁵ C. Hill¹⁶⁵ M. Joyce¹⁶⁵ A. Lesauvage¹⁶⁵ M. Nunez Ornelas¹⁶⁵ K. Wei,¹⁶⁵
 B. L. Winer¹⁶⁵ B. R. Yates¹⁶⁵ F. M. Addesa¹⁶⁶ P. Das¹⁶⁶ G. Dezoort¹⁶⁶ P. Elmer¹⁶⁶ A. Frankenthal¹⁶⁶
 B. Greenberg¹⁶⁶ N. Haubrich¹⁶⁶ S. Higginbotham¹⁶⁶ A. Kalogeropoulos¹⁶⁶ G. Kopp¹⁶⁶ S. Kwan¹⁶⁶
 D. Lange¹⁶⁶ D. Marlow¹⁶⁶ K. Mei¹⁶⁶ I. Ojalvo¹⁶⁶ J. Olsen¹⁶⁶ D. Stickland¹⁶⁶ C. Tully¹⁶⁶ S. Malik¹⁶⁷
 S. Norberg,¹⁶⁷ A. S. Bakshi¹⁶⁸ V. E. Barnes¹⁶⁸ R. Chawla¹⁶⁸ S. Das¹⁶⁸ L. Gutay,¹⁶⁸ M. Jones¹⁶⁸ A. W. Jung¹⁶⁸
 D. Kondratyev¹⁶⁸ A. M. Koshy,¹⁶⁸ M. Liu¹⁶⁸ G. Negro¹⁶⁸ N. Neumeister¹⁶⁸ G. Paspalaki¹⁶⁸ S. Piperov¹⁶⁸
 A. Purohit¹⁶⁸ J. F. Schulte¹⁶⁸ M. Stojanovic¹⁶⁸ J. Thieman¹⁶⁸ F. Wang¹⁶⁸ R. Xiao¹⁶⁸ W. Xie¹⁶⁸ J. Dolen¹⁶⁹
 N. Parashar¹⁶⁹ D. Acosta¹⁷⁰ A. Baty¹⁷⁰ T. Carnahan¹⁷⁰ M. Decaro,¹⁷⁰ S. Dildick¹⁷⁰ K. M. Ecklund¹⁷⁰
 P. J. Fernández Manteca¹⁷⁰ S. Freed,¹⁷⁰ P. Gardner,¹⁷⁰ F. J. M. Geurts¹⁷⁰ A. Kumar¹⁷⁰ W. Li¹⁷⁰ B. P. Padley¹⁷⁰
 R. Redjimi,¹⁷⁰ J. Rotter¹⁷⁰ W. Shi¹⁷⁰ S. Yang¹⁷⁰ E. Yigitbasi¹⁷⁰ L. Zhang,^{170,nnnn} Y. Zhang¹⁷⁰ A. Bodek¹⁷¹
 P. de Barbaro¹⁷¹ R. Demina¹⁷¹ J. L. Dulemba¹⁷¹ C. Fallon,¹⁷¹ T. Ferbel¹⁷¹ M. Galanti,¹⁷¹ A. Garcia-Bellido¹⁷¹
 O. Hindrichs¹⁷¹ A. Khukhunaishvili¹⁷¹ E. Ranken¹⁷¹ R. Taus¹⁷¹ G. P. Van Onsem¹⁷¹ K. Goulianatos¹⁷²
 B. Chiarito,¹⁷³ J. P. Chou¹⁷³ Y. Gershtein¹⁷³ E. Halkiadakis¹⁷³ A. Hart¹⁷³ M. Heindl¹⁷³ D. Jaroslawski¹⁷³
 O. Karacheban^{173,aa} I. Laflotte¹⁷³ A. Lath¹⁷³ R. Montalvo,¹⁷³ K. Nash,¹⁷³ M. Osherson¹⁷³ H. Routray¹⁷³
 S. Salur¹⁷³ S. Schnetzer,¹⁷³ S. Somalwar¹⁷³ R. Stone¹⁷³ S. A. Thayil¹⁷³ S. Thomas,¹⁷³ H. Wang¹⁷³ H. Acharya,¹⁷⁴
 A. G. Delannoy¹⁷⁴ S. Fiorendi¹⁷⁴ T. Holmes¹⁷⁴ E. Nibigira¹⁷⁴ S. Spanier¹⁷⁴ O. Bouhali^{175,oooo}

- M. Dalchenko¹⁷⁵ A. Delgado¹⁷⁵ R. Eusebi¹⁷⁵ J. Gilmore¹⁷⁵ T. Huang¹⁷⁵ T. Kamon^{175,pppp} H. Kim¹⁷⁵
 S. Luo¹⁷⁵ S. Malhotra¹⁷⁵ R. Mueller¹⁷⁵ D. Overton¹⁷⁵ D. Rathjens¹⁷⁵ A. Safonov¹⁷⁵ N. Akchurin¹⁷⁶
 J. Damgov¹⁷⁶ V. Hegde¹⁷⁶ K. Lamichhane¹⁷⁶ S. W. Lee¹⁷⁶ T. Mengke¹⁷⁶ S. Muthumuni¹⁷⁶ T. Peltola¹⁷⁶
 I. Volobouev¹⁷⁶ A. Whitbeck¹⁷⁶ E. Appelt¹⁷⁷ S. Greene¹⁷⁷ A. Gurrola¹⁷⁷ W. Johns¹⁷⁷ A. Melo¹⁷⁷
 F. Romeo¹⁷⁷ P. Sheldon¹⁷⁷ S. Tuo¹⁷⁷ J. Velkovska¹⁷⁷ J. Viinikainen¹⁷⁷ B. Cardwell¹⁷⁸ B. Cox¹⁷⁸
 G. Cummings¹⁷⁸ J. Hakala¹⁷⁸ R. Hirosky¹⁷⁸ A. Ledovskoy¹⁷⁸ A. Li¹⁷⁸ C. Neu¹⁷⁸ C. E. Perez Lara¹⁷⁸
 B. Tannenwald¹⁷⁸ P. E. Karchin¹⁷⁹ N. Poudyal¹⁷⁹ S. Banerjee¹⁸⁰ K. Black¹⁸⁰ T. Bose¹⁸⁰ S. Dasu¹⁸⁰
 I. De Bruyn¹⁸⁰ P. Everaerts¹⁸⁰ C. Galloni¹⁸⁰ H. He¹⁸⁰ M. Herndon¹⁸⁰ A. Herve¹⁸⁰ C. K. Koraka¹⁸⁰
 A. Lanaro¹⁸⁰ A. Loeliger¹⁸⁰ R. Loveless¹⁸⁰ J. Madhusudanan Sreekala¹⁸⁰ A. Mallampalli¹⁸⁰ A. Mohammadi¹⁸⁰
 S. Mondal¹⁸⁰ G. Parida¹⁸⁰ D. Pinna¹⁸⁰ A. Savin¹⁸⁰ V. Shang¹⁸⁰ V. Sharma¹⁸⁰ W. H. Smith¹⁸⁰ D. Teague¹⁸⁰
 H. F. Tsoi¹⁸⁰ W. Vetens¹⁸⁰ S. Afanasiev¹⁸¹ V. Andreev¹⁸¹ Yu. Andreev¹⁸¹ T. Aushev¹⁸¹ M. Azarkin¹⁸¹
 A. Babaev¹⁸¹ A. Belyaev¹⁸¹ V. Blinov^{181,n} E. Boos¹⁸¹ V. Borshch¹⁸¹ D. Budkouski¹⁸¹ V. Bunichev¹⁸¹
 V. Chekhovsky¹⁸¹ R. Chistov^{181,n} A. Dermenev¹⁸¹ T. Dimova^{181,n} I. Dremin¹⁸¹ M. Dubinin^{181,hhh}
 L. Dudko¹⁸¹ V. Epshteyn¹⁸¹ G. Gavrilov¹⁸¹ V. Gavrilov¹⁸¹ S. Gninenko¹⁸¹ V. Golovtcov¹⁸¹ N. Golubev¹⁸¹
 I. Golutvin¹⁸¹ I. Gorbunov¹⁸¹ V. Ivanchenko¹⁸¹ Y. Ivanov¹⁸¹ V. Kachanov¹⁸¹ L. Kardapoltsev^{181,n}
 V. Karjavine¹⁸¹ A. Karneyeu¹⁸¹ V. Kim^{181,n} M. Kirakosyan¹⁸¹ D. Kirpichnikov¹⁸¹ M. Kirsanov¹⁸¹
 V. Klyukhin¹⁸¹ O. Kodolova^{181,qqq} D. Konstantinov¹⁸¹ V. Korenkov¹⁸¹ A. Kozyrev^{181,n} N. Krasnikov¹⁸¹
 E. Kuznetsova^{181,rrr} A. Lanev¹⁸¹ P. Levchenko¹⁸¹ A. Litomin¹⁸¹ O. Lukina¹⁸¹ N. Lychkovskaya¹⁸¹
 V. Makarenko¹⁸¹ A. Malakhov¹⁸¹ V. Matveev^{181,n} V. Murzin¹⁸¹ A. Nikitenko^{181,sss} S. Obraztsov¹⁸¹
 A. Oskin¹⁸¹ I. Ovtin^{181,n} V. Palichik¹⁸¹ P. Parygin¹⁸¹ V. Perelygin¹⁸¹ S. Petrushanko¹⁸¹ S. Polikarpov¹⁸¹
 V. Popov¹⁸¹ E. Popova¹⁸¹ O. Radchenko^{181,n} M. Savina¹⁸¹ V. Savrin¹⁸¹ D. Selivanova¹⁸¹ V. Shalaev¹⁸¹
 S. Shmatov¹⁸¹ S. Shulha¹⁸¹ Y. Skoppen^{181,n} S. Slabospitskii¹⁸¹ V. Smirnov¹⁸¹ A. Snigirev¹⁸¹ D. Sosnov¹⁸¹
 V. Sulimov¹⁸¹ E. Tcherniaev¹⁸¹ A. Terkulov¹⁸¹ O. Teryaev¹⁸¹ I. Tlisova¹⁸¹ M. Toms¹⁸¹ A. Toropin¹⁸¹
 L. Uvarov¹⁸¹ A. Uzunian¹⁸¹ E. Vlasov¹⁸¹ A. Vorobyev¹⁸¹ N. Voytishin¹⁸¹ B. S. Yuldashev^{181,ttt} A. Zarubin¹⁸¹
 I. Zhizhin¹⁸¹ and A. Zhokin¹⁸¹

(CMS Collaboration)

¹*Yerevan Physics Institute, Yerevan, Armenia*²*Institut für Hochenergiephysik, Vienna, Austria*³*Universiteit Antwerpen, Antwerpen, Belgium*⁴*Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussel, Belgium*⁵*Université Libre de Bruxelles, Bruxelles, Belgium*⁶*Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium*⁷*Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium*⁸*Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Fisicas, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*⁹*Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*¹⁰*Universidade Estadual Paulista, Universidade Federal do ABC, São Paulo, Brazil*¹¹*Institute for Nuclear Research and Nuclear Energy, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria*¹²*University of Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria*¹³*Instituto De Alta Investigación, Universidad de Tarapacá, Casilla 7 D, Arica, Chile*¹⁴*Beihang University, Beijing, China*¹⁵*Department of Physics, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China*¹⁶*Institute of High Energy Physics, Beijing, China*¹⁷*State Key Laboratory of Nuclear Physics and Technology, Peking University, Beijing, China*¹⁸*Sun Yat-Sen University, Guangzhou, China*¹⁹*Institute of Modern Physics and Key Laboratory of Nuclear Physics and Ion-beam Application (MOE)—Fudan University, Shanghai, China*²⁰*Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China*²¹*Universidad de Los Andes, Bogota, Colombia*²²*Universidad de Antioquia, Medellin, Colombia*²³*University of Split, Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture, Split, Croatia*²⁴*University of Split, Faculty of Science, Split, Croatia*

- ²⁵Institute Rudjer Boskovic, Zagreb, Croatia
²⁶University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
²⁷Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic
²⁸Escuela Politecnica Nacional, Quito, Ecuador
²⁹Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Quito, Ecuador
³⁰Academy of Scientific Research and Technology of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Egyptian Network of High Energy Physics, Cairo, Egypt
³¹Center for High Energy Physics (CHEP-FU), Fayoum University, El-Fayoum, Egypt
³²National Institute of Chemical Physics and Biophysics, Tallinn, Estonia
³³Department of Physics, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland
³⁴Helsinki Institute of Physics, Helsinki, Finland
³⁵Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology, Lappeenranta, Finland
³⁶IRFU, CEA, Université Paris-Saclay, Gif-sur-Yvette, France
³⁷Laboratoire Leprince-Ringuet, CNRS/IN2P3, Ecole Polytechnique, Institut Polytechnique de Paris, Palaiseau, France
³⁸Université de Strasbourg, CNRS, IPHC UMR 7178, Strasbourg, France
³⁹Institut de Physique des 2 Infinis de Lyon (IP2I), Villeurbanne, France
⁴⁰Georgian Technical University, Tbilisi, Georgia
⁴¹RWTH Aachen University, I. Physikalisches Institut, Aachen, Germany
⁴²RWTH Aachen University, III. Physikalisches Institut A, Aachen, Germany
⁴³RWTH Aachen University, III. Physikalisches Institut B, Aachen, Germany
⁴⁴Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron, Hamburg, Germany
⁴⁵University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany
⁴⁶Karlsruhe Institute for Technology, Karlsruhe, Germany
⁴⁷Institute of Nuclear and Particle Physics (INPP), NCSR Demokritos, Aghia Paraskevi, Greece
⁴⁸National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece
⁴⁹National Technical University of Athens, Athens, Greece
⁵⁰University of Ioánnina, Ioánnina, Greece
⁵¹MTA-ELTE Lendület CMS Particle and Nuclear Physics Group, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary
⁵²Wigner Research Centre for Physics, Budapest, Hungary
⁵³Institute of Nuclear Research ATOMKI, Debrecen, Hungary
⁵⁴Institute of Physics, University of Debrecen, Debrecen, Hungary
⁵⁵Karoly Robert Campus, MATE Institute of Technology, Gyongyos, Hungary
⁵⁶Panjab University, Chandigarh, India
⁵⁷University of Delhi, Delhi, India
⁵⁸Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics, HBNI, Kolkata, India
⁵⁹Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Madras, India
⁶⁰Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai, India
⁶¹Tata Institute of Fundamental Research-A, Mumbai, India
⁶²Tata Institute of Fundamental Research-B, Mumbai, India
⁶³National Institute of Science Education and Research, An OCC of Homi Bhabha National Institute, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India
⁶⁴Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Pune, India
⁶⁵Isfahan University of Technology, Isfahan, Iran
⁶⁶Institute for Research in Fundamental Sciences (IPM), Tehran, Iran
⁶⁷University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland
^{68a}INFN Sezione di Bari, Bari, Italy
^{68b}Università di Bari, Bari, Italy
^{68c}Politecnico di Bari, Bari, Italy
^{69a}INFN Sezione di Bologna, Bologna, Italy
^{69b}Università di Bologna, Bologna, Italy
^{70a}INFN Sezione di Catania, Catania, Italy
^{70b}Università di Catania, Catania, Italy
^{71a}INFN Sezione di Firenze, Firenze, Italy
^{71b}Università di Firenze, Firenze, Italy
⁷²INFN Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati, Frascati, Italy
^{73a}INFN Sezione di Genova, Genova, Italy
^{73b}Università di Genova, Genova, Italy
^{74a}INFN Sezione di Milano-Bicocca, Milano, Italy

- ^{74b}*Università di Milano-Bicocca, Milano, Italy*
^{75a}*INFN Sezione di Napoli, Napoli, Italy*
^{75b}*Università di Napoli "Federico II", Napoli, Italy*
^{75c}*Università della Basilicata, Potenza, Italy*
^{75d}*Università G. Marconi, Roma, Italy*
^{76a}*INFN Sezione di Padova, Padova, Italy*
^{76b}*Università di Padova, Padova, Italy*
^{76c}*Università di Trento, Trento, Italy*
^{77a}*INFN Sezione di Pavia, Pavia, Italy*
^{77b}*Università di Pavia, Pavia, Italy*
^{78a}*INFN Sezione di Perugia, Perugia, Italy*
^{78b}*Università di Perugia, Perugia, Italy*
^{79a}*INFN Sezione di Pisa, Pisa, Italy*
^{79b}*Università di Pisa, Pisa, Italy*
^{79c}*Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, Pisa, Italy*
^{79d}*Università di Siena, Siena, Italy*
^{80a}*INFN Sezione di Roma, Roma, Italy*
^{80b}*Sapienza Università di Roma, Roma, Italy*
^{81a}*INFN Sezione di Torino, Torino, Italy*
^{81b}*Università di Torino, Torino, Italy*
^{81c}*Università del Piemonte Orientale, Novara, Italy*
^{82a}*INFN Sezione di Trieste, Trieste, Italy*
^{82b}*Università di Trieste, Trieste, Italy*
⁸³*Kyungpook National University, Daegu, Korea*
⁸⁴*Chonnam National University, Institute for Universe and Elementary Particles, Kwangju, Korea*
⁸⁵*Hanyang University, Seoul, Korea*
⁸⁶*Korea University, Seoul, Korea*
⁸⁷*Kyung Hee University, Department of Physics, Seoul, Korea*
⁸⁸*Sejong University, Seoul, Korea*
⁸⁹*Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea*
⁹⁰*University of Seoul, Seoul, Korea*
⁹¹*Yonsei University, Department of Physics, Seoul, Korea*
⁹²*Sungkyunkwan University, Suwon, Korea*
⁹³*College of Engineering and Technology, American University of the Middle East (AUM), Dasman, Kuwait*
⁹⁴*Riga Technical University, Riga, Latvia*
⁹⁵*Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania*
⁹⁶*National Centre for Particle Physics, Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*
⁹⁷*Universidad de Sonora (UNISON), Hermosillo, Mexico*
⁹⁸*Centro de Investigacion y de Estudios Avanzados del IPN, Mexico City, Mexico*
⁹⁹*Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, Mexico*
¹⁰⁰*Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla, Puebla, Mexico*
¹⁰¹*University of Montenegro, Podgorica, Montenegro*
¹⁰²*National Centre for Physics, Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan*
¹⁰³*AGH University of Science and Technology Faculty of Computer Science, Electronics and Telecommunications, Krakow, Poland*
¹⁰⁴*National Centre for Nuclear Research, Swierk, Poland*
¹⁰⁵*Institute of Experimental Physics, Faculty of Physics, University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland*
¹⁰⁶*Laboratório de Instrumentação e Física Experimental de Partículas, Lisboa, Portugal*
¹⁰⁷*VINCA Institute of Nuclear Sciences, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia*
¹⁰⁸*Centro de Investigaciones Energéticas Medioambientales y Tecnológicas (CIEMAT), Madrid, Spain*
¹⁰⁹*Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain*
¹¹⁰*Universidad de Oviedo, Instituto Universitario de Ciencias y Tecnologías Espaciales de Asturias (ICTEA), Oviedo, Spain*
¹¹¹*Instituto de Física de Cantabria (IFCA), CSIC-Universidad de Cantabria, Santander, Spain*
¹¹²*University of Colombo, Colombo, Sri Lanka*
¹¹³*University of Ruhuna, Department of Physics, Matara, Sri Lanka*
¹¹⁴*CERN, European Organization for Nuclear Research, Geneva, Switzerland*
¹¹⁵*Paul Scherrer Institut, Villigen, Switzerland*
¹¹⁶*ETH Zurich—Institute for Particle Physics and Astrophysics (IPA), Zurich, Switzerland*

- ¹¹⁷Universität Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland
¹¹⁸National Central University, Chung-Li, Taiwan
¹¹⁹National Taiwan University (NTU), Taipei, Taiwan
¹²⁰Chulalongkorn University, Faculty of Science, Department of Physics, Bangkok, Thailand
¹²¹Çukurova University, Physics Department, Science and Art Faculty, Adana, Turkey
¹²²Middle East Technical University, Physics Department, Ankara, Turkey
¹²³Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey
¹²⁴Istanbul Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey
¹²⁵Istanbul University, Istanbul, Turkey
¹²⁶Institute for Scintillation Materials of National Academy of Science of Ukraine, Kharkiv, Ukraine
¹²⁷National Science Centre, Kharkiv Institute of Physics and Technology, Kharkiv, Ukraine
¹²⁸University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom
¹²⁹Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, United Kingdom
¹³⁰Imperial College, London, United Kingdom
¹³¹Brunel University, Uxbridge, United Kingdom
¹³²Baylor University, Waco, Texas, USA
¹³³Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, USA
¹³⁴The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, USA
¹³⁵Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, USA
¹³⁶Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, USA
¹³⁷University of California, Davis, Davis, California, USA
¹³⁸University of California, Los Angeles, California, USA
¹³⁹University of California, Riverside, Riverside, California, USA
¹⁴⁰University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, California, USA
¹⁴¹University of California, Santa Barbara—Department of Physics, Santa Barbara, California, USA
¹⁴²California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California, USA
¹⁴³Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA
¹⁴⁴University of Colorado Boulder, Boulder, Colorado, USA
¹⁴⁵Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, USA
¹⁴⁶Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, Batavia, Illinois, USA
¹⁴⁷University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, USA
¹⁴⁸Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida, USA
¹⁴⁹Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne, Florida, USA
¹⁵⁰University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), Chicago, Illinois, USA
¹⁵¹The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, USA
¹⁵²Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, USA
¹⁵³The University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, USA
¹⁵⁴Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, USA
¹⁵⁵Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, California, USA
¹⁵⁶University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, USA
¹⁵⁷Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA
¹⁵⁸University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA
¹⁵⁹University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi, USA
¹⁶⁰University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska, USA
¹⁶¹State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, New York, USA
¹⁶²Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts, USA
¹⁶³Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, USA
¹⁶⁴University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana, USA
¹⁶⁵The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, USA
¹⁶⁶Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, USA
¹⁶⁷University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, USA
¹⁶⁸Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, USA
¹⁶⁹Purdue University Northwest, Hammond, Indiana, USA
¹⁷⁰Rice University, Houston, Texas, USA
¹⁷¹University of Rochester, Rochester, New York, USA
¹⁷²The Rockefeller University, New York, New York, USA
¹⁷³Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Piscataway, New Jersey, USA
¹⁷⁴University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, USA
¹⁷⁵Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, USA
¹⁷⁶Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, USA

¹⁷⁷Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, USA¹⁷⁸University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, USA¹⁷⁹Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, USA¹⁸⁰University of Wisconsin—Madison, Madison, Wisconsin, USA¹⁸¹An institute or international laboratory covered by a cooperation agreement with CERN^aDeceased.^bAlso at Yerevan State University, Yerevan, Armenia.^cAlso at TU Wien, Vienna, Austria.^dAlso at Institute of Basic and Applied Sciences, Faculty of Engineering, Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, Alexandria, Egypt.^eAlso at Université Libre de Bruxelles, Bruxelles, Belgium.^fAlso at Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Campinas, Brazil.^gAlso at Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil.^hAlso at UFMS, Nova Andradina, Brazil.ⁱAlso at The University of the State of Amazonas, Manaus, Brazil.^jAlso at University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China.^kAlso at Nanjing Normal University Department of Physics, Nanjing, China.^lAlso at The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, USA.^mAlso at University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China.ⁿAlso at Another institute or international laboratory covered by a cooperation agreement with CERN.^oAlso at Helwan University, Cairo, Egypt.^pAlso at Zewail City of Science and Technology, Zewail, Egypt.^qAlso at Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt.^rAlso at British University in Egypt, Cairo, Egypt.^sAlso at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, USA.^tAlso at Université de Haute Alsace, Mulhouse, France.^uAlso at Department of Physics, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China.^vAlso at Erzincan Binali Yildirim University, Erzincan, Turkey.^wAlso at University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany.^xAlso at RWTH Aachen University, III. Physikalisches Institut A, Aachen, Germany.^yAlso at Isfahan University of Technology, Isfahan, Iran.^zAlso at Bergische University Wuppertal (BUW), Wuppertal, Germany.^{aa}Also at Brandenburg University of Technology, Cottbus, Germany.^{bb}Also at Forschungszentrum Jülich, Juelich, Germany.^{cc}Also at CERN, European Organization for Nuclear Research, Geneva, Switzerland.^{dd}Also at Physics Department, Faculty of Science, Assiut University, Assiut, Egypt.^{ee}Also at Karoly Robert Campus, MATE Institute of Technology, Gyongyos, Hungary.^{ff}Also at Wigner Research Centre for Physics, Budapest, Hungary.^{gg}Also at Institute of Physics, University of Debrecen, Debrecen, Hungary.^{hh}Also at Institute of Nuclear Research ATOMKI, Debrecen, Hungary.ⁱⁱAlso at Universitatea Babes-Bolyai—Facultatea de Fizica, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.^{jj}Also at Faculty of Informatics, University of Debrecen, Debrecen, Hungary.^{kk}Also at Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, India.^{ll}Also at UPES—University of Petroleum and Energy Studies, Dehradun, India.^{mm}Also at University of Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, India.ⁿⁿAlso at University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, India.^{oo}Also at Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, India.^{pp}Also at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Mumbai, India.^{qq}Also at IIT Bhubaneswar, Bhubaneswar, India.^{rr}Also at Institute of Physics, Bhubaneswar, India.^{ss}Also at Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron, Hamburg, Germany.^{tt}Also at Department of Physics, Isfahan University of Technology, Isfahan, Iran.^{uu}Also at Sharif University of Technology, Tehran, Iran.^{vv}Also at Department of Physics, University of Science and Technology of Mazandaran, Behshahr, Iran.^{ww}Also at Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development, Bologna, Italy.^{xx}Also at Centro Siciliano di Fisica Nucleare e di Struttura Della Materia, Catania, Italy.^{yy}Also at Scuola Superiore Meridionale, Università di Napoli “Federico II,” Napoli, Italy.^{zz}Also at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, Batavia, Illinois, USA.^{aaa}Also at Università di Napoli “Federico II,” Napoli, Italy.

- ^{bbb} Also at Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche—Istituto Officina dei Materiali, Perugia, Italy.
^{ccc} Also at Department of Applied Physics, Faculty of Science and Technology, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Malaysia.
^{ddd} Also at Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología, Mexico City, Mexico.
^{eee} Also at IRFU, CEA, Université Paris-Saclay, Gif-sur-Yvette, France.
^{fff} Also at Faculty of Physics, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia.
^{ggg} Also at Trincomalee Campus, Eastern University, Sri Lanka, Nilaveli, Sri Lanka.
^{hhh} Also at INFN Sezione di Pavia, Università di Pavia, Pavia, Italy.
ⁱⁱⁱ Also at National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece.
^{jjj} Also at Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale Lausanne, Lausanne, Switzerland.
^{kkk} Also at Universität Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland.
^{lll} Also at Stefan Meyer Institute for Subatomic Physics, Vienna, Austria.
^{mmm} Also at Laboratoire d'Annecy-le-Vieux de Physique des Particules, IN2P3-CNRS, Annecy-le-Vieux, France.
ⁿⁿⁿ Also at Near East University, Research Center of Experimental Health Science, Mersin, Turkey.
^{ooo} Also at Konya Technical University, Konya, Turkey.
^{ppp} Also at Izmir Bakircay University, Izmir, Turkey.
^{qqq} Also at Adiyaman University, Adiyaman, Turkey.
^{rrr} Also at Istanbul Gedik University, Istanbul, Turkey.
^{sss} Also at Necmettin Erbakan University, Konya, Turkey.
^{ttt} Also at Bozok Universitetesi Rektörlüğü, Yozgat, Turkey.
^{uuu} Also at Marmara University, Istanbul, Turkey.
^{vvv} Also at Milli Savunma University, Istanbul, Turkey.
^{www} Also at Kafkas University, Kars, Turkey.
^{xxx} Also at İstanbul University—Cerrahpaşa, Faculty of Engineering, İstanbul, Turkey.
^{yyy} Also at Yildiz Technical University, İstanbul, Turkey.
^{zzz} Also at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussel, Belgium.
^{aaaa} Also at School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Southampton, Southampton, United Kingdom.
^{bbbb} Also at University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom.
^{cccc} Also at IPPP Durham University, Durham, United Kingdom.
^{dddd} Also at Monash University, Faculty of Science, Clayton, Australia.
^{eeee} Also at Università di Torino, Torino, Italy.
^{ffff} Also at Bethel University, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA.
^{gggg} Also at Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University, Karaman, Turkey.
^{hhhh} Also at California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California, USA.
ⁱⁱⁱⁱ Also at United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, USA.
^{jjjj} Also at Bingöl University, Bingöl, Turkey.
^{kkkk} Also at Georgian Technical University, Tbilisi, Georgia.
^{llll} Also at Sinop University, Sinop, Turkey.
^{mmmm} Also at Erciyes University, Kayseri, Turkey.
ⁿⁿⁿⁿ Also at Institute of Modern Physics and Key Laboratory of Nuclear Physics and Ion-beam Application (MOE)—Fudan University, Shanghai, China.
^{oooo} Also at Texas A&M University at Qatar, Doha, Qatar.
^{pppp} Also at Kyungpook National University, Daegu, Korea.
^{qqqq} Also at Yerevan Physics Institute, Yerevan, Armenia.
^{tttt} Also at University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, USA.
^{ssss} Also at Imperial College, London, United Kingdom.
^{tttt} Also at Institute of Nuclear Physics of the Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.