IDENTITIES IN ITERATED RASCAL TRIANGLES

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ABSTRACT. In this manuscript, we explore new binomial identities within iterated Rascal triangles, revealing a connection between Vandermonde convolution and iterated Rascal numbers. We also provide new identities in terms of finite differences of iterated Rascal numbers and Binomial coefficients. Apart that, the manuscript provides a proof of the row sums conjecture in iterated Rascal triangles. Also, we establish and explore a connection between iterated Rascal triangles and (1,q)-Binomial coefficients, showing related OEIS sequences. All result can be validated through the supplementary Mathematica programs.

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1. Introduction

Rascal triangle is Pascal-like numeric triangle developed in 2010 by three middle school students, Alif Anggoro, Eddy Liu, and Angus Tulloch [1]. During math classes they were challenged to provide the next row for the following number triangle

The teacher anticipated that the next row would match Pascal's triangle, such as "1 4 6 4 1", by applying the binomial coefficient recurrence rule South = East + West. However, Anggoro, Liu, and Tulloch proposed that the next row should be "1 4 5 4 1". Instead of using Pascal's triangle rule South = East + West, they derived this new row using a relation they termed the diamond formula

$$South = \frac{East \cdot West + 1}{North} \tag{1.1}$$

By applying the recurrence relation from equation (1.1), the students successfully generated an entirely new triangular sequence, now referred to as the Rascal triangle.

n/k	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	1									
1	1	1								
2	1	2	1							
3	1	3	3	1						
4	1	4	5	4	1					
5	1	5	7	7	5	1				
6	1	6	9	10	9	6	1			
7	1	7	11	13	13	11	7	1		
8	1	8	13	16	17	16	13	8	1	
9	1	9	15	19	21	21	19	15	9	1

Table 1. Rascal triangle. Sequence A077028 in OEIS [2].

For example, the fourth row is "1 4 5 4 1" because $4 = \frac{1 \cdot 3 + 1}{1}$ and $5 = \frac{3 \cdot 3 + 1}{2}$. Moreover, the Rascal triangle, as presented in table (1), represents the first and foundational instance of a new family of Pascal-like triangles. This family, known as *iterated Rascal triangles*, was first introduced by J. Gregory in her master's thesis [3].

We define the k-th element in the n-th row of an iterated Rascal triangle as $\binom{n}{k}_i$, where i represents the number of iterations. The integer sequence produced by $\binom{n}{k}_i$ is referred to as an iterated Rascal triangle Ri, and each $\binom{n}{k}_i$ is termed an iterated Rascal number. Therefore, the Rascal triangle shown in table (1) corresponds to the iterated Rascal triangle R1, generated by the formula $\binom{n}{k}_1 = k(n-k) + 1$. While the iterated Rascal number $\binom{n}{k}_i$ is defined by the diamond rule (1.1), which differs from the standard binomial coefficient recurrence, it still maintains a significant connection with the binomial coefficients $\binom{n}{k}$, as demonstrated by

$$\binom{n}{k}_{i} = \sum_{m=0}^{i} \binom{n-k}{m} \binom{k}{m} \tag{1.2}$$

For example, $\binom{7}{4}_3 = 35$, $\binom{12}{7}_5 = 792$, $\binom{11}{5}_5 = 462$.

Example 1.1. Rascal triangle R2 generated by $\binom{n}{k}_2$

n/k	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	1									
1	1	1								
2	1	2	1							
3	1	3	3	1						
4	1	4	6	4	1					
5	1	5	10	10	5	1				
6	1	6	15	19	15	6	1			
7	1	7	21	31	31	21	7	1		
8	1	8	28	46	53	46	28	8	1	
9	1	9	36	64	81	81	64	36	9	1

Table 2. Rascal triangle R2. Sequence A374378 in OEIS [4].

Example 1.2. Rascal triangle R3 generated by $\binom{n}{k}_3$

n/k	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	1									
1	1	1								
2	1	2	1							
3	1	3	3	1						
4	1	4	6	4	1					
5	1	5	10	10	5	1				
6	1	6	15	20	15	6	1			
7	1	7	21	35	35	21	7	1		
8	1	8	28	56	69	56	28	8	1	
9	1	9	36	84	121	121	84	36	9	1

Table 3. Rascal triangle R3. Sequence A374452 in OEIS [5].

Since then, a lot of work has been done over the topic of rascal triangles. Numerous identities and relations have been revealed. For instance, a few combinatorial interpretations of rascal numbers provided at [6], in particular, these interpretations establish a relation between rascal numbers and combinatorics of binary words. Several generalization approaches were proposed, namely generalized and iterated rascal triangles [7, 8]. In particular, the

concept of iterated rascal numbers establishes a close connection between rascal numbers and binomial coefficients.

2. Binomial identities in Iterated Rascal Triangles

Prior we begin our discussion it is worth to introduce a few preliminary facts and statements. Define the iterated rascal number [3, eq. 3.2]

Definition 2.1. Iterated rascal number

$$\binom{n}{k}_{i} = \sum_{m=0}^{i} \binom{n-k}{m} \binom{k}{m} \tag{2.1}$$

The first important thing to notice is that the iterated Rascal number is a special case of the Vandermonde convolution. Consider the Vandermonde convolution [9]

$$\binom{a+b}{r} = \sum_{m=0}^{r} \binom{a}{m} \binom{b}{r-m}$$

Implies

$$\binom{n}{k} = \sum_{m=0}^{k} \binom{n-k}{m} \binom{k}{k-m}$$

Thus,

$$\binom{n}{k}_{i} = \sum_{m=0}^{i} \binom{n-k}{m} \binom{k}{k-m} \tag{2.2}$$

Meaning that iterated rascal number is partial case of Vandermonde convolution of $\binom{n}{k}$ with the upper summation bound equals to i. Without further hesitation consider our findings.

Proposition 2.2. Iterated rascal triangle equals to Pascal's triangle up to i-th column. For every $k \leq i$

$$\binom{n}{k}_i = \binom{n}{k} \tag{2.3}$$

Then binomial identity follows

$$\binom{n}{i-k}_i = \binom{n}{i-k}$$

Applying binomial coefficients symmetry principle we obtain

$$\binom{n}{n-i+k}_i = \binom{n}{n-i+k}$$

Proof. Proof of proposition (2.2) is given by [8, proposition 6.0.1].

Proposition 2.3. Iterated rascal triangle equals to Pascal's triangle up to 2i+1-th row. For every $n \le 2i+1$

$$\binom{n}{k}_i = \binom{n}{k}$$

Therefore, for every $i \geq 0$ and $n \geq 0$

Equation (2.4) is of interest because in contrast to rascal column identity (2.3) it gives relation over k for each i, so that it is true for all cases in i, k: i < k, i = k and k > i. In particular, equation (2.4) implies the row sums identity in iterated rascal triangles

$$\sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \binom{2i+1-n}{k}_{i} = 2^{2i+1-n}$$

Given n = 0 we obtain

$$\sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \binom{2i+1}{k}_i = 2^{2i+1}$$

and so on. Taking t = 2i + 1 in (2.4) yields

$$\binom{t-n}{k}_{t-i-1} = \binom{t-n}{k}$$

Moreover, equation (2.4) gives Vandermonde-like identity

$$\binom{2i+1-n}{k} = \sum_{m=0}^{i} \binom{2i+1-n-k}{m} \binom{k}{m}$$
 (2.5)

In particular, given n = 0, 1 equation (2.5) yields the following Vandermonde-like identities

$$\binom{2i+1}{k} = \sum_{m=0}^{i} \binom{2i+1-k}{m} \binom{k}{m}$$

$$\binom{2i}{k} = \sum_{m=0}^{i} \binom{2i-k}{m} \binom{k}{m}$$

Proof. Proof of proposition (2.3). We have to prove that for every i, k

$$\sum_{m=0}^{k} {2i+1-n-k \choose m} {k \choose m} - \sum_{m=0}^{i} {2i+1-n-k \choose m} {k \choose m} = 0$$

For the case k < i proof is given by [8, proposition 6.0.1]. For the case k = i proof is trivial. Thus, the remaining case is k > i yields

$$\sum_{m=i+1}^{k} {2i+1-n-k \choose m} {k \choose m} = 0$$
 (2.6)

If (2.6) is true for each k > i, then its sum over k should be zero as well. Introducing sum in k to (2.6) we get

$$\sum_{k} \sum_{m=i+1}^{k} {2i+1-n-k \choose m} {k \choose m} = 0$$

The sum $\sum_{k} {2i+1-n-k \choose m} {k \choose m}$ appears to match the equation (5.26) in Concrete mathematics [10, eq. 5.26]

$$\sum_{k=0}^{\ell} {\ell-k \choose m} {q+k \choose n} = {\ell+q+1 \choose m+n+1}$$
 (2.7)

Therefore,

$$\sum_{k} {2i+1-n-k \choose m} {k \choose m} = {2i+2-n \choose 2m+1}$$

Thus, our main assumption is equivalent to

$$\sum_{m=i+1}^{k} \sum_{k} {2i+1-n-k \choose m} {k \choose m} \equiv \sum_{m=i+1}^{k} {2i+2-n \choose 2m+1}$$

Hence, we have to prove that

$$\sum_{m=i+1}^{k} \binom{2i+2-n}{2m+1} = 0 \tag{2.8}$$

Substituting m = i + 1 + m into (2.8), we get

$$\sum_{m=0}^{k} {2i+2-n \choose 2(i+1+m)+1} = \sum_{m=0}^{k} {2i+2-n \choose 2i+3+2m} = 0$$

Which is indeed true because $\binom{2i+2-n}{2i+3+2m} = 0$ for every $m, n \ge 0$. Thus, the proposition (2.4) is true.

Now, let's smoothly switch our focus to finite differences of binomial coefficients and iterated rascal numbers. Considering the table of differences $\binom{n}{k} - \binom{n}{k}_3$

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	0 0	9	П												Ţ		П	T	十	1
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	0 6	9 0	0	0	0												П	T	T	1
	0 0	9 0	0	0	0	0											П	Т	\top	7
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	0 6	—	\mathbf{H}		406	658	658	406	126	0	0	0	0						\perp	
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	0 6	9 0	0	330	1302	2730	3830	3830	2730	1302	330	0	0	0	0				\perp	
	0 6	_	\mathbf{H}		2112	4872	7680	8885	7680	4872	2112	495	0	0	0	0			\perp	
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Figure 1. Difference $\binom{n}{k} - \binom{n}{k}_3$. Highlighted column is $\binom{n}{4}$. Sequence A000332 in the OEIS [11].

We can spot that having i = 3 the k = 4-th column gives binomial coefficient $\binom{n}{4}$. Indeed, this rule is true for every i.

Proposition 2.4. (Row-column difference.) For every $i \geq 0$

$$\binom{n+2i}{i} - \binom{n+2i}{i}_{i-1} = \binom{n+i}{i}$$

Proof. We have previously stated that iterated rascal numbers are closely related to Vandermonde convolution (2.2). Thus, proposition (2.4) can be rewritten as

$$\sum_{m=0}^{i} \binom{n+i}{m} \binom{i}{i-m} - \sum_{m=0}^{i-1} \binom{n+i}{m} \binom{i}{i-m} = \binom{n+i}{i} \binom{i}{0}$$

Therefore, $\binom{n+2i}{i} - \binom{n+2i}{i}_{i-1} = \binom{n+i}{i}$ is indeed true.

Proposition (2.4) yields to few more identities. Applying binomial coefficients symmetry

$$\binom{n+2i}{n+i} - \binom{n+2i}{n+i}_{i-1} = \binom{n+i}{n}$$

Taking j = n + i gives

$$\binom{j+i}{j} - \binom{j+i}{j}_{i-1} = \binom{j}{j-i}$$

By symmetry

$$\binom{j+i}{i} - \binom{j+i}{i}_{i-1} = \binom{j}{i}$$

Proposition (2.4) can be generalized even further, for every i < k and i > k.

Proposition 2.5. (Finite difference of binomial coefficients and iterated rascal numbers for i < k.) For every i < k

$$\binom{n}{k} - \binom{n}{k}_{i} = \sum_{m=i+1}^{k} \binom{n-k}{m} \binom{k}{k-m}$$

Proof. It is true by means of Vandermonde convolution.

Proposition 2.6. (Finite difference of binomial coefficients and iterated rascal numbers for i > k.) For every i > k

$$\binom{n}{k} - \binom{n}{k}_{i} = \sum_{m=k+1}^{i} \binom{n-k}{m} \binom{k}{k-m}$$

Proof. It is true by means of Vandermonde convolution.

3. Q-Binomial identities in Iterated Rascal Triangles

Consider the table of differences of binomial coefficients and iterated rascal numbers one more time as there is another pattern we can spot.

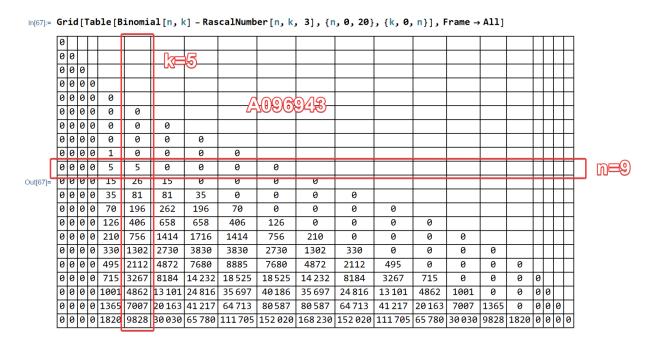


Figure 2. Difference $\binom{n}{k} - \binom{n}{k}_3$. Highlighted column is (1,5)-binomial coefficient $\binom{n}{k}^5$. Sequence A096943 in the OEIS [12].

The (1,q)-binomial coefficients $\binom{n}{k}^q$ are special kind of binomial coefficients defined by

Definition 3.1. (1,q)-Binomial coefficient

$$\begin{bmatrix} n \\ k \end{bmatrix}^{q} = \begin{cases} q & \text{if } k = 0, n = 0 \\ 1 & \text{if } k = 0 \\ 0 & \text{if } k > n \end{cases}$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \binom{n-1}{k} \rceil^{q} + \binom{n-1}{k-1} \rceil^{q} \\ \end{cases}$$
(3.1)

Indeed, the relation shown in Figure (2) is true for every i, so that it establishes a relation between (1, q)-binomial coefficients and iterated rascal numbers.

Proposition 3.2. (Relation between iterated rascal numbers and (1, q)-binomial coefficients.) For every $i \ge 0$

$$\binom{2i+3+j}{i+2} - \binom{2i+3+j}{i+2}_{i} = \begin{bmatrix} i+2+j\\ i+2 \end{bmatrix}^{i+2}_{i}$$

Taking t = i + 2 in (3.2) yields

$$\binom{2t-1+j}{t} - \binom{2t-1+j}{t}_{t-2} = \begin{bmatrix} t+j \\ t \end{bmatrix}^t$$

In particular, having i = 1 proposition (3.2) gives the OEIS sequence A006503 [13] such that third column of (1,3)-Pascal triangle A095660 [14].

Having i = 3 proposition (3.2) gives the OEIS sequence A096943 [12] such that third column of (1, 5)-Pascal triangle A096940 [15].

For i = 5, the proposition (3.2) yields the OEIS sequence A097297 [16] such that seventh column of (1, 6)-Pascal triangle A096940 [17].

4. Row sums conjecture

In [8] the authors propose the following conjecture for row sums of iterated rascal triangles.

Conjecture 4.1. (Conjecture 7.5 in [8].) For every i

$$\sum_{k=0}^{4i+3} \binom{4i+3}{k}_i = 2^{4i+2}$$

Proof. Rewrite conjecture statement explicitly as

$$\sum_{k=0}^{4i+3} \sum_{m=0}^{i} {4i+3-k \choose m} {k \choose m} = 2^{4i+2}$$

Rearranging sums and omitting summation bounds yields

$$\sum_{m=0}^{i} \sum_{k} {4i+3-k \choose m} {k \choose m} = 2^{4i+2}$$
(4.1)

In Concrete mathematics [[10], p. 169, eq (5.26)], Knuth et al. provide the identity for the column sum of binomial coefficients multiplication

$$\sum_{k=0}^{l} {l-k \choose m} {q+k \choose n} = {l+q+1 \choose m+n+1}$$

$$(4.2)$$

We can observe this pattern in the equation (4.1), thus the sum $\sum_{k} {4i+3-k \choose m} {k \choose m}$ equals to

$$\sum_{k} {4i+3-k \choose m} {k \choose m} = {4i+4 \choose 2m+1}$$

Therefore, conjecture (4.1) is equivalent to

$$\sum_{m=0}^{i} \binom{4i+4}{2m+1} = 2^{4i+2}$$

Note that

$$\sum_{m=0}^{2i+1} {4i+4 \choose 2m+1} = 2^{4i+3}$$

So that

$$\frac{1}{2} \sum_{m=0}^{2i+1} {4i+4 \choose 2m+1} = \sum_{m=0}^{i} {4i+4 \choose 2m+1} = 2^{4i+2}$$

This completes the proof.

Proposition 4.2. For every i

$$\sum_{k=0}^{4i+3} {4i+3 \choose k}_i = 2^{4i+2}$$

In particular, equation (4.2) assumes the following identity in row sums of iterated rascal triangles

$$\sum_{k=0}^{n} \binom{n}{k}_{i} = \sum_{m=0}^{i} \binom{n+1}{2m+1}$$

Decomposing $\binom{n+1}{2m+1}$ in above equation yields

Proposition 4.3. (Iterated rascal triangles row sums.) For every i

$$\sum_{k=0}^{n} \binom{n}{k}_i = \sum_{m=0}^{2i+1} \binom{n}{m}$$

Proof.

$$\sum_{k=0}^{n} \binom{n}{k}_{i} = \sum_{m=0}^{i} \binom{n+1}{2m+1} = \sum_{m=0}^{i} \binom{n}{2m} + \binom{n}{2m+1} = \sum_{m=0}^{2i+1} \binom{n}{m}$$

5. Conclusions

In this manuscript we have discussed new binomial identities in iterated rascal triangles (2.4), (2.4), (2.5), revealing a connection between the Vandermonde convolution formula and iterated rascal numbers. We also present Vandermonde-like binomial identities (2.5). Furthermore, we establish a relation between iterated rascal triangles and (1,q)-binomial coefficients (3.2). All the results can be validated using supplementary Mathematica scripts at [18].

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