

SUMS OF POWERS VIA CENTRAL FINITE DIFFERENCES AND NEWTON'S FORMULA

PETRO KOLOSOV

ABSTRACT. In this manuscript we derive formula for multifold sums of powers using Newton's formula and central differences.

1. INTRODUCTION AND MAIN RESULTS

In this manuscript we derive formula for multifold sums of powers using Newton's formula and central differences. The topic of sums of powers is well-developed since Johann Faulhaber (1631). We define the following recurrence for multifold sums of powers, which we utilize throughout the paper.

$$\Sigma^0 n^m = n^m$$

$$\Sigma^1 n^m = \Sigma^0 1^m + \Sigma^0 2^m + \cdots + \Sigma^0 n^m$$

$$\Sigma^{r+1} n^m = \Sigma^r 1^m + \Sigma^r 2^m + \cdots + \Sigma^r n^m$$

Consider the Newton's formula [1] in central differences

Proposition 1.1 (Newton's series in central differences).

$$f(x) = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \frac{x^{[k]}}{k!} \delta^k f(0)$$

Date: December 30, 2025.

2010 Mathematics Subject Classification. 05A19, 05A10, 11B73, 11B83.

Key words and phrases. Sums of powers, Newton's interpolation formula, Finite differences, Binomial coefficients, Faulhaber's formula, Bernoulli numbers, Bernoulli polynomials, Interpolation, Discrete convolution, Combinatorics, Polynomial identities, Central factorial numbers, Stirling numbers, Eulerian numbers, Worpitzky identity, Pascal's triangle, OEIS.

where $\delta^k f(0) = \sum_{j=0}^k (-1)^j \binom{k}{j} f\left(\frac{k}{2}-j\right)$ is central finite difference in zero, and $x^{[k]} = n(n+\frac{k}{2}-1)(n+\frac{k}{2}-2)\cdots(n-\frac{k}{2}+1)$ is central factorial.

Lemma 1.2 (Central factorial).

$$n^{[k]} = n \left(n + \frac{k}{2} - 1 \right) \left(n + \frac{k}{2} - 2 \right) \cdots \left(n - \frac{k}{2} + 1 \right) = n \prod_{j=1}^{k-1} \left(n + \frac{k}{2} - j \right)$$

We observe that central factorials are closely related to falling factorials $(x)_n = x(x-1)(x-2)(x-3)\cdots(x-n+1) = \prod_{k=0}^{n-1} (x-k)$. Therefore,

$$n^{[k]} = n \left(n + \frac{k}{2} - 1 \right)_{k-1}$$

To derive formula for multifold sums of powers, we follow the strategy to express the Newton's formula [eq ref] in terms of binomial coefficients, then to reach closed forms of column sum of binomial coefficients by means of hockey stick identity. Therefore,

Proposition 1.3. For $k \geq 1$

$$\frac{n^{[k]}}{k!} = \frac{n}{k!} \left(n + \frac{k}{2} - 1 \right)_{k-1} = \frac{n}{k(k-1)!} \left(n + \frac{k}{2} - 1 \right)_{k-1} = \frac{n}{k} \binom{n + \frac{k}{2} - 1}{k-1}$$

Proof. The identity above is true because $\frac{(x)_n}{n!} = \binom{x}{n}$. □

Which yields Newton's formula for powers, in terms of central differences. For positive integers $n \geq 1$ and $m \geq 1$

$$n^m = \sum_{k=1}^m \frac{n}{k} \binom{n + \frac{k}{2} - 1}{k-1} \delta^k 0^m$$

Although based on Newton's interpolation series, the formula above begins the summation from $k = 1$ to avoid division by zero in $\frac{n}{k}$. It is a valid trick, because the central difference $\delta^k 0^n$ is zero for all $n \geq 1$ and $k = 0$.

By factoring out and simplifying the term n , we get

$$n^{m-1} = \sum_{k=1}^m \frac{1}{k} \binom{n + \frac{k}{2} - 1}{k-1} \delta^k 0^m$$

We may observe that the operator of central finite difference of power $\delta^k 0^m$ requires the parity of its arguments m and k meaning that both m and k must be $m \bmod 2 = k \bmod 2$ so that $\delta^k 0^m$ is non-zero.

By setting $m \rightarrow 2m$ we get

$$n^{2m-1} = \sum_{k=1}^{2m} \frac{1}{k} \binom{n + \frac{k}{2} - 1}{k-1} \delta^k 0^{2m}$$

Thus, the central difference $\delta^k 0^{2m}$ for odd k is zero. Since k runs over all integers in the range $0 \leq k \leq 2m$, we are able to omit odd values of k

$$n^{2m-1} = \sum_{k=1}^m \frac{1}{2k} \binom{n + k - 1}{2k-1} \delta^{2k} 0^{2m}$$

Thus, formula for ordinary sums of odd powers is

Proposition 1.4 (Ordinary sums of powers).

$$\Sigma^1 n^{2m-1} = \sum_{k=1}^m \frac{1}{2k} \binom{n+k}{2k} \delta^{2k} 0^{2m}$$

Proof. We have $\Sigma^1 n^{2m-1} = \sum_{k=1}^m \frac{1}{2k} \delta^{2k} 0^{2m} \sum_{j=1}^n \binom{j+k-1}{2k-1}$.

By hockey stick identity $\sum_{j=1}^n \binom{j+k-1}{2k-1} = \binom{n+k}{2k}$, thus the statement follows. \square

Therefore,

Theorem 1.5 (Multifold sums of odd powers).

$$\Sigma^r n^{2m-1} = \sum_{k=1}^m \frac{1}{2k} \binom{n+k-1+r}{2k-1+r} \delta^{2k} 0^{2m}.$$

Proof. We have $\Sigma^1 n^{2m-1} = \sum_{k=1}^m \frac{1}{2k} \delta^{2k} 0^{2m} \sum_{j=1}^n \binom{j+k-1}{2k-1}$.

By hockey stick identity $\sum_{j=1}^n \binom{j+k-1}{2k-1} = \binom{n+k}{2k}$. By induction the claim follows. \square

The formula for multifold sums of odd powers can be rewritten in terms of central factorial numbers of the second kind $T(n, k)$, because

$$k! T(n, k) = \delta^k 0^n$$

The identity above is well discussed in [2, 3, 4]. The non-zero central factorial numbers $T(2m, 2k)$ are registered as [A008957](#) in the OEIS [5].

Hence,

Proposition 1.6 (Multifold sums of odd powers in central factorial numbers).

$$\sum^r n^{2m-1} = \sum_{k=1}^m (2k-1)! \binom{n+k-1+r}{2k-1+r} T(2m, 2k).$$

It is remarkable that exactly this formula can be found in Donald Knuth's work *Johann Faulhaber and sums of powers*, see [6].

2. CONCLUSIONS

In this manuscript we derived formula for multifold sums of powers using Newton's formula and central differences. Additionally, we discussed the connection with classical formulas for sums of powers (Knuth 1993 [6]).

REFERENCES

- [1] Newton, Isaac and Chittenden, N.W. *Newton's Principia: the mathematical principles of natural philosophy*. New-York, D. Adey, 1850. https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_KaAIAAAIAAJ/page/466/mode/2up.
- [2] Steffensen, Johan Frederik. *Interpolation*. Williams & Wilkins, 1927. <https://www.amazon.com/-/de/Interpolation-Second-Dover-Books-Mathematics-ebook/dp/B00GHQVON8>.
- [3] L. Carlitz and John Riordan. The divided central differences of zero. *Canadian Journal of Mathematics*, 15:94–100, 1963. <https://doi.org/10.4153/CJM-1963-010-8>.
- [4] John Riordan. *Combinatorial identities*, volume 217. Wiley New York, 1968. <https://www.amazon.com/-/de/Combinatorial-Identities-Probability-Mathematical-Statistics/dp/0471722758>.
- [5] Sloane, Neil J.A. and others. The on-line encyclopedia of integer sequences, 2003. <https://oeis.org/>.
- [6] Knuth, Donald E. Johann Faulhaber and sums of powers. *Mathematics of Computation*, 61(203):277–294, 1993. <https://arxiv.org/abs/math/9207222>.

License: This work is licensed under a [CC BY 4.0 License](#).

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18096789>

Sources: github.com/kolosovpetro/SumsOfPowersViaCentralDifferences

ORCID: 0000-0002-6544-8880

Email: kolosovp94@gmail.com

SOFTWARE DEVELOPER, DEVOPS ENGINEER

URL: <https://kolosovpetro.github.io>