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Search for a Supersymmetric Partner to the Top Quark in Final States with Jets and Missing Transverse Momentum at $\sqrt{s} = 7$ TeV with the ATLAS Detector

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A search for direct pair production of supersymmetric top squarks ($\tilde{t}_1\tilde{t}$) is presented, assuming the $\tilde{t}_1$ decays into a top quark and the lightest supersymmetric particle, $\tilde{\chi}^0_1$, and that both top quarks decay to purely hadronic final states. A total of 16 (4) events are observed compared to a predicted standard model background of $13.5^{+3.7}_{-6.0}(4.4^{+1.7}_{-1.3})$ events in two signal regions based on $\int L dt = 4.7$ fb$^{-1}$ of $pp$ collision data taken at $\sqrt{s} = 7$ TeV with the ATLAS detector at the LHC. An exclusion region in the $m_{\tilde{t}}$ versus $\tilde{\chi}^0_1$ mass plane is evaluated: $370 < m_{\tilde{t}} < 465$ GeV is excluded for $m_{\tilde{\chi}^0_1} \sim 0$ GeV while $m_{\tilde{t}} = 445$ GeV is excluded for $m_{\tilde{\chi}^0_1} \leq 50$ GeV.

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The standard model (SM) is a successful but incomplete theory of particle interactions. Supersymmetry (SUSY) [1–9] provides an elegant cancellation of the quadratic mass divergences that would accompany a SM Higgs boson by introducing supersymmetric partners of all SM particles, such as a scalar partner of the top quark ($\tilde{t}$). Like $t\bar{t}$, direct $\tilde{t}\tilde{t}$ is produced primarily through gluon fusion at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC). The production cross section depends mostly on the mass of the top partner and has minimal dependence on other SUSY parameters [10–12]. The LHC enables searches for direct $\tilde{t}\tilde{t}$ production at higher mass scales than previous accelerators [13–27]. The viability of SUSY as a scenario to stabilize the Higgs potential and to be consistent with electroweak naturalness [28,29] is tested by the search for $\tilde{t}$ below the TeV scale.

In this Letter, we present a search for direct $\tilde{t}\tilde{t}$ production assuming $t \tilde{t} \rightarrow t\tilde{\chi}^0_1 \rightarrow bW\tilde{\chi}^0_1$, where $\tilde{t}_1$ is the lightest $t$ eigenstate and $\tilde{\chi}^0_1$ represents the lightest supersymmetric particle (LSP) in $R$-parity conserving models [30–34]. We target events where both $W$ bosons decay hadronically, yielding a final state with six high transverse momentum ($p_T$) jets from the all-hadronic $t\tilde{t}$ final state and large missing transverse momentum ($E_T^{miss}$) from the LSPs. The kinematics of both top quarks can therefore be fully specified by the visible decay products. Additionally, SM backgrounds from all-hadronic $t\tilde{t}$ are suppressed as there is no intrinsic $E_T^{miss}$ except from semileptonic $c$- and $b$-quark decays. The dominant background consists of $t\bar{t}$ events that contain a $W \rightarrow \ell \nu$ decay where the lepton ($\ell$), often of $\tau$ flavor, is either lost or misidentified as a jet. These events also have large $E_T^{miss}$ from the neutrino ($\nu$).

The data were acquired during 2011 in LHC $pp$ collisions at a center-of-mass energy of 7 TeV with the ATLAS detector [35], which consists of tracking detectors surrounded by a 2 T superconducting solenoid, calorimeters, and a muon spectrometer in a toroidal magnetic field. The high-granularity calorimeter system, with acceptance covering $|\eta| < 4.9$ [36], is composed of liquid argon with lead, copper, or tungsten absorbers and scintillator tiles with steel absorbers. This data set, composed of events with a high-$p_T$ jet and large $E_T^{miss}$ as selected by the trigger system, corresponds to an integrated luminosity of 4.7 fb$^{-1}$ with a relative uncertainty of 3.9% [37–39].

Jets are constructed from three-dimensional clusters of calorimeter cells using the anti-$k_T$ algorithm with a distance parameter of 0.4 [39,40]. Jet energies are corrected [41] for losses in material in front of the active calorimeter layers, detectorinhomogeneities, the noncompensating nature of the calorimeter, and the impact of multiple overlapping $pp$ interactions. These corrections are derived from test beam, cosmic-ray, and $pp$ collision data, and from a detailed GEANT4 [42] detector simulation [43]. Jets containing a $b$-hadron are identified with an algorithm exploiting both the impact parameter and secondary vertex information [44,45]. A factor correcting for the slight differences in the $b$-tagging efficiency between data and the GEANT4 simulation is applied to each jet in the simulation. The $b$-jets are restricted to the fiducial region of the tracker, $|\eta| < 2.5$. Non-$b$ backgrounds are minimized by requiring either $\geq 1$ $b$-jets with a selection corresponding to a 60% efficiency with a low $<0.2\%$ misidentification rate (tight), or $\geq 2$ $b$-jets each with 75% efficiency but a higher $\sim 1.7\%$ misidentification rate per $b$-jet (loose).

The $E_T^{miss}$ is the magnitude of $p_T^{miss}$, the negative vector sum of the $p_T$ of the clusters of calorimeter cells, calibrated according to their associated reconstructed object (e.g., jets and electrons), and of the $p_T$ of muons above 10 GeV.
within $|\eta| < 2.4$. Events containing $E_T^{\text{miss}}$ induced by jets associated with calorimeter noise or noncollision backgrounds [46], or by cosmic-ray muons [47,48], are removed from consideration. Large $p_T^{\text{miss}}$ collinear with a high-$p_T$ jet could indicate a significant fluctuation in the reconstructed jet energy or the presence of a semileptonic $c$- or $b$-quark decay. Therefore, the difference in azimuthal angle ($\Delta \phi$) between the $p_T^{\text{miss}}$ and any of the three highest-$p_T$ jets in the event, $\Delta \phi(p_T^{\text{miss}}, \text{jet})$, is required to be $>\pi/5$ radians. Fluctuations in the $E_T^{\text{miss}}$ are also suppressed by requiring that the $\Delta \phi$ between the above computed $p_T^{\text{miss}}$ and one calculated with the tracking system, using tracks having $p_T > 0.5$ GeV, is $<\pi/3$ radians.

Events are required to have at least one jet with $p_T > 130$ GeV in $|\eta| < 2.8$ and $E_T^{\text{miss}} > 150$ GeV to ensure full efficiency of the trigger. At least five other jets having $p_T > 30$ GeV and $|\eta| < 2.8$ must be present. In addition to the jet and $E_T^{\text{miss}}$ requirements, events containing “loose” electrons [49,50] with $p_T > 20$ GeV and $|\eta| < 2.47$ that do not overlap with any jet within $\Delta R < 0.4$, where $\Delta R = \sqrt{(\Delta \eta)^2 + (\Delta \phi)^2}$, are rejected. Similarly, events with muons [47–51] having $p_T > 10$ GeV and $|\eta| < 2.4$ that are separated by $\Delta R > 0.4$ from the nearest jet are rejected. A jet with 1–4 tracks and $\Delta \phi(p_T^{\text{miss}}, \text{jet}) < \pi/5$ indicates a likely $W \rightarrow \tau \nu$ decay. Events with such $\tau$-like jets that have transverse mass $m_T = \sqrt{2p_T E_T^{\text{miss}}(1 - \cos \Delta \phi)} < 100$ GeV are rejected.

The presence of high-$p_T$ top quarks that decay through $t \rightarrow bW \rightarrow bjj$ in the $t\bar{t}\tau\nu$ final state is exploited to further reduce SM backgrounds by only considering events with reconstructed three-jet invariant masses consistent with the top-quark mass ($m_t$). A clustering technique resolves the combinatorics associated with high-multiplicity jet events. The three closest jets in the $\eta-\phi$ plane are combined to form one triplet; a second triplet is formed from the remaining jets by repeating the procedure. The resulting three-jet mass ($m_{jjj}$) spectrum is shown in Fig. 1 for the control region constructed from $\ell +$ jets events (defined below). There is a clear peak associated with the hadronically decaying top quarks above a non-$t\bar{t}$ background. A requirement of $80 < m_{jjj} < 270$ GeV is placed on each reconstructed triplet in the event. The kinematics of the $t \rightarrow bW \rightarrow b\nu$ decay is also exploited to further reduce the dominant $\ell +$ jets $m_T$ background, as the $m_T$ distribution of the $p_T^{\text{miss}}$ and $b$-jet ($m_T^{\text{jet}}$) has an end point at $m_t$. When there are $\geq 2$ loose $b$-jets, the $m_T^{\text{jet}}$ for the $b$-jet closest to the $p_T^{\text{miss}}$ is required to be $>175$ GeV. The largest $m_T^{\text{jet}}$ is calculated for each of the four highest-$p_T$ jets, is required to be $>175$ GeV in the case of only one tight $b$-jet.

Two signal regions (SR) are defined including the above kinematic and mass requirements. The first, which requires $E_T^{\text{miss}} > 150$ GeV (SRA), is optimized for low $m_{\chi_1}$, while the second, requiring $E_T^{\text{miss}} > 260$ GeV (SRB), is used for higher $m_{\chi_1}$. Using these signal regions, the search is most sensitive to $t\bar{t}\chi_1^0$ production with $350 \lesssim m_{\chi_1} \lesssim 500$ GeV and $m_{t\chi_1} \ll m_{\chi_1}$. Signal events are simulated using HERWIG++ [52] with the MRST2007LO* [53] parton distribution functions (PDF) generated with the $t\bar{t}$ and $\chi_1^0$ masses at fixed values in a grid with 50 GeV spacing. The mixing between $t_\ell$ and $\bar{t}_\ell$ is chosen such that the lightest scalar top is mostly the partner of the right-handed top quark. The branching fraction of $t\rightarrow t\chi_1^0$ is set to 100% and the top-quark mass is set to 172.5 GeV. Signal cross sections are calculated to next-to-leading order in the strong coupling constant, including the resummation of soft gluon emission at next-to-leading-logarithmic accuracy (NLO + NLL) [10–12]. The nominal production cross section and associated uncertainty are taken from an envelope of cross section predictions using different PDF sets and factorization and renormalization scales, as described in Ref. [54]. The $t\bar{t}\chi_1^0$ cross section for $m_{\chi_1} = 400$ GeV is $\sigma_{t\bar{t}\chi_1} = 0.21 \pm 0.03$ pb.

In the signal region, the dominant source of SM background is $t\bar{t} +$ jets events where the $\tau$ lepton is reconstructed as a jet. Additional, smaller, backgrounds include other $t\bar{t} \rightarrow \ell +$ jets final states, $t\bar{t} + V$ where $V$ represents a $W$ or $Z$ boson, single top-quark production, $V +$ jets, and $VV +$ jets. The $t\bar{t}$ events are produced with ALPGEN [55] using the CTEQ6L1 PDF [56] and interfaced to HERWIG [57,58] for particle production and JIMMY [59] for the underlying event model. TAUOLA was used to model the decay of $\tau$ leptons [60]. Additional $t\bar{t}$ samples generated with MC@NLO [61,62] and ACERMC [63], interfaced to HERWIG and JIMMY, are used to estimate event generator.
systematic uncertainties. Samples of $t\bar{t}$ + $V$ are produced with MADGRAPH [64] interfaced to PYTHIA [58,65,66]. Single top events are generated with MC@NLO [67,68] and ACERMC. The associated production of $W$ and $Z$ bosons and light and heavy-flavor jets is simulated using ALPGEN; diboson production is simulated with SHERPA [69].

All samples are passed through the GEANT4 simulation of the ATLAS detector, and are reconstructed in the same manner as the data. The simulation includes the effect of multiple $pp$ interactions and is weighted to reproduce the observed distribution of the number of interactions per bunch crossing. SM event samples are normalized to the observed distribution of the number of interactions per $pp$ interaction, and light and heavy-flavor jets is simulated using ALPGEN; $(0.66 \pm 0.05)$ to bring the $\simeq 6$ jet $\ell + \text{jets}$ ALPGEN $t\bar{t}$ events into agreement with the data after recalculating all quantities except $E_T^{\text{miss}}$; the uncertainty quoted here is statistical only. This scale factor is used in Figs. 1–3. The normalization is validated with an orthogonal $t\bar{t}$-dominated sample created from SRA by selecting events with $\tau$-like jets; the requirement on $m_T^{\text{jet}}$ is removed to increase the sample size. The $m_T$ of $\tau$-like jets is shown in Fig. 2, where the $t\bar{t}$ sample has been normalized as described above. Expectations from the simulation agree with the data within uncertainties. Contributions to the signal region from QCD multijet and all-hadronic $t\bar{t}$ production are estimated with a data-driven technique [71]. Jets are smeared in a low-$E_T^{\text{miss}}$ data sample using response functions derived from control regions dominated by multijet events. The expected number of such events is $0.2 \pm 0.2$ in SRA after the full event selection.

The $E_T^{\text{miss}}$ distribution in SRA is shown in Fig. 3 for data, for the SM backgrounds, and for expectations of $t\bar{t}$ production with $m_{t\bar{t}} = 400$ and $m_{t\bar{t}} = 1$ GeV. Numbers of events and combined statistical and systematic uncertainties, for both SRA and SRB, are tabulated in Table I. Uncertainties in the event generators, including the impact of initial- and final-state radiation, are the dominant source of systematic uncertainty of 28% (23%) for the background in SRA (SRB). Other major sources of uncertainty include 22% (32%) for the jet energy calibration, 6.5% (6.8%) for jet energy resolution, 5.9% (6.2%) for $b$-jet identification, and 1.4% (1.5%) for $E_T^{\text{miss}}$ in SRA (SRB).
The number of observed events in the data is well matched by the SM background. These results are interpreted as exclusion limits for \( m_{\tilde{t}} \) and \( m_{\tilde{t}^0} \) using a CLs likelihood ratio combining Poisson probabilities for signal and background [72]. Systematic uncertainties are treated as nuisance parameters assuming Gaussian distributions. Uncertainties associated with jets, b-jets, \( E_T^{\text{miss}} \), and luminosity are fully correlated between signal and background; the others are assumed to be uncorrelated. The expected limits for the signal regions are evaluated for each \( (m_{\tilde{t}}, m_{\tilde{t}^0}) \) point; the SR with the better expected sensitivity is used for that point. The expected and observed 95% C.L. exclusion limits, interpolating across points, are displayed in Fig. 4. The \(-1\sigma\) observed limit contour that accounts for theoretical uncertainties on the SUSY cross sections is maximum at \( (m_{\tilde{t}}, m_{\tilde{t}^0}) = (445, 50) \) GeV. Top squark masses between 370 and 465 GeV are excluded for \( m_{\tilde{t}^0} \approx 0 \) GeV. These values are derived from the \(-1\sigma\) observed limit contour to account for theoretical uncertainties on the SUSY cross sections. The 95% C.L. upper limit on the number of events beyond the SM in each signal region, divided by the integrated luminosity, yields limits on the observed (expected) visible cross sections of 2.9 (2.5) fb in SRA and 1.3 (1.3) fb in SRB.

In conclusion, we have presented a search for the direct production of \( \tilde{t}\tilde{t} \) in the \( \tilde{t}^0\tilde{t}\tilde{t}^0 \) decay channel, assuming 100% branching fraction for \( \tilde{t} \to t\tilde{t}^0 \). A total of 16 (4) events are observed compared to a predicted standard model background of \( 13.5 \pm 3.6 (4.4 \pm 1.7) \) events in two signal regions based on \( \int L dt = 4.7 \) fb\(^{-1}\) of pp collision data taken at \( \sqrt{s} = 7 \) TeV with the ATLAS detector at the LHC. No evidence for \( \tilde{t}_1 \to \tilde{t}_2 \) is observed in data and 95% C.L. limits are set on \( \tilde{t}_1 \to \tilde{t}_2 \) production as a function of \( m_{\tilde{t}_2} \) and \( m_{\tilde{t}_2} \).

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### Table I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SRA ( E_T^{\text{miss}} &gt; 150 ) GeV</th>
<th>SRB ( &gt;260 ) GeV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( \tilde{t}\tilde{t} )</td>
<td>9.2 ± 2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \tilde{t}\tilde{t} + W/Z )</td>
<td>0.8 ± 0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single top</td>
<td>0.7 ± 0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z + jets</td>
<td>1.3 ± 1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W + jets</td>
<td>1.2 ± 1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diboson</td>
<td>0.1 ± 0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multijets</td>
<td>0.2 ± 0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total SM</td>
<td>13.5 ± 3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSY ( (m_{\tilde{t}}, m_{\tilde{t}^0}) = (400, 1) ) GeV</td>
<td>14.8 ± 4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data (observed)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visible cross section limit [fb]</td>
<td>2.9 (2.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
puting support from all WLCG partners is acknowledged gratefully, in particular, from CERN and the ATLAS Tier-1 facilities at TRIUMF (Canada), NDGF (Denmark, Norway, Sweden), CC-IN2P3 (France), KIT/GridKA (Germany), INFN-CNAF (Italy), NL-T1 (Netherlands), PIC (Spain), ASGC (Taiwan), RAL (UK), and BNL (USA) and in the Tier-2 facilities worldwide.

[36] ATLAS uses a right-handed coordinate system with its origin at the nominal interaction point in the center of the detector and the z axis along the beam pipe. Cylindrical coordinates (r, Φ) are used in the transverse plane, being the azimuthal angle around the beam pipe. The pseudorapidity is defined in terms of the polar angle θ as η = − ln tan(θ/2).
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