

Geometric quantum discord through the Schatten 1-norm

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It has recently been pointed out that the geometric quantum discord, as defined by the Hilbert-Schmidt norm (2-norm), is not a good measure of quantum correlations, since it may increase under local reversible operations on the unmeasured subsystem. Here, we revisit the geometric discord by considering general Schatten p -norms, explicitly showing that the 1-norm is the only p -norm able to define a consistent quantum correlation measure. In addition, by restricting the optimization to the tetrahedron of two-qubit Bell-diagonal states, we provide an analytical expression for the 1-norm geometric discord, which turns out to be equivalent to the negativity of quantumness. We illustrate the measure by analyzing its monotonicity properties.

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Quantum discord is an information-theoretic measure of nonclassical correlations, initially proposed by Ollivier and Zurek [1], which goes beyond entanglement (i.e., separable states can have nonzero discord) and whose characterization has attracted much attention during the last decade (see Ref. [2] for a review and Ref. [3] for an operational interpretation). From an analytical point of view, the evaluation of quantum discord is a difficult task, even for (general) two-qubit states, since an optimization procedure is required for the conditional entropy over all local generalized measurements. In this scenario, closed expressions are known only for classes of states [4,5].

The difficulty of extracting analytical solutions for quantum discord led Dakić, Vedral, and Brukner to propose a geometric measure of quantum discord [6], which quantifies the amount of quantum correlations of a state in terms of its minimal Hilbert-Schmidt distance from the set of classical states. The calculation of this alternative measure requires a simpler minimization process, which is realizable analytically for general two-qubit states [6] as well as for arbitrary bipartite states [7–9]. Moreover, it has been shown to exhibit operational significance in specific quantum protocols (see, e.g., Ref. [10]). Despite those remarkable features, geometric discord is known to be sensitive to the choice of distance measures (see, e.g., Ref. [11]). In turn, as recently pointed out [12–14], the geometric discord as proposed in Ref. [6] cannot be regarded as a good measure for the quantumness of correlations, since it may increase under local operations on the unmeasured subsystem. In particular, it has explicitly been shown by Piani [14] that the simple introduction of a factorized local ancillary state on the unmeasured party changes the geometric discord by a factor given by the lack of purity of the ancilla. This is in contrast with the entropic quantum discord, which does not suffer this problem. From a technical point of view, the root of this drawback is the lack of contractivity of geometric discord under trace-preserving quantum channels. Remarkably, this is strongly connected with the norm adopted to define distance in the state space.

Most recently, Tufarelli *et al.* [15] have introduced a modified version of geometric discord that is immune to the

particular ancilla considered in Ref. [14]. However, since this measure is also based on Hilbert-Schmidt distance, it inherits the noncontractivity problem (see, e.g., examples in Ref. [12]). A way to circumvent this issue is to employ the trace distance in place of the Hilbert-Schmidt norm [12,16,17]. In this direction, we consider the generalization of the geometric discord in terms of Schatten p -norms. More specifically, we show that the geometric discord as defined by the 1-norm is the only p -norm geometric discord invariant under the class of channels considered in Ref. [14]. Furthermore, by restricting the minimization to states in the Bell-diagonal form, we analytically evaluate the 1-norm geometric discord for arbitrary Bell-diagonal two-qubit states. As an illustration, we compare our result with the entropic quantum discord and the 2-norm geometric discord, analyzing its monotonicity properties as a function of the correlation functions.

Entropic and geometric measures of quantum discord. Quantum discord has been introduced as an entropic measure of quantum correlation in a quantum state. For a bipartite system described by the density matrix ρ , it is defined by the difference $\mathcal{Q}(\rho) = \mathcal{I}(\rho) - \mathcal{J}(\rho)$ [1], where $\mathcal{I}(\rho)$ is the quantum mutual information, which represents the total correlation in ρ [18], and $\mathcal{J}(\rho)$ is the measurement-based mutual information, which can be interpreted as the classical correlation in ρ [19]. These quantities are given by $\mathcal{I}(\rho) = S(\rho_a) + S(\rho_b) - S(\rho)$ and $\mathcal{J}(\rho) = S(\rho_b) - \min_{\{E_k\}} [\sum_k p_k S(\rho_{b|k})]$. In these expressions, $S(\rho) = -\text{tr}[\rho \log_2 \rho]$ denotes the von Neumann entropy, $\rho_{a(b)}$ is the reduced density matrix of the subsystem $a(b)$, and the minimum is taken over all possible positive operator-valued measures (POVMs) $\{E_k\}$ on subsystem a , where $\rho_{b|k} = \text{tr}_a[E_k \rho] / p_k$ is the post-measurement state of b after the outcome k on a is obtained with probability $p_k = \text{tr}[E_k \rho]$.

The analytical minimization over POVMs involved in $\mathcal{J}(\rho)$ constitutes a hard task, even for two-qubit systems in a general state. This motivated the introduction of an alternative measure [6], which was named geometric quantum discord. Such a geometric measure is based on the distance between the given quantum state ρ and the closest classical-quantum state ρ_c , reading

$$D_G(\rho) = \min_{\Omega_0} \|\rho - \rho_c\|_2^2, \quad (1)$$

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where $\|X\|_2 = \sqrt{\text{tr}[X^\dagger X]}$ is the Hilbert-Schmidt norm (2-norm) and Ω_0 is the set of classical-quantum states, whose general form is given by

$$\rho_c = \sum_k p_k \Pi_k^a \otimes \rho_k^b, \quad (2)$$

with $0 \leq p_k \leq 1$ ($\sum_k p_k = 1$), $\{\Pi_k^a\}$ denoting a set of orthogonal projectors for subsystem a , and ρ_k^b being a general reduced density operator for subsystem b . Note that extremization here is over a distance measure rather than POVMs, as in $\mathcal{J}(\rho)$. In terms of the entropic quantum discord $\mathcal{Q}(\rho)$ and of the negativity (of entanglement) $\mathcal{N}(\rho) = \|\rho^{t_a}\|_1 - 1$, where ρ^{t_a} denotes partial transposition of ρ with respect to subsystem a and $\|X\|_1 = \text{tr}[\sqrt{X^\dagger X}]$ is the trace norm, the geometric discord presents the following bound for two-qubit states [20]:

$$2D_G(\rho) \geq \mathcal{Q}^2(\rho), \mathcal{N}^2(\rho). \quad (3)$$

The inequality $2D_G \geq \mathcal{N}^2$ is not universal, with counterexamples in spaces of dimension higher than 2×2 [21].

We will focus here in the particular case of two-qubit Bell diagonal states, whose density operator presents the form

$$\rho = \frac{1}{4}[I \otimes I + \vec{c} \cdot (\vec{\sigma} \otimes \vec{\sigma})], \quad (4)$$

where I is the identity matrix, $\vec{c} = (c_1, c_2, c_3)$ is a three-dimensional vector, and $\vec{\sigma} = (\sigma_1, \sigma_2, \sigma_3)$ is a vector formed by Pauli matrices. In this case, the entropic quantum discord and the geometric discord are given by [4,22]

$$\mathcal{Q} = \log_2 \frac{4\lambda_{00}^{\lambda_{00}} \lambda_{01}^{\lambda_{01}} \lambda_{10}^{\lambda_{10}} \lambda_{11}^{\lambda_{11}}}{(1 - c_+)^{\frac{1-c_+}{2}} (1 + c_+)^{\frac{1+c_+}{2}}} \quad (5)$$

and

$$D_G = \frac{1}{4}(c_-^2 + c_0^2), \quad (6)$$

where $\lambda_{ij} = [1 + (-1)^i c_1 - (-1)^{i+j} c_2 + (-1)^j c_3]/4$ are the eigenvalues of the density operator ρ , whereas $c_+ = \max[|c_1|, |c_2|, |c_3|]$, $c_0 = \text{int}[|c_1|, |c_2|, |c_3|]$, and $c_- = \min[|c_1|, |c_2|, |c_3|]$ represent the maximum, intermediate, and minimum among the absolute values of the correlation functions c_1 , c_2 , and c_3 , respectively. If ρ describes a physical state, then $0 \leq \lambda_{ij} \leq 1$ and $\sum_{i,j} \lambda_{ij} = 1$. In this condition, the vector \vec{c} must be restricted to the tetrahedron whose vertices situated on the points $(1, 1, -1)$, $(-1, -1, -1)$, $(1, -1, 1)$, and $(-1, 1, 1)$ represent the Bell states (see Fig. 1). Quantum discord is a maximum ($\mathcal{Q} = 1$ and $D_G = 1/2$) in these vertices and minimum ($\mathcal{Q} = D_G = 0$) over the perpendicular axes c_1 , c_2 , and c_3 (dashed lines).

Geometric quantum discord and Schatten p -norms. Despite being easier to compute and exhibiting an interesting geometric interpretation, the measure D_G fails as a rigorous quantifier of quantum correlation, since it may increase under local reversible operations on the unmeasured subsystem. Explicitly, by assuming the map $\Gamma^\sigma : X \rightarrow X \otimes \sigma$, i.e., a channel that introduces a noisy ancillary state, Piani has recently shown that [14] $D_G(\Gamma_b^\sigma[\rho]) = D_G(\rho) \text{tr}[\sigma^2]$. This means that the geometric discord may increase under local operations on the unmeasured subsystem b , because $\text{tr}[\sigma^2] \leq 1$ in general. Indeed, by considering the coupling of b with an arbitrary auxiliary system in a mixed state σ , we obtain

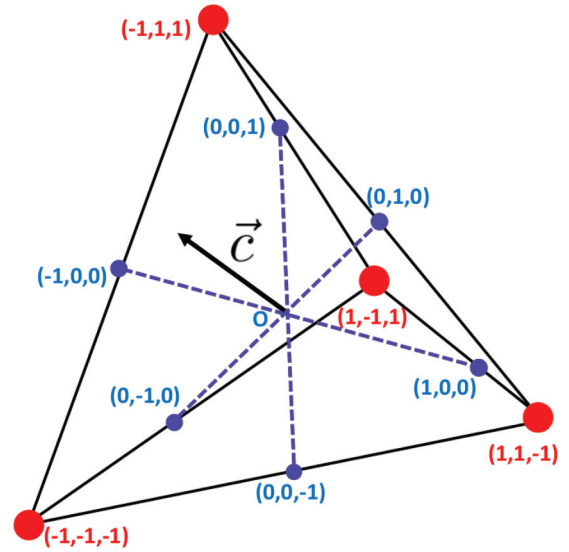


FIG. 1. (Color online) Tetrahedron corresponding to the two-qubit Bell-diagonal states, with its vertices representing the four Bell states. Quantum discord is a maximum ($\mathcal{Q} = 1$ and $D_G = 1/2$) in these vertices and vanishing ($\mathcal{Q} = D_G = 0$) over the perpendicular axes c_1 , c_2 , and c_3 (dashed lines).

that D_G increases by the simple reversible removal of σ . The origin of this problem is the Hilbert-Schmidt norm, which is not an appropriate choice for geometrically quantifying the quantumness of correlations (for a similar analysis in the case of entanglement, see Ref. [23]).

Let us then consider the geometric discord based on a more general norm, defined by [24]

$$D_p(\rho) = \min_{\Omega_0} \|\rho - \rho_c\|_p^p, \quad (7)$$

where $\|X\|_p = \text{tr}[(X^\dagger X)^{\frac{p}{2}}]^{\frac{1}{p}}$ is the Schatten p -norm, with p denoting a positive integer number. In this notation, the geometric discord is simply obtained by taking $p = 2$, namely, $D_G = D_2$. Since the p -norm is multiplicative under tensor products [25], it is then easy to see that $\|X\|_p \rightarrow \|\Gamma_b^\sigma[X]\|_p = \|X\|_p \|\sigma\|_p$. Thus,

$$D_p(\Gamma_b^\sigma[\rho]) = D_p(\rho) \|\sigma\|_p^p. \quad (8)$$

Note that $\|\sigma\|_p = 1$ if and only if $p = 1$, since $\|\sigma\|_1 = \text{tr}[\sigma] = 1$ for a general state σ . Therefore, the geometric discord based on the 1-norm is the only possible Schatten p -norm able to consistently quantify nonclassical correlations. Indeed, one can show that $D_1(\rho)$ is nonincreasing under general local operations on b (see also Ref. [12]). Due to the properties of the trace distance, the 1-norm geometric discord is contractive under trace-preserving quantum channels [12,16], i.e., $\|\rho - \rho_c\|_1 \geq \|\varepsilon(\rho) - \varepsilon(\rho_c)\|_1$, where ε is a general trace-preserving quantum operation. Then, let us consider a quantum operation ε_b , which acts only over subsystem b . By denoting as $\bar{\rho}_c$ the closest classical state to a given quantum state ρ , we can write $D_1(\rho) = \|\rho - \bar{\rho}_c\|_1 \geq \|\varepsilon_b(\rho) - \varepsilon_b(\bar{\rho}_c)\|_1$. Note that $\varepsilon_b(\bar{\rho}_c)$ is still a classical state, but it is not necessarily the closest classical state to $\varepsilon_b(\rho)$. Then, $\|\varepsilon_b(\rho) - \varepsilon_b(\bar{\rho}_c)\|_1 \geq D_1(\varepsilon_b(\rho))$. Hence it follows that $D_1(\rho) \geq D_1(\varepsilon_b(\rho))$ [12], which

implies that $D_1(\rho)$ cannot increase under operations over subsystem b .

1-norm geometric quantum discord for Bell-diagonal states. In order to obtain the 1-norm geometric discord for two-qubit systems described by Bell-diagonal states given by Eq. (4), let us start from the expression

$$D_1(\rho) = \min_{\Omega_0} \|\rho - \rho_c\|_1, \quad (9)$$

where $\|X\|_1 = \text{tr}[\sqrt{X^\dagger X}]$ is the 1-norm, ρ is given by Eq. (4), and ρ_c is an arbitrary classical-quantum state given by Eq. (2). The minimization over the whole set of classical states was obtained for the 2-norm [7] and the relative entropy [26], where it can be proved that the minimal state is the measured original state. We will make a similar hypothesis and assume that the minimal state preserves the Bell-diagonal form of the original state. This has been numerically checked for a number of Bell-diagonal states, as will be discussed below. Therefore, we assume that the minimization in Eq. (9) is achieved by a Bell-diagonal classical state $\rho_c^{(BD)}$, which is denoted by

$$\rho_c^{(BD)} = \frac{1}{4}[I \otimes I + \vec{l} \cdot (\vec{\sigma} \otimes \vec{\sigma})], \quad (10)$$

with \vec{l} representing a vector over the perpendicular classical axes in the tetrahedron of Bell-diagonal states (dashed lines in Fig. 1). Then, \vec{l} has the form $\vec{l}_1 = (l_1, 0, 0)$, $\vec{l}_2 = (0, l_2, 0)$, or $\vec{l}_3 = (0, 0, l_3)$, with $l_i \in \mathfrak{R}$ and $-1 \leq l_i \leq 1$. From Eqs. (9) and (10), we can then write

$$D_1 = \min \left[\min_{l_1} f_1(l_1), \min_{l_2} f_2(l_2), \min_{l_3} f_3(l_3) \right], \quad (11)$$

where

$$f_i(l_i) = \left\| \frac{1}{4}(\vec{c} - \vec{l}_i) \cdot (\vec{\sigma} \otimes \vec{\sigma}) \right\|_1 = \sum_{p=0}^1 \sum_{q=0}^1 |\tau_{pq,i}| \quad (12)$$

with $\tau_{pq,i} = [(-1)^p(c_i - l_i) - (-1)^{p+q}c_j + (-1)^q c_k]/4$ ($i \neq j \neq k$) denoting the eigenvalues of the operator $(\vec{c} - \vec{l}_i) \cdot (\vec{\sigma} \otimes \vec{\sigma})/4$. Now, by defining $d_i = l_i - c_i$ and $d_{\pm} = c_k \pm c_j$, we find $f_i(d_i) = (|d_i + d_+| + |d_i - d_+| + |d_i + d_-| + |d_i - d_-|)/4$. Because $f_i(d_i)$ reaches its minimum value when $d_i = 0$, then $\min_{l_i} f_i(l_i) = \min_{d_i} f_i(d_i) = \max[|c_j|, |c_k|]$. By using this result in Eq. (11), we then obtain

$$D_1 = c_0 = \text{int}[|c_1|, |c_2|, |c_3|]. \quad (13)$$

The same result encapsulated by Eq. (13) was obtained in the context of the study of the negativity of quantumness, which is a measure of nonclassicality recently introduced in Refs. [27,28] and experimentally discussed in Ref. [29]. In such a case, the 1-norm distance is computed with respect to the decohered (measured) state $\rho' = \sum_k \Pi_k^a \rho \Pi_k^a$.

For a finite subset of classical states Ω'_0 , the equivalence between Eqs. (9) and (13) is numerically supported by the condition

$$\delta = \min_{\Omega'_0} \|\rho - \rho_c\|_1 - c_0 \geq 0, \quad (14)$$

with the equality expected after minimization over all classical states ρ_c , i.e., $\Omega'_0 = \Omega_0$. In Fig. 2, we present a numerical analysis of Eq. (14) through a histogram of δ . This has been obtained for $N = 10^3$ Bell-diagonal states ρ randomly generated inside of the tetrahedron (Fig. 1). For each ρ , we

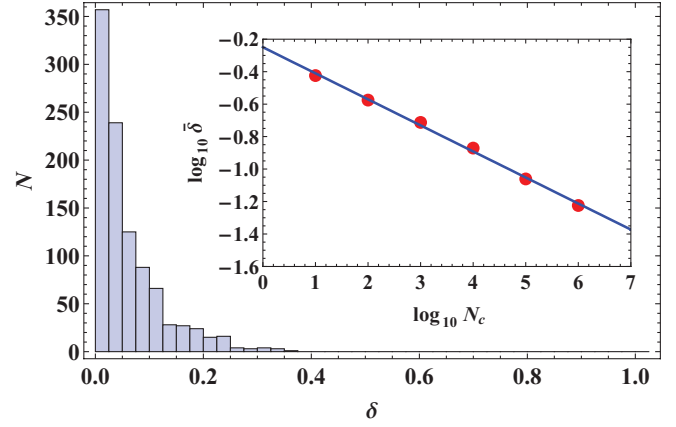


FIG. 2. (Color online) Histogram of δ for $N = 10^3$ Bell-diagonal states and $N_c = 10^6$ classical states. In the inset, we show the decreasing behavior of $\log_{10} \bar{\delta} \times \log_{10} N_c$ for $N_c = 10, 10^2, 10^3, 10^4, 10^5$, and 10^6 .

have performed the minimization in Eq. (14) with $N_c = 10^6$ classical states ρ_c randomly chosen from Eq. (2). Note that $\delta \geq 0$, with an average value $\bar{\delta} = 0.06$. In the inset, we have investigated the behavior of $\bar{\delta}$ as we increase the number of classical states N_c in Ω'_0 . For each value of $\log_{10} N_c$ (data point), we compute $\log_{10} \bar{\delta}$ by randomly selecting 10^3 independent states ρ . By a linear fit (solid line) we obtain that $\bar{\delta}$ decreases to zero for $N_c \rightarrow \infty$, according to the power law $\bar{\delta} = 0.56 \times N_c^{-0.16}$ [30].

Monotonicity with other quantum discord measures. Let us now apply Eq. (13) to investigate the monotonicity of $D_1(\rho)$ with the quantum correlation measures $\mathcal{Q}(\rho)$ and $D_2(\rho)$, which are given by Eqs. (5) and (6). First of all, we readily conclude that $D_1 = 0$ over the orthogonal axes c_1, c_2 , and c_3 and is maximal ($D_1 = 1$) for the four Bell states, as it occurs for \mathcal{Q} and D_G . Moreover, since $0 \leq c_0 \leq 1$ and $c_- \leq c_0$, it follows that $c_0^2 \geq (c_-^2 + c_0^2)/2 \implies D_1^2 \geq 2D_G$. From this inequality and from Eq. (3), we can find the following hierarchy for two-qubit Bell-diagonal states:

$$D_1^2 \geq 2D_G \geq \mathcal{Q}^2, \mathcal{N}^2. \quad (15)$$

The inequality $D_1 \geq \mathcal{N}$ that emerges from Eq. (15) has also been proposed for arbitrary bipartite states in Ref. [24], but counterexamples have subsequently pointed out in Ref. [17].

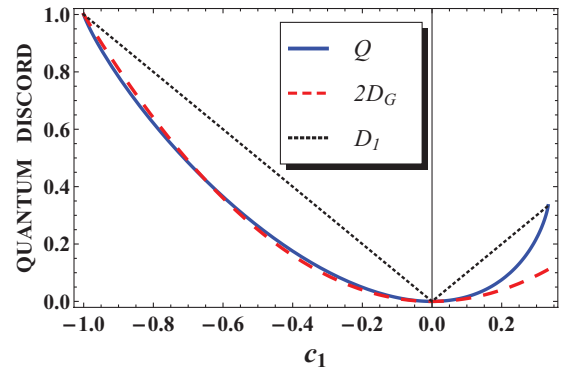


FIG. 3. (Color online) Plots of \mathcal{Q} (solid line), $2D_G$ (dashed line), and D_1 (dotted line) for $SU(2)$ -symmetric states ($c_1 = c_2 = c_3$).

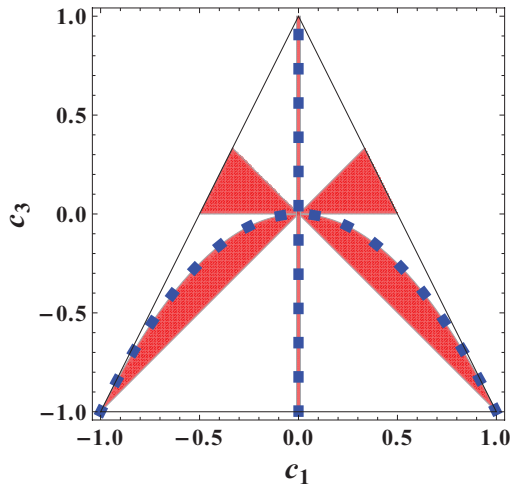


FIG. 4. (Color online) Triangle representing U(1)-symmetric states ($c_1 = c_2 \neq c_3$). Shaded regions and dashed lines indicate the points for which \mathcal{Q} is monotonically related along the c_3 direction with D_G and D_1 , respectively.

Concerning monotonicity relationships, the symmetry exhibited by the quantum state plays a fundamental role. For instance, in the case of SU(2) symmetry, i.e., $c_1 = c_2 = c_3$, the three measures of discord maintain the ordering of states

throughout the physical region ($0 \leq c_1 \leq 1/3$), as we can observe in Fig. 3. However, this does not occur for more general classes of states. For instance, the triangle shown in Fig. 4 represents the set of physical states corresponding to the class of U(1)-symmetric states, i.e., $c_1 = c_2 \neq c_3$. Inside the triangle, the shaded region and the dashed lines indicate the points where \mathcal{Q} is monotonically related along the c_3 direction with D_G and D_1 , respectively. In this situation, note that the ordering of states between \mathcal{Q} and the geometric measures D_1 and D_G is strongly violated. As the shaded region and the dashed lines do not cover the same space (a situation that occurs only when $c_3 = -c_1^2$ and $c_1 = 0$), we also concluded that D_G and D_1 are not monotonic between themselves in general.

In conclusion, the 1-norm geometric discord has by itself a conceptual importance since it is the only p -norm able to yield a well-defined quantum correlation measure. Moreover, it exhibits remarkable properties under decoherence for simple Bell diagonal states as, for instance, freezing and double sudden change [32]. As a future challenge, it would be useful to investigate its relevance for the advantage quantum protocols.

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