Search for dark matter in events with a $Z$ boson and missing transverse momentum in $pp$ collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 8$ TeV with the ATLAS detector

The ATLAS Collaboration

Abstract

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Astrophysical measurements indicate the existence of non-baryonic dark matter [1, 2]. However, collider based searches, nuclear scattering experiments, and searches for particles produced from dark-matter annihilation have not yet revealed its particle nature nor discovered its non-gravitational interactions, if they exist [3].Collider-based searches for weakly interacting massive particles (WIMPs, denoted as $\chi$), specifically $pp \rightarrow \chi\bar{\chi} + X$ at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) via some unknown intermediate state, are an important facet of the experimental program and provide sensitivity over a broad range of values of the WIMP mass, $m_\chi$, including for low masses where direct detection experiments are less sensitive. The presence of dark-matter particles, not directly observable in a collider detector, can be inferred from their recoil against Standard Model (SM) particles. The LHC collaborations have reported limits on the cross section for the process that includes initial state radiation (ISR), $pp \rightarrow \chi\bar{\chi} + X$, where the ISR component $X$ is a hadronic jet [4, 5], a photon [6, 7], or a $W$ or $Z$ boson decaying hadronically [8]. Limits on dark matter produced in the decay of the Higgs boson have also been reported [9]. In this analysis, limits are set using the final state of a $Z$ boson decaying to two oppositely charged electrons or muons, plus missing transverse momentum, $E_T^{\text{miss}}$.

Since the nature of the intermediate state mediating the parton–WIMP interaction is not known, a useful approach is to construct an effective field theory (EFT) [10–12]. EFTs have often been used to describe interactions between dark-matter particles and quarks or gluons, but they have recently been extended to describe direct interactions with electroweak bosons [13–15]. In the context of the EFT framework, the WIMP is considered to be the only new particle accessible at LHC energies, in addition to the SM fields. The mediator of the interaction is assumed to be heavy compared to the typical parton interaction energies involved, and the dark-matter particles are also assumed to be produced in pairs.

The EFTs considered in this analysis, depicted in Fig. 1, are expressed in terms of two parameters: $m_\chi$ and a mass scale, $M_\star$, described in Ref. [10]. $M_\star$ parameterizes the coupling between the WIMP and SM particles, where the coupling strength is normalized, or in inverse proportion, to the heavy-mediator mass scale. The coefficients of the Lagrangian’s interaction terms appear as powers of $M_\star$, e.g. for the D1 operator as $1/M_\star^2$ and for the D5 and D9 operators as $1/M_\star^2$. The definition of the D1, D5, and D9 operators and the region of validity of the EFT limits are discussed in Ref. [10, 16].

Following the approach of Ref. [13], the coupling of dark matter to electroweak bosons is considered for dimension-5 and dimension-7 operators. The dimension-7 operator couples dark matter to $Z\gamma^*$ as well as $ZZ$. Since a $Z$ boson is in the final state for each operator, intermediate states with a $Z$ or $\gamma^*$ each contribute to the matrix element. The relative contribution of the $Z$ and $\gamma^*$ diagrams is a parameter of the theory.

This analysis considers models of dark-matter production where a $Z$ boson is radiated as ISR or interacts directly with WIMPs. The latter case of an interaction between a $Z$-boson and a WIMP is a process not previously investigated in the analysis of LHC experiments.

To complement the EFT analysis, this paper also examines the results in terms of a model in which the intermediate state is specified [17]. In this model a scalar–mediator $\eta$, with mass $m_\eta$, and a scalar–WIMP coupling strength $f$ is responsible for the production of the dark-matter particles. The mediator $\eta$ transforms as a color triplet and an electroweak doublet, and has a hypercharge of $1/3$. The production cross section is propor-
tional to $f^4$. The same final state signature predicted by the EFT, $Z\chi\bar{\chi}$, is produced. This process is similar to SUSY processes in which the $\chi$ is a neutralino and the $\eta$ is a squark doublet, but without a direct gluino analogue. This corresponds to a scenario where the gluino would be too heavy to be produced at the LHC and is therefore irrelevant.

In this analysis, a search for the production of a $Z$ boson with subsequent decay to $e^+e^-$ or $\mu^+\mu^-$ in association with large $E_T^{\text{miss}}$ from the escaping $\chi^\pm\bar{\chi}^\mp$ particles is reported, based on 20.3 fb$^{-1}$ of pp collision data collected by the ATLAS detector at a center-of-mass energy of $\sqrt{s} = 8$ TeV. Only data collected with stable beams and all detector subsystems fully operational are used. Several signal regions with different requirements on the $E_T^{\text{miss}}$ are defined to best probe the variety of models tested.

The ATLAS detector [13] consists of an inner detector (ID) surrounded by a solenoid that produces a 2 T magnetic field, electromagnetic and hadronic calorimeters, and a muon spectrometer (MS) employing toroidal magnets. The ID measures charged-particle tracks over the full azimuthal angle and in a pseudorapidity [19] range of $|\eta| < 2.5$ using silicon pixel, silicon microstrip, and transition-radiation straw-tube detectors, the last of which also distinguishes electrons from heavier charged particles in the range $|\eta| < 2.0$. Liquid-argon (LAr) electromagnetic sampling calorimeters cover the range $|\eta| < 3.2$ with a typical granularity in $\Delta\eta \times \Delta\phi$ of 0.025 $\times$ 0.025. A scintillator-tile calorimeter provides hadronic calorimetry for $|\eta| < 1.7$. In the endcaps ($|\eta| > 1.5$), LAr is also used for the hadronic calorimeters matching the outer $|\eta|$ limit of the endcap electromagnetic calorimeters. The LAr forward calorimeters extend the coverage to $|\eta| < 4.9$ and provide both the electromagnetic and hadronic energy measurements. The MS covers $|\eta| < 2.7$ and provides triggering and precision tracking for muons. A three-level trigger system is used to select interesting events to be recorded for subsequent offline analysis.

Electrons are required to have transverse energy, $E_T$, larger than 20 GeV and $|\eta| < 2.47$. The $E_T$ is measured from the energy deposited in the electromagnetic calorimeter, and the electron’s direction from the ID track. Electrons must satisfy the medium object quality requirements from Ref. [20] updated for 2012 run conditions, which are based on calorimeter shower shape, ID track quality, and the spatial match between the shower and the track. Electrons must be isolated, satisfying $\sum_{R<0.2}(p_T^{\text{track}}/E_T) < 0.1$, where the sum is over the transverse momenta, $p_T^{\text{track}}$, of all other ID tracks with $p_T^{\text{track}} > 1$ GeV within a cone of radius $\Delta R = \sqrt{(\Delta\eta)^2 + (\Delta\phi)^2} = 0.2$ around the electron direction.

Muons are required to have $p_T > 20$ GeV and $|\eta| < 2.5$. A combined fit of the ID and MS tracks is used to reconstruct the muon $p_T$. High-quality tracks are ensured by requirements on the number of hits in the ID. Longitudinal and transverse impact parameters, $z_0$ and $d_0$ respectively, must satisfy $|z_0| < 10$ mm and $|d_0| < 1$ mm, with respect to the primary vertex, defined as the vertex with the highest $\sum (p_T^{\text{track}})^2$. The muon must be isolated, satisfying $\sum_{R<0.2}(p_T^{\text{track}}/p_T) < 0.1$; here again, the muon track itself is excluded from the sum.

The anti-$k_T$ jet algorithm [21] with radius parameter of 0.4 is used to reconstruct jets from topological clusters [22], which are three-dimensional clusters of neighboring energy deposits in the calorimeter cells. A calibration procedure is used in which the raw energy measurement from the calorimeter cluster is corrected to the jet energy scale. Jets are required to have $p_T > 25$ GeV and $|\eta| < 2.5$. Jets from secondary proton–proton collisions are removed by requiring that most of the tracks associated with the jet, weighted by $p_T$, originate at the primary vertex.

Since muons may generate delta-ray electrons or radiate photons that produce electron–positron pairs, electrons closer than $\Delta R = 0.2$ to a muon that passes the analysis selection are rejected. In addition, electrons and muons closer than $\Delta R = 0.4$ to a jet are also rejected.

The measurement of the missing transverse momentum, a vector in the transverse plane, $E_T^{\text{miss}}$, with magnitude $E_T^{\text{miss}}$, is based on the measurement of the energy collected by the calorimeters and the momenta of muons. Muons and electrons with $p_T > 10$ GeV, jets with $p_T > 20$ GeV, low-$p_T$ tracks which don’t seed a topological cluster, and topological clusters not associated with a jet are included in the $E_T^{\text{miss}}$ calculation [23].

The candidate signal events were accepted by at least one of the several triggers that require either two leptons with low $p_T$ or a single lepton with higher $p_T$. An event must have at least one reconstructed vertex with at least three associated tracks with $p_T > 400$ MeV to remove non-collision background. In addition, events must have two oppositely charged electrons or muons with invariant mass $m_{\ell\ell} \in [76, 106]$ GeV to form a $Z$ boson candidate. In order to suppress events where the $E_T^{\text{miss}}$ originates from mismeasured jets, the azimuthal angle between the dilepton system and the $E_T^{\text{miss}}$, $\Delta\phi(E_T^{\text{miss}}, p_T^{\ell\ell})$, must be greater than 2.5, the absolute value of the pseudorapidity of the dilepton system, $|\eta^{\ell\ell}|$, must be less than 2.5, and the ratio $|p_T^{\ell\ell} - E_T^{\text{miss}}|/p_T^{\ell\ell}$ must be less than 0.5, where $p_T^{\ell\ell}$ is the transverse momentum of the dilepton system. Events are removed if they contain one or more jets with $p_T > 25$ GeV to suppress top-quark pair background. Similarly, events containing a third lepton with $p_T > 7$ GeV, satisfying looser identification requirements than invoked for the leptons produced in the decay of the $Z$ boson, are removed to suppress diboson background.

The various dark-matter models considered here have different $E_T^{\text{miss}}$ spectra, leading to a variety of optimal lower thresholds of $E_T^{\text{miss}}$. Four inclusive signal regions are defined with lower thresholds in $E_T^{\text{miss}}$ of 150, 250, 350, and 450 GeV.

The dominant background process is $ZZ \rightarrow \ell^+\ell^-\bar{\nu}\nu$. 

(\ell = e, \mu), an irreducible background. The other irreducible background is \(WW \rightarrow \ell^+\nu\ell^-\bar{\nu}\), which may only be reduced through the mass window requirement. Reducible backgrounds may have jets produced in association with two leptons, where the jets are misidentified or uncorrected, such as \(t\bar{t} \rightarrow t^+\nu t^-\bar{\nu}, ZZ \rightarrow \ell^+\ell^- q\bar{q}, WZ \rightarrow q\ell^+\ell^-\bar{\nu},\) or \(Z+\text{jets}\) (including decays to \(\tau\) leptons). Additional reducible sources may produce events with more than two leptons where the additional leptons are misidentified or not reconstructed, or less than two leptons where jets are misidentified as leptons, such as \(WZ \rightarrow \ell\ell^+\ell^-\) and \(W+\text{jets},\) respectively.

The \(WZ\) and \(ZZ\) backgrounds are estimated from Monte Carlo (MC) simulation. The next-to-leading-order MC generator POWHEG BOX 1.0 \cite{24} is used, which models the production of a \(q\bar{q}\) initial state. The \(ZZ\) background sample is normalized to include the \(gg \rightarrow ZZ\) contribution using MCFM 6.2 \cite{25}. Parton distribution functions (PDFs) for these samples are modeled using CT10 \cite{29}. The underlying event, as well as parton showers and hadronization, are simulated with PYTHIA 8.165 \cite{27}, using the AU2 tune \cite{28}. QED radiative corrections are calculated using PHOTOS++ 3.0 \cite{29}. The detector response is simulated with GEANT 4 \cite{30,31}. The simulated samples are generated with pileup conditions similar to those observed in data. Pileup refers to the multiple interactions occurring in the same, or adjacent, beam bunch crossings as the hard process. Simulated events are reweighted so that the number of pileup interactions has the same distribution as in data events.

The \(WW, tt, Wt,\) and \(Z \rightarrow \tau\tau\) backgrounds are estimated from data using the absence of signal in the \(e\mu\) channel and the relative production rate of 1:1:2 for the \(ee, \mu\mu,\) and \(e\mu\) channels. An \(e\mu\) control region similar to the signal region is defined, and the background estimate for the \(ee\) and \(\mu\mu\) signal regions is obtained from the number of \(e\mu\) events in the control region after correcting for the slightly different electron and muon acceptance efficiencies.

The \(Z+\text{jets}\) background is estimated using two data-driven techniques. The first method, commonly referred to as the ABCD method \cite{32}, considers the distribution of signal and background events in a phase space defined by two uncorrelated variables, here \(E^\text{miss}_T\) and \(\eta^{\ell\ell},\) for which the signal and background have different shapes. The phase space is partitioned into four regions labeled A, B, C, and D. Region A is the signal region where selection requirements on both variables are invoked, while regions B, C, and D are control regions in which one or both selections are reversed. Contamination by signal events in the control regions is found to be negligible. The number of events in one control region scaled by the ratio of background events in two other control regions estimates the background contribution in the signal region. In the second method, the contribution is measured by fitting the distributions of \(\Delta \phi\left(E^\text{miss}_T, p^\ell_T\right)\) and \(E^\text{miss}_T\) at small values (\(E^\text{miss}_T < 80\) GeV and \(\Delta \phi\left(E^\text{miss}_T, p^\ell_T\right) < 2.5\)) and extrapolating them to the signal regions. The two methods invoke all the standard selection requirements and give consistent results. The ABCD method is used to provide the background estimate, and the difference between the two is taken as a systematic uncertainty on the estimate.

The \(W+\text{jets}\) background is estimated by reversing the electron isolation condition and loosening identification requirements for one electron in order to obtain a data sample enriched in jets reconstructed as electrons. The resultant \(E^\text{miss}_T\) distribution is fitted with a function of the form \(N = A \cdot (E^\text{miss}_T)^{b}\) below 300 GeV and extrapolated to the highest 450 GeV signal region. The fitted function is integrated over \(E^\text{miss}_T\) to obtain an estimated background above a given \(E^\text{miss}_T\) threshold. A normalization factor is derived from data in the low-\(E^\text{miss}_T\) region with all the analysis selections applied. This factor is applied to the extrapolated result to obtain an estimate of this background.

Background estimates are validated in signal-depleted control regions that are determined by similar selection criteria used to define the signal region, but where a requirement may be inverted or modified. For the dominant \(ZZ \rightarrow \ell^+\ell^-\bar{\nu}\bar{\nu}\) background, estimated with MC simulation, the control region probes four-lepton events and is defined by the presence of two pairs of same-flavor, oppositely-charged leptons for which the invariant mass of the pairs is within the \(Z\) boson mass window. For the subdominant \(WZ \rightarrow \ell\nu\ell^-\bar{\nu}\) background, the control region is characterized by three leptons: a pair of same-flavor, oppositely-charged leptons for which the invariant mass is within the \(Z\) boson mass window, an additional electron or muon, and a reconstructed \(E^\text{miss}_T > 80\) GeV. For the minor \(WW\) and top-quark backgrounds, derived from a data-driven technique, events containing an electron and a muon (\(e\mu\)) with opposite charge are used. The expected signal region event yield is obtained from correction factors that account for the relative dilepton reconstruction efficiencies and the ratio of same-flavor lepton production to mixed flavor. The predicted yields from MC simulation are consistent with the data-driven estimates and in all cases are consistent with the control region yields observed in data.

Samples of \(pp \rightarrow Z\chi\chi\) signals are generated using MadGraph 5 1.5.2 \cite{33} with parton showering and hadronization modeled by PYTHIA 8.170 using the MSTW2008 leading-order PDFs \cite{34} and the AU2 tune. EFT operators D1 (scalar, spin independent), D5 (vector, spin independent), and D9 (tensor, spin-dependent), following the definitions of Ref. \cite{10}, are representative of the full set of operators in which the \(Z\) boson is emitted as ISR. Similar \(E^\text{miss}_T\) distributions result from all the operators within each of the three types: scalar, vector, and tensor.

Two examples of the dimension-7 \(ZZ\chi\chi\) operator mixtures are considered: one in which the \(Z\gamma\gamma^*\) contribution is negligible and one in which it is maximal. Therefore the dimension-7 operators are referred to as \(ZZ\chi\chi\)-maximal-
\(\gamma^*\) and \(ZZ\chi\chi\)-no-\(\gamma^*\) while the dimension-5 operator is referred to simply as \(ZZ\chi\chi\). Cross sections for a few representative operators and for the scalar-mediator theory with representative coupling constant, \(f = 6\), and \(m_\eta = 1\) TeV are given in Table I.

**TABLE I.** The power dependence of 1/\(M_\chi\) for the EFT and the cross sections of WIMP production in association with an on-shell \(Z\) boson for various EFT operators and the scalar-mediator theory. For the calculation of the production cross section, \(M_\chi\) is taken to be 1 TeV for the EFT operators. The coupling constant of the scalar-mediator theory, \(f\), is taken to be 6 and the mass of the mediator, \(m_\eta\), is 1 TeV.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(m_\chi) [GeV]</th>
<th>D5</th>
<th>D9</th>
<th>Cross sections [fb]</th>
<th>Scalar max. (\gamma^*)</th>
<th>mediat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M_\chi^{-1}) power</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Samples of \(pp \rightarrow Z\chi\bar{\chi}\) events are propagated through the ATLAS detector using the full simulation of the ID and muon trackers and the parameterized simulation of the calorimeter [30], tuned to full simulation and data. The shapes of the simulated \(E_T^{\text{miss}}\) distributions for the signal operators are shown in Fig. 2 compared to the dominant SM background process \(ZZ \rightarrow \ell^+\ell^-\bar{\nu}\bar{\nu}\).

Contributions to the systematic uncertainty of the expected SM backgrounds are due largely to experimental sources affecting the \(E_T^{\text{miss}}\) measurement and to the efficiencies for the reconstruction and identification of electrons and muons. For example, when \(E_T^{\text{miss}} > 120\) GeV, the experimental systematic uncertainty for the \(ZZ\) background is dominated by the jet–energy scale (1.7% and 2.3% for electron and muon final states, respectively) and the electron and muon momentum scale (2.3% and 0.8%, respectively). Smaller systematic uncertainties are associated with the \(E_T^{\text{miss}}\) measurement and with the efficiencies for the reconstruction and identification of electrons and muons.

For the dominant background, \(ZZ \rightarrow \ell^+\ell^-\bar{\nu}\bar{\nu}\), determined from simulated samples, systematic theoretical uncertainties are derived from the generator differences, QCD factorization and renormalization scales, and PDF modeling. The largest theoretical uncertainty, the generator difference, is evaluated as the difference in yields calculated from samples simulated with SHERPA 1.4.1 [35] and POWHEG BOX. The systematic uncertainties associated with the \(ZZ\) background are summarized in Table II for each signal region. The luminosity uncertainty is 2.8% and is derived from beam-separation scans performed following the procedure described in Ref. [36].

The expected background and observed yields are reported in Table III. Figure 3 shows the \(E_T^{\text{miss}}\) distribution after applying all selection requirements other than the \(E_T^{\text{miss}}\) thresholds for the observed data, the expected SM backgrounds, and the hypothetical \(pp \rightarrow Z\chi\bar{\chi}\) signals for various values of the mass scale.

**TABLE II.** Summary of the systematic uncertainties for the largest background process: \((ZZ \rightarrow \ell^+\ell^-\bar{\nu}\bar{\nu})\). Statistical uncertainties are from MC simulation sample size.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uncertainty Source</th>
<th>(E_T^{\text{miss}}) threshold [GeV]</th>
<th>150</th>
<th>250</th>
<th>350</th>
<th>450</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statistical [%]</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental [%]</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical [%]</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luminosity [%]</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total [%]</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the effective operators mediating the interaction of the dark-matter particles with the initial state quarks or the Z/γ intermediate state. This is done using the relation, $M^\text{limit}_\tau = M^\text{generator}_\tau \times (a^\text{generator}_\tau/a^\text{limit}_\tau)^{1/p}$, where the superscript indicates whether the parameter is a measured limit or calculated using MC simulation, and $p$ indicates the power of $(1/M^\star)$ appearing in the EFT Lagrangian. These limits are shown in Fig. 4. They are also translated into limits on the $\chi$–nucleon scattering cross section using the method in Ref. [10] for several effective operators mediating the interaction of the dark-matter particles with the $q\bar{q}$ initial state, and are compared with other experimental results described in Refs. [35–36]. These limits, shown at 90% C.L. in Figs. 5 and 6, are less stringent than the lower limits for dark-matter candidates recoiling against a $W$ or $Z$ boson decaying to hadrons reported in Ref. [8]. The limits degrade by 13–23% at 95% C.L., depending on the $E^\text{miss}_T$ signal region under consideration.

A lower limit on the coupling, $f$, of the scalar-mediator model is also calculated based on the WIMP relic abundance in Ref. [47] and the expression for the freeze-out temperature from Ref. [48]. If the relic abundance lower limit calculated at some mass point ($m_\chi$, $m_n$) is greater than the upper limit measured in this analysis, that mass point is excluded. Limits on the cross section times branching ratio in the scalar-mediator model are shown in Fig. 7 and limits on $f$ as a function of mediator mass $m_n$ and $m_\chi$, as well as the exclusion region, are shown in Fig. 8.

Fiducial cross-section limits are calculated in each signal region to complement the limits on specific models. The reconstruction efficiency is defined as the ratio of reconstructed events satisfying all the selection criteria to the number of generated events within a fiducial region characterized by selection requirements at particle level identical to all the requirements on the reconstructed dilepton+$E^\text{miss}_T$ system, where the $E^\text{miss}_T$ is calculated summing over all neutrinos and dark-matter particles. The acceptance is the ratio of the number of generated events within the fiducial region to the total number of generated events. In addition, the generated leptons are required to be separated by at least $\Delta R = 0.2$ to match the isolation requirement. The reconstruction efficiency ranges from (56.9±0.9)% for ZZχχ→$\tau^+\tau^-$ at $m_\chi = 1000$ GeV to (77.9±3.1)% for D5 at $m_\chi = 400$ GeV. The lowest value of the reconstruction efficiency is used to calculate the fiducial cross-section limits in order to be conservative. The corresponding acceptances for the previous operators are (30.3±0.5)% and (2.6±0.2)%, respectively, where the uncertainties are purely statistical and the variation in the acceptance arises primarily from the different $E^\text{miss}_T$ spectra of the
are mediated by operators different from those used for the analysis, since they are obtained assuming the interactions and are only shown for comparison with the results from this are shown as they are given in the corresponding publications XENON100 [43], CDMS [44, 45], and LUX [46]. These limits are compared with results from the published ATLAS hadronically decaying W/Z and j + \chi \chi searches, COUPP [38], SIMPLE [39], PICASSO [40], and IceCube [11]. These limits are shown as they are given in the corresponding publications and are only shown for comparison with the results from this analysis, since they are obtained assuming the interactions are mediated by operators different from those used for the ATLAS limits.

![Graph 6](image6.png)

**FIG. 6.** Observed 90% C.L. upper limits on the \( \chi \)-nucleon scattering cross section as a function of \( m_\chi \) for the spin-independent D9 effective operators mediating the interaction of the dark-matter particles with the \( q\bar{q} \) initial state. The limits are compared with results from the published ATLAS hadronically decaying W/Z and \( j + \chi \chi \) searches, COUPP [38], SIMPLE [39], PICASSO [40], and IceCube [11]. These limits are shown as they are given in the corresponding publications and are only shown for comparison with the results from this analysis, since they are obtained assuming the interactions are mediated by operators different from those used for the ATLAS limits.

![Graph 7](image7.png)

**FIG. 7.** Observed 95% C.L. upper limits on the cross section multiplied by the branching ratio of \( Z \rightarrow \ell^+ \ell^- \) of the scalar-mediator theory as a function of \( m_\eta \). The observed cross-section limit for a scalar-mediator mass, \( m_\eta \), of 1000 GeV is shown. Production cross sections predicted from theory are shown for \( m_\eta = 1 \) TeV and for different values of the coupling strength, \( f \).

![Graph 8](image8.png)

**FIG. 8.** Observed 95% C.L. upper limits on the coupling constant, \( f \), of the scalar-mediator theory as a function of \( m_\chi \) and the mediator mass, \( m_\eta \). The cross-hatching shows the theoretically accessible region outside the range covered by this analysis. The white region is phase space beyond the model’s validity. In the excluded region in the upper left-hand corner, demarcated by the black line, the lower limit on \( f \) from the relic abundance calculations based on [47, 48] is greater than the upper limit measured in this analysis.

operators. The observed and expected upper limits on the fiducial cross section are given in Table IV.

In conclusion, a search for the production of dark-matter particles in association with a \( Z \) boson that decays leptonically in 20.3 fb\(^{-1}\) of \( pp \) collisions at \( \sqrt{s} = 8 \) TeV is presented for three EFT operators where the dark matter interacts directly with quarks: D1, D5, and D9. The new limits complement the limits reported
TABLE IV. The observed and expected upper limits on the fiducial cross section at 95% C.L. for each signal region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$E_{T}^{miss}$ threshold [GeV]</th>
<th>150</th>
<th>250</th>
<th>350</th>
<th>450</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiducial cross section [fb]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Limits [fb]</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observed Limits [fb]</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

in other LHC analyses. The results are also interpreted using EFT models where the dark matter interacts directly with pairs of electroweak bosons. Initial limits are set on the mass scale of the $ZZ\chi\chi$ EFT operators describing the interaction between dark matter and a $Z$ or $\gamma^*$ intermediate state. Upper limits are also set on the scattering cross section of dark-matter particles with nucleons for effective operators mediating the interaction of dark-matter particles with a $q\bar{q}$ initial state, and on a model in which the interaction between the dark matter and $Z/\gamma^*$ is mediated by a scalar particle.

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H. Wolters125a,125c, B.K. Wosiek39, J. Wotschack30, M.J. Woudstra83, K.W. Wozniak39, M. Wright53, S.L. Wu174,
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1 School of Chemistry and Physics, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, Australia
2 Physics Department, SUNY Albany, Albany NY, United States of America
3 Department of Physics, University of Alberta, Edmonton AB, Canada
4 (a) Department of Physics, Ankara University, Ankara; (b) Department of Physics, Gazi University, Ankara; (c) Division of Physics, TOBB University of Economics and Technology, Ankara; (d) Turkish Atomic Energy Authority, Ankara, Turkey
5 LAPP, CNRS/IN2P3 and Université de Savoie, Annecy-le-Vieux, France
6 High Energy Physics Division, Argonne National Laboratory, Argonne IL, United States of America
7 Department of Physics, University of Arizona, Tucson AZ, United States of America
8 Department of Physics, The University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington TX, United States of America
9 Physics Department, University of Athens, Athens, Greece
10 Physics Department, National Technical University of Athens, Zografou, Greece
11 Institute of Physics, Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, Baku, Azerbaijan
12 Institut de Física d’Altes Energies and Departament de Física de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain
13 (a) Institute of Physics, University of Belgrade, Belgrade; (b) Vinca Institute of Nuclear Sciences, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia
14 Department for Physics and Technology, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway
15 Physics Division, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and University of California, Berkeley CA, United States of America
16 Department of Physics, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany
17 Albert Einstein Center for Fundamental Physics and Laboratory for High Energy Physics, University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland
18 School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom
19 (a) Department of Physics, Bogazici University, Istanbul; (b) Department of Physics, Bogus University, Istanbul;
(c) Department of Physics Engineering, Gaziantep University, Gaziantep, Turkey
20 (a) INFN Sezione di Bologna; (b) Dipartimento di Fisica e Astronomia, Università di Bologna, Bologna, Italy
21 Physikalisches Institut, University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany
22 Department of Physics, Boston University, Boston MA, United States of America
23 Department of Physics, Brandeis University, Waltham MA, United States of America
24 (a) Universidade Federal do Rio De Janeiro COPPE/EE/IF, Rio de Janeiro; (b) Federal University of Juiz de Fora (UFJF), Juiz de Fora; (c) Federal University of Sao Joao del Rei (UFSJ), Sao Joao del Rei; (d) Instituto de Física, Universidade de Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil
25 Physics Department, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton NY, United States of America
26 (a) National Institute of Physics and Nuclear Engineering, Bucharest; (b) National Institute for Research and Development of Isotopic and Molecular Technologies, Physics Department, Cluj Napoca; (c) University Politehnica Bucharest, Bucharest; (d) West University in Timisoara, Timisoara, Romania
27 Departamento de Física, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Argentina
28 Cavendish Laboratory, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom
29 Department of Physics, Carleton University, Ottawa ON, Canada
30 CERN, Geneva, Switzerland
Louisiana Tech University, Ruston LA, United States of America
Laboratoire de Physique Nucléaire et de Hautes Energies, UPMC and Université Paris-Diderot and CNRS/IN2P3, Paris, France
Fysiska institutionen, Lunds universitet, Lund, Sweden
Departamento de Física Teorica C-15, Universidad Autonoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain
Institut für Physik, Universität Mainz, Mainz, Germany
School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom
CPPM, Aix-Marseille Université et CNRS/IN2P3, Marseille, France
Department of Physics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst MA, United States of America
Department of Physics, McGill University, Montreal QC, Canada
School of Physics, University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
Department of Physics, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor MI, United States of America
Department of Physics and Astronomy, Michigan State University, East Lansing MI, United States of America
(a) INFN Sezione di Milano; (b) Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Milano, Milano, Italy
B.I. Stepanov Institute of Physics, National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Minsk, Republic of Belarus
National Scientific and Educational Centre for Particle and High Energy Physics, Minsk, Republic of Belarus
Department of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge MA, United States of America
Group of Particle Physics, University of Montreal, Montreal QC, Canada
P.N. Lebedev Institute of Physics, Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia
Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics (ITEP), Moscow, Russia
Moscow Engineering and Physics Institute (MEPhI), Moscow, Russia
D.V. Skobeltsyn Institute of Nuclear Physics, M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia
Fakultät für Physik, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, München, Germany
Max-Planck-Institut für Physik (Werner-Heisenberg-Institut), München, Germany
Nagasaki Institute of Applied Science, Nagasaki, Japan
Graduate School of Science and Kobayashi-Maskawa Institute, Nagoya University, Nagoya, Japan
(a) INFN Sezione di Napoli; (b) Dipartimento di Scienze Fisiche, Università di Napoli, Napoli, Italy
Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque NM, United States of America
Institute for Mathematics, Astrophysics and Particle Physics, Radboud University Nijmegen/Nikhef, Nijmegen, Netherlands
Nikhef National Institute for Subatomic Physics and University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands
Department of Physics, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb IL, United States of America
Budker Institute of Nuclear Physics, SB RAS, Novosibirsk, Russia
Department of Physics, New York University, New York NY, United States of America
Ohio State University, Columbus OH, United States of America
Faculty of Science, Okayama University, Okayama, Japan
Homer L. Dodge Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Oklahoma, Norman OK, United States of America
Department of Physics, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater OK, United States of America
Palacký University, RCPTM, Olomouc, Czech Republic
Center for High Energy Physics, University of Oregon, Eugene OR, United States of America
LAL, Université Paris-Sud and CNRS/IN2P3, Orsay, France
Graduate School of Science, Osaka University, Osaka, Japan
Department of Physics, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway
Department of Physics, Oxford University, Oxford, United Kingdom
(a) INFN Sezione di Pavia; (b) Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Pavia, Pavia, Italy
Department of Physics, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia PA, United States of America
Petersburg Nuclear Physics Institute, Gatchina, Russia
(a) INFN Sezione di Pisa; (b) Dipartimento di Fisica e Enrico Fermi, Università di Pisa, Pisa, Italy
Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh PA, United States of America
Laboratório de Instrumentação e Física Experimental de Partículas - LIP, Lisboa; (b) Faculdade de Ciências, Universidade de Lisboa, Lisboa; (c) Departamento de Física, University of Coimbra, Coimbra; (d) Centro de Física Nuclear da Universidade de Lisboa, Lisboa; (e) Departamento de Física, Universidade do Minho, Braga, Portugal; (f) Departamento de Física Teórica y del Cosmos and CAfn, Universidad de Granada, Granada, Spain; (g) Dep. of Physics and CEFITEC of Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Caparica, Portugal
Institute of Physics, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Praha, Czech Republic
Czech Technical University in Prague, Praha, Czech Republic
Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Charles University in Prague, Praha, Czech Republic
175 Fakultät für Physik und Astronomie, Julius-Maximilians-Universität, Würzburg, Germany
176 Fachbereich C Physik, Bergische Universität Wuppertal, Wuppertal, Germany
177 Department of Physics, Yale University, New Haven CT, United States of America
178 Yerevan Physics Institute, Yerevan, Armenia
179 Centre de Calcul de l’Institut National de Physique Nucléaire et de Physique des Particules (IN2P3), Villeurbanne, France

a Also at Department of Physics, King’s College London, London, United Kingdom
b Also at Institute of Physics, Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, Baku, Azerbaijan
c Also at Particle Physics Department, Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, United Kingdom
d Also at TRIUMF, Vancouver BC, Canada
e Also at Department of Physics, California State University, Fresno CA, United States of America
f Also at Novosibirsk State University, Novosibirsk, Russia

Also at CPPM, Aix-Marseille Université and CNRS/IN2P3, Marseille, France
Also at Università di Napoli Parthenope, Napoli, Italy

Also at Institute of Particle Physics (IPP), Canada
Also at Department of Physics and Astronomy, Michigan State University, East Lansing MI, United States of America

Also at Department of Financial and Management Engineering, University of the Aegean, Chios, Greece

Also at Louisiana Tech University, Ruston LA, United States of America

Also at Institut Català de Recerca i Estudis Avancats, ICREA, Barcelona, Spain

Also at CERN, Geneva, Switzerland

Also at Ochadai Academic Production, Ochanomizu University, Tokyo, Japan

Also at Manhattan College, New York NY, United States of America

Also at Institute of Physics, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan

Also at School of Physics and Engineering, Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, China

Also at Academia Sinica Grid Computing, Institute of Physics, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan

Also at Laboratoire de Physique Nucléaire et de Hautes Energies, UPMC and Université Paris-Diderot and CNRS/IN2P3, Paris, France

Also at School of Physical Sciences, National Institute of Science Education and Research, Bhubaneswar, India

Also at Dipartimento di Fisica, Sapienza Università di Roma, Roma, Italy

Also at Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology State University, Dolgoprudny, Russia

Also at Section de Physique, Université de Genève, Geneva, Switzerland

Also at Department of Physics, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin TX, United States of America

Also at Institute for Particle and Nuclear Physics, Wigner Research Centre for Physics, Budapest, Hungary

Also at International School for Advanced Studies (SISSA), Trieste, Italy

Also at Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of South Carolina, Columbia SC, United States of America

Also at Faculty of Physics, M.V.Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia

Also at Physics Department, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton NY, United States of America

Also at Moscow Engineering and Physics Institute (MEPhI), Moscow, Russia

Also at Department of Physics, Oxford University, Oxford, United Kingdom

Also at Institut für Experimentalphysik, Universität Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany

Also at Department of Physics, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor MI, United States of America

Also at Discipline of Physics, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa

* Deceased