



# Vortex light bullets in rotating Quasi-Phase-Matched photonic crystals with quadratic and cubic nonlinearity

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## ABSTRACT

We design a setup for generating stable vortex light bullets (LBs) in a rotating Quasi-Phase-Matched (QPM) photonic crystal, exhibiting competing quadratic and cubic nonlinearity. The photonic crystal is designed with a rotational checkerboard structure. Within this framework, three types of vortex LBs (square-, rhombus- and necklace-shaped) are observed, which are constructed as four-peak and eight-peak vortex modes, respectively. The dynamics of vortex LBs are controlled by system parameters, including the power, rotating frequency, size of checkerboard cells, and azimuthal indices of the incident light. In contrast to the stable two-dimensional vortex solitons observed in pure quadratic systems, the vortex LBs investigated in the competing quadratic and cubic nonlinear system can support vortex LBs with higher topological charges. Especially, the rotating frequency results in a transition of vortex LBs from a quadrupole to the traditional vortex modes.

## 1. Introduction

Light bullets (LBs), localized wave packets that achieve a delicate equilibrium between diffraction, dispersion, and nonlinearity [1–3], have attracted considerable attention in recent years [4,5]. These unique wave packets hold pivotal significance in diverse applications, including communication and rapid data processing in optical systems [6–9], as well as quantum droplets in Bose–Einstein condensates [10,11]. However, the generations of three-dimensional (3D) LBs face a significant challenge compared to their low-dimensional counterparts. The primary obstacle arises from the inherent cubic, locally self-attracting nonlinearity that triggers critical and supercritical collapses of LBs in higher dimensions [12–17]. Moreover, the experimental realization of LBs faces numerous difficulties. One prominent challenge is achieving a balance with random noise [18,19]. Among these LBs, vortex LBs have attracted particular interest due to their possession of nonzero angular momentum, a feature that notably contributes to their pronounced azimuthal instability [20,21].

Over the past two decades, LBs have been studied both theoretically and experimentally. The first experimental observation of LBs was reported in 1999 through the cascaded second harmonic generation process in bulk media [22]. Subsequently, 2D LBs in LiIO<sub>3</sub>

crystals [23] and quasi-3D LBs in waveguide arrays [24] were discovered. More recently, Lahav et al. reported trains of 3D dark solitons in photorefractive materials [25]. However, these LBs often suffer from severe instability, limiting their propagation to just a few diffraction lengths. Theoretically, numerous setups have been proposed to investigate the formation and dynamics of LBs. To stabilize LBs, researchers have explored various nonlinear optical materials, including those with spatially patterned nonlinear interactions [26], optical tandem systems [27], materials exhibiting saturable, competing, or nonlocal nonlinearities [28,29], hybrids of local and nonlocal nonlinearities [30,31], and combinations of quadratic and cubic nonlinearities [32–34].

Another effective approach for achieving stable LBs involves spatial modulation of optical lattices. Stable vortices have been predicted in 2D lattices with cubic nonlinearity [35,36]. Stable LBs can form in both discrete [37,38] and continuous [39,40] lattices, even when the input beams carry vorticity [41–43]. Notably, the Rydberg electromagnetically induced transparency (Rydberg-EIT) system has emerged as an effective medium for generating stable LBs due to the nonlocal nonlinearities arising from the long-range Rydberg–Rydberg interactions [44–48].

In recent years, Quasi-Phase-Matched (QPM) crystals have attracted a lot of attentions due to their ability to facilitate the generation of

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quadratic nonlinearity within the medium [49–51], thereby enabling the production of stable 2D vortex solitons [52]. Distinguishing themselves from vortex solitons in spatially uniform quadratic systems, which are inherently unstable, these recently discovered families exhibit remarkable stability across extensive regions within the system parameter space. In this system, tightly bound rhombic vortex solitons occupy the ground state of system, which is characterized by the minimal Hamiltonian and a more wider stability range compared to loosely bound square solitons. Further, stable vortex LBs were found in a rotational QPM crystal with quadratic nonlinearity [53].

Despite the above progress, 3D vortex LBs created in a combination of quadratic and cubic nonlinearity are still inadequately understood, especially in a rotating coordinate system. This paper aims to construct 3D stable vortex LBs in a rotating QPM photonic crystal with competing quadratic and cubic nonlinearity. Following the work [52,53], we design a setup for generating stable vortex LBs using high-power optical beams in a rotating system. This technique is based on spatial modulation of quadratic and cubic nonlinearity, which is achieved by means of periodic poling of the crystalline material [54–57] in 2D and the femtosecond laser engineering technology in 3D system [58,59]. We find three kinds of vortex LBs (square-, rhombus- and necklace-shaped), which are constructed as four-peak and eight-peak vortex modes with different topological charges. Control parameters include the azimuthal indices of the incident light, power, angular velocity of rotation, and the size of each square cell. These parameters affect the distribution and stability range of these vortex LBs. In particular, the rotating frequency results in the transition of vortex LBs from a quadrupole to the traditional vortex modes.

## 2. The model

We elaborate on a mechanism for stabilizing vortex LBs using a 3D QPM nonlinear photonic crystal, where electric fields with fundamental-frequency (FF) and second-harmonic (SH) modes propagate along the  $z$  direction [60]

$$\mathbf{E}_{1,2}(\mathbf{r}, t) = \frac{1}{2} \hat{e} A_{1,2} \exp[i(k_{1,2}Z - \omega_{1,2}t)] + \text{c.c.}, \quad (1)$$

where the indices 1 and 2 represent the FF and SH modes, respectively;  $\mathbf{r} = (X, Y)$ ,  $Z$  and  $t$  are the transverse, longitudinal, and time coordinates;  $A_{1,2}$ ,  $k_{1,2}$ , and  $\omega_{1,2}$  are, respectively the envelope, wave-vector, and frequency of light fields; c.c. is the complex conjugate. In this work, the light field propagates in  $Z$  direction, and the frequencies of FF and SH modes satisfy  $\omega_2 = 2\omega_1 = 2\omega$ .

Using a standard procedure and applying the paraxial and slowly varying envelope approximations [60], the envelopes  $A_{1,2}(\mathbf{r}, t)$  are governed by the following coupled equations:

$$\begin{aligned} i \frac{\partial A_1}{\partial Z} - \frac{K}{2} \frac{\partial^2 A_1}{\partial T^2} + \frac{1}{2k_1} \left( \frac{\partial^2 A_1}{\partial X^2} + \frac{\partial^2 A_1}{\partial Y^2} \right) + \frac{\pi\omega_1\chi^{(2)}}{2cn_1} A_1^* A_2 e^{-i\Delta k_0 Z} \\ + \frac{\pi^3\omega_1\chi^{(3)}}{2cn_1} (|A_1|^2 + 2|A_2|^2) A_1 = 0, \\ i \frac{\partial A_2}{\partial Z} - \frac{K}{2} \frac{\partial^2 A_2}{\partial T^2} + \frac{1}{2k_2} \left( \frac{\partial^2 A_2}{\partial X^2} + \frac{\partial^2 A_2}{\partial Y^2} \right) + \frac{\pi\omega_2\chi^{(2)}}{2cn_2} A_1^2 e^{i\Delta k_0 Z} \\ + \frac{\pi^3\omega_2\chi^{(3)}}{2cn_2} (|A_2|^2 + 2|A_1|^2) A_2 = 0. \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

where  $T = t - Z/V_g$  with  $V_g = 1/(\partial k_{1,2}/\partial \omega_{1,2})$  being the group velocities,  $K = (\partial^2 k_{1,2}/\partial \omega_{1,2}^2)$  are the group-velocity dispersion (GVD) parameters. In the context of this study, we assume that the Poynting-vector walkoff between FF and SH modes is negligible [61–68]. It should be noted that there is a limit on the minimal temporal size of a pulse to admit vortices [69]. Thus, one has  $V_g = V_{g1} = V_{g2} = 1/(\partial k_{1,2}/\partial \omega_{1,2})$ ,  $K = K_1 = K_2 = (\partial^2 k_{1,2}/\partial \omega_{1,2}^2)$ .  $\Delta k_0 = 2k_1 - k_2$  is the phase mismatch.  $n_{1,2}$  are the refractive indices of FF and SH modes in the QPM photonic crystal;  $\chi^{(2)}$  and  $\chi^{(3)}$  are the second- and third-order susceptibilities.

Here, the 3D periodically modulated  $\chi^{(2)}$  susceptibility is determined by a checkerboard setup constructed as  $\chi^{(2)} = \sigma(X, Y)d(Z)$ , where  $\sigma(X, Y) = -\text{sgn}\{\cos(\pi X/D)\cos(\pi Y/D)\}$  and  $d(Z) = d_0 \text{sgn}\cos(2\pi Z/\Lambda)$  with  $d_0$  being the coefficient of modulation in the  $Z$  direction,  $D \times D$  represents the size of checkerboard cell, and  $\Lambda$  is the modulation period with duty cycle 1/2 [70], as shown in Figs. 1(a), (b) and (c). In the direction of propagation along the  $Z$ -axis, the function  $d(Z)$  can be formulated via a Fourier expansion due to their dominant role in QPM, wherein only the fundamental harmonic terms remain, while the influence of higher-order harmonics is negligible [52].

By introducing the rescaled coordinates, Eq. (2) can be normalized to a non-dimensional nonlinear Schrödinger equation (NLSE)

$$\begin{aligned} i \frac{\partial \psi_1}{\partial z} = -\frac{1}{2} \left( \frac{\partial^2 \psi_1}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 \psi_1}{\partial y^2} \right) - \frac{\rho}{2} \frac{\partial^2 \psi_1}{\partial \tau^2} - \Omega \psi_1 \\ - 2\sigma(x, y)\psi_1^* \psi_2 + (g_{11} |\psi_1|^2 + g_{12} |\psi_2|^2) \psi_1 \\ i \frac{\partial \psi_2}{\partial z} = -\frac{1}{4} \left( \frac{\partial^2 \psi_2}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 \psi_2}{\partial y^2} \right) - \frac{\rho}{4} \frac{\partial^2 \psi_2}{\partial \tau^2} - \Omega \psi_2 \\ - \sigma(x, y)\psi_1^2 + (g_{22} |\psi_2|^2 + g_{12} |\psi_1|^2) \psi_2, \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

Here, the transverse and longitudinal coordinates are rescaled as  $(x, y) = (X, Y)\sqrt{k_1/z_d}$  and  $z = Z/z_d$  with  $z_d^{-1} = \frac{2}{c\pi} \frac{d_0^2}{\chi^{(3)}} \sqrt{\left(\frac{\omega_1^2 \omega_2}{n_1^2 n_2}\right)}$ ,  $\xi = (n_1/\omega_1 + n_2/\omega_2)$  [71]. The time is rescaled as  $\tau = T/T_0$  where  $T_0$  is the typical pulse duration. The symbol  $\rho = -K z_d/T_0^2$  represents the ratio of different GVD coefficients at the two harmonics [66,67], where an anomalous dispersion with  $K < 0$  is adopted. In this work, we take  $\rho = 1$  for simplicity. The wavefunctions of FF and SH modes are rescaled as  $\psi_{1,2} = \frac{\chi^{(3)}}{d_0} \sqrt{\frac{n_{1,2}}{\omega_{1,2}\xi}} A_{1,2} \exp[i(\Delta k_0 - 2\pi/\Lambda)Z]$ .  $\Omega = z_d(\Delta k_0 - 2\pi/\Lambda)$  in the right side of Eq. (4) is the mismatch. Previous research has proven that the states of vortex solitons are most stable with the perfect phase matching condition, leading to  $\Omega = 0$  [52] which is taken in this work.

In this work,  $\chi^{(3)}$  is supposed to be tunable as  $\chi^{(3)} = \eta\chi_0^{(3)}$ , where  $\chi_0^{(3)}$  is the fundamental value that related to the intrinsic characteristics of media, and  $\eta$  represents the shift from the fundamental value. The

strength coefficients for the cubic nonlinearity are  $g_{11} = \frac{3\pi\eta}{4} \sqrt{\frac{\omega_1^2 n_2}{n_1^2 \omega_2}} \xi$ ,

$g_{12} = \frac{3\pi\eta}{2} \sqrt{\frac{\omega_2}{n_2}} \xi$ , and  $g_{22} = \frac{3\pi\eta}{4} \sqrt{\frac{\omega_2^2 n_1^2}{n_2^2 \omega_1}} \xi$ . The difference of the refractive indices for the FF and SH modes is supposed to be negligible, i.e.,  $n_1 \approx n_2$ . Then, the cubic nonlinear coefficients are  $g_{11} = 3\pi\eta\sqrt{3}/8$ ,  $g_{12} = g_{22} = 4g_{11}$  [71]. Under the above approximation, the non-dimensional NLSE (3) can be expressed as

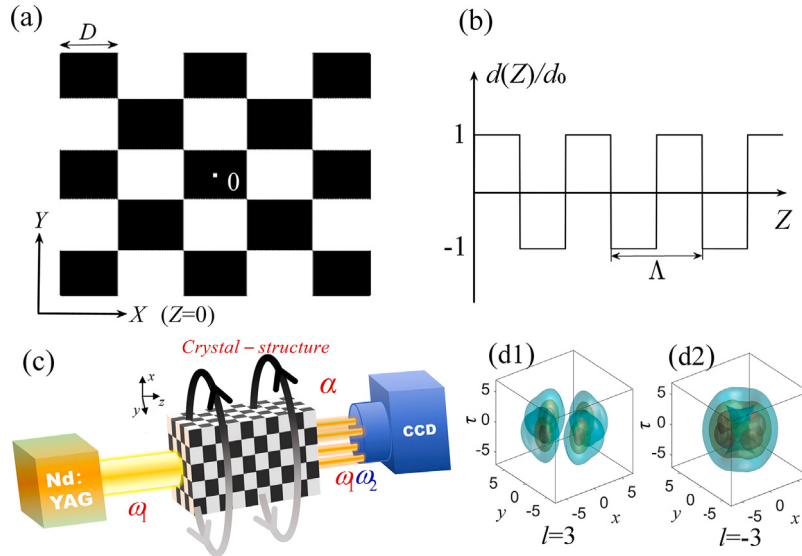
$$\begin{aligned} i \frac{\partial \psi_1}{\partial z} = -\frac{1}{2} \nabla_{x,y,\tau}^2 \psi_1 - 2\sigma(x, y)\psi_1^* \psi_2 + g_{11} (|\psi_1|^2 + 4|\psi_2|^2) \psi_1, \\ i \frac{\partial \psi_2}{\partial z} = -\frac{1}{4} \nabla_{x,y,\tau}^2 \psi_2 - \sigma(x, y)\psi_1^2 + 4g_{11} (|\psi_2|^2 + |\psi_1|^2) \psi_2, \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

where  $\nabla_{x,y,\tau}^2 = (\partial^2/\partial x^2 + \partial^2/\partial y^2 + \partial^2/\partial \tau^2)$ .

A longitudinal twist with rotating frequency  $\alpha$  is performed on the photonic crystal, then the new coordinates  $(x', y', z')$  in the rotational system satisfy the following relation:

$$\begin{aligned} x'(z) &= x \cos(\alpha z) - y \sin(\alpha z), \\ y'(z) &= x \sin(\alpha z) + y \cos(\alpha z), \\ z' &= z. \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

Here, the rotation scheme can be described as involving a screw-based fabrication approach through the QPM [72,73], and have been theoretically explored [74,75] and realized in experiment [76,77]. By substituting Eq. (5) into Eq. (4), one can obtain the following coupled



**Fig. 1.** (a) Checkerboard structure of the nonlinear lattice. White and black cells correspond to  $\sigma(x, y) = +1$  and  $-1$ , respectively. (b) Modulation along the propagation distance with period  $\Lambda$ . (c) Schematic of the experimental setup. (d) Eigenstates  $|\psi_{1,2}\rangle$  of vortex LBs with topological charge  $l = 3$  (d1) and  $l = -3$  (d2). Here only rhombus-shaped LBs with FF mode are plotted, and the system parameters are  $P = 100$ ,  $D = 3$ ,  $\alpha = 0.2$ ,  $g_{11} = 0.1$ .

NLSE:

$$\begin{aligned}
 i \frac{\partial \psi_1}{\partial z} &= -\frac{1}{2} \nabla_{x,y,\tau}^2 \psi_1 - 2\sigma(x, y) \psi_1^* \psi_2 \\
 &\quad + g_{11} (|\psi_1|^2 + 4|\psi_2|^2) \psi_1 + i\alpha \left( x \frac{\partial \psi_1}{\partial y} - y \frac{\partial \psi_1}{\partial x} \right), \\
 i \frac{\partial \psi_2}{\partial z} &= -\frac{1}{4} \nabla_{x,y,\tau}^2 \psi_2 - \sigma(x, y) \psi_1^2 \\
 &\quad + 4g_{11} (|\psi_2|^2 + |\psi_1|^2) \psi_2 + i\alpha \left( x \frac{\partial \psi_2}{\partial y} - y \frac{\partial \psi_2}{\partial x} \right).
 \end{aligned} \quad (6)$$

The primes in the coordinates  $x'$ ,  $y'$ , and  $z'$  in Eq. (6) are omitted.

The total Hamiltonian of this system is defined as

$$H = \int \int \int (H_P + H_{\chi^{(2)}} + H_{\chi^{(3)}} + H_\alpha) dx dy d\tau \quad (7)$$

where  $H_P = \frac{1}{2} |\nabla_{x,y,\tau} \psi_1|^2 + \frac{1}{4} |\nabla_{x,y,\tau} \psi_2|^2$ ,  $H_{\chi^{(2)}} = -\sigma(x, y) [(\psi_1^*)^2 \psi_2 + \text{c.c.}]$ ,  $H_{\chi^{(3)}} = \frac{1}{2} g_{11} |\psi_1|^4 + g_{12} |\psi_1|^2 |\psi_2|^2 + \frac{1}{2} g_{22} |\psi_2|^4$ , and  $H_\alpha = \frac{i}{2} \alpha \left[ \psi_1^* \left( x \frac{\partial \psi_1}{\partial y} - y \frac{\partial \psi_1}{\partial x} \right) + \psi_2^* \left( x \frac{\partial \psi_2}{\partial y} - y \frac{\partial \psi_2}{\partial x} \right) + \text{c.c.} \right]$  with c.c. representing the complex conjugate.

The power of LBs (alias the Manley–Rowe invariant [78,79]) is defined as  $P = \int \int \int (|\psi_1|^2 + 2|\psi_2|^2) dx dy d\tau = P_1 + P_2$ , where  $P_1$  and  $P_2$  correspond to the power of FF and SH components, respectively. The power ratio  $\gamma = P_2/P_1$  is defined to evaluate the power conversion from FF to SH modes.

### 3. Results and discussions

To obtain stable solution of Eq. (6), the wavefunctions of light fields are expressed in the form  $\psi_{1,2} = \phi_{1,2} e^{i\beta_{1,2}z}$ , where the indices 1 and 2 represent the FF and SH modes,  $\phi_{1,2}$  are stationary solutions that are independent of the propagation distance  $z$ , and  $\beta_{1,2}$  are propagation constants that satisfy the relation  $\beta_2 = 2\beta_1 = 2\beta$ . The initial input beams are taken in the following form:

$$\phi_j = \left( \frac{\sqrt{2x^2 + 2y^2 + 2\tau^2}}{w_0} \right)^{|l_j|} e^{-\frac{(x-s_0)^2 + (y-\eta_0)^2 + (\tau-\eta_0)^2}{w_0^2}} L_{p_j}^{|l_j|} \left[ \frac{2x^2 + 2y^2 + 2\tau^2}{w_0^2} \right] e^{i l_j \theta}, \quad (8)$$

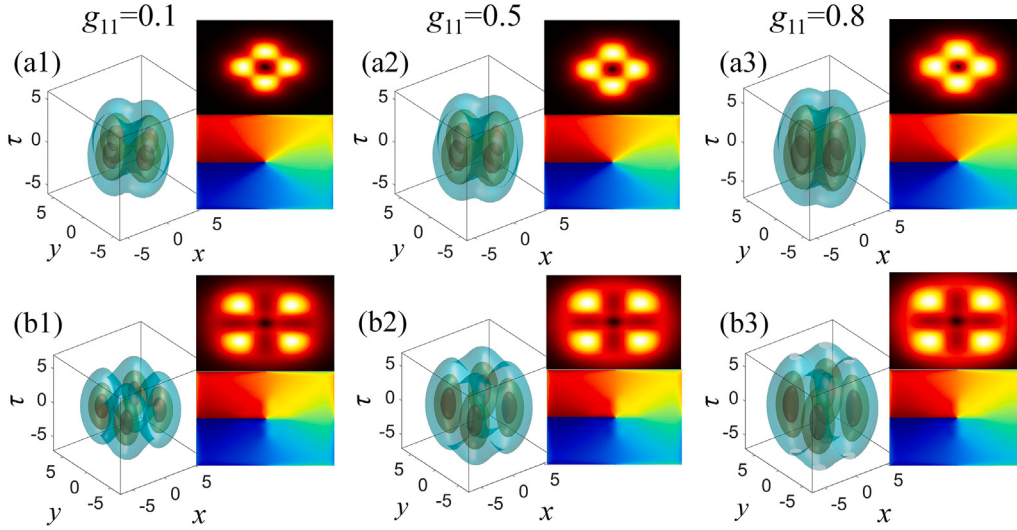
where  $j = 1, 2$ ,  $w_0$  is the width of laser field,  $L_{p_j}^{|l_j|}$  are the generalized Laguerre–Gauss polynomials,  $\theta$  is the azimuthal angle,  $l$  and  $p$  are radial

and azimuthal indices, respectively. In this work,  $l$  can be taken as an integer topological charge.

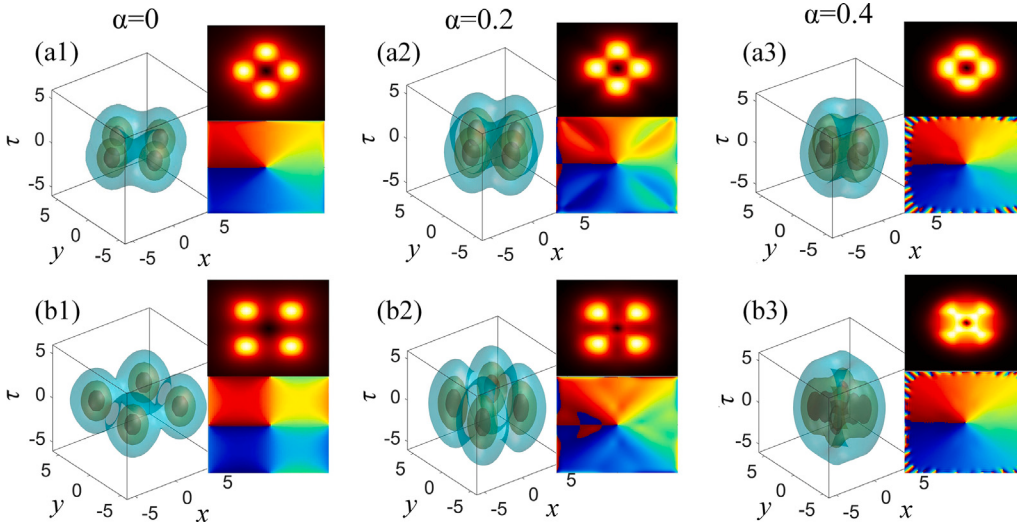
By substituting  $\psi_{1,2}$  into Eq. (6), and performing the accelerated imaginary-time evolution methods [80], the stationary solution (eigenstates  $\psi_{1,2}$ ) can be obtained numerically. The matching conditions are  $\varphi_2 = 2\varphi_1 - \varphi_d$  or  $\varphi_d = 2\varphi_1 - \varphi_2$ , where  $\varphi_{1,2} = \text{Arg}\{\phi_{1,2}\}$  and  $\varphi_d$  are determined by  $\sigma(x, y)$ . We get  $\varphi_d = 0$  and  $\pi$  with  $\sigma(x, y) = +1$  and  $-1$ , respectively. Under the condition  $p = 0$ , rhombus- and square-shaped vortex LBs, corresponding to  $\varphi_d = 0$  and  $\pi$ , are found. Each shaped vortex LBs has two components, FF and SH modes. The rotational system can support vortex LBs with  $l = 1 \sim 3$ . Examples of rhombus-shaped vortex LBs with  $l = +3$  and  $l = -3$  are shown in Figs. 1(d1) and (d2), respectively. In this paper, the LB profiles are plotted with moduli of eigenstates  $|\psi_{1,2}|$ . The vortex LBs can be considered as stable when their profiles do not undergo significant changes over a propagation distance of  $z = 500$ . In comparison, non-rotating QPM systems with pure quadratic nonlinearity can only support vortex solitons with topological charge of 1 [52]. On the other hand, vortices with high topological charges can be obtained in two-dimensional bulk systems with competing cubic–quintic nonlinearities [81]. In the context of this paper, vortices of higher topological charges are achieved due to the rotation of system and the competing quadratic–cubic nonlinearity [82].

The 3D profiles of vortex LBs and their projections/phases in  $(x, y)$  plane under varying cubic nonlinear coefficient  $g_{11}$  are illustrated in Fig. 2. The rhombus- and square-shaped vortex LBs are shown in the first and second rows, respectively. Only the FF mode is given as the cases for SH mode are similar to FF mode. A notable elongation of 3D vortex LBs along the  $\tau$ -axis becomes evident with the modulation of cubic nonlinearity  $g_{11}$ , indicating a distortion in the LBs' shape which is perpendicular to the transverse plane. The projections of vortex LBs in the  $(x, y)$  plane remain relatively unchanged. Specifically, the phase structure distributions present a vortex pattern, corresponding to a topological charge of  $l = 1$ .

Fig. 3 focuses on the detailed iso-surface of rhombus- and square-shaped vortex LBs with varying rotating frequency  $\alpha$ . Under non-rotating conditions ( $\alpha = 0$ ), both rhombus- and square-shaped vortex LBs exhibit a clear four-peak pattern, reflecting the geometry of a checkerboard lattice. The two kinds of vortex LBs are localized at the white and black cells of the checkerboard lattice, respectively. The



**Fig. 2.** Vortex LBs with various  $g_{11} = 0.1, 0.5, 0.8$ . The 3D profiles of vortex LBs are plotted with moduli of eigenstates  $|\psi_{1,2}|$ , projections and phases in the  $(x, y)$  plane. The first and second rows are the cases for rhombus- and square-shaped vortex LBs. System parameters are  $(\alpha, P, D, l, p) = (0.2, 60, 3, 1, 0)$ .



**Fig. 3.** Vortex LBs with various  $\alpha = 0, 0.2, 0.4$ . The first and second rows are the cases for rhombus- and square-shaped vortex LBs. System parameters are  $(g_{11}, P, D, l, p) = (0.1, 60, 3, 1, 0)$ .

distinct separation between these peaks indicates a well-defined spatial localization. However, the boundaries separating the peaks become increasingly blurred with the increase of  $\alpha$ . Furthermore, the distance between the peaks decreases, indicating that the peaks are moving closer together. These changes reflect a reconfiguration of the intensity landscape of vortex LBs in response to rotational dynamics. Additionally, the phase of vortex LBs undergoes a transition from a quadrupole pattern to the typical vortex mode with increasing  $\alpha$  [53], where the phase presents a continuous and smooth manner.

This rotational system can support vortex LBs with topological charges up to  $l = 3$ , as shown in Fig. 4. Here the rotating frequency is taken as  $\alpha = 0.2$ , and the cubic nonlinearity coefficient is  $g_{11} = 0.1$ . Rhombus-shaped vortex LBs with FF and SH modes are shown here. It is found that the profiles of vortex LBs in the  $(x, y)$  plane expand with increasing topological charges, while the profiles in the  $\tau$  direction remain unchanged. In the azimuthal direction, the phase structures present periodical gradient changes which are determined

by topological charge  $l$ . For the FF mode, the phase periodical cycle equals to  $l$ , while it is twice the value of  $l$  for SH mode.

According to Figs. 2–4, we observe that the sizes of vortex LBs present different responses to the modulation of parameters  $g_{11}$ ,  $\alpha$  and  $l$ . Here, the width of vortex LBs with FF mode in  $(x, y)$  plane is defined as  $W_{FF} = \sqrt{\int \int \int x^2 |\psi_1|^2 dx dy d\tau} / \int \int \int |\psi_1|^2 dx dy d\tau$ . We have conducted a thorough investigation and presented the relationship between the width and control parameters in Fig. 5. The results indicate that the width of vortex LBs increases with topological charge  $l$ , whereas it monotonically decreases with both  $\alpha$  and  $g_{11}$ .

The Hamiltonian  $H$ , propagation constant  $\beta$ , and power ratio  $\gamma$  as functions of control parameters  $\alpha$ ,  $P$ ,  $D$ , and  $g_{11}$  are demonstrated in Fig. 6. It is found that the rhombus-shaped vortex LBs exhibit a lower Hamiltonian compared to the square-shaped ones, as shown in Figs. 6(a1, b1, c1, d1). This phenomenon stems from the tightly bounding ground state of rhombus-shaped vortex. The  $\beta(P)$  curve in Fig. 6(b2)

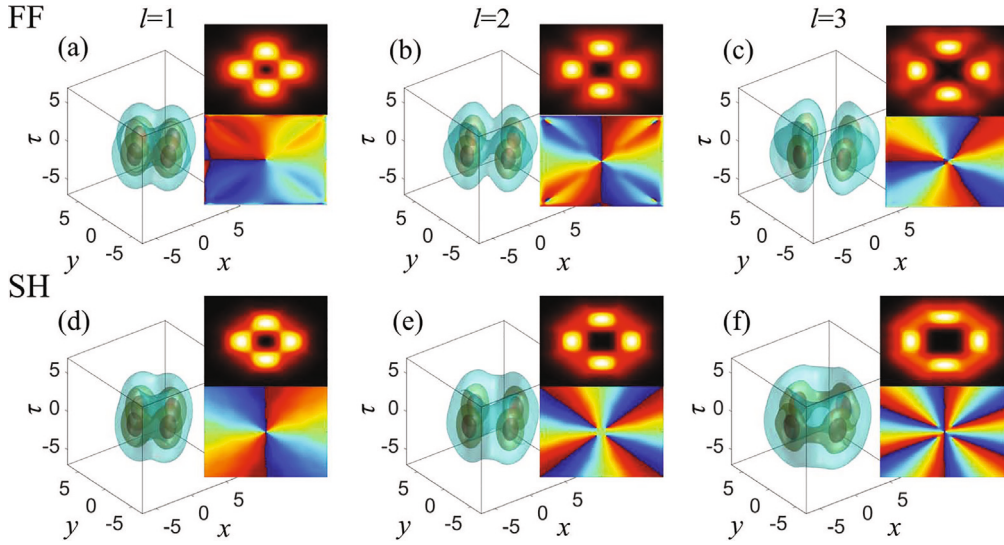


Fig. 4. Vortex LBs with various topological charges  $l = 1, 2, 3$ . The rhombus-shaped vortex LBs are taken for example. The first and second rows are LBs with FF and SH modes, respectively. System parameters are  $(\alpha, g_{11}, P, D, l, p) = (0.2, 0.1, 80, 3, 1, 0)$ .

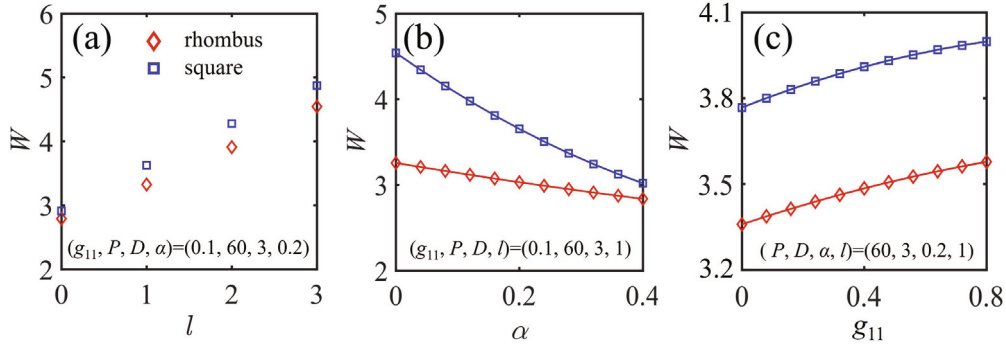


Fig. 5. Width of vortex LBs vs  $l$  (a),  $\alpha$  (b), and  $g_{11}$  (c). The other parameters are  $l = 1, p = 0$ .

has the relation  $dP/d\beta < 0$ , satisfying the Vakhitov–Kolokolov (VK) criterion which is typically associated with the stability of solitons with self-focusing nonlinearity [83]. Further, the power ratio  $\gamma = P_2/P_1$  decreases monotonically with  $\alpha$  [Fig. 6(a3)]. On the other hand,  $\gamma$  would increase with  $P$  [Fig. 6(b3)], indicating that the conversion efficiency from FF to SH might improve at higher power levels. Another finding is that the power ratio  $\gamma$  remains unaffected by changing the cell size  $D$  [Fig. 6(c3)], agreeing with the previous research on 2D QPM photonic crystal [52]. Furthermore, there is only a slight increase in the power ratio  $\gamma$  when there is an increase in cubic nonlinear coefficient  $g_{11}$  [Fig. 6(d3)].

The stability domains of this system in the  $(\alpha, g_{11})$ ,  $(D, g_{11})$ , and  $(P, g_{11})$  planes are depicted in Fig. 7. Here, only the vortex LBs with topological charge  $l = 1$  are presented. The stability domains for rhombus- and square-shaped vortex LBs are indicated by red and blue areas, respectively. The overlapping areas of these two types are shown in purple. It is found that the rhombus-shaped vortex LBs exhibit a larger stability region compared to their square-shaped counterpart. There are considerable overlapping areas for the two types of LBs. In the  $(\alpha, g_{11})$  plane, the stability regions of rhombus- and square-shaped vortex LBs are almost overlapping [Fig. 7(a)]. While the stability regions of square-shaped vortex LBs are completely covered by that of rhombus-shaped ones in the  $(D, g_{11})$  plane [Fig. 7(b)]. The stability domain in the  $(P, g_{11})$  plane exhibits a non-monotonic trend, first increasing and then decreasing with the increasing of  $g_{11}$  [Fig. 7(c)]. These results demonstrate that  $g_{11}$  plays a key role in the

stability domains of vortex LBs, and rhombus-shaped vortex LBs exhibit larger stability domains than square-shaped ones, agreeing with the conclusions drawn from Fig. 6(a1,b1,c1,d1).

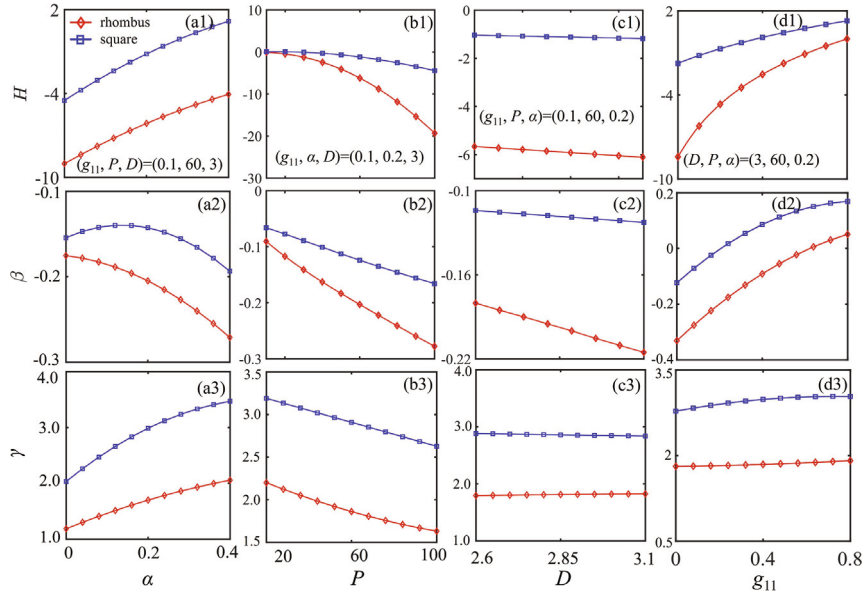
Another characteristic of the vortex LBs is the orbital angular momentum (OAM) in the  $(x, y)$  plane, which is defined as

$$\langle L_{1,2} \rangle = \int \frac{(\psi_{1,2}^* \hat{L} \psi_{1,2} + \text{c.c.})}{2P_{1,2}} dx dy, \quad (9)$$

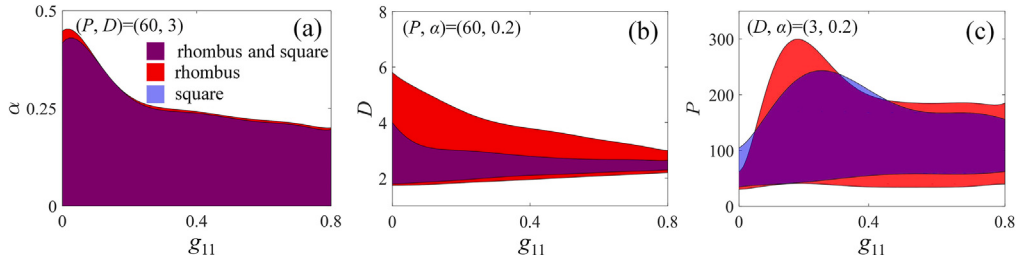
$$\langle L \rangle = \frac{P_1 \langle L_1 \rangle + P_2 \langle L_2 \rangle}{P},$$

where c.c. stands for complex conjugate,  $L_{1,2}$  and  $L$  represent the OAM of the FF/SH components and total one, respectively;  $\hat{L} = -i(x\partial/\partial y - y\partial/\partial x)$  is the OAM operator. Fig. 8 depicts the OAM of vortex LBs as functions of control parameters  $\alpha$ ,  $g_{11}$ , and  $l$ . For a non-rotational system  $\alpha = 0$ , the values of OAM are proportional to topological charges [84]. Under the influence of rotation and cubic nonlinearities, some derivations of OAM can be observed. By modulating  $\alpha$  and  $g_{11}$ , it is found that the total OAM monotonically increases with  $\alpha$ , while it decreases with  $g_{11}$ . The reason is that an artificial angular momentum is introduced by rotating frequency  $\alpha$ , the total OAM of the system can be regarded as the superposition of this artificial angular momentum and the intrinsic angular momentum derived from the topological charge.

A significant finding of this paper is that the rotating QPM system can support vortex LBs with topological charges up to  $l = 3$ . In contrast, only vortex solitons with  $l = 1$  can be achieved in a 2D non-rotating QPM system [52]. To test the stability of these vortex LBs with higher



**Fig. 6.** Modulation of Hamiltonian  $H$ , propagation constant  $\beta$ , and power ratio  $\gamma$  as functions of control parameters  $\alpha$ ,  $P$ ,  $D$ , and  $g_{11}$ . The topological charge is taken as  $l = 1$ . The fixed parameters are shown in the first panel of each column.



**Fig. 7.** Stability domains in the  $(\alpha, g_{11})$ ,  $(D, g_{11})$ , and  $(P, g_{11})$  planes. The red and blue areas represent the stability domains of rhombus and square-shaped vortex LBs, respectively. The purple area is the overlapping region for both two types. The stability domains are identified using vortex LBs that can propagate over distances greater than  $z = 500$ .

topological charges, we conducted direct simulations of Eq. (6) using the fourth-order Runge–Kutta method. The evolution of vortex LBs with  $l = 3$  is plotted in Fig. 9, where the 3D eigenstates  $|\psi_l|$ , their projections and phase structures in  $(x, y)$  plane are shown. Firstly, it is observed that during the propagation along  $z$  direction, the four peaks of vortex LBs rotate counterclockwise around the center of  $(x, y)$  plane, which is attributed to the coordinate rotation. Secondly, the temporal and spatial localization of the vortex LBs remains largely robust. Lastly, vortex LBs with  $l = 3$  can propagate stably up  $z = 800$ . Further investigations have shown that LBs with lower topological charges can propagate longer. One example of vortex LBs with  $l = 1$  is shown in Fig. 10.

It is noticed that the radius of the Laguerre-Gaussian beam in Eq. (8) can be modulated by parameters  $l$  and  $p$ , as shown in Fig. 11. The rhombus- and square-shaped vortex LBs are obtained with  $(l, p) = (1, 0)$ , as shown in Figs. 11(a) and (b). It can be observed that 8 blocks, including 4 white and 4 black blocks, are covered by the input light beam. The white and black blocks indicate  $\sigma = +1$  and  $-1$ , corresponding to  $\varphi_d = 0$  and  $\pi$ , respectively. When the initial beams of FF and SH modes satisfy the matching condition  $\varphi_d = 0$ , the rhombus-shaped vortex LBs would be generated in the four white blocks, as shown in Fig. 11(a). On the other hand, with matching condition  $\varphi_d = \pi$ , the square-shaped vortex LBs would be generated in the four black blocks, as shown in Fig. 11(b). With suitable values of  $l$  and  $p$ , one can get more complex shaped vortex LBs. For example, two kinds of necklace vortex LBs with eight peaks

would be obtained when  $(l, p) = (1, 4)$ , as shown in Figs. 11(c) and (d), where they are generated in white and black blocks, respectively. The stability of these 8-core necklace vortex LBs is confirmed by the propagation evolution, as shown in Fig. 12.

To assess the propagation distance of vortex LBs in experiment, we adopt Lithium niobate as a potential candidate where the refractive indices  $n_1 \approx n_2 = 2.2$ , quadratic nonlinearity coefficient  $d_0 = 2.1 \text{ pm/V}$  [85], and the cubic nonlinearity coefficient  $\chi_0^{(3)} = 6.6 \times 10^{-22} \text{ m}^2/\text{V}^2$  [86]. The wavelengths of FF and SH modes are chosen as 1064 nm and 532 nm, respectively, with an electric field amplitude  $A_0 = 200 \text{ kV/cm}$  and pulse duration  $T_0 = 100 \text{ ps}$  [87]. The propagation distance scale is estimated as  $z_d = 0.05 \text{ mm}$ . Thus, the physical propagation distance  $z = 800$  is about 40 mm for vortex LBs with topological charge  $l = 3$  in the simulation, which is enough for the observation in the experiment.

#### 4. Conclusions

In conclusion, our study presents a novel approach for generating and manipulating stable vortex LBs within a rotating QPM photonic crystal characterized by its unique rotational checkerboard structure. This setup considers the interplay between competing quadratic and cubic nonlinearities, enabling the observation of three distinct vortex LB configurations: square-, rhombus-, and necklace-shaped patterns.

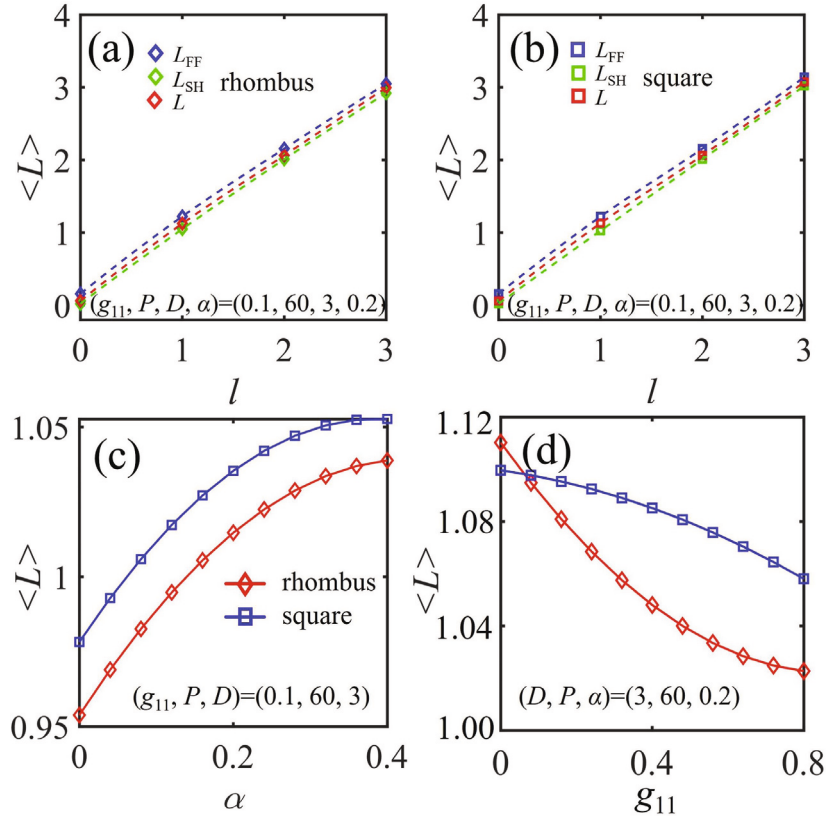


Fig. 8. Angular momentum vs  $l$  (a, b),  $\alpha$  (c), and  $g_{11}$  (d). Panels (a) and (b) are OAM for rhombus- and square-shaped vortex LBs, respectively.

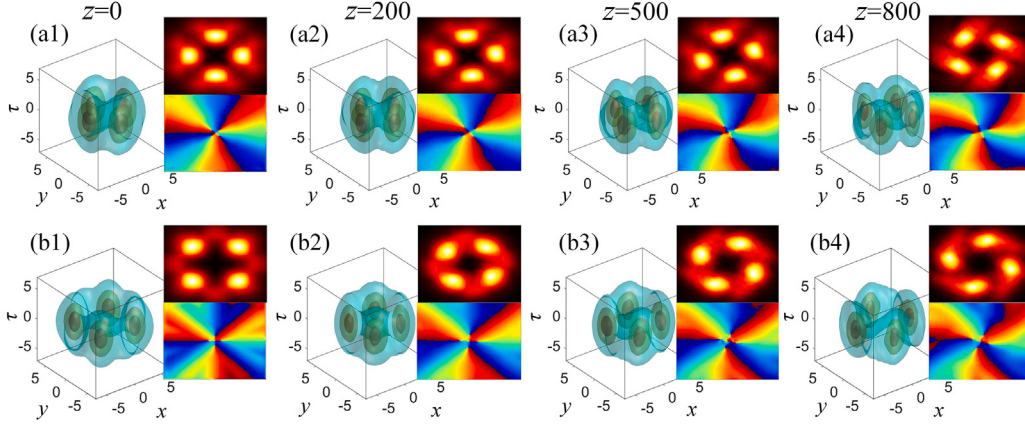
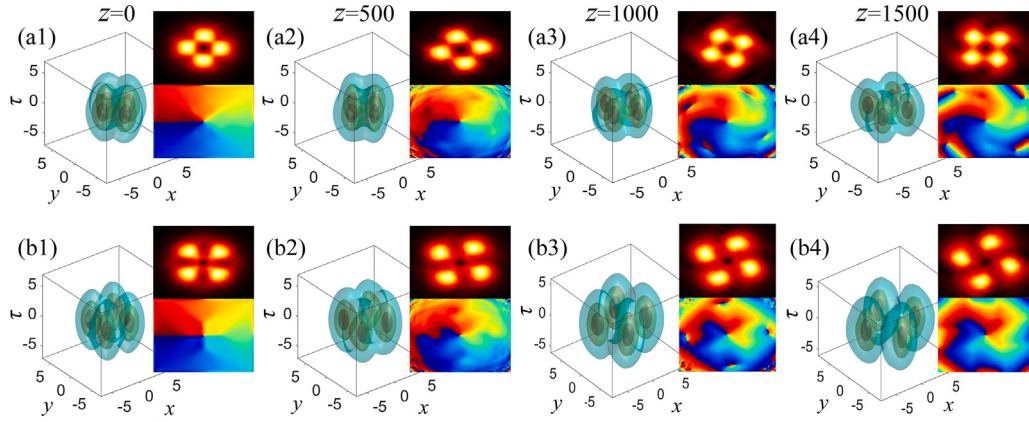


Fig. 9. Propagation of vortex LBs, where the propagation distances are taken as  $z = 0, 200, 500, 800$ . In each panel, the 3D eigenstates  $|\psi_l|$ , their projections and phase structures in  $(x, y)$  plane are shown. The FF mode for rhombus- and square-shaped vortex LBs are shown. The topological charge is taken  $l = 3$  for example. The other parameters are  $(\alpha, g_{11}, P, D) = (0.2, 0.1, 100, 3)$ .

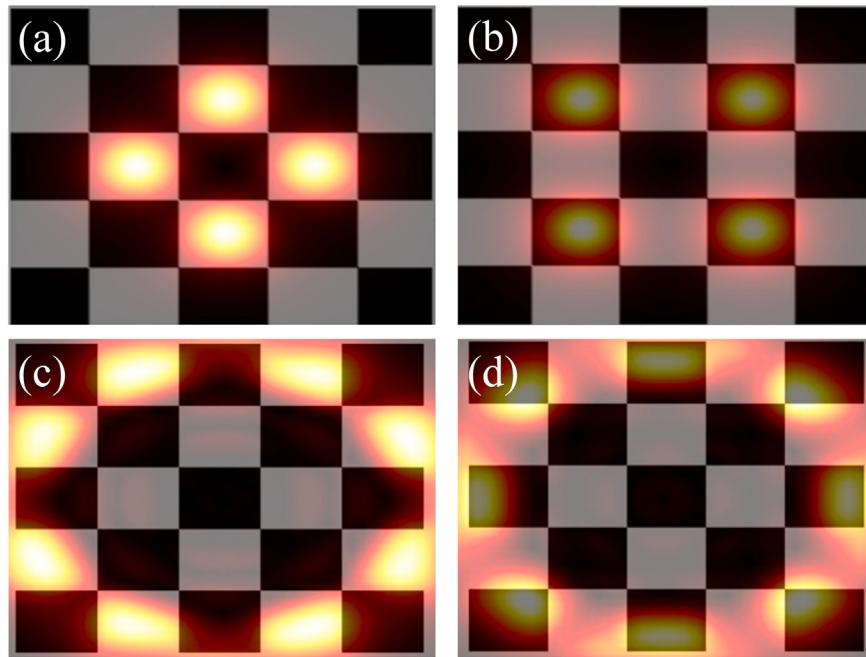
The versatility of this system lies in its ability to dynamically control the vortex LBs through system parameters, such as input power, rotating frequency, checkerboard cell size, and azimuthal indices of the incident light.

Our findings demonstrate that the vortex LBs in this competing quadratic–cubic nonlinearity can support higher topological charges comparing stable 2D vortex solitons observed in pure quadratic systems. Owing to the artificial angular momentum induced by rotation, the total OAM can be strengthened or weakened, leading to a new balance of vortex LBs with high topological charges. This enhanced capability is particularly noteworthy, as it opens up avenues for generating more complex and powerful vortex structures with potential

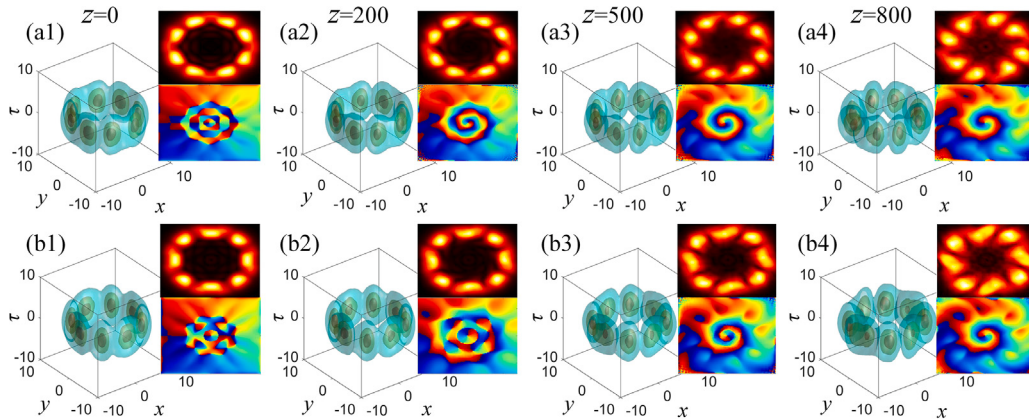
applications in advanced optical technologies. Furthermore, the rotating frequency triggers a fascinating transition from quadrupole vortex LBs to typical vortex modes, highlighting the rich dynamics achievable within this system. It should be noted that we mainly concentrate on the defocusing cubic term. The reason lies in the competing quadratic–cubic nonlinearity. Generally, in order to achieve the balance between the quadratic and cubic nonlinearities, the signs of the two coefficients should be the opposite. Thus, in this work, we mainly consider the defocusing cubic nonlinearity  $g_{11} > 0$  and focusing quadratic nonlinearity. In the simulations, we also tried the focusing case  $g_{11} < 0$ , however, we could not obtain any stationary solutions.



**Fig. 10.** Propagation of vortex LBs, where the propagation distances are  $z = 0, 500, 1000, 1500$ . The topological charge is taken  $l = 1$  for example. The other parameters are  $(\alpha, g_{11}, P, D) = (0.2, 0.1, 100, 3)$ .



**Fig. 11.** Geometry of Laguerre-Gaussian beam and checkerboard lattice. (a, b) Rhombus- and square-shaped vortex LBs are located in white and black blocks, respectively. The parameters are  $(l, p) = (1, 0)$ . (c, d) Eight-core necklace vortex LBs are located in white and black blocks, respectively. The parameters are  $(l, p) = (1, 4)$ .



**Fig. 12.** Vortex LBs with big radius and their propagation. The parameters are the same as Fig. 11.

## CRediT authorship contribution statement

**Shunfang Chen:** Supervision, Conceptualization. **Linjia Wang:** Software, Investigation. **Zhuo Fan:** Formal analysis. **Wei Peng:** Data curation. **Di Wu:** Writing – original draft. **Yuan Zhao:** Writing – original draft, Methodology. **Siliu Xu:** Writing – review & editing, Funding acquisition.

## Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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## Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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