SAT-Based Analysis of Related-Key Impossible Distinguishers on Piccolo and (Tweakable) TWINE

Shion UTSUMI*, Nonmember, Kosei SAKAMOTO†,††, and Takanori ISOBE†, Members

SUMMARY Lightweight block ciphers have gained attention in recent years due to the increasing demand for sensor nodes, RFID tags, and various applications. In such a situation, lightweight block ciphers Piccolo and TWINE have been proposed. Both Piccolo and TWINE are designed based on the Generalized Feistel Structure. However, it is crucial to address the potential vulnerability of these structures to the impossible differential attack. Therefore, detailed security evaluations against this attack are essential. This paper focuses on conducting bit-level evaluations of Piccolo and TWINE against related-key impossible differential attacks by leveraging SAT-aided approaches. We search for the longest distinguishers under the condition that the Hamming weight of the active bits of the input, which includes plaintext and master key differences, and output differences is set to 1, respectively. Additionally, for Tweakable TWINE, we search for the longest distinguishers under the related-tweak and related-tweak-key settings. The result for Piccolo with a 128-bit key, we identify the longest 16-round distinguishers for the first time. In addition, we also demonstrate the ability to extend these distinguishers to 17 rounds by taking into account the cancellation of the round key and plaintext difference. Regarding evaluations of TWINE with a 128-bit key, we search for the first time and reveal the distinguishers up to 19 rounds. For the search for Tweakable TWINE, we evaluate under the related-tweak-key setting for the first time and reveal the distinguishers up to 18 rounds for 80-bit key and 19 rounds for 128-bit key.

key words: Piccolo, TWINE, related-key impossible differential attack, SAT

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In recent years, there has been an increasing opportunity for real-world applications, such as in healthcare, manufacturing, and automotive sectors, to be exchanged in the digital world. These systems often incorporate resource-constrained RFID tags or sensor nodes, and traditional encryption methods have been unable to provide security for these devices. Therefore, in such situations, lightweight ciphers that can replace conventional block ciphers have gained attention in recent years.

Piccolo [1], a lightweight block cipher that can be implemented in hardware with a small circuit size, was proposed at CHES 2011. TWINE [2], a lightweight block cipher that is designed well-balanced for both hardware and software, was proposed at SAC 2012. Both lightweight block ciphers feature a well-designed Generalized Feistel Structure (GFS) to improve diffusion properties. However, one of the most effective attacks on Piccolo in both single-key and related-key settings are the impossible differential attacks by Azimi et al. [3] and Minier [4], respectively. Regarding TWINE, impossible differential attacks by Zheng et al. [5] and Biryukov et al. [6] are effective under the single-key setting for 80-bit and 128-bit keys, respectively. In the related-key setting, the attack by Wei et al. [7] indicate a 24-round impossible differential attack on TWINE with a 80-bit key. Thus, impossible differential attacks on these ciphers may harbor hidden vulnerability and should be investigated in more detail.

Traditionally, evaluations against impossible differentials have been derived from manual calculations using the miss-in-the-middle method [8]. Subsequently, various automated search methods have been developed, including the ‘U-method’ by Kim et al. [9] and its improvements [10], and the constraint programming (CP)-aided method proposed by Sun et al. [11] and others. These methods rely on truncated differential-based evaluations and do not consider the differential propagation within the internals of S-boxes. Later, Sasaki and Todo introduced a mixed integer linear programming (MILP)-aided method for searching impossible differentials [12]. This method transforms the previous MILP-aided differential search into an impossible differential search, making it possible to consider the differential property within the S-box.

On the other hand, cryptanalyses using automated tools are also conducted with SAT solvers. In recent years, Sun et al. have proposed an evaluation method against differential and linear cryptanalysis [13] that enables faster evaluation than MILP-aided methods. This faster method enables the discovery of bit-level differentials and linear characteristics over a larger number of rounds. The SAT-aided approach has the potential to lead to the discovery of more rigorous characteristics over a higher number of rounds, also about impossible differential evaluations.

In this paper, we mainly focus on related-key, related-tweak, and related-tweak-key impossible distinguishers as it is important to understand their structure property and the security of underlying components as pseudo random permutations. However, due to the large input space and high computational cost, the bit-level searches for impossible differential distinguishers under these settings have been challenging. Therefore, in this study, we attempt to achieve distinguisher searches by utilizing a SAT-aided efficient evaluation method.

Manuscript received November 20, 2023.
Manuscript publicized February 8, 2024.
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DOI: 10.1587/transfun.2023EAP1149

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1.2 Our Contribution

In this paper, we conduct bit-level analyses of related-key impossible differential attacks on Piccolo and (Tweakable) TWINE by converting SAT-aided approaches for differential cryptanalysis proposed by Sun et al. [13]. As for the evaluation of Piccolo, since the round keys are linearly determined in the key scheduling by the round that initiates the encryption, we conduct evaluations by varying the round at which encryption starts. Additionally, for Tweakable TWINE, we search for the first time under the related-tweak-key setting, considering differences not only in the plaintext and key but also in the tweak, using the same method.

In the differential search with SAT solver, we represent the differential propagation at each round of the cipher using Conjunctive Normal Form (CNF)-format constraints. Additionally, we utilize auxiliary variables to express the differential probabilities in the non-linear functions and calculate the differential characteristic probabilities using an objective function based on cardinality constraints.

In this evaluation against impossible differentials, to examine the impossibility of given input and output, we simply add constraints to fix the input and output differences without object function. Moreover, searching through all possible input-output pairs is computationally challenging. Therefore, we restrict the search under the condition that the Hamming weight of the active bits of the input, which includes plaintext and master key differences, and output differences is 1, respectively.

Furthermore, by taking into account the cancellation of differences between the key and data processing parts through manual calculation, we successfully extend the impossible differentials of Piccolo with a 128-bit key by one round based on the results obtained by the SAT-aided evaluation.

A summary of our results is shown in Table 1. For the first time, we succeed in identifying the longest 16-round distinguishers for Piccolo with a 128-bit key using the SAT-aided method. In addition, considering the cancellation of the round key and plaintext difference, we extend the distinguishers to 17 rounds. Regarding the evaluation of TWINE with a 128-bit key, we search for the first time and reveal the distinguishers up to 19 rounds. For the search for Tweakable TWINE, we conduct the evaluation under the related-tweak-key setting for the first time and revealed the distinguishers up to 18 rounds for 80-bit key and 19 rounds for 128-bit key.

1.3 Organization

This paper is organized as follows. We first describe the related-key impossible differential attack and a brief explanation of security evaluation by SAT solvers in Sect. 2. In Sect. 3, we describe the specifications of Piccolo, TWINE, and Tweakable TWINE. In Sect. 4, we explain the specific security evaluation methods against related-key impossible distinguisher attacks using SAT solvers. We show the search result of the related-key impossible distinguishers in Sect. 5 and present some considerations in Sect. 6. Finally, Sect. 7 concludes this paper.

2. Preliminaries

In this section, we describe the related-key impossible attack and a brief explanation of the security evaluation using SAT solvers.

2.1 Related-Key Impossible Differential Attack

Related-key impossible differential attack was first proposed in 2003 by Jakimoski et al. [15] as an attack combining an impossible differential attack and a related-key differential attack. The impossible differential attack was independently introduced by Biham et al. in 1998 [16] and Knudsen in 1999 [17]. Impossible differential attack is one of the most powerful attacks against block ciphers based on Generalized Feistel structure (GFS). In contrast to the differential attack, the impossible differential attack searches for an output differential that propagates with a probability of 0 for a given input differential. When this input-output differential pair is found in $r$ rounds, it is called the impossible distinguisher in $r$ rounds, and the disinguisher attack is successful.

The related-key differential attack was introduced by Biham in 1994 [18] allow an attacker to know some relations between different keys without knowing the keys themselves and to cipher under those keys some plaintext. This is a highly disadvantageous attack condition for cryptographic designers, but it allows for evaluating the security against attacks exploiting weak key schedule functions.

In the related-key impossible differential attack, the attacker introduces differences in the keys and produces an impossible differential.

2.2 Security Evaluation of Block Cipher by SAT Solver

In recent years, solver-aided automatic search methods greatly contributed to the cryptanalysis of symmetric-key primitives. The impactful solver-aided search began with the method using mixed integer linear programming (MILP) by Mouha et al. [19], and it has been employed in various
sides of symmetric-key primitives [20], [21]. Subsequently, the search method utilizing the Boolean Satisfiability Problem (SAT) proposed by Sun et al. [13] has been suggested as a more efficient approach compared to MILP. Since the introduction of SAT-aided evaluation methods, various contributions have emerged [22], [23]. The SAT-aided automatic evaluation method for symmetric key block ciphers is currently one of the effective evaluation methods, and in this study, we employ “parkissat†” as a SAT solver.

SAT is concerned with determining whether a given Boolean formula can be evaluated to True by assigning appropriate Boolean values to its variables. To construct a SAT model for evaluation, the method expresses all operations in a cryptographic scheme as Conjunctive Normal Form (CNF) and assigns them to a SAT model as constraints. The evaluation method used in this research is described in Sect. 4.

3. Specification of Our Target

In this section, we describe the specification of lightweight block ciphers Piccolo and (Tweakable) TWINE.

3.1 Notation

The notation in this paper is shown below.

- \(a_{(b)}\): the bit length of \(b\)
- \(a|b\) or \((a|b)\): concatenate \(a\) and \(b\)
- \(a \leftarrow b\): update value \(a\) to \(b\)
- \(\{a\}_{(b)}\): transpose \(a\) vector or matrix
- \(\{a\}_{(b)}\): express \(a\) as a radix of \(b\)
- \(a_L, a_R\): left and right half of \(a\), respectively
- \(F(a)\): input \(a\) to the F-function
- \(RPA\): permutate \(a\) with round permutation
- \(Rotz(a)\): the \(z\)-bit left cyclic shift of \(a\)
- \(P, C\): represent the plaintext and the ciphertext, respectively
- \(K, T\): represent the master key and the tweak, respectively

3.2 Description of Piccolo

Piccolo [1] is a lightweight block cipher that was proposed at CHES 2011, and is capable of being implemented in hardware with a low circuit size. Piccolo is designed based on the GFS and has a block length of 64 bits, supporting 80-bit and 128-bit key lengths. If the key length needs to be specified, we write Piccolo-80 or Piccolo-128 to denote the corresponding version. The number of rounds varies depending on the key length, with 25 or 31 rounds for 80 or 128 bits, respectively. However, both variants of Piccolo share similar processes in key scheduling and data processing. The encryption function of Piccolo is depicted in Fig. 1. The following presents detailed specifications for Piccolo.

Fig. 1 Data encryption of Piccolo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Algorithm 1 Piccolo algorithm.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(X_{(i+1)} = F(X_i) \oplus r k_{(i+1)}) for (i \leftarrow 0) to (24) or (30) do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(X_1 \leftarrow X_1 \oplus F(X_0) \oplus r k_{24})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(X_5 \leftarrow X_5 \oplus F(X_2) \oplus r k_{24+1})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(X_6[X_1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>end for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(X_1 \leftarrow X_1 \oplus F(X_0) \oplus r k_{24+2})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(X_5 \leftarrow X_5 \oplus F(X_2) \oplus r k_{24+1})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(X_6 \leftarrow X_6 \oplus w k_3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(X_5 \leftarrow X_5 \oplus w k_3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C_{(64)} \leftarrow X_0[X_1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.1 Data Processing Part

In the data processing part, the 64-bit input is first divided into four 16-bit segments, and then the encryption is performed using a 4-line GFS. Before the first round and after the last round, the pre- and post-whitening keys are added. The encryption algorithm is presented in Algorithm 1.

The \(F\)-function consists of two S-box layers separated by a diffusion matrix \(M\). Each S-box layer applies the same four \(4 \times 4\) bijective S-boxes presented in Table 2 in parallel. The diffusion function updates the internal state by the matrix \(M\) as follows:

\[(x_{(0)}, x_{(1)}, x_{(2)}, x_{(3)})^T = M \cdot (x_{(0)}, x_{(1)}, x_{(2)}, x_{(3)})^T.\]

where the multiplication is performed over a finite field GF \(2^4\). The round permutation \(RP\) acts at byte level and permutes the bytes of the current block as follows:

\[ RP : (x_{(0)}, x_{(1)}, \ldots, x_{(7)}) \rightarrow (x_{(2)}, x_{(7)}, x_{(4)}, x_{(1)}, x_{(6)}, x_{(3)}, x_{(0)}, x_{(5)}). \]

3.2.2 Key Scheduling Part

Piccolo supports 80-bit and 128-bit keys. We first define 16-bit constants \(con^{80}\) and \(con^{128}\), and then we describe the process of key scheduling part.

Constant Values

The constants \(con^{80}_i\) for Piccolo-80 and \(con^{128}_i\) for Piccolo-128 are generated as follows:

†https://github.com/songfu1983/ParKissat-RS
Algorithm 2 Key Schedule function for Piccolo-80.
\[ \begin{align*}
  k_{0\{16\}} | k_{1\{16\}} | k_{2\{16\}} | k_{3\{16\}} | k_{4\{16\}} & \leftarrow K_{80} \\
  w_{k_0} & \leftarrow k_0^L | k_0^R, w_{k_1} & \leftarrow k_1^L | k_1^R, w_{k_2} & \leftarrow k_2^L | k_2^R, w_{k_3} & \leftarrow k_3^L | k_3^R \\
  \text{for } i \leftarrow 0 \text{ to } (2r - 1) & \text{ do} \\
  (r_{k_2i}, r_{k_3i+1}) & \leftarrow (c_{i+16}n_{i+16}) \oplus \{(k_2, k_3) \text{ if } i \text{ mod } 5 = 0 \text{ or } 2\} \\
  & \quad \text{if } (i + 2) \text{ mod } 8 = 0 \text{ then} \quad \{k_0, k_1, k_3, k_4, k_5, k_6, k_7, k_8, k_9, k_0, k_1, k_2, k_3, k_4, k_5, k_6, k_7, k_8, k_9, k_0\} \\
  & \quad \text{end if} \\
  r_{k_2i} & \leftarrow k_{i+16} \text{ mod } 8 \oplus c_{i+16}^{28} \\
  \text{end for}
\end{align*} \]

Algorithm 3 Key Schedule function for Piccolo-128.
\[ \begin{align*}
  k_{0\{16\}} | k_{1\{16\}} | k_{2\{16\}} | k_{3\{16\}} | k_{4\{16\}} | k_{5\{16\}} | k_{6\{16\}} | k_{7\{16\}} & \leftarrow K_{128} \\
  w_{k_0} & \leftarrow k_0^L | k_0^R, w_{k_1} & \leftarrow k_1^L | k_1^R, w_{k_2} & \leftarrow k_2^L | k_2^R, w_{k_3} & \leftarrow k_3^L | k_3^R \\
  \text{for } i \leftarrow 0 \text{ to } (2r - 1) & \text{ do} \\
  (r_{k_2i}, r_{k_3i+1}) & \leftarrow (c_{i+16}n_{i+16}) \oplus \{(k_2, k_3) \text{ if } i \text{ mod } 5 = 0 \text{ or } 2\} \\
  & \quad \text{if } (i + 2) \text{ mod } 8 = 0 \text{ then} \quad \{k_0, k_1, k_3, k_4, k_5, k_6, k_7, k_8, k_9, k_0, k_1, k_2, k_3, k_4, k_5, k_6, k_7, k_8, k_9, k_0\} \\
  & \quad \text{end if} \\
  r_{k_2i} & \leftarrow k_{i+16} \text{ mod } 8 \oplus c_{i+16}^{28} \\
  \text{end for}
\end{align*} \]

Table 2 S-box of Piccolo.
\[
\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccc}
 x & 0 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 & 8 & 9 & a & f & 6 & c & 5 & d \\
 S^f[x] & e & 4 & b & 2 & 3 & 8 & 0 & 9 & 1 & a & 7 & f & 6 & c & 5 & d
\end{array}
\]

3.3 Description of (Tweakable) TWINE

TWINE [2] is a lightweight block cipher proposed by Suzuki et al. It realizes efficient implementation on both quite small hardware and microcontrollers. TWINE employs a GFS and has a block length of 64 bits, supporting 80-bit and 128-bit key lengths. We denote these versions of TWINE as TWINE-80 and TWINE-128, respectively. TWINE-80 and TWINE-128 employs the same 36-round round function and a similar key schedule function. Furthermore, Tweakable TWINE incorporates the same structure as TWINE with the addition of a tweak schedule. In the following, we denote each key length of Tweakable TWINE as T-TWINE-80 and T-TWINE-128. The encryption function of TWINE and T-TWINE is depicted in Fig. 2. The following presents detailed specifications for T-TWINE.

3.3.1 Data Processing Part

In the data processing part, the 64-bit plaintext is divided into 16 4-bit segments, and then the encryption is performed using a 16-line GFS. Each Feistel function simply consist of xor with round keys and mapping using the S-box presented in Table 3. After the above operation, the advanced shuffle selected to improve the diffusion is applied according to the following:
\[
(0_{0(4)}, x_1(4) \ldots x_{15}(4)) \rightarrow (x_5(4), x_0(4), x_1(4), x_4(4), x_7(4), x_12(4), x_3(4), x_8(4), x_{13}(4), x_6(4), x_9(4), x_2(4), x_{15}(4), x_{10}(4), x_{11}(4), x_{14}(4)).
\]
In the case of T-TWINE, as shown in Fig. 2, the round tweak is added designated branches.

3.3.2 Key Scheduling Part

TWINE supports 80-bit and 128-bit keys. We first define 6-bit constants \( CON_{80} \), and then we describe the process of key scheduling part.

Constant Values

The 6-bit round constants, \( CON_{80} = CON^L_{13}(3)|CON^R_{13}(3) \), are defined as \( 2^i \) in GF(2^6) with primitive polynomial \( z^6 + z + 1 \).

Key Schedule for TWINE-80

The key scheduling function for TWINE-80 provides the 36 round keys \( r_{k_{i(32)}}(0 \leq i < 36) \) from a 80-bit master key \( K \) for the data processing part as following Algorithm 4.

Key Schedule for TWINE-128

The key scheduling function for TWINE-128 provides the 36 round keys \( r_{k_{i(32)}}(0 \leq i < 36) \) from a 128-bit master key \( K \) for the data processing part as following Algorithm 5.

3.3.3 Tweak Scheduling Part

The tweak scheduling function of T-TWINE provides the 24-
### Table 3: S-box of TWINE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$S[x]$</th>
<th>c</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$x$</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Algorithm 4: Key Schedule function for TWINE-80.

For $i = 0$ to 34 do

```plaintext
rk_i ← k_1 ⊕ k_2 ⊕ k_3 ⊕ k_4 ⊕ k_5 ⊕ k_6
k_1 ← k_1 ⊕ S(k_6) ⊕ k_2
k_7 ← k_7 ⊕ CONL_k_3 ⊕ k_8 ⊕ CONR_k_3
k_9 ⊕ k_10 ⊕ Rot4(k_10) ⊕ k_5
k_11 ⊕ k_12 ⊕ Rot16(k_12) ⊕ k_13
```

end for

### Algorithm 5: Key Schedule function for TWINE-128.

For $i = 0$ to 34 do

```plaintext
rk_i ← k_1 ⊕ k_2 ⊕ k_3 ⊕ k_4 ⊕ k_5 ⊕ k_6
k_1 ← k_1 ⊕ S(k_6) ⊕ k_2 ⊕ k_3 ⊕ S(k_30)
k_7 ← k_7 ⊕ CONL_k_3 ⊕ k_8 ⊕ CONR_k_3
k_9 ⊕ k_10 ⊕ Rot4(k_10) ⊕ k_5
k_11 ⊕ k_12 ⊕ Rot16(k_12) ⊕ k_13
```

end for

### Algorithm 6: Tweak scheduling function of T-TWINE

For $i = 0$ to 35 do

```plaintext
RT_i ← t^i_{0}(0) ⊕ t^i_{1}(0) ⊕ t^i_{2}(0) ⊕ t^i_{3}(0)
```

end for

4. Evaluation Method of Using SAT Solver

In this paper, we conduct bit-level evaluations using the SAT-aided method for the related-key impossible differential attack. The evaluations are mainly based on the method proposed by Sun et al. [13]. We explain the modeling method for the SAT model for the evaluations of the related-key impossible differential attack below.

#### 4.1 SAT Model for Differential Propagation

When using SAT solvers to search for differential distinguishers in a cipher that includes various operations such as linear and nonlinear layers, it is necessary to convert the relationship between operations and differentials of the cipher into a CNF-formatted SAT problem.

The clauses in a CNF formula regarding the search for the optimal differential are classified into two groups. The first group represents the propagations of differences inside the cipher, and the second one measures the non-random feature of the trail, which can be set as the number of active S-boxes, the differential probability optionally. However, in the evaluation of impossible differentials, since the number of active S-box or differential probabilities is not taken into account, the CNF of boolean cardinality constraints for the object function of calculating number of active S-boxes or differential probability is not used. Here, we explain the SAT models of several operations used to discover impossible differential distinguishers.

Differential Model 1 (Branching) [13]. Let $y = f(x)$ be a branching function, where $x \in \mathbb{F}_2^n$ is the input variable, and the output variables $y = (y_0, y_1, \ldots, y_{n-1}) \in \mathbb{F}_2^n$ is calculated as $y_0 = y_1 = \cdots = y_{n-1} = x$. Then, $(\alpha, \beta_0, \beta_1, \ldots, \beta_{n-1})$ is a valid differential trail of function if and only if it satisfies all the equations in the following:

$$\alpha \lor \beta_i = 1, \quad 0 \leq i \leq n - 1.$$  

Differential Model 2 (XOR) [13]. Let $y = f(x)$ be a function compressed by an XOR, where $x = (x_0, x_1, \ldots, x_{n-1}) \in \mathbb{F}_2^n$ is the input variables, and the output variable $y \in \mathbb{F}_2$ is calculated as $y = x_0 \oplus x_1 \oplus \cdots \oplus x_{n-1}$. When $n = 2$, $(\alpha_0, \alpha_1, \beta)$ is a valid differential trail of function if and only if it satisfies all the equations in the following:

$$\alpha_0 \lor \alpha_1 \lor \beta = 1.$$  

When $n \geq 3$, let $A$ be the set \{ $(\alpha_0, \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_n) \in \mathbb{F}_2^{n+1} | \alpha_0 \oplus \alpha_1 \oplus \cdots \oplus \alpha_n = 1$ \}. Then the differential trail $(\alpha_0, \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_{n-1}, \beta)$ is valid if and only if it satisfies all the following equations:

$$(\alpha_0 \oplus \alpha_0) \lor (\alpha_1 \oplus \alpha_1) \lor \cdots \lor (\alpha_{n-1} \oplus \alpha_{n-1}) \lor (\beta \oplus \alpha_n) = 1,$n \geq 3, A.$$  

Differential Model 3 (S-box). While we primarily represent differential propagation of S-boxes based on the method proposed by Sun et al. [13], here, we represent the differential
propagation without auxiliary variables.

Let \( Pr(\alpha, \beta) \) be the probability of the difference for an \( n \)-bit input-output S-box, where \( \alpha \in \mathbb{F}_2^n \) is the input difference and \( \beta \in \mathbb{F}_2^n \) is the output difference. To create a differential model for the S-box in SAT, we prepare the following Boolean functions:

\[
\begin{align*}
g(\alpha, \beta) &= \begin{cases} 
0, & \text{if } Pr(\alpha, \beta) = 0 \\
1, & \text{otherwise}.
\end{cases}
\end{align*}
\]

This represents whether the variable assignment for input/output differences in the S-box is valid or not. We define the set of invalid variable assignments for the S-box, where \( g(\alpha, \beta) = 0 \), as set \( A \).

\[ A = \{(a, b) \in \mathbb{F}_2^{2n} | g(a, b) = 0\} \]

To construct the model of the S-box, each invalid assignment of the set \( A \) can be excluded from the set \( \mathbb{F}_2^{2n} \) by the following equation, where \(|A|\) is the number of invalid assignments.

\[
\bigwedge_{i=0}^{n-1} (a_i \oplus a'_i) \lor \bigwedge_{j=0}^{n-1} (b_j \oplus b'_j) = 1, \\
(a^i, b^i) \in A, \quad 0 \leq i \leq |A| - 1.
\]

The Boolean function representing the differential propagation of the S-box is expressed as follows by excluding all invalid assignments from the solution space.

\[
h(\alpha, \beta) = \bigwedge_{i=0}^{n-1} \left( (a_i \oplus a'_i) \lor (b_j \oplus b'_j) \right) = 1.
\]

The above equation is equivalent to the following equation, and the minimum number of clauses can be constructed using software such as Logic Friday \(^\dagger\).

\[
h(\alpha, \beta) = \bigwedge_{(a, b) \in \mathbb{F}_2^{2n}} \left( g(a, b) \lor \bigwedge_{i=0}^{n-1} (a_i \oplus a'_i) \lor \bigwedge_{j=0}^{n-1} (b_j \oplus b'_j) \right).
\]

4.2 Related-Key Impossible Differential Evaluation Model

For the evaluation of the impossible differential attack, we conduct modeling of the differential propagation of the encryption algorithm and verify the validity of the propagation of given input differences and output differences. In the evaluation of the related-key impossible differentials, we also model the differential propagation of the key schedule function and then searched for distinguishers by constraining input-output patterns to evaluate whether the differential propagations of these patterns are possible. We impose constraints such that the Hamming weight of the active difference in the input is 1 for plaintext and key (and tweak), and the Hamming weight of the active difference in the output is 1 for the ciphertext.

Let \( \alpha \) denote the input difference of \( n \) bits including the key difference, and \( \beta \) denote the output difference of \( m \) bits. If we denote the positions of the active 1-bits in the input and output as \( i \) and \( j \), respectively, the input and output differences can be fixed with the following equations:

\[
\begin{align*}
\bar{\alpha}_0 \land \bar{\alpha}_1 \land \cdots \land \bar{\alpha}_t \land \cdots \land \bar{\alpha}_{n-1} \land \bar{\alpha}_n &= 1, \\
\bar{\beta}_0 \land \bar{\beta}_1 \land \cdots \land \bar{\beta}_t \land \cdots \land \bar{\beta}_{m-1} \land \bar{\beta}_m &= 1.
\end{align*}
\]

From the perspective of diffusion property, our search considers Hamming weight of 1 to be better and other block cipher designers evaluated in the same way [24]–[26] when estimating the longest distinguisher. In addition, when constraints on active key differences at the input are imposed, evaluations are carried out while considering the condition of constraining the output differences to be 0. This is because there is a possibility that the difference between the key and the data path cancels out, resulting in no difference in the ciphertext. Given these constraints, for a block length of \( b \) and a key length of \( k \) bits, in a search space with a Hamming weight of 1 or less, we solve a total of \( b^2 + k(b + 1) \) SAT models in each round.

5. Evaluation Results

In this section, we show the search results of the longest distinguishers for the related-key impossible differential attack. Table 1 shows the summary of results with a comparison to existing results.

5.1 Evaluation Results of Each Target

The following shows search results of the related-key impossible differential distinguishers for Piccolo, TWINE and T-TWINE with the method described in Sect. 4.

**Piccolo** In the search for the distinguishers for Piccolo, we change the start round of the Piccolo-encryption and we find related-key impossible differential distinguishers up to 10 and 16 rounds of Piccolo-80 and Piccolo-128, respectively. Tables 4 and 5 show the length of related-key impossible differential distinguishers, the number of distinguishers, and approximate time of the search under the conditions of a particular starting round for each key length of Piccolo.

According to Table 4 for Piccolo-80, we find related-key impossible differential distinguishers up to 10 rounds and they can be constructed regardless of the starting round for encryption. We also demonstrate that when encryption begins from the 3rd round, we can configure the longest 16-round distinguishers for Piccolo-128 in 16 different patterns.

**TWINE** Table 6 shows the number of related-key impossible differential disinguishers and approximate time
of the search for TWINE-80 and TWINE-128 at each round. As for the searches of TWINE, we find related-key impossible differential distinguishers up to 15 and 19 rounds for 80-bit and 128-bit keys, respectively. For TWINE-80, we can configure 4 different distinguishers for 15 rounds and for TWINE-128, we can configure 4 different distinguishers for 19 rounds.

5.2 More Rounds for Piccolo-128

In this section, we present the 16-round impossible differentials discovered by our SAT-aided evaluation and manually extend it to the 17-round differentials by taking the cancellation of difference in the key and data processing part into account. These 17-round impossible differentials, where differences in plaintext and key are active, could not be discovered through the search under the condition of Hamming weight of 1 by the SAT-aided evaluation.

First, we denote the notations used in this section. $\Delta X$, $\Delta Y$, $\Delta K$ are the differences of plaintext, ciphertext and 128-bit master key, respectively. $\Delta k_i$ and $\Delta y_i$ mean the $i$th 16-bit of master key and ciphertext. From the above notation, the following can be obvious.

$\Delta K(128) = [\Delta k_0 | \Delta k_1 | \cdots | \Delta k_7]$, $\Delta Y(64) = [\Delta y_0 | \Delta y_1 | \Delta y_2 | \Delta y_3]$. $k_i^4$ denotes the $i$th bit of difference in $k_4$ is active, and otherwise inactive. Therefore, Hamming weight of $k_i^4$ which is 16-bit length is 1.

$(\Delta X, \Delta K) \xrightarrow{16R} (\Delta Y)$ means $\Delta X$ and $\Delta K$ never lead to $\Delta Y$ in 16-round encryptions, which represents a 16-round impossible differential.

In this research, we demonstrated the following 16 kinds of impossible differentials.

$\begin{align*}
(\Delta X = [0_{64}], 0_{64} | \Delta k_i^4 | 0_{48}) 

\xrightarrow{16R} (0_{32} | \Delta y_i^2 | 0_{16}) (0 \leq i \leq 15).
\end{align*}$

We illustrate these impossible differentials in Fig. 3. In this figure, the gray area indicates that one bit within the area is active. When considering the relationship between round keys and the cancellation of plaintext differences, we can decrypt one more round with probability 1. Thus, we can extend the related-key impossible differentials of Piccolo-128 to 17 rounds. These differentials are expressed as follows and depicted in Fig. 4.

$\begin{align*}
(0_{32} | \Delta x_i^2 | 0_{16}, 0_{64} | \Delta k_i^4 | 0_{48}) 

\xrightarrow{17R} (0_{32} | \Delta y_i^2 | 0_{16}) (0 \leq i \leq 15).
\end{align*}$

6. Consideration

In this section, we discuss the key recovery attack on Piccolo-128 with updated impossible differentials.
The general approach in impossible differential attacks is to extend the impossible differential by some rounds at the top and the bottom of the impossible differential. Then, guess the key bits that intervene in these rounds and check whether a trial pair is partially encrypted (or decrypted) to the impossible differential. When the input-output differences extended to additional rounds reach the impossible differential, we know that the guessed key bits are certainly wrong and we can remove the key from the candidate key space.

When we conduct key recovery attacks using the impossible differential we discovered in Piccolo-128, because we could only consider intermediate rounds of impossible differentials with Hamming weight of 1, the probability of reaching them from the extended rounds was low, and we were unable to eliminate a sufficient number of key candidates. Therefore, it was impossible to conduct key recovery attacks utilizing the impossible differentials discovered under this condition. However, finding the longest distinguishers is crucial for examining the structural properties of the cipher.

### 7. Conclusion

In this paper, we performed bit-level evaluations on Piccolo, TWINE and T-TWINE against related-key impossible differential attacks by leveraging SAT-aided approaches. Especially, by changing the starting round of encryption of Piccolo, we succeeded in identifying the longest 16-round distinguisher on Piccolo-128 for the first time. In addition, considering the cancellation of round key and plaintext difference, we demonstrated we can extend Piccolo-128 distinguishers found by the SAT approach to 17 rounds. For the evaluation of TWINE-128, we searched for related-key impossible differential distinguisher for the first time and we revealed the distinguishers up to 19 rounds. Regarding the

### Table 7  The number of related-tweak and related-tweak-key impossible differentials for T-TWINE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Tweak/Tweak-Key</th>
<th>length of Distinguisher</th>
<th>Number of IDs</th>
<th>Approx. Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T-TWINE-80</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>16R</td>
<td>76 IDs</td>
<td>2 hours 30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>17R</td>
<td>16 IDs</td>
<td>2 hours 30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>18R</td>
<td>4 IDs</td>
<td>2 hours 30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>19R</td>
<td>0 IDs</td>
<td>2 hours 30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-TWINE-128</td>
<td>TK</td>
<td>16R</td>
<td>76 IDs</td>
<td>4 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TK</td>
<td>17R</td>
<td>16 IDs</td>
<td>4 hours 20 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TK</td>
<td>18R</td>
<td>4 IDs</td>
<td>4 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TK</td>
<td>19R</td>
<td>0 IDs</td>
<td>4 hours 30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-TWINE-128</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>16R</td>
<td>76 IDs</td>
<td>2 hours 30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>17R</td>
<td>16 IDs</td>
<td>2 hours 30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>18R</td>
<td>4 IDs</td>
<td>2 hours 30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>19R</td>
<td>0 IDs</td>
<td>2 hours 30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-TWINE-128</td>
<td>TK</td>
<td>17R</td>
<td>36 IDs</td>
<td>5 hours 20 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TK</td>
<td>18R</td>
<td>12 IDs</td>
<td>5 hours 30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TK</td>
<td>19R</td>
<td>4 IDs</td>
<td>5 hours 50 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TK</td>
<td>20R</td>
<td>0 IDs</td>
<td>5 hours 50 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ID: impossible differential

T: Tweak, TK: Tweak-Key

**Fig. 3** 16 rounds impossible differential of Piccolo-128.

**Fig. 4** 17 rounds impossible differential of Piccolo-128.
evaluation of T-TWINE under the related-tweak-key condition, we searched for the longest distinguishers for the first time and we revealed the distinguishers up to 18 rounds for 80-bit key and up to 19 rounds 128-bit key.

We explored impossible differentials under the condition that the Hamming weight of the active differences in the input and output is 1, respectively. However, it is likely that this condition is not effective in key recovery attacks. Therefore, it is necessary to consider methods for identifying impossible differentials that are effective against key recovery attacks in the future.

Acknowledgments

Takanori Isobe is supported by JST, PRESTO Grant Number JPMJPR2031. This research was in part conducted under a contract of “Research and development on new generation cryptography for secure wireless communication services” among “Research and Development for Expansion of Radio Wave Resources (JP000254)”, which was supported by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Japan. This result is also obtained from the commissioned research (JP012368C05801) by National Institute of Information and Communications Technology (NICT), Japan. The authors would like to express their gratitude to Ryoma Ito for useful discussions.

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