The impact of dust in host galaxies on quasar luminosity functions

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ABSTRACT
We have investigated effects of dust attenuation on quasar luminosity functions at \( z \sim 2 \) using a semi-analytic galaxy formation model combined with a large cosmological \( N \)-body simulation. We estimate the dust attenuation of quasars self-consistently with that of galaxies by considering the dust in their host bulges. We find that the luminosity of the bright quasars is strongly dimmed by the dust attenuation, \( \sim 2 \) mag in the \( B \)-band. Assuming the empirical bolometric corrections for active galactic nuclei (AGNs) by Marconi et al., we find that this dust attenuation is too strong to explain the \( B \)-band and X-ray quasar luminosity functions simultaneously. We consider two possible mechanisms that weaken the dust attenuation. As such a mechanism, we introduce a time delay for AGN activity, that is, gas fuelling to a central black hole starts sometime after the beginning of the starburst induced by a major merger. The other is the anisotropy in the dust distribution. We find that in order to make the dust attenuation of the quasars negligible, either the gas accretion into the black holes has to be delayed at least three times the dynamical time-scale of their host bulges or the dust covering factor is as small as \( \sim 0.1 \).

Key words: galaxies: active – galaxies: nuclei – quasars: general.

1 INTRODUCTION
The mass of supermassive black holes (SMBHs) correlates with the properties of their host galaxies, such as stellar mass and velocity dispersion of their bulges (e.g. Magorrian et al. 1998; Ferrarese & Merritt 2000; Haring & Rix 2004; McConnell & Ma 2013). These facts suggest that SMBHs have co-evolved with their host galaxies. The most straightforward way to understand the co-evolution is studying the properties of active galactic nuclei (AGNs), which emit light when materials get accreted by the SMBHs.

Quasars are the brightest class of AGNs. There have been many observational studies of AGN luminosity functions in several bands (e.g. Croom et al. 2009, 2001; Ueda et al. 2014). Effects of dust attenuation have also been studied for various classes of AGNs, including quasars (e.g. Sanders et al. 1988; Gaskell & Benker 2007; Lacy et al. 2007). These studies suggest the existence of obscured quasars, which are hidden by the surrounding dust and can be observed only in X-ray. Lacy et al. (2007) suggest that only 33 per cent of luminous AGNs selected based on their mid-infrared colours are unobscured (Type I) quasars. This picture is in good accord with the simulation results by Hopkins et al. (2005); they suggest that quasars are buried in the dust in merger remnants and only become observable at their late evolutionary stage.

Semi-analytic (SA) galaxy formation models are powerful tools to study rare objects like AGNs theoretically since they can calculate properties of individual galaxies in large cosmological \( N \)-body simulations. SA models have thus been widely used to investigate AGN properties (e.g. Kauffmann & Haehnelt 2000; Enoki, Nagashima & Gouda 2003; Cattaneo et al. 2005b; Monaco, Fontanot & Taffoni 2007; Lagos, Cora & Padilla 2008; Marulli et al. 2008; Fanidakis et al. 2012; Hirschmann et al. 2012). Many of them considered dust attenuation and attempted to reproduce observed luminosity functions (e.g. Cattaneo et al. 2005b; Fanidakis et al. 2012) by utilizing the empirical relations (e.g. Ueda et al. 2003; Szokoly et al. 2004; Barger et al. 2005; Hasinger 2008). None of them however consider effects of the dust attenuation on quasar luminosity self-consistently with properties of their host galaxies. In order to investigate effects of the dust on quasar luminosity functions self-consistently with galaxy formation, we employ an SA model, based on vGC (Nagashima et al. 2005) that is a galaxy formation model combined with high-resolution cosmological \( N \)-body simulations.

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in a $\Lambda$-dominated cold dark matter ($\Lambda$CDM) universe. This model well reproduces the quasar luminosity functions around $z \sim 2$ and naturally explains the cosmic downsizing of quasars (Enoki et al. 2014, hereafter E14) together with many observed properties of galaxies (Nagashima et al. 2005). Our model is identical to that used in E14, unless otherwise stated. In this Letter, we consider the dust in quasar host bulges, which attenuates the starlight from the bulge stars during starbursts; the same dust must attenuate the quasars, while this effect has been neglected in our previous studies (Enoki et al. 2003; E14).

This Letter is organized as follows: in Section 2, we briefly review our models for the growth of the SMBHs and AGN luminosity. In Section 3, we present our results that indicate the quasars produced by our model are significantly attenuated by the dust in the host galaxies. We also propose two mechanisms which make the dust attenuation weak. Finally, we summarize and discuss our results in Section 4.

2 MODELLING SMBH GROWTH AND QUASAR LUMINOSITY

We create merging histories of dark matter haloes from a large cosmological $N$-body simulation. The baryonic processes in each halo are calculated by using simple, parametric forms of equations. Throughout this Letter, we assume a $\Lambda$CDM universe with the following parameters: $\Omega_0 = 0.2725$, $\Omega_\Lambda = 0.7275$, $\Omega_b = 0.0455$, $\sigma_8 = 0.807$, $n_s = 0.961$ and a Hubble constant of $H_0 = 100 h$ km s$^{-1}$ Mpc$^{-1}$, where $h = 0.702$ (Komatsu et al. 2011). Our cosmological $N$-body simulation contains 2048$^3$ particles within a comoving box size of 280 h$^{-1}$ Mpc. The minimum halo mass is 7.72 $\times$ 10$^9$ h$^{-1}$ M$\odot$. Further details can be found in E14 and Ishiyama et al. (2014). In this section, we briefly describe the processes that are most relevant to our study.

2.1 Growth of SMBHs

Galaxies in a common dark matter halo sometimes merge together by dynamical friction or random collisions. When two or more galaxies merge, their central SMBHs also coalesce into a single SMBH. We define a major merger as an event where the mass ratio of the secondary progenitor to the primary one is larger than 0.4. In this case, the cold gas in the merger remnant is converted into stars with a short time-scale and a fraction of it gets accreted by the SMBH. The mass of the cold gas accreted by the SMBH, $M_{\text{acc}}$, is given by

$$M_{\text{acc}} = f_{\text{BH}}\Delta M_{\text{e, burst}},$$

where $\Delta M_{\text{e, burst}}$ is the mass of stars that form during the starburst and $f_{\text{BH}}$ is a free parameter whose value is set to 0.01 in order to reproduce the observed relationship between bulge mass and black hole mass at $z = 0$ (H"aring & Rix 2004; McConnell & Ma 2013).

2.2 AGN luminosity

Assuming that a fixed fraction of the rest mass energy of the accreted cold gas by an SMBH is radiated and that an AGN light curve has an exponentially declining form as in E14, we obtain the bolometric luminosity of an AGN at time $t$ after a major merger as

$$L_{\text{bol}}(t) = \frac{\epsilon_{\text{bol}} M_{\text{acc}}}{f_{\text{life}}} \times \exp(-t/t_{\text{life}}).$$

where $\epsilon_{\text{bol}}$ is the bolometric radiative efficiency, $f_{\text{life}}$ is the AGN lifetime and $c$ is the speed of light. We suppose that the AGN lifetime is proportional to the dynamical time-scale of the bulge, $t_{\text{life}} \propto M_B^{1/2}$. Marconi et al. (2004) propose the bolometric corrections for hard X-ray (2–10 keV), soft X-ray (0.5–2 keV) and B-band (hereafter ‘Marconi relations’). We obtain hard X-ray luminosity, $L_X$ and B-band luminosity, $L_B$ from Marconi relations as

$$\log(L/L_{(2-10\text{keV})}) = 1.54 + 0.24L + 0.012L^2 - 0.0015L^3,$$

$$\log(L/L_{\text{B}}(1+z)) = 0.80 - 0.067L + 0.017L^2 - 0.0023L^3,$$

where $L = (\log L - 12)$ and $L$ is the intrinsic bolometric luminosity in units of $L_{\odot}$.

We chose the values of $\epsilon_{\text{bol}}$ and $f_{\text{life}}$ to match the observed AGN luminosity functions in hard X-ray at $z \sim 2$, at which the comoving number density of the quasars is the highest. We employ $\epsilon_{\text{bol}} = 0.1$ and $f_{\text{life}} = 1.5$ throughout this Letter. If $t_{\text{life}}$ is shortened, then the faint end slope of the AGN luminosity function is shallower and the number of bright AGNs increases as mentioned in Cattaneo (2001) and Enoki et al. (2003). We assume that AGNs with $N_{\text{HI}} > 10^{23}$ cm$^{-2}$ are Compton-thick and that they will be missed even by hard X-ray surveys.

2.3 Dust attenuation

The dust attenuation of galaxies has been an important ingredient in SA models (e.g. Cole et al. 2000; Nagashima et al. 2005). In our model, the optical depth of internal dust in a merger remnant at the V-band is assumed to be

$$\tau_V = \tau_{V0}(M_{\text{cold}}/M_{\odot})(Z_{\text{cold}}/Z_{\odot})(1+z)^{-\gamma},$$

where $\tau_{V0} = 2.5 \times 10^{-6}$ is the proportionality constant, $M_{\text{cold}}$ is the total cold gas mass in the merger remnant, $Z_{\text{cold}}$ is the metallicity of the cold gas, $r_c$ is the effective radius of the merger remnant (bulge) and $\gamma$ is a free parameter chosen to predict a consistent number of high-redshift galaxies with observations. As in Nagashima et al. (2005), we set $\gamma = 1$. Although Cole et al. (2000) assumed local extinction (Savage & Mathis 1979), $N_{\text{HI}}/E(B-V) = 5.8 \times 10^{21}$ cm$^{-2}$, we employ half of the value because we adopt the value of the chemical yield twice as large as that in Cole et al. (2000) in order to reproduce observed colour of elliptical galaxies (Nagashima et al. 2005). We employ the extinction curve by Calzetti et al. (2000), $R_V = 4.01$, and obtain $\tau_{V0} = 3.1 \times 10^{-9}$. The time evolution of $M_{\text{cold}}$ and $Z_{\text{cold}}$ after a major merger is also given in Nagashima et al. (2005).

An AGN must also be subject to the attenuation by the same dust that attenuates the merger remnant, since the AGN is embedded in the very centre of it. While we adopt a slab model for galaxies, we employ a screen model for AGNs. We also halve the optical depth obtained by equation (4) to compute the attenuation of AGNs because an AGN is located at the centre of its host bulge.

The other important physical parameter is the star formation time-scale for a starburst, $\tau_{\text{burst}}$, since the cold gas is exhausted by this time-scale. We assume that this time-scale scales with the dynamical time-scale of a bulge as $\tau_{\text{burst}} = 0.5t_{\text{life}}$. The proportionality constant

$^{1}$ E14 assumed that the AGN lifetime is proportional to the dynamical time-scale of the host halo. Although this modification does not affect the results in E14 qualitatively, the values of $\epsilon_B$ and $f_{\text{life}}$ must be adjusted to obtain equivalent results to E14.
has been chosen to explain the colour of high-redshift starburst galaxies (Nagashima et al. 2005).

2.4 Models

In this Letter, we consider three models regarding the dust attenuation of AGNs and investigate quasar luminosity functions. In the first model, and the first model only, we ignore the dust attenuation. In this case, the luminosity of an AGN is fully specified by equation (2). This model is an analogue of the one presented in E14 and we call this model ‘E14 model’. We note that this E14 model is different from the original E14 model in the treatment of dust attenuation; in the original E14 model, dust attenuation is effectively included since $\epsilon_B$ is treated as a free parameter.

In E14 model, we assume that the accretion on to an SMBH and a starburst begin immediately after the occurrence of a major merger. It may however take some time before the gas reaches to the galactic centre after a major merger. We hence consider the second model in which gas accretion on to an SMBH starts $\tau_{\text{delay}} = \nu_{\text{delay}} t_{\text{dyn}}$ after a major merger; doing this must reduce the dust attenuation of AGNs. This delay is first introduced in this Letter. We refer to this model as ‘delay model’ and present the results of $\nu_{\text{delay}} = 1$ and $3$.

In the third model, we vary the dust covering factor (CF). We present the results of $\epsilon = 0.1, 0.5, 0.75, 0.9$, while $\epsilon = 1$ is assumed in E14 and delay models. We dub this model ‘CF model’.

Quasars are required to be brighter than their host galaxies in our definition.

3 RESULTS

In order to focus on these effects, hereafter we show the luminosity functions of the quasars only at $z \sim 2$. Note that our model overpredicts the number of bright quasars in the $B$-band about an order of magnitude at $z < 0.5$. We leave this issue for future studies.

We now investigate effects of the delayed accretion on to SMBHs (delay model). In Fig. 2, we compare luminosity functions with $\nu_{\text{delay}} = 0$ (E14 model), 1, and 3. We find that this effect is larger for the bright end. Thanks to the smaller amount of the cold gas due to star formation and feedback, the dust attenuation becomes weak. Since the red solid line (E14 model) and black dashed line ($\nu_{\text{delay}} = 3$) in Fig. 2 are indistinguishable, we conclude that, in order to make the dust attenuation to be negligible, the gas accretion on to an SMBH has to wait $\sim 3 t_{\text{dyn}}$ after a major merger.

Finally, we have tested the CF model in Fig. 3. We find that the shape of the quasar luminosity functions vary according to the CF, consider quasar-like AGNs, i.e. AGNs induced by major mergers, it is natural that our model underpredicts the number of faint AGNs.

The brightest end is highly uncertain due to the cosmic variance.

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Finally, we have tested the CF model in Fig. 3. We find that the shape of the quasar luminosity functions vary according to the CF,
and that the dust attenuation can be negligible if CF $\sim 0.1$. The dust distribution therefore plays an important role for dust attenuation as mentioned in Cattaneo et al. (2005a).

4 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

We have analysed the quasars obtained by an SA galaxy formation model of E14, which naturally explains the antihierarchical evolution of the AGNs, to study the dust attenuation of the quasars self-consistently with galaxy formation.

We find that bright quasars suffer significant dust attenuation, $\sim 2$ mag in the $B$ band, if the accretion on to a central black hole occurs simultaneously with a starburst. Hence, we should introduce some mechanisms which weaken the dust attenuation in order for our model to reproduced observed quasar luminosity functions, both in the $B$-band and X-ray.

The dust attenuation is weakened if the accretion on to an SMBH starts sometime after a major merger since the amount of the cold gas and hence the dust in the host bulge is reduced by star formation starts sometime after a major merger since the amount of the cold gas and hence the dust in the host bulge is reduced by star formation.

We conclude that the attenuation by the dust in the host galaxies is so large that we cannot ignore it for modelling quasars. We have not considered nuclear dust in this Letter, which might be more important than the dust in the host galaxies because of its higher column density. The role of the AGN feedback is likely to be more important for the nuclear dust than the galactic one (Hopkins et al. 2005). To consider the nuclear dust, we however have to model the nuclei more in detail and we leave it for future studies.

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Figure 3. Quasar luminosity functions of the CF model. The red solid line shows the quasar luminosity function without dust attenuation. Other five thick lines show that of with CF = 0.1 (brown solid line), 0.5 (orange solid line), 0.75 (cyan solid line), 0.9 (blue solid line) and 1 (purple solid line); the smaller CF corresponds to the brighter bright end.

hence speculate that inclusion of this feedback will not change our results much.

We have not considered nuclear dust in this Letter, which might be more important than the dust in the host galaxies because of its higher column density. The role of the AGN feedback is likely to be more important for the nuclear dust than the galactic one (Hopkins et al. 2005). To consider the nuclear dust, we however have to model the nuclei more in detail and we leave it for future studies.
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