

## EXISTENCE OF POSITIVE SOLUTIONS FOR A SINGULAR $p$ -LAPLACIAN DIRICHLET PROBLEM

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ABSTRACT. By a argument based on regularization technique, upper and lower solutions method and Arzelá-Ascoli theorem, this paper shows sufficient conditions of the existence of positive solutions of a Dirichlet problem for singular  $p$ -Laplacian.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper shows the existence of positive solutions for the singular  $p$ -Laplacian equation

$$(\phi_p(u'))' - \lambda \frac{|u'|^p}{u^m} + f(t, u') = 0, \quad 0 < t < 1, \quad (1.1)$$

subject to Dirichlet boundary conditions

$$u(1) = u(0) = 0, \quad (1.2)$$

where  $\phi_p(s) = |s|^{p-2}s$ ,  $p > 1$ ,  $\lambda$  and  $m$  are positive constants, and  $f$  is a continuous function. We call  $u \in C^1[0, 1]$  is a solution if  $u > 0$  in  $(0, 1)$ ,  $|u'|^{p-2}u' \in C^1(0, 1)$ , and it satisfies (1.1)–(1.2).

Such equation arises in the studies of some degenerate parabolic equations and in Non-Newtonian fluids; see [2, 3, 4, 5, 13]. The interesting feature of (1.1) is the lower term both is singular at  $u = 0$  and depends on the first derivative.

Recently, the one-dimensional singular  $p$ -Laplacian differential equations without dependence on the first derivative have been studied extensively, see [1, 7, 12] and references therein. When it depends on the first derivative, however, it has not received much attention, see [8, 9, 10, 11]. Recently, the authors [14], considered the equation

$$(\phi_p(u'))' - \lambda \frac{|u'|^p}{u} + g(t) = 0, \quad 0 < t < 1,$$

subject to (1.2), and proved, by the classical method of elliptic regularization, that the problem admits one positive solution if  $p \geq 2$ ,  $\lambda > 0$  and  $g \in C[0, 1]$  with  $g > 0$  on  $[0, 1]$ . In the present paper we extend the result and obtain the sufficient conditions of existence. Our argument is based on regularization technique, upper

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and lower solutions method and Arzelá-Ascoli theorem. In addition, an example is also given to illustrate our main result.

## 2. MAIN RESULT

The following hypotheses will be adopted in this section:

- (H1)  $1 \leq m < p$ .  
 (H2)  $f(t, r)$  is a positive, continuous function in  $[0, +\infty) \times \mathbb{R}$ , and there exist constants  $\alpha > 0$ ,  $\beta \in [0, 1)$  such that  $f(t, r) \leq \alpha + \beta|r|^{p-1}$ , for all  $(t, r) \in [0, 1] \times \mathbb{R}$ .  
 (H3)  $\lambda > \inf_{r \geq 1} H(r)$ , where  $H(r) : \mathbb{R}^+ \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^+$  is defined by

$$H(r) = \alpha r^{m-p} + \beta r^{m-1}.$$

**Remark 2.1.** Let  $m \in (1, p)$  and define

$$X_0 = \left( \frac{\alpha(p-m)}{\beta(m-1)} \right)^{1/(p-1)}; \quad X_* = \begin{cases} X_0, & X_0 \geq 1 \\ 1, & X_0 < 1 \end{cases}$$

Then  $\inf_{s \geq 1} H(s) = H(X_*)$ . Indeed, since  $\lim_{s \rightarrow 0^+} H(s) = \lim_{s \rightarrow +\infty} H(s) = +\infty$ ,  $H(s)$  must reach a minimum at some  $s \in (0, \infty)$  satisfying  $H'(s) = 0$ . Solving it gives  $s = X_0$  and hence,  $\inf_{s > 0} H(s) = H(X_0)$ . Since  $H'(s) \geq 0$  for all  $s \geq X_0$ , we see that  $\inf_{s \geq 1} H(s) = H(X_0)$  if  $X_0 \geq 1$ , and  $\inf_{s \geq 1} H(s) = H(1)$  if  $X_0 < 1$ .

The main result of this paper is stated as follows.

**Theorem 2.2.** *Under Assumptions (H1)–(H3), problem (1.1)–(1.2) has at least one solution.*

**Remark 2.3.** If  $m = 1$  and  $f \equiv 1$  (taking  $\alpha = 1, \beta = 0$ ), then  $\inf_{s \geq 1} H(s) = 0$ . Clearly, Theorem 2.2 is an extension of the corresponding result of [14].

**Proof of Theorem 2.2.** Let  $\epsilon \in (0, 1)$ , and define  $H_\epsilon(t, v, \xi) : (0, 1) \times \mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  by

$$H_\epsilon(t, v, \xi) = \lambda \frac{|\xi|^p}{[I_\epsilon(v)]^m} - f(t, \xi),$$

where  $I_\epsilon(v) = v + \epsilon$  if  $v \geq 0$ ,  $I_\epsilon(v) = \epsilon$  if  $v < 0$ . By (H2) and using the inequality:  $a^{p-1} \leq a^p + 1$ , for all  $a \geq 0$ , we have

$$|H_\epsilon(t, v, \xi)| \leq \frac{\lambda}{\epsilon^m} |\xi|^p + \alpha + \beta |\xi|^{p-1} \leq \left( \frac{\lambda}{\epsilon^m} + \alpha + \beta \right) \mathcal{H}(|\xi|)$$

for all  $(t, v, \xi) \in (0, 1) \times \mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R}$ , where  $\mathcal{H}(s) = 1 + s^p$  for  $s \geq 0$ . Denote  $\mathfrak{M} = \{u \in C^1(0, 1); |u'|^{p-2} u' \in C^1(0, 1)\}$ , and define  $\mathcal{L}_\epsilon : \mathfrak{M} \rightarrow C(0, 1)$  by

$$(\mathcal{L}_\epsilon u)(t) = -(\phi_p(u'))' + H_\epsilon(t, u, u'), \quad 0 < t < 1.$$

Consider the problem:

$$\begin{aligned} (\mathcal{L}_\epsilon u)(t) &= 0, & 0 < t < 1, \\ u(1) &= u(0) = 0. \end{aligned} \tag{2.1}$$

We call  $u \in \mathfrak{M}$  is an upper solution (lower solution) of problem (2.1) if  $\mathcal{L}_\epsilon u \geq 0$  ( $\leq 0$ ) in  $(0, 1)$  and  $u(t) \geq (\leq) 0$  for  $t = 0, 1$ .

We will apply the upper and lower solutions method (see [8, Theorem 1 and Remark 2.4]) to show the existence of solutions of problem (2.1). Obviously,

$\int_0^{+\infty} \frac{s^{p-1}}{\mathcal{H}(s)} ds = +\infty$ , thus the condition [8, Eq. (2.3)] is satisfied. Then it suffices to find a lower solution and an upper solution to obtain a solution.

Let  $\inf_{s \geq 1} H(s) \equiv \delta$ . Then it follows from the definition of infimum and  $\lambda > \delta$  that for  $\delta_0 = \frac{\lambda - \delta}{2} > 0$ , there exists  $S^* \geq 1$  such that  $H(S^*) < \delta + \delta_0 < \lambda$ .

**Lemma 2.4.** *There exists a constant  $\epsilon_0 \in (0, 1)$ , such that for any  $\epsilon \in (0, \epsilon_0)$ ,  $U_\epsilon = S^*(t + \epsilon)$  is an upper solution of (2.1).*

*Proof.* Noticing  $U_\epsilon \geq \epsilon$  in  $(0, 1)$  and  $m \geq 1$ , we have

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{L}_\epsilon U_\epsilon &= -(|U'_\epsilon|^{p-2} U'_\epsilon)' + \lambda \frac{|U'_\epsilon|^p}{(U_\epsilon + \epsilon)^m} - f(t, U'_\epsilon) \\ &= \frac{\lambda S^{*p-m}}{(t + \epsilon + \epsilon/S^*)^m} - f(t, S^*) \\ &\geq \frac{\lambda S^{*p-m}}{(1 + \epsilon + \epsilon/S^*)^m} - \alpha - \beta S^{*p-1} \\ &= S^{*p-m}[\lambda - H(S^*)] + r_\epsilon, \quad 0 < t < 1, \end{aligned}$$

where  $r_\epsilon = \lambda S^{*p-m}[(1 + \epsilon + \epsilon/S^*)^{-m} - 1]$ . Clearly,  $r_\epsilon \rightarrow 0$  ( $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$ ). Since  $\lambda > H(S^*)$ , there exists a constant  $\epsilon_0 \in (0, 1)$ , such that for any  $\epsilon \in (0, \epsilon_0)$  there holds  $S^{*p-m}[\lambda - H(S^*)] + r_\epsilon \geq 0$ . So that we obtain  $\mathcal{L}_\epsilon U_\epsilon \geq 0$  in  $(0, 1)$  for all  $\epsilon \in (0, \epsilon_0)$ . The lemma follows.  $\square$

**Lemma 2.5.** *Let  $W = C\Phi^\alpha$ , where  $\alpha = \frac{p}{p-m}$ ,  $\Phi(t)$  is defined by*

$$\Phi(t) = \frac{p-1}{p} \left[ \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^{p/(p-1)} - \left|\frac{1}{2} - t\right|^{p/(p-1)} \right], \quad 0 \leq t \leq 1,$$

and  $C \in (0, 1)$  such that  $C\alpha < 1$  and  $(C\alpha)^{p-1} + \lambda C^{p-m} \alpha^p \leq \min_{[0,1] \times [-1,1]} f(s, r)$ . Then  $W$  is a lower solution of problem (2.1).

*Proof.* It is easy to check that  $\Phi$  has the following properties:

- (a)  $\Phi > 0$  in  $(0, 1)$ ,  $\Phi \in C^1[0, 1]$ .
- (b)  $(|\Phi'|^{p-2} \Phi')' = -1$  in  $(0, 1)$ ,  $\Phi(1) = \Phi(0) = 0$ .
- (c)  $\Phi(t) \leq t$ ,  $|\Phi'(t)| \leq 1$ , for all  $t \in [0, 1]$ .

Using these properties of  $\Phi$ , by some calculations, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{L}_\epsilon W &= -(|W'|^{p-2} W')' + \lambda \frac{|W'|^p}{(W + \epsilon)^m} - f(t, W') \\ &\leq -(|W'|^{p-2} W')' + \lambda \frac{|W'|^p}{W^m} - f(t, W') \\ &= -(C\alpha)^{p-1} \Phi^{(\alpha-1)(p-1)} (|\Phi'|^{p-2} \Phi')' \\ &\quad - (C\alpha)^{p-1} (\alpha-1)(p-1) \Phi^{(\alpha-1)(p-1)-1} |\Phi'|^p \\ &\quad + \lambda C^{p-m} \alpha^p |\Phi'|^p - f(t, C\alpha \Phi^{\alpha-1} \Phi') \\ &\leq (C\alpha)^{p-1} \Phi^{(\alpha-1)(p-1)} + \lambda C^{p-m} \alpha^p |\Phi'|^p - \min_{[0,1] \times [-1,1]} f(s, r) \\ &\leq (C\alpha)^{p-1} + \lambda C^{p-m} \alpha^p - \min_{[0,1] \times [-1,1]} f(s, r) \leq 0, \quad 0 < t < 1. \end{aligned}$$

Thus the lemma follows.  $\square$

According to [8, Theorem 1 and Remark 2.4], for fixed  $\epsilon \in (0, \epsilon_0)$  problem (2.1) has a solution  $u_\epsilon \in C^1[0, 1]$  satisfying  $|u'_\epsilon|^{p-2}u'_\epsilon \in C^1(0, 1)$  and

$$U_\epsilon \geq u_\epsilon \geq W > 0, \quad t \in (0, 1). \tag{2.2}$$

Hence  $u_\epsilon$  satisfies

$$-(|u'_\epsilon|^{p-2}u'_\epsilon)' + \lambda \frac{|u'_\epsilon|^p}{(u_\epsilon + \epsilon)^m} - f(t, u'_\epsilon) = 0, \quad t \in (0, 1). \tag{2.3}$$

**Lemma 2.6.** *For all  $\epsilon \in (0, \epsilon_0)$ , we have*

$$|u'_\epsilon(t)| \leq [\alpha(1 - \beta)^{-1}]^{1/(p-1)}, \quad \forall t \in [0, 1]. \tag{2.4}$$

*Proof.* Noticing that  $u_\epsilon(1) = u_\epsilon(0) = 0$  and  $u_\epsilon \geq 0$  on  $[0, 1]$ , we have

$$u'_\epsilon(0) \geq 0 \geq u'_\epsilon(1). \tag{2.5}$$

From (2.3), we obtain

$$(|u'_\epsilon|^{p-2}u'_\epsilon)' + \alpha + \beta|u'_\epsilon|^{p-1} \geq 0, \quad t \in (0, 1). \tag{2.6}$$

Let  $\chi = \phi_p(u'_\epsilon)$ . Then we obtain from (2.6),  $\chi' + \alpha + \beta|\chi| \geq 0$ ,  $t \in (0, 1)$ ; i.e.,  $(\int_0^{\chi(t)} \frac{1}{\alpha + \beta|s|} ds + t)' \geq 0$ ,  $t \in (0, 1)$ . This and (2.5) give  $1 \geq \int_0^{\chi(t)} \frac{1}{\alpha + \beta|s|} ds + t \geq 0$ ,  $t \in [0, 1]$ , hence  $|\int_0^{\chi(t)} \frac{1}{\alpha + \beta|s|} ds| \leq 1$ ,  $t \in [0, 1]$ . Using the inequality:  $|\int_0^y \frac{1}{\alpha + \beta|s|} ds| \geq \frac{|y|}{\alpha + \beta|y|}$  ( $y \in \mathbb{R}$ ), we deduce that  $|\chi| \leq \alpha + \beta|\chi|$ ,  $t \in [0, 1]$ ; that is,  $|\chi| \leq \alpha(1 - \beta)^{-1}$  on  $[0, 1]$ . The lemma is proved.  $\square$

**Lemma 2.7.** *For each  $\delta \in (0, 1/2)$ , there exists a positive constant  $C_\delta$  independent of  $\epsilon$ , such that for all  $\epsilon \in (0, \epsilon_0)$*

$$|u'_\epsilon(t_2) - u'_\epsilon(t_1)| \leq C_\delta |t_2 - t_1|^\gamma, \quad \forall t_2, t_1 \in [\delta, 1 - \delta], \tag{2.7}$$

where  $\gamma = 1/(p - 1)$  if  $p \geq 2$ ;  $\gamma = 1$  if  $1 < p < 2$ .

*Proof.* By (2.2) and (2.4), it is easy to derive from (2.3) that for any  $\delta \in (0, 1/2)$  there exists a constant  $C_\delta > 0$  independent of  $\epsilon$ , such that for all  $\epsilon \in (0, \epsilon_0)$

$$|(|u'_\epsilon|^{p-2}u'_\epsilon)'| \leq C_\delta, \quad \delta \leq t \leq 1 - \delta. \tag{2.8}$$

Recalling the inequality (see [6])

$$(|\eta|^{p-2}\eta - |\eta'|^{p-2}\eta') \cdot (\eta - \eta') \geq \begin{cases} C_1|\eta - \eta'|^p, & p \geq 2 \\ C_2(|\eta| + |\eta'|)^{p-2}|\eta - \eta'|^2, & 1 < p < 2 \end{cases}$$

for each  $\eta \in \mathbb{R}$ , where  $C_i (i = 1, 2)$  are positive constants depending only on  $p$ , we derive, by (2.8), that if  $p \geq 2$ , then

$$\begin{aligned} |u'_\epsilon(t_2) - u'_\epsilon(t_1)|^p &\leq C_2^{-1}[u'_\epsilon(t_2) - u'_\epsilon(t_1)] \cdot [|u'_\epsilon(t_2)|^{p-2}u'_\epsilon(t_2) - |u'_\epsilon(t_1)|^{p-2}u'_\epsilon(t_1)] \\ &\leq C_\delta |u'_\epsilon(t_2) - u'_\epsilon(t_1)| |t_2 - t_1|, \quad \forall t_2, t_1 \in [\delta, 1 - \delta], \end{aligned}$$

hence

$$|u'_\epsilon(t_2) - u'_\epsilon(t_1)| \leq C_\delta |t_2 - t_1|^{1/(p-1)}, \quad \forall t_2, t_1 \in [\delta, 1 - \delta],$$

and if  $p \in (1, 2)$ , then

$$\begin{aligned} &|u'_\epsilon(t_2) - u'_\epsilon(t_1)|^2 [|u'_\epsilon(t_2)| + |u'_\epsilon(t_1)|]^{p-2} \\ &\leq C_2^{-1}[u'_\epsilon(t_2) - u'_\epsilon(t_1)] \cdot [|u'_\epsilon(t_2)|^{p-2}u'_\epsilon(t_2) - |u'_\epsilon(t_1)|^{p-2}u'_\epsilon(t_1)] \\ &\leq C_\delta |u'_\epsilon(t_2) - u'_\epsilon(t_1)| |t_2 - t_1|, \quad \forall t_2, t_1 \in [\delta, 1 - \delta]. \end{aligned}$$

Then, (2.4) yields

$$|u'_\epsilon(t_2) - u'_\epsilon(t_1)| \leq C_\delta |t_2 - t_1| [|u'_\epsilon(t_2)| + |u'_\epsilon(t_1)|]^{2-p} \leq C_\delta |t_2 - t_1|$$

for all  $t_2, t_1 \in [\delta, 1 - \delta]$ . This completes the proof. □

By (2.4) and (2.7) and using Arzelá-Ascoli theorem, there exist a subsequence of  $\{u_\epsilon\}$ , still denoted by  $\{u_\epsilon\}$ , and a function  $u \in C^1(0, 1) \cap C[0, 1]$  such that, as  $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} u_\epsilon &\rightarrow u, && \text{uniformly in } C[0, 1], \\ u_\epsilon &\rightarrow u, && \text{uniformly in } C^1[\delta, 1 - \delta], \end{aligned} \tag{2.9}$$

where  $\delta \in (0, 1/2)$ , and hence from  $u_\epsilon(1) = u_\epsilon(0) = \epsilon$  and (2.2) we derive that  $u(1) = u(0) = 0$ , and  $u(t) \geq C\Phi^{p/(p-m)}$ ,  $t \in [0, 1]$ ; therefore  $u > 0$  in  $(0, 1)$ .

We now show that  $u$  satisfies (1.1). Integrating (2.3) over  $(t_0, t)$  gives

$$|u'_\epsilon(t)|^{p-2} u'_\epsilon(t) = \int_{t_0}^t \left( \lambda \frac{|u'_\epsilon|^p}{(u_\epsilon + \epsilon)^m} - f(s, u'_\epsilon) \right) ds + |u'_\epsilon(t_0)|^{p-2} u'_\epsilon(t_0),$$

and letting  $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$  and using Lebesgue's dominated convergence theorem yield

$$|u'(t)|^{p-2} u'(t) = \int_{t_0}^t \left( \lambda \frac{|u'|^p}{u^m} - f(s, u') \right) ds + |u'(t_0)|^{p-2} u'(t_0). \tag{2.10}$$

This shows that  $|u'(t)|^{p-2} u'(t) \in C^1(0, 1)$  and (1.1) is satisfied.

It remains to show that  $u \in C^1[0, 1]$ . Integrating (2.3) over  $(0, 1)$  and using (2.4) and (2.5), we derive that

$$\int_0^1 \frac{|u'_\epsilon|^p}{(u_\epsilon + \epsilon)^m} dt \leq \frac{1}{\lambda} \min_{[0,1] \times [-Y, Y]} f(t, r), \quad Y := \left( \frac{\alpha}{1 - \beta} \right)^{1/(p-1)},$$

and letting  $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$  and using Fatou's lemma and (2.9), we obtain

$$\int_0^1 \frac{|u'|^p}{u^m} dt \leq \frac{1}{\lambda} \min_{[0,1] \times [-Y, Y]} f(t, r).$$

So,  $\frac{|u'|^p}{u^m} \in L^1[0, 1]$ . By (2.10), the function  $\omega(t) = |u'(t)|^{p-2} u'(t) = \phi_p(u'(t))$  is absolutely continuous on  $[0, 1]$ . Since  $u'(t) = \phi_q(\omega(t)) (\frac{1}{p} + \frac{1}{q} = 1)$ ,  $u' \in C[0, 1]$ . The proof of Theorem 2.2 is complete.

**Example.** Let  $\lambda > 4/27$ . Consider the problem

$$\begin{aligned} (|u'|^3 u')' - \lambda \frac{|u'|^5}{u^2} + \frac{(\frac{1}{2} + \frac{\sqrt{6}}{18} |u'|^2)^2}{2t + 2 \cos t - 1} + \frac{\sin(\pi t)}{\sqrt{4 + |u'|^3}} &= 0, \quad 0 < t < 1, \\ u(1) = u(0) &= 0. \end{aligned} \tag{2.11}$$

Let  $p = 5, m = 2$ ,

$$f(t, r) = \frac{(\frac{1}{2} + \frac{\sqrt{6}}{18} r^2)^2}{2t + 2 \cos t - 1} + \frac{\sin(\pi t)}{\sqrt{4 + |r|^3}}.$$

Since  $(2t + 2 \cos t - 1)' = 2(1 - \sin t) \geq 0$ ,  $1 + 2 \cos 1 \geq 2t + 2 \cos t - 1 \geq 1$  for all  $t \in [0, 1]$  and hence, noticing  $0 \leq \frac{\sin(\pi t)}{\sqrt{4 + |r|^3}} \leq \frac{1}{2}$  for  $(t, r) \in [0, 1] \times \mathbb{R}$ , we obtain

$$\frac{1}{1 + 2 \cos 1} \left( \frac{1}{2} + \frac{\sqrt{6}}{18} r^2 \right)^2 \leq f(t, r) \leq \left( \frac{1}{2} + \frac{\sqrt{6}}{18} r^2 \right)^2 + \frac{1}{2},$$

for  $(t, r) \in [0, 1] \times \mathbb{R}$ . By the inequality  $(a + b)^2 \leq 2(a^2 + b^2)$ , we have

$$f(t, r) \leq 1 + \frac{1}{27}r^4, \quad (t, r) \in [0, 1] \times \mathbb{R}.$$

Let  $\alpha = 1$ ,  $\beta = \frac{1}{27}$ . Then  $X_0 = 3$ , and therefore  $X_* = 3$  and  $\inf_{s \geq 1} H(s) = H(X_*) = H(X_0) = \frac{4}{27}$  (see Remark 2.1). Thus all assumptions of Theorem 2.2 are satisfied for any  $\lambda > \frac{4}{27}$ , so problem (2.11) has at least one solution.

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