

An Existence Result on Periodic Solutions of an Ordinary p -Laplacian System

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Abstract. A solvability condition of periodic solutions is obtained for an ordinary p -Laplacian system by the Linking Theorem in critical point theory.

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1. Introduction

This paper is concerned with the existence of periodic solutions for the following p -Laplacian system:

$$(1.1) \quad -(|u'(t)|^{p-2}u'(t))' = \nabla F(t, u(t)), \quad \text{a.e. } t \in \mathbb{R},$$

where $p \geq 2, T > 0$ and $F : \mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R}^N \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ with $N \geq 2$ is T -periodic in its first variable and satisfies the following assumption:

- (A) $F(t, x)$ is measurable in t for all $x \in \mathbb{R}^N$ and continuously differentiable in x for a.e. $t \in [0, T]$ and there exist $a \in C(\mathbb{R}^+, \mathbb{R}^+)$ and $b \in L^1(0, T; \mathbb{R}^+)$ such that

$$|F(t, x)| \leq a(|x|)b(t), \quad |\nabla F(t, x)| \leq a(|x|)b(t)$$

for all $x \in \mathbb{R}^N$ and a.e. $t \in [0, T]$.

When $p = 2$, there are many existence results of periodic solutions for system (1.1) (see [5–11] and references therein). However, in these references, all authors studied only the existence of solutions. In [12] and [15], by using the local Linking Theorem, the authors considered the existence of nontrivial solutions. In [13], Tao and Tang considered the existence of non-constant solutions and they obtained the following theorem:

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Theorem 1.1. *Assume that F satisfies (A) and the following conditions:*

$$\begin{aligned}
 &F(t, x) \geq 0, \quad \forall (t, x) \in [0, T] \times \mathbb{R}^N, \\
 &\lim_{|x| \rightarrow 0} \frac{F(t, x)}{|x|^2} < \frac{\omega^2}{2} \text{ uniformly for a.e. } t \in [0, T], \\
 &\liminf_{|x| \rightarrow \infty} \frac{F(t, x)}{|x|^2} > \frac{\omega^2}{2} \text{ uniformly for a.e. } t \in [0, T],
 \end{aligned}$$

where $\omega = 2\pi/T$. There exist constants $r > 2$ and $\mu > r - 2$ such that

$$\begin{aligned}
 &\limsup_{|x| \rightarrow \infty} \frac{F(t, x)}{|x|^r} < \infty \text{ uniformly for a.e. } t \in [0, T], \\
 &\liminf_{|x| \rightarrow \infty} \frac{(\nabla F(t, x), x) - 2F(t, x)}{|x|^\mu} > 0 \text{ uniformly for a.e. } t \in [0, T].
 \end{aligned}$$

Then system (1.1) with $p = 2$ has a non-constant T -periodic solution.

When $p > 1$, in [14] and [16], the authors considered system (1.1) by using the dual least action principle and the Saddle Point Theorem, respectively, and they also only obtained the existence results of solutions for system (1.1). In our paper, motivated by idea of [13, 14, 16], we shall use the method in [13] to study the existence of non-constant solutions for system (1.1) with $p \geq 2$. The corresponding conditions in Theorem 1.1 are generalized and it is proved that under these conditions, the corresponding energy functional also satisfies (C) condition. Then an existence result for problem (1.1) is obtained by Linking Theorem.

2. Main results

Let

$$\begin{aligned}
 W_T^{1,p} = \{ &u : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^N \mid u(t) \text{ is absolutely continuous on } \mathbb{R}, u(t) = u(t + T) \\
 &\text{and } \dot{u} \in L^p(0, T; \mathbb{R}^N)\}.
 \end{aligned}$$

On $W_T^{1,p}$, we define the norm as follows:

$$\|u\| = \left[\int_0^T |u(t)|^p dt + \int_0^T |\dot{u}(t)|^p dt \right]^{1/p}, \quad u \in W_T^{1,p}.$$

Then, $(W_T^{1,p}, \|\cdot\|)$ is a reflexive and uniformly convex Banach space (see e.g. [1, Theorem 3.3 and Theorem 3.6]). From [4], one can know that a locally uniformly convex Banach space has the Kadec-Klee property, that is for any sequence $\{u_n\}$ satisfying $u_n \rightharpoonup u$ weakly in Banach space $(X, \|\cdot\|)$ and $\|u_n\| \rightarrow \|u\|$, one has $u_n \rightarrow u$ strongly in X . This property will be used later.

Let $\varphi : W_T^{1,p} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be defined by

$$\varphi(u) = \frac{1}{p} \int_0^T |\dot{u}(t)|^p dt - \int_0^T F(t, u(t)) dt.$$

It follows from assumption (A) that φ is continuously differentiable on $W_T^{1,p}$ and

$$\langle \varphi'(u), v \rangle = \int_0^T (|\dot{u}(t)|^{p-2} \dot{u}(t), \dot{v}(t)) dt - \int_0^T (\nabla F(t, u(t)), v(t)) dt$$

for $u, v \in W_T^{1,p}$ (see [6, Theorem 1.4]). Similar to [6, Corollary 1.1], it is easy to know that the solutions of problem (1.1) correspond to the critical points of φ . By [6, Proposition 1.1], there is a constant $C_0 > 0$ such that

$$(2.1) \quad \|u\|_\infty := \max_{t \in [0, T]} |u(t)| \leq C_0 \|u\|, \text{ for every } u \in W_T^{1,p}.$$

Let

$$\tilde{W}_T^{1,p} = \left\{ u \in W_T^{1,p} \mid \int_0^T u(t) dt = 0 \right\}.$$

It is easy to know that $\tilde{W}_T^{1,p}$ is a closed subspace of $W_T^{1,p}$ and $W_T^{1,p} = \mathbb{R}^N \oplus \tilde{W}_T^{1,p}$. For $u \in W_T^{1,p}$, let $\bar{u} = \frac{1}{T} \int_0^T u(t) dt$ and $\tilde{u}(t) = u(t) - \bar{u}$. It follows from the proof of in [6, Proposition 1.1] that

$$(2.2) \quad \int_0^T |u(t)|^p dt \leq T^p \int_0^T |u'(t)|^p dt, \text{ for every } u \in \tilde{W}_T^{1,p},$$

(Wirtinger's inequality). Hence,

$$(2.3) \quad \|u\|^p \leq (T^p + 1) \int_0^T |u'(t)|^p dt, \text{ for every } u \in \tilde{W}_T^{1,p}.$$

The main result of this paper is the following theorem:

Theorem 2.1. *Assume that F satisfies (A) and the following conditions:*

$$(2.4) \quad F(t, x) \geq 0, \quad \forall (t, x) \in [0, T] \times \mathbb{R}^N,$$

$$(2.5) \quad \lim_{|x| \rightarrow 0} \frac{F(t, x)}{|x|^p} < \frac{1}{pT^p} \quad \text{uniformly for a.e. } t \in [0, T],$$

$$(2.6) \quad \liminf_{|x| \rightarrow \infty} \frac{F(t, x)}{|x|^p} > \frac{\omega^p}{p} \quad \text{uniformly for a.e. } t \in [0, T],$$

where $\omega = 2\pi/T$. There exist constants $r > p$ and $\mu > r - p$ such that

$$(2.7) \quad \limsup_{|x| \rightarrow \infty} \frac{F(t, x)}{|x|^r} < \infty \quad \text{uniformly for a.e. } t \in [0, T],$$

$$(2.8) \quad \liminf_{|x| \rightarrow \infty} \frac{(\nabla F(t, x), x) - pF(t, x)}{|x|^\mu} > 0 \quad \text{uniformly for a.e. } t \in [0, T].$$

Then system (1.1) has a non-constant T -periodic solution.

3. Proof of theorem

Lemma 3.1. *Assume that condition (A), (2.7) and (2.8) hold, then the functional φ satisfies condition (C), that is $\{u_n\}$ has a convergent subsequence in $W_T^{1,p}$, whenever $\varphi(u_n)$ is bounded and $\|\varphi'(u_n)\| \times (1 + \|u_n\|) \rightarrow 0$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$.*

Proof. Let $\{u_n\}$ be a sequence in $W_T^{1,p}$ such that $\varphi(u_n)$ is bounded and $\|\varphi'(u_n)\| \times (1 + \|u_n\|) \rightarrow 0$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$. Then there exists a constant M such that

$$(3.1) \quad |\varphi(u_n)| \leq M, \quad \|\varphi'(u_n)\|(1 + \|u_n\|) \leq M$$

for all $n \in N$. By (2.7), there are constants $C_1 > 0$ and $\delta_1 > 0$ such that

$$(3.2) \quad F(t, x) \leq C_1|x|^r, \quad \text{for all } |x| > \delta_1 \text{ and a.e. } t \in [0, T].$$

It follows from by assumption (A) that

$$F(t, x) \leq \max_{s \in [0, \delta_1]} a(s)b(t), \quad \text{for all } |x| \leq \delta_1 \text{ and a.e. } t \in [0, T].$$

Hence, for all $x \in \mathbb{R}^N$ and a.e. $t \in [0, T]$, one has

$$(3.3) \quad F(t, x) \leq \max_{s \in [0, \delta_1]} a(s)b(t) + C_1|x|^r.$$

It follows from (3.1), (3.3) and Hölder's inequality that

$$(3.4) \quad \begin{aligned} \frac{1}{p}\|u_n\|^p &= \varphi(u_n) + \int_0^T F(t, u_n(t))dt + \frac{1}{p} \int_0^T |u_n(t)|^p dt \\ &\leq M + C_2 + C_1 \int_0^T |u_n(t)|^r dt + \frac{1}{p} \int_0^T |u_n(t)|^p dt \\ &\leq M + C_2 + C_1 \int_0^T |u_n(t)|^r dt + \frac{1}{p} T^{\frac{r-p}{r}} \left(\int_0^T |u_n(t)|^r dt \right)^{\frac{p}{r}}, \end{aligned}$$

where $C_2 = \max_{s \in [0, \delta_1]} a(s) \int_0^T b(t)dt$. By (2.8), there are constants $C_3 > 0$ and $\delta_2 > 0$ such that

$$(\nabla F(t, x), x) - pF(t, x) \geq C_3|x|^\mu > 0, \quad \text{for all } |x| > \delta_2 \text{ and a.e. } t \in [0, T].$$

By assumption (A), one has

$$\left| (\nabla F(t, x), x) - pF(t, x) \right| \leq C_4 b(t), \quad \text{for all } |x| \leq \delta_2 \text{ and a.e. } t \in [0, T],$$

where $C_4 = (p + \delta_2) \max_{s \in [0, \delta_2]} a(s)$. Hence one can obtain that

$$(\nabla F(t, x), x) - pF(t, x) \geq C_3|x|^\mu - C_3\delta_2^\mu - C_4b(t)$$

for all $x \in \mathbb{R}^N$ and a.e. $t \in [0, T]$. Then one has

$$\begin{aligned} (p+1)M &\geq p\varphi(u_n) - (\varphi'(u_n), u_n) \\ &= \int_0^T |u_n'(t)|^p dt - p \int_0^T F(t, u_n(t))dt - \int_0^T (|u_n'(t)|^{p-2}u_n'(t), u_n'(t))dt \\ &\quad + \int_0^T (\nabla F(t, u_n(t)), u_n(t))dt \\ &= \int_0^T (\nabla F(t, u_n(t)), u_n(t))dt - p \int_0^T F(t, u_n(t))dt \\ &= \int_0^T \left[(\nabla F(t, u_n(t)), u_n(t)) - pF(t, u_n(t)) \right] dt \end{aligned}$$

$$\geq C_3 \int_0^T |u_n(t)|^\mu dt - TC_3\delta_2^\mu - C_4 \int_0^T b(t)dt,$$

which implies that $\int_0^T |u_n(t)|^\mu dt$ is bounded. If $\mu \geq r$, by (3.4) and Hölder's inequality

$$\int_0^T |u_n(t)|^r dt \leq T^{\frac{\mu-r}{\mu}} \left(\int_0^T |u_n(t)|^\mu dt \right)^{\frac{r}{\mu}},$$

one has $\|u_n\|$ is bounded. If $\mu \leq r$, by (2.1), one has

$$\begin{aligned} \int_0^T |u_n(t)|^r dt &= \int_0^T |u_n(t)|^{r-\mu} |u_n(t)|^\mu dt \\ &\leq \|u_n\|_\infty^{r-\mu} \int_0^T |u_n(t)|^\mu dt \\ &\leq C_0^{r-\mu} \|u_n\|^{r-\mu} \int_0^T |u_n(t)|^\mu dt. \end{aligned}$$

Thus, by (3.4) and $r - \mu < p$, one can know that $\|u_n\|$ is bounded, too. Hence $\|u_n\|$ is bounded in $W_T^{1,p}$. Since for the set in a reflexive Banach space, boundedness and weak compactness are equivalent, then there is a subsequence of $\{u_n\}$, again denoted by $\{u_n\}$, such that

$$(3.5) \quad u_n \rightharpoonup u \text{ weakly in } W_T^{1,p}.$$

Furthermore, by [6, Proposition 1.2], one has

$$u_n \rightarrow u \text{ strongly in } C([0, T], \mathbb{R}^N).$$

Then we can use the same argument as in [16] to obtain that $\|u_n\| \rightarrow \|u\|$. Because of the uniform convexity of $W_T^{1,p}$ and (3.5), it follows that $u_n \rightarrow u$ strongly in $W_T^{1,p}$ from the *Kadec-Klee* property. The proof is completed. \blacksquare

The Linking Theorem introduced in [9] (also see [3, Theorem 2.1 and Example 3 in Chapter 3]) by Rabinowitz will be used to obtain the critical point of φ .

Theorem 3.1 (Linking Theorem). *Let $E = E_1 \oplus E_2$ be a Banach space, where E_1 is a finite dimensional subspace of E and $E_2 = E_1^\perp$. Suppose that $\varphi(\cdot) \in C^1(E, \mathbb{R})$ satisfies the Palais-Smale condition and the following conditions:*

- (i) *There are constants $\rho > 0$ and α such that $\varphi|_{\partial B_\rho \cap E_2} \geq \alpha$, where $B_\rho = \{u \in E : \|u\|_E < \rho\}$,*
- (ii) *there is a constant $d < \alpha$ and $e \in E_2$, $\|e\|_E = 1$, $s_1 > 0$, $s_2 > \rho$ such that $\varphi|_{\partial Q} \leq d$ where $Q = \{u \in E | u = z + \lambda e, z \in E_1, \|z\| \leq s_1, \lambda \in [0, s_2]\}$.*

Then φ possesses a critical value.

Proof of Theorem 2.1. As shown in [2], a deformation lemma can be proved with the weaker condition (C) replacing the usual Palais-Smale condition, and it turns out that the Linking Theorem holds under the condition (C). Let $E_1 = \mathbb{R}^N$, $E_2 = \tilde{W}_T^{1,p} = \{u \in W_T^{1,p} | \int_0^T u(t)dt = 0\}$. Then, by Lemma 3.1, one only needs to prove (i) and (ii) in Linking Theorem hold.

By (2.5), there is $\varepsilon_0 > 0$ such that

$$\lim_{|x| \rightarrow 0} \frac{F(t, x)}{|x|^p} \leq \frac{1}{pT^p} - 2\varepsilon_0.$$

Thus, there is a constant $\delta_0 \in (0, \delta_1)$ such that

$$(3.6) \quad F(t, x) \leq \left(\frac{1}{pT^p} - \varepsilon_0 \right) |x|^p, \text{ for all } |x| \leq \delta_0 \text{ and a.e. } t \in [0, T].$$

It follows from assumption (A) that

$$(3.7) \quad |F(t, x)| \leq \max_{s \in [\delta_0, \delta_1]} a(s)b(t), \text{ for all } \delta_0 \leq |x| \leq \delta_1 \text{ and a.e. } t \in [0, T].$$

Then, by (3.2), (3.6) and (3.7), for all $x \in \mathbb{R}^N$ and a.e. $t \in [0, T]$, one has

$$(3.8) \quad F(t, x) \leq \left(\frac{1}{pT^p} - \varepsilon_0 \right) |x|^p + \left(\max_{s \in [\delta_0, \delta_1]} a(s)b(t)\delta_0^{-r} + C_1 \right) |x|^r.$$

Hence, by (2.2), (2.3), (3.8) and (2.1), for every $u \in \tilde{W}_T^{1,p}$, one has

$$\begin{aligned} \varphi(u) &= \frac{1}{p} \int_0^T |u'(t)|^p dt - \int_0^T F(t, u(t)) dt \\ &\geq \frac{1}{p} \int_0^T |u'(t)|^p dt - \left(\frac{1}{pT^p} - \varepsilon_0 \right) \int_0^T |u(t)|^p dt \\ &\quad - \max_{s \in [\delta_0, \delta_1]} a(s) \int_0^T b(t) dt \delta_0^{-r} \|u\|_\infty^r - C_1 \|u\|_\infty^{r-p} \int_0^T |u(t)|^p dt \\ &\geq \frac{1}{p} \int_0^T |u'(t)|^p dt - \left(\frac{1}{pT^p} - \varepsilon_0 \right) T^p \int_0^T |u'(t)|^p dt \\ &\quad - \max_{s \in [\delta_0, \delta_1]} a(s) \int_0^T b(t) dt \delta_0^{-r} \|u\|_\infty^r - C_1 \|u\|_\infty^{r-p} \int_0^T |u(t)|^p dt \\ &= \varepsilon_0 T^p \int_0^T |u'(t)|^p dt - \max_{s \in [\delta_0, \delta_1]} a(s) \int_0^T b(t) dt \delta_0^{-r} \|u\|_\infty^r \\ &\quad - C_1 \|u\|_\infty^{r-p} \int_0^T |u(t)|^p dt \\ &\geq \varepsilon_0 T^p (T^p + 1)^{-1} \|u\|^p - (C_1 C_0^{r-p} + C_2 \delta_0^{-r} C_0^r) \|u\|^r. \end{aligned}$$

Thus it is easy to know that there exist constants $\alpha > 0$ and $\rho \in (0, 1)$ such that

$$\varphi(u) \geq \alpha, \text{ for every } u \in \tilde{W}_T^{1,p} \text{ and } \|u\| = \rho.$$

which shows that (i) holds. Next it will be shown that (ii) also holds. By (2.6), for

$$\varepsilon_1 = \operatorname{ess\,inf}_{t \in [0, T]} \liminf_{|x| \rightarrow \infty} \frac{F(t, x)}{|x|^p} - \frac{\omega^p}{p} > 0,$$

there exists $\delta_3 > \rho T^{-\frac{1}{p}}$ such that

$$F(t, x) \geq \left(\frac{\omega^p}{p} + \varepsilon_1 \right) |x|^p, \text{ for all } |x| \geq \delta_3 \text{ and a.e. } t \in [0, T].$$

Hence, by (2.4), for all $x \in \mathbb{R}^N$ and a.e. $t \in [0, T]$, one has

$$(3.9) \quad F(t, x) \geq \left(\frac{\omega^p}{p} + \varepsilon_1 \right) |x|^p - \left(\frac{\omega^p}{p} + \varepsilon_1 \right) \delta_3^p.$$

Let

$$\begin{aligned} e &= \frac{\sin \omega t}{(T + \omega^p T)^{\frac{1}{p}}} e_1 + \frac{\cos \omega t}{(T + \omega^p T)^{\frac{1}{p}}} e_2, \\ e_1 &= (1, 0, 0, \dots, 0) \in \mathbb{R}^N, \\ e_2 &= (0, 1, 0, \dots, 0) \in \mathbb{R}^N. \end{aligned}$$

Then it is easy to know that

$$\begin{aligned} |e| &= \frac{1}{(T + \omega^p T)^{\frac{1}{p}}}, \\ |\dot{e}| &= \frac{\omega}{(T + \omega^p T)^{\frac{1}{p}}}, \end{aligned}$$

$\|e\| = 1$ and $e \in \tilde{W}_T^{1,p}$. Let

$$Q = \left\{ x + se \mid x \in \mathbb{R}^N, |x| \leq \left(\frac{\omega^p}{p\varepsilon_1} + 1 \right)^{\frac{1}{p}} \delta_3, 0 \leq s \leq \left(\frac{\omega^p}{p\varepsilon_1} + 1 \right)^{\frac{1}{p}} \delta_3 (T + T\omega^p)^{\frac{1}{p}} \right\}$$

and $C_6 = \left(\frac{\omega^p}{p} + \varepsilon_1 \right) T \delta_3^p$. It follows from Hölder's inequality that

$$\int_0^T |x + se|^2 dt \leq \left[\int_0^T (|x + se|^2)^{\frac{p}{2}} dt \right]^{\frac{2}{p}} \cdot T^{1 - \frac{2}{p}}.$$

Thus one has

$$\begin{aligned} \omega^p \int_0^T |x + se|^p dt &\geq \omega^p T^{1 - \frac{p}{2}} \left(\int_0^T |x + se|^2 dt \right)^{\frac{p}{2}} \\ &= \omega^p T^{1 - \frac{p}{2}} \left(\int_0^T |x|^2 dt + \int_0^T |se|^2 dt \right)^{\frac{p}{2}} \\ &\geq \omega^p T^{1 - \frac{p}{2}} \left(\int_0^T |se|^2 dt \right)^{\frac{p}{2}} \\ &= \frac{T s^p \omega^p}{T + \omega^p T} \\ (3.10) \quad &= \int_0^T |s\dot{e}|^p dt. \end{aligned}$$

Then for every $x + se \in Q$, by (3.9) and (3.10), one has

$$\begin{aligned} \varphi(x + se) &= \frac{1}{p} \int_0^T |s\dot{e}|^p dt - \int_0^T F(t, x + se) dt \\ &\leq \frac{\omega^p}{p} \int_0^T |x + se|^p dt - \left(\frac{\omega^p}{p} + \varepsilon_1 \right) \int_0^T |x + se|^p dt + C_6 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
&= -\varepsilon_1 \int_0^T |x + se|^p dt + C_6 \\
(3.11) \quad &\leq -\varepsilon_1 T^{1-\frac{p}{2}} \left(\int_0^T |x|^2 dt + \int_0^T \frac{s^2}{(T + \omega^p T)^{\frac{2}{p}}} dt \right)^{\frac{p}{2}} + C_6.
\end{aligned}$$

For every $x + se \in Q$, where $|x| = \left(\frac{\omega^p}{p\varepsilon_1} + 1\right)^{\frac{1}{p}} \delta_3$, one has

$$(3.12) \quad \varphi(x + se) \leq -\varepsilon_1 T^{1-\frac{p}{2}} \left(\int_0^T |x|^2 dt \right)^{\frac{p}{2}} + C_6 = 0.$$

For every $x + se \in Q$, where $s = \left(\frac{\omega^p}{p\varepsilon_1} + 1\right)^{\frac{1}{p}} \delta_3 (T + T\omega^p)^{\frac{1}{p}}$, one has

$$(3.13) \quad \varphi(x + se) \leq -\varepsilon_1 T^{1-\frac{p}{2}} \left(\int_0^T \frac{s^2}{(T + \omega^p T)^{\frac{2}{p}}} dt \right)^{\frac{p}{2}} + C_6 = 0.$$

If $s = 0$, for all $x \in \mathbb{R}^N$, by (2.4), one has

$$(3.14) \quad \varphi(x) = - \int_0^T F(t, x) dt \leq 0.$$

Therefore, by (3.12)–(3.14), one has $\varphi|_{\partial Q} \leq 0$. Let $d = 0, s_1 = T^{\frac{1}{p}} \left(\frac{\omega^p}{p\varepsilon_1} + 1\right)^{\frac{1}{p}} \delta_3$ and $s_2 = \left(\frac{\omega^p}{p\varepsilon_1} + 1\right)^{\frac{1}{p}} \delta_3 (T + T\omega^p)^{\frac{1}{p}} > \rho$. Thus (ii) is proved. Hence, by Linking Theorem, system (1.1) has a non-constant T -periodic solution. \blacksquare

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