EXISTENCE OF SOLUTION FOR A DIRICHLET BOUNDARY VALUE PROBLEM INVOLVING THE $p(x)$ LAPLACIAN VIA A FIXED POINT APPROACH

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Abstract. In this paper, we study the existence of a non-trivial solution in $W^{1, p(x)}_0(\Omega)$ for the problem

$$\begin{cases}
\Delta_{p(x)} u = f(x, u, \nabla u) & \text{in } \Omega, \\
u = 0 & \text{in } \Omega.
\end{cases}$$

The proof is based on Schaefer’s fixed point theorem.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Let us consider the problem

$$\begin{cases}
-\Delta_{p(x)} u = f(x, u, \nabla u), & \text{if } x \in \Omega, \\
u = 0, & \text{if } x \in \partial \Omega,
\end{cases} \tag{1.1}$$

where $\Omega$ is a smooth bounded domain in $\mathbb{R}^N, N \geq 2$, $p(x) \in C(\overline{\Omega})$ is log-Hölder continuous with values in $(1, +\infty)$,

$$-\Delta_{p(x)} u = \text{div} \left( |\nabla u(x)|^{p(x)-2} \nabla u(x) \right)$$

and $f: \Omega \times \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R}$ is a Caratheodory function satisfying some growth conditions.

According to the behavior of $f$, the existence results of weak solutions for Dirichlet boundary value problems involving $p(x)$-Laplacian have been established in [3, 4, 6, 10–12] where variational and topological methods were used in [10] while the proof relies on simple variational arguments based on Mountain-Pass Theorem in [12].

Our contribution in this area is to prove the existence of nontrivial solutions for the Problem (1.1) using variable exponent and a fixed point theorem, in particular, Schaefer’s fixed point theorem. This paper is divided into three sections. In the
On this space, the so-called Luxemburg norm is defined by the following formula

\[ \| u \|_{p(x)} = \inf \left\{ \tau > 0 : \frac{\int_{\Omega} |u(x)|^{p(x)} \, dx}{\tau} \leq 1 \right\}. \]

(\(L^{p(x)}(\Omega), \| u \|_{p(x)}\)) are Banach spaces. There exists a fact that they are reflexive if and only if \(1 < p^- \leq p^+ < \infty\). The inclusion between Lebesgue spaces also generalizes naturality: if \(0 < |\Omega| < \infty\) and \(p_1(\cdot), p_2(\cdot)\) are variable exponents such that \(p_1(x) \leq p_2(x)\) a.e. \(x \in \Omega\). Then, there exists a continuous embedding from \(L^{p_2(\cdot)}(\Omega)\) to \(L^{p_1(\cdot)}(\Omega)\).

Moreover, if \(L^{p(x)}(\Omega)\) is the conjugate space of \(L^{p(\cdot)}(\Omega)\), where \(\frac{1}{p(x)} + \frac{1}{p'(x)} = 1\), then we have H"older-type inequality [3]

\[ \left| \int_{\Omega} uv \, dx \right| \leq \left( \frac{1}{p} + \frac{1}{p'} \right) \| u \|_{p(x)} \| v \|_{p'(x)} \leq 2 \| u \|_{p(x)} \| v \|_{p'(x)}, \quad u \in L^{p(x)}(\Omega), v \in L^{p'(x)}(\Omega). \]

(2.1)

Later we need to use the modular and its properties, which is a mapping

\[ \rho_{p(x)} : L^{p(x)}(\Omega) \to \mathbb{R} \]

defined by

\[ \rho_{p(x)}(u) := \int_{\Omega} |u|^{p(x)} \, dx. \]

**Proposition 1.** (See [3]) For all \(u, v \in L^{p(x)}(\Omega)\), we have

\[ |u|_{p(x)} < 1 \ (\text{resp. } 1 > 1) \iff \rho_{p(x)}(u) < 1 \ (\text{resp. } 1 > 1). \]

(2.2)

\[ |u|_{p(x)} < 1 \Rightarrow |u|_{p'(x)}^{p'} \leq \rho_{p(x)}(u) \leq |u|_{p(x)}^{p^+}. \]

(2.3)
$|u|_{p(x)} > 1 \Rightarrow |u|^p_{p(x)} \leq \rho_{p(x)}(u) \leq |u|^p_{p(x)}$.  
(2.4)

$\rho_{p(x)}(u - v) \to 0 \iff |u - v|_{p(x)} \to 0$.  
(2.5)

From (2.3) and (2.4), it follows that

$|u|_{p(x)} \leq \rho_{p(x)}(u) + 1$  
(2.6)

and

$\rho_{p(x)}(u) \leq |u|^{p^+}_{p(x)} + |u|^{p^-}_{p(x)}$.  
(2.7)

The variable Sobolev space $W^{1,p(x)}(\Omega)$ is defined as follows:

$W^{1,p(x)}(\Omega) = \left\{ u \in L^p(x)(\Omega) : |\nabla u| \in L^p(x)(\Omega) \right\}$

and it is equipped with the norm

$\|u\|_{1,p(x)} := |u|_{p(x)} + |\nabla u|_{p(x)}$.

$W_0^{1,p(x)}(\Omega)$ denotes the closure of $C_0^\infty(\Omega)$ in $W^{1,p(x)}(\Omega)$ and

\[
p^*(x) = \begin{cases} 
Np(x) & \text{if } p(x) < N \\
N - p(x) & \text{if } p(x) \geq N.
\end{cases}
\]

We have the following proposition.

**Proposition 2.** (See [5, 7, 12])

1. $W^{1,p(x)}(\Omega)$ and $W_0^{1,p(x)}(\Omega)$ are separable reflexive Banach spaces.
2. If $\alpha \in C_+^\infty(\Omega)$ and $\alpha(x) < p^*(x)$ for any $x \in \Omega$, then the embedding from $W^{1,p(x)}(\Omega)$ to $L^{\alpha(x)}(\Omega)$ is continuous and compact.
3. There exists a constant $\theta_0 > 0$ such that

$|u|_{p(x)} \leq \theta_0 |\nabla u|_{p(x)} \forall u \in W_0^{1,p(x)}(\Omega)$.  
(2.8)

According to this last assertion, $|\nabla u|_{p(x)}$ and $\|u\|_{1,p(x)}$ are equivalent norms on $W_0^{1,p(x)}(\Omega)$.

We close this section with the following fixed point theorem which will be used in this paper.

**Theorem 1.** (Classical Schaefer’s fixed point theorem) [15]

Let $X$ be a normed space, $T$ a continuous mapping of $X$ into $X$ which is compact on each bounded subset of $X$. Then, either

- the equation $u = \lambda Tu$ has a solution for $\lambda = 1$, or
- the set of all such solutions $u$, for $0 < \lambda < 1$ is unbounded.
3. Main Result

In this section, we first consider the following problem

\[
\begin{align*}
-\Delta_{p(x)}u &= f(x,u,\nabla u), \quad x \in \Omega \\
u &= 0, \quad x \in \partial\Omega,
\end{align*}
\]

where \( \Omega \) is a smooth bounded domain in \( \mathbb{R}^N \), \( N \geq 2 \), \( p(x) \in C(\overline{\Omega}) \) is log-Hölder continuous with values in \((1, +\infty)\), \( 1 < p^- \leq p(x) \leq p^+ < \infty \), \( p'(x) \) the conjugate of \( p(x) \), \(-\Delta_{p(x)}(u) = \text{div}(|\nabla u(x)|^{p(x)-2}\nabla u(x)) \) and \( f : \Omega \times \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R} \) is Carathéodory function satisfying the following growth condition.

\[
(A_1) \quad |f(x,s,t)| \leq \phi(x) + c|x|^\eta(x) - 1 + c|t|^\eta(x) - 1, \quad \forall (x,s,t) \in \Omega \times \mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R}^N,
\]

where \( \phi(x) \in L^{p'(x)}(\Omega) \), \( c > 0 \), \( \eta(x) \in C_+ (\overline{\Omega}) \), \( \eta(x) < p^+(x) \), \( 1 < \eta^- \leq \eta(x) \leq \eta^+ < p^- \).

Let \( \theta_0 \) be such that \( |u|_{p(x)} \leq \theta_0 |\nabla u|_{p(x)} \), for all \( u \in W_0^{1,p(x)}(\Omega) \) and \( \theta_1 \) the constant of the embedding of \( L^{p(x)}(\Omega) \) into \( L^{\eta(x)}(\Omega) \) such that

\[
(A_2) \quad 0 < c < \frac{1}{4\lambda p^- - 1 + \theta_1^p}, \quad |\phi|_{p(x)} < \frac{1 - 4c\lambda p^+-1((\theta_0\theta_1)^{p^-} + \theta_1^p)}{2\lambda p^+-1\theta_0},
\]

for some \( \lambda \in [0,1] \). If \( u \) is a weak solution of the Problem (1.1), then for all \( v \in W_0^{1,p(x)}(\Omega) \), we have

\[
\int_{\Omega} |\nabla u|^{p(x)-2}\nabla u \nabla v \, dx = \int_{\Omega} f(x,u,\nabla u) v \, dx. \quad (3.1)
\]

Let \( K = W_0^{1,p(x)}(\Omega) \) and \( K^* \) its dual, that is \((W_0^{1,p(x)}(\Omega))^* = K^* \). We define the operators \((-\Delta_{p(x)}\) ) and \( \Phi \) as follows:

\[
-\Delta_{p(x)} : K \rightarrow K^*,
\]

\[
\langle -\Delta_{p(x)} u, v \rangle = \int_{\Omega} |\nabla (u)|^{p(x)-2}\nabla u \nabla v \, dx, \quad \forall u, v \in K
\]

and

\[
\Phi : K^* \rightarrow K
\]

\[
\langle \Phi u, v \rangle = \int_{\Omega} f(x,u,\nabla u) v \, dx, \quad \forall u, v \in K.
\]

If \((A_1)\) is satisfied, then the following propositions give the most properties of \(-\Delta_{p(x)}\) and \( \Phi \).

**Proposition 3.** [3, 6]
(1) $-\Delta_{p(x)} : W^{1,p(x)}_0(\Omega) \to \left( W^{1,p(x)}_0(\Omega) \right)'$ is a homeomorphism from $W^{1,p(x)}_0(\Omega)$ to $\left( W^{1,p(x)}_0(\Omega) \right)'$.

(2) $-\Delta_{p(x)} : W^{1,p(x)}_0(\Omega) \to \left( W^{1,p(x)}_0(\Omega) \right)'$ is a continuous, bounded and strictly monotone operator.

(3) $-\Delta_{p(x)} : W^{1,p(x)}_0(\Omega) \to \left( W^{1,p(x)}_0(\Omega) \right)'$ is a mapping of type $S_+^\ast$.

(4) The operator $-\Delta_{p(x)} : W^{1,p(x)}_0(\Omega) \to \left( W^{1,p(x)}_0(\Omega) \right)'$ has a continuous inverse mapping $\left( -\Delta_{p(x)} \right)^{-1} : \left( W^{1,p(x)}_0(\Omega) \right)' \to W^{1,p(x)}_0(\Omega)$.

(5) $\left( -\Delta_{p(x)} \right)^{-1}$ is bounded and satisfies condition $S_+$.

**Proposition 4.** [3] The operator $\Phi$ is compact.

One can see that if $u$ is a weak solution for the Problem (1.1) means that
\[ \langle -\Delta_{p(x)}u, v \rangle = \langle \Phi u, v \rangle, \quad \forall v \in K. \]

On the other hand, we have the following equivalence:
\[ -\Delta_{p(x)}u = \Phi(u) \iff u = (-\Delta_{p(x)})^{-1}\Phi u. \]

Let $T$ be the operator defined by
\[ T : K \to K, \quad Tu = (-\Delta_{p(x)})^{-1}\Phi u. \]

Now, we state our main result which will be proved by using Schaefer’s fixed point theorem.

**Theorem 2.** Under assumptions $(A_1)$ and $(A_2)$, the Problem (1.1) admits at least a nontrivial solution.

It is easily seen that a solution of the Problem (1.1) is a fixed point of the operator $T$. So, we will prove that $T$ is well defined and all the conditions of Theorem 1 are satisfied.

**Proof.**

(1) $T$ is well defined. Indeed, the operator $T$ can be considered as follows:
\[ T : K \to K^* \to K. \]

(2) $T$ is compact. In fact, let $(u_n)$ be a bounded sequence in the reflexive space $K$. Then, there exist $u_0$ and a subsequence which we also denote $(u_n)$ such that $u_n$ converges weakly to $u_0$ in $K$. By the compactness of $\Phi$ (Lemma 2 in [3]), we have $\Phi(u_n) \to \Phi(u_0)$ in $K^*$. Using the continuity of the operator $(-\Delta_{p(x)})^{-1}$, then we get
\[ (-\Delta_{p(x)})^{-1}F(u_n) \to (-\Delta_{p(x)})^{-1}F(u_0). \]
That is, $T(u_n)$ converges strongly to $T(u_0)$. We mention that $T$ is also continuous.

(3) We claim that the set

$$B = \left\{ u \in W_0^{1,p(x)}(\Omega) : u = \lambda Tu, \; \lambda \in [0, 1] \right\}$$

is bounded. In fact, we will prove that for all $u \in B$, there exists $R > 0$ such that $|\nabla u|_{p(x)} \leq R$. Let $u \in B$. Then, we have to consider two cases:

- If $|\nabla u| < 1$, then $B$ is bounded.
- If $|\nabla u| > 1$, by using modular’s properties, we proceed as follows: If $u = \lambda Tu$ and assuming that $\lambda \neq 0$, we have $\frac{u}{\lambda} = Tu = (-\Delta_{p(x)})^{-1} \Phi u$. Then we obtain

$$-\Delta_{p(x)} \left( \frac{u}{\lambda} \right) = \Phi u$$

and consequently,

$$\int_{\Omega} |\nabla \left( \frac{u}{\lambda} \right)|^{p(x)-2} \nabla \left( \frac{u}{\lambda} \right) \nabla v \, dx = \int_{\Omega} f(x, u, \nabla u) v \, dx,$$

for all $v \in K$. Using Hölder-type inequality, Proposition 1 and Proposition 2, we have

$$\frac{1}{\lambda^{p(x)}} \rho_{p(x)}(\nabla u) \leq \rho_{p(x)}(\nabla \left( \frac{u}{\lambda} \right)) \leq \frac{1}{\lambda} \int_{\Omega} f(x, u, \nabla u) u \, dx,$$

$$\rho_{p(x)}(\nabla u) \leq \lambda^{p(x)-1} \int_{\Omega} f(x, u(x)) u(x) \, dx,$$

$$\leq \lambda^{p(x)-1} \left[ \int_{\Omega} |\phi(x) u(x)| + c \int_{\Omega} |u(x)|^{p(x)} + c \int_{\Omega} |\nabla u(x)|^{p(x)} \, dx \right],$$

$$\leq \lambda^{p(x)-1} \left[ 2|\phi|_{p(x)} |u|_{p(x)} + c \rho_{p(x)}(\nabla u) \right],$$

$$\leq \lambda^{p(x)-1} \left[ 2|\phi|_{p(x)} \theta_0 (\rho_{p(x)}(\nabla u) + 1) + c \left( |u|^{p(x)}_{p(x)} + |u|^{-} \right) 
+ c \left( |\nabla u|_{p(x)}^{p(x)} + |\nabla u|^{-}_{p(x)} \right) \right],$$

and so,

$$\left( 1 - 2\lambda^{p(x)-1} \theta_0 |\phi|_{p(x)} \right) \rho_{p(x)}(\nabla u) \leq 2\lambda^{p(x)-1} \theta_0 |\phi|_{p(x)}$$

$$+ 4\lambda^{p(x)-1} c \left[ (\theta_0 \theta_1)^{p(x)} + (\theta_1)^{p(x)} \right] |\nabla u|_{p(x)}^{p(x)}$$,

$$\left( 1 - 2\lambda^{p(x)-1} \theta_0 |\phi|_{p(x)} \right) |\nabla u|_{p(x)}^{p(x)} \leq 2\lambda^{p(x)-1} \theta_0 |\phi|_{p(x)}$$

$$+ 4\lambda^{p(x)-1} c \left[ (\theta_0 \theta_1)^{p(x)} + (\theta_1)^{p(x)} \right] |\nabla u|_{p(x)}^{p(x)},$$
EXISTENCE OF SOLUTION FOR A DIRICHLET BOUNDARY VALUE PROBLEM...

\[
(1 - 2\lambda p^{-1} \theta_0 |\phi|_{p'(x)} - 4\lambda p^{-1} c \left[ (\theta_0 \theta_1)^{p^-} + (\theta_1)^{p^-} \right]) |\nabla u|_{p'(x)}^{p^-} \leq 2\lambda p^{-1} \theta_0 |\phi|_{p'(x)}.
\]

It follows from assumption \((A_2)\) that

\[1 - 4\lambda p^{-1} c \left[ (\theta_0 \theta_1)^{p^-} + (\theta_1)^{p^-} \right] > 0,
\]

and

\[2\lambda p^{-1} \theta_0 |\phi|_{p'(x)} < 1 - 4\lambda p^{-1} c \left[ (\theta_0 \theta_1)^{p^-} + (\theta_1)^{p^-} \right],
\]

hence we obtain

\[1 - 2\lambda p^{-1} \theta_0 |\phi|_{p'(x)} - 4\lambda p^{-1} c \left[ (\theta_0 \theta_1)^{p^-} + (\theta_1)^{p^-} \right] > 0
\]

and

\[|\nabla u|_{p'(x)}^{p^-} \leq \frac{2\lambda p^{-1} \theta_0 |\phi|_{p'(x)}}{1 - 2\lambda p^{-1} \theta_0 |\phi|_{p'(x)} - 4\lambda p^{-1} c (\theta_0 \theta_1)^{p^-} + (\theta_1)^{p^-}} = R > 0.
\]

That is, \(B\) is bounded. By Schaefer’s fixed point theorem, the operator \(T\) has a fixed point \(u\) which is the solution of the given Problem (1.1).

\[\square\]

Remark 1. If we assume that there exists \(x_0 \in \Omega\) such that \(f(x_0, 0, t) \neq 0\) in Theorem 2, then the solution of the Problem (1.1) is nontrivial.

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REFERENCES


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