Research Article

Existence of Multiple Solutions for a Quasilinear Biharmonic Equation

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Using three critical point theorems, we prove the existence of at least three solutions for a quasilinear biharmonic equation.

1. Introduction

In this paper, we show the existence of at least three weak solutions for the Navier boundary value problem

\[ \Delta^2 u - \text{div} (\nabla u) = \lambda f (x, u) + g (u) \quad \text{in} \quad \Omega, \]
\[ u = \Delta u = 0 \quad \text{on} \quad \partial \Omega, \quad (1) \]

where \( \Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^N \) \((N \geq 1)\) is a nonempty bounded open set with a sufficient smooth boundary \( \partial \Omega \), \( \lambda > 0 \), \( f : \Omega \times \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R} \) is an \( L^1 \)-Carathéodory function, and \( g : \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R} \) is a Lipschitz continuous function with Lipschitz constant \( L > 0 \); that is,

\[ |g (t_1) - g (t_2)| \leq L |t_1 - t_2| \quad (2) \]

for every \( t_1, t_2 \in \mathbb{R} \) and \( g(0) = 0 \).

Motivated by the fact that such problems are used to describe a large class of physical phenomena, many authors looked for existence and multiplicity of solutions for fourth-order nonlinear equations. For an overview on this subject, we cite the papers [1–23]. For instance, when \( N = 1 \), in [22], Liu and Li, using Ricceri’s three critical points theorem [24], established the existence of at least three weak solutions for the following problem:

\[ \Delta \left( |\Delta u|^{p-2} \Delta u \right) - \text{div} (|\nabla u|^{p-2} \nabla u) = \lambda f (x, u) \quad \text{in} \quad \Omega, \]
\[ u = \Delta u = 0 \quad \text{on} \quad \partial \Omega, \quad (4) \]

where \( \Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^N \) \((N \geq 1)\) is a nonempty bounded open set with a sufficient smooth boundary \( \partial \Omega \), \( p > \max \{1, N/2\} \), \( \lambda > 0 \), and \( f : \Omega \times \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R} \) is an \( L^1 \)-Carathéodory function. After that some authors used different critical point theorems to get one nontrivial, at least three, and infinitely many solutions (see [6–8, 16, 18]). Elliptic systems were also considered by [9, 11, 13, 14, 17, 20, 23].

The goal of the present paper is to establish some new criteria for (1) to have at least three weak solutions (Theorems 4 and 5). Our analysis is mainly based on recent critical point theorems that are contained in Theorems 2 and 3. In fact, employing rather different three critical points theorems, under different assumptions on the nonlinear term \( f \), we obtain the exact collections of \( \lambda \) for which (1) admits at least three weak solutions in the space \( W^{2,2} (\Omega) \cap W_0^{1,2} (\Omega) \).
A special case of our main results is the following theorem.

**Theorem 1.** Let \( g : \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R} \) be a Lipschitz continuous function with the Lipschitz constant \( L > 0 \) and \( g(0) = 0 \) such that \( L < 1/K^2 m(\Omega) \), where \( K \) is defined by (17). Let \( f : \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R} \) be a continuous function and put \( F(t) = \int_0^t f(\xi) d\xi \) for each \( t \in \mathbb{R} \). Assume that \( F(d) > 0 \) for some \( d > 0 \) and \( F(\xi) \geq 0 \) in \([0, d]\) and

\[
\liminf_{\xi \to 0} \frac{F(\xi)}{\xi^2} = 0, \quad \limsup_{\xi \to +\infty} \frac{F(\xi)}{\xi^2} = 0. \tag{5}
\]

Then, there is \( \lambda^* > 0 \) such that for each \( \lambda > \lambda^* \), the problem

\[
\Delta^2 u - \text{div}(\nabla u) = \lambda f(u) + g(u) \quad \text{in} \; \Omega,
\]

\[
u = \Delta u = 0 \quad \text{on} \; \partial \Omega
\]

admits at least three weak solutions.

## 2. Preliminaries

First we here recall for the reader’s convenience our main tools to prove the results. The first result has been obtained in [25] and the second one in [26].

**Theorem 2** (see [25, Theorem 3.1]). Let \( X \) be a separable and reflexive real Banach space, \( \Phi : X \to \mathbb{R} \) a nonnegative continuously Gateaux differentiable and sequentially weakly lower semicontinuous, coercive, and continuously Gateaux differentiable whose Gateaux derivative admits a continuous inverse on \( X^* \), and \( \Psi : X \to \mathbb{R} \) a continuously Gateaux differentiable functional whose Gateaux derivative is compact. Assume that there exists \( x_0 \in X \) such that \( \Phi(x_0) = \Psi(x_0) = 0 \) and that

\[
\lim_{|x| \to +\infty} (\Phi(x) - \lambda \Psi(x)) = +\infty \quad \forall \lambda \in [0, +\infty[. \tag{7}
\]

Further, assume that there are \( r > 0, x_1 \in X \), such that \( r < \Phi(x_1) \) and

\[
\sup_{x \in \Phi^{-1}(]-\infty,r[)} \Psi(x) < \frac{r}{r + \Phi(x_1)} \Psi(x_1); \tag{8}
\]

here \( \Phi^{-1}(]-\infty,r[) \) denotes the closure of \( \Phi^{-1}(]-\infty,r[) \) in the weak topology. Then, for each \( \lambda \in \Lambda_1 := \left[ \frac{\Phi(x_1)}{\Psi(x_1) - \sup_{x \in \Phi^{-1}(]-\infty,r[)} \Psi(x)}, \frac{r}{\sup_{x \in \Phi^{-1}(]-\infty,r[)} \Psi(x)} \right] \)

the equation

\[
\Phi'(u) - \lambda \Psi'(u) = 0 \quad \lambda \in \Lambda_2 \subseteq \left[ 0, \frac{hr}{r(\Phi(x_1)/\Phi(x_1)) - \sup_{x \in \Phi^{-1}(]-\infty,r[)} \Psi(x)} \right] \tag{11}
\]

and a positive real number \( \sigma \) such that, for each \( \lambda \in \Lambda_2 \), (10) has at least three solutions in \( X \) whose norms are less than \( \sigma \).

**Theorem 3** (see [26, Theorem 3.6]). Let \( X \) be a reflexive real Banach space; let \( \Phi : X \to \mathbb{R} \) be a sequentially weakly lower semicontinuous, coercive, and continuously Gateaux differentiable whose Gateaux derivative admits a continuous inverse on \( X^* \), and let \( \Psi : X \to \mathbb{R} \) be a sequentially weakly upper semicontinuous and continuously Gateaux differentiable functional whose Gateaux derivative is compact. Assume that there exist \( r \in \mathbb{R} \) and \( u_1 \in X \) with \( 0 < r < \Phi(u_1) \), such that

\[
(A_1) \sup_{u \in \Phi^{-1}(]-\infty,r[)} \Psi(u) < r(\Psi(u_1)/\Phi(u_1));
\]

\[
(A_2) \text{for each } \lambda \in \Lambda_1 := [\Phi(u_1)/\Psi(u_1), r/\sup_{u \in \Phi^{-1}(]-\infty,r[)} \Psi(u)] \text{the functional } \Phi - \lambda \Psi \text{ is coercive.}
\]

Then, for each \( \lambda \in \Lambda_1 \), the functional \( \Phi - \lambda \Psi \) has at least three critical points in \( X \).

Let \( f : \Omega \times \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R} \) be an \( L^1 \)-Carathéodory function and let \( g : \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R} \) be a Lipschitz continuous function with the Lipschitz constant \( L > 0 \); that is,

\[
|g(t_1) - g(t_2)| \leq L |t_1 - t_2| \tag{12}
\]

for every \( t_1, t_2 \in \mathbb{R} \), and \( g(0) = 0 \).

Put

\[
F(x, t) := \int_0^t f(x, \xi) d\xi, \quad G(t) := -\int_0^t g(t) d\xi \tag{13}
\]

for all \( x \in \Omega \) and \( t \in \mathbb{R} \). Denote

\[
X := W^{2,2}(\Omega) \cap W^{1,2}_0(\Omega); \tag{14}
\]

the usual norm in \( X \) is defined by

\[
\|u\| := \left( \int_{\Omega} |\nabla u(x)|^2 + |\nabla u(x)\|^2 dx \right)^{1/2}. \tag{15}
\]

Note that \( X \) is a separable and reflexive real Banach space.

We say that a function \( u \in X \) is a weak solution of problem (I) if

\[
\int_{\Omega} \Delta u(x) \Delta v(x) dx + \int_{\Omega} \nabla u(x) \cdot \nabla v(x) dx = 0 \tag{16}
\]

for all \( v \in X \).

It is well known that \( (X, \| \cdot \|) \) is embedded in \( (C^0(\Omega), \| \cdot \|_{C^0}) \) and

\[
\|u\|_{C^0} \leq K \|u\| \tag{17}
\]

for all \( u \in X \). Since \( N < 4 \), one has \( K < +\infty \).

Suppose that the Lipschitz constant \( L > 0 \) of the function \( g \) satisfies \( L < 1/K^2 m(\Omega) \). For other basic notations and definitions, we refer the reader to [27–29].
3. Main Results

Our main results are the following theorems.

Theorem 4. Assume that there exist a function \( w \in X \), a positive function \( a \in L^1 \), and two positive constants \( r \) and \( \gamma \) with \( \gamma < p \) such that

\[
\begin{align*}
(A1) \quad & \|w\|^2 > 2r/(1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega)), \\
(A2) \quad & \int_{\Omega} \sup_{t \leq K} \frac{t}{\|w\|^2} F(x, t) \, dx < r \left( \int_{\Omega} F(x, w(x)) \, dx / \|w\|^2 \right) , \\
(A3) \quad & F(x, t) \leq a(x)(1 + |t|^\gamma) \text{ for a.e. } x \in \Omega \text{ and all } t \in \mathbb{R}.
\end{align*}
\]

Then, for each \( \lambda \) in

\[
\Lambda_1 := \left( \left( 1 + K^2 Lm(\Omega) \right) / 2 \right) \|w\|^2 \times \left( \int_{\Omega} F(x, w(x)) \, dx - \int_{\Omega} \sup_{t \leq K} \frac{t}{\|w\|^2} F(x, t) \, dx \right) ^{-1},
\]

problem (1) admits at least three weak solutions in \( X \) and, moreover, for each \( h > 1 \), there exists an open interval

\[
\Lambda_2 \subseteq \left[ 0, (hr) \left( \frac{2r}{(1 + K^2 Lm(\Omega)) \|w\|^2} \int_{\Omega} F(x, w(x)) \, dx \right) ^{-1} \right],
\]

and a positive real number \( \sigma \) such that, for each \( \lambda \in \Lambda_2 \), the problem (1) admits at least three weak solutions in \( X \) whose norms are less than \( \sigma \).

Theorem 5. Assume that there exists a function \( w \in X \) and a positive constant \( r \) such that

\[
\begin{align*}
(B1) \quad & \|w\|^2 > 2r/(1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega)), \\
(B2) \quad & \int_{\Omega} \sup_{t \leq K} \frac{t}{\|w\|^2} F(x, t) \, dx / r < (2/(1 + K^2 Lm(\Omega))) \left( \int_{\Omega} F(x, w(x)) \, dx / \|w\|^2 \right) , \\
(B3) \quad & 2K^2/(1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega)) \limsup_{|t| \to \infty} \frac{F(x, t)}{t^2} < \left( \int_{\Omega} \sup_{t \leq K} \frac{t}{\|w\|^2} F(x, t) \, dx / r \right).
\end{align*}
\]

Then, for each

\[
\lambda \in \left[ \frac{1 + K^2 Lm(\Omega)}{2} \right] \left[ \frac{\|w\|^2}{\int_{\Omega} F(x, w(x)) \, dx} \right] ^{-1},
\]

problem (1) admits at least three weak solutions.

Let us give particular consequences of Theorems 4 and 5 for a fixed test function \( w \). Now, fix \( x^0 \in \Omega \) and pick \( y \) with \( y > 0 \) such that \( B(x^0, y) \subset \Omega \) where \( B(x^0, y) \) denotes the ball with center at \( x^0 \) and radius of \( y \). Put

\[
\begin{align*}
Q &= \frac{12}{y^2} |x - x^0| \left( 1 - \frac{24}{y} \frac{l}{y^2} \frac{9}{y} \frac{l}{y^2} \right) ^2 \, dx, \\
R &= \frac{\pi^{N/2}}{\Gamma(N/2)} \int_{(y/2)^2} y^2 \left( \frac{2N}{y^2} \frac{9(N-1)}{y} \frac{l}{y} \frac{24N}{y^2} \right) ^{1/2} \, dt, \\
\theta &= K(R + Q)^{1/2},
\end{align*}
\]

where \( l = \left( \sum_{i=1}^N x_i^2 \right) ^{1/2} \), \( |x - x^0| = \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^N (x_i - x_i^0)^2} \), and \( m(\Omega) \) denotes the volume of \( \Omega \).

Corollary 6. Assume that there exist a positive function \( a \in L^1 \) and three positive constants \( c, d, \) and \( \gamma \) with \( c < \theta d \) and \( \gamma < 2 \) such that Assumption (A3) in Theorem 4 holds. Furthermore, suppose that

\[
\begin{align*}
(A4) \quad & F(x, t) \geq 0 \text{ for a.e. } x \in \Omega \setminus B(x^0, y/2) \text{ and all } t \in [0, d]; \\
(A5) \quad & \int_{B(x^0, y/2)} \sup_{t \leq c} F(x, t) \, dx < (1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega))^2 \left( \int_{B(x^0, y/2)} F(x, d) \, dx / (1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega))^2 + (1 + K^2 Lm(\Omega))(\theta d^2) \right).
\end{align*}
\]
Then, for each \( \lambda \) in

\[
\Lambda_1 := \left[ 1 + K^2 Lm(\Omega) \right] \frac{1}{2} \times (\theta d)^2 \left( 2K^2 \left( \int_{B(x^0,\gamma/2)} F(x, d) \, dx \right) - \left( \int_{\Omega} \sup_{t \in [-\infty]} F(x,t) \, dx \right) \right)^{-1},
\]

\[
1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega) \frac{c^2}{2} \left[ 2K^2 \int_{\Omega} \sup_{t \in [-\infty]} F(x,t) \, dx \right]
\]

problem (1) admits at least three weak solutions in \( X \) and, moreover, for each \( h > 1 \), there exist an open interval

\[
\Lambda_2' \subseteq \left[ 0, \frac{1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega)}{2} \right] \times \left( \frac{h}{2} \frac{(c/K)^2}{(c/\theta d)^2} \int_{B(x^0,\gamma/2)} F(x, d) \, dx - \int_{\Omega} \sup_{t \in [-\infty]} F(x,t) \, dx \right)
\]

and a positive real number \( \sigma \) such that, for each \( \lambda \in \Lambda_2' \), problem (1) admits at least three weak solutions in \( X \) whose norms are less than \( \sigma \).

**Proof.** We claim that all the assumptions of Theorem 4 are fulfilled with \( w \) given by

\[
w(x) = \begin{cases} 
0 & \text{for } x \in \Omega \setminus B(x^0, \gamma), \\
\frac{4}{\gamma} |x - x^0|^3 - \frac{12}{\gamma^2} |x - x^0|^2 \\
+ \frac{9}{\gamma} |x - x^0| - 1 & \text{for } x \in B(x^0, \gamma) \setminus B(x^0, \gamma/2), \\
d & \text{for } x \in B(x^0, \gamma/2),
\end{cases}
\]

and \( r := ((1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega))/2)(c/K)^2 \). It is easy to verify that \( w \) is in \( W^{2,2}(\Omega) \cap W^{1,2}_0(\Omega) \), and, in particular, one has

\[
\|w\|^2 = (R + Q) d^2,
\]

and consequently from (22) we see that

\[
\|w\| = \frac{\theta d}{K},
\]
In addition note that
\[
\int_{B(x_0,\gamma/2)} F(x,d) \, dx - \int_{\Omega} \sup_{t \in [0,c]} F(x,t) \, dx,
\]
\[
< \frac{(1 + K^2 Lm(\Omega)(\theta d)^2)}{2K^2} \int_{B(x_0,\gamma/2)} F(x,d) \, dx - \int_{\Omega} \sup_{t \in [0,c]} F(x,t) \, dx
\]
\[
\times \left( \frac{(1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega))c^2}{(1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega))c^2 + (1 + K^2 Lm(\Omega))(\theta d)^2 - 1} \right)
\]
\[
\times \int_{\Omega} \sup_{t \in [0,c]} F(x,t) \, dx^{-1}
\]
\[
= \frac{(1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega))c^2}{2K^2} \int_{\Omega} \sup_{t \in [0,c]} F(x,t) \, dx.
\]
Finally note that
\[
(\eta r) \left( \frac{2r}{(1 + K^2 Lm(\Omega))\|w\|^2} \int_{\Omega} F(x,w(x)) \, dx
\]
\[
- \int_{\Omega} \sup_{|z| \leq K \eta r (1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega))} F(x,t) \, dx \right)^{-1}
\]
\[
\leq \frac{1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega)}{2r}
\]
\[
\times \left( \frac{h}{2} \left( \frac{c}{K} \right)^2 \right)^2 \int_{B(x_0,\gamma/2)} F(x,d) \, dx
\]
\[
- \int_{\Omega} \sup_{t \in [0,c]} F(x,t) \, dx \right)^{-1},
\]
and, taking into account that \( \Lambda' \subseteq \Lambda \) and \( \Lambda_2 \subseteq \Lambda'_2 \), we have the desired conclusion directly from Theorem 4.

**Corollary 7.** Assume that there exist two positive constants \( c \) and \( d \) with \( c < \theta d \) such that the assumption (A4) in Corollary 6 holds. Furthermore, suppose that
\[
(B4) \int_{\Omega} \sup_{t \in [0,c]} F(x,t) \, dx/(1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega))c^2 < \int_{B(x_0,\gamma/2)} F(x,d) \, dx/(1 + K^2 Lm(\Omega))(\theta d)^2;
\]
\[
(B5) \lim sup_{\|u\| \to \infty} F(x,t)/t^2 < \int_{\Omega} \sup_{t \in [0,c]} F(x,t) \, dx/c^2.
\]
Then, for each
\[
\lambda \in \left[ \frac{1 + K^2 Lm(\Omega)}{2} \frac{1}{2K^2} \frac{(\theta d)^2}{\int_{B(x_0,\gamma/2)} F(x,d) \, dx}, \frac{1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega)}{2} \frac{c^2}{2K^2} \int_{\Omega} \sup_{t \in [0,c]} F(x,t) \, dx \right],
\]
problem (1) admits at least three weak solutions.

**Proof.** All the assumptions of Theorem 5 are fulfilled by choosing \( w \) as given in (25) and \( r := ((1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega))/c/K)^2 \) and bearing in mind that
\[
\|w\| = \frac{\theta d}{K}
\]
and recalling
\[
\int_{\Omega} F(x,w(x)) \, dx
\]
\[
+ \int_{B(x_0,\gamma/2)} F(x,d) \, dx \geq 0.
\]
Hence, by applying Theorem 5, we have the conclusion.

**Proof of Theorem 4.** Our aim is to apply Theorem 2 to our problem. To this end, for each \( u \in X \), we let the functionals \( \Phi, \Psi : X \to \mathbb{R} \) be defined by
\[
\Phi(u) := \frac{1}{2} \|u\|^2 + \int_{\Omega} G(u(x)) \, dx,
\]
\[
\Psi(u) := \int_{\Omega} F(x,u(x)) \, dx,
\]
and put
\[
I_\lambda(u) := \Phi(u) - \lambda \Psi(u) \quad \forall u \in X.
\]

**4. Proofs**

**Proof of Theorem 1.** Fix \( \lambda > \lambda^* := m(\Omega)(1 + K^2 Lm(\Omega))\theta d^2 / m(B(x_0,\gamma))F(d) \) for some \( d > 0 \). Since
\[
\liminf_{\xi \to 0} \frac{F(\xi)}{\xi^2} = 0,
\]
there is \( \{c_m\}_{m \in \mathbb{N}} \subseteq [0, +\infty) \) such that \( \lim_{m \to +\infty} c_m = 0 \) and
\[
\lim_{m \to +\infty} \sup_{|\xi| \leq c_m} \frac{F(\xi)}{c_m} = 0.
\]
In fact, one has
\[
\lim_{m \to +\infty} \sup_{|\xi| \leq c_m} F(\xi)/c_m = \lim_{m \to +\infty} \frac{F(\xi_{c_m})}{c_m^2} \cdot \xi_{c_m}^2 = 0,
\]
where \( F(\xi_{c_m}) = \sup_{|\xi| \leq c_m} F(\xi) \). Hence, there is \( \xi > 0 \) such that
\[
\sup_{|\xi| \leq \xi_{c_m}} \frac{F(\xi)}{\xi^2} < \min \left\{ \frac{m(B(x_0,\gamma)) (1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega)) F(d)}{m(\Omega) (1 + K^2 Lm(\Omega))(\theta d)^2}, \frac{(1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega))}{\lambda} \right\}
\]
and \( \exists > \theta d \). From Corollary 7 we have the desired conclusion.
The functionals $\Phi$ and $\Psi$ satisfy the regularity assumptions of Theorem 2. Indeed, by standard arguments, we have that $\Phi$ is Gâteaux differentiable and sequentially weakly lower semicontinuous and its Gâteaux derivative at the point $u \in X$ is the functional $\Phi'(u) \in X^*$, given by
\[
\Phi'(u)(v) = \int_{\Omega} \Delta u(x) \Delta v(x) \, dx + \int_{\Omega} \nabla u(x) \cdot \nabla v(x) \, dx - \int_{\Omega} g(u(x)) v(x) \, dx,
\]
for every $v \in X$. Furthermore, the differential $\Phi': X \to X^*$ is a Lipschitzian operator. Indeed, for any $u, v \in X$, there holds
\[
\|\Phi'(u) - \Phi'(v)\|_{X^*} = \sup_{\|w\| \leq 1} |(\Phi'(u) - \Phi'(v), w)|
\leq \sup_{\|w\| \leq 1} \|u - v\| \|w\|
+ \sup_{\|w\| \leq 1} \int_{\Omega} |g(u(x)) - g(v(x))| |w(x)| \, dx
\leq \|u - v\| \|v\|
+ \sup_{\|w\| \leq 1} \left( \int_{\Omega} |w(x)|^2 \right)^{1/2}
\times \left( \int_{\Omega} |w(x)|^2 \right)^{1/2}.
\]
Recalling that $g$ is Lipschitz continuous and the embedding $X \hookrightarrow L^2(\Omega)$ is compact, the claim is true. In particular, we derive that $\Phi$ is continuously differentiable. The inequality (17) yields for any $u, v \in X$ the estimate
\[
(\Phi'(u) - \Phi'(v), u - v)
= (u - v, u - v) - \int_{\Omega} (g(u(x)) - g(v(x))) (u(x) - v(x)) \, dx
\geq \left( 1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega) \right) \|u - v\|^2.
\]
By the assumption $L < 1/K^2 m(\Omega)$, it turns out that $\Phi'$ is a strongly monotone operator. So, by applying Minty-Browder theorem [29, Theorem 26.1A], $\Phi': X \to X^*$ admits a Lipschitz continuous inverse. On the other hand, the fact that $X$ is compactly embedded into $C^0(\Omega)$ implies that the functional $\Psi$ is well defined, continuously Gâteaux differentiable, and with compact derivative, whose Gateaux derivative at the point $u \in X$ is given by
\[
\Psi'(u)(v) = \int_{\Omega} f(x, u(x)) v(x) \, dx,
\]
for every $v \in X$. Note that the weak solutions of (1) are exactly the critical points of $I_\lambda$. Also, since $g$ is Lipschitz continuous and satisfies $g(0) = 0$, we have from (17) that
\[
\frac{1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega)}{2} \|u\|^2 \leq \Phi(u) \leq \frac{1 + K^2 Lm(\Omega)}{2} \|u\|^2,
\]
for all $u \in X$, and so $\Phi$ is coercive. Furthermore from (A3) for any fixed $\lambda \in [0, +\infty[$, using (46), taking (17) into account, we have
\[
\Phi(u) - \lambda \Psi(u)
= \frac{1}{2} \|u\|^2 + \int_{\Omega} G(u(x)) \, dx - \lambda \int_{\Omega} F(x, u(x)) \, dx
\geq \frac{1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega)}{2} \|u\|^2 - \frac{\lambda}{2} \|u\|^2
\geq \frac{1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega)}{2} \|u\|^2 - \lambda \|u\|_\infty^2 \left( m(\Omega) + K \|u\|^2 \right),
\]
and so
\[
\lim_{\|w\| \to +\infty} (\Phi(u) - \lambda \Psi(u)) = +\infty.
\]
Also according to (A1) we achieve $\Phi(u) > r$. From the definition of $\Phi$ and by using (46) we have
\[
\Phi^{-1}([-\infty, r[)
= \{u \in X : \Phi(u) < r\}
\leq \left\{ u \in X : \|u\| < \sqrt{\frac{2r}{1 - LK^2 m(\Omega)}} \right\}
\leq \left\{ u \in X : |u(x)| < K \sqrt{\frac{2r}{1 - LK^2 m(\Omega)}} \quad \forall x \in \Omega \right\}.
\]
So, we obtain
\[
\sup_{u \in \Phi^{-1}([-\infty, r[)} \Psi(u) \leq \int_{\Omega} \sup_{|t| \leq K \sqrt{2r/(1-LK^2 m(\Omega))}} F(x, t) \, dx.
\]
Therefore, from (A2) and (46), we have
\[
\sup_{u \in \Phi^{-1}([-\infty, r[)} \Psi(u)
\leq \int_{\Omega} \sup_{|t| \leq K \sqrt{2r/(1-LK^2 m(\Omega))}} F(x, t) \, dx
\leq \frac{r}{r + \Phi(w) \Psi(w)} \int_{\Omega} F(x, w(x)) \, dx
\leq \frac{r}{r + \Phi(w) \Psi(w)}.
\]
Now, we can apply Theorem 2. Note that, for each $x \in \Omega$,

$$
\frac{\Phi(w)}{\Psi(w)} - \sup_{u \in \Phi^{-1}[(-\infty, r)])} \Psi(u)
\leq \left( \frac{1 + K^2 L m(\Omega)}{2} \|w\|^2 \right)^{-1} \times \left( \int_{\Omega} F(x, w(x)) \, dx - \int_{\Omega} \sup_{|t| \leq K \sqrt{r/(1-LK^2 m(\Omega))}} F(x, t) \, dx \right),
$$

(52)

from (A2) it follows that

$$
\frac{2r}{(1 + K^2 L m(\Omega)) \|w\|^2} \int_{\Omega} F(x, w(x)) \, dx - \int_{\Omega} \sup_{|t| \leq K \sqrt{r/(1-LK^2 m(\Omega))}} F(x, t) \, dx
\leq \left( \frac{2r}{(1 + K^2 L m(\Omega)) \|w\|^2} - \frac{r}{r + ((1 + K^2 L m(\Omega))/(2)) \|w\|^2} \right)
\times \int_{\Omega} F(x, w(x)) \, dx
\leq \left( \frac{2r}{(1 + K^2 L m(\Omega)) \|w\|^2} - (1 + K^2 L m(\Omega)) \|w\|^2 \right)
\times \int_{\Omega} F(x, w(x)) \, dx = 0,
$$

(55)

since $\int_{\Omega} F(x, w(x)) \, dx \geq 0$ (note $F(x, 0) = 0$ so $\int_{\Omega} \sup_{|t| \leq K \sqrt{r/(1-LK^2 m(\Omega))}} F(x, t) \, dx \geq 0$ and now apply (A2)).

Now with $x_0 = 0$ and $x_1 = w$ from Theorem 2 (note $\Psi(0) = 0$) it follows that, for each $\lambda \in \Lambda_1$, the problem (1) admits at least three weak solutions and there exist an open interval $\Lambda_2 \subseteq [0, \rho]$ and a real positive number $\sigma$ such that, for each $\lambda \in \Lambda_2$, the problem (1) admits at least three weak solutions whose norms in $X$ are less than $\sigma$. Thus, the conclusion is achieved.

Proof of Theorem 5. To apply Theorem 3 to our problem, we take the functionals $\Phi, \Psi : X \to \mathbb{R}$ as given in the proof of Theorem 4. Let us prove that the functionals $\Phi$ and $\Psi$ satisfy the conditions required in Theorem 3. The regularity assumptions on $\Phi$ and $\Psi$, as requested in Theorem 3, hold.

According to (B1) we deduce

$$
\Phi^{-1}[(-\infty, r)]) \subseteq \{u \in X : |u(x)| < K \sqrt{2r/(1-LK^2 m(\Omega))} \forall x \in \Omega\}.
$$

(56)

and it follows that

$$
\sup_{u \in \Phi^{-1}[(-\infty, r)])} \Psi(u) \leq \int_{\Omega} \sup_{|t| \leq K \sqrt{2r/(1-LK^2 m(\Omega))}} F(x, t) \, dx.
$$

(57)

Therefore, due to assumption (B2), we have

$$
\sup_{u \in \Phi^{-1}[(-\infty, r)])} \Psi(u)
\leq \int_{\Omega} \sup_{|t| \leq K \sqrt{2r/(1-LK^2 m(\Omega))}} F(x, t) \, dx
$$

r

(54)
On the other hand, if
\[
\begin{aligned}
\frac{2}{1 + K^2 Lm(\Omega)} \int_{\Omega} F(x, w(x)) \, dx \\
\leq \psi(\omega) \\
\leq \frac{\Psi(\omega)}{\Phi(\omega)}.
\end{aligned}
\]  

Furthermore, from (B3) there exist two constants \(\eta, \delta \in \mathbb{R}\) with
\[
\eta < \frac{1}{\sup_{|t| \leq K \sqrt{2/(1-K^2 Lm(\Omega))}} F(x, t) \, dx}
\]
such that
\[
\frac{2K^2}{1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega)} F(x, t) \leq \eta t^2 + \delta
\]
for all \(x \in \Omega\) and all \(t \in \mathbb{R}\). Fix \(u \in X\). Then
\[
F(x, u(x)) \leq \frac{1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega)}{2K^2} \left( \eta |u(x)|^2 + \delta \right)
\]
for all \(x \in \Omega\). Now, to prove the coercivity of the functional \(\Phi - \lambda \Psi\), first we assume that \(\eta > 0\). So, for any fixed
\[
\lambda \in \left[ \frac{1 + K^2 Lm(\Omega)}{2}, \frac{1}{\int_{\Omega} F(x, w(x)) \, dx} \right],
\]
using (61), we have
\[
\Phi(u) - \lambda \Psi(u) = \frac{1}{2} \|u\|^2 + \int_{\Omega} G(u(x)) \, dx - \lambda \int_{\Omega} F(x, u(x)) \, dx
\]
\[
\geq \frac{1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega)}{2} \|u\|^2 - \frac{1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega)}{2} \left( \eta \int_{\Omega} |u(x)|^2 \, dx + \delta \right)
\]
\[
\geq \frac{1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega)}{2} \left[ 1 - \eta \sup_{|t| \leq K \sqrt{2/(1-K^2 Lm(\Omega))}} F(x, t) \, dx \right]
\]
\[
\times \|u\|^2 - \frac{1 - K^2 Lm(\Omega)}{2} \delta,
\]
and thus
\[
\lim_{|u| \to \infty} (\Phi(u) - \lambda \Psi(u)) = +\infty.
\]  

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

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