Stability against three-body clustering in one-dimensional spinless $p$-wave fermions

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We theoretically investigate in-medium two- and three-body correlations in one-dimensional spinless fermions with attractive two-body $p$-wave interaction. By investigating the variational problem of two- and three-body states above the Fermi sea, we elucidate the fate of the in-medium two- and three-body cluster states. The one-dimensional system with the strong $p$-wave interaction is found to be stable against the formation of three-body clusters even in the presence of the Fermi sea, in contrast to higher-dimensional systems that suffer the strong three-body loss associated with the trimer formation. Our results indicate that the weak two-body coupling side is more sensitive to the residual three-body interaction than the strong-coupling side. By including the dimensionless three-body coupling such that the universality associated with the scattering length is maintained, we find that an in-medium three-body state similar to a squeezed Cooper triple appears.

I. INTRODUCTION

The study of unconventional superconductors and superfluids is one of the most exciting issues in modern physics [1]. In particular, the importance of the $p$-wave pairing state has been widely recognized in the field of condensed-matter physics as well as nuclear physics, such as the $^3$He superfluid [2] and the $^3P_2$ neutron superfluid [3].

An ultracold Fermi gas near the $p$-wave Feshbach resonance is one of the promising candidates to systematically investigate the role of strong $p$-wave interaction in unconventional superfluid states [4] due to its tunable interaction [5]. In this regard, the realization of a $p$-wave superfluid Fermi gas is a long-standing concern in cold-atom physics. A cold-atom quantum simulation of $p$-wave superfluids will make an important breakthrough in our understanding of topological superconductors [6]. However, in three dimensions, the $p$-wave Fermi superfluid state is unstable against three-body clustering [6], which leads to the three-body recombination accompanying strong particle loss. Such a three-body loss near the $p$-wave Feshbach resonance has been measured in experiments [8–10]. Also, the three-body loss has been theoretically examined in connection with few-body physics in three dimensions [10–13].

In contrast, the suppression of three-body loss in a one-dimensional $p$-wave system has been theoretically predicted [14]. In this context, the three-body loss in one-dimensional $p$-wave fermions was experimentally studied recently [15–16]. The one-dimensional $p$-wave superfluid is also relevant for the Majorana edge mode [17]. Moreover, a Bose-Fermi duality is also of great interest in one-dimensional $p$-wave Fermi systems [18–24]. Thanks to such a fascinating property in this system, the bulk viscosity has attracted attention [25–26]. The one-dimensional $p$-wave contact has also been investigated by using the thermodynamic Bethe ansatz [27] and virial expansion [28].

To investigate the stability against three-body clustering in quantum many-body systems, we need to consider the in-medium three-body problem. For such a purpose, the generalized Cooper problem has been applied to cluster states consisting of more than two particles, such as Cooper triples [29–32] and even Cooper quartets [33–36]. The investigation of the fate of such higher-order clustering is also a stimulating topic in various fields. These approaches are useful for further understanding the many-body ground state. Indeed, the Cooper pair problem has been considered to elucidate the pairing mechanism in unconventional superconductors [37–40]. On the other hand, the corresponding study of one-dimensional spinless $p$-wave fermionic systems has not been strictly performed so far.

In this paper, we theoretically study in-medium two- and three-body states in a one-dimensional Fermi gas with the resonant $p$-wave interaction using the variational method based on the generalized Cooper problem. We show that a $p$-wave Cooper pair appears even in the weak-coupling regime and undergoes the crossover towards the molecular state like the BCS-BEC crossover in a three-dimensional Fermi gas with strong $s$-wave interaction [41]. By solving the in-medium three-body equation derived from the variational principle, we show the absence of the stable in-medium three-body cluster state (such as a Cooper triple and in-medium trimer) in the present system without any additional interactions such as three-body attraction. The fermion-dimer repulsion, which suppresses the in-medium three-body clustering, is found to be always present, although it is weakened by the in-medium effect in the crossover regime. Accordingly, we also show the emergence of the in-medium three-body state is similar to the squeezed Cooper triple [31, 52] in the presence of the residual
three-body interaction proposed in Ref. [24].

This paper is organized as follows. In Sec. III we introduce the Hamiltonian for one-dimensional spinless fermions with attractive $p$-wave two-body interaction. In Sec. IV we derive the Cooper-pair problem in the one-dimensional spinless $p$-wave fermionic system. In addition, the similarity between the present Cooper problem and mean-field theory is discussed in the Appendix. In Sec. V we show the in-medium three-body equation obtained from the variational approach and the effective fermion-dimer repulsion. The three-body bound state is found to be absent in one-dimensional spinless $p$-wave fermions correspondingly. Finally, a summary and perspectives are given in Sec. VI.

In the following, we take $\hbar = c = k_B = 1$. The system size is taken to be unit.

II. HAMILTONIAN

In this paper, we consider one-dimensional spinless fermions with attractive $p$-wave interaction. The Hamiltonian of such a system can be given as

$$H = K + V,$$

$$K = \sum_k \xi_k c_k^\dagger c_k,$$

$$V = \frac{U_2}{2} \sum_{k_1,k_2,k_3,k_4} \frac{(k_1 - k_2)(k_3 - k_4)}{2} + c_{k_1}^\dagger c_{k_2}^\dagger c_{k_4} c_{k_3} \delta_{k_1+k_2,k_3+k_4},$$

where $\xi_k = k^2/(2m) - \mu$ in the kinetic term $K$ is the single-particle energy with momentum $k$, atomic mass $m$, and chemical potential $\mu$. In the generalized Cooper problems, we take $\mu = E_F$, where $E_F$ is the Fermi energy. $V$ represents the short-range $p$-wave two-body interaction with coupling constant $U_2$. This interaction corresponds to the zero-range limit of the two-channel model for the Feshbach resonance [43, 44]. The relation between $U_2$ and the $p$-wave scattering length $a$ is obtained from the two-body $T$ matrix as [22, 13]

$$\frac{1}{U_2} - \sum_p \frac{mp^2}{k^2 + i\delta - p^2} = \frac{m}{2} \left( 1 - \frac{1}{2} r_{\text{eff}} k^2 + ik \right),$$

where $r_{\text{eff}}$ is the effective range and $\delta$ is an infinitesimally small number. Correspondingly, we have

$$-\frac{1}{mU_2} = \Lambda \frac{1}{\pi} - \frac{1}{2a},$$

where $\Lambda$ is the momentum cutoff. $\Lambda$ can also be expressed in terms of the effective range $r_{\text{eff}}$ as

$$\Lambda = \frac{4}{\pi r_{\text{eff}}}. $$

For convenience, the pair-creation and -annihilation operators are introduced as

$$B_{k_1,k_2}^\dagger = c_{k_1}^\dagger c_{k_2}^\dagger, \quad B_{k_3,k_4} = c_{k_4} c_{k_3},$$

respectively. In a similar way, the corresponding operators for the three-body sector read

$$F_{k_1,k_2,k_3}^\dagger = c_{k_1}^\dagger c_{k_2}^\dagger c_{k_3}^\dagger, \quad F_{p_1,p_2,p_3} = c_{p_3} c_{p_2} c_{p_1}.$$

III. COOPER-PAIR PROBLEM

In this section, we first solve the Cooper pair problem in the one-dimensional $p$-wave system as described in Sec. III. Correspondingly, the trial wave function is adopted as

$$|\Psi_2\rangle = \sum_k \theta(|k| - k_F) \Phi_k B_{k,-k}^\dagger |\text{FS}\rangle,$$

where $|\text{FS}\rangle$ denotes the Fermi sea. By minimizing the ground-state energy based on the variational principle, the variational parameter $\Phi_k$ in Eq. (1) can be determined. In what follows, we introduce the momentum summation restricted by the Fermi surface as

$$\sum_{k_1,k_2,\ldots} F(k_1,k_2,\ldots) = \sum_{k_1,k_2,\ldots} \theta(|k_1| - k_F) \theta(|k_2| - k_F) \cdots \times F(k_1,k_2,\ldots),$$

for an arbitrary function $F(k_1,k_2,\ldots)$, where $k_F = \sqrt{2mE_F}$ is the Fermi momentum.

The expectation values for the kinetic and interaction parts are obtained as

$$\langle \Psi_2 | K | \Psi_2 \rangle = \sum_{k,p,q} \xi_p \Phi_k^* \Phi_q \langle \text{FS}|B_{k,-k} c_{p} c_{p} B_{q,-q}^\dagger |\text{FS}\rangle$$

$$= 2 \sum_k (\xi_k + \xi_{-k}) |\Phi_k|^2$$

and
Consequently, the variational equation reads

$$\langle \Psi_2 | V | \Psi_2 \rangle = \frac{U_2}{2} \sum_{p,q,k_1,k_2,k_1',k_2'} \left( \frac{k_1 - k_2}{2} \right) \left( \frac{k_1' - k_2'}{2} \right) \Phi_p \Phi_q \langle \text{FS}|B_{k_1-k}B_{k_2}^\dagger B_{k_1'}B_{k_2'}^\dagger |\text{FS}\rangle \delta_{k_1+k_2,k_1'+k_2'}$$

$$= 2U_2 \sum_{p,q} p_q \Phi_p^* \Phi_q,$$

respectively.

Furthermore, from the variational principle, we obtain

$$\frac{\delta \langle \Psi_2 | (H - E_2) | \Psi_2 \rangle}{\delta \Phi_p} = 0,$$

where $E_2$ is the ground-state energy of a pairing state. Consequently, the variational equation reads

$$2(\xi_p + \xi_{-p} - E_2)\Phi_p + 2U_2 \sum_q q \Phi_q = 0. \quad (14)$$

In order to simplify the further derivations, we introduce

$$A = \sum_q q \Phi_q. \quad (15)$$

Substituting Eq. (15) into Eq. (14), we obtain

$$\Phi_p = -\frac{U_2 A}{2\xi_p - E_2}. \quad (16)$$

Equation (15) can be then rewritten as

$$A = \sum_p p \Phi_p = -U_2 A \sum_p \frac{p^2}{2\xi_p - E_2}. \quad (17)$$

Consequently, we get the bound-state equation for the Cooper pair:

$$1 + U_2 \sum_p \frac{p^2}{2\xi_p - E_2} = 0. \quad (18)$$

By taking the momentum cutoff $\Lambda$, the two-body equation is then given as

$$-\frac{1}{U_2} \int_{k_p \leq |p| \leq \Lambda} dp \frac{m p^2}{2\pi p^2 - m(2E_F + E_2)}$$

$$= \frac{m(\Lambda - k_F)}{\pi} + \frac{m\sqrt{m(2E_F + E_2)}}{2\pi} \left[ \ln \left( \frac{\Lambda - \sqrt{m(2E_F + E_2)}}{\Lambda + \sqrt{m(2E_F + E_2)}} \right) - \ln \left( \frac{k_F - \sqrt{m(2E_F + E_2)}}{k_F + \sqrt{m(2E_F + E_2)}} \right) \right]$$

$$= I_2(p_2 = 0, E_2 - E_F), \quad (19)$$

where we introduced

$$I_2(p_2, E) = \frac{m}{2\pi} \int dp \frac{\theta(|p_1 + p_2| - k_F)\theta(|p_1| - k_F)}{p_1^2 + p_2^2 + p_1 p_2 - m(3E_F + E_2)} (p_1 + p_2/2)^2. \quad (20)$$

By taking the momentum cutoff $\Lambda = 10k_F$, the ground state of the Cooper-pair problem can be solved from Eq. (19). The two-body ground-state energy $E_2$ as a function of $1/(k_F a)$ is shown in Fig. 1. It can be seen that the $p$-wave Cooper pair exists even on the weak-coupling side and undergoes the crossover towards the molecular state like the BCS-BEC crossover in a three-dimensional Fermi gas [11, 12]. Note that the result is qualitatively unchanged by the difference of $\Lambda$.

Here we can further see the asymptotic behavior of the two-body ground-state energy in the Cooper-pair problem. On the one hand, in the weak-coupling limit
where \( |E_2| \ll E_F \), Eq. (19) further reduces to

\[
- \frac{1}{U_2} \simeq \frac{m(\Lambda - k_F)}{\pi} + \frac{m \sqrt{2m(2E_F + E_2)}}{2\pi} \ln \left( \frac{|E_2|}{8E_F} \right),
\]

which indicates that

\[
|E_2| \simeq 8E_F e^{\frac{\pi}{\sqrt{2}}}.
\]

This expression is identical to the three-dimensional \( s \)-wave case after replacing the \( p \)-wave scattering length \( a \) with the \( s \)-wave one \( \frac{4\pi}{\pi} \), indicating the similarity between the one-dimensional \( p \)-wave pairing and the three-dimensional \( s \)-wave one \( \frac{4\pi}{\pi} \). On the other hand, in the strong-coupling limit \( |E_2| \gg E_F \), we obtain

\[
- \frac{1}{U_2} \simeq \frac{m(\Lambda - k_F)}{\pi} + \frac{m \sqrt{m(|E_2| - 2E_F)}}{\pi} \times \tan^{-1} \left( \frac{\sqrt{m(|E_2| - 2E_F)}}{\Lambda} \right),
\]

leading to \( |E_2| \simeq 2E_F + \frac{1}{2F} \) in the limit of \( \Lambda/k_F \to \infty \). This is equivalent to the two-body binding energy except for the shift \( 2E_F \) associated with the Fermi sea.

In addition, we can define the pair-correlation length \( \xi_{\text{pair}} \) as

\[
\xi_{\text{pair}}^2 = \frac{\sum_p' |\partial_p \Phi_p|^2}{\sum_p' |\Phi_p|^2},
\]

where in detail, the summations read

\[
\sum_p' |\Phi_p|^2 = 2m^2U_2^2A^2 \int_{k_F}^{\Lambda} dp \frac{p^2}{(p^2 - k_F^2 + m|E_2|)^2}.
\]

The pair-correlation length \( \xi_{\text{pair}} \) given by Eq. (24), which describes the size of the pair, is shown in Fig. 2 as a function of \( 1/(k_Fa) \). The momentum cutoff \( \Lambda \) is taken to be \( 10k_F \). The large pair-correlation length \( \xi_{\text{pair}} \) on the weak-coupling side indicates the huge overlaps among pairs when a macroscopic number of Cooper pairs are formed. Qualitatively, the mean interparticle distance is given by \( k_F^{-1} \), and hence, \( \xi_{\text{pair}}k_F \gg 1 \) represents such an overlap of pairs. With the increase of coupling strength, the pair-correlation length \( \xi_{\text{pair}} \) decreases quickly. Finally, \( \xi_{\text{pair}} \) becomes very small on the strong-coupling side, which indicates the formation of a molecule-like bound state. Such behavior of the pair-correlation length is similar to the \( s \)-wave case in Refs. [45, 46].

Incidentally, although the Cooper problem is investigated here, the pairing energy \( E_2 \) is qualitatively similar to the reduction of the chemical potential \( \mu \) with the pairing gap \( D \) in the mean-field theory, which can be expressed as \( \Delta E = 2(\mu - mD^2) - 2E_F \), as discussed in the Appendix. We note that the Cooper problem gives an approximated two-body ground state in the medium, which differs from an exact many-body ground state. Therefore, generally, the Cooper problem does not satisfy the Bose-Fermi duality. However, it is still useful to understand the pairing effect in this system. Indeed, this approach can describe both the Cooper-pair formation in the weak-coupling limit and the molecule formation in the strong-coupling limit.
IV. THREE-BODY PROBLEM IN THE MEDIUM

In a way similar to the two-body case, the trial wave function for the three-body sector is taken to be \[ |\Psi_3\rangle = \sum_{p_1,p_2,p_3} \delta_{p_1+p_2,-p_3} \Omega_{p_1,p_2} F_{p_1,p_2,p_3}^\dagger |FS\rangle, \] (27)

where \( \Omega_{p_1,p_2} \) is the variational parameter and the three-body state with zero center-of-mass momentum \( (p_1 + p_2 + p_3 = 0) \) is considered here.

The expectation value of the kinetic part is then obtained as

\[
\langle \Psi_3 | K | \Psi_3 \rangle = \sum_{p_1,p_2,p_3} \Omega_{p_1,p_2}^* \Omega_{p_1,p_2}^\dagger \Omega_{p_1,p_2}^\dagger \langle \xi_{p_1} + \xi_{p_2} + \xi_{p_3} \rangle \epsilon_{p_1,p_2,p_3} \epsilon_{p_1',p_2',p_3'} \delta_{p_1',p_2',p_3'} \delta_{p_3',p_3} \delta_{p_1-p_2} \\
= 2 \sum_{p_1,p_2} (\xi_{p_1} + \xi_{p_2} + \xi_{p_1+p_2}) \Omega_{p_1,p_2}^* \Omega_{p_1,p_2}^\dagger \Omega_{p_1,p_2}^\dagger \left[ \Omega_{p_1,p_2} + \Omega_{p_2,p_1-p_2} + \Omega_{p_1,p_2-p_1} \right].
\] (28)

In addition, the expectation value of the interaction part can also be derived as

\[
\langle \Psi_3 | V | \Psi_3 \rangle = \frac{U_2}{2} \sum_{k_1,k_2} \sum_{k_1',k_2'} \sum_{p_1,p_2,p_3} \sum_{p_1',p_2',p_3'} \left( \frac{k_1 - k_2}{2} \right) \left( \frac{k_1' - k_2'}{2} \right) \Omega_{p_1,p_2}^* \Omega_{p_1,p_2}^\dagger \Omega_{p_1,p_2}^\dagger \delta_{p_1+p_2,p_1} \delta_{p_2,p_2} \delta_{p_3,p_3} \delta_{p_1'-p_2',p_3'} \\
\times \langle \Omega_{p_1,p_2} F_{p_1,p_2,p_3} \Omega_{p_1',p_2',p_3'}^\dagger \rangle_{FS} \\
\equiv 2v_1 + v_2,
\] (29)

where in detail,

\[
v_1 = \frac{U_2}{2} \sum_{p_1,p_2,q} \Omega_{p_1,p_2}^* \left[ (p_1 - p_2)(2q - p_1 - p_2) \Omega_{p_1,p_2}^\dagger \right] \left[ (p_1 - p_2)(2q - p_1 - p_2) \Omega_{p_1,p_2}^\dagger \right] + (2p_1 + p_2)(2q + p_1) \Omega_{p_1,p_2}^\dagger + (-2p_1 - p_2)(2q + p_2) \Omega_{p_1,p_2}^\dagger,
\] (30a)

and

\[
v_2 = \frac{U_2}{2} \sum_{p_1,p_2,q} \Omega_{p_1,p_2}^* \left[ (p_1 - p_2)(2q - p_1 - p_2) \Omega_{p_1,p_2}^\dagger \right] \left[ (p_1 - p_2)(2q - p_1 - p_2) \Omega_{p_1,p_2}^\dagger \right] + (2p_1 + p_2)(2q + p_1) \Omega_{p_1,p_2}^\dagger + (-2p_1 - p_2)(2q + p_2) \Omega_{p_1,p_2}^\dagger.
\] (30b)

From the variational principle, we obtain

\[
\frac{\delta \langle \Psi_3 | (H - E) | \Psi_3 \rangle}{\delta \Omega_{p_1,p_2}^*} = \frac{\delta \langle \Psi_3 | (K + V - E) | \Psi_3 \rangle}{\delta \Omega_{p_1,p_2}^*} = 0.
\] (31)

The resulting variational equation reads

\[
2(\xi_{p_1} + \xi_{p_2} + \xi_{p_3} - E) \left[ \Omega_{p_1,p_2} + \Omega_{p_2,p_3} + \Omega_{p_3,p_1} \right] \\
= - \frac{U_2}{2} \sum_{q} \left[ (p_1 - p_2)(2q + p_3)(2\Omega_{p_3,q} + \Omega_{q,-q-p_3}) \right. \\
+ (p_2 - p_3)(2q + p_1)(2\Omega_{p_1,q} + \Omega_{q,-q-p_1}) \\
+ (p_3 - p_1)(2q + p_2)(2\Omega_{p_2,q} + \Omega_{q,-q-p_2}) \right].
\] (32)
By further introducing

$$A(p_1, p_2) = \sum_q^\prime (p_1 - p_2)(2q + p_3)(2\Omega_{p_3,q} + \Omega_{q,-q-p_3}) \equiv (p_1 - p_2)B(p_3),$$

Eq. (32) can be recast into

$$[1 + U_2 \sum_{p_1}^\prime \frac{(p_1 + p_2/2)^2}{\xi p_1 + \xi p_2 + \xi - p_1 - p_2 - E}] B(p_2) = U_2 \sum_{p_1}^\prime \frac{(p_1 + p_2/2)(p_1 + 2p_2)}{\xi p_1 + \xi p_2 + \xi - p_1 - p_2 - E} B(p_1),$$

which actually corresponds to the in-medium Skorniakov-Ter-Martirosian (STM) equation [29, 31, 47]. If we remove the constraint on the momentum summation associated with the Fermi sea as $\sum_{p_1} \to \sum_{p_1}$, we recover the usual STM equation for the three-body problem. Equation (34) can be further rewritten in terms of the in-medium two- and three-body $T$ matrices as

$$T_2^{-1}(p_2, E)B(p_2) = T_3(p_2, E),$$

where we introduce

$$T_2(p_2, E) = \left[\frac{1}{U_2} + I_2(p_2, E)\right]^{-1},$$

and

$$T_3(p_2, E) = \sum_{p_1}^\prime \frac{(p_1 + p_2/2)(p_1 + 2p_2)\theta(|p_1 + p_2| - k_F)}{\xi p_1 + \xi - p_1 - p_2 - E} B(p_1)
= \frac{m}{2\pi} \int dp_1 \frac{(p_1 + p_2/2)(p_1 + 2p_2)\theta(|p_1| - k_F)\theta(|p_1 + p_2| - k_F)}{p_1^2 + p_2^2 + p_1 p_2 - m(3E_F + E)} B(p_1)
= -\frac{m}{4\pi} \int dp_1 \theta(|p_1| - k_F)\theta(|p_1 + p_2| - k_F) t_F(p_1, p_2)B(p_1).$$

In the last line of Eq. (37), following Ref. [24], we have defined

$$t_F(p_1, p_2) = -\frac{2p_1^2 + 2p_2^2 + 5p_1 p_2}{p_1^2 + p_2^2 + p_1 p_2 - m(3E_F + E)}
= \frac{3p_1 p_2 + 2m(3E_F + E)}{m(3E_F + E) - (p_1^2 + p_2^2 + p_1 p_2)} - 2(38).$$

One can find that Eq. (37) exhibits an ultraviolet divergence due to the second term of $t_F(p_1, p_2)$ (i.e., $-2$) in Eq. (38). To avoid this ultraviolet divergence and keep the universal Bose-Fermi duality in the sense that the interaction is characterized by only $a$ while taking the large-$\Lambda$ limit, a dimensionless three-body coupling $v_3 = 2$ was introduced in Ref. [24]. Because we are interested in in-medium three-body properties with the two-body $p$-wave interaction rather than such universal properties, we do not go into details about $v_3$ and use the present interaction with finite $\Lambda$ in this paper. Such a scheme is also related to the finite-range two-body interaction as given by $r_{\text{eff}} = \frac{1}{\pi a}$.

By solving Eq. (34), we numerically find that there is only the trivial solution for $B(p)$, i.e., $B(p) = 0$, except for $E = E_{\text{sol}}$, corresponding to the continuum of in-medium pairing states and an additional fermion on the Fermi sea. Such a result demonstrates that the three-body bound state is absent in one-dimensional spinless $p$-wave fermionic systems with attractive two-body interaction. As we will show below, the fermion-dimer repulsion always exists at the solution of the in-medium three-body equation $E = E_{\text{sol}}$. It is equivalent to the solution of the following equation:

$$T_2^{-1}(p = k_F, E = E_{\text{sol}}) = 0$$

because the divergence of $T_2(p, E)$ in the range of $k_F \leq p \leq \Lambda$ should be avoided in the in-medium three-body equation.

In order to investigate the physics deeper, we calculate $E_{\text{sol}}$ numerically. In Eq. (39), $E_{\text{sol}}$ can also be regarded as the energy of the pairing state with center-of-mass momentum $k_F$. This configuration also appears in the in-medium three-body equation (35) within the zero center-of-mass frame of three particles above the Fermi sea. In this regard, the solution of Eq. (39) can also be that of the in-medium three-body equation with $B(p) \neq 0$. Otherwise, the in-medium three-body equation exhibits a singularity associated with the divergent two-body $T$-matrix at an arbitrary momentum $p > k_F$. In Fig. 9
FIG. 3. Top: The solution $E_{\text{sol}}$ of the in-medium three-body equation (35) and the Cooper-pair energy $E_2$ as functions of $1/(k_F a)$ at $\Lambda/k_F = 10$. The results are shown by the red dotted and blue dashed lines, respectively. $E_{\text{sol}}$, shown by the olive solid line, is the solution of the in-medium two-body state energy $E_{\text{sol}}$ at $1/(k_F a) = 1$.

Bottom: The cutoff dependence of $E_{\text{sol}}$ at $1/(k_F a) = 1$.

The two-body ground-state energy $E_2$ obtained with the Cooper-pair problem and $E_{\text{sol}}$ are shown as functions of interaction strength $1/(k_F a)$. The results are shown by blue dashed and red solid lines, respectively. The difference between $E_{\text{sol}}$ and two-body state energy $E_2$ in the three-body problem can be estimated as

$$E'_2 + \frac{k_F^2}{4m} + E_F = E_{\text{sol}} + 3E_F,$$

i.e.,

$$E_{\text{sol}} - E'_2 = \frac{3}{2}E_F,$$

where we assume that two of the three particles on the Fermi sea have formed a Cooper pair with energy $E'_2$ and nonzero center-of-mass momentum $k_F$, such that the total momentum with the unpaired fermion is zero.

Here the two-body state energy $E_2$ obtained with the Cooper-pair problem as shown in Fig. 1 should be slightly different from $E'_2$ because $E_2$ is obtained with the in-medium two-body problem without concern for correlations with the additional third particle. However, it can be seen that the difference between $E_2$ and $E_{\text{sol}}$ is still around $\frac{3}{2}E_F$ in Fig. 3 as found in Eq. (41). This result indirectly shows that $E'_2$ is close to $E_2$ in this regime.

As pointed out in Ref. [24], Eq. (37) explicitly depends on $\Lambda$ because of the dimensional transmutation, and the dimensionless three-body coupling $v_3 = 2$ is introduced by replacing $t_F(p_1, p_2)$ with $t_F(p_1, p_2) + v_3 \equiv t_F(p_1, p_2) + 2$ in Eq. (37) based on Ref. [24]. In Fig. 3, we also plot the in-medium three-body binding energy $E_{\text{sol}}$ by using this procedure. This three-body solution at $E_{\text{sol}} \geq -3E_F$ is similar to the squeezed Cooper triple discussed in Refs. [31, 32]. While $E_{\text{sol}}$ is close to $E_{\text{med}}$ on the strong-coupling side, $E_{\text{sol}}$ gradually deviates from $E_{\text{sol}}$ at weaker coupling, indicating the sensitivity to the residual three-body interaction on the weak-coupling side. $E_{\text{sol}}$ shows a strong cutoff dependence, as shown in the bottom panel of Fig. 3 where $1/(k_F a) = 1$ is adopted, while the in-vacuum three-body binding energy $4/(m a^2)$ at $\Lambda \to \infty$ was reported in Ref. [24]. Although we specifically focus on the case with only two-body interaction and finite $\Lambda$, the properties of the in-medium three-body state induced by the three-body interaction require further detailed investigation, which is out of the scope of this paper.

To investigate the physics behind the absence of in-medium trimers and Cooper triples in this system without the three-body interaction, we calculate the in-medium three-body $T$ matrix $T_3(p = k_F, E = E_{\text{med}})$ at $p = k_F$ and $E = E_{\text{med}}$, representing the interaction between a bound dimer and a fermion on the Fermi surface. While our calculation does not include the lowest-order inhomogeneous term compared to the exact diagrammatic approach [48], the effective repulsive interaction given by $T_3(p = k_F, E = E_{\text{med}})$ is sufficient for a qualitative description of in-medium fermion-dimer correlations in the strongly interacting regime. For comparison, we calculate the in-vacuum counterpart without a Fermi sea. Correspondingly, the energy $E$ in the two- and three-body $T$-matrices is directly fixed as

FIG. 4. $T_3(p = k_F, E = E_{\text{sol}})/T_3^{\text{vac}}(p = 0, E = -E_b)$ as a function of $1/(k_F a)$ (where $i = \text{med.}$ or vac.). The results for $T_3^{\text{med}}(p = k_F, E = E_{\text{med}})$ and $T_3^{\text{vac}}(p = k_F, E = -E_b)$ are shown by the blue solid and red dashed lines, respectively. Here, $\Lambda/k_F = 10$. 
the two-body binding energy, which reads
\[ E = -E_b = -\frac{1}{ma^2}. \] (42)

in the large-\(\Lambda\) limit. In this paper, we employ the numerical value of \(E_b\) with \(\Lambda = 10k_F\). Moreover, for convenience, we introduce the notation of the three-body \(T\) matrix as \(T_3^\text{med}(p, E)\) with \(i = \text{vac}.\) (med.) for the in-vacuum (in-medium) case.

In Fig. 4 we plot the ratio \(T_3^\text{med}(p = k_F, E = E_{\text{sol}})/T_3^\text{vac}(p = 0, E = -E_b)\) (blue solid line) at \(\Lambda/k_F = 10\). Although it can be seen that after introducing the in-medium effect, the three-body \(T\) matrix becomes smaller with the decrease of coupling strength, the interaction between the fermion and dimer is always repulsive. To see the finite-momentum effect \((p = k_F)\) due to the presence of the Fermi sea [note that \(p \geq k_F\) in \(T_3^\text{med}(p, E)\)], we also plot the in-vacuum counterpart \(T_3^\text{vac}(p = k_F, E = -E_b)/T_3^\text{vac}(p = 0, E = -E_b)\) with \(p = k_F\) (red dashed line). Since this in-vacuum ratio is close to 1 in Fig. 4 the momentum dependence of the fermion-dimer scattering in vacuum is found to be weak in this parameter regime. In this regard, the suppressed fermion-dimer repulsion in the medium is regarded as an aspect of the Fermi-surface effect. Consequently, the three-body bound state can not be formed due to the fermion-dimer repulsion in the present system even with the Fermi sea. Physically, while the zero-center-of-mass three-body state with \(C_3\) symmetry in the momentum space near the Fermi surface (i.e., Cooper triple) can be realized in two and three dimensions \[24, 31, 49\], that is not the case in the one-dimensional geometry, where at least one of three fermions should have a momentum away from \(k_F\). However, it is interesting to see such a decrease of the fermion-dimer repulsion in the intermediate-coupling regime, implying the possibility of an in-medium three-body bound state with zero or nonzero center-of-mass momenta in the presence of even a small three-body attraction \[32, 50\]. Indeed, such a decrease in the repulsion is consistent with the qualitative behavior of \(E_{\text{sol}}\) in Fig. 4.

We note that the calculation of \(E_{\text{sol}}\) is stopped at \(1/(k_Fa) \simeq 0.65\), where \(E_{\text{sol}}\) becomes zero because the Cooper-pair energy and the kinetic energies of the Cooper pair and the unpaired fermion are equal to each other. This implies that the in-medium three-body state with the zero center-of-momentum is not stable against the state with three non-interacting fermions on the Fermi sea, as shown in Eq. (11). On the other hand, as shown in the Appendix, the strong-coupling region shown in Figs. 3 and 4 covers the critical value for the topological phase transition \(1/(k_Fa) \simeq 1.27\) predicted by the mean-field theory \[51\]. Although the present variational approach cannot directly address the topological phase transition, our result indicates the validity of the BCS-type Cooper pairing without considering the three-body clustering in such a regime.

Figure 5 shows the in-medium three-body \(T\) matrix \(T_3^\text{med}(p = k_F, E = 0)\) on the BCS side \((a < 0)\) with \(\Lambda/k_F = 10\), where we used \(T_3^\text{med.}_\text{ref} = T_3^\text{med}(p = k_F, E = E_{\text{sol}})\) at \(1/(k_Fa) = 1\) is used for a reference. \(\Lambda/k_F\) is also taken to be 10.

![FIG. 5. \(T_3^\text{med}(p = k_F, E = 0)/T_3^\text{med.}_\text{ref}\) as a function of \(1/(k_Fa)\) on the BCS side \((a < 0)\). \(T_3^\text{med.}_\text{ref} = T_3^\text{med}(p = k_F, E = E_{\text{sol}})\) at \(1/(k_Fa) = 1\) is used for a reference. \(\Lambda/k_F\) is also taken to be 10.](image)

**V. SUMMARY AND PERSPECTIVES**

In this paper, we have investigated in-medium two- and three-body clusters in one-dimensional spinless fermions with \(p\)-wave interaction. We first solved the \(p\)-wave Cooper-pair problem in one-dimensional spinless fermions, and calculated the two-body bound-state energy in the medium as a function of coupling strength. The \(p\)-wave Cooper pair was found to be present even in the weak-coupling limit and undergoes the crossover towards the molecular state like the BCS-BEC crossover in a three-dimensional Fermi gas with \(s\)-wave interaction. In addition, the pair-correlation length, which describes the size of the \(p\)-wave Cooper pair, was also calculated as a function of coupling strength. While we found a large pair-correlation length implying overlapping among pairs on the weak-coupling side, the pair-correlation length...
decreases with the increase of coupling strength and finally indicates the formation of tightly bound molecules on the strong-coupling side. Furthermore, the similarity between the present Cooper problem and the results of the mean-field theory are discussed in the Appendix.

As a step further, we also investigated the corresponding in-medium three-body problem. It can be seen that only the trivial solution can be found for the in-medium three-body equation, except for the point $E = E_{\text{vol}}$, where the $p$-wave Cooper pair with a nonzero center-of-mass momentum appears. This result is due to the existence of the fermion-dimer repulsion associated with the one-dimensional geometry. By making a comparison with the in-vacuum three-body $T$ matrix, we have found that such a repulsion is weakened by the medium effect in the crossover regime, the in-medium three-body $T$ matrix is always positive. In other words, the fermion-dimer repulsion, which suppresses in-medium three-body clustering, is found to always present. Consequently, such a one-dimensional $p$-wave fermionic system is stable against three-body clustering even in the presence of the Fermi sea.

While we showed the absence of in-medium and in-vacuum three-body bound states in the present system with two-body interaction (without three-body interaction) at zero temperature, our conclusion may not drastically change with finite-temperature effects because the finite-temperature effect basically suppresses the medium corrections. If some additional factors such as a three-body force exist, the three-body bound state can be induced as pointed out in Ref. [24]. Indeed, following Ref. [24] for the inclusion of the dimensionless three-body coupling, we found the solution of the in-medium bound state with the binding energy $E_{\text{bs}}$. In such a case, the finite-temperature effect may become important in addition to the Fermi-surface effect when the temperature $T$ exceeds $E_{\text{bs}}$.

Our results would be useful for further investigation of unconventional superconductors and superfluids. Moreover, the decrease in the fermion-dimer repulsion in the intermediate-coupling regime, which implies the possibility of an in-medium three-body bound state with the existence of a non-negligible three-body attraction, also paves a promising way for the study of higher-order corresponding Cooper cluster states. Also, the emergent $s$-wave interaction due to the quasi-one-dimensional geometries may play a crucial role in the formation of Cooper cluster states [52]. Furthermore, the medium effect on bound trimers in higher dimensions such as the super Efimov state [53] would be an interesting issue to study.

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Appendix A: Mean-field theory

Based on BCS-Leggett theory [2], we introduce the $p$-wave superfluid order parameter as

$$\Delta(k) = -U_2 k \sum_{k'} k' \langle c_{-k'} c_k \rangle = kD.$$  \hspace{1cm} (A1)

By taking an appropriate gauge transformation, $D$ can be taken as a positive real value without loss of generality, and $\Delta(k)$ becomes real valued correspondingly. The mean-field Hamiltonian reads

$$H_{\text{MF}} = \frac{1}{2} \sum_k \Psi_k^{\dagger} \left( \begin{array}{cc} -\Delta(k) & \xi_k \\ -\xi_k & -\Delta(k) \end{array} \right) \Psi_k$$  

$$- \frac{D^2}{2U_2} + \frac{1}{2} \sum_k \xi_k,$$ \hspace{1cm} (A2)

where $\Psi_k = \left( c_k \ c_k^{\dagger} \right)^T$ is the Nambu spinor. The Bogoliubov transformation is introduced here as

$$\left( \begin{array}{c} \alpha_k \\ \alpha_k^\dagger \end{array} \right) = \left( \begin{array}{cc} u_k c_k - v_k c_k^{\dagger} \\ u_k c_k + v_k c_k^{\dagger} \end{array} \right),$$ \hspace{1cm} (A3)

where $u_k^2 = \frac{1}{2} (1 + \xi_k/E_k)$ and $v_k^2 = \frac{1}{2} (1 - \xi_k/E_k)$ are the BCS coherence factors. Using this transformation, we obtain

$$H_{\text{MF}} = \frac{1}{2} \sum_k E_k \alpha_k^{\dagger} \alpha_k + E_{\text{GS}},$$ \hspace{1cm} (A4)

with the dispersion of the Bogoliubov quasiparticle

$$E_k = \sqrt{\xi_k^2 + \Delta^2(k)} = \sqrt{\xi_k^2 + k^2D^2}$$ \hspace{1cm} (A5)

and the ground-state energy

$$E_{\text{GS}} = - \frac{D^2}{2U_2} + \frac{1}{2} \sum_k (\xi_k - E_k).$$ \hspace{1cm} (A6)

For the given scattering length $a$ and particle number $N$, $D$ and $\mu$ can be determined by self-consistently solving the following two equations [54]: the gap equation,

$$\frac{m}{2a} \sum_k k^2 \left[ \frac{1}{2E_k} - \frac{1}{2E_k} \right] = \frac{1}{U_2} + \sum_k k^2 \frac{1}{2E_k} = 0,$$ \hspace{1cm} (A7)

with $\varepsilon_k = k^2/(2m)$, and the particle number equation,

$$N = - \frac{\partial E_{\text{GS}}}{\partial \mu} = \frac{1}{2} \sum_k \left[ 1 - \frac{\xi_k}{E_k} \right].$$ \hspace{1cm} (A8)
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By further introducing the dimensionless variable \( x = k/k_F \), we can rewrite them, respectively, as

\[
\frac{\pi}{2k_F a} \int_0^{\Lambda} dx \left[ \frac{x^2}{\sqrt{(x^2 - \tilde{\mu})^2 + D^2 x^2}} - 1 \right] = 0 \tag{A9}
\]

and

\[
1 = \frac{1}{2} \int_0^\infty dx \left[ 1 - \frac{x^2 - \tilde{\mu}}{\sqrt{(x^2 - \tilde{\mu})^2 + D^2 x^2}} \right], \tag{A10}
\]

where we introduced \( \tilde{\mu} = \mu/E_F \), \( \tilde{D} = Dk_F/E_F \), and \( \tilde{\Lambda} = \Lambda/k_F \). The solutions of Eqs. (A9) and (A10) are identical to the case of spin-1/2 fermions with the interspin \( p \)-wave interaction in Refs. [44,51], noting that the spin degrees of freedom \( (s = 2) \) are absorbed into the number density \( \rho = \frac{s k_F}{\pi} \).

Figure 6 shows the numerical results \( Dk_F/E_F \) and \( \mu/E_F \) of the mean-field theory. It is found that the cutoff dependence is not significant in the crossover regime. In particular, \( \mu/E_F \) is less sensitive than \( Dk_F/E_F \), because \( \Lambda/k_F \) is explicitly included in the gap equation (A9) but not in the number-density equation (A10). In this regard, the location of the topological phase transition \( (\mu = 0) \) is relatively robust against the change in \( \Lambda \). It is also associated with the fact that at \( \mu = 0 \) the low-energy gapless mode \( E_k = Dk + O(k^3) \) plays a crucial role in system’s properties. To compare the mean-field result with that in the Cooper problem in the main text, we introduce a quantity characterizing the reduction of \( \mu \) from \( E_F \) due to the pairing effect as

\[
\Delta E = 2(\mu - mD^2) - 2E_F, \tag{A11}
\]

where the factor 2 is multiplied for the comparison with the two-body energy \( E_2 \) in the Cooper problem. The pairing shift \( mD^2 \) is explicitly included in this definition because \( \Delta(k) = Dk \) is not negligible even in such a relatively strong coupling regime \( [e.g., 1/(k_F a) \sim 1] \), in contrast to the three-dimensional \( s \)-wave case with the momentum-independent pairing gap [42]. This fact can be found from the quasiparticle dispersion

\[
E_k = \sqrt{\left( \frac{k^2}{2m} \right)^2 - \frac{\mu - mD^2}{m} k^2 + \mu^2}, \tag{A12}
\]

where the term being proportional to \( k^2 \) involves \( \mu - mD^2 \). Indeed, \( \Delta E \) shown in the inset of Fig. 6 is similar to \( E_2 \) shown in Fig. 1, although \( E_k \) does not exhibit the usual quadratic dispersion \( \sim k^2/(2m) + |\mu| \). In this sense, \( E_2 \) and \( \Delta E \) does not coincide with each other quantitatively. However, we can see that the Cooper problem and the mean-field theory give a similar result for the \( \mu \)-wave pairing in this model. Also, we note that the mean-field theory does not satisfy the Bose-Fermi duality [18–24] and the Mermin-Wagner-Hohenberg theorem [55, 56] due to the approximation. Nevertheless, the mean-field theory is still useful for discussing several interesting features of spinless \( p \)-wave fermions such as the Majorana low-energy mode [17].
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