Research Article

Nehari-Type Ground State Positive Solutions for Superlinear Asymptotically Periodic Schrödinger Equations

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We deal with the existence of Nehari-type ground state positive solutions for the nonlinear Schrödinger equation $-\Delta u + V(x)u = f(x, u)$, $x \in \mathbb{R}^N$, $u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$. Under a weaker Nehari condition, we establish some existence criteria to guarantee that the above problem has Nehari-type ground state solutions by using a more direct method in two cases: the periodic case and the asymptotically periodic case.

1. Introduction

Consider the following semilinear Schrödinger equation:

$$\begin{aligned} -\Delta u + V(x)u &= f(x, u), \quad x \in \mathbb{R}^N, \\ u &\in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N), \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

where $V: \mathbb{R}^N \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ and $f: \mathbb{R}^N \times \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$.

The Schrödinger equation has found a great deal of interest last years because not only it is important in applications but also it provides a good model for developing mathematical methods. Many authors have studied the existence of entire solutions of Schrödinger equations under various stipulations (cf., e.g., [1–28] and the references quoted in them).

When $\inf_{\mathbb{R}^N} V(x) > 0$ and $V(x)$ is periodic, Li et al. [12] made use of a combination of the techniques in [13, 14] with applications of Lions' concentration compactness principle [26, 29, 30] to establish the following theorem.

Theorem 1 (see [12]). Assume that V and f satisfy the following assumptions:

- (V0) $V \in C(\mathbb{R}^N, \mathbb{R})$ and $\inf_{\mathbb{R}^N} V(x) > 0$;
- (V1) $V(x)$ is 1-periodic in each of $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_N$;

(S0) $f \in C^1$, f'_t is a Caratheodory function, and there exists a constant $C > 0$ such that

$$|f'_t(x, t)| \leq C(1 + |t|^{2^*-2}), \quad \lim_{|t| \rightarrow \infty} \frac{|f'_t(x, t)|}{|t|^{2^*-2}} = 0; \quad (2)$$

(S1) $f(x, t)$ is 1-periodic in each of $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_N$;

(S2) $f(x, t) = o(|t|)$, as $|t| \rightarrow 0$, uniformly in $x \in \mathbb{R}^N$;

(S3) $\lim_{|t| \rightarrow \infty} (|F(x, t)|/|t|^2) = \infty$, uniformly in $x \in \mathbb{R}^N$;

(S4) $f(x, t)/|t|$ is strictly increasing in t on $\mathbb{R} \setminus \{0\}$ for every $x \in \mathbb{R}^N$.

Then problem (1) has a solution $u_0 \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ such that $\Phi(u_0) = \inf_{\mathcal{A}} \Phi > 0$, where

$$\begin{aligned} \Phi(u) &= \frac{1}{2} \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} (|\nabla u|^2 + V(x)u^2) \, dx \\ &\quad - \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} F(x, u) \, dx, \quad \forall u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N), \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

$$\langle \Phi'(u), v \rangle = \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} (\nabla u \cdot \nabla v + V(x)uv) \, dx$$

$$- \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} f(x, u)v \, dx, \quad \forall u, v \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) \quad (4)$$

with $F(x, t) := \int_0^t f(x, s) ds$, and

$$\mathcal{N} = \{u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) : \langle \Phi'(u), u \rangle = 0, u \neq 0\}. \quad (5)$$

The set $\mathcal{N}$ is the Nehari manifold, which contains infinitely many elements of $H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$. In fact, for any $u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) \setminus \{0\}$, there exists $t = t(u) > 0$ such that $tu \in \mathcal{N}$; see Lemma 9. Since u_0 is a solution at which Φ has least “energy” in set $\mathcal{N}$, we will call it a Nehari-type ground state solution.

We must point out that “the least energy solution” (which is sometimes also called the ground state solution in some references) is in fact a nontrivial solution u_0 which satisfies $\Phi(u_0) = \inf_{\mathcal{M}} \Phi$, where

$$\mathcal{M} = \{u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) \setminus \{0\} : \Phi'(u) = 0\} \quad (6)$$

is a very small subset of $\mathcal{N}$; it may contain only one element. In general, it is much more difficult to find a solution u_0 for problem (1) with a constraint condition $\Phi(u_0) = \inf_{\mathcal{N}} \Phi$ than with one $\Phi(u_0) = \inf_{\mathcal{M}} \Phi$.

To establish the existence of Nehari-type ground state solutions, the so-called Nehari-type condition (S4) seems to be always necessary in the proof of the existence of ground states solutions for problem (1).

In recent paper [15, 20], Theorem 1 has been extended to the case where 0 is in the gap of the spectrum $\sigma(-\Delta + V)$, but an additional assumption on the nonlinearity f is assumed in [15].

Motivated by [12, 17, 20], in the present paper, we will develop a more direct method to generalize Theorem 1 by relaxing assumptions (V0), (S3), and (S4) in two cases: the periodic case and the asymptotically periodic case.

In the periodic case, we establish the following two theorems.

Theorem 2. Assume that V and f satisfy (V0), (V1), (S1), (S2), and the following assumptions:

(S0') $f \in C(\mathbb{R}^N \times \mathbb{R}, \mathbb{R})$, and there exists a constant $C > 0$ such that

$$|f(x, t)| \leq C(1 + |t|^{2^*-1}), \quad \lim_{|t| \rightarrow \infty} \frac{|f(x, t)|}{|t|^{2^*-1}} = 0, \quad (7)$$

uniformly in $x \in \mathbb{R}^N$;

(S3') $\lim_{|t| \rightarrow \infty} (|F(x, t)|/|t|^2) = \infty$, a.e. $x \in \mathbb{R}^N$;

(S4') $f(x, t)/|t|$ is nondecreasing in t on $\mathbb{R} \setminus \{0\}$ for every $x \in \mathbb{R}^N$.

Then problem (1) has a solution $u_0 \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ such that $\Phi(u_0) = \inf_{\mathcal{N}} \Phi > 0$.

Theorem 3. Assume that V and f satisfy (V0), (V1), (S0'), (S1), (S2), (S3'), and (S4'). Then problem (1) has a positive solution $\bar{u} \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ such that $\Phi_+(\bar{u}) = \inf_{\mathcal{N}_+} \Phi_+ > 0$, where

$$\Phi_+(u) = \frac{1}{2} \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} (|\nabla u|^2 + V(x)u^2) dx - \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} F(x, u^+) dx, \quad \forall u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) \quad (8)$$

with $u^+(x) = \max\{u(x), 0\}$ and $u^-(x) = \max\{-u(x), 0\}$, and

$$\mathcal{N}_+ = \{u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) : \langle \Phi'_+(u), u \rangle = 0, u \neq 0\}. \quad (9)$$

In the asymptotically periodic case, $V(x)$ is allowed to be negative in some bounded domain in $\mathbb{R}^N$. Precisely, we use the following condition instead of (V0).

(V0') $V \in C(\mathbb{R}^N) \cap L^\infty(\mathbb{R}^N)$, $V(x) \leq \bar{V} \in (0, \infty)$ for all $x \in \mathbb{R}^N$ and there exists a constant $\zeta_0 > 0$ such that

$$\begin{aligned} & \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} (|\nabla u|^2 + V(x)u^2) dx \\ & \geq \zeta_0 \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} [\bar{V} - V(x)] |u|^2 dx, \quad \forall u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N). \end{aligned} \quad (10)$$

(V0') Was first introduced by Deng et al. [6]; it is satisfied if the following assumption holds (see Lemma 7):

(V0'') $V \in C(\mathbb{R}^N) \cap L^\infty(\mathbb{R}^N)$, and there exist two constants $a_1, a_2 > 0$ and a bounded measurable set $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^N$ such that $(a_1 + a_2)|\Omega|^{2/N} \leq S$, and

$$V(x) \geq \begin{cases} -a_1, & x \in \Omega, \\ a_2, & x \notin \Omega, \end{cases} \quad (11)$$

where $S = \inf_{u \in \mathcal{D}^{1,2}(\mathbb{R}^N), \|u\|_{2^*} = 1} \|\nabla u\|_2^2$.

In this case, we establish the following two theorems.

Theorem 4. Assume that V and f satisfy (V0'), (S0'), (S2), (S3), (S4'), and the following assumptions:

(V2) $V(x) = V_0(x) + V_1(x)$, $V_0 \in C(\mathbb{R}^N, (0, +\infty))$, $V_0(x)$ is 1-periodic in each of $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_N$, $V_1(x) < 0$ for $|x| < 1 + \sqrt{N}$, and $V_1(x) \leq 0$ for $|x| \geq 1 + \sqrt{N}$, $\lim_{|x| \rightarrow \infty} |V_1(x)| = 0$;

(S1') $f(x, t) = f_0(x, t) + f_1(x, t)$; $f_0 \in C(\mathbb{R}^N \times \mathbb{R}, \mathbb{R})$ satisfies (S1), (S2), and (S4'); $f_1 \in C(\mathbb{R}^N \times \mathbb{R}, \mathbb{R})$ satisfies that

$$0 \leq tf_1(x, t) \leq a(x)(t^2 + |t|^{p_0}), \quad \forall (x, t) \in \mathbb{R}^N \times \mathbb{R}, \quad (12)$$

where $p_0 \in (2, 2^*)$ and $a \in C(\mathbb{R}^N, \mathbb{R}^+)$ with $\lim_{|x| \rightarrow \infty} a(x) = 0$.

Then problem (1) has a solution $u_0 \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ such that $\Phi(u_0) = \inf_{\mathcal{N}} \Phi > 0$.

Theorem 5. Assume that V and f satisfy (V0'), (V2), (S0'), (S1'), (S2), (S3), and (S4'). Then problem (1) has a positive solution $\bar{u} \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ such that $\Phi_+(\bar{u}) = \inf_{\mathcal{N}_+} \Phi_+ > 0$.

In our theorems, we give a new condition (S4') which weakens Nehari-type condition (S3) considerably.

2. Preliminaries

Lemma 6 (see [6, Lemma 2.3]). *Assume that V satisfies $(V0')$. Then there exist two positive constants $C_1, C_2 > 0$ such that*

$$\begin{aligned} C_1 \|u\|_{H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)}^2 &\leq \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} [|\nabla u|^2 + V(x)u^2] dx \\ &\leq C_2 \|u\|_{H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)}^2, \quad \forall u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N), \end{aligned} \quad (13)$$

where $\|u\|_{H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)}$ is the usual norm of $H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$

$$\|u\|_{H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)} = \left[\int_{\mathbb{R}^N} (|\nabla u|^2 + u^2) dx \right]^{1/2}, \quad u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N). \quad (14)$$

By Lemma 6, we define an inner product

$$(u, v) = \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} [(\nabla u \cdot \nabla v) + V(x)uv] dx, \quad u, v \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N), \quad (15)$$

associated with the norm

$$\|u\| = \left\{ \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} [|\nabla u|^2 + V(x)u^2] dx \right\}^{1/2}, \quad u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N). \quad (16)$$

Then $H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ is a Hilbert space with this inner product. Moreover, under assumptions $(V0')$ and $(S0')$, the functional Φ defined by (3) is of class $C^1(H^1(\mathbb{R}^N), \mathbb{R})$.

Lemma 7. *If $(V0'')$ holds, then $(V0')$ does.*

Proof. By virtue of $(V0'')$, the Hölder inequality, and the Sobolev inequality, we have

$$\begin{aligned} &\int_{\mathbb{R}^N} [|\nabla u|^2 + V(x)u^2] dx \\ &\geq \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} |\nabla u|^2 dx - (a_1 + a_2) \int_{\Omega} u^2 dx + a_2 \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} u^2 dx \\ &\geq \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} |\nabla u|^2 dx - (a_1 + a_2) |\Omega|^{2/N} \|u\|_{2^*}^2 + a_2 \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} u^2 dx \\ &\geq \|\nabla u\|_2^2 - (a_1 + a_2) |\Omega|^{2/N} S^{-1} \|\nabla u\|_2^2 + a_2 \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} u^2 dx \\ &\geq a_2 \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} u^2 dx \\ &\geq \frac{a_2}{\bar{V} + a_1} \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} [\bar{V} - V(x)] u^2 dx, \quad \forall u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N). \end{aligned} \quad (17)$$

This shows that $(V0')$ holds with $\zeta_0 = a_2/(\bar{V} + a_1)$. $\square$

Lemma 8. *Let X be a Banach space. Let M_0 be a closed subspace of the metric space M and $\Gamma_0 \subset C(M_0, X)$. Define*

$$\Gamma = \{\gamma \in C(M, X) : \gamma|_{M_0} \in \Gamma_0\}. \quad (18)$$

If $\Psi \in C^1(X, \mathbb{R})$ satisfies

$$\infty > c := \inf_{\gamma \in \Gamma} \sup_{t \in M} \Psi(\gamma(t)) > a := \sup_{\gamma_0 \in \Gamma_0} \sup_{t \in M_0} \Psi(\gamma_0(t)), \quad (19)$$

then there exists a sequence $\{u_n\} \subset X$ satisfying

$$\Psi(u_n) \rightarrow c, \quad \|\Psi'(u_n)\| (1 + \|u_n\|) \rightarrow 0. \quad (20)$$

Proof. For any $\gamma \in \Gamma$, define set $K_\gamma = \{\gamma(t) : t \in M\}$ in X and the collection $\mathcal{K} = \{K_\gamma : \gamma \in \Gamma\}$. Let $A = \{\gamma_0(t) : \gamma_0 \in \Gamma_0, t \in M_0\}$,

$$\Lambda = \{\varphi \in C(X, X) : \varphi^{-1} \in C(X, X),$$

$$\text{both } \varphi \text{ and } \varphi^{-1} \text{ are} \quad (21)$$

$$\text{bounded on bounded sets}\},$$

$$\Lambda(A) = \{\varphi \in \Lambda : \varphi(u) = u, u \in A\}.$$

For any $\gamma \in \Gamma$ and $\varphi \in \Lambda(A)$, let $\gamma_0 = \gamma|_{M_0}$ and $\tilde{\gamma}(t) = \varphi(\gamma(t))$, $t \in M$. Then $\gamma_0 \in \Gamma_0$ and $\tilde{\gamma} \in C(M, X)$. Hence,

$$\tilde{\gamma}(t) = \varphi(\gamma_0(t)) = \gamma_0(t), \quad \forall t \in M_0; \quad (22)$$

that is, $\tilde{\gamma}|_{M_0} = \gamma_0 \in \Gamma_0$. Therefore,

$$\varphi(K) \in \mathcal{K}, \quad \forall \varphi \in \Lambda(A), K \in \mathcal{K}. \quad (23)$$

These show that the collection $\mathcal{K}$ is a minimax system for A . Since (19) implies

$$\infty > c := \inf_{K \in \mathcal{K}} \sup_K \Psi > a := \sup_A \Psi, \quad (24)$$

it follows from Theorem 2.4 in [18] that the result is true. $\square$

Lemma 9. *Under assumptions $(V0')$, $(S0')$, $(S2)$, and $(S3')$, for any $u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) \setminus \{0\}$, there exists $t(u) > 0$ such that $t(u)u \in \mathcal{N}$.*

Proof. Let $u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) \setminus \{0\}$ be fixed and define the function $g(t) := \Phi(tu)$ on $[0, \infty)$. Clearly we have

$$g'(t) = 0 \iff tu \in \mathcal{N} \iff \|u\|^2 = \frac{1}{t} \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} f(x, tu) u dx. \quad (25)$$

It is easy to verify, using $(S2)$ and $(S3')$, that $g(0) = 0$, $g(t) > 0$ for $t > 0$ small and $g(t) < 0$ for t large. Therefore $\max_{t \in [0, \infty)} g(t)$ is achieved at a $t_0 = t(u)$ so that $g'(t_0) = 0$ and $t(u)u \in \mathcal{N}$. $\square$

Lemma 10. *Under assumptions $(V0')$, $(S0')$, and $(S4')$,*

$$\begin{aligned} \Phi(u) &\geq \Phi(tu) + \frac{1-t^2}{2} \langle \Phi'(u), u \rangle, \\ &\quad \forall u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N), \quad t \geq 0. \end{aligned} \quad (26)$$

Proof. For $\tau \neq 0$, $(S4')$ yields

$$\begin{aligned} f(x, s) &\leq \frac{f(x, \tau)}{|\tau|} |s|, \quad s \leq \tau; \\ f(x, s) &\geq \frac{f(x, \tau)}{|\tau|} |s|, \quad s \geq \tau. \end{aligned} \quad (27)$$

It follows that

$$\frac{1-t^2}{2} \tau f(x, \tau) \geq \int_{t\tau}^{\tau} f(x, s) ds, \quad t \geq 0. \quad (28)$$

Note that

$$\langle \Phi'(u), u \rangle = \|u\|^2 - \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} f(x, u) u dx. \quad (29)$$

Thus, by (3), (28), and (29), one has

$$\begin{aligned} \Phi(u) - \Phi(tu) &= \frac{1-t^2}{2} \|u\|^2 + \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} [F(x, tu) - F(x, u)] dx \\ &= \frac{1-t^2}{2} \langle \Phi'(u), u \rangle \\ &\quad + \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} \left[\frac{1-t^2}{2} f(x, u) u + F(x, tu) - F(x, u) \right] dx \\ &= \frac{1-t^2}{2} \langle \Phi'(u), u \rangle \\ &\quad + \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} \left[\frac{1-t^2}{2} f(x, u) u - \int_{tu}^u f(x, s) ds \right] dx \\ &\geq \frac{1-t^2}{2} \langle \Phi'(u), u \rangle, \quad t \geq 0. \end{aligned} \quad (30)$$

This shows that (26) holds. $\square$

Corollary 11. Under assumptions $(V0')$, $(S0')$, and $(S4')$, for $u \in \mathcal{N}$,

$$\Phi(u) \geq \Phi(tu), \quad \forall t \geq 0. \quad (31)$$

We define

$$\begin{aligned} c_1 &:= \inf_{\mathcal{N}} \Phi, \quad c_2 := \inf_{u \in E, u \neq 0} \max_{t \geq 0} \Phi(tu), \\ c &:= \inf_{\gamma \in \Gamma} \sup_{t \in [0,1]} \Phi(\gamma(t)), \end{aligned} \quad (32)$$

where

$$\Gamma = \{\gamma \in C([0,1], E) : \gamma(0) = 0, \Phi(\gamma(1)) < 0\}. \quad (33)$$

Lemma 12. Under assumptions $(V0')$, $(S0')$, $(S2)$, $(S3')$, and $(S4')$, one has that $c_1 = c_2 = c > 0$ and there exists a sequence $\{u_n\} \subset H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ satisfying

$$\Phi(u_n) \rightarrow c, \quad \|\Phi'(u_n)\| (1 + \|u_n\|) \rightarrow 0. \quad (34)$$

Proof. (1) Both Lemma 9 and Corollary 11 imply that $c_1 = c_2$. Next, we prove that $c = c_1 = c_2$. By the definition of c_2 , we choose a sequence $\{v_n\} \subset E \setminus \{0\}$ such that

$$c_2 \leq \max_{t \geq 0} \Phi(tv_n) < c_2 + \frac{1}{n}, \quad n \in \mathbb{N}. \quad (35)$$

Since $\Phi(tu) < 0$ for $u \in E \setminus \{0\}$ and t large, there exist $t_n = t(v_n) > 0$ and $s_n > t_n$ such that

$$\Phi(t_n v_n) = \max_{t \geq 0} \Phi(tv_n), \quad \Phi(s_n v_n) < 0, \quad n \in \mathbb{N}. \quad (36)$$

Let $\gamma_n(t) = ts_n v_n$ for $t \in [0, 1]$. Then $\gamma_n \in \Gamma$, and it follows from (35) and (36) that

$$\sup_{t \in [0,1]} \Phi(\gamma_n(t)) = \max_{t \geq 0} \Phi(tv_n) < c_2 + \frac{1}{n}, \quad n \in \mathbb{N}, \quad (37)$$

which implies that $c \leq c_2$. On the other hand, the manifold $\mathcal{N}$ separates $H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ into two components $E^+ = \{u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) : \langle \Phi'(u), u \rangle > 0\} \cup \{0\}$ and $E^- = \{u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) : \langle \Phi'(u), u \rangle < 0\}$. By $(S4')$, one has

$$f(x, t) \geq 2F(x, t), \quad \forall (x, t) \in \mathbb{R}^N \times \mathbb{R}. \quad (38)$$

It follows that $\Phi(u) \geq 0$ for $u \in E^+$. By $(S0')$ and $(S2)$, E^+ contains a small ball around the origin. Thus every $\gamma \in \Gamma$ has to cross $\mathcal{N}$, because $\gamma(0) \in E^+$ and $\gamma(1) \in E^-$, and so $c_1 \leq c$.

(2) In order to prove the second part of Lemma 12, we apply Lemma 8 with $M = [0, 1]$, $M_0 = \{0, 1\}$, and

$$\Gamma_0 = \{\gamma_0 : \{0, 1\} \rightarrow H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) : \gamma_0(0) = 0, \Phi(\gamma_0(1)) < 0\}. \quad (39)$$

By $(S0')$ and $(S2)$, there exists $r > 0$ such that

$$\min_{\|u\| \leq r} \Phi(u) = 0, \quad \inf_{\|u\| = r} \Phi(u) > 0. \quad (40)$$

Hence we obtain

$$c \geq \inf_{\|u\|=r} \Phi(u) > 0 = \sup_{\gamma_0 \in \Gamma_0} \sup_{t \in M_0} \Phi(\gamma_0(t)). \quad (41)$$

These show that all assumptions of Lemma 8 are satisfied. Therefore there exists a sequence $\{u_n\} \subset H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ satisfying (34). $\square$

Lemma 13. Under assumptions $(V0')$, $(S0')$, $(S2)$, $(S3)$, and $(S4')$, any sequence $\{u_n\} \subset H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ satisfying (34) is bounded in $H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$.

Proof. To prove the boundedness of $\{u_n\}$, arguing by contradiction, suppose that $\|u_n\| \rightarrow \infty$. Let $v_n = u_n / \|u_n\|$. Then $\|v_n\| = 1$. By Sobolev embedding theorem, there exists a constant $C_3 > 0$ such that

$$\|v_n\|_2 + \|v_n\|_{2^*} \leq C_3. \quad (42)$$

Passing to a subsequence, we may assume that $v_n \rightharpoonup v$ in $H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$, $v_n \rightarrow v$ in $L^s_{\text{loc}}(\mathbb{R}^N)$, $2 \leq s < 2^*$, and $v_n \rightarrow v$ a.e. on $\mathbb{R}^N$.

If $\delta := \limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} \sup_{y \in \mathbb{R}^N} \int_{B_1(y)} |v_n|^2 dx = 0$, then by Lions' concentration compactness principle [23, Lemma 1.21], $v_n \rightarrow 0$ in $L^s(\mathbb{R}^N)$ for $2 < s < 2^*$. Fix $p \in (2, 2^*)$ and $R > 2\sqrt{c}$. By (S0') and (S2), for $\varepsilon = c/4[(RC_3)^2 + (RC_3)^{2^*}] > 0$ there exists $C_\varepsilon > 0$ such that

$$|F(x, u)| \leq \varepsilon (|u|^2 + |u|^{2^*}) + C_\varepsilon |u|^p. \quad (43)$$

It follows that

$$\begin{aligned} & \limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} F(x, Rv_n) dx \\ & \leq \varepsilon [(RC_3)^2 + (RC_3)^{2^*}] + R^p C_\varepsilon \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \|v_n\|_p^p = \frac{c}{4}. \end{aligned} \quad (44)$$

Hence, by using (34), (44), and Lemma 10, one has

$$\begin{aligned} c + o(1) &= \Phi(u_n) \\ &\geq \Phi(Rv_n) + \left(\frac{1}{2} - \frac{R^2}{2\|u_n\|^2} \right) \langle \Phi'(u_n), u_n \rangle \\ &= \frac{R^2}{2} - \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} F(x, Rv_n) dx \\ &\quad + \left(\frac{1}{2} - \frac{R^2}{2\|u_n\|^2} \right) \langle \Phi'(u_n), u_n \rangle \\ &\geq \frac{R^2}{2} - \frac{c}{4} + o(1) > \frac{7c}{4} + o(1), \end{aligned} \quad (45)$$

which is a contradiction. Thus, $\delta > 0$.

Going if necessary to a subsequence, we may assume the existence of $k_n \in \mathbb{Z}^N$ such that $\int_{B_{1+\sqrt{N}}(k_n)} |v_n|^2 dx > \delta/2$. Let $w_n(x) = v_n(x + k_n)$. Then it follows that

$$\int_{B_{1+\sqrt{N}}(0)} |w_n|^2 dx > \frac{\delta}{2}. \quad (46)$$

Now we define $\tilde{u}_n(x) = u_n(x + k_n)$, then $\tilde{u}_n/\|u_n\| = w_n$, and $\|w_n\|_{H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)} = \|u_n\|_{H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)}/\|u_n\| \leq C_4$ for some $C_4 > 0$. Passing to a subsequence, we have $w_n \rightharpoonup w$ in $H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$, $w_n \rightarrow w$ in $L^s_{\text{loc}}(\mathbb{R}^N)$, $2 \leq s < 2^*$, and $w_n \rightarrow w$ a.e. on $\mathbb{R}^N$. Thus, (46) implies that $w \neq 0$. Hence, it follows from (34), (S3), and Fatou's lemma that

$$\begin{aligned} 0 &= \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{c + o(1)}{\|u_n\|^2} = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\Phi(u_n)}{\|u_n\|^2} \\ &= \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \left[\frac{1}{2} - \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} \frac{F(x + k_n, \tilde{u}_n)}{\tilde{u}_n^2} w_n^2 dx \right] \\ &\leq \frac{1}{2} - \liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} \frac{F(x + k_n, \tilde{u}_n)}{\tilde{u}_n^2} w_n^2 dx \\ &\leq \frac{1}{2} - \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} \liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{F(x + k_n, \tilde{u}_n)}{\tilde{u}_n^2} w_n^2 dx = -\infty, \end{aligned} \quad (47)$$

which is a contradiction. Thus $\{u_n\}$ is bounded in $H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$. $\square$

Remark 14. In the proof of Lemma 13, (S3) is used only in (47). Hence, it can be weakened to (S3') if $f(x, t)$ is 1-periodic in each of $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_N$.

3. The Proofs of Theorems

Proof of Theorem 2. Lemma 12 implies the existence of a sequence $\{u_n\} \subset H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ satisfying (34), by a standard argument; we can prove Theorem 2. $\square$

Proof of Theorem 3. In view of the proofs of Lemmas 12 and 13, we can show that the conclusions of Lemmas 12 and 13 still hold if Φ and $\mathcal{N}$ are replaced by Φ_+ and $\mathcal{N}_+$, respectively. Hence, there exists a bounded sequence $\{u_n\} \subset H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ satisfying

$$\Phi_+(u_n) \rightarrow c_+, \quad \|\Phi'_+(u_n)\| (1 + \|u_n\|) \rightarrow 0, \quad (48)$$

where $c_+ = \inf_{u \in \mathcal{N}_+} \Phi_+(u)$. The rest of the proof is standard, so we omit it. $\square$

To prove Theorems 4 and 5, we define functional Φ_0 and $\Phi_{+,0}$ as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \Phi_0(u) &= \frac{1}{2} \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} (|\nabla u|^2 + V_0(x) u^2) dx - \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} F_0(x, u) dx, \\ &u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N), \\ \Phi_{+,0}(u) &= \frac{1}{2} \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} (|\nabla u|^2 + V_0(x) u^2) dx - \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} F_0(x, u^+) dx, \\ &u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N), \end{aligned} \quad (49)$$

where $F_0(x, t) := \int_0^t f_0(x, s) ds$. Then (V2), (S0'), and (S1') imply that $\Phi_0 \in C^1(H^1(\mathbb{R}^N), \mathbb{R})$ and

$$\begin{aligned} \langle \Phi'_0(u), v \rangle &= \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} (\nabla u \nabla v + V_0(x) uv) dx \\ &\quad - \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} f_0(x, u) v dx, \quad u, v \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N). \end{aligned} \quad (51)$$

Proof of Theorem 4. Lemma 12 implies the existence of a sequence $\{u_n\} \subset H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ satisfying (34). By Lemma 13, $\{u_n\}$ is bounded in $H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$. Passing to a subsequence, we have $u_n \rightharpoonup u_0$ in $H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$. Next, we prove $u_0 \neq 0$.

Arguing by contradiction, suppose that $u_0 = 0$; that is, $u_n \rightarrow 0$ in $H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$, and so $u_n \rightarrow 0$ in $L^s_{\text{loc}}(\mathbb{R}^N)$, $2 \leq s < 2^*$, and $u_n \rightarrow 0$ a.e. on $\mathbb{R}^N$. For any $\varepsilon > 0$, it follows from (V2)

that there exists $R_\varepsilon > 0$ such that $|V_1(x)| \leq \varepsilon$ for $|x| \geq R_\varepsilon$. Hence,

$$\begin{aligned} & \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} |V_1(x)| u_n^2 dx \\ &= \int_{B_{R_\varepsilon}(0)} |V_1(x)| u_n^2 dx + \int_{\mathbb{R}^N \setminus B_{R_\varepsilon}(0)} |V_1(x)| u_n^2 dx \\ &\leq \sup_{\mathbb{R}^N} |V_1(x)| \int_{B_{R_\varepsilon}(0)} u_n^2 dx + \varepsilon \int_{\mathbb{R}^N \setminus B_{R_\varepsilon}(0)} u_n^2 dx \\ &\leq o(1) + \varepsilon \|u_n\|_2^2 \leq o(1) + C_3 \varepsilon. \end{aligned} \quad (52)$$

Since $\varepsilon > 0$ is arbitrary, we have

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} V_1(x) u_n^2 dx = 0. \quad (53)$$

Similarly, by (S1'), one has

$$\begin{aligned} & \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} F_1(x, u_n) dx = 0, \\ & \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} f_1(x, u_n) u_n dx = 0. \end{aligned} \quad (54)$$

Note that

$$\begin{aligned} \Phi_0(u) &= \Phi(u) - \frac{1}{2} \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} V_1(x) u^2 dx \\ &\quad + \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} F_1(x, u) dx, \quad \forall u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N), \\ \langle \Phi'_0(u), v \rangle &= \langle \Phi'(u), v \rangle - \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} V_1(x) uv dx \\ &\quad + \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} f_1(x, u) v dx, \quad \forall u, v \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N). \end{aligned} \quad (55)$$

From (34) and (53)–(55), one has

$$\Phi_0(u_n) \rightarrow c, \quad \|\Phi'_0(u_n)\| (1 + \|u_n\|) \rightarrow 0. \quad (56)$$

By a standard argument, we may prove that there exists $k_n \in \mathbb{Z}^N$, going if necessary to a subsequence, such that

$$\int_{B_{1+\sqrt{N}}(k_n)} |u_n|^2 dx > \frac{\delta}{2} > 0. \quad (57)$$

Let $v_n(x) = u_n(x + k_n)$. Then $\|v_n\|_{H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)} = \|u_n\|_{H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)}$, and

$$\int_{B_{1+\sqrt{N}}(0)} |v_n|^2 dx > \frac{\delta}{2}. \quad (58)$$

Since $V_0(x)$ and $f_0(x, u)$ are periodic, we have

$$\Phi_0(v_n) \rightarrow c, \quad \|\Phi'_0(v_n)\| (1 + \|v_n\|) \rightarrow 0. \quad (59)$$

Since $\{v_n\}$ is bounded in $H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$, passing to a subsequence, we have $v_n \rightarrow \bar{v}$ in $H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$, $v_n \rightarrow \bar{v}$ in $L^s_{\text{loc}}(\mathbb{R}^N)$, $2 \leq s < 2^*$,

and $v_n \rightarrow \bar{v}$ a.e. on $\mathbb{R}^N$. Obviously, (58) implies that $\bar{v}(x) \neq 0$ for $x \in B_{1+\sqrt{N}}(0)$. By a standard argument, we can prove that $\Phi'_0(\bar{v}) = 0$ and $\Phi_0(\bar{v}) \leq c$ by using (59).

Since $\bar{v} \neq 0$, it follows from Lemma 9 that there exists $t_0 = t(\bar{v})$ such that $t_0 \bar{v} \in \mathcal{N}$, and so $\Phi(t_0 \bar{v}) \geq c$. On the other hand, from (49), (51), (V2), (S1'), and (S4'), we have

$$\begin{aligned} c &\geq \Phi_0(\bar{v}) \\ &= \Phi_0(t_0 \bar{v}) \\ &\quad + \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} \left[\frac{1-t_0^2}{2} f_0(x, \bar{v}) \bar{v} + F_0(x, t_0 \bar{v}) - F_0(x, \bar{v}) \right] dx \\ &\geq \Phi_0(t_0 \bar{v}) \\ &= \Phi(t_0 \bar{v}) - \frac{t_0^2}{2} \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} V_1(x) \bar{v}^2 dx + \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} F_1(x, t_0 \bar{v}) dx \\ &> \Phi(t_0 \bar{v}) \geq c. \end{aligned} \quad (60)$$

This contradiction implies that $u_0 \neq 0$. By a standard argument, we can prove that $\Phi'(u_0) = 0$ and $\Phi(u_0) = c = \inf_{\mathcal{N}} \Phi$. This shows that $u_0 \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ is a solution for problem (1) with $\Phi(u_0) = \inf_{\mathcal{N}} \Phi > 0$. $\square$

Proof of Theorem 5. Similar to the proof of Theorem 3, there exists a bounded sequence $\{u_n\} \subset H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ satisfying (48). Passing to an appropriate subsequence, we have that $u_n \rightarrow \bar{u}$ in $H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$. Next, we prove $\bar{u} \neq 0$.

Arguing by contradiction, suppose that $\bar{u} = 0$; that is, $u_n \rightarrow 0$ in $H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$. Then, $u_n \rightarrow 0$ in $L^s_{\text{loc}}(\mathbb{R}^N)$, $2 \leq s < 2^*$, and $u_n \rightarrow 0$ a.e. on $\mathbb{R}^N$. Analogous to the proof of Theorem 4, we can demonstrate that there exists a $\bar{v} \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) \setminus \{0\}$ with $\bar{v}(x) \neq 0$ for $x \in B_{1+\sqrt{N}}(0)$ such that $\Phi'_{+,0}(\bar{v}) = 0$ and $\Phi_{+,0}(\bar{v}) \leq c$. By a standard argument, we can show that $\bar{v} \geq 0$.

Since $\bar{v} \geq (\neq) 0$, it follows from Lemma 9 that there exists $t_0 = t(\bar{v})$ such that $t_0 \bar{v} \in \mathcal{N}_+$, and so $\Phi_+(t_0 \bar{v}) \geq c$. On the other hand, from (49), (51), (V2), (S1'), and (S4'), we have

$$\begin{aligned} c &\geq \Phi_{+,0}(\bar{v}) \\ &= \Phi_{+,0}(t_0 \bar{v}) + \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} \left[\frac{1-t_0^2}{2} f_0(x, \bar{v}) \bar{v} \right. \\ &\quad \left. + F_0(x, t_0 \bar{v}) - F_0(x, \bar{v}) \right] dx \\ &\geq \Phi_{+,0}(t_0 \bar{v}) \\ &= \Phi_+(t_0 \bar{v}) - \frac{t_0^2}{2} \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} V_1(x) \bar{v}^2 dx + \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} F_1(x, t_0 \bar{v}) dx \\ &> \Phi_+(t_0 \bar{v}) \geq c. \end{aligned} \quad (61)$$

This contradiction shows that $\bar{u} \neq 0$. In the same way as the last part of the proof of Theorem 1, we can deduce that $\Phi'_+(\bar{u}) = 0$ and $\Phi_+(\bar{u}) = c = \inf_{\mathcal{N}_+} \Phi_+$. By a standard

argument, we can demonstrate that $\bar{u} \geq 0$. Therefore, $\bar{u} \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ is a positive solution for problem (1) with $\Phi_+(\bar{u}) = \inf_{\mathcal{N}_+} \Phi_+ > 0$. $\square$

Conflict of Interests

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

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