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# On a class of nonlinear elliptic equations with fast increasing weight and critical growth<sup>☆</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

We are concerned with the existence of rapidly decaying solutions for the equation

$$-\operatorname{div}(K(x)\nabla u) = \lambda K(x)|x|^\beta |u|^{q-2}u + K(x)|u|^{2^*-2}u, \quad x \in \mathbb{R}^N,$$

where  $N \geq 3$ ,  $2 \leq q < 2^* := 2N/(N-2)$ ,  $\lambda > 0$  is a parameter,  $K(x) := \exp(|x|^\alpha/4)$ ,  $\alpha \geq 2$  and the number  $\beta$  is given by  $\beta := (\alpha-2) \frac{(2^*-q)}{(2^*-2)}$ . We obtain a positive solution if  $2 < q < 2^*$  and a sign changing solution if  $q = 2$ . The existence results depend on the values of the parameter  $\lambda$ . In the proofs we apply variational methods.

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## 1. Introduction

We consider the nonlinear equation

$$-\operatorname{div}(K(x)\nabla u) = \lambda K(x)|x|^\beta |u|^{q-2}u + K(x)|u|^{2^*-2}u, \quad x \in \mathbb{R}^N, \quad (P)$$

where  $N \geq 3$ ,  $2 \leq q < 2^* := 2N/(N-2)$ ,  $\lambda > 0$  is a parameter,  $K(x) := \exp(|x|^\alpha/4)$ ,  $\alpha \geq 2$  and the number  $\beta$  is given by

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$$\beta := (\alpha - 2) \frac{(2^* - q)}{(2^* - 2)}.$$

As pointed out in [7], one of the motivations for studying the above equation relies on the fact that, for  $\alpha = q = 2$  and  $\lambda = (N - 2)/(N + 2)$ , it appears when one tries to find self-similar solutions

$$v(x, t) = t^{\frac{2-N}{N+2}} u\left(x t^{\frac{-1}{2}}\right)$$

to the parabolic equation

$$v_t - \Delta v = |v|^{\frac{4}{N-2}} v, \quad \mathbb{R}^N \times (0, +\infty).$$

The radially symmetric case with  $\alpha = q = 2$  was considered in [1]. As far as we know, the first variational approach was done by Escobedo and Kavian in [6]. In that article the authors have considered  $\alpha = q = 2$  and  $N \geq 3$ , and have proved that the existence of positive solutions is related with the interaction of the parameter  $\lambda$  with the first positive eigenvalue of the associated linear problem

$$-\operatorname{div}(K(x)\nabla u) = \lambda K(x)|x|^{\alpha-2}u, \quad x \in \mathbb{R}^N. \quad (LP)$$

Among other results, they have noticed a dichotomy in the existence range of  $\lambda$  for  $N = 3$ , relative to space dimensions  $N \geq 4$ . More precisely, for  $N \geq 4$ , there is a solution if and only if  $\lambda \in (N/4, N/2)$ . If  $N = 3$ , there is a positive solution for  $\lambda \in (1, 3/2)$ , and there is no solution for  $\lambda \leq 3/4$  and  $\lambda \geq 3/2$ .

Later on, many authors considered the case  $\alpha = q = 2$  and addressed questions of existence, symmetry and asymptotic behavior of solutions of (P), of the associated parabolic equation and its variants (see [8,10,12,9] and references therein). We also quote the paper of Ohya [11], where some results for a  $p$ -Laplacian type operator can be found.

Recently, Catrina, Furtado and Montenegro [4] have obtained some results for  $\alpha \geq 2$  and  $q = 2$ . After calculating the first eigenvalue of (LP) as  $\lambda_1 = \alpha(N - 2 + \alpha)/4$ , they have proved that, if  $2 \leq \alpha \leq N - 2$ , then the problem (P) has a positive solution if, and only if,  $\lambda \in (\lambda_1/2, \lambda_1)$ . If  $\alpha > N - 2$  and  $\lambda \in (\alpha^2/4, \lambda_1)$  then the problem (P) has a positive solution. Moreover, also in this last case, the problem has no solution if  $\lambda \leq \lambda_1/2$  or  $\lambda \geq \lambda_1$ . So, if  $\alpha > 2$ , the critical dimension of the problem depends on the value of  $\alpha$ .

Due to the presence of the critical Sobolev exponent in (P), it is natural to make a parallel with the Brezis and Nirenberg problem

$$-\Delta u = \lambda |u|^{q-2}u + |u|^{2^*-2}u, \quad u \in H_0^1(\Omega), \quad (BN)$$

where  $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^N$  is a bounded domain and  $N \geq 3$ . The aforementioned results of [6,4] can be viewed as versions of those ones presented in [2] for the above problem when  $q = 2$ . The nonexistence results for  $\lambda \geq \lambda_1$  are a consequence of a Pohozaev type identity. In the case that  $2 < q < 2^*$ , this identity does not give any information. So, we can expect existence of solution for any  $\lambda > 0$ . A result in this direction to the problem (BN) was presented in [2, Section 2]. In our first result we give an answer for this question when we deal with the problem (P). More specifically, we shall prove the following result.

**Theorem 1.1.** *The problem (P) has a positive solution in each of the following cases*

- (i)  $N \geq \alpha + 2$ ,  $2 < q < 2^*$ ,  $\lambda > 0$ ;
- (ii)  $2 < N < \alpha + 2$ ,  $2^* - \frac{4}{\alpha} < q < 2^*$ ,  $\lambda > 0$ ;
- (iii)  $2 < N < \alpha + 2$ ,  $2 < q \leq 2^* - \frac{4}{\alpha}$ ,  $\lambda > 0$  is sufficiently large.

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