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Nucleon Structure Functions, their Medium Modification and the Polarized EMC effect

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Abstract

The central theme of this thesis is an investigation of the in-medium modifications to nucleon structure. We focus on the medium modifications to the three twist-two quark lightcone momentum distributions and associated structure functions. To achieve this we utilize the Nambu–Jona-Lasinio model, with the proper-time regularization scheme, in which confinement is simulated by eliminating unphysical thresholds for nucleon decay into quarks. The nucleon bound state is obtained by solving the relativistic Faddeev equation in the quark-diquark approximation, where both scalar and axial-vector diquark channels are included.

In this framework we obtain excellent results for the free spin-independent and spin-dependent quark distributions. The transversity distributions satisfy the Soffer inequality and are similar to the spin-dependent distributions. With the introduction of mean scalar and vector fields that couple to the quarks in the nucleon, we obtain a good description of many nuclear matter properties, including saturation at the correct energy and density.

The medium modifications to the nucleon structure functions are investigated in both infinite nuclear matter and for the nuclei ${}^7\text{Li}$, ${}^{11}\text{B}$, ${}^{15}\text{N}$, ${}^{27}\text{Al}$ and the closed shell neighbours ${}^{12}\text{C}$, ${}^{16}\text{O}$ and ${}^{28}\text{Si}$. In each case the in-medium quark degrees of freedom are accessed via the convolution formalism. For finite nuclei we use a relativistic shell model including mean scalar and vector fields. We derive, for the first time, relativistic expressions for the nucleon distributions in a nucleus, that retain the phenomenologically important lower components of the nucleon wavefunction. We find that we are readily able to reproduce the experimental F_{2A}/F_{2N} ratio, that is, the EMC effect. However, the main focus of this thesis is on a new ratio – the nuclear structure function, g_{1A} , divided by the naive free result – which we refer to as the polarized EMC effect. We find that the medium modifications of the spin structure functions are remarkably large, up to twice the usual EMC effect. This result has important experimental implications, and may provide the impetus for future polarized deep inelastic experiments on nuclei.

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Deep Inelastic Scattering	5
2.1	Reactions and Kinematics	6
2.2	Cross-Sections and Structure Functions	8
2.3	Quark-Parton Model and Bjorken Scaling	12
2.4	Lightcone dominance	15
2.5	Factorization and Quark Distributions	16
2.6	QCD Evolution of Quark Distributions	18
2.7	Transversity Cross-sections	21
2.8	Summary	23
3	Nambu–Jona-Lasinio Model	25
3.1	NJL Lagrangian and Regularization	26
3.2	Gap Equation and Dynamical Mass Generation	30
3.3	The Pion and Chiral Symmetry	31
3.4	Baryons	34
3.5	Summary	40
4	Quark Distributions from the Nambu–Jona-Lasinio model	43
4.1	Quark distributions	44
4.2	The nucleon in the NJL model	46
4.3	Results	49
4.4	Conclusion	57
5	Quark Distributions in Nuclear Matter	59
5.1	Finite Density Quark Distributions	60
5.2	Finite Density NJL Model	66
5.3	Results for in-medium Quark Distributions	70
5.4	Conclusion	76
6	Finite Nuclei Quark Distributions and the Polarized EMC effect	79
6.1	Deep inelastic scattering from nuclear targets	80
6.2	Nuclear distribution functions	82

6.3	Medium modified quark distributions in the nucleon	88
6.4	Results	90
6.5	Conclusion	99
7	Summary and Outlook	101
A	Notations, Conventions and Useful Results	105
A.1	Regularization and 4-D Polar Coordinates	105
A.2	Useful Integrals	105
A.3	Lightcone Vectors	105
A.4	Useful Relations	106
A.5	Feynman Parametrization	106
A.6	Integral Relations	107
A.7	Wick Rotation	107
A.8	Simple Bubble Graphs :- $\Pi_\pi(q^2)$, $\Pi_s(q^2)$ and $\Pi_a(q^2)$	108
A.9	Effective Couplings :- g_π , g_s and g_a	108
A.10	Propagators	109
A.11	Pion Decay Constant f_π	109
A.12	The Gap Equation	110
A.13	Dirac Spinors	110
A.14	Matrix Elements	111
	A.14.1 Helicity matrix elements	111
	A.14.2 Transverse matrix elements	112
A.15	3j-symbols	113
A.16	Spherical Harmonics	114
B	Derivation of Lepton and Hadronic Tensors	115
B.1	The Lepton Tensor	115
B.2	The Hadronic Tensor	117
C	Solution to the NJL Faddeev Equation in the Static Approximation	119
C.1	The Nucleon Quark-Diquark Bubble Graphs	119
C.2	The Faddeev Equation	120
C.3	Normalization of the Nucleon Vertex Function	121
D	Explicit Calculation of the Transversity Distributions	125
D.1	Transverse Feynman Diagrams	125
	D.1.1 Transverse Scalar Quark Diagram	125
	D.1.2 Transverse Axial-vector Quark Diagram	128
	D.1.3 Transverse Axial-Vector Diquark Diagram	132

D.1.4	Transverse Mixed Diquark Diagram	168
D.2	Summary of All Feynman Diagram Results	183
D.2.1	Scalar Quark Diagrams	183
D.2.2	Axial-Vector Quark Diagrams	183
D.2.3	Scalar Diquark Diagrams	184
D.2.4	Axial-Vector Diquark Diagrams	185
D.2.5	Mixed Diquark Diagrams	186
E	Derivation of the Infinite Nuclear Matter Distribution Function	191
F	Dirac Equation with Scalar and Vector Potentials	193
F.1	Coordinate Space Derivation	193
F.2	Momentum space solutions	197
G	Multipole Formulas	201
G.1	$J = 0$	201
G.2	$J = \frac{1}{2}$	201
G.3	$J = 1$	202
G.4	$J = \frac{3}{2}$	202
G.5	$J = \frac{5}{2}$	202
H	Explicit Calculation of the Nucleon Distribution Functions in the Nucleus.	203
H.1	Spin-Dependent Nucleon Distribution	203
H.1.1	Moments	212
H.2	Spin-Independent Nucleon Distribution	215
H.2.1	Baryon Number Sum Rule	217
H.2.2	Momentum Sum Rule	219
I	Further Finite Nuclei Results	221
I.1	${}^7\text{Li}$	221
I.2	${}^{11}\text{B}$	226
I.3	${}^{12}\text{C}$	230
I.4	${}^{15}\text{N}$	231
I.5	${}^{16}\text{O}$	234
I.6	${}^{27}\text{Al}$	235
I.7	${}^{28}\text{Si}$	240
	Bibliography	241