Transverse Spin Transfer to $\Lambda$ and $\Lambda^-$ Hyperons in Polarized Proton-Proton Collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 200$ GeV

J. Adam  
*Creighton University*

L. Adamczyk  
*AGH University of Science and Technology, Poland*

James K. Adkins  
*University of Kentucky, kevin.adkins@uky.edu*

G. Agakishiev  
*Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, Russia*

M. M. Aggarwal  
*Panjab University, India*

*See next page for additional authors*

Click here to let us know how access to this document benefits you.  
Follow this and additional works at: https://uknowledge.uky.edu/physastron_facpub

Part of the Elementary Particles and Fields and String Theory Commons

Repository Citation  
https://uknowledge.uky.edu/physastron_facpub/632

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Physics and Astronomy at UKnowledge. It has been accepted for inclusion in Physics and Astronomy Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of UKnowledge. For more information, please contact UKnowledge@lsv.uky.edu.
Transverse Spin Transfer to $\Lambda$ and $\Lambda^-$ Hyperons in Polarized Proton-Proton Collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 200$ GeV

Notes/Citation Information

Published by the American Physical Society under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Further distribution of this work must maintain attribution to the author(s) and the published article's title, journal citation, and DOI.

Due to the large number of authors, only the first 30 and the authors affiliated with the University of Kentucky are listed in the author section above. For the complete list of authors, please download this article or visit: https://doi.org/10.1103/PhysRevD.98.091103

This group of authors is collectively known as the STAR Collaboration.

Digital Object Identifier (DOI)
https://doi.org/10.1103/PhysRevD.98.091103
Transverse spin transfer to $\Lambda$ and $\bar{\Lambda}$ hyperons in polarized proton-proton collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 200$ GeV


(STAR Collaboration)

1Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas 79699
2AGH University of Science and Technology, FPACS, Cracow 30-059, Poland
3Alikhanov Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics, Moscow 117218, Russia
(Received 24 August 2018; published 29 November 2018)
The transverse spin transfer from polarized protons to Λ and $\bar{\Lambda}$ hyperons is expected to provide sensitivity to the transversity distribution of the nucleon and to the transversely polarized fragmentation functions. We report the first measurement of the transverse spin transfer to Λ and $\bar{\Lambda}$ along the polarization direction of the fragmenting quark, $D_{TT}$, in transversely polarized proton-proton collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 200$ GeV with the STAR detector at RHIC. The data correspond to an integrated luminosity of 18 pb$^{-1}$ and cover the pseudorapidity range $|\eta| < 1.2$ and transverse momenta $p_T$ up to 8 GeV/c. The dependence on $p_T$ and $\eta$ are presented. The $D_{TT}$ results are found to be comparable with a model prediction and are also consistent with zero within uncertainties.

The polarizations of Λ and $\bar{\Lambda}$ hyperons have been studied extensively in various aspects of spin effects in high energy reactions due to the self-spin-analyzing parity violating decay [1]. Many of them have been found to be quite surprising, for example, the induced transverse polarization with respect to the production plane in unpolarized hadron-hadron reactions [2] and the global polarization with respect to the reaction plane observed recently in heavy ion collisions [3]. On the other hand, Λ polarization transferred from polarized lepton or hadron beams (usually referred to as “spin transfer”) in different reactions provides a natural connection to polarized fragmentation functions and the polarized parton densities of the nucleon. A number of measurements have been made in polarized lepton-nucleon deep inelastic scattering (DIS), for example, E665 [4], HERMES [5] and COMPASS [6], and in polarized hadron-hadron collisions in the STAR experiment at RHIC [7,8]. In particular, among the polarized parton distributions, the transversity distribution remains much less known than the helicity distribution due to its chiral-odd nature [9,10]. The transversity distribution describes the probability of finding a transversely polarized quark in a transversely polarized proton. Interestingly, the transverse spin transfer to Λ in lepton-hadron and/or hadron-hadron collisions provides a natural connection to transversity through polarized fragmentation functions [11–16]. Previously, sizable spin transfer along the normal direction of the Λ production plane, $D_{NN}$, was observed at large $x_F$ with fixed target proton-proton collisions by the E704 Collaboration at Fermilab [17] and also in exclusive production in proton-proton reactions at low energy [18].

We report the first measurement of transverse spin transfer to Λ and $\bar{\Lambda}$ hyperons in transversely polarized proton-proton collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 200$ GeV with the STAR experiment at RHIC at Brookhaven National Laboratory. The transverse spin transfer, $D_{TT}$, to the Λ in proton-proton collisions is defined as

$$D_{TT} \equiv \frac{d\sigma(p^+ p \to \Lambda \pi^-) - d\sigma(p^+ p \to \Lambda^\pi^+)}{d\sigma(p^+ p \to \Lambda \pi^-) + d\sigma(p^+ p \to \Lambda^\pi^+)} = \frac{d\delta\sigma^\Lambda}{d\delta\sigma},$$

where $\uparrow (\downarrow)$ denotes the positive (negative) transverse polarization direction of the particles and $\delta\sigma^\Lambda$ is the transversely polarized cross section. Within the factorization framework, $\delta\sigma^\Lambda$ can be factorized into the convolution of parton transversity, polarized partonic cross section and the polarized fragmentation function [13]. As the $s(\bar{s})$ quark plays a dominant role in $\Lambda(\bar{\Lambda})$ hyperon’s spin content, the measurements of $D_{TT}$ for $\Lambda(\bar{\Lambda})$ hyperon provide a natural connection to the transversity distribution of strange and antistrange quarks [13,15,16]. Experimentally, the transverse spin transfer, $D_{TT}$, can be measured along the transverse polarization direction of the outgoing quark after the hard scattering.

The polarization of $\Lambda(\bar{\Lambda})$ hyperons, $P_{\Lambda(\bar{\Lambda})}$, can be measured from the angular distribution of the final state particles via their weak decay channel $\Lambda \to p\pi^-(\bar{\Lambda} \to \bar{p}\pi^+)$,

$$\frac{dN}{d\cos\theta^\ast} \propto A(1 + \alpha_{\Lambda(\bar{\Lambda})}P_{\Lambda(\bar{\Lambda})}\cos\theta^\ast),$$

where $A$ is the detector acceptance varying with $\theta^\ast$ as well as other observables, $\alpha_{\Lambda(\bar{\Lambda})}$ is the weak decay parameter, and $\theta^\ast$ is the angle between the $\Lambda(\bar{\Lambda})$ polarization direction and the (anti-) proton momentum in the $\Lambda(\bar{\Lambda})$ rest frame. For the $D_{TT}$ measurements in this analysis, the transverse polarization direction of the outgoing fragmenting parton is used to obtain $\theta^\ast$. As there is a rotation along the normal direction of the scattering plane between the transverse polarization directions of incoming and outgoing quarks [19], the direction of the momentum of the outgoing parton is required, and the reconstructed jet axis adjacent to the $\Lambda(\bar{\Lambda})$ is used as the substitute for the direction of the outgoing fragmenting quark.

The data were collected at RHIC with the STAR experiment in the year 2012. An integrated luminosity of 18 pb$^{-1}$ was sampled with transverse proton beam polarization. The proton polarization was measured for each beam and per fill using Coulomb nuclear interference (CNI) proton carbon polarimeters [20], which were calibrated using a polarized atomic hydrogen gas-jet target [21]. The average transverse polarizations for the two

Published by the American Physical Society under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Further distribution of this work must maintain attribution to the author(s) and the published article’s title, journal citation, and DOI. Funded by SCOAP3.
The total BEMC coverage was used to generate the primary jet trigger information at STAR. The barrel electromagnetic calorimeter (BEMC) in the TPC gas provided information for particle identification. The endcap electromagnetic calorimeter (EEMC) was used to obtain the momentum direction of the fragmenting quark and thus the transverse polarization direction of hyperons for the $D_{T\ell}$ measurement. In this analysis, jets were reconstructed using the anti-$k_T$ algorithm with a resolution parameter $R = 0.6$ and jet $p_T > 5$ GeV/$c$. In STAR, the TPC tracks and tower energies from the BEMC and EEMC are used for the jet reconstruction. Then the association between $\Lambda(\bar{\Lambda})$ candidates and the adjacent reconstructed jet was made by constraining the radius, $\Delta R = \sqrt{(\Delta \eta)^2 + (\Delta \phi)^2}$, between the $\Lambda(\bar{\Lambda})$ momentum direction and the jet axis in $\eta - \phi$ space. The $\Lambda(\bar{\Lambda})$ candidates that have a jet with $\Delta R < 0.6$ were used in the following $D_{T\ell}$ determination. The fraction of $\Lambda(\bar{\Lambda})$ candidates that have a matching jet increases from about 30 to 90% from the lowest hyperon $p_T$ bin to the highest.

After topological selections and jet correlation, the invariant mass distributions for the $\Lambda$ and $\bar{\Lambda}$ candidates with $1 < p_T < 8$ GeV/$c$ and $|\eta| < 1.2$ are shown in Fig. 1.
FIG. 1. Invariant mass distribution for Λ (open circles) and Λ̅ (filled circles) candidates with $1 < p_T < 8$ GeV/c after selection in this analysis.

The values of the peak in the Λ and Λ̅ mass distributions are in agreement with the PDG mass value $m_{\Lambda(\Lambda)} = 1.11568$ GeV/c² [25]. The two-dimensional distribution of invariant mass versus $\cos \theta^*$ as defined in Eq. (2) is shown in Fig. 2 for Λ candidates. A similar distribution was also obtained for Λ̅ candidates. The bin counting method was used to obtain the raw yields of Λ and Λ̅ candidates. The signal mass windows were chosen to be about 3σ of the mass width. These range from 1.111 to 1.119 GeV/c² in the lowest $p_T$ bin to 1.104–1.128 GeV/c² in the highest $p_T$ bin. About $1.02 \times 10^6 \ \Lambda$ and $1.17 \times 10^6 \ \Lambda$̅ candidates in

\[
D_{TT} = \frac{1}{\alpha P_{beam} \langle \cos \theta^* \rangle} \frac{\sqrt{N^\uparrow (\cos \theta^*) N^\downarrow (-\cos \theta^*)} - \sqrt{N^\downarrow (\cos \theta^*) N^\uparrow (-\cos \theta^*)}}{\sqrt{N^\uparrow (\cos \theta^*) N^\downarrow (-\cos \theta^*)} + \sqrt{N^\downarrow (\cos \theta^*) N^\uparrow (-\cos \theta^*)}},
\]

where $\alpha_\Lambda = 0.642 \pm 0.013$ [25], $\alpha_\Lambda̅ = -\alpha_\Lambda$, $P_{beam}$ is the beam polarization and $\langle \cos \theta^* \rangle$ denotes the average value in the $\cos \theta^*$ interval. $N^\uparrow(\downarrow)$ is the Λ yield in the corresponding $\cos \theta^*$ bin when the proton beam is upward (downward) polarized. The relative luminosity between $N^\uparrow$ and $N^\downarrow$ is canceled in this cross-ratio asymmetry. The acceptance is also canceled as the acceptance in a small $\cos \theta^*$ interval is expected to remain the same when flipping the beam polarization [7], and the effect from limited $\cos \theta^*$ bin width is negligible. At RHIC both proton beams are polarized, and the single spin hyperon yield $N^\uparrow(\downarrow)$ was obtained by summing over the spin states of the other beam, as the beam fill patterns are nearly balanced with opposite polarizations.

The yields $N^\uparrow$ and $N^\downarrow$ were first determined in each $\cos \theta^*$ interval from the observed Λ or Λ̅ candidate yields in the chosen mass interval, and the raw spin transfer, $D_{TT}^{raw}$, was extracted using Eq. (3) in each $\cos \theta^*$ bin. Then the $D_{TT}^{raw}$ values were averaged over the entire $\cos \theta^*$ range in each hyperon $p_T$ bin. As single spin yields can be obtained with either beam polarized, we have two independent measurements for the same physics $\eta$ range, but with different detector coverage, by treating one beam as polarized and summing over the polarization states of the other beam. After confirming their consistency, we determined the final $D_{TT}^{raw}$ results from the weighted mean.

Figure 3(a) shows the beam combined $D_{TT}^{raw}$ versus $\cos \theta^*$ for Λ hyperons in the positive and negative $\eta$ regions, respectively, with $2 < p_T < 3$ GeV/c provided as an example. The results for Λ̅ hyperon are shown in Fig. 3(b). Positive $\eta$ is defined along the direction of the incident polarized beam. The extracted $D_{TT}^{raw}$ is constant

FIG. 2. Invariant mass distribution versus $\cos \theta^*$ for Λ candidates with $1 < p_T < 8$ GeV/c in this analysis as an example.

The observed $\cos \theta^*$ spectra are affected by detector efficiency and acceptance as seen in Eq. (2). To minimize the systematics associated with acceptance and relative luminosity, $D_{TT}$ has been extracted from the asymmetry in small $\cos \theta^*$ intervals using

The residual background fractions were estimated by the side-band method and found to be 7–10%. The yields, background fractions and signal mass windows are listed in Table I. The Λ̅ signal is larger than that of the Λ because of the effects of antiproton annihilation in the BEMC and EEMC, which provides additional energy to the JP trigger conditions for the Λ̅.
FIG. 3. Spin transfer $D_{TT}^{\text{raw}}$ versus $\cos \theta^*$ for (a) $\Lambda$ and (b) $\bar{\Lambda}$ hyperons, and (c) the spin asymmetry $\delta_{TT}$ for the control sample of $K^0_S$ mesons versus $\cos \theta^*$ in the $p_T$ bin of (2, 3) GeV/c. The red circles show the results for positive pseudorapidity $\eta$ with respect to the polarized beam, and the blue squares show the results for negative $\eta$. Only statistical uncertainties are shown.

with $\cos \theta^*$ as expected and confirmed by the quality of the fit. A null measurement was performed with the spin transfer for the spinless $K^0_S$, $\delta_{TT}$, as a cross check, which has a similar event topology. The $\delta_{TT}$ obtained with an artificial weak decay parameter $\alpha_{K^0_S} = 1$ is shown in Fig. 3(c). As expected, the results were found to be consistent with no spin transfer.

$D_{TT}^{\text{raw}}$ values and their statistical uncertainties were then corrected for residual background dilution according to

$$D_{TT} = \frac{D_{TT}^{\text{raw}} - r D_{TT}^{\text{bkg}}}{1 - r},$$

$$\delta D_{TT} = \sqrt{\left(\delta D_{TT}^{\text{raw}}\right)^2 + \left(r \delta D_{TT}^{\text{bkg}}\right)^2} / (1 - r),$$

where $r$ is the background fraction in each $p_T$ bin estimated by the side-band method [8], and $D_{TT}^{\text{bkg}}$ was obtained from the left and right side-band mass intervals as shown in last two rows of Table I using the same procedure as $D_{TT}^{\text{raw}}$ following Eq. (3) and was consistent with zero within the statistical uncertainty.

The systematic uncertainties of $D_{TT}$ include contributions from the decay parameter, $\alpha$, from the measurement of the beam polarizations as well as uncertainty caused by the residual background fraction, event pile-up effects and trigger bias due to trigger conditions. The total systematic uncertainties in $D_{TT}$ range from 0.0003 to 0.009 in different $p_T$ bins, whereas the corresponding statistical uncertainties vary from 0.006 to 0.040. The above contributions are considered to be independent, and their sizes have been estimated as described below. The trigger bias is the dominant contribution to the systematic uncertainty.

The uncertainty in $\alpha_\Lambda = -\alpha_{\bar{\Lambda}} = 0.642 \pm 0.013$ corresponds to a 2% scale uncertainty in $D_{TT}$. The uncertainty in the RHIC beam polarization measurements contributes an additional 3.4% scale uncertainty in $D_{TT}$. The pile-up effect due to possible overlapping events recorded in the TPC was studied by examining the hyperon yield per event versus the STAR collision rate. A comparison between the yields per collision event found by fitting with a constant and a linear extrapolation to very low collision rates was used to estimate the pile-up contribution for different spin states, and the corresponding uncertainty to $D_{TT}$ was found to be small (<0.005). The residual background fractions were estimated by the side-band method, and $D_{TT}$ was corrected accordingly. The corresponding uncertainty was quantified from the difference in the results when the background fractions were estimated instead by fitting the mass spectra. This part is found to be also very small (<0.003). The data samples used in this analysis were recorded with jet-patch trigger conditions, which help to reach high transverse momenta of hyperons. However, these trigger conditions may bias the $D_{TT}$ measurements by changing the natural composition of hyperon events with respect to the distributions of the hyperon momentum fraction in its associated jet, the hard production subprocesses, the flavor of the associated jet, the decay contribution, etc. The uncertainties caused by the above mentioned jet trigger conditions were studied with a Monte Carlo simulation of events generated using PYTHIA 6.4 [30] with the Perugia 2012 tune [31] and the STAR detector response package based on GEANT 3 [32]. The uncertainties from trigger bias were then estimated by comparing the $D_{TT}$ values obtained from a theoretical model [16] before and after applying the trigger conditions. This yields uncertainties up to 0.008 with increasing $p_T$.

The STAR results for $D_{TT}$ versus hyperon $p_T$ are shown in Fig. 4 for $\Lambda$ and $\bar{\Lambda}$ at both positive and negative $\eta$ regions relative to the polarized beam in proton-proton collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 200$ GeV. About 60% of $\Lambda$ or $\bar{\Lambda}$ are not primary particles but stem from decay of heavier hyperons. No corrections have been applied for decay contributions from heavier baryonic states. Several of the models do take into
A few model predictions exist of hyperon transverse spin transfer in hadron-hadron collisions, based on different assumptions on the transversity distribution and transversely polarized fragmentation functions [13,15,16]. In Fig. 4, the $D_{TT}$ data are compared with a model estimation calculated at $\langle \eta \rangle = \pm 0.5$, which is available for RHIC energy, with simple assumptions of the transversity (using the DSSV helicity distribution as input) and the SU6 picture of fragmentation functions [15,16]. The data are, in general, consistent with the model predictions. The $D_{TT}$ of $\Lambda$ and $\bar{\Lambda}$ are not in disagreement with each other, with a $\chi^2$/ndf of 9.5/6. A possible difference between them could come, for example, from different fragmentation contributions from the nonstrange quarks.

In summary, we report the first measurement of the transverse spin transfer, $D_{TT}$, to $\Lambda$ and $\bar{\Lambda}$ in transversely polarized proton-proton collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 200$ GeV at RHIC. The data correspond to an integrated luminosity of 18 pb$^{-1}$ taken by the STAR experiment in 2012 and cover midrapidity, $|\eta| < 1.2$, and $p_T$ up to 8 GeV/c. The $D_{TT}$ value and precision in the highest $p_T$ bin, where the effects are expected to be largest, are found to be $D_{TT} = 0.031 \pm 0.033$(stat) $\pm 0.008$(sys) for $\Lambda$ and $D_{TT} = -0.034 \pm 0.040$(stat) $\pm 0.009$(sys) for $\bar{\Lambda}$ at $\langle \eta \rangle = 0.5$ and $\langle p_T \rangle = 6.7$ GeV/c. The results for $D_{TT}$ are found to be consistent with zero for $\Lambda$ and $\bar{\Lambda}$ within uncertainties and are also consistent with model predictions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the RHIC Operations Group and RCF at BNL, the NERSC Center at LBNL, and the Open Science Grid consortium for providing resources and support. This work was supported in part by the Office of Nuclear Physics within the U.S. DOE Office of Science, the U.S. National Science Foundation, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, Natural Science Foundation of China, Chinese Academy of Science, the Ministry of Science and Technology of China, the Major State Basic Research Development Program in China (No. 2014CB845406) and the Chinese Ministry of Education, the National Research Foundation of Korea, Czech Science Foundation and Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, Department of Atomic Energy and Department of Science and Technology of the Government of India, the National Science Centre of Poland, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia, RosAtom of Russia and German Bundesministerium fur Bildung, Wissenschaft, Forschung and Technologie (BMBF) and the Helmholtz Association.
[34] Z. B. Kang, A. Prokudin, P. Sun, and F. Yuan, Phys. Rev. D 93, 014009 (2016).