

Angular distributions of $\tau^- \rightarrow K_S \pi^- \nu_\tau$ decay

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Based on experimental data by the Belle Collaboration, we present a phenomenological analysis of the angular distributions in $\tau^- \rightarrow K_S \pi^- \nu_\tau$ decay. Our study shows that the angular analysis could lead to some interesting observables, and the future experimental investigation of these observables might be very helpful in revealing the nature of the scalar components of the decay. New physics contributions from the two-Higgs-doublet model to this decay have also been examined.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The τ lepton is the only known lepton massive enough to decay into hadrons and its hadronic decays provide a very useful laboratory to test the low energy dynamics of the standard model (SM) [1,2]. With the increased experimental sensitivities achieved already or in the future, some interesting limits on possible new physics contributions to the τ decay amplitudes could be expected; for instance, in the decays $\tau^\pm \rightarrow K_S \pi^\pm \nu_\tau$, upper limits on the CP violation parameter from multi-Higgs-doublet models have been obtained by the Belle Collaboration [3].

The decay $\tau \rightarrow K \pi \nu_\tau$, which has the largest branching ratio of all Cabibbo-suppressed decays, could be a powerful probe of the strange sector of the weak charged current [4–6]. Early investigations have established that the dominant contribution to the decay spectrum is from the $K^*(892)$ meson [7], while the scalar or tensor contributions, which are expected theoretically [6,8], are not excluded experimentally [9,10]. Recently, a precise measurement of $\tau^- \rightarrow K_S \pi^- \nu_\tau$ decay has been done by the Belle Collaboration [11] with high-statistics data, which showed that the $K^*(892)$ alone is not sufficient to describe the $K_S \pi$ invariant mass spectrum and other states such as scalar [$K_0^*(800)$, $K_0^*(1430)$, ...] or more vector resonances [$K^*(1410)$, $K^*(1680)$, ...] have to be included. Thus, three models, $K_0^*(800) + K^*(892) + K^*(1410)$, $K_0^*(800) + K^*(892) + K_0^*(1430)$, and $K_0^*(800) + K^*(892) + K^*(1680)$, were introduced to fit the data, and the best description of the decay spectrum is achieved in the first two models [11]. One can expect that these two models will lead to the different angular distribution behavior since they have different scalar and vector components. This angular analysis has not been done yet experimentally.

Motivated by the above new experimental data, in this paper we present a phenomenological analysis of the angular distributions in the $\tau^- \rightarrow K_S \pi^- \nu_\tau$ decay. We hope that this angular analysis will reveal the difference from the

above models, which could further increase our understanding of the scalar contributions in this decay.

The paper is organized as follows. In Sec. II, we will discuss the decay distributions of $\tau^- \rightarrow K_S \pi^- \nu_\tau$, and some interesting observables will be introduced. In Sec. III, a phenomenological analysis of the angular distribution is carried out, and new physics contributions from the two-Higgs-doublet model to this decay will be examined. Finally, we summarize our results in Sec. IV.

II. DECAY DISTRIBUTIONS

In the SM, the general invariant amplitude of $\tau^- \rightarrow K_S \pi^- \nu_\tau$ can be decomposed as a product of a leptonic current and a hadronic current [6]:

$$\mathcal{M} = \frac{G_F \sin \theta_C}{\sqrt{2}} M_\mu J^\mu. \quad (1)$$

Here G_F is the Fermi coupling constant and θ_C is the Cabibbo angle. The leptonic current is given by

$$M_\mu = \bar{u}(p_{\nu_\tau}) \gamma_\mu (1 - \gamma_5) u(p_\tau), \quad (2)$$

and the hadronic current can be parametrized by two form factors as

$$J^\mu = \langle K_S \pi^- | \bar{s} \gamma^\mu u | 0 \rangle = F_V(s) \left(g^{\mu\nu} - \frac{Q^\mu Q^\nu}{Q^2} \right) q_\nu + F_S(s) Q^\mu, \quad (3)$$

with

$$Q^\mu = p_K^\mu + p_\pi^\mu, \quad q_\mu = p_K^\mu - p_\pi^\mu, \quad s = Q^2,$$

where F_V is the vector form factor, corresponding to the $J^P = 1^-$ component of the strange weak charged currents, and F_S is the scalar one, corresponding to the $J^P = 0^+$ component. In the limit of SU(3) symmetry, $m_K^2 = m_\pi^2$, the vector current is conserved and F_S is zero. Now the differential decay rate—in terms of s , the $K_S \pi$ invariant mass squared, and θ , the angle between the three-momentum of K_S and the three momentum of τ^- in the $K_S \pi^-$ rest frame—can be written as

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$$\begin{aligned} \frac{d^2\Gamma}{ds d\cos\theta} &= \frac{G_F^2 \sin^2\theta_C}{2^6 \pi^3 \sqrt{s}} \frac{(m_\tau^2 - s)^2}{m_\tau^3} \\ &\times P(s) \left[\left(\frac{m_\tau^2}{s} \cos^2\theta + \sin^2\theta \right) P^2(s) |F_V|^2 \right. \\ &\left. + \frac{m_\tau^2}{4} |F_S|^2 - \frac{m_\tau^2}{\sqrt{s}} P(s) \text{Re}(F_V F_S^*) \cos\theta \right], \quad (4) \end{aligned}$$

with

$$P(s) = \frac{1}{2\sqrt{s}} \sqrt{(s + m_K^2 - m_\pi^2)^2 - 4sm_K^2},$$

and the phase space is given by

$$(m_\pi + m_K)^2 \leq s \leq m_\tau^2, \quad -1 \leq \cos\theta \leq 1. \quad (5)$$

After integrating over $\cos\theta$ in Eq. (4), one can get

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{d\Gamma}{ds} &= \frac{G_F^2 \sin^2\theta_C}{2^6 \pi^3 \sqrt{s}} \frac{(m_\tau^2 - s)^2}{m_\tau^3} \\ &\times P(s) \left[\left(\frac{2m_\tau^2}{3s} + \frac{4}{3} \right) P^2(s) |F_V|^2 + \frac{m_\tau^2}{2} |F_S|^2 \right]. \quad (6) \end{aligned}$$

It is generally believed that this decay spectrum is dominated by the vector contributions [$K^*(892)$ resonances] [7]. Recent experimental results from the Belle Collaboration [11] have shown that the scalar contribution is necessary to fit the data, although it provides only a small contribution to the decay rate. It is found in Ref. [11] that two different combinations, $K_0^*(800) + K^*(892) + K^*(1410)$ and $K_0^*(800) + K^*(892) + K_0^*(1430)$, can both describe the spectrum very well. In order to further understand the scalar form factor, one may carry out the angular analysis. From Eq. (4), if we only focus on the angular part, we can write the distribution as

$$\frac{d\Gamma}{d\cos\theta} = I_0 + I_1 \cos\theta + I_2 \cos^2\theta, \quad (7)$$

with

$$\begin{aligned} I_0 &= \int_{s_{\min}}^{s_{\max}} ds \frac{G_F^2 \sin^2\theta_C}{2^6 \pi^3 \sqrt{s}} \frac{(m_\tau^2 - s)^2}{m_\tau^3} \\ &\times P(s) \left(\frac{m_\tau^2}{4} |F_S|^2 + P^2(s) |F_V|^2 \right), \quad (8) \end{aligned}$$

$$I_1 = \int_{s_{\min}}^{s_{\max}} ds \frac{G_F^2 \sin^2\theta_C}{2^6 \pi^3 \sqrt{s}} \frac{(m_\tau^2 - s)^2}{m_\tau^3} P^2(s) \frac{-m_\tau^2}{\sqrt{s}} \text{Re}(F_V F_S^*), \quad (9)$$

$$I_2 = \int_{s_{\min}}^{s_{\max}} ds \frac{G_F^2 \sin^2\theta_C}{2^6 \pi^3 \sqrt{s}} \frac{(m_\tau^2 - s)^2}{m_\tau^3} P^3(s) \frac{m_\tau^2 - s}{s} |F_V|^2. \quad (10)$$

Here (s_{\min}, s_{\max}) denotes the range of the integration over s , which could be the full phase space shown in Eq. (5) or some kinematical cuts on s . Using the above equations, one can further get

$$\frac{1}{\Gamma} \frac{d\Gamma}{d\cos\theta} = \mathcal{G} + \mathcal{A} \cos\theta + \frac{3}{2} (1 - 2\mathcal{G}) \cos^2\theta, \quad (11)$$

where

$$\Gamma = 2 \left(I_0 + \frac{1}{3} I_2 \right) \quad (12)$$

is the decay rate. The constant term in (11) can be expressed as

$$\mathcal{G} = \frac{I_0}{\Gamma}, \quad (13)$$

and the linear term in $\cos\theta$,

$$\mathcal{A} = \frac{I_1}{\Gamma}, \quad (14)$$

will give a vanishing contribution to the decay rate after integrating $\cos\theta$ in the full phase space. However, this term can induce an interesting observable, called the forward-backward asymmetry. Equation (14) gives the integrated and normalized asymmetry. One can also define the differential asymmetry as [12,13]

$$A_{\text{FB}}(s) = \frac{\int_0^1 \left(\frac{d^2\Gamma}{ds d\cos\theta} \right) d\cos\theta - \int_{-1}^0 \left(\frac{d^2\Gamma}{ds d\cos\theta} \right) d\cos\theta}{\int_0^1 \left(\frac{d^2\Gamma}{ds d\cos\theta} \right) d\cos\theta + \int_{-1}^0 \left(\frac{d^2\Gamma}{ds d\cos\theta} \right) d\cos\theta}. \quad (15)$$

Thus, together with Eq. (4), we have

$$A_{\text{FB}}(s) = \frac{-\frac{P(s)}{\sqrt{s}} \text{Re}(F_V F_S^*)}{\frac{2}{3s} \left(1 + \frac{2s}{m_\tau^2} \right) P^2(s) |F_V|^2 + \frac{1}{2} |F_S|^2}. \quad (16)$$

Note that the forward-backward asymmetries are generated from the interference between the scalar part and vector part amplitudes of the decay. In the case that the scalar contribution is not large, study of these asymmetries may be very important for us to extract the information on the scalar form factor.

III. PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

In order to evaluate the quantities \mathcal{G} , \mathcal{A} , and A_{FB} defined in the previous section, we need the information on the hadronic form factors F_V and F_S . Theoretically, due to the nonperturbative quantum chromodynamics (QCD) effects at low energies, there is no model-independent way at the present. Therefore, various methods have been employed to study these form factors of $\tau \rightarrow K \pi \nu_\tau$ decays, such as meson dominance models [6,14] and chiral Lagrangians, including the resonances [13,15–17]. Phenomenologically, as shown in Refs. [6,11], these form factors could be parametrized by resonance contributions, which read

$$\begin{aligned} F_V &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}(1 + \beta + \chi)} \\ &\times [\text{BW}_{K^*(892)}(s) + \beta \text{BW}_{K^*(1410)}(s) + \chi \text{BW}_{K^*(1680)}(s)] \quad (17) \end{aligned}$$

and

$$F_S = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}(m_K^2 - m_\pi^2) \left[\frac{\kappa}{M_{K_0^*(800)}^2} \text{BW}_{K_0^*(800)}(s) + \frac{\gamma}{M_{K_0^*(1430)}^2} \text{BW}_{K_0^*(1430)}(s) \right], \quad (18)$$

where

$$\text{BW}_R(s) = \frac{M_R^2}{s - M_R^2 + i\sqrt{s}\Gamma_R(s)},$$

and

$$\Gamma_R(s) = \Gamma_{0R} \frac{M_R^2}{s} \left(\frac{P(s)}{P(M_R^2)} \right)^{2\ell+1}$$

is the s -dependent total width of the resonance. $\ell = 1(0)$ for $K\pi$ in the $P(S)$ -wave state and Γ_{0R} is the width of the

resonance at its peak. β , χ , κ , and γ in Eqs. (17) and (18) are parameters for the fractions of the resonances, which can be determined by fitting the data of the hadronic invariant mass distribution.

Actually these parameters have been determined in Ref. [11] for two models with different combinations of the resonances, both of which can provide a good description of the decay spectrum. For model I, $K_0^*(800) + K^*(892) + K^*(1410)$,

$$|\beta| = 0.075 \pm 0.006, \quad \arg(\beta) = 1.44 \pm 0.15, \quad (19)$$

$$\kappa = 1.57 \pm 0.23.$$

For model II, $K_0^*(800) + K^*(892) + K_0^*(1430)$, the parameters could have two solutions from the data fit, which read (hereafter we call them model II-1 and model II-2, respectively)

$$\text{Model II-1: } \kappa = 1.27 \pm 0.22, \quad |\gamma| = 0.954 \pm 0.081, \quad \arg(\gamma) = 0.62 \pm 0.34, \quad (20)$$

$$\text{Model II-2: } \kappa = 2.28 \pm 0.47, \quad |\gamma| = 1.92 \pm 0.20, \quad \arg(\gamma) = 4.03 \pm 0.09. \quad (21)$$

It is obvious that there is no contribution from $K^*(1680)$ in these two models; χ in Eq. (17) is set to zero.

Now we can calculate the quantity \mathcal{G} and the forward-backward asymmetry \mathcal{A} . The results have been shown in Tables I and II, respectively. It is found that, when these two quantities are evaluated for the full phase space, all of the models give consistent results. Models II-1 and II-2

are consistent for \mathcal{G} even if we calculate it for different cuts on s . However, in the large s region, $s \geq (1.2 \text{ GeV})^2$, it is expected that one might distinguish model I and model II from the values of \mathcal{G} . The asymmetry \mathcal{A} shown in Table II is more interesting since its values will show the difference from these three cases for s above 1 GeV^2 . A similar conclusion can also be obtained from the differential

TABLE I. The values of \mathcal{G} defined in Eq. (13) are evaluated for different cuts on s in the above models [(19)–(21)]. The last line is for the full phase space.

$s_{\min} \sim s_{\max}$	Model I	Model II-1	Model II-2
$(m_K + m_\pi)^2 \sim (0.8 \text{ GeV})^2$	0.326 ± 0.021	0.320 ± 0.021	0.343 ± 0.039
$(0.8 \text{ GeV})^2 \sim (1.0 \text{ GeV})^2$	0.257 ± 0.001	0.257 ± 0.001	0.257 ± 0.002
$(1.0 \text{ GeV})^2 \sim (1.2 \text{ GeV})^2$	0.333 ± 0.005	0.340 ± 0.007	0.339 ± 0.008
$(1.2 \text{ GeV})^2 \sim (1.4 \text{ GeV})^2$	0.398 ± 0.003	0.436 ± 0.006	0.437 ± 0.009
$(1.4 \text{ GeV})^2 \sim m_\tau^2$	0.440 ± 0.002	0.479 ± 0.002	0.479 ± 0.005
$(m_K + m_\pi)^2 \sim m_\tau^2$	0.269 ± 0.002	0.270 ± 0.003	0.271 ± 0.004

TABLE II. The integrated and normalized forward-backward asymmetry \mathcal{A} is evaluated for different cuts on s in the above models [(19)–(21)]. The last line is for the full phase space.

$s_{\min} \sim s_{\max}$	Model I	Model II-1	Model II-2
$(m_K + m_\pi)^2 \sim (0.8 \text{ GeV})^2$	-0.229 ± 0.006	-0.300 ± 0.030	-0.217 ± 0.022
$(0.8 \text{ GeV})^2 \sim (1.0 \text{ GeV})^2$	-0.107 ± 0.015	-0.108 ± 0.016	-0.105 ± 0.032
$(1.0 \text{ GeV})^2 \sim (1.2 \text{ GeV})^2$	-0.332 ± 0.039	-0.182 ± 0.073	-0.413 ± 0.075
$(1.2 \text{ GeV})^2 \sim (1.4 \text{ GeV})^2$	-0.378 ± 0.044	-0.292 ± 0.116	-0.042 ± 0.110
$(1.4 \text{ GeV})^2 \sim m_\tau^2$	-0.297 ± 0.037	-0.481 ± 0.044	0.471 ± 0.019
$(m_K + m_\pi)^2 \sim m_\tau^2$	-0.133 ± 0.018	-0.125 ± 0.021	-0.123 ± 0.037

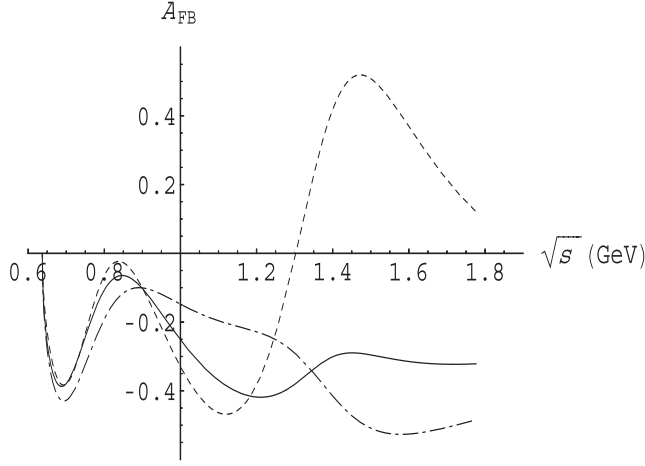


FIG. 1. The differential forward-backward asymmetry A_{FB} is plotted as the function of \sqrt{s} . The solid line is for model I, the dotted-dashed line is for model II-1, and the dashed line is for model II-2.

asymmetry A_{FB} , which has been plotted in Fig. 1. A_{FB} 's are almost consistent for the three cases when s is below 1 GeV^2 ; however, they behave differently for s above 1 GeV^2 . In particular, A_{FB} from model II-2 could change the sign for large s .

Early studies tell us that the decay $\tau \rightarrow K\pi\nu_\tau$ is dominated by vector $K^*(892)$ contributions. The above different models [(19)–(21)] from the Belle experiment have parametrized different scalar contents; therefore, it is not surprising that analysis of the angular distribution of the decay will reveal some difference. This means that the future angular analysis from the high-statistics experiment might be useful in distinguishing the above models and would help us to further understand the scalar components of the decay.

We would like to give some remarks here.

- (i) The purpose of this paper is to show that the angular analysis of the decay $\tau^- \rightarrow K_S \pi^- \nu_\tau$ may help us to reveal the nature of the scalar form factors. In order to illustrate our analysis, we simply take the form factors adopted in the Belle experiment [11]. It is not surprising that other different descriptions of the form factors, in particular, for the scalar form factors, could lead to different results from those in the present work.
- (ii) Actually, some physically better motivated descriptions of the scalar form factors, which both satisfy constraints by analyticity and unitarity and provide a good description of the experimental data, have been obtained in a series of seminal papers [18]. Note that our F_S is equivalent to $(m_K^2 - m_\pi^2)/s \cdot F_0^{K\pi}$ (here $F_0^{K\pi}$ is the scalar form factor) in these papers due to different notations. Thus, the different behavior of the differential forward-backward asymmetry A_{FB} for the small s region can be expected, to be compared with those shown in Fig. 1, in which A_{FB} 's

from the Belle data are consistent with one another for s below 1 GeV^2 . A detailed quantitative comparison is beyond the scope of the present paper, which is left for future work.

- (iii) For comparison, we suggest our experimental colleagues should also include these physically better motivated form factors in the future experimental analysis.

In Ref. [13], the differential forward-backward asymmetry A_{FB} has been studied in the two-Higgs-doublet model of type II with large $\tan\beta$ [19]. In this model, the charged Higgs exchange,

$$\mathcal{L}^{H^\pm} = \frac{G_F}{\sqrt{2}} \sin\theta_C \frac{m_s m_\tau \tan^2\beta}{m_{H^\pm}^2} \bar{\nu}_\tau (1 + \gamma_5) \tau \bar{s} (1 - \gamma_5) u, \quad (22)$$

can lead to a tree level contribution to $\tau \rightarrow K\pi\nu_\tau$, which thus gives a new contribution to the scalar form factor F_S ,

$$F_S^{\text{New}} = F_S + \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \frac{m_K^2 \tan^2\beta}{M_{H^\pm}^2} \frac{m_s}{m_s + m_u}. \quad (23)$$

In general, this new contribution will be strongly suppressed by the large charged Higgs mass M_{H^\pm} , which however may be substantially compensated by large $\tan\beta$. In terms of F_S^{New} , together with Eq. (16), one can evaluate the new contribution to A_{FB} , which has been plotted in Fig. 2. We take F_S in Eq. (23) from model I, and $\tan\beta/M_{H^\pm} = 0.4 \text{ GeV}^{-1}$ [20,21]. In Fig. 2, we include the uncertainty from the present experimental fit for A_{FB} , which shows that the uncertainty could obscure the new physics signal. Thus, new physics searches through A_{FB} might be interesting in the future; however, they might not be very significant at present.

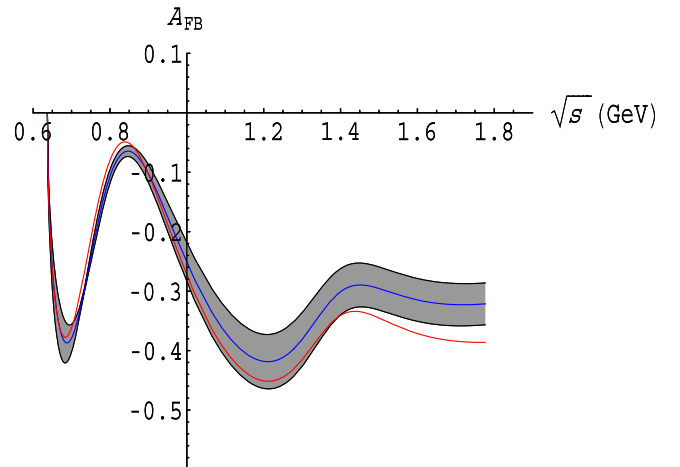


FIG. 2 (color online). The differential forward-backward asymmetry A_{FB} is plotted as the function of \sqrt{s} . The blue line, which is completely inside the grey region, is for model I, and grey region denotes the uncertainty from the parameters in model I. The red line, which is not completely inside the grey region, is from F_S^{New} .

IV. SUMMARY

The Belle Collaboration reported a measurement of the decay spectrum of $\tau^- \rightarrow K_S \pi^- \nu_\tau$, and found two models, $K_0^*(800) + K^*(892) + K^*(1410)$ and $K_0^*(800) + K^*(892) + K_0^*(1430)$, that can both describe the spectrum very well. Based on these data, we carried out a phenomenological analysis of the angular distributions in this decay. We find that the $\cos\theta$ -dependence of the normalized spectrum $1/\Gamma d\Gamma/d\cos\theta$ [see Eq. (11)] offers good opportunities to test the models. Therefore, the future experimental study of the angular distribution—in particular, the analysis of the forward-backward

asymmetries—may be very useful to distinguish or rule out the above models, which would be helpful to reveal the nature of the scalar form factor of the decay. Possible new physics contributions from two-Higgs-doublet model to the A_{FB} have also been analyzed. We found that the present experimental uncertainty may obscure the new physics signal.

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