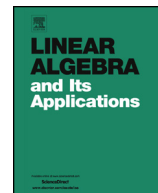




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Linear Algebra and its Applications

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Regular sparse anti-magic squares with the second maximum density [☆]



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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 14 January 2014

Accepted 5 May 2014

Available online 24 May 2014

Submitted by R. Brualdi

MSC:

05B20

15B36

Keywords:

Magic square

Sparse anti-magic square

Regular

Quasi

ABSTRACT

Sparse anti-magic squares are useful in constructing vertex-magic labelings for bipartite graphs. An $n \times n$ array based on $\{0, 1, \dots, nd\}$ is called a *sparse anti-magic square of order n with density d* ($d < n$), denoted by $\text{SAMS}(n, d)$, if its row-sums, column-sums and two main diagonal sums form a set of $2n + 2$ consecutive integers. An $\text{SAMS}(n, d)$ is called *regular* if there are d positive entries in each row, each column and each main diagonal. In this paper, we investigate the existence of regular sparse anti-magic squares with the second maximum density, i.e., $d = n - 2$, and it is shown that there exists a regular $\text{SAMS}(n, n - 2)$ if and only if $n \geq 4$.

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1. Introduction

Magic squares and their various generalizations have been objects of interest for many centuries and in many cultures. A lot of work had been done on the constructions of

[☆] Research supported by the National Natural Science Foundation of China (Nos. 11371308, 11301457, 11371121, 11201114).

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magic squares, for more details, the interested reader may refer to [1–4] and the references therein.

An *anti-magic square of order n* is an $n \times n$ array with entries consisting of n^2 consecutive nonnegative integers such that the row-sums, column-sums and two main diagonal sums constitute a set of consecutive integers. Usually, the main diagonal from upper left to lower right is called *the left diagonal*, another is called *the right diagonal*. The existence of an anti-magic square has been solved completely by Cormie et al. (see [5,6]). It was shown that there exists an anti-magic square of order n if and only if $n \geq 4$.

For positive integers n, d ($d < n$), an $n \times n$ array based on $\{0, 1, \dots, nd\}$ is called *sparse magic square of order n with density d* , denoted by $\text{SMS}(n, d)$, if its row-sums, column-sums and two main diagonal sums are the same. An $\text{SMS}(n, d)$ is called *regular* if there exist d elements in each row, each column and each main diagonal. The existence of a regular $\text{SMS}(n, d)$ has been solved completely by Li et al. [7]. It was shown that there exists a regular $\text{SMS}(n, d)$ if and only if $d \geq 3$ when n is odd and $d \geq 4$ when n is even.

Sparse anti-magic squares are generalization of anti-magic squares. For positive integers n, d ($d < n$), let A be an $n \times n$ array with entries consisting of $0, 1, \dots, nd$ and let S_A be the set of row-sums, column-sums and two main diagonal sums of A . We call S_A the *sum set* of A . Then A is called a *sparse anti-magic square of order n with density d* , denoted by $\text{SAMS}(n, d)$, if S_A consists of $2n + 2$ consecutive integers. In [8], an $\text{SAMS}(n, d)$ is also called a *sparse totally anti-magic square*. An $\text{SAMS}(n, d)$ is called *regular* if all of its rows, columns and two main diagonals contain d positive entries.

Sparse anti-magic squares are useful in graph theory. For example, they can be used to construct a vertex-magic total labeling for bipartite graphs, see [8] and the references therein.

Quite recently, the authors Chen et al. [9] proved the following result.

Theorem 1.1. *There exists a regular $\text{SAMS}(n, n - 1)$ if and only if $n \geq 4$.*

In this paper, we investigate the existence of a regular sparse anti-magic square with $d = n - 2$. It is not difficult to see that there is no $\text{SAMS}(3, 1)$. So to consider the existence of a regular $\text{SAMS}(n, n - 2)$, we need only to consider the case of $n \geq 4$. We shall prove the following.

Theorem 1.2. *There exists a regular $\text{SAMS}(n, n - 2)$ if and only if $n \geq 4$.*

2. Regular $\text{SAMS}(n, n - 2)$ with n even

In this section, we shall provide construction of sparse anti-magic squares based on quasi sparse anti-magic squares and prove that there exists a regular $\text{SAMS}(n, n - 2)$ for any $n \geq 4$ and n is even.

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