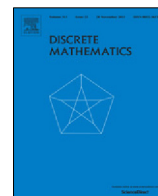




Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Discrete Mathematics

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/disc

Proper connection and size of graphs

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 22 March 2016

Received in revised form 12 September 2016

Accepted 15 September 2016

Available online xxx

Keywords:

Edge-colouring
proper connection

ABSTRACT

An edge-coloured graph G is called *properly connected* if any two vertices are connected by a path whose edges are properly coloured. The *proper connection number* of a connected graph G , denoted by $pc(G)$, is the smallest number of colours that are needed in order to make G properly connected. Our main result is the following: Let G be a connected graph of order n and $k \geq 2$. If $|E(G)| \geq \binom{n-k-1}{2} + k + 2$, then $pc(G) \leq k$ except when $k = 2$ and $G \in \{G_1, G_2\}$, where $G_1 = K_1 \vee (2K_1 + K_2)$ and $G_2 = K_1 \vee (K_1 + 2K_2)$.

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1. Introduction

We use [12] for terminology and notation not defined here and consider finite and simple graphs only. In particular, if G is a graph, then we denote by $c(G)$ the *circumference* of G , i.e. the order of a longest cycle of G , and by $p(G)$ the *detour number* of G , i.e. the order of a longest path of G .

An edge-coloured graph G is called *rainbow-connected* if any two vertices are connected by a path whose edges have different colours. The concept of rainbow connection in graphs was introduced by Chartrand, Johns, McKeon, and Zhang [3]. The *rainbow connection number* of a connected graph G , denoted by $rc(G)$, is the smallest number of colours that are needed in order to make G rainbow connected. An easy observation is that if G has n vertices then $rc(G) \leq n - 1$, since one may colour the edges of a given spanning tree of G with different colours, and colour the remaining edges with one of the already used colours.

As a modification of proper colourings and rainbow connections of graphs, Andrews, Lumduamhom, Laforge, and Zhang [1] and, independently, Borozan, Fujita, Gerek, Magnant, Manoussakis, Montero, and Tuza [2] introduced the concept of proper connections of graphs. An edge-coloured graph G is called *properly connected* if any two vertices are connected by a path whose edges are properly coloured. The *proper connection number* of a connected graph G , denoted by $pc(G)$, is the smallest number of colours that are needed in order to make G properly connected.

For the proper connection number of graphs, the following results are known.

Proposition 1. *Let G be a connected graph of order n and size m . Then*

- (1) $1 \leq pc(G) \leq \min\{\chi'(G), rc(G)\}$,
- (2) $pc(G) = 1 \Leftrightarrow G$ is complete,

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.disc.2016.09.021>

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- (3) $pc(G) = m \Leftrightarrow G \cong K_{1,m}$,
- (4) If G is a tree, then $pc(G) = \Delta(G)$.
- (5) If G is traceable, then $pc(G) \leq 2$.

For each pair of positive integers n and k , we define by $g(n, k)$ the smallest integer such that every connected graph of order n and size at least $g(n, k)$ has proper connection number at most k . Huang, Li, and Wang [5] showed that $g(n, k) = \binom{n-k-1}{2} + k + 2$ for $k = 2, n \geq 14$, and for $k = 3, n \geq 14$. In this paper we completely determine the function $g(n, k)$.

The analogous problem for rainbow connections was introduced in [7] and results on that problem appear in [6–9,11].

2. Auxiliary results

We shall use the following two results of Borozan et al. [2].

Proposition 2 ([2]). *If a graph G contains a vertex v such that $d(v) \geq 2$ and $pc(G - v) \leq 2$, then $pc(G) \leq 2$.*

Theorem 1 ([2]). *If G is a 2-connected graph, then $pc(G) \leq 3$.*

Huang et al. [5] extended Theorem 1 as follows.

Theorem 2 ([5]). *If G is a connected bridgeless graph, then $pc(G) \leq 3$.*

For a connected graph G with bridges, Huang et al. [5] described the following natural approach: Let $B \subseteq E(G)$ be the set of bridges of G and let G^* be the graph obtained from G by contracting each component of $G - B$ to a single vertex. Then G^* is obviously a tree with edge set B . They then proved the following result.

Theorem 3 ([5]). *If G is a connected graph, then $pc(G) \leq \max\{3, \Delta(G^*)\}$.*

We shall repeatedly use the following identities.

Proposition 3. *For every pair of positive integers a and b ,*

$$\binom{a}{2} + \binom{b}{2} = \binom{a+b}{2} - ab, \quad \text{and} \tag{1}$$

$$\binom{a+1}{2} = \binom{a}{2} + a. \tag{2}$$

The next lemma will be useful for the proof of our main result.

Lemma 1. *Let G be a connected graph with t bridges. Then*

$$|E(G)| \leq \binom{n-t}{2} + t.$$

Proof. The proof is by induction on t . The result obviously holds when $t = 0$. Now assume $t \geq 1$. Then $G - B$ has $t + 1$ components. Let H be a component of $G - B$ that corresponds to a leaf of G^* . Let $n(H) = r$. Then $G - V(H)$ is a connected graph of order $n - r$ with $t - 1$ bridges. Hence, by our induction hypothesis, $E(G - V(H)) \leq \binom{n-r-(t-1)}{2} + t - 1$. Therefore, using Proposition 3, we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} |E(G)| &\leq \binom{n-r-t+1}{2} + t - 1 + \binom{r}{2} + 1 \\ &= \binom{n-t+1}{2} - r(n-r-t+1) + t \\ &= \binom{n-t}{2} + (n-t) - r(n-r-t) - r + t \\ &= \binom{n-t}{2} + (n-r-t)(1-r) + t \\ &\leq \binom{n-t}{2} + t \end{aligned}$$

since $n \geq t + r$ and $r \geq 1$. □

We end this section with some results on the existence of long cycles in graphs that we need for the proof of our main theorem. We first state a classic result of Erdős and Gallai [4].

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