A Fan-Type Degree Condition for $k$-Linked Graphs

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Abstract

A graph $G$ is $k$-linked if for any $2k$ vertices $s_1, \ldots, s_k, t_1, \ldots, t_k$ in $G$, there exist disjoint paths $P_i$ such that $P_i$ is an $s_i - t_i$ path for $1 \leq i \leq k$. Motivated by work of G. Fan, let $\sigma_2^*(G)$ denote the minimum degree sum of vertices at distance two in $G$. In this note, we prove that a graph $G$ of order $n \geq 232k$ with $\sigma_2^*(G) \geq n + 2k - 3$ is $k$-linked. For $n$ sufficiently large, this implies a result of Kawarabayashi et al. that gives Ore-type degree conditions for $k$-linkedness.

Keywords: $k$-linked, Fan-type condition.

1 Introduction

All graphs in this paper are simple and finite. We let $N(v)$ denote the neighborhood of a vertex $v$, and let $d(v)$ denote the degree of $v$. If $X$ is a set of vertices in a graph $G$, we will often simply write $X$ for the induced subgraph $G[X]$ if the context is clear. Further, we let $N_X(v) = N(v) \cap X$ and $d_X(v) = |N_X(v)|$, and we also let $N(X) = \bigcup_{v \in X} N(v)$. The distance between vertices $u$ and $v$ in a graph is denoted $\text{dist}(u, v)$.

A graph $G$ is $k$-linked if for any $2k$ vertices $s_1, \ldots, s_k, t_1, \ldots, t_k$ in $G$, there exist disjoint paths $P_i$ such that $P_i$ is an $s_i - t_i$ path for $1 \leq i \leq k$. In [3], Kawarabayashi, Kostochka and Yu gave Ore-type degree-sum conditions that assure a graph $G$ of order at least $2k$ is $k$-linked. Let $\sigma_2(G)$ denote the minimum degree sum of a pair of nonadjacent vertices in $G$.

Theorem 1. Let $G$ be a graph on $n \geq 2k$ vertices. If

$$\sigma_2(G) \geq \begin{cases} 
  n + 2k - 3, & n \geq 4k - 1 \\
  \frac{2(n+5k)}{3} - 3, & 3k \leq n \leq 4k - 2 \\
  2n - 3, & 2k \leq n \leq 3k - 1 
\end{cases}$$

then $G$ is $k$-linked. These bounds are best possible.

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In this note, inspired by a result of G. Fan [2] for hamiltonian graphs, we are interested in studying degree sum conditions for $k$-linkedness restricted to pairs of vertices at distance two in $G$. Specifically, let
\[
\sigma^*_2(G) = \min\{d(u) + d(v) \mid \text{dist}(u, v) = 2\}.
\]
Our main result is as follows.

**Theorem 2.** Let $k \geq 1$ and let $G$ be a graph of order $n \geq 232k$. If $\sigma^*_2(G) \geq n + 2k - 3$, then $G$ is $k$-linked.

We note here that Theorem 2 implies Theorem 1 for sufficiently large $n$. The converse, however, does not hold. Indeed, construct the graph $G$ from $K_{m_1} \cup K_{m_2} \cup K_{m_3} \cup K_{m_4}$ with $\sum m_i = n$, where $K_t$ denotes the complete graph of order $t$, by adding all edges between $K_{m_i}$ and $K_{m_{i+1}}$ for $i = 1, 2, 3$. If $m_2 = 2k - 2$, then $\sigma^*_2(G) = n + 2k - 4$, but $G$ is not $k$-linked since if we choose $s_1, t_1, \ldots, s_{k-1}$ and $t_{k-1}$ to be the vertices in $K_{m_2}$, then there is no path from $K_{m_1}$ to $K_{m_3}$ avoiding these vertices. Furthermore, if $m_i \geq 2k - 1$ for $1 \leq i \leq 4$, then $\sigma^*_2(G) \geq n + 2k - 3$, so Theorem 2 implies that $G$ is $k$-linked. However, $\sigma_2(G) = n - 2$ in this case, so Theorem 1 does not allow us to draw the same conclusion.

## 2 Proof of Theorem 2

Prior to proving Theorem 2, we require several known results and lemmas.

**Theorem 3** (Mader 1972 [4]). If $G$ is a graph of order $n$ with at least $2kn$ edges, then $G$ contains a $k$-connected subgraph.

One of the central questions in the area of graph linkedness is to determine the minimum $f(k)$ such that every $f(k)$-connected graph is $k$-linked. The following result implies that $f(k) \leq 10k$, which currently represents the best progress towards determining $f(k)$ in general.

**Theorem 4** (Thomas and Wollan 2005 [6]). If $G$ is a $2k$-connected graph with at least $5kn$ edges, then $G$ is $k$-linked.

The next two lemmas appear in several places throughout the literature on $k$-linked graphs.

**Lemma 1** (c.f. Chen, Gould and Pfender [1]). If $G$ is a $2k$-connected graph that contains a $k$-linked subgraph $H$, then $G$ is $k$-linked.

**Lemma 2** (c.f. Manoussakis [5]). Let $G$ be a graph and $v$ be a vertex in $G$ with $d(v) \geq 2k - 1$. If $G - v$ is $k$-linked, then $G$ is $k$-linked.

Our final lemma is a straightforward analogue to the $\sigma_2$-threshold for $k$-connectedness.

**Lemma 3.** If $p \geq 1$ and $G$ is a graph of order $n$ with $\sigma^*_2(G) \geq n + p - 2$, then $G$ is $p$-connected and in particular has minimum degree at least $p$.

**Proof.** Suppose that $G$ has $\sigma^*_2(G) \geq n + p - 2$, but that $G$ is not $p$-connected. Choose a minimum cutset $S$ of $G$, so that $|S| \leq p - 1$, and note that every vertex in $S$ has a neighbor in each component of $G - S$. Thus, there exist components $X$ and $Y$ of $G - S$ containing vertices $x$ and $y$, respectively, such that $\text{dist}(x, y) = 2$. However, we then have that
\[
d(x) + d(y) \leq (|X| - 1) + (|Y| - 1) + 2|S| \leq n + p - 3,
\]
a contradiction. $\Box$
We are now ready to prove Theorem 2.

**Proof:** Assume that $G$ is as given, but is not $k$-linked. Let $S$ be a minimum cutset of $G$, so that by Theorem 4 and Lemma 3 we have that $2k - 1 \leq |S| < 10k$. As $n \geq 232k$, we also have that $G - S$ has exactly two components; call them $A$ and $B$, and assume without loss of generality that $|A| \leq |B|$.

First assume that $|S| = 2k - 1$, and for some $s \in S$, let $a$ and $b$ be vertices in $N_A(s)$ and $N_B(s)$, respectively. We have that

$$n + 2k - 3 \leq d(a) + d(b) \leq (|A| - 1) + (|B| - 1) + 2|S| = n + 2k - 3.$$  

(1)

Consequently, $N(a) = (A \cup S) - \{a\}$ and $N(b) = (B \cup S) - \{b\}$ for every such choice of $a$ and $b$. Let $X_A = N_A(S)$ and $X_B = N_B(S)$. As $S$ is a minimum cutset, each $s \in S$ must have neighbors in both $A$ and $B$, so $X_A$ and $X_B$ are both necessarily complete. Furthermore, for $x_a \in X_A$ and $y \in (A \cup S) - X_A$ (respectively $x_b \in X_B$ and $y' \in (B \cup S) - X_B$), $x_ay$ (resp. $x_by'$) is an edge in $G$.

We now wish to apply Lemma 2 to $G$. If $X_A = A$, then each vertex in $A$ is adjacent to all of $S$ and, if $X_A \neq A$, then $|X_A| \geq 2k - 1$, lest $G$ is not $(2k - 1)$-connected. In either event we may iteratively delete all vertices in $A - X_A$, followed by all vertices in $A$. Now, as $|B| \geq \frac{n - 2k + 1}{2}$ and $n \geq 232k$, we have that $|X_B| \geq 2k - 1$ (as again, otherwise $G$ is not $(2k - 1)$-connected). Thus, every vertex in $S \cup B$ is adjacent to every vertex in $X_B$, so we may iteratively delete vertices in $(B - X_B) \cup S$ until we obtain a complete graph of order $2k$ (comprised of $X_B$ and any vertex in $S$). As each deleted vertex had degree at least $2k - 1$ at the time of its deletion and $K_{2k}$ is $k$-linked, $G$ is $k$-linked by Lemma 2.

Thus, we may assume that $2k \leq |S| < 10k$, so that in particular $G$ is $2k$-connected. We consider two cases.

**Case 1:** $A$ is not complete.

Observe that $\sigma^*_2(A) \geq (n + 2k - 3) - 2|S| \geq n - 18k - 1$. As $n \geq 232k$ and $|A| \leq \frac{n - 2k + 1}{2}$, we have that $\sigma^*_2(A) \geq |A| + 40k$, so that $\delta(A) \geq 40k$. Theorem 3 therefore implies that $A$, and hence $G$, contains a $10k$-connected subgraph so that $G$ is $k$-linked by Lemma 1.

**Case 2:** $A$ is complete.

In this case, Lemma 1 implies that $|A| < 2k$, so that for any vertex $a \in A$, $d(a) < |S| + 2k < 12k$. Let $X_b = N_B(S)$ and note that the minimality of $S$ implies that for every $x_b \in X_b$ there is some vertex $s \in S$ and $a \in A$ such that $asx_b$ is an induced $P_3$. Consequently, as $d(a) < 12k$, it follows that $d(x_b) \geq n - 10k - 3$.

We next claim that if $|X_b| > 11k$, then $B \cup S$ is $k$-linked. If so,

$$|E(B \cup S)| \geq \frac{1}{2}|X_b|(n - 10k - 3) > \frac{11}{2}k(n - 10k) > 5kn,$$

since $n > 110k$. As $S$ is a minimum cutset, $B \cup S$ is $2k$-connected so we have that $B \cup S$ is $k$-linked by Theorem 4. Consequently $G$ is $k$-linked by Lemma 1. Thus, we will assume going forward that $|X_b| \leq 11k$, which implies that every vertex in $S$ has degree at most $|A| + |S| + |X_b| < 23k$.

As $n \geq 232k$ and $B \geq \frac{n - 10k}{2}$ we know that $B - X_b$ is nonempty, so let $X'_b = N_{B - X_b}(x_b)$. Every vertex in $X'_b$ is distance two from some vertex in $S$, so for any vertex $x'_b \in X'_b$ we therefore have
that $d(x_b') \geq n - 21k - 3$. As above, we claim that if $|X_b'| > 11k$, then $G$ is $k$-linked. Indeed, if so then

$$|E(B \cup S)| \geq \frac{1}{2} |X_b'| (n - 21k - 3) > \frac{11}{2} k (n - 21k) \geq 5kn,$$

since $n \geq 232k$. We will therefore assume that $|X_b'| < 11k$, so that each vertex $x_b$ in $X_b$ has degree at most $|S| + |X_b| + |X_b'| < 32k$.

To complete the proof, choose any vertices $a \in A$ and $x_b \in X_b$ that are at distance two in $G$. As $d(a) < 12k$ and $d(x_b) < 32k$ we have that $n + 2k - 3 \leq d(a) + d(x_b) < 44k$, a contradiction to the assumption that $n \geq 232k$. \qed

References


