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A NOTE ON RAMSEY NUMBERS FOR FANS

YANBO ZHANG, HAJO BROERSMA and YAOJUN CHEN✉

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Abstract

For two given graphs G_1 and G_2, the Ramsey number $R(G_1, G_2)$ is the smallest integer N such that, for any graph G of order N, either G contains G_1 as a subgraph or the complement of G contains G_2 as a subgraph. A fan F_l is l triangles sharing exactly one vertex. In this note, it is shown that $R(F_n, F_m) = 4n + 1$ for $n \geq \max\{m^2 - m/2, 11m/2 - 4\}$.

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1. Introduction

In this note we deal with finite simple graphs only. Let $G = (V(G), E(G))$ be a graph. For $S \subseteq V(G)$, we use $N_S(v)$ to denote the set of the neighbours of a vertex v that are contained in S, $N_S[v] = N_S(v) \cup \{v\}$ and $d_S(v) = |N_S(v)|$. If $S = V(G)$, we write $N(v) = N_G(v)$, $N[v] = N(v) \cup \{v\}$ and $d(v) = d_G(v)$. The maximum and minimum degrees of a graph G are denoted by $\Delta(G)$ and $\delta(G)$, respectively. Denote by $G[S]$ and $G - S$ the subgraphs induced by S and $V(G) - S$, respectively. For two vertex-disjoint graphs G_1 and G_2, $G_1 \cup G_2$ denotes their disjoint union and $G_1 + G_2$ is the graph obtained from $G_1 \cup G_2$ by joining every vertex of G_1 to every vertex of G_2. We use mG to denote the union of m vertex-disjoint copies of G. A complete graph of order m is denoted by K_m. A star S_n is $K_1 + (n-1)K_1$ and a fan F_n is $K_1 + nK_2$.

Given two graphs G_1 and G_2, the Ramsey number $R(G_1, G_2)$ is the smallest integer N such that, for any graph G of order N, either G contains G_1 as a subgraph or $\overline{G}$ contains G_2 as a subgraph, where $\overline{G}$ is the complement of G. Chvátal and Harary [2] constructed a general lower bound which often yields the exact values of $R(G_1, G_2)$. That is, $R(G_1, G_2) \geq (|V(G_1)| - 1)(\chi(G_2) - 1) + 1$, where G_1 is a connected graph and $\chi(G_2)$ is the chromatic number of G_2. Burr [1] generalised this lower bound by using another parameter $s(G_2)$, called the chromatic surplus of G_2, which is defined as the minimum number of vertices in some colour class under all proper vertex colourings of G_2 by $\chi(G_2)$ colours.

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THEOREM 1.1 [1]. *$R(G_1, G_2) \geq (|V(G_1)| - 1)(\chi(G_2) - 1) + s(G_2)$ for any connected graph G_1 with $|V(G_1)| \geq s(G_2)$.*

Burr defined G_1 to be G_2-good if the equality holds in Theorem 1.1. Based on this definition, one may ask, for a given graph G, which graphs F are G-good? This generated many questions in Ramsey theory and results were established for some special graphs G such as a tree, a cycle, a complete graph and so on. When G is a fan, Li and Rousseau showed that F_n is F_1-good for $n \geq 2$ and obtained lower and upper bounds for $R(F_n, F_m)$ in terms of n and m.

THEOREM 1.2 [4]. *$R(F_n, F_1) = 4n + 1$ for $n \geq 2$; and $4n + 1 \leq R(F_n, F_m) \leq 4n + 4m - 2$.*

Recently, Lin and Li proved that F_n is F_2-good for $n \geq 2$ and improved the upper bound for $R(F_n, F_m)$ in Theorem 1.2.

THEOREM 1.3 [5]. *$R(F_n, F_2) = 4n + 1$ for $n \geq 2$; and $R(F_n, F_m) \leq 4n + 2m$ for $n \geq m \geq 2$.*

Theorems 1.2 and 1.3 say that any F_n with $n \geq 2$ is both F_1-good and F_2-good. For a given $m \geq 3$, can we decide when F_n is F_m-good? Lin *et al.* established an approximate result by using the Erdős–Simonovits theorem.

THEOREM 1.4 [6]. *$R(F_n, F_m) = 4n + 1$ for sufficiently large n.*

It is not difficult to see that F_n is not always F_m-good for $n \geq m \geq 2$. In fact, we can prove that $R(F_n, F_m) \geq 4n + 2$ for $m \leq n < m(m-1)/2$. Since $m(m-1)/2 > m$, we must have $m \geq 4$ here. There exist positive integers p, q such that $2n + 1 = pm + q$ and $1 \leq q \leq m$. Let $H = pS_m \cup S_q$ if $q \neq 1$, and $H = (p-1)S_m \cup S_{m-1} \cup S_2$ if $q = 1$. Since $n < m(m-1)/2$, $2n + 1 \leq m(m-1)$ and $p \leq m - 2$. It is easy to check that H is a graph of order $2n + 1$ with $\delta(H) \geq 1$, and that $\overline{H}$ contains neither S_{m+1} nor mK_2. Let $H' = K_{2n} \cup \overline{H}$. Then H' contains no F_n and $\overline{H'}$ contains no F_m. Thus, if $m \leq n < m(m-1)/2$, then $R(F_n, F_m) \geq 4n + 2$.

In this note, our main goal is to determine a range of n with respect to m such that F_n is F_m-good for a given $m \geq 3$. Our main result is as follows.

THEOREM 1.5. *$R(F_n, F_m) = 4n + 1$ for $n \geq \max\{m^2 - m/2, 11m/2 - 4\}$.*

REMARK 1.6. Since F_n is not F_m-good for $m \leq n < m(m-1)/2$, we wonder whether F_n is F_m-good for $n \geq m(m-1)/2$. If this is true, then we can see that the range $n \geq m(m-1)/2$ is best possible.

2. Proof of Theorem 1.5

In order to prove Theorem 1.5, we need the following two lemmas.

LEMMA 2.1 [5]. $R(F_t, sK_2) = \max\{s, t\} + s + t$.

LEMMA 2.2 [3]. *A bipartite graph $G = (X, Y)$ has a matching which covers every vertex in X if and only if $|N(S)| \geq |S|$ for all $S \subseteq X$, where $N(S) = \bigcup_{v \in S} N_Y(v)$.*

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Proof of Theorem 1.5. The lower bound $R(F_n, F_m) \geq 4n + 1$ is implied by the fact that $2K_{2n}$ contains no F_n and its complement contains no triangle and hence no F_m. It remains to prove that $R(F_n, F_m) \leq 4n + 1$ for $n \geq \max\{m^2 - m/2, 11m/2 - 4\}$.

Let G be a graph of order $4n + 1$ with $n \geq \max\{m^2 - m/2, 11m/2 - 4\}$, and suppose to the contrary that G does not contain an F_n and $\overline{G}$ does not contain an F_m. If $\Delta(G) \geq 2n + m$, let x be a vertex with $d(x) = \Delta(G)$ and $H = G[N(x)]$. By Lemma 2.1, either H contains nK_2, which, together with x, forms an F_n, or $\overline{H}$ contains an F_m, which is also a contradiction. Thus, we have $\Delta(G) \leq 2n + m - 1$ and $\delta(\overline{G}) \geq 2n - m + 1$.

Claim 1. For any vertex v of $V(G)$, $G - N_G[v]$ contains a subgraph H_v which satisfies one of the following conditions:

(1) $H_v = K_{2n-2m+2}$;

(2) $\overline{H_v} = K_3 \cup (2n - 2m)K_1$;

(3) H_v is a graph of order $2n - m - l + 1$ and at most $3m - 2l - 3$ vertices in $\overline{H_v}$ are of positive degree, where $0 \leq l \leq m - 3$.

Moreover, there exists $X_v \subseteq V(H_v)$ such that $G[X_v] = K_{2n-3m+3}$ and $d_{X_v}(u) \geq 2n - 3m + 2$ for any $u \in V(H_v)$.

Proof. Since $\delta(\overline{G}) \geq 2n - m + 1$, we have $|V(G) - N_G[v]| \geq 2n - m + 1$. Let H_1 be an induced subgraph of $G - N_G[v]$ on $2n - m + 1$ vertices and $M = \{x_1y_1, \ldots, x_ty_t\}$ a maximum matching of $\overline{H_1}$ and $H_2 = H_1 - V(M)$. We deduce that $t \leq m - 1$, since otherwise M together with v forms an F_m in $\overline{G}$, which is a contradiction. Since M is a maximum matching in $\overline{H_1}$, $H_2 = K_{2n-m+1-2t}$. By the maximality of M, we can see that if $|N_{\overline{G}}(x_i) \cap V(H_2)| \geq 2$, then $|N_{\overline{G}}(y_i) \cap V(H_2)| = 0$ and *vice versa*. Assume without loss of generality that $x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_s$ are all the vertices of $V(M)$ such that $|N_{\overline{G}}(x_i) \cap V(H_2)| \geq 2$, where $s \leq t$. If $y_py_q \in E(\overline{G})$ for $1 \leq p < q \leq s$, then, since $|N_{\overline{G}}(x_p) \cap V(H_2)| \geq 2$ and $|N_{\overline{G}}(x_q) \cap V(H_2)| \geq 2$, we can find an M-augmenting path in $\overline{H_1}$, which contradicts the maximality of M. Thus, $y_py_q \in E(G)$ for all $1 \leq p < q \leq s$.

Set $H_3 = H_1 - \{x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_s\}$. We first show that H_3 contains an H_v, as required. By the assumption, $|N_{\overline{G}}(y_i) \cap V(H_2)| = 0$ for all $1 \leq i \leq s$. Noting that $y_py_q \in E(G)$ for all $1 \leq p < q \leq s$, we can see that $G[V(H_2) \cup \{y_1, y_2, \ldots, y_s\}] = K_{2n-m+1+s-2t}$.

If $s = m - 1$, then $t = m - 1$ and so $H_3 = G[V(H_2) \cup \{y_1, y_2, \ldots, y_s\}] = K_{2n-2m+2}$. Let $H_v = H_3$; then H_v is the subgraph, as required.

If $s = m - 2$ and $t = m - 2$, then $H_3 = G[V(H_2) \cup \{y_1, y_2, \ldots, y_s\}] = K_{2n-2m+3}$ and hence H_3 contains a subgraph $H_v = K_{2n-2m+2}$. If $s = m - 2$ and $t = m - 1$, then $G[V(H_2) \cup \{y_1, y_2, \ldots, y_s\}] = K_{2n-2m+1}$. If $V(H_2) \subseteq N_G(x_{m-1})$ or $V(H_2) \subseteq N_G(y_{m-1})$, then clearly H_3 contains an $H_v = K_{2n-2m+2}$. If not, then, by the maximality of M, we have $N_{\overline{G}}(x_{m-1}) \cap V(H_2) = N_{\overline{G}}(y_{m-1}) \cap V(H_2)$ and $|N_{\overline{G}}(x_{m-1}) \cap V(H_2)| = |N_{\overline{G}}(y_{m-1}) \cap V(H_2)| = 1$, which implies that $H_3 = K_{2n-2m+3} - \{x_{m-1}y_{m-1}, x_{m-1}u, y_{m-1}u\}$ for some $u \in V(H_2)$. Taking $H_v = H_3$, H_v is the subgraph, as required.

If $s \leq m - 3$, we let $l = s$ and $H_v = H_3$. Obviously, $|H_v| = 2n - m - l + 1$. By the assumption, $|N_{\overline{G}}(x_i) \cap V(H_2)| \leq 1$ and $|N_{\overline{G}}(y_i) \cap V(H_2)| \leq 1$ for $s + 1 \leq i \leq t$. By the maximality of M, we have $|(N_{\overline{G}}(x_i) \cup N_{\overline{G}}(y_i)) \cap V(H_2)| \leq 1$ for $s + 1 \leq i \leq t$.

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Thus, H_v contains at most $l + 3(t - l) \le 3m - 2l - 3$ vertices of positive degree in $\overline{H_v}$, where $0 \le l \le m - 3$.

Since $|V(H_2)| = 2n - m + 1 - 2t \ge 2n - 3m + 3$, we may let $X_v \subseteq V(H_2)$ with $|X_v| = 2n - 3m + 3$. Because H_2 is a complete graph, we have $G[X_v] = K_{2n-3m+3}$. Noting that each vertex of $V(H_v) - V(H_2)$ has at most one nonadjacent vertex in $V(H_2)$, we have $d_{X_v}(u) \ge 2n - 3m + 2$ for any $u \in V(H_v)$. □

Let $v \in V(G)$ be given. By Claim 1, there exist H_v and X_v attached to v. Since $n \ge \max\{m^2 - m/2, 11m/2 - 4\}$, we have $2n - 2m \ge 1$ and $2n - m - l + 1 - (3m - 2l - 3) \ge 1$; it follows that $V(H_v)$ contains a vertex u such that $V(H_v) \subseteq N_G[u]$. By Claim 1, there exist H_u and X_u attached to u. Noting that $V(H_v) \subseteq N_G[u]$ and $V(H_u) \subseteq V(G) - N_G[u]$, we have $V(H_v) \cap V(H_u) = \emptyset$.

Set $V_1 = \{w \mid |X_w \cap X_u| \ge 2n - 7m + 6 \text{ and } X_w \cap X_v = \emptyset\}$ and $V_2 = \{w \mid |X_w \cap X_v| \ge 2n - 7m + 6 \text{ and } X_w \cap X_u = \emptyset\}$.

Claim 2. (V_1, V_2) is a partition of $V(G)$ with $V(H_v) \subseteq V_1$ and $V(H_u) \subseteq V_2$.

Proof. For any vertex w of $V(G)$, if $X_w \cap X_u = X_w \cap X_v = \emptyset$, then $4n + 1 \ge |X_u| + |X_v| + |X_w| \ge 3(2n - 3m + 3)$ and hence $n \le 9m/2 - 4$, which is a contradiction. Thus, either $X_w \cap X_u \ne \emptyset$ or $X_w \cap X_v \ne \emptyset$. If $X_w \cap X_u \ne \emptyset$, then, since both $G[X_w]$ and $G[X_u]$ are complete graphs, we have $d(z) \ge |X_w| + |X_u| - |X_w \cap X_u| - 1$ for any vertex z in $X_w \cap X_u$. Because $d(z) \le \Delta(G) \le 2n + m - 1$, we obtain $|X_w \cap X_u| \ge |X_w| + |X_u| - 2n - m = 2n - 7m + 6$. Similarly, if $X_w \cap X_v \ne \emptyset$, then $|X_w \cap X_v| \ge 2n - 7m + 6$. If both $X_w \cap X_u \ne \emptyset$ and $X_w \cap X_v \ne \emptyset$, then $|X_w| \ge |X_w \cap X_u| + |X_w \cap X_v| \ge 2(2n - 7m + 6)$ and hence $n \le (11m - 9)/2$, which contradicts $n \ge (11m - 8)/2$. Therefore, for any vertex w of $V(G)$, either $w \in V_1$ or $w \in V_2$, but not in both, that is, (V_1, V_2) is a partition of $V(G)$.

By Claim 1, for any $w \in V(H_v)$, w is nonadjacent to at most one vertex of X_v, and $X_w \subseteq V(G) - N_G[w]$; hence $|X_w \cap X_v| \le 1$. Thus, $w \in V_1$ and $V(H_v) \subseteq V_1$. By symmetry, $V(H_u) \subseteq V_2$. □

Claim 3. For any two vertices $w_1, w_2 \in V_i$, $i = 1, 2$, we have $|X_{w_1} \cap X_{w_2}| \ge 4m - 2$.

Proof. By symmetry, it is sufficient to assume that $w_1, w_2 \in V_1$. Since $|X_{w_j} \cap X_u| \ge 2n - 7m + 6$ for $j = 1, 2$, we see that $|X_{w_1} \cap X_{w_2}| \ge |X_{w_1} \cap X_u| + |X_{w_2} \cap X_u| - |X_u| \ge 1$. Since both $G[X_{w_1}]$ and $G[X_{w_2}]$ are complete graphs, we have $d(z) \ge |X_{w_1}| + |X_{w_2}| - |X_{w_1} \cap X_{w_2}| - 1$ for any vertex z in $X_{w_1} \cap X_{w_2}$. Noting that $\Delta(G) \le 2n + m - 1$ and $n \ge 11m/2 - 4$, we have $|X_{w_1} \cap X_{w_2}| \ge 4m - 2$. □

Assume that $|V_1| \ge |V_2|$. By Claim 2, $|V_1| \ge \lceil (4n + 1)/2 \rceil \ge 2n + 1$. For any vertex z of V_1, if $d_{V_1}(z) \ge m$ in $\overline{G}$, we choose m nonadjacent vertices of z from V_1, denoted by $z_1, \ldots, z_m$. By Claim 3, for $1 \le i \le m$, z_i and z have at least $4m - 2$ common nonadjacent vertices, and then z_i has at least $3m - 1$ nonadjacent vertices in $X_z - \{z_1, \ldots, z_m\}$. Thus, we may find a matching of m edges in $\overline{G}[N_{\overline{G}}(z)]$ by Lemma 2.2, which, together with z, forms an F_m in $\overline{G}$, which is a contradiction. Therefore, for any vertex z of V_1, we have $d_{V_1}(z) \le m - 1$ in $\overline{G}$. Moreover, we may assume that $m \ge 2$, otherwise $G[V_1]$ is a complete graph which contains F_n, which is a contradiction. Since $V(H_v) \subseteq V_1$

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and $|H_v| \le 2n - 2m + 3$ by Claim 1, we let $V_1' \subseteq V_1$ be such that $V(H_v) \subseteq V_1'$ and $|V_1'| = 2n + 1$.

Now we prove that there exists some $z_0 \in V_1'$ such that $d_{V_1'}(z_0) = 2n$. By Claim 1, $H_v = K_{2n-2m+2}$; or $\overline{H_v} = K_3 \cup (2n-2m)K_1$; or H_v is a graph of order $2n - m - l + 1$ and at most $3m - 2l - 3$ vertices in $\overline{H_v}$ are of positive degree, where $0 \le l \le m - 3$. Since each vertex of $V_1' - V(H_v)$ is of degree at most $m - 1$ in $\overline{G}[V_1']$, then at most $q = \max\{(2m-1)m, (2m-2)m + 3, (m+l)m + (3m - 2l - 3)\}$ vertices are of positive degree in $\overline{G}[V_1']$. Because $n \ge \max\{m^2 - m/2, 11m/2 - 4\}$, $m \ge 2$ and $l \le m - 3$, it is easy to check that $q \le 2n$. Thus, there is a vertex $z_0 \in V_1'$ such that $d_{V_1'}(z_0) = 2n$. Since $G[X_v - \{z_0\}]$ is a complete graph of order at least $2n - 3m + 2$, and every vertex of $V_1' - X_v$ has at least $2n - 3m + 2 - (m - 1) \ge n$ adjacent vertices in X_v, we can always find a perfect matching in $G[V_1' - \{z_0\}]$, which, together with z_0, forms an F_n, which is a contradiction. This completes the proof. □

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YANBO ZHANG, Department of Mathematics, Nanjing University,
Nanjing 210093, PR China
and
Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Mathematics and Computer Science,
University of Twente, PO Box 217, 7500 AE Enschede, The Netherlands

HAJO BROERSMA, Faculty of Electrical Engineering,
Mathematics and Computer Science, University of Twente, PO Box 217,
7500 AE Enschede, The Netherlands

YAOJUN CHEN, Department of Mathematics, Nanjing University,
Nanjing 210093, PR China
e-mail: yaojunc@nju.edu.cn

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