On (n,k)-extendable graphs and induced subgraphs

Guizhen Liu*
Department of Mathematics, Shandong University,
Jinan, Shandong, P. R. China

Qinglin Yu†
Center for Combinatorics, LPMC
Nankai University, Tianjin, China
and
Department of Mathematics and Statistics
Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops, BC, Canada

Abstract

Let G be a graph with vertex set $V(G)$. Let n and k be non-negative integers such that $n+2k \leq |V(G)|-2$ and $|V(G)|-n$ is even. If when deleting any n vertices of G the remaining subgraph contains a matching of k edges and every k-matching can be extended to a 1-factor, then G is called an $(n,k)-$**extendable graph**. In this paper we present several results about (n,k)-extendable graphs and its subgraphs. In particular, we proved that if $G-V(e)$ is (n,k)-extendable graph for each $e \in F$ (where F is a fixed 1-factor in G), then G is (n,k)-extendable graph.

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Let G be a simple graph with the vertex set $V(G)$ and the edge set $E(G)$. A **matching** M of G is a subset of $E(G)$ such that any two edges of M have no vertices in common. A matching of size k is called a k-**matching**. If M is a matching so that every vertex (or except one) of G is incident with an edge of M, then M is called 1-**factor** (or **near** 1-**factor**).

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Let S be a subset of $V(G)$. Denote by $G[S]$ the induced subgraph of G by S and we write $G-S$ for $G[V(G)\setminus S]$. $E(S,T)$ denotes the edges between two vertex sets S and T. The number of odd components of G is denoted by $o(G)$.

Let M be a matching of G. If there is a matching M' of G such that $M \subseteq M'$, then we say that M can be extended to M' or M' is an extension of M. If each k-matching can be extended to a 1-factor, then G is called k-**extendable**. A graph G is called n-**factor-critical** if after deleting any n vertices the remaining subgraph of G has a 1-factor. The properties of 2-factor-critical and k-extendable graphs were studied extensively by Lovász and Plummer. The history and applications of these topics can be found in [2] and [5]. Liu and Yu [1] have introduced new concept, (n,k)-extendable graph, to combine the n-factor-criticality and the k-extendability.

Let n and k be non-negative integers such that $n+2k \leq |V(G)|-2$ and $|V(G)|-n$ is even. If when deleting any n vertices from G the remaining subgraph of G contains a k-matching and each k-matching in the subgraph can be extended to 1-factor, then G is called a (n,k)-**extendable graph**. Clearly, a graph is $(0,0)$-extendable if and only if it has a 1-factor. Similarly, $(0,k)$-extendable graphs are precisely those k-extendable graphs and $(n,0)$-extendable graphs are exactly n-critical graphs. A characterization and basic properties of (n,k)-extendable graphs were discussed in [1].

Nishimura and Saito [3] and Yu [7] studied the relationships between k-extendable graphs and its subgraphs and proved the followings

Theorem A. (Nishimura and Saito [3]) Let G be a graph with a 1-factor. If $G-V(e)$ is k-extendable for each $e \in E(G)$, then G is k-extendable.

Theorem B. (Yu [7]) A graph G is k-extendable if and only if for any matching M of size i $(1 \leq i \leq k)$ the graph $G-V(M)$ is (k-i)-extendable.

Based on Theorem B, Theorem A can be improved to the following:

Theorem 1. Let G be a graph with a 1-factor. If $G-V(e)$ is k-extendable for each $e \in E(G)$ and $|V(G)| \geq 2k+4$, then G is $(k+1)$-extendable.
Proof: Let $i=1$ in Theorem B, then the result follows. □

In fact, the reverse of Theorem 1 is also true from Theorem B. Next we generalize this result to (n,k)-extendable graphs.

Theorem 2. If $G-V(e)$ is an (n,k)-extendable graph for each $e \in E(G)$, then G is $(n,k+1)$-extendable graph but may not be an $(n,k+2)$-extendable or $(n+2,k)$-extendable graph.
Proof: Consider any vertex set S and $(k+1)$-matching M with $|S|=n$ and

$V(M) \cap S = \emptyset$. Let e be an edge of M. Since $G - V(e)$ is (n,k)-extendable, there exists a 1-factor in $(G - V(e)) - (S \cup V(M - \{e\}) = G - (S \cup V(M))$. Therefore, G is an $(n, k+1)$-extendable graph.

To see that G may not be $(n, k+2)$-extendable, we consider the graph

$$H_1 = (2K_{2n+1}) + (K_n \cup (k+2)K_2)$$

Then H_1 is not an $(n, k+2)$-extendable graph by considering $S = V(K_n)$ and $(k+2)$-matching $(k+2)K_2$. In the mean time, it is not hard to verify that for any $e \in E(H_1)$ $H_1 - V(e)$ is an (n,k)-extendable graph.

Similarly, to see that G may not be $(n+2, k)$-extendable, we consider the graph

$$H_2 = (2K_{2n+1}) + (K_{n+2} \cup kK_2)$$

Then H_2 is not an $(n+2, k)$-extendable graph but for any $e \in E(H_2)$ $H_2 - V(e)$ is an (n,k)-extendable graph. □

Before proceeding further, we quote two results from [1] as lemmas.

Lemma 1. Let G be an (n,k)-extendable graph. Then it is also a $(n-2, k+1)$-extendable graph.

Lemma 2. If G is an (n,k)-graph, then

(1) G is also $(n-2, k)$-extendable for $n \geq 2$;

(2) G is also $(n, k-1)$-extendable for $k \geq 1$.

For the convenience of the future arguments, we introduce one more term. Let S be a vertex set and M a k-matching with $S \cap V(M) = \emptyset$. If $G - S - V(M)$ has a 1-factor, then we say that G has a (S, M)-**extension**.

Since an $(n+2, k)$-extendable or an $(n, k+2)$-extendable graph must be $(n, k+1)$-extendable, Theorem 2 indicates that $(n, k+1)$-extendability is the best possible under the general conditions. But by introducing an additional condition on the size of graph in Theorem 2, we can improve it to the following:

Theorem 3. If $G - V(e)$ is an (n,k)-extendable graph $(n > 1)$ for each $e \in E(G)$ and $V(G) \leq 2k + 3n + 4$, then G is an $(n+2, k)$-extendable graph.

Proof: Suppose that G is not an $(n+2, k)$-extendable graph. By the definition, there exists a vertex set S with $|S| = n+2$ and k-matching M so that $G - S - V(M)$ has no 1-factor.

Let $G' = G - S - V(M)$. From Tutte's Theorem, there exists a vertex set $S' \subseteq V(G')$ such that $o(G' - S') \geq |S'| + 2$.

Claim 1. $G' - S'$ has exactly $|S'| + 2$ odd components.

Otherwise, if $o(G' - S') \neq |S'| + 2$, by parity, then we have $o(G' - S') \geq |S'| + 4$. Set $S_1 = S - \{a, b\}$ (where a, b are any two vertices of S) and $S_1' = S' \cup \{a, b\}$. Then

$$o(G - S_1 - V(M) - S_1') = o(G - S - V(M) - S') = o(G' - S') \geq |S'| + 4 = |S_1'| + 2$$

That is, $G - S_1 - V(M)$ has no 1-factor or G has no (S_1, M)-extension. But $|S_1| = n$ and $|M| = k$, so it contradicts to that G is (n, k)-extendable.

Claim 2. S and S' are independent sets.

If S is not independent, let e be an edge of $G[S]$ and $S_1 = S - V(e)$, then $G - V(e)$ has no (S_1, M)-extension. This contradicts to the fact that $G - V(e)$ is an (n, k)-extendable graph.

Similarly, if S' is not independent, let e be an edge of $G[S']$, $S_1 = S - \{a, b\}$ (where a, b are any two vertices of S) and $S_1' = S' - V(e) \cup \{a, b\}$, then $o(G - V(e) - S_1 - V(M) - S_1') = o(G - V(e) - S - V(M) - S') = o(G' - S') \geq |S_1'| + 2$ or $G - V(e)$ has no (S_1, M)-extension. This contradicts to that $G - V(e)$ is an (n, k)-extendable graph.

Claim 3. $E(S, S') = \emptyset$.

Otherwise, let $e = xy \in E(S, S')$ and $x \in S$, $y \in S'$. Replacing the vertex y by a vertex of $S - \{x\}$ and moving y to S, then the new pair still have all of the properties of the old pair S and S' have but the new pair is against Claim 2, a contradiction.

Claim 4. No vertex in an even component is adjacent to $S \cup S'$.

If there is an edge $e = xy$ so that $x \in S'$ and y is in an even component. Set $S_1' = S' \cup \{y\}$. Then

$$o(G - S - V(M) - S_1') = o(G - S - V(M) - S') + 1 = o(G' - S') + 1 \geq |S'| + 2 + 1 = |S_1'| + 2$$

But $e = xy \in S_1'$, a contradiction to Claim 2.

Similarly, if there is an edge $e = xy$ so that $x \in S$ and y is in an even component. Set $S_1' = S' - \cup\{y\}$. Then

$$o(G - S - V(M) - S_1') = o(G - S - V(M) - S') + 1 = o(G' - S') + 1 \geq |S'| + 2 + 1 = |S_1'| + 2$$

But $e = xy \in E(S, S_1')$, a contradiction to Claim 3.

With the preparation above, we can proceed to the proof of the theorem now.

From Theorem 2, G is $(n, k+1)$-extendable. Applying Lemma 1 repeatedly we see that G is $(\epsilon, (k + 1 + \lfloor n/2 \rfloor))$-extendable, where $\epsilon = 0$ or 1. When k-matching M is extended to a 1-factor (or near 1-factor) then $S \cup S'$ has to match to the vertices of odd components $\cup O_i$. As $o(G' - S') = |S'| + 2$ and $n \geq 2$, so at least one of O_i's has at least 3 vertices. Choose an edge e_1 from such an odd component, say O_1, now we can extend $(k+1)$-matching $M \cup \{e_1\}$ to a 1-factor (or near 1-factor). Thus $S \cup S'$ has to match to the vertices of $\cup O_i - V(e_1)$ and there exists an edge in $\cup O_i - V(e_1)$. If this process is repeated, we can find $\lfloor n/2 \rfloor + 1$ disjoint edges in $\cup O_i$, namely, $\{e_1, e_2, \cdots, e_l\}$ (where $l = \lfloor n/2 \rfloor + 1$). Since G is $(\epsilon, k + l)$-extendable, $M \cup \{e_1, e_2, \cdots, e_l\}$ can be extended to a 1-factor (or near 1-factor), and thus $S \cup S'$ has to match to some vertices of $\cup O_i - V(e_1) - V(e_2) - \cdots - V(e_l)$. Therefore, we have

$$|V(G)| \geq 2|S \cup S'| + 2k + 2(\lfloor n/2 \rfloor + 1)$$

$$\geq 2(n + 2) + 2k + (n - 1) + 2 = 2n + 4 + 2k + n + 1 = 3n + 2k + 5$$

which contradicts to the given condition. Hence, G is an $(n+2, k)$-extendable graph. □

Recently, Nishimura improved Theorem A by reducing the conditions required in the theorem. Instead of checking the k-extendability of $G - V(e)$ for every edge e in G, now one needs only checking the k-extendability of $G - V(e)$ for the edges belonging to a 1-factor of G.

Theorem C. (Nishimura [4]) Let G be a graph with 1-factors and let F be an arbitrary 1-factor of G. If $G - V(e)$ is k-extendable graph (or n-factor-critical) for each $e \in F$, then G is k-extendable (or n-factor-critical) graph.

We will generalize the above result to (n, k)-extendable graphs.

Theorem 4. Let G be a graph with 1-factors and let F be an arbitrary 1-factor of G. If $G - V(e)$ is (n, k)-extendable graph for each $e \in F$, then G is (n, k)-extendable graph.

Proof: We may assume that $n > 0$ and $k > 0$.

We proceed to prove the theorem by contradiction. Suppose that there exists a 1-factor F of G such that $G - V(e)$ is (n, k)-extendable for any $e \in F$ but G is not (n, k)-extendable. Then there exists a k-matching M and a vertex set S of size n, where $V(M) \cap S = \emptyset$, such that $G - V(M) - S$ has no 1-factor. Let $G' = G - V(M) - S$. Applying Tutte's 1-Factor Theorem, there exists $S' \subseteq V(G')$ so that $o(G' - S') > |S'|$. By the parity, $o(G' - S') \geq |S'| + 2$. Our aim is to find an edge $e \in F$ so that $G - V(e)$ is not (n, k)-extendable and thus leads to a contradiction.

At first, we show that 1-factor F can only match vertices from $V(M)$ to rest by the next claim.

Claim 1. For the given F, S and G', we have

(i) $F \cap E[S] = \emptyset$;

(ii) $F \cap E(S') = \emptyset$;

(iii) $F \cap E(S, S') = \emptyset$;

To see (i), if $e \in F \cap E(S)$, then $|S - V(e)| = n$ - 2 and $G - V(e)$ is not $(n-2, k)$-extendable. Thus, G is not (n, k)-extendable, a contradiction.

To see (ii), if $e \in F \cap E(S')$, then $G' - V(e)$ has no 1-factor or $G - V(e)$ is not (n, k)-extendable, a contradiction.

To see (iii), if $e \in F \cap E(S, S')$, where $e = ab$ and $a \in S$, $b \in S'$, choosing a vertex c from an odd component of $G' - S'$ and then $S - \{a\} \cup \{c\}$ and M can not be extended to a 1-factor as $o(G' - V(e) - S') > |S'| + 2 - 1$.

From (i) - (iii), it follows that a 1-factor F is in $E(S \cup V(M), G')$ or $E(S, V(M))$ or $E(G[V(M)])$.

Claim 2. G' has no even components.

Otherwise, let D be an even component and let $e = ab$ be an edge of F, where $a \in V(D)$.

If $b \in S$, choose $c \in V(D) - \{a\}$, then $T = S - \{b\}$ and M can not extended to a 1-factor in $G - \{a, b\}$ as $o((G' - V(e) - T - V(M)) - S') \geq |S'| + 2$, a contradiction.

If $b \in V(M)$, consider an alternating path of $M \cup F$ with end-vertex a. If another end-vertex c of this alternating path is in S. Similarly to the previous case, let $T = S - \{c\} \cup \{x\}$ (where $x \in V(D) - \{a\}$ and $M' = M - \{bc'\} \cup \{ab\}$. Then $G - \{c, c'\}$ (where $cc' \in F$) has no (T, M')-extension, a contradiction.

If c is in S', it is similar.

If c is in a component (either odd or even), let $T = S$ and $M' = M - \{bc'\} \cup \{ab\}$, then $G - \{c, c'\}$ has no (T, M')-extension as $G' - \{a, c\} - S'$ has at least $|S'| + 2$ odd components.

Claim 3. $S' = \emptyset$.

If $S' \neq \emptyset$, let $a \in S'$, then a is matched to a vertex b in the 1-factor F and b must be in $V(M)$. Consider an alternating path of $M \cup F$, say $abb' \cdots dd'c$.

If $c \in S'$, let $T = S$ and $M' = M - \{bb', dd'\} \cup \{ab, b'd\}$, then $G - \{d', c\}$ has no (T, M')-extension as $G' - \{a, c\}$ has no 1-factor.

If $c \in S$, let $T = S - \{c\} \cup \{x\}$ (where x is a vertex of a component) and $M' = M - \{bb', dd'\} \cup \{ab, b'd\}$, then $G - \{d', c\}$ has no (T, M')-extension as $G' - \{a, c\} - (S' - \{a\})$ has $o(G' - S')$ - 1 odd components, a contradiction.

If $c \in C$ (where C is any component), using the same argument we can see that $G' - \{a, c\} - (S' - \{a\})$ loses at most one odd component and obtain a contradiction.

Claim 4. $o(G' - S') = o(G') = 2$.

Suppose $o(G') > 2$ (i.e., $o(G') \geq 4$). If there exists an edge $e \in F$ and $e \in E(S, C_1)$, choose c from an odd component C_2, let $T = S - \{b\} \cup \{c\}$ and $M' = M$, then $o(G' - \{a, c\}) \geq 2$ or $G - \{a, b\}$ has no (T, M')-extension, a contradiction.

Otherwise, all vertices in $\cup C_i$ are matched into $V(M)$. Consider the alternating paths of $F \cup M$, there exists such a path starting with C_i and ending C_j. Let $c_i x_1 y_1 x_2 y_2 \cdots x_m y_m c_j$ be the alternating path, where $c_i \in C_i$, $c_j \in C_j$ and $c_i x_1$, $y_1 x_2$, $\cdots$, $y_m c_j \in F$, $x_1 y_1$, $x_2 y_2$, $\cdots$, $x_m y_m \in M$.

Let $T = S$ and $M' = M - \{x_1 y_1, \cdots, x_m y_m\} \cup \{y_1 x_2, \cdots, y_m c_j\}$. Then $G - \{c_i, x_1\}$ has no (T, M')-extension as $o(G' - \{c_i, c_j\}) \geq 2$, a contradiction.

Claim 5. $F \cap E(S, V(M)) = \emptyset$.

Consider the alternating path $ab \cdots c$ of $F \cup M$ with end-vertex a. If $c \in S$, let $T = S - \{a, c\}$ and $M' = M - \{bb'\} \cup \{cb'\}$, then $G - \{a, b\}$ does not have (T, M')-extension, that is $G - \{a, b\}$ is not $(n-2, k)$-extendable, a contradiction. If $c \in C_1$ (where C_1 is an odd component) and $|C_1| \geq 3$, choose $d \in V(C_1) - \{c\}$ and let $T = S - \{a\} \cup \{d\}$ and $M' = M - \{bb'\} \cup \{b'c\}$. Then $G - \{a, b\}$ (where $ab \in F$) has no (T, M')-extension as $o(G' - \{c, d\}) \geq 2$.

If $c \in C_1$ but $|C_1| = 1$, then we have $|C_2| \geq 3$ because G' has only two odd components, no even component and $|G'| \geq 4$. Suppose that $F \cap E(S, C_2) \neq \emptyset$. Let $e = gh \in F \cap E(S, C_2)$, where $g \in V(C_2)$ and $h \in S$. Choose $y \in V(C_2) - \{g\}$ and set $T = S - \{h\} \cup \{y\}$ and $M' = M$, then $G - \{g, h\}$ has no (T, M')-extension as $o(G' - \{g, y\}) \geq 2$, a contradiction.

So we may assume $F \cap E(S, C_2) = \emptyset$. In this case, all vertices of C_2 are matched to $V(M)$ in F. Considering $F \cup M$, there must be an alternating path with both end-vertices in $V(C_2)$ or an alternating path starting in $V(C_2)$ and ending in S. In either case, it yields a contradiction.

Now we are ready to conclude the proof.

Since $|S| \geq 1$ and $F \cap E(S, V(M)) = \emptyset$, there exists an edge $e = ab \in F$ from S to an odd component C_1 (where $a \in S$, $b \in V(C_1)$). If $|C_1| \geq 3$, let $c \in V(C_1) - \{c\}$ and set $T = S - \{a\} \cup \{c\}$ and $M' = M$, then $G - \{a, b\}$ has no (T, M')-extension, a contradiction. If $|C_1| = 1$, then $|C_2| \geq 3$. Without loss of generality, we assume $F \cap E(S, C_2) = \emptyset$. Thus, all vertices of $V(C_2)$ are matched to $V(M)$ in F. Considering $F \cup M$, there exists an alternating path P with both of ends in C_2 or an alternating path P from C_2 to S.

Let $P = c x_1 y_1 d$, where $c x_1, y_1 d \in F$ and $x_1 y_1 \in M$. If $c, d \in V(C_2)$, let $T = S$ and $M' = M - \{x_1 y_1\} \cup \{d y_1\}$, then $G - \{c, x_1\}$ has no (T, M')-extension as $o(G' - \{c, d\}) \geq 2$. If $c \in V(C_2)$ and $d \in S$, let $T = S - \{d\} \cup \{g\}$ (where $g \in V(C_2) - \{e\}$) and $M' = M - \{x_1 y_1\} \cup \{d y_1\}$, then $G - \{c, x_1\}$ has no (T, M')-extension, a contradiction.

The proof is completed. □

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