

# Bounds for the Sum-Balaban index and (revised) Szeged index of regular graphs

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## Abstract

Mathematical properties of many topological indices are investigated. Knor et al. gave an upper bound for the Balaban index of  $r$ -regular graphs on  $n$  vertices and a better upper bound for fullerene graphs. They also suggested exploring similar bounds for other topological indices. In this paper, we consider the Sum-Balaban index and the (revised) Szeged index, and give upper and lower bounds for these three indices of  $r$ -regular graphs, and also the cubic graphs and fullerene graphs, respectively.

*Keywords:* Sum-Balaban index; the (revised) Szeged index; regular graph; fullerene graph

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## 1. Introduction

Thousands of topological indices are introduced to characterize the physical-chemical properties of molecules [57]. We can divide these topological indices into three types according to the definitions: degree-based indices, distance-based indices and spectrum-based indices. Degree-based indices contain (general) Randić index [47], (general) zeroth order Randić index [47, 34, 35, 55], Zagreb index [29, 26, 3, 5, 20, 58], connective eccentricity index [62, 63] and so on. Distance-based indices [61, 15] include Balaban index [7, 8, 4], Wiener index [51, 50, 41, 22, 25, 33], Wiener polarity index [19, 52], Szeged index [2], Kirchhoff index [23, 24], the ABC index [32, 54], and the Harary index [1, 6], and so on. Eigenvalues of graphs [64], various of graph energies [10, 11, 36, 37, 43, 48, 38, 49,

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27, 13, 15, 30, 53], the Estrada index [39], and HOMO-LUMO index [46] belong to spectrum-based indices. Actually, there are also some topological indices defined based on both degrees and distances [60], such as degree distance [21]. From mathematical aspect, one direction to studying properties of each index is to determine the extremal values of the index among a given classes of graphs. In this paper, we focus on the bound for the Sum-Balaban index and the (revised) Szeged index.

Let  $G = (V, E)$  be a simple graph. The distance between vertices  $u$  and  $v$  is denoted by  $d_G(u, v)$ . Let  $w(u) = \sum_{a \in V} d_G(u, a)$ . The *Balaban index* of  $G$  is defined as

$$J(G) = \frac{m}{m-n+2} \sum_{e=uv \in E} \frac{1}{\sqrt{w(u) \cdot w(v)}},$$

which was proposed by Balaban [7, 8] in 1982. It is also called the *average distance-sum connectivity index* or *Balaban  $J$  index*. Furthermore, Balaban et al. [9] proposed the concept of the *Sum-Balaban index* for a connected graph  $G$ , namely,

$$SJ(G) = \frac{m}{m-n+2} \sum_{e=uv \in E} \frac{1}{\sqrt{w(u) + w(v)}}.$$

We emphasize that many mathematical properties and results on the Balaban index and the Sum-Balaban index have been achieved, see [12, 16, 17, 45, 59, 65].

As a topological index, the Sum-Balaban index was widely used in QSAR/QSPR modeling. And several approaches have been presented for the calculation of Sum-Balaban index by taking into account the chemical nature of elements. However, many mathematical properties of Sum-Balaban index are still not studied extensively. For example, we have known that the complete graph  $K_n$  has the maximum Sum-Balaban index and

$$SJ(K_n) = \frac{\binom{n}{2}}{\binom{n}{2} - n + 2} \binom{n}{2} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2(n-1)}}.$$

However, the minimum value among  $n$ -vertex graphs is not known.

Let  $e = uv \in E$ . Define three sets as follows:

$$N_u(e) = \{w \in V(G) : d_G(u, w) < d_G(v, w)\},$$

$$N_v(e) = \{w \in V(G) : d_G(v, w) < d_G(u, w)\},$$

$$N_0(e) = \{w \in V(G) : d_G(u, w) = d_G(v, w)\}.$$

Obviously,  $N_u(e), N_v(e), N_0(e)$  constitutes a partition of  $V(G)$ . And set  $|N_u(e)| = n_u(e)$ ,  $|N_v(e)| = n_v(e)$  and  $|N_0(e)| = n_0(e)$ . Gutman [28] presented a graph invariant named as *Szeged index*, defined by

$$S_z = \sum_{e=uv \in E} n_u(e)n_v(e).$$

The above index is based on counting of vertices of the underlying graph. Also the edge-invariant is considered, say “edge-Szeged index” [18, 44]. Randić [56] found the Szeged index does not count the contributions of the vertices at equal distances to the two endpoints of an edge and then proposed the *revised Szeged index* as follows

$$S_z^* = \sum_{e=uv \in E} \left( n_u(e) + \frac{n_0(e)}{2} \right) \left( n_v(e) + \frac{n_0(e)}{2} \right).$$

In [7], Aouchiche and Hansen proved the upper bound of the connected graph with  $n$  vertices and  $m$  edges is  $\frac{n^2 m}{4}$ . Then Xing and Zhou [57] determined the maximum and minimum revised Szeged index of unicyclic graphs with  $n \geq 5$  and the unicyclic graph with the unique cycle is of length  $r$  ( $3 \leq r \leq n$ ). Several properties and applications of two indices have been presented in [8, 16, 17].

Denote by  $K_n$ ,  $P_n$  and  $C_n$  the complete graph, path graph and cycle graph with  $n$  vertices, respectively. Among graphs on  $n$  vertices, Balaban index attains its maximum for the complete graph  $K_n$  and  $J(K_n) = \frac{n^3 - n^2}{2(n^2 - 3n + 2)}$ , which is slightly more than  $n/2$ . However, its minimum value among  $n$ -vertex graphs is not known. Recently, Knor et al. [42] prove that if  $G$  is an  $n$ -vertex  $r$ -regular graph, then  $J(G)$  tends to 0 as  $n$  tends to  $\infty$ . In other words, zero is also an accumulation point for Balaban index.

**Theorem 1.** *Let  $G$  be an  $r$ -regular graph on  $n$  vertices with  $r \geq 3$ . Then*

$$J(G) \leq \frac{r^2(r-1)^2}{2(r-2)^2 \left\lceil \log_{r-1} \frac{(r-2)n+2}{r} \right\rceil},$$

*which implies that  $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} J(G) = 0$ .*

The upper bound of fullerene graphs was also determined. Fullerenes [40] are polyhedral molecules made of carbon atoms arranged in pentagonal and hexagonal faces, and their corresponding graphs, fullerene graphs, are 3-connected, cubic planar graphs with only pentagonal and hexagonal faces.

**Theorem 2.** *Let  $G$  be a fullerene graph on  $n \geq 60$  vertices. Then  $J(G) \leq \frac{25}{\sqrt{n}}$ .*

At the end of [42], Knor et al. suggested exploring similar bounds for other indices. In this paper, we consider the Sum-Balaban index and the (revised) Szeged index. Following the result of Knor et al., we will give bounds for the Sum-Balaban index and the (revised) Szeged index of  $r$ -regular graphs, and also the cubic graphs and fullerene graphs, respectively.

## 2. Regular graphs

In this section, we will concentrate the bounds on  $r$ -regular graphs.

**Theorem 3.** *Let  $G$  be an  $r$ -regular graph on  $n$  vertices with  $r \geq 3$ . Then*

$$SJ(G) \leq \frac{r^2(r-1)n^{\frac{1}{2}}}{2(r-2)^{\frac{3}{2}}\sqrt{2\lceil \log_{r-1}\left(\frac{(r-2)n+2}{r}\right)\rceil}}.$$

*Proof.* Let  $u \in V(G)$  and  $n_i$  be the number of vertices at distance  $i$  from  $u$ . Thus,

$$w(u) = \sum_i i \cdot n_i, \quad \sum_i n_i = n.$$

Since the graph is  $r$ -regular, we have  $n_i \leq r(r-1)^{i-1}$ . Let  $s$  and  $c$  satisfy that

$$n = 1 + r + r(r-1) + \dots + r(r-1)^{s-1} + c, \quad 0 \leq c < r(r-1)^s.$$

Thus we can bound  $w(u)$  in the following way:

$$w(u) = \sum_{i=0}^{s+1} i \cdot n_i \geq 1r + 2r(r-1) + \dots + sr(r-1)^{s-1} + (s+1)c.$$

In other words, a lower bound on  $w(u)$  is attained if the breadth-search tree, rooted at  $u$ , is an almost complete tree with all leaves at distance  $s$  and maybe  $s+1$  from  $u$ , and every non-leaf vertex is of degree  $r$ . So, we have

$$1 + (r-1) + \dots + (r-1)^{s-1} = \frac{n-1-c}{r},$$

and hence

$$\frac{(r-1)^s - 1}{r-2} = \frac{n-1-c}{r},$$

which gives

$$s = \log_{r-1} \left( \frac{(r-2)n+2-c(r-2)}{r} \right). \quad (1)$$

From (1) and from  $c < r(r-1)^s$  we get

$$\frac{(r-2)n+2}{r} = (r-1)^s + \frac{c(r-2)}{r} < (r-1)^s + (r-1)^s(r-2) = (r-1)^{s+1},$$

which means that  $\log_{r-1} \left( \frac{(r-2)n+2}{r} \right) < s+1$ . Since  $\log_{r-1} \left( \frac{(r-2)n+2}{r} \right) \geq s$  by (1), we have  $s = \lfloor \log_{r-1} \left( \frac{(r-2)n+2}{r} \right) \rfloor$ . Consequently,

$$\begin{aligned} w(u) &\geq sr(r-1)^{s-1} = \lfloor \log_{r-1} \left( \frac{(r-2)n+2}{r} \right) \rfloor \cdot r \cdot (r-1)^{\lfloor \log_{r-1} \left( \frac{(r-2)n+2}{r} \right) \rfloor - 1} \\ &\geq \lfloor \log_{r-1} \left( \frac{(r-2)n+2}{r} \right) \rfloor r \frac{(r-2)n+2}{r} \frac{1}{(r-1)^2} \\ &= \lfloor \log_{r-1} \left( \frac{(r-2)n+2}{r} \right) \rfloor \frac{(r-2)n+2}{(r-1)^2}. \end{aligned}$$

Thus,

$$\begin{aligned} SJ(G) &\leq \frac{m}{m-n+2} m \frac{1}{\sqrt{2w(u)}} \\ &\leq \frac{\frac{m}{2}}{\frac{m}{2}-n+2} \frac{rn}{2} \frac{1}{2\sqrt{\lfloor \log_{r-1} \left( \frac{(r-2)n+2}{r} \right) \rfloor \frac{(r-2)n+2}{(r-1)^2}}} \\ &< \frac{r^2(r-1)n^{\frac{1}{2}}}{2(r-2)^{\frac{3}{2}} \sqrt{2\lfloor \log_{r-1} \left( \frac{(r-2)n+2}{r} \right) \rfloor}}. \end{aligned}$$

■

Next, we consider the Szeged index of  $r$ -regular graphs.

**Theorem 4.** *Let  $G$  be an  $r$ -regular connected graph on  $n$  vertices, where  $n$  is even and  $r \leq \frac{n}{2}$ . Then*

$$S_z(G) \leq \frac{rn^3}{8}.$$

*And this bound is tight.*

*Proof.* By the definition, we know that  $n_u(e) + n_v(e) \leq n$  and  $n_0(e) \geq 0$ . So the smaller the  $n_0(e)$  is and the closer  $n_u(e)$  and  $n_v(e)$  are, and then the larger the Szeged index is. Hence,

$$S_z(G) = \sum_{e=uv \in E} n_u(e)n_v(e) \leq m \frac{n}{2} \frac{n}{2} \leq \frac{rn^3}{8}.$$

We say this bound is tight, namely, for given  $n$  and  $r$ , there exist a graph  $G$  satisfying that  $S_z(G) = \frac{rn^3}{8}$ . We construct such a graph as follows. Constitute a bipartite graph  $B_{\frac{n}{2}, r}$  with vertex classes  $X = \{u_i : 1 \leq i \leq \frac{n}{2}\}$  and  $Y = \{u'_i : 1 \leq i \leq \frac{n}{2}\}$  in which  $u_i$  join to the corresponding vertices  $u'_i, u'_{i+1}, \dots, u'_{i+r-1}$ , where the subscripts are taken modulo  $\frac{n}{2}$ . See Figure 1 for  $B_{6,3}$ .

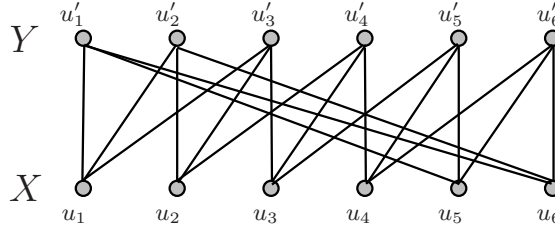


Figure 1: The graph  $B_{6,3}$ .

By some elementary calculations, we get  $n_u(e) = n_v(e) = \frac{n}{2}$  for an arbitrary edge  $e = uv$ . Therefore,

$$S_z(B_{\frac{n}{2}, r}) = \frac{rn^3}{8}.$$

The result is proved. ■

**Theorem 5.** *Let  $G$  be an  $r$ -regular connected graph on  $n$  vertices. Then*

$$S_z^*(G) \leq \frac{rn^3}{8}.$$

*And this bound is tight.*

*Proof.* We know the sum of  $n_u(e) + \frac{n_0(e)}{2}$  and  $n_v(e) + \frac{n_0(e)}{2}$  is  $n$ . Therefore, the closer the above two values are, the larger the product is. So, if  $n_u(e) + \frac{n_0(e)}{2} = n_v(e) + \frac{n_0(e)}{2} = \frac{n}{2}$ , then the product is largest obviously. At this time,

$$S_z^*(G) \leq \frac{rn^3}{8}.$$

If for arbitrary  $n$  and  $r$  satisfying that  $nr$  is even, we can find a graph with the required conditions and the revised Szeged index is  $\frac{rn^3}{8}$ , then the theorem is proved obviously.

In the following, we will characterize such an  $r$ -regular graph  $C_{n,r}$  with  $n$  vertices. First, we start from a cycle with  $n$  vertices, i.e.,  $C_n$ . Since at least one of  $r$  and  $n$  is even, we consider two situations.

**Case 1.** One of  $r$  and  $n$  is odd.

For each vertex  $u$  in  $C_n$ ,  $u$  is adjacent to every vertex of a path  $P_{r-2}$  which lies on  $C_n$ , satisfying that the distances in  $C_n$  between  $u$  and two endpoints of  $P_{r-2}$  are equal. Then we get an  $r$ -regular graph. As examples, see Figure 2 for  $C_{8,5}$  and  $C_{9,4}$ .



Figure 2: The graph  $C_{8,5}$  (left) and  $C_{9,4}$  (right).

**Case 2.** Both of  $r$  and  $n$  are even.

For each vertex  $u$  in  $C_n$ , find the symmetrical vertex  $v$  of  $u$  on  $C_n$  and join  $u$  to  $\frac{r-2}{2}$  consecutive vertices on the left and right sides of  $v$  on  $C_n$ , respectively. Then we get an  $r$ -regular graph. See Figure 3 for  $C_{6,4}$ .

It is easy to calculate the values of  $n_u(e) + \frac{n_0(e)}{2}$  and  $n_v(e) + \frac{n_0(e)}{2}$  for each edge of  $C_{n,r}$ . ■

Next, we will give a lower bound of the revised Szeged index.

**Theorem 6.** Let  $G$  be an  $r$ -regular graph on  $n$  vertices with  $r \geq 3$ . Then

$$S_z^*(G) \geq \frac{n(r^2 + 2r)(2n - r - 2)}{8}.$$

*Proof.* From the above proof, we know the larger the difference value of  $n_u(e) + \frac{n_0(e)}{2}$  and  $n_v(e) + \frac{n_0(e)}{2}$  is, the lower the product is. Therefore, we need to find the

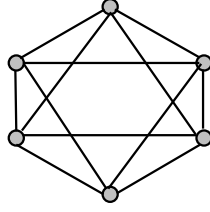


Figure 3: The graph  $C_{6,4}$ .

largest difference. For some edge  $e(=uv)$  of  $G$ , we know that  $r-1$  neighbors of  $u$  are either in  $N_u(e)$  or  $N_0(e)$ . Obviously, the difference between  $n_u(e) + \frac{n_0(e)}{2}$  and  $n_v(e) + \frac{n_0(e)}{2}$  is largest when the graph satisfies the following conditions:  $u$  and  $v$  have  $r-2$  common neighbors which form a complete subgraph  $K_{r-2}$ ; the other neighbor  $x$  of  $u$  is adjacent to all neighbors of  $v$ . See Figure 4. In this case,  $n_u(e) = 2$ ,  $n_v(e) = n-r$  and  $n_0(e) = r-2$ . So we get the conclusion

$$S_z^*(G) \geq \frac{rn}{2} \left(2 + \frac{r-2}{2}\right) \left(n-r + \frac{r-2}{2}\right) \geq \frac{n(r^2+2r)(2n-r-2)}{8}.$$

■

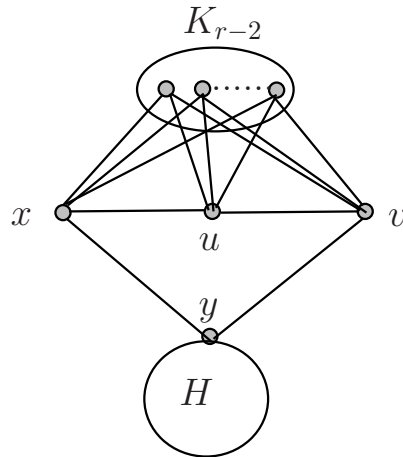


Figure 4: The graph  $G$ .



### 3. Fullerene graphs

Here we consider the chemical structure–fullerene.

**Theorem 7.** *Let  $G$  be a fullerene graph on  $n \geq 60$  vertices. Then*

$$SJ(G) \leq \frac{9n}{\sqrt{n\sqrt{n}}}.$$

*Proof.* Let  $u \in V(G)$  and  $n_i$  be the number of vertices at distance  $i$  from  $u$ . Then  $n_0 = 1$  and  $n_1 = 3$ . Moreover, it is shown that  $n_{i+1} \leq n_i + 3$  for  $i \geq 1$ . This immediately gives the bound  $n_i \leq 3i$  for  $i \geq 1$ . We obtain a lower bound of  $w(u)$  by assuming each  $n_i = 3i$  for  $i \geq 1$ , as in this way we have fewer vertices at higher distance. So

$$w(u) = \sum_i i \cdot n_i \geq 1 * 3 + 2 * 6 + \dots + s * 3s + (s+1)c,$$

for some  $s$  and  $c$ , where  $0 \leq c < 3s + 3$  and  $1 + 3 + \dots + 3s + c = n$ . Hence,

$$3(1 + 2 + \dots + s + (s+1)) \geq n,$$

and so

$$s^2 + 3s + 2 \geq \frac{2n}{3}.$$

Since  $n \geq 60$ , we have  $s \geq 5$ , and hence  $s^2 \geq 3s + 2$ , which gives  $s \geq \sqrt{\frac{n}{3}}$ . Since  $s$  is integer, we obtain

$$s \geq \left\lceil \sqrt{\frac{n}{3}} \right\rceil.$$

Consequently,

$$w(u) \geq 1 * 3 + 2 * 6 + \dots + 3 \left\lceil \sqrt{\frac{n}{3}} \right\rceil^2 + c(\left\lceil \sqrt{\frac{n}{3}} \right\rceil + 1) \geq 3 \sum_{j=1}^{\left\lceil \sqrt{\frac{n}{3}} \right\rceil} j^2 > \frac{n}{3} \sqrt{\frac{n}{3}}.$$

Thus,

$$SJ(G) \leq \frac{m}{m-n+2} m \frac{1}{\sqrt{2w(u)}} \leq \frac{\frac{m}{2}}{\frac{m}{2}-n+2} \frac{rn}{2} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\frac{n}{3}\sqrt{\frac{n}{3}}}} \leq \frac{9\sqrt{3}\sqrt{3}n}{2\sqrt{2n\sqrt{n}}} < \frac{9n}{\sqrt{n\sqrt{n}}}.$$

■

We know that the smallest fullerene graph is the dodecahedral  $C_{20}$ . Other fullerenes are denoted by  $C_{2n}, n = 12, 13, \dots$ . For each edge  $e(= uv)$  of one fullerene, there are at least 2 vertices at the same distance to  $u$  and  $v$ . Particularly, for the five edges of the outer pentagonal or hexagonal faces, there are at least 4 such vertices. Then we can get Theorem 8 directly.

**Theorem 8.** *Let  $G$  be a fullerene graph on  $n$  vertices. Then*

$$S_z(G) < \frac{3n(n-2)^2}{8} - 5(n-3).$$

The following result can be obtained directly from Theorems 2.2 and 2.3.

**Theorem 9.** *Let  $G$  be a fullerene graph on  $n \geq 60$  vertices. Then*

$$\frac{15n(2n-5)}{8} < S_z^*(G) \leq \frac{3n^3}{8}.$$

#### 4. Cubic graphs

In [42], Knor et al. consider a special cubic graph  $H_n$ . In this section, we consider the Sum-Balaban and the (revised) Szeged index value of  $H_n$ .

Let  $4|n$ , and  $H_n$  be such a graph which has the cycle of length  $3\frac{n}{4}$ , in which every third vertex is doubled, see Figure 5 for  $H_{12}$ . In other words,  $H_n$  is obtained from  $n/4$  copies of  $K_4 - e$  joined by  $n/4$  extra edges. Obviously,  $H_n$  is a cubic connected graph. And we can get the following conclusion.

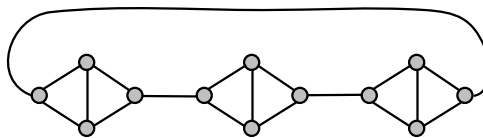


Figure 5: The graph  $H_{12}$ .

**Theorem 10.** *For positive  $n$  is divisible by 4, it holds*

$$SJ(H_n) \leq 6\sqrt{2}.$$

*Proof.* Let  $\ell = \frac{3n}{4}$ . First we give a lower bound for  $w(u), u \in V(H_n)$ . In order to do so, we find the total distance  $cw(u)$  from  $u$  to the vertices of the original cycle. If  $\ell$  is even, then

$$cw(u) = 1 + 2 + \cdots + \frac{\ell}{2} + 1 + 2 + \cdots + (\frac{\ell}{2} - 1) = \frac{\ell^2}{4}.$$

Similarly, if  $\ell$  is odd, then

$$cw(u) = 2(1 + 2 + \cdots + \frac{\ell - 1}{2}) = \frac{\ell^2 - 1}{4}.$$

As there is at least one vertex in  $H_n$  not on the original cycle and different from  $u$ , and as the distance of this vertex to  $u$  is at least one, for both the above cases we get

$$w(u) \geq cw(u) + 1 > \frac{\ell^2}{4} = \frac{9n^2}{64}.$$

Hence,

$$SJ(H_n) \leq \frac{\frac{3n}{2}}{\frac{3n}{2} - n + 2} \frac{3n}{2} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\frac{9n^2}{64}}} = \frac{12n}{\sqrt{2}(n+4)} < 6\sqrt{2}.$$

■

From the properties of this graph, we can get the following results easily.

**Theorem 11.** *For positive  $n$  divisible by 4, it holds*

$$S_z(H_n) = \begin{cases} \frac{5n(n-2)^2+4n}{16} & \text{if } \frac{n}{4} \text{ is odd,} \\ \frac{5n^3-8n^2+4n}{16} & \text{if } \frac{n}{4} \text{ is even.} \end{cases}$$

**Theorem 12.** *For positive  $n$  divisible by 4, it holds*

$$S_z^*(H_n) = \begin{cases} \frac{3n^3}{8} & \text{if } \frac{n}{4} \text{ is odd,} \\ \frac{3n^3-2n}{8} & \text{if } \frac{n}{4} \text{ is even.} \end{cases}$$

## 5. Summary and Conclusion

Knor et al. gave an upper bound for the Balaban index of  $r$ -regular graphs on  $n$  vertices and a better upper bound for fullerene graphs. They also suggested exploring similar bounds for other indices. In this paper, we consider the Sum-Balaban index and the (revised) Szeged index, and give bounds for these three indices of  $r$ -regular graphs, and also the cubic graphs and fullerene graphs, respectively. As a future work, it would be interesting to consider other topological indices for regular graphs.

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