

# Bounds on an Independent Distance Domination Parameter

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**ABSTRACT.** Let  $m \geq 1$  be an integer and let  $G$  be a graph of order  $n$ . A set  $\mathcal{D}$  of vertices of  $G$  is a  $m$ -dominating set of  $G$  if every vertex of  $V(G) - \mathcal{D}$  is within distance  $m$  from some vertex of  $\mathcal{D}$ . An independent set of vertices of  $G$  is a set of vertices of  $G$  whose elements are pairwise nonadjacent. The minimum cardinality among all independent  $m$ -dominating sets of  $G$  is called the independent  $m$ -domination number and is denoted by  $id(m, G)$ . We show that if  $G$  is a connected graph of order  $n \geq m + 1$ , then  $id(m, G) \leq (n + m + 1 - 2\sqrt{n}) / m$ , and this bound is sharp.

## 1 Introduction

In this paper, we use fairly standard graph theoretic terminology and notation. For example, for a connected graph  $G$ , the distance  $d(u, v)$  between two vertices  $u$  and  $v$  is the length of a shortest  $u$ - $v$  path. If  $S$  is a set of vertices of  $G$  and  $v$  is a vertex of  $G$ , then the *distance from  $v$  to  $S$* , denoted by  $d_G(v, S)$  or simply  $d(v, S)$ , is the shortest distance from  $v$  to a vertex of  $S$ .

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Let  $G = (V, E)$  be a graph with vertex set  $V$  and edge set  $E$ . If  $X$  and  $Y$  are subsets of  $V$ ,  $X$  *dominates*  $Y$  if and only if each vertex of  $Y - X$  is adjacent to some vertex of  $X$ . In particular, if  $X$  dominates  $V$ , then  $X$  is called a *dominating set* of  $G$ . An independent set of vertices is a set of vertices whose elements are pairwise nonadjacent. The fact that every maximal independent set of vertices in a graph is also a minimal dominating set motivated Cockayne and Hedetniemi [12] in 1974 to initiate the study of '*independent domination*' in graphs. A dominating set of vertices in a graph that is also an independent set is called an *independent dominating set*. The minimum cardinality among all independent dominating sets of a graph  $G$  is called the *independent domination number* of  $G$  and is denoted by  $i(G)$ . The parameter  $i(G)$  has received considerably attention in the literature (see, for instance, [1, 2, 6, 15, 29]). For an excellent bibliography on dominating and independent dominating sets we refer the reader to [23].

In this paper, we extend the definition of independent dominating sets in graphs. Let  $m \geq 1$  be an integer and let  $G = (V, E)$  be a graph. In [24], if  $X$  and  $Y$  are subsets of  $V$ , then the set  $X$  is said to  *$m$ -dominate*  $Y$  if and only if each vertex of  $Y - X$  is within distance  $m$  from some vertex of  $X$ . In particular, if  $X$   *$m$ -dominates*  $V$ , then  $X$  is defined to be an  *$m$ -dominating set* of  $G$ . An  *$m$ -dominating set* of vertices in a graph that is also an independent set we call an *independent  $m$ -dominating set*. The *independent  $m$ -domination number*  $id(m, G)$  of  $G$  is the minimum cardinality among all independent  $m$ -dominating sets of  $G$ . Thus  $\mathcal{D}$  is an independent 1-dominating set of  $G$  if and only if  $\mathcal{D}$  is an independent dominating set of  $G$ . Hence  $id(1, G) = i(G)$ .

We show that if  $G$  is a connected graph of order  $n \geq m + 1$ , then  $id(m, G) \leq (n + m + 1 - 2\sqrt{n}) / m$ , and this bound is sharp.

Results on the concept of  $m$ -domination in graphs have been presented by, among others, Bascó and Tuza [3, 4], Beineke and Henning [5], Bondy and Fan [7], Chang [8], Chang and Nemhauser [9, 10, 11], Fraisse [15], Fricke, Hedetniemi, and Henning [16, 17], Fricke, Henning, Oellermann, and Swart [18], Hattingh and Henning [21, 22], Henning, Oellermann, and Swart [24, 25, 26, 27, 28], Meir and Moon [30], Mo and Williams [31], Slater [32], Topp and Volkmann [33], and Xin He and Yesha [34].

## 2 Known results

Let  $v$  be a vertex of a graph  $G$ , and let  $m$  be a positive integer. Then the set of all vertices of  $G$  different from  $v$  and at distance at most  $m$  from  $v$  in  $G$  is defined in [15] as the  *$m$ -neighbourhood* of  $v$  in  $G$  and is denoted by  $N_m(v)$ . We begin by stating the following result from [26], which will prove useful to us later.

**Theorem A** For  $m \geq 1$ , if  $G$  is a connected graph of order at least  $m+1$ , then there exists a minimum  $m$ -dominating set  $\mathcal{D}$  of  $G$  such that for each  $v \in \mathcal{D}$ , there exists a vertex  $w \in V(G) - \mathcal{D}$  at distance exactly  $m$  from  $v$  such that  $N_m(w) \cap \mathcal{D} = \{v\}$ .

Next we mention known upper bounds on  $id(m, G)$  for a connected graph  $G$ . The following result is due to Gimbel and Vestergaard [20].

**Theorem B** If  $G$  is a connected graph of order  $n \geq 2$ , then

$$i(G) \leq n + 2 - 2\sqrt{n},$$

and this bound is sharp.

That the bound given in Theorem B is sharp, may be seen by considering the graph  $G$  obtained from a complete graph on  $k+1$  vertices by attaching to each of its vertices  $k$  disjoint paths of length 1. Then  $n = (k+1)^2$  and  $i(G) = k^2 + 1$ , so  $i(G) = n + 2 - 2\sqrt{n}$ .

Since  $i(G) = id(1, G)$ , Theorem B gives a sharp upper bound on  $id(1, G)$  for a connected graph  $G$ . For  $m \geq 2$ , Beineke and Henning [5] established the following upper bound on  $id(m, G)$  for a connected graph  $G$ .

**Theorem C** For  $m \geq 2$ , if  $G$  is a connected graph of order  $n \geq m$ , then

$$id(m, G) \leq \frac{n}{m},$$

and this bound is asymptotically best possible.

That the bound given in Theorem C is in a sense best possible, may be seen by considering the connected graph  $G$  constructed as follows: For  $k$  and  $b$  very large integers, let  $G$  be obtained from a complete graph on  $b$  vertices by attaching to each of its vertices  $k$  disjoint paths of length  $m$ . (The graph  $G$  is shown in Figure 1.) Then  $id(m, G) = (b-1)k + 1$  and  $n = |V(G)| = b(mk + 1)$ , so

$$\frac{id(m, G)}{n} = \frac{bk - k + 1}{bmk + b} = \frac{1 - \frac{1}{b} + \frac{1}{bk}}{m + \frac{1}{k}} \xrightarrow{b, k \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{m}.$$

If we restrict our attention to trees, then Beineke and Henning [5] established the following upper bound on  $id(m, T)$  for small values of  $m$ .

**Theorem D** For  $m \in \{1, 2, 3\}$ , if  $T$  is a tree of order  $n \geq m + 1$ , then  $id(m, T) \leq n/(m + 1)$ , and this bound is sharp.

That the bound given in Theorem D is sharp, may be seen by considering a tree  $T_m$  of order  $n$  obtained from a path on  $b$  vertices by attaching a path of length  $m$  to each vertex of the path. Then  $id(m, T_m) = b = n/(m + 1)$ .

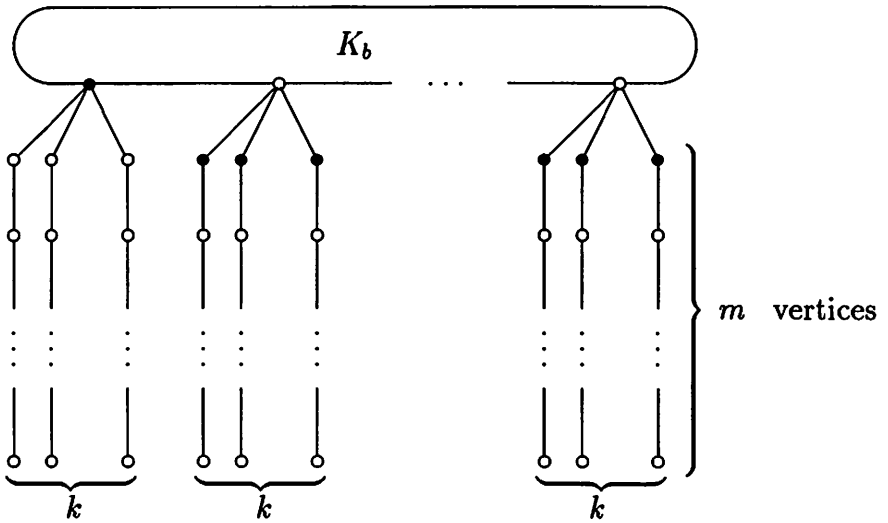


Figure 1: The graph  $G$ .

### 3 Complexity issues

In this section, we consider the decision problem corresponding to the problem of computing  $id(m, G)$  for any fixed integer  $m \geq 1$ . We show that from a computational point of view the problem of finding  $id(m, G)$  appears to be very difficult.

The following independent dominating set problem is known to be  $NP$ -complete (see Garey and Johnson [19]), and remains  $NP$ -complete for the class of bipartite graphs, as shown by Corneil and Perl [14].

**PROBLEM:** Independent dominating set ( $IDOM$ )

**INSTANCE:** A graph  $G = (V, E)$  and a positive integer  $k \leq |V|$ .

**QUESTION:** Is  $i(G) \leq k$  (that is, is there a vertex set  $S \subseteq V$  such that  $S$  is an independent dominating set with  $|S| \leq k$ )?

We will demonstrate a polynomial time reduction of the problem  $IDOM$  to show that the following problem is also  $NP$ -complete.

**PROBLEM:** Independent  $m$ -dominating set ( $ImDOM$ )

**INSTANCE:** A graph  $H = (V, E)$  and a positive integer  $j \leq |V|$ .

**QUESTION:** Is  $id(m, H) \leq j$  (that is, is there a vertex set  $S \subseteq V$  such that  $S$  is an independent  $m$ -dominating set with  $|S| \leq k$ )?

**Theorem 1** *Problem  $ImDOM$  is  $NP$ -complete, even when restricted to bipartite graphs.*

**Proof:** It is obvious that  $ImDOM$  is a member of  $NP$  since we can, in polynomial time, guess at a subset of vertices, verify that its cardinality is at most  $j$ , and then verify that it is an independent  $m$ -dominating set. To see that  $ImDOM$  is  $NP$ -complete it is next shown that a polynomial time algorithm for  $ImDOM$  could be used to solve  $IDOM$  in polynomial time.

Starting with an instance  $G = (V, E)$  and  $k \leq |V| = n$  and  $|E| = q$  for problem  $IDOM$ , we can construct the graph  $H$  from  $G$  by attaching to each vertex of  $G$  a path of length  $m-1$ . Thus in forming  $H$  from  $G$  we have added  $n(m-1)$  new vertices and  $n(m-1)$  new edges. That is,  $|V(H)| = nm$  and  $|E(H)| = q + n(m-1)$ , so the graph  $H$  can be constructed from  $G$  in time polynomial in  $n$ . We note that if  $G$  is bipartite, then so too is  $H$ .

**Lemma 1**  $id(m, H) = i(G)$ .

**Proof:** Let  $I$  be an independent dominating set of  $G$  of cardinality  $i(G)$ . Then  $I$  is an independent  $m$ -dominating set of  $H$ , so  $id(m, H) \leq |I| = i(G)$ . On the other hand, let  $\mathcal{D}$  be an independent  $m$ -dominating set of  $H$  of cardinality  $id(m, H)$ . The minimality of  $\mathcal{D}$  implies that  $\mathcal{D}$  contains at most one vertex from each path of length  $m-1$  added to  $G$  in forming  $H$ . Let  $v \in V(G)$  and consider the path of length  $m-1$  attached to  $v$  in forming the graph  $H$ . If  $\mathcal{D}$  contains a vertex  $w$  that belongs to this path, then neither  $v$  nor any vertex adjacent to  $v$  in  $G$  belongs to  $\mathcal{D}$ , for otherwise we may remove  $w$  from  $\mathcal{D}$  to produce an independent  $m$ -dominating set of  $H$  of cardinality less than  $|\mathcal{D}|$ . Replacing the vertex  $w$  in  $\mathcal{D}$  with the vertex  $v$  produces a new independent  $m$ -dominating set of  $H$  of cardinality  $|\mathcal{D}|$ . Hence we may assume that each vertex of  $\mathcal{D}$  belongs to  $G$ . But then  $\mathcal{D}$  forms an independent dominating set of  $G$ , so  $i(G) \leq |\mathcal{D}| = id(m, H)$ . Consequently,  $id(m, H) = i(G)$ .  $\square$

Lemma 1 implies that if we let  $j = k$ , then  $i(G) \leq k$  if and only if  $id(m, H) \leq j$ . This completes the proof of Theorem 1.  $\square$

#### 4 Bounds on $id(m, G)$ for a connected graph $G$

Since the problem of computing  $id(m, G)$  appears to be a difficult one, it is desirable to find good upper bounds on this parameter. In this section, we prove the following result, which improves on that of Theorem C and generalizes that of Theorem B.

**Theorem 2** For  $m \geq 1$ , if  $G = (V, E)$  is a connected graph of order  $n \geq m+1$ , then

$$id(m, G) \leq \frac{n + m + 1 - 2\sqrt{n}}{m}$$

and this bound is sharp.

**Proof:** Let  $\mathcal{D} = \{v_1, \dots, v_b\}$  be a minimum  $m$ -dominating set of  $G$  that satisfies the statement of Theorem A. We introduce the following notation. For  $i = 1, \dots, b$ , let

$$W_i = \{w \in V - \mathcal{D} \mid d(v_i, w) = m \text{ and } N_m(w) \cap \mathcal{D} = \{v_i\}\},$$

$$X_i = \{x \in V \mid x \text{ belongs to a } v_i\text{-}w \text{ path of length } m \text{ for some } w \in W_i\}, \text{ and}$$

$$U_i = \{u \in V \mid u \text{ is the vertex adjacent to } v_i \text{ on some } v_i\text{-}w \text{ path of length } m \text{ for some } w \in W_i\}.$$

By our choice of  $\mathcal{D}$ , we know that  $W_i \neq \emptyset$  for all  $i$ . Hence  $|X_i| \geq m + 1$  and  $v_i \in X_i$  for all  $i$ .

**Claim 1**  $X_i \cap X_j = \emptyset$  for  $1 \leq i < j \leq b$ .

**Proof:** Suppose  $x \in X_i \cap X_j$  for some  $i$  and  $j$  with  $1 \leq i < j \leq b$ . Then there exists a vertex  $w_i$  ( $w_j$ ) in  $W_i$  ( $W_j$ , respectively) such that a  $v_i$ - $w_i$  path ( $v_j$ - $w_j$  path, respectively) of length  $m$  contains the vertex  $x$ . But then at least one of  $w_i$  and  $w_j$  is within distance  $m$  from both  $v_i$  and  $v_j$ , which produces a contradiction.  $\square$

By Claim 1, and since  $\mathcal{D}$   $m$ -dominates  $V$ , we can partition  $V$  into sets  $V_1, \dots, V_b$ , where each  $V_i$  induces a *connected* graph of radius at most  $m$ , and where  $X_i \subseteq V_i$  and  $v_i$   $m$ -dominates  $V_i$ . Let  $S$  be the set produced by the following algorithm.

**Algorithm 1 :**

**Begin**

1.  $S \leftarrow \emptyset$ ,  $I \leftarrow \{1, \dots, b\}$  and  $i \leftarrow 1$ .

2.  $S \leftarrow S \cup \{v_i\}$  and  $I \leftarrow I - \{i\}$ .

3. **For**  $j \in I$  **do**

**If**  $v_i v_j \in E$  **then**

3.1. **For**  $u \in U_j$  **do**

**If** ( $d(u, w) = m - 1$  for some  $w \in W_j$  satisfying  $d(w, S) > m$ ) **then**  $S \leftarrow S \cup \{u\}$ .

**End for**

3.2.  $I \leftarrow I - \{j\}$ .

**End for**

4. If  $I = \emptyset$ , then continue; otherwise, let  $i' \in I$ , set  $i \leftarrow i'$ , and return to Step 2.

5. If  $S$   $m$ -dominates  $V$ , then stop; otherwise, continue.

6.  $T \leftarrow \{t \in V \mid d(t, S) > m\}$ .

7. For  $t \in T$  do

7.1. If  $t \in V_j$  then

$u_t \leftarrow$  (the vertex adjacent to  $v_j$  on some  $v_j$ - $t$  path of length  $m$  in  $\langle V_j \rangle$ )

7.2. If  $d(t, S) > m$  then  $S \leftarrow S \cup \{u_t\}$ .

End for

End

We prove that the set  $S$  produced by Algorithm 1 is an independent  $m$ -dominating set of  $G$  of cardinality at most  $(n + m + 1 - 2\sqrt{n})/m$ . We begin with two claims.

**Claim 2** If  $v_i v_j \in E$  in Step 3 of Algorithm 1, then when  $j$  is removed from  $I$  in Step 3.2, the set  $S$   $m$ -dominates  $W_j$ .

**Proof:** In Step 3 of Algorithm 1, if  $v_i v_j \in E$ , then we proceed systematically through the vertices of  $U_j$ , placing a vertex in  $S$  only if it is at distance  $m - 1$  from a vertex of  $W_j$  which is not  $m$ -dominated by a vertex already in  $S$ . Suppose that after the completion of Step 3,  $d(w_j, S) > m$  for some  $w_j \in W_j$ . Consider a  $v_j$ - $w_j$  path of length  $m$ , and let  $u_j$  be the vertex adjacent to  $v_j$  on this path. Then  $u_j \in U_j$ . Since  $d(u_j, w_j) = m - 1$  and  $d(w_j, S) > m$ , the vertex  $u_j$  would have been added to  $S$  in Step 3 of Algorithm 1, producing a contradiction.  $\square$

**Claim 3** If  $t \in T$ , then  $d(t, \mathcal{D}) = m$ .

**Proof:** Suppose  $d(t, v_j) \leq m - 1$  for some  $j$  ( $1 \leq j \leq b$ ). Let  $S$  be the set constructed when the set  $T$  in Step 6 of the algorithm is defined. Since  $d(t, S) > m$ ,  $v_j \notin S$ . Thus, by the way in which the set  $S$  is constructed, there is a vertex  $v_i$  of  $S \cap \mathcal{D}$  adjacent to  $v_j$ . But then  $d(t, v_i) \leq m$ , contradicting the fact that  $d(t, S) > m$ .  $\square$

If  $t \in T$ , then  $t \in V_j$  for some  $j$  ( $1 \leq j \leq b$ ). Since  $v_j$   $m$ -dominates  $V_j$ , and  $\langle V_j \rangle$  is connected,  $d(v_j, t) \leq m$  in  $\langle V_j \rangle$ . However, by Claim 3,  $d(v_j, t) \geq m$ . Consequently,  $d(v_j, t) = m$  in  $\langle V_j \rangle$ . Hence there exists a  $v_j$ - $t$  path of length  $m$  in  $\langle V_j \rangle$ , and therefore the vertex  $u_t$  described in Step 7.2.

of the algorithm does indeed exist. It is now evident from the way in which the set  $S$  is constructed, that  $S$  is an  $m$ -dominating set of  $G$ . We show next that  $S$  is also an independent set of  $G$ .

**Claim 4** *The set  $S$  produced by Algorithm 1 is an independent set.*

**Proof:** If  $v_i \in S$ , then, by the way in which the set  $S$  is constructed, no vertex  $v_j$  of  $\mathcal{D}$  adjacent to  $v_i$  belongs to  $S$ . We show next that immediately before a vertex  $u \in U_j$  is placed in the set  $S$  in Step 3 of the algorithm,  $d(u, S) > 1$ . We know that before  $u \in U_j$  is placed in  $S$ , there exists a vertex  $w \in W_j$  satisfying  $d(w, S) > m$  and  $d(u, w) = m - 1$ . Hence before  $u \in U_j$  is placed in  $S$ , it is adjacent to no vertex of  $S$ , for otherwise  $d(w, S) \leq m$ . Furthermore, immediately before a vertex  $u_t$  is placed in  $S$  in Step 7.2. of the algorithm, we know that  $d(t, S) > m$ . However  $d(u_t, t) = m - 1$ , implying that  $d(u_t, S) > 1$  before  $u_t$  is placed in  $S$  for otherwise  $d(t, S) \leq m$ . Thus whenever a vertex is added to  $S$  at any stage of the algorithm, it is adjacent to no other vertex of  $S$ .  $\square$

It remains for us to show that  $|S| \leq (n + m + 1 - 2\sqrt{n})/m$ . For  $i = 1, \dots, b$ , let  $|V_i| = n_i$ . By the Pigeonhole Principle, at least one of the sets  $V_i$  contains at least  $n/b$  vertices. Relabeling the sets if necessary, we may assume that  $n_1 \geq n/b$ . For  $i = 1, \dots, b$ , let  $S_i = S \cap V_i$ . We show that, for each  $i = 1, \dots, b$ ,

$$|S_i| \leq \frac{n_i - 1}{m}. \quad (1)$$

Since  $|X_i| \geq m + 1$ , we know that  $n_i = |V_i| \geq |X_i| \geq m + 1$  for all  $i$ . For each  $v_i \in S$ , since  $v_i$   $m$ -dominates  $V_i$ , it is evident from the way in which the set  $S$  is constructed that  $v_i$  is the only vertex of  $V_i$  in  $S$ . Hence equation (1) holds for all  $i$  for which  $v_i \in S$ . The only values of  $i$  for which equation (1) is in doubt, are those integers  $j$  for which  $v_j \notin S$ .

If  $v_j \notin S$ , then, by the way in which the set  $S$  is constructed, there is a vertex  $v_i$  of  $S \cap \mathcal{D}$  adjacent to  $v_j$ . After the completion of Step 3 of Algorithm 1, if  $S \cap U_j \neq \emptyset$ , then let  $u_{j,1}, \dots, u_{j,r_j}$  be the order in which the vertices of  $U_j$  were placed in  $S$ . For each  $k$  with  $1 \leq k \leq r_j$ , immediately before  $u_{j,k}$  was placed into the set  $S$  in Step 3 of the algorithm, we know that there exists a  $w_{j,k} \in W_j$  satisfying  $d(w_{j,k}, S) > m$  and  $d(u_{j,k}, w_{j,k}) = m - 1$ . For  $k = 1, \dots, r_j$ , let  $Q_{j,k}$  be a  $u_{j,k}$ - $w_{j,k}$  path of length  $m - 1$ .

**Claim 5** *If  $S \cap U_j \neq \emptyset$ , then*

$$V(Q_{j,k}) \cap V(Q_{j,\ell}) = \emptyset \text{ for } 1 \leq k < \ell \leq r_j.$$



**Proof:** Suppose  $x \in V(Q_{j,k}) \cap V(Q_{j,\ell})$  for some  $k$  and  $\ell$  with  $1 \leq k < \ell \leq r_j$ . Since  $k < \ell$ , it follows from the ordering on the vertices of  $S \cap U_j$  that  $d(u_{j,k}, w_{j,\ell}) > m$ . If the length of the  $u_{j,\ell}$ - $x$  section of  $Q_{j,\ell}$  is at least the length of the  $u_{j,k}$ - $x$  section of  $Q_{j,k}$ , then the  $u_{j,k}$ - $w_{j,\ell}$  path obtained by following the  $u_{j,k}$ - $x$  section of  $Q_{j,k}$ , and then proceeding along the  $x$ - $w_{j,\ell}$  section of  $Q_{j,\ell}$  has length at most that of  $Q_{j,\ell}$ . That is to say,  $d(u_{j,k}, w_{j,\ell}) \leq m - 1$ , which produces a contradiction. On the other hand, if the length of the  $u_{j,\ell}$ - $x$  section of  $Q_{j,\ell}$  is less than that of the  $u_{j,k}$ - $x$  section of  $Q_{j,k}$ , then  $d(u_{j,\ell}, w_{j,k}) < m - 1$ . Since  $v_j u_{j,\ell} \in E$ , it follows that  $d(v_j, w_{j,\ell}) < m$ , which once again produces a contradiction.  $\square$

If  $S \cap U_j \neq \emptyset$ , then  $\cup_{k=1}^{r_j} V(Q_{j,k}) \subseteq X_j \subseteq V_j$ . Hence we have the following result.

**Claim 6** *If  $S \cap U_j \neq \emptyset$  and  $S \cap U_c \neq \emptyset$  for  $c \neq j$ , then*

$$V(Q_{j,k}) \cap V(Q_{c,\ell}) = \emptyset \text{ for } 1 \leq k \leq r_j \text{ and } 1 \leq \ell \leq r_c.$$

If  $T \neq \emptyset$ , then let  $u_{t_1}, \dots, u_{t_s}$  be the order in which the vertices of  $T$  were placed in  $S$  in Step 7.2. of the algorithm. If  $t_i \in T$ , then  $t_i \in V_j$  for some  $j$  ( $1 \leq j \leq b$ ). It follows then from Claim 3 that  $d(v_j, t_i) = m$  and  $d(u_{t_i}, t_i) = m - 1$ . For  $i = 1, \dots, s$ , let  $P_i$  be a  $u_{t_i}$ - $t_i$  path of length  $m - 1$  in  $(V_j)$ .

**Claim 7**  $V(P_k) \cap V(P_\ell) = \emptyset$  for  $1 \leq k < \ell \leq s$ .

**Proof:** Suppose  $x \in V(P_k) \cap V(P_\ell)$  for some  $k$  and  $\ell$  with  $1 \leq k < \ell \leq s$ . Suppose  $t_k \in V_i$  and  $t_\ell \in V_j$  where  $1 \leq i \leq j \leq b$ . Then  $V(P_k) \subseteq V_i$  and  $V(P_\ell) \subseteq V_j$ , implying necessarily that  $i = j$ . Since  $k < \ell$ , it follows from the ordering on the vertices of  $S \cap T$  that  $d(u_{t_k}, t_\ell) > m$ . If the length of the  $u_{t_\ell}$ - $x$  section of  $P_\ell$  is at least the length of the  $u_{t_k}$ - $x$  section of  $P_k$ , then the  $u_{t_k}$ - $t_\ell$  path obtained by following the  $u_{t_k}$ - $x$  section of  $P_k$ , and then proceeding along the  $x$ - $t_\ell$  section of  $P_\ell$  has length at most that of  $P_\ell$ . That is to say,  $d(u_{t_k}, t_\ell) \leq m - 1$ , which produces a contradiction. On the other hand, if the length of the  $u_{t_\ell}$ - $x$  section of  $P_\ell$  is less than that of the  $u_{t_k}$ - $x$  section of  $P_k$ , then  $d(u_{t_\ell}, t_k) < m - 1$ , implying that  $d(v_j, t_k) < m$ , once again producing a contradiction.  $\square$

**Claim 8** *If  $S \cap U_j \neq \emptyset$ , then*

$$V(Q_{j,k}) \cap V(P_\ell) = \emptyset \text{ for } 1 \leq k \leq r_j \text{ and } 1 \leq \ell \leq s.$$

**Proof:** Suppose  $x \in V(Q_{j,k}) \cap V(P_\ell)$  for some  $k$  and  $\ell$  with  $1 \leq k \leq r_j$  and  $1 \leq \ell \leq s$ . Suppose  $t_k \in V_i$  ( $1 \leq i \leq b$ ). Then  $V(P_\ell) \subseteq V_i$ . Since  $V(Q_{j,k}) \subseteq V_j$ , it follows that  $i = j$ . By the way in which the set  $S$  is

constructed, the vertex  $u_{j,k}$  was placed in  $S$  before the vertex  $u_{t_\ell}$ . We know, therefore, that  $d(u_{j,k}, t_\ell) > m$ . Hence the length of the  $u_{j,k}$ - $x$  section of  $Q_{j,k}$  exceeds that of the  $u_{t_\ell}$ - $x$  section of  $P_\ell$ , for otherwise  $d(u_{j,k}, t_\ell) \leq m-1$ . But this implies that the  $u_{t_\ell}$ - $w_{j,k}$  path obtained by following the  $u_{t_\ell}$ - $x$  section of  $P_\ell$ , and then proceeding along the  $x$ - $w_{j,k}$  section of  $Q_{j,k}$  has length less than that of  $Q_{j,k}$ . Thus,  $d(u_{t_\ell}, w_{j,k}) < m-1$ . Since  $v_j u_{t_\ell} \in E$ , this implies that  $d(v_j, w_{j,k}) < m$ , which produces a contradiction.  $\square$

We now consider the sets  $S_j$  for which  $v_j \notin S_j$ . It follows from Claims 5, 6, 7, and 8, that there is a collection of  $|S_j|$  vertex disjoint paths of length  $m-1$  that belong to  $\langle V_j \rangle$  and do not contain the vertex  $v_j$ . Thus  $n_j = |V_j| \geq |\{v_j\}| + m|S_j|$ , so  $|S_j| \leq (n_j - 1)/m$ . Hence equation (1) is true for all  $i = 1, \dots, b$ . Since  $S$  is an independent  $m$ -dominating set of  $G$ , we now have

$$\begin{aligned}
 id(m, G) \leq |S| &= |S_1| + \sum_{i=2}^b |S_i| \\
 &\leq |\{v_1\}| + \sum_{i=2}^b (n_i - 1)/m \quad (\text{by equation (1)}) \\
 &= 1 + ((n - n_1) - (b - 1))/m \\
 &\leq 1 + (n - \frac{n}{b} - b + 1)/m \quad (\text{since } n_1 \geq \frac{n}{b}) \\
 &= \frac{1}{m} (m + n + 1 - \frac{n}{b} - b).
 \end{aligned}$$

The last expression is maximized with  $b = \sqrt{n}$ . Thus

$$id(m, G) \leq |S| \leq \frac{1}{m} (m + n + 1 - 2\sqrt{n}).$$

That this upper bound on  $id(m, G)$  is sharp may be seen by considering the graph  $G$  shown in Figure 1 with  $b = mk + 1$ . Then  $id(m, G) = 1 + (b - 1)k = 1 + mk^2$  and  $n = |V(G)| = b(mk + 1) = (mk + 1)^2$ . Thus

$$\frac{1}{m} (m + n + 1 - 2\sqrt{n}) = 1 + mk^2 = id(m, G).$$

This completes the proof of the theorem.  $\square$

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