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**Transactions on Combinatorics**

ISSN (print): 2251-8657, ISSN (on-line): 2251-8665

Vol. 5 No. 1 (2016), pp. 15-23.

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## SKEW EQUIENERGETIC DIGRAPHS

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Communicated by Ali Reza Ashrafi

**ABSTRACT.** Let  $D$  be a digraph with skew-adjacency matrix  $S(D)$ . The skew energy of  $D$  is defined as the sum of the norms of all eigenvalues of  $S(D)$ . Two digraphs are said to be skew equienergetic if their skew energies are equal. We establish an expression for the characteristic polynomial of the skew adjacency matrix of the join of two digraphs, and for the respective skew energy, and thereby construct non-cospectral, skew equienergetic digraphs on  $n$  vertices, for all  $n \geq 6$ . Thus we arrive at the solution of some open problems proposed in [X. Li, H. Lian, A survey on the skew energy of oriented graphs, arXiv:1304.5707].

### 1. Introduction

Let  $D$  be a digraph with vertex set  $V(D) = \{v_1, v_2, \dots, v_n\}$  and arc set  $\Gamma(D)$ . The skew-adjacency matrix of  $D$  is the  $n \times n$  matrix  $S(D) = [s_{ij}]$  in which  $s_{ij} = 1$  if  $(v_i, v_j)$  is an arc of  $D$ ,  $s_{ij} = -1$ , if  $(v_j, v_i)$  is an arc of  $D$ , and  $s_{ij} = 0$ , otherwise. The characteristic polynomial of  $S(D)$  is defined as  $\phi_s(D : \lambda) = \det(\lambda I - S(D))$ , where  $I$  is an identity matrix of order  $n$ . The eigenvalues of  $S(D)$  are denoted by  $\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_n$ . These are all pure imaginary or zeros, since  $S(D)$  is skew symmetric. Two digraphs are said to be cospectral if they have same eigenvalues. The skew energy of the digraph  $D$ , denoted by  $E_s(D)$ , is defined as the sum of the norms of all eigenvalues of  $S(D)$ , that is,

$$E_s(D) = \sum_{i=1}^n |\lambda_i|.$$

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MSC(2010): Primary: 05C20; Secondary: 05C50.

Keywords: energy of graph, skew energy, skew equienergetic digraphs.

Received: 19 December 2014, Accepted: 5 May 2015.

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Two digraphs  $D_1$  and  $D_2$  are said to be skew equienergetic if  $E_s(D_1) = E_s(D_2)$ . If two digraphs are cospectral, then in a trivial manner, they are skew equienergetic. Therefore, in what follows, we are interested in finding skew equienergetic non-cospectral digraphs.

The energy of a simple undirected graph was introduced by one of the present authors [8]; for details of the theory of graph energy see [9, 20] and the references cited therein. In theoretical chemistry, the energy of a given molecular graph is related to the total  $\pi$ -electron energy of the molecule represented by that graph [10]. Recently, other graph energies were considered, such as the Laplacian energy [11], signless Laplacian energy [2], incidence energy [15], distance energy [14], and skew energy [1].

Adiga et al. [1] introduced the concept of skew energy of a simple digraph and obtained bounds for it. They have also calculated the skew energy of directed trees and directed cycles. For other results on the skew energy, see [3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 16, 21, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26] and the survey [18].

Adiga et al. [1] showed that the skew energy of an oriented tree is independent of its orientation. With this, Li and Lian [18] proposed the following problem:

**Problem 1.** [18] How to construct families of oriented graphs such that they have equal skew energy, but they do not have the same spectra?

In this paper we establish expressions for the characteristic polynomial of the skew adjacency matrix of a join of digraphs and for the skew energy of join of digraphs. Further, we construct non-cospectral skew equienergetic digraphs on  $n$  vertices for all  $n \geq 6$ . By this we get the complete solution of the Problem 1 from [18].

## 2. Spectra and skew energy of join of digraphs

The indegree of a vertex  $u$ , denoted by  $id_D(u)$  in a digraph  $D$  is the number of arcs coming to  $u$ . The outdegree of  $u$ , denoted by  $od_D(u)$  is the number of arcs going out from  $u$ .

**Definition:** The join of a digraph  $D_1$  to  $D_2$ , denoted by  $D_1 \rightarrow D_2$ , is a graph obtained from  $D_1$  and  $D_2$  by adding an arcs from each vertex of  $D_1$  to all vertices of  $D_2$ . An example is depicted in Fig. 1.

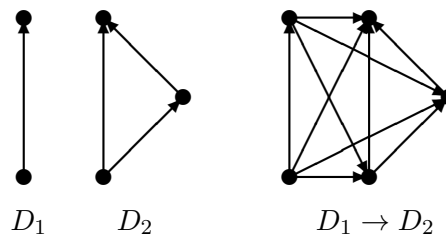


Fig.1

**Theorem 2.1.** Let for  $i = 1, 2$ ,  $D_i$  be a digraph on  $n_i$  vertices and  $id_{D_i}(u) = od_{D_i}(u)$  for all  $u \in V(D_i)$ . Then the characteristic polynomial of the skew adjacency matrix of  $D_1 \rightarrow D_2$  is

$$(2.1) \quad \phi_s(D_1 \rightarrow D_2 : \lambda) = \frac{\lambda^2 + n_1 n_2}{\lambda^2} \phi_s(D_1 : \lambda) \phi_s(D_2 : \lambda).$$

*Proof.*

$$(2.2) \quad \phi_s(D_1 \rightarrow D_2 : \lambda) = \det(\lambda I - S(D_1 \rightarrow D_2)) = \begin{vmatrix} \lambda I_{n_1} - S(D_1) & -J_{n_1 \times n_2} \\ J_{n_2 \times n_1} & \lambda I_{n_2} - S(D_2) \end{vmatrix}$$

where  $J$  is a matrix whose all entries are equal to one.

The determinant (2.2) can be written as

$$(2.3) \quad \begin{vmatrix} \lambda & -s_{12} & \dots & -s_{1n_1} & -1 & -1 & \dots & -1 \\ -s_{21} & \lambda & \dots & -s_{2n_1} & -1 & -1 & \dots & -1 \\ \vdots & & \vdots & & & & \vdots & \\ -s_{n_1 1} & -s_{n_1 2} & \dots & \lambda & -1 & -1 & \dots & -1 \\ 1 & 1 & \dots & 1 & \lambda & -s'_{12} & \dots & -s'_{1n_2} \\ 1 & 1 & \dots & 1 & -s'_{21} & \lambda & \dots & -s'_{2n_2} \\ \vdots & & \vdots & & & & \vdots & \\ 1 & 1 & \dots & 1 & -s'_{n_2 1} & -s'_{n_2 2} & \dots & \lambda \end{vmatrix}$$

where  $s_{ij}$  is the  $(i, j)$ -th entry in  $D_1$ ,  $i, j = 1, 2, \dots, n_1$  and  $s'_{ij}$  is the  $(i, j)$ -th entry in  $D_2$ ,  $i, j = 1, 2, \dots, n_2$ .

Since  $id_{D_i}(u) = od_{D_i}(u)$  for all  $u \in V(D_i)$ ,  $i = 1, 2$ , it easily follows that

$$(2.4) \quad \sum_{j=1}^{n_1} s_{ij} = 0 \quad \text{for } i = 1, 2, \dots, n_1$$

$$(2.5) \quad \sum_{j=1}^{n_2} s'_{ij} = 0 \quad \text{for } i = 1, 2, \dots, n_2.$$

We now perform the number of operations on the determinant (2.3).

Subtract the row  $(n_1 + 1)$  from the rows  $(n_1 + 2), (n_1 + 3), \dots, (n_1 + n_2)$  of (2.3) to obtain (2.6):

$$(2.6) \quad \begin{vmatrix} \lambda & -s_{12} & \dots & -s_{1n_1} & -1 & -1 & \dots & -1 \\ -s_{21} & \lambda & \dots & -s_{2n_1} & -1 & -1 & \dots & -1 \\ \vdots & & \vdots & & & & \vdots & \\ -s_{n_1 1} & -s_{n_1 2} & \dots & \lambda & -1 & -1 & \dots & -1 \\ 1 & 1 & \dots & 1 & \lambda & -s'_{12} & \dots & -s'_{1n_2} \\ 0 & 0 & \dots & 0 & -s'_{21} - \lambda & \lambda + s'_{12} & \dots & -s'_{2n_2} + s'_{1n_2} \\ \vdots & & \vdots & & & & \vdots & \\ 0 & 0 & \dots & 0 & -s'_{n_2 1} - \lambda & -s'_{n_2 2} + s'_{12} & \dots & \lambda + s'_{1n_2} \end{vmatrix}.$$

Adding the columns  $(n_1 + 2), (n_1 + 3), \dots, (n_1 + n_2)$  to the column  $(n_1 + 1)$  of (2.6), using Eq. (2.5), and noting that  $s'_{ij} = -s'_{ji}$  we arrive at the determinant (2.7):

$$(2.7) \quad \begin{vmatrix} \lambda & -s_{12} & \dots & -s_{1n_1} & -n_2 & -1 & \dots & -1 \\ -s_{21} & \lambda & \dots & -s_{2n_1} & -n_2 & -1 & \dots & -1 \\ \vdots & & \vdots & & & & \vdots & \\ -s_{n_1 1} & -s_{n_1 2} & \dots & \lambda & -n_2 & -1 & \dots & -1 \\ 1 & 1 & \dots & 1 & \lambda & -s'_{12} & \dots & -s'_{1n_2} \\ 0 & 0 & \dots & 0 & 0 & \lambda + s'_{12} & \dots & -s'_{2n_2} + s'_{1n_2} \\ \vdots & & \vdots & & & & \vdots & \\ 0 & 0 & \dots & 0 & 0 & -s'_{n_2 2} + s'_{12} & \dots & \lambda + s'_{1n_2} \end{vmatrix}$$

which is equal to (2.8):

$$(2.8) \quad \begin{vmatrix} \lambda & -s_{12} & \dots & -s_{1n_1} & -n_2 \\ -s_{21} & \lambda & \dots & -s_{2n_1} & -n_2 \\ \vdots & & \vdots & & \\ -s_{n_1 1} & -s_{n_1 2} & \dots & \lambda & -n_2 \\ 1 & 1 & \dots & 1 & \lambda \end{vmatrix} |B|$$

where

$$(2.9) \quad |B| = \begin{vmatrix} \lambda + s'_{12} & -s'_{23} + s'_{13} & \dots & -s'_{2n_2} + s'_{1n_2} \\ -s'_{32} + s'_{12} & \lambda + s'_{13} & \dots & -s'_{3n_2} + s'_{1n_2} \\ \vdots & & \vdots & \\ -s'_{n_2 2} + s'_{12} & -s'_{n_2 3} + s'_{13} & \dots & \lambda + s'_{1n_2} \end{vmatrix}.$$

The first determinant in (2.8) is of order  $(n_1 + 1)$ . Subtract the first row from the rows  $2, 3, \dots, n_1$ , in (2.8) to obtain (2.10):

$$(2.10) \quad \begin{vmatrix} \lambda & -s_{12} & \dots & -s_{1n_1} & -n_2 \\ -s_{21} - \lambda & \lambda + s_{12} & \dots & -s_{2n_1} + s_{1n_1} & 0 \\ \vdots & & \vdots & & \\ -s_{n_1 1} - \lambda & -s_{n_1 2} + s_{12} & \dots & \lambda + s_{1n_1} & 0 \\ 1 & 1 & \dots & 1 & \lambda \end{vmatrix} |B|.$$

Adding columns 2, 3, ...,  $n_1$  to the first column of (2.10) and using Eq. (2.4) we get (2.11):

$$(2.11) \quad \begin{vmatrix} \lambda & -s_{12} & \dots & -s_{1n_1} & -n_2 \\ 0 & \lambda + s_{12} & \dots & -s_{2n_1} + s_{1n_1} & 0 \\ \vdots & & \ddots & & \\ 0 & -s_{n_12} + s_{12} & \dots & \lambda + s_{1n_1} & 0 \\ n_1 & 1 & \dots & 1 & \lambda \end{vmatrix} |B|.$$

Expand it along the first column to obtain (2.12):

$$(2.12) \quad \{\lambda \Delta_1 + (-1)^{n_1} n_1 \Delta_2\} |B|$$

where

$$\Delta_1 = \begin{vmatrix} \lambda + s_{12} & -s_{23} + s_{13} & \dots & -s_{2n_1} + s_{1n_1} & 0 \\ -s_{32} + s_{12} & \lambda + s_{13} & \dots & -s_{3n_1} + s_{1n_1} & 0 \\ \vdots & & \ddots & & \\ -s_{n_12} + s_{12} & -s_{n_13} + s_{13} & \dots & \lambda + s_{1n_1} & 0 \\ 1 & 1 & \dots & 1 & \lambda \end{vmatrix}$$

and

$$\Delta_2 = \begin{vmatrix} -s_{12} & -s_{13} & \dots & -s_{1n_1} & -n_2 \\ \lambda + s_{12} & -s_{23} + s_{13} & \dots & -s_{2n_1} + s_{1n_1} & 0 \\ -s_{32} + s_{12} & \lambda + s_{13} & \dots & -s_{3n_1} + s_{1n_1} & 0 \\ \vdots & & \ddots & & \\ -s_{n_12} + s_{12} & -s_{n_13} + s_{13} & \dots & \lambda + s_{1n_1} & 0 \end{vmatrix}.$$

The expression (2.12) can be rewritten as

$$(2.13) \quad \{\lambda^2 |A| + (-1)^{n_1} n_1 (-1)^{n_1} n_2 |A|\} |B| = (\lambda^2 - n_1 n_2) |A| |B|$$

where

$$(2.14) \quad |A| = \begin{vmatrix} \lambda + s_{12} & -s_{23} + s_{13} & \dots & -s_{2n_1} + s_{1n_1} \\ -s_{32} + s_{12} & \lambda + s_{13} & \dots & -s_{3n_1} + s_{1n_1} \\ \vdots & & \ddots & \\ -s_{n_12} + s_{12} & -s_{n_13} + s_{13} & \dots & \lambda + s_{1n_1} \end{vmatrix}.$$

The determinant (2.14) can be written as

$$(2.15) \quad |A| = \frac{1}{\lambda} \begin{vmatrix} \lambda & -s_{12} & -s_{13} & \dots & -s_{1n_1} \\ 0 & \lambda + s_{12} & -s_{23} + s_{13} & \dots & -s_{2n_1} + s_{1n_1} \\ 0 & -s_{32} + s_{12} & \lambda + s_{13} & \dots & -s_{3n_1} + s_{1n_1} \\ \vdots & & & \ddots & \\ 0 & -s_{n_12} + s_{12} & -s_{n_13} + s_{13} & \dots & \lambda + s_{1n_1} \end{vmatrix}.$$

From Eq. (2.4), the sum of the  $i$ -th row in (2.15) is  $\lambda + s_{i1}$  for  $i = 2, 3, \dots, n_1$ . Therefore, by subtracting the columns  $2, 3, \dots, n_1$  of (2.15) from the first column, we obtain (2.16):

$$(2.16) \quad |A| = \frac{1}{\lambda} \begin{vmatrix} \lambda & -s_{12} & -s_{13} & \dots & -s_{1n_1} \\ -\lambda - s_{21} & \lambda + s_{12} & -s_{23} + s_{13} & \dots & -s_{2n_1} + s_{1n_1} \\ -\lambda - s_{31} & -s_{32} + s_{12} & \lambda + s_{13} & \dots & -s_{3n_1} + s_{1n_1} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ -\lambda - s_{n_11} & -s_{n_12} + s_{12} & -s_{n_13} + s_{13} & \dots & \lambda + s_{1n_1} \end{vmatrix}.$$

Add the first row of (2.16) to the rows  $2, 3, \dots, n_1$  to obtain (2.17):

$$(2.17) \quad |A| = \frac{1}{\lambda} \begin{vmatrix} \lambda & -s_{12} & -s_{13} & \dots & -s_{1n_1} \\ -s_{21} & \lambda & -s_{23} & \dots & -s_{2n_1} \\ -s_{31} & -s_{32} & \lambda & \dots & -s_{3n_1} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ -s_{n_11} & -s_{n_12} & -s_{n_13} & \dots & \lambda \end{vmatrix} = \frac{1}{\lambda} \phi_s(D_1 : \lambda).$$

In a similar manner we can show that from (2.9) it follows

$$(2.18) \quad |B| = \frac{1}{\lambda} \phi_s(D_2 : \lambda).$$

Substituting (2.17) and (2.18) back into (2.13) gives Eq. (2.1). □

Let  $W$  be a subset of the vertex set  $V(D)$  of a digraph  $D$  and  $\overline{W} = V(D) \setminus W$ . Let  $D'$  be the digraph obtained from  $D$  by reversing the directions of all arcs between  $W$  and  $\overline{W}$ . As usual [18], we say that  $D'$  has been obtained from  $D$  by switching with respect to  $W$ .

Two digraphs  $D$  and  $D'$  are said to be switching equivalent if  $D'$  can be obtained from  $D$  by a sequence of switching. Hou, Shen and Zhang [13] showed that if  $D$  and  $D'$  are switching equivalent, then  $D$  and  $D'$  have the same spectra and equal skew energy. Thus for any two digraphs  $D_1$  and  $D_2$ , the joins  $D_1 \rightarrow D_2$  and  $D_2 \rightarrow D_1$  are switching equivalent and therefore have same characteristic polynomials and  $E_s(D_1 \rightarrow D_2) = E_s(D_2 \rightarrow D_1)$ .

**Theorem 2.2.** *Let for  $i = 1, 2$ ,  $D_i$  be a digraph on  $n_i$  vertices and  $id_{D_i}(u) = od_{D_i}(u)$  for all  $u \in V(D_i)$ . Then*

$$(2.19) \quad E_s(D_1 \rightarrow D_2) = E_s(D_1) + E_s(D_2) + 2\sqrt{n_1 n_2}.$$

*Proof.* From Theorem 2.1,

$$\phi_s(D_1 \rightarrow D_2 : \lambda) = \frac{(\lambda^2 + n_1 n_2)}{\lambda^2} \phi_s(D_1 : \lambda) \phi_s(D_2 : \lambda)$$

which yields

$$\lambda^2 \phi_s(D_1 \rightarrow D_2 : \lambda) = (\lambda^2 + n_1 n_2) \phi_s(D_1 : \lambda) \phi_s(D_2 : \lambda).$$

Let

$$P_1(\lambda) = \lambda^2 \phi_s(D_1 \rightarrow D_2 : \lambda)$$

and

$$P_2(\lambda) = (\lambda^2 + n_1 n_2) \phi_s(D_1 : \lambda) \phi_s(D_2 : \lambda).$$

The roots of the equation  $P_1(\lambda) = 0$  are 0 (2 times) and the eigenvalues of  $S(D_1 \rightarrow D_2)$ . Therefore the sum of the absolute values of the roots of  $P_1(\lambda) = 0$  is

$$(2.20) \quad E_s(D_1 \rightarrow D_2).$$

The roots of  $P_2(\lambda) = 0$  are  $\sqrt{n_1 n_2}$ ,  $-\sqrt{n_1 n_2}$  and the eigenvalues of  $S(D_1)$  and  $S(D_2)$ . Therefore the sum of the absolute values of the roots of  $P_2(\lambda) = 0$  is

$$(2.21) \quad E_s(D_1) + E_s(D_2) + 2\sqrt{n_1 n_2}.$$

Since  $P_1(\lambda) = P_2(\lambda)$ , equating Eqs. (2.20) and (2.21) we arrive at Eq. (2.19). □

Let  $\overline{K_n}$  be the totally disconnected graph on  $n$  vertices, that is a graph without edges.

**Corollary 2.3.**  $E_s(\overline{K_p} \rightarrow \overline{K_q}) = 2\sqrt{pq}$ .

**Corollary 2.4.** *If  $H_1$  and  $H_2$  are non cospectral, skew-equienergetic digraphs on  $n$  vertices such that  $id_{H_i}(u) = od_{H_i}(u)$  for all  $u \in V(H_i)$ ,  $i = 1, 2$ , then for any digraph  $G$  with  $id_G(v) = od_G(v)$ ,  $v \in V(G)$ ,  $E_s(H_1 \rightarrow G) = E_s(H_2 \rightarrow G)$ .*

### 3. Construction of skew equienergetic digraphs

**Theorem 3.1.** *There exist pairs of non cospectral, skew equienergetic digraphs on  $n$  vertices for all  $n \geq 6$ .*

*Proof.* Consider the digraphs  $D_a$  and  $D_b$  as depicted in Fig. 2.

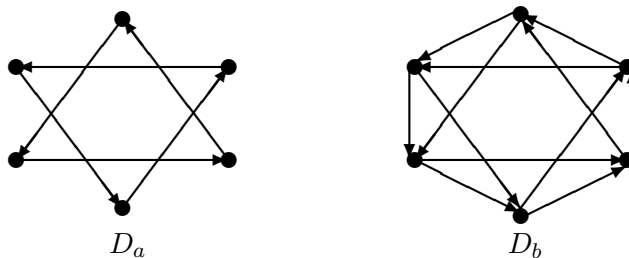


Fig. 2

By direct computation,

$$(3.1) \quad \phi_s(D_a : \lambda) = \lambda^4 (\lambda^2 + 12)$$

$$(3.2) \quad \phi_s(D_b : \lambda) = \lambda^2 (\lambda^4 + 6\lambda^2 + 9).$$

Both  $D_a$  and  $D_b$  are digraphs on 6 vertices. Also  $id_{D_i}(u) = od_{D_i}(u)$ , for all  $u \in D_i$ ,  $i = a, b$ , and  $E_s(D_a) = E_s(D_b) = 4\sqrt{3}$ .

Let  $D$  be any digraph on  $p \geq 1$  vertices and  $id_D(u) = od_D(u)$ ,  $u \in V(D)$ . Then by Theorem 2.2,

$$E_s(D_a \rightarrow D) = E_s(D_b \rightarrow D) = 4\sqrt{3} + E_s(D) + 2\sqrt{6p}.$$

Thus,  $D_a \rightarrow D$  and  $D_b \rightarrow D$  are skew equienergetic. By Eqs. (3.1) and (3.2),  $D_a$  and  $D_b$  are non-cospectral. Then by Theorem 2.1,  $D_a \rightarrow D$  and  $D_b \rightarrow D$  are also non-cospectral. Further  $D_a \rightarrow D$  and  $D_b \rightarrow D$  possesses equal number of vertices  $n = 6 + p$ ,  $p = 0, 1, 2, \dots$ .  $\square$

Let  $\overline{K_p}$  be the totally disconnected digraph on  $p$  vertices. In this  $id_{\overline{K_p}}(u) = od_{\overline{K_p}}(u) = 0$  for all  $u \in V(\overline{K_p})$  and  $\phi_s(\overline{K_p} : \lambda) = \lambda^p$ . Therefore  $E_s(\overline{K_p}) = 0$ . Using this in Theorem 2.2 we have following result.

**Corollary 3.2.** *If  $D_a$  and  $D_b$  are the digraphs shown in Fig. 2, then*

$$E_s(D_a \rightarrow \overline{K_p}) = E_s(D_b \rightarrow \overline{K_p}) = 4\sqrt{3} + 2\sqrt{6p} \quad , \quad p \geq 0.$$

#### 4. Conclusions

Using Corollary 2.4, it is easy to construct a pair of non-cospectral, skew equienergetic digraphs. In particular by means of Theorem 3.1 and Corollary 3.2 pairs of non-cospectral, skew equienergetic  $n$ -vertex digraphs can be constructed for all  $n \geq 6$ . Thus Problem 1. from [18] has been completely solved.

#### Acknowledgments

The authors HSR and KCN are thankful to the University Grants Commission (UGC), Govt. of India, for support through research grant under UPE FAR-II grant No. F 14-3/2012 (NS/PE).

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