DISTANCE LABELINGS: A GENERALIZATION OF LANGFORD SEQUENCES

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Abstract. A Langford sequence of order $m$ and defect $d$ can be identified with a labeling of the vertices of a path of order $2m$ in which each labeled from $d$ up to $d + m - 1$ appears twice and in which the vertices that have been label with $k$ are at distance $k$. In this paper, we introduce two generalizations of this labeling that are related to distances.

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1. Introduction

For the graph terminology not introduced in this paper we refer the reader to [9, 10]. For $m \leq n$, we denote the set \{m, m + 1, \ldots, n\} by $[m, n]$. A Skolem sequence [5, 6] of order $m$ is a sequence of $2m$ numbers $(s_1, s_2, \ldots, s_{2m})$ such that (i) for every $k \in [1, m]$ there exist exactly two subscripts $i, j \in [1, 2m]$ with $s_i = s_j = k$, (ii) the subscripts $i$ and $j$ satisfy the condition $|i - j| = k$. The sequence $(4, 2, 3, 2, 4, 3, 1, 1)$ is an example of a Skolem sequence of order 4. It is well known that Skolem sequences of order $m$ exist if and only if $m \equiv 0$ or 1 (mod 4).

Skolem introduced in [7] what is now called a hooked Skolem sequence of order $m$, where there exists a zero at the second to last position of the sequence containing $2m + 1$ elements. Later on, in 1981, Abrahm and Kotzig [1] introduced the concept of extended Skolem sequence, where the zero is allowed to appear in any position of the sequence. An extended Skolem sequence of order $m$ exists for every $m$. The following construction was given in [1]:

$$(1) \ (p_m, p_m - 2, p_m - 4, \ldots, 2, 0, 2, \ldots, p_m - 2, p_m, q_m, q_m - 2, q_m - 4, \ldots, 3, 1, 3, \ldots, q_m - 2, q_m),$$

where $p_m$ and $q_m$ are the largest even and odd numbers not exceeding $m$, respectively. Notice that from every Skolem sequence we can obtain two trivial extended Skolem sequences just by adding a zero either in the first or in the last position.

Let $d$ be a positive integer. A Langford sequence of order $m$ and defect $d$ [8] is a sequence $(l_1, l_2, \ldots, l_{2m})$ of $2m$ numbers such that (i) for every $k \in [d, d + m - 1]$ there exist exactly two subscripts $i, j \in [1, 2m]$ with $l_i = l_j = k$, (ii) the subscripts $i$ and $j$ satisfy the condition $|i - j| = k$. Langford sequences, for $d = 2$, where introduced in [4] and they are referred to as perfect Langford sequences. Notice that, a Langford sequence of order $m$ and defect $d = 1$ is a Skolem sequence of order $m$. Bermond, Brower and Germa on one side [2], and Simpson on the other side [8] characterized the existence of Langford sequences for every order $m$ and defect $d$.

Theorem 1.1. [2, 8] A Langford sequence of order $m$ and defect $d$ exists if and only if the following conditions hold: (i) $m \geq 2d - 1$, and (ii) $m \equiv 0$ or 1 (mod 4) if $d$ is odd; $m \equiv 0$ or 3 (mod 4) if $d$ is even.

For a complete survey on Skolem-type sequences we refer the reader to [3].
1.1. Distance labelings. Let $L = (l_1, l_2, \ldots, l_{2m})$ be a Langford sequence of order $m$ and defect $d$. Consider a path $P$ with $V(P) = \{v_i : i = 1, 2, \ldots, 2m\}$ and $E(P) = \{v_iv_{i+1} : i = 1, 2, 2m - 1\}$. Then, we can identify $L$ with a labeling $f : V(P) \to [d, d + m - 1]$ in such a way that, (i) for every $k \in [d, d + m - 1]$ there exist exactly two vertices $v_i, v_j$ with $f(v_i) = f(v_j) = k$, (ii) the distance $d(v_i, v_j) = k$. Motivated by this fact, we introduce two notions of distance labelings, one of them associated with a positive integer $l$ and the other one associated with a set of positive integers $I$.

Let $G$ be a graph and let $l$ be a positive integer. Consider any function $f : V(G) \to [0, l]$. We say that $f$ is a distance labeling of length $l$ (or distance $l$-labeling) of $G$ if the following two conditions hold, (i) either $f(V(G)) = [0, l]$ or $f(V(G)) = [1, l]$ and (ii) if there exist two vertices $v_i, v_j$ with $f(v_i) = f(v_j) = k$ then $d(v_i, v_j) = k$. Clearly, a graph can have many different distance labelings.

We denote by $\lambda(G)$, the labeling length of $G$, the minimum length $l$ for which a distance $l$-labeling of $G$ exists.

Let $J$ be a set of nonnegative integers. Consider any function $f : V(G) \to J$. We say that a distance $J$-labeling of $G$ is proper if for every $k \in [1, l]$ there exist at least two vertices $v_i, v_j$ with $f(v_i) = f(v_j) = k$. We also say that a proper distance $l$-labeling of $G$ is regular of degree $r$ (for short $r$-regular) if for every $k \in [1, l]$ there exist exactly $r$ vertices $v_{i_1}, v_{i_2}, \ldots, v_{i_r}$ with $f(v_{i_1}) = f(v_{i_2}) = \ldots = f(v_{i_r}) = k$. Clearly, if a graph $G$ admits a proper distance $l$-labeling then $l \leq D(G)$, where $D(G)$ is the diameter of $G$.

Let $G$ be a graph and let $J$ be a set of nonnegative integers. Consider any function $f : V(G) \to J$. We say that $f$ is a distance $J$-labeling of $G$ if the following two conditions hold, (i) $f(V(G)) = J$ and (ii) for any pair of vertices $v_i, v_j$ with $f(v_i) = f(v_j) = k$ we have that $d(v_i, v_j) = k$. We say that a distance $J$-labeling is proper if for every $k \in J \setminus \{0\}$ there exist at least two vertices $v_i, v_j$ with $f(v_i) = f(v_j) = k$. We also say that a proper distance $J$-labeling of $G$ is regular of degree $r$ (for short $r$-regular) if for every $k \in J \setminus \{0\}$ there exist exactly $r$ vertices $v_{i_1}, v_{i_2}, \ldots, v_{i_r}$ with $f(v_{i_1}) = f(v_{i_2}) = \ldots = f(v_{i_r}) = k$. Clearly, a distance $l$-labeling is a distance $J$-labeling in which either $J = [0, l]$ or $J = [1, l]$. Thus, the notion of a $J$-labeling is more general than the notion of a $l$-labeling.

In this paper, we provide the labeling length of some well known families of graphs. We also study the inverse problem, that is, for a given pair of positive integers $l$ and $r$ we ask for the existence of a graph of order $lr$ with a regular $l$-labeling of degree $r$. Finally, we study a similar question when we deal with $J$-labelings. The organization of the paper is the following one. Section 2 is devoted to $l$-labelings, we start calculating the labeling length of complete graphs, paths, cycles and some others families. The inverse problem is studied in the second part of the section. Section 3 is devoted to the inverse problem in $J$-labelings. There are many open problem that remain to be solve, we end the paper by presenting some of them.

2. Distance $l$-labelings

We start this section by providing the labeling length of some well known families of graphs.

**Proposition 2.1.** The complete graph $K_n$ has $\lambda(K_n) = 1$.

*Proof.*

By assigning the label 1 to all vertices of $K_n$, we obtain a distance 1-labeling of it. \qed

**Proposition 2.2.** The path $P_n$ has $\lambda(P_n) = \lfloor n/2 \rfloor$.

*Proof.*

By previous comment, we know that a Skolem sequence of order $m$ exists if $m \equiv 0 \text{ or } 1 \pmod{4}$. This fact together with (1) guarantees the existence of a proper distance $\lfloor n/2 \rfloor$-labeling when $n \not\equiv 4, 6 \pmod{8}$. By removing one of the end labels of (1), we obtain a (non proper) distance labeling of length
|n/2|. Thus, we have that \( \lambda(P_n) \leq |n/2| \). Since, there are not three vertices in the path which are at the same distance, this lower bound turns out to be an equality. \(\square\)

The sequence that appears in (1) also works for constructing proper distance labelings of cycles. Thus, we obtain the next result.

**Proposition 2.3.** Let \( n \) be a positive integer. The cycle \( C_n \) has \( \lambda(C_n) = |n/2| \).

**Proof.**
Since, except for \( C_3 \) there are not three vertices in the cycle which are at the same distance, we have that \( \lambda(C_n) \geq |n/2| \). The sequence that appears in (1) allows us to construct a (proper) distance \( |n/2| \)-labeling of \( C_n \) when \( n \) is odd. Moreover, if \( n \) is even we can obtain a distance \( |n/2| \)-labeling of \( C_n \) from the sequence that appears in (1) just by removing the end odd label. \(\square\)

**Proposition 2.4.** The star \( K_{1,k} \) has \( \lambda(K_{1,k}) = 2 \), when \( k \geq 3 \), and \( \lambda(K_{1,k}) = 1 \) otherwise.

**Proof.**
For \( k \geq 3 \), consider a labeling \( f \) that assigns the label 1 to the central vertex and to one of its leaves, and that assigns label 2 to the other vertices. Then \( f \) is a (proper) distance 2-labeling of \( K_{1,k} \). For \( 1 \leq k \leq 2 \), the sequences \( 1-1 \) and \( 0-1-1 \), where 0 is assigned to a leaf, give a (proper) distance 1-labeling of \( K_{1,1} \) and \( K_{1,2} \), respectively. \(\square\)

**Proposition 2.5.** Let \( m \) and \( n \) be integers with \( 2 \leq m \leq n \). Then, \( \lambda(K_{m,n}) = m \). In particular, the graph \( K_{m,n} \) admits a proper distance \( l \)-labeling if and only if, \( 1 \leq m \leq 2 \).

**Proof.**
Let \( X \) and \( Y \) be the stable sets of \( K_{m,n} \), with \( |X| \leq |Y| \). We have that \( D(K_{m,n}) = 2 \), however the maximum number of vertices that are mutually at distance 2 is \( n \). Thus, by assigning label 2 to all vertices, except one, in \( Y \), 1 to the remaining vertex in \( Y \) and to one vertex in \( X \), 0 to another vertex of \( X \) we still have left \( m-2 \) vertices in \( X \) to label. \(\square\)

**Proposition 2.6.** Let \( n \) and \( k \) be positive integers with \( k \geq 4 \). Let \( S^n_k \) be the graph obtained from \( K_{1,k} \) by replacing each edge with a path of \( n+1 \) vertices. Then

\[
\lambda(S^n_k) = \begin{cases} 
2(n-1), & \text{if } k = n-1, \\
2n-1, & \text{if } k = n, \\
2n, & \text{if } k > n.
\end{cases}
\]

**Proof.**
Suppose that \( S^n_k \) admits a distance \( l \)-labeling with \( l < 2n \). Then, all the labels assigned to leaves should be different. Moreover, although each even label could appear \( k \)-times, one for each of the \( k \) paths that are joined to the star \( K_{1,k} \), odd labels appear at most twice (either in the same or in two of the original forming paths). Thus, at least \( 2n - 2 \) labels are needed for obtaining a distance labeling of \( S^n_k \). The following construction provides a distance \( 2(n-1) \)-labeling of \( S^n_k \), when \( k = n-1 \). Suppose that we label the central vertices of each path using the pattern \( 2-4-\ldots-2(n-1) \). Then, add odd labels to the leaves and if there is not enough leaves, replace some of the even labels by the remaining odd labels, in such a way that every even label appears at least once. In case \( k = n \), we need to introduce a new odd label, which corresponds to \( 2n-1 \). Finally, when \( k > n \), we cannot complete a distance \( l \)-labeling without using \( 2n \) labels. Fig. 3 provides a proper \( 2n \)-labeling that can be generalized in that case. \(\square\)
Fig. 1 and 2 show proper distance labelings of $S^n_5$ and $S^n_6$, respectively, that have been obtained by using the above constructions, and then, combining pairs of paths (whose end odd labels sum up to 8) for obtaining a proper distance 8-labeling and 9-labeling, respectively.

**Figure 1.** A proper distance 8-labeling of $S^n_5$.

**Figure 2.** A proper distance 9-labeling of $S^n_6$.

**Figure 3.** A proper distance 10-labeling of $S^n_6$.

The case $k < n - 1$ in Proposition 2.6 requires a more detailed study. Consider the labeling of $S^n_k$ obtained by assigning the labels in the sequence $0 - 2 - 4 - \ldots - 2(n - o) - s_1^i - s_2^i - s_3^i$ to the vertices of the path $P^i$, $i = 1, \ldots, k$, where 0 is the label assigned to the central vertex of $S^n_k$, and $\{s_j^i\}_{j=1}^{o}$ is the (multi)set of odd labels. By considering the pattern $1 - 1, 3 - 1 - 1 - 3, 5 - 3 - 1 - 1 - 3 - 5$ to the vertices of one of the paths, it can be checked that, the graph $S^n_k$ admits an $l$-distance labeling with $l \in \{2(n - o), 2(n - o) + 1\}$ and

$$\left\lfloor \frac{2n - 1}{2k + 1} \right\rfloor \leq o \leq \left\lfloor \frac{2n + 2}{2k + 1} \right\rfloor.$$ 

Thus, according to the proof of Proposition 2.6, we strongly suspect that

$$2(n - o) \leq \lambda(S^n_k) \leq 2(n - o) + 1,$$

where $\lfloor (2n - 1)/(2k + 1) \rfloor \leq o \leq \lfloor (2n + 2)/(2k + 1) \rfloor$.

**Proposition 2.7.** For $n \geq 3$, let $W_n$ be the wheel of order $n + 1$. Then $\lambda(W_n) = \lfloor n/2 \rfloor$.

**Proof.**

Except for $W_3$, all wheels have $D(W_n) = 2$. The maximum number of vertices that are mutually at distance 2 is $\lfloor n/2 \rfloor$ and all of them are in the cycle. Thus, by assigning label 2 to all these vertices, 0 to one vertex of the cycle and 1 to the central vertex and to one vertex of the cycle, we still have to label $\lfloor n/2 \rfloor - 2$ vertices.
Proposition 2.8. For \( n \geq 2 \), let \( F_n \) be the fan of order \( n + 1 \). Then \( \lambda(F_n) = \lfloor n/2 \rfloor \).

Proof. Except for \( F_2 \), all fans have \( D(F_n) = 2 \). The maximum number of vertices that are mutually at distance 2 is \( \lceil n/2 \rceil \) and all of them are in the path. Thus, by assigning label 2 to all these vertices, 0 to one vertex of the path, 1 to the central vertex and to one vertex of the path when \( n \) is even and to two vertices when \( n \) is odd, we still have to label \( \lceil n/2 \rceil - 2 \) vertices. \( \square \)

2.1. The inverse problem. For every positive integer \( l \), there exists a graph \( G \) of order \( l \) with a trivial \( l \)-labeling that assigns a different label in \([1, l]\) to each vertex. In this section, we are interested on the existence of a graph \( G \) that admits a proper distance \( l \)-labeling.

We are now ready to state and prove the next result.

Theorem 2.1. For every pair of positive integers \( l \) and \( r \), there exists a graph \( G \) of order \( lr \) with a regular \( l \)-labeling of degree \( r \).

Proof. We give a constructive proof. Assume first that \( l \) is odd. Let \( G \) be the graph obtained from the complete graph \( K_r \) by identifying \( r - 1 \) vertices of \( K_r \) with one of the end vertices of a path of length \( \lfloor l/2 \rfloor \) and the remaining vertex of \( K_r \) with the central vertex of the graph \( S_{r+1}^{\lfloor l/2 \rfloor} \). That is, \( G \) is obtained from \( K_r \) by attaching \( 2r \) paths of length \( \lfloor l/2 \rfloor \) to its vertices, \( r + 1 \) to a particular vertex \( v_1 \) of \( K_r \) and exactly one path to each of the remaining vertices \( F = \{ v_2, v_3, \ldots, v_r \} \) of \( K_r \). Now, consider the labeling \( f \) of \( G \) that assigns 1 to the vertices of \( K_r \), the sequence \( 1 - 3 - \ldots - l \) to the vertices of the paths attached to \( F \) and one of the paths attached to \( v_1 \), and the sequence \( 1 - 2 - 4 - \ldots - (l - 1) \) to the remaining paths. Then \( f \) is a regular \( l \)-labeling of degree \( r \) of \( G \). Assume now that \( l \) is even. Let \( G \) be the graph obtained in the above construction for \( l - 1 \). Then, by adding a leave to each vertex of \( G \) labeled with \( l - 2 \) we obtain a new graph \( G' \) that admits a regular \( l \)-labeling \( f' \) of degree \( r \). The labeling \( f' \) can be obtained from the labeling \( f \) of \( G \), defined above, just by assigning the label \( l \) to the new vertices. \( \square \)

![Figure 4](image.png)

Figure 4. A regular 5-labeling of degree 4 of a graph \( G \).

Notice that, the graph provided in the proof of Theorem 2.1 also has \( \lambda(G) = l \). Fig. 4 and 5 show examples for the above construction. The pattern provided in the proof of the above theorem, for \( r = 2 \), can be modified in order to obtain the following lower bound for the size of a graph \( G \) as in Theorem 2.1.

Proposition 2.9. For every positive integer \( l \) there exists a graph of order \( 2l \) and size \((l+2)(l+1)/2 - 2\) that admits a regular distance \( l \)-labeling of degree 2.
Proposition 3.1. Let \( \Sigma = \{1 = s_1 < s_2 < \ldots < s_l\} \) be a set such that \( s_i - s_{i-1} \leq 2 \), for \( i = 1, 2, \ldots, l \). Then \( \Sigma \) is a \( \delta \)-set. Furthermore, there is a caterpillar of order \( 2l \) that realizes \( \Sigma \).
Proof.
We claim that for each set $\Sigma = \{1 = s_1 < s_2 < \ldots < s_l\}$ such that $s_i - s_{i-1} \leq 2$ there is a caterpillar of order $2l$ that admits a 2-regular distance $\Sigma$-labeling in which the label $s_1$ is assigned to exactly two leaves. The proof is by induction. For $l = 1$, the path $P_2$ admits a 2-regular distance $\{1\}$-labeling, and for $l = 2$, the star $K_{1,3}$ and the path $P_4$ admit a 2-regular distance $\{1,2\}$-labeling and a 2-regular distance $\{1,3\}$-labeling, respectively. Assume that the claim is true for $l$ and let $\Sigma = \{1 = s_1 < s_2 < \ldots < s_{l+1}\}$ such that $s_i - s_{i-1} \leq 2$. Let $\Sigma' = \Sigma \setminus \{s_{l+1}\}$. By the induction hypothesis, there is a caterpillar $G'$ of order $2l$ that admits a regular distance $\Sigma'$-labeling of degree 2 in which the label $s_1$ is assigned to leaves, namely, $u_1$ and $u_2$. Let $u \in V(G')$ be the (unique) vertex in $G'$ adjacent to $u_1$. Then, if $s_{l+1} - s_1 = 2$, the caterpillar obtained from $G'$ by adding two new vertices $v_1$ and $v_2$ and the edges $u_iv_1$, for $i = 1, 2$, admits a regular distance $\Sigma$-labeling of degree 2 in which the label $s_{l+1}$ is assigned to leaves $\{v_1, v_2\}$. Otherwise, if $s_{l+1} - s_1 = 1$ then the caterpillar obtained from $G'$ by adding two new vertices $v_1$ and $v_2$ and the edges $uv_1$ and $uv_2$ admits a regular distance $\Sigma$-labeling of degree 2 in which the label $s_{l+1}$ is assigned to leaves $\{v_1, v_2\}$. This proves the claim. To complete the proof, we only have to consider the vertex partition of $G$ defined by the vertices that receive the same label. □

Proposition 3.1 provides us with a family of $\delta$-sets, in which, if we order the elements of each $\delta$-set, we get that the differences between consecutive elements are upper bounded by 2. This fact may lead us to get the idea that the differences between consecutive elements in $\delta$-sets cannot be too large. This is not true in general and we show it in the next result.

**Theorem 3.1.** Let $\{k_1 < k_2 < \ldots < k_n\}$ be a set of positive integers. Then there exists a $\delta$-set $\Sigma = \{s_1 < s_2 < \ldots < s_l\}$ and a set of indices $\{1 = j_1 < j_2 < \ldots < j_n\}$, with $j_n < l - 1$, such that

\[ s_{j_1+1} - s_{j_1} = k_1, \ s_{j_2+1} - s_{j_2} = k_2, \ldots, \ s_{j_n+1} - s_{j_n} = k_n. \]

Moreover, $s_1$ can be chosen to be any positive integer.

**Proof.**
Choose any number $d_1 \in \mathbb{N}$ and choose any Langford sequence of defect $d_1$. We let $d_1 = s_1$. (Notice that if $d_1 = 1$ then the sequence is actually a Skolem sequence.) Let this Langford sequence be $L_1$. Next, choose a Langford sequence $L_2$ with defect $\max L_1 + k_1$. Next, choose a Langford sequence $L_3$ with defect $\max L_2 + k_2$. Keep this procedure until we have used all the values $k_1, k_2, \ldots, k_n$. At this point create a new sequence $L$, where $L$ is the concatenation of $L_1, L_2, \ldots, L_n$ and label the vertices of the path $P_r$, $r = \sum_{i=1}^{n+1} |L_i|$, with the elements of $L$ keeping the order in the labeling induced by the sequence $L$. This shows the result. □

The next result shows that there are sets that are not $\delta$-sets.

**Proposition 3.2.** The set $\Sigma = \{2,3\}$ is not a $\delta$-set.

**Proof.**
The proof is by contradiction. Assume to the contrary that $\Sigma = \{2,3\}$ is a $\delta$-set. That is to say, we assume that there exists a sequence $S$ consisting of $k_1$ copies of 2 and $k_2$ copies of 3 that is a $\delta$-sequence. Let $G$ be a graph that realizes $S$ and $V_1 \cup V_2$ the partition of $V(G)$ defined as follows: if $u, v \in V_i$ then $d_G(u,v) = i + 1$, for $i = 1, 2$. It is clear that $V_1$ must be formed by the leaves of a star with center some vertex $a \in V$. Since $a$ is at distance 1 of any vertex in $V_1$, it follows that $a$ must be in $V_2$ and furthermore, all vertices adjacent to $a$ must be in $V_1$. Thus, there are no two adjacent vertices in the neighborhood of $a$. At this point, let $b \in V_2 \setminus \{a\}$. Then, there is a path of the form $a, u_1, u_2, b$, where $u_1 \in V_1$ and hence, $u_2, b \in V_2$. This contradicts the fact that $d_G(u_2, b) = 1$. □

The above proof works for any set of the form $\Sigma = \{2, n\}$, for $n \geq 3$. Thus, in fact, Proposition 3.2 can be generalized as follows.
Proposition 3.3. The set $\Sigma = \{2, n\}$ is not a $\delta$-set.

Notice that, although $\Sigma = \{2, n\}$ is not a $\delta$-set, it is a $\delta_1$-set, since we can consider a star in which the center is labeled with $n$ and the leaves with 2.

The next result gives a lower bound on the size of $\delta$-sets in terms of the maximum of the set.

Theorem 3.2. Let $\Sigma$ be a $\delta$-set with $s = \max \Sigma$. Then, $|\Sigma| \geq \left(\frac{s+1}{2}\right)$.

Proof. Let $\Sigma$ be a $\delta$-set with $s = \max \Sigma$. Let $G$ be a graph that realizes $\Sigma$ and let $V(G) = \cup_{i \in \Sigma} V_i$ be the partition defined as follows: if $u, v \in V_i$ then $d_G(u, v) = i$. Let $a_1, a_2 \in V_s$. At this point, let $P = a_1 = b_1b_2 \ldots b_{s+1} = a_2$ be a path of length $s$ starting at $a_1$ and ending at $a_2$. We claim that there are no three vertices in $V(P)$ belonging to the same set $V_j, j \in \Sigma$. We proceed by contradiction. Assume to the contrary that there exist vertices $u, v$ and $w \in V(P)$ such that $u, v, w \in V_j$. That is, $d_G(u, v) = d_G(u, w) = d_G(v, w) = j$. However, it is clear that the above cannot happen if we take the distances in the path. That is to say, the following is impossible: $d_P(u, v) = d_P(v, w) = d_P(u, w) = j$. Without loss of generality assume that $d_P(u, v) = k \neq j$. Clearly, $k > j$. Otherwise, we have that $d_G(u, v) \leq k$ instead of $d_G(u, v) = j$. Let $P'$ be a path in $G$ of length $j$ that joins $u$ and $v$. Then, the subgraph of $G$ obtained from $P$ by substituting the subpath of $P$ joining $u$ and $v$ by $P'$ contains a subpath of length strictly smaller than $s$. Thus, we obtain a contradiction. Hence, each set in the partition of $V(G)$ can contain at most two vertices of $P$. Since $|V(P)| = s + 1$, it follows that we need at least $\left(\frac{s+1}{2}\right)$ sets in the partition of $V(G)$. Therefore, we obtain that $|\Sigma| \geq \left(\frac{s+1}{2}\right)$. $\square$

It is clear that the above proof cannot be improved in general, since from Proposition 3.1 we get that the any set of the form $\{1, 3, \ldots, 2n+1\}$ is a $\delta$-set and $|\{1, 3, \ldots, 2n+1\}| = \left(\frac{2n+2}{2}\right)$. Furthermore, Proposition 3.3 is an immediate consequence of the above result. It is also worth to mention that there are sets which meet the bound provided in Theorem 3.2 however they are not $\delta$-sets. For instance, the set $\{2, 3\}$ considered in Lemma 3.2. From this fact, we see that we cannot characterize $\delta$-sets from, only, a density point of view. Next we want to propose the following open problem.

Open problem 3.1. Characterize $\delta$-sets.

Let $\Sigma$ be a set. By construction, a path of order $|\Sigma|$ in which each vertex receives a different labeling of $\Sigma$ defines a distance $|\Sigma|$-labeling. That is, every set is a $\delta_{|\Sigma|}$-set. So, according to that, we propose the next problem.

Open problem 3.2. Given a set $\Sigma$ is there any construction that provides the minimum $r$ such that $\Sigma$ is a $\delta_r$-set.

Thus, the above problem is a bit more general than Problem 3.1.

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