



*Research article*

## Mixed domination and 2-independence in trees

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**Abstract:** We investigate some relationships between two vastly studied parameters of a simple graph  $G$ . These parameters include mixed domination number (denoted by  $\gamma_m(G)$ ) and 2-independence number ( $\beta_2(G)$ ). For a tree  $T$ , we obtain  $\frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T) \geq \gamma_m(T)$  and characterized all those trees which attain the equality.

**Keywords:** mixed dominating function; mixed domination number; 2-independent set; 2-independence number

**Mathematics Subject Classification:** 05C05, 05C69

### 1. Introduction

The problem of covering vertices (edges) by vertices (edges) has been widely studied in recent years. The quests of covering: vertices by vertices, edges by vertices, vertices by edges and edges by edges resulted into several significant problems in the area of graph theory. As a natural extension of these problems, the domination of the vertices or edges by vertices or edges was introduced and studied in [2, 3, 17, 18, 20].

Before proceeding further, we fix the notations used in this paper. For other notations and terminologies, see [19]. We consider the simple and connected graphs  $G$ , denote a vertex set by  $V = V(G)$ , edge set by  $E = E(G)$  and the cardinality of  $V$  by  $n$ . Furthermore, we denote the open (closed) neighborhood of a vertex  $v$  by  $N(v)$  ( $N[v]$ ), the number of neighbors of a vertex  $v$  by  $d_v$ ,

children and descendants by  $C(v)$  and  $D(v)$ , a tree by  $T$ , maximal subtree at  $v$  by  $T_v$ , the set of leaves adjacent to  $v$  by  $L_v$ , pendant path by  $P$ , diameter by  $\text{diam}(G)$ , path of order  $n$  by  $P_n$ , star of order  $n$  by  $K_{1,n-1}$  and a *double star*,  $DS_{p,q}$  is a tree containing exactly two non-pendant vertices, one of which is adjacent to  $p$  leaves and the other is adjacent to  $q$  leaves. A pendant path  $P$  of a graph  $G$  is an induced path starting from a leaf and containing only vertices of degree two in  $G$  as inner vertices. In addition, the notions of degree of  $v$ , leaf, rooted tree and support vertex which will be used in this paper are well known in the literature.

For a graph  $G = (V, E)$ , a vertex  $v$  mixed dominates its closed neighborhood and all edges incident to  $v$ . An edge  $uv$  mixed dominates all the edges incident to  $u$  or  $v$  and the vertices  $u, v$ . A set  $D$  consisting of vertices and edges of  $G$  such that each vertex and edge in  $G$  can be mixed dominated by an element of  $D$  is called a mixed dominating set (MDS). Such a set with minimum cardinality is defined as  $\gamma_m$ -set of  $G$  and its cardinality is called the mixed domination number  $\gamma_m(G)$ . It is clear that the MDS is a variant of dominating set which has been generalized to many other parameters, such as total domination [22], Roman domination [16], semitotal domination [21, 23]. Several researchers studied the problem of mixed domination (MD) in different directions such as: in [15], NP-completeness in split graphs and a primal dual algorithm for MD problem were presented; some results related to MD problem contributing toward electric power system have been obtained in [20]. For more literature on mixed domination and related notions, see [2, 3, 14, 17].

On the other hand, the notion of  $k$ -independent set ( $k$ -IS), generalizing the notion of the independent set, was introduced in [12] as: For a positive integer  $k$ , a set  $X \subseteq V$  is called  $k$ -IS if every vertex  $v$  in the subgraph induced by vertices of  $X$  has degree at most  $k - 1$ . The  $k$ -independence number (denoted by  $\beta_k(G)$ ) is the maximum possible cardinality of  $k$ -IS and such a set is called  $\beta_k(G)$ -set. The results on bounding and improvement of  $\beta_k(G)$  may be seen in [13], [6] and [7]. Another aspect of  $\beta_k(G)$  which has been studied is its relationship with  $\gamma_k(G)$ , for instance see [11]. In such relationships the case  $\beta_2(G)$  got especial attention, see [1, 4, 5, 9, 10, 16]. For more on  $k$ -independence we refer the readers [8].

The following result can be found in [2].

**Theorem 1.** For a complete graph  $K_n$ ,  $\gamma_m(K_n) = \lceil \frac{n}{2} \rceil$ .

The next result shows that there exist families of graphs such that  $\gamma_m(G) < \beta_2(G)$  for a graph  $G$  in a family and  $\gamma_m(H) > \beta_2(H)$  for a graph  $H$  in another family.

**Proposition 1.** For any  $t \in \mathbb{N}$ , there exist graphs  $G_t$  and  $H_t$  such that  $\beta_2(G_t) - \gamma_m(G_t) = t$  and  $\gamma_m(H_t) - \beta_2(H_t) = t$ .

*Proof.* Let  $G_t = K_{1,t+1}$ . Then clearly  $\beta_2(G_t) = t + 1$  and  $\gamma_m(G_t) = 1$  and so  $\beta_2(G_t) - \gamma_m(G_t) = t$ . Now assume that  $H_t = K_{2t+4}$ . We can see that  $\beta_2(H_t) = 2$  and by Theorem 1,  $\gamma_m(H_t) = t + 2$ . So  $\gamma_m(H_t) - \beta_2(H_t) = t$ .  $\square$

Motivated by the above proposition, the current work is devoted to investigations of relationships between  $\beta_2(G)$  and  $\gamma_m(G)$ . Specifically, by keeping in view the importance of trees, we prove  $3\beta_2(T) - 4\gamma_m(T) \geq 0$  and characterize all trees  $T$  such that  $3\beta_2(T) = 4\gamma_m(T)$ . Before proceeding further, we include some definitions, notations and a lemma which will be used later. We start with the following Remark.

**Remark 1.** For any  $G$  and  $v \in V(G)$ ,  $\gamma_m(G) \leq \gamma_m(G - v) + 1$  holds.

**Definition 1.** Let  $u \in V \cup E$ , and  $D \subseteq V \cup E$ . The element  $u$  is said to be mixed dominated by  $D$  if  $u$  belongs to  $D$  or is adjacent to a vertex  $v$  of  $D$  or is incident to an edge  $e$  of  $D$ . Let  $v \in V \cup E$ . A set  $D$  is said to be an almost mixed dominating set (AMDS) corresponding to  $v$ , if any element  $u \in (V \cup E)$ , except possibly  $v$ , is mixed dominated by  $D$ . Take  $\gamma_m(G; v)$  the cardinality of an AMDS corresponding to  $v$  with minimum possible elements.

We note that any mixed dominating set on  $G$  is an AMDS corresponding to any element of  $G$ . Therefore, for any  $v \in V \cup E$  the inequality  $\gamma_m(G; v) \leq \gamma_m(G)$  holds.

**Definition 2.** For any  $G$ , we define  $W_G^1$  as:

$$W_G^1 = \{v \in V \mid \gamma_m(G - v) \geq \gamma_m(G)\}$$

and

$$W_G^2 = \{v \in V \cup E \mid \gamma_m(G; v) = \gamma_m(G)\}.$$

**Lemma 1.** Let  $T'$  be a tree and  $u \in V(T')$ . If  $T$  is a tree constructed from  $T'$  by adding a path  $P_6 = x_6x_5x_4x_3x_2x_1$ , and either joining  $u$  to  $x_3$  or joining  $u$  to  $x_2$ , then  $\beta_2(T) = \beta_2(T') + 4$  and  $\gamma_m(T) \leq \gamma_m(T') + 3$ .

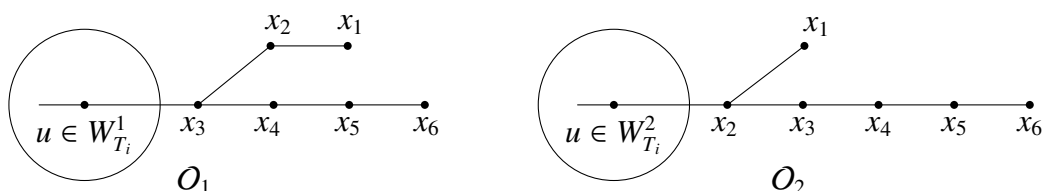
*Proof.* From any  $\beta_2(T')$ -set, a 2-IS of  $T$  may be obtained by including  $x_1, x_2, x_5, x_6$ , and so  $\beta_2(T) \geq \beta_2(T') + 4$ . Moreover, for any  $\beta_2(T)$ -set  $S$ , the equality  $|S \cap \{x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5, x_6\}| = 4$  holds and  $S \cap V(T')$  is a 2-IS of  $T'$ , therefore  $\beta_2(T) \leq \beta_2(T') + 4$ . Thus  $\beta_2(T) = \beta_2(T') + 4$ . Moreover, by adding  $x_1, x_3, x_5$  to any  $\gamma_m(T')$ -set  $D$  we get an MD-set of  $T$ . Consequently, we get  $\gamma_m(T) \leq \gamma_m(T') + 3$  as desired.  $\square$

## 2. Results

The current section is devoted to the proofs of the main results which have been briefly described in the previous section. To achieve this objective, we use  $\mathcal{T}$  to denote a family includes all trees that can be constructed by a sequences of trees  $T_j$ , for  $j = 1, 2, \dots, m$  ( $m \geq 1$ ) such that  $T_1 = P_6$ , and  $T_{i+1}$  is obtained from  $T_i$  recursively, by using the operations (Figure 1):

**Operation  $O_1$ .** If  $u \in W_{T_i}^1$ , then  $O_1$  adds a path  $P_6 = x_6x_5x_4x_3x_2x_1$ , and an edge  $ux_3$  to produce  $T_{i+1}$ .

**Operation  $O_2$ .** If  $u \in W_{T_i}^2$ , then  $O_2$  adds a path  $P_6 = x_6x_5x_4x_3x_2x_1$ , and an edge  $ux_2$  to produce  $T_{i+1}$ .



**Figure 1.** Two Operations  $O_1, O_2$ .

**Lemma 2.** If  $T_i$  is a tree with  $\gamma_m(T_i) = \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T_i)$  and  $T_{i+1}$  is a tree obtained from  $T_i$  by Operation  $O_1$ , then  $\gamma_m(T_{i+1}) = \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T_{i+1})$ .

*Proof.* By Lemma 1,  $\beta_2(T_{i+1}) = \beta_2(T_i) + 4$  and  $\gamma_m(T_{i+1}) \leq \gamma_m(T_i) + 3$ . Let  $D$  be a  $\gamma_m(T_{i+1})$ -set. We have

$$k = |D \cap \{x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5, x_6, x_1x_2, x_2x_3, x_3x_4, x_4x_5, x_5x_6, ux_3\}| \geq 3.$$

If  $u \in D$  or  $wu \in D$  for some  $w \in N(u) - \{x_3\}$ , then the set  $D$ , restricted to  $T_i$  is an MDS of  $T_i$  and this implies that  $\gamma_m(T_{i+1}) \geq \gamma_m(T_i) + 3$ . Now let  $u \notin D$  and  $wu \notin D$  for every  $w \in N(u) - \{x_3\}$ . Then the set  $D$ , restricted to  $T_i - u$  is an MDS of  $T_i - u$ . We deduce from  $u \in W_{T_i}^1$  that  $\gamma_m(T_i - u) \geq \gamma_m(T_i)$  and this implies that  $\gamma_m(T_{i+1}) \geq \gamma_m(T_i) + 3$ . Thus  $\gamma_m(T_{i+1}) = \gamma_m(T_i) + 3$ .

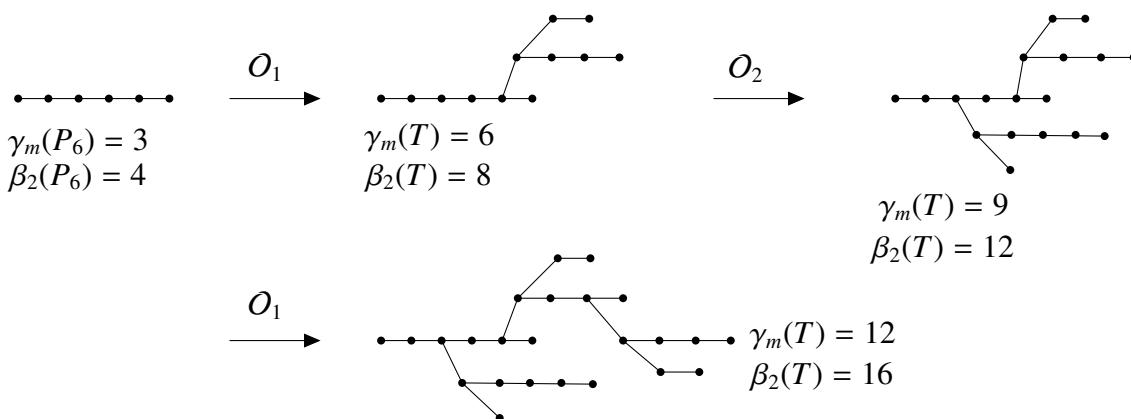
By the assumption  $\gamma_m(T_i) = \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T_i)$ , we obtain  $\frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T_{i+1}) = \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T_i) + 3 = \gamma_m(T_i) + 3 = \gamma_m(T_{i+1})$ .  $\square$

**Lemma 3.** If  $T_i$  is a tree with  $\gamma_m(T_i) = \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T_i)$  and  $T_{i+1}$  is a tree obtained from  $T_i$  by Operation  $O_2$ , then  $\gamma_m(T_{i+1}) = \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T_{i+1})$ .

*Proof.* By Lemma 1,  $\beta_2(T_{i+1}) = \beta_2(T_i) + 4$  and  $\gamma_m(T_{i+1}) \leq \gamma_m(T_i) + 3$ . Let  $D$  be a  $\gamma_m(T_{i+1})$ -set. We have

$$k = |D \cap \{x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5, x_6, x_1x_2, x_2x_3, x_3x_4, x_4x_5, x_5x_6, ux_2\}| \geq 3.$$

If  $u \in D$  or  $wu \in D$  for some  $w \in N(u) - \{x_2\}$ , then the set  $D$ , restricted to  $T_i$  is an MDS of  $T_i$  and this implies that  $\gamma_m(T_{i+1}) \geq \gamma_m(T_i) + 3$ . Now let  $u \notin D$  and  $wu \notin D$  for every  $w \in N(u) - \{x_2\}$ . If  $ux_3 \in D$ , then we can see that  $k = 4$  and the result follows as above. If  $ux_3 \notin D$ , then the set  $D$ , restricted to  $T_i$  is an MDS of  $T_i$  corresponding to  $u$  and the assumption  $u \in W_{T_i}^2$  implies  $\gamma_m(T_{i+1}) + 3 \geq \gamma_m(T_i; u) = \gamma_m(T_i)$ . Thus  $\gamma_m(T_{i+1}) = \gamma_m(T_i) + 3$ . By the assumption  $\gamma_m(T_i) = \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T_i)$ , we obtain  $\frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T_{i+1}) = \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T_i) + 3 = \gamma_m(T_i) + 3 = \gamma_m(T_{i+1})$  (Figure 2).  $\square$



**Figure 2.** Trees obtained by applying a sequence of two operations.

**Theorem 2.** If  $T \in \mathcal{T}$ , then  $\gamma_m(T) = \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T)$ .

*Proof.* Let  $T \in \mathcal{T}$ , then by the definition of  $\mathcal{T}$ ,  $T$  can be constructed by using the operations  $O_1$  and  $O_2$ . Suppose  $T$  is obtained recursively by the sequence  $(T_k)_{k=1}^j$ . Now, we prove it by induction on  $j$ . If  $j = 1$ ,  $T = P_6 \in \mathcal{T}$  and the equality is true. Assume that the equality hold for  $T$  constructed from  $j - 1$

operations. Now, let  $T$  be a tree constructed from  $j$  operations, take  $T' = T_{j-1}$ . Then  $T$  is constructed from  $T'$  by either  $O_1$  or  $O_2$ . Consequently, by applying the Lemmas 2- 3, we get  $\gamma_m(T) = \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T)$ .  $\square$

Up to now, we have developed the sufficient results to prove the following main theorem of this paper.

**Theorem 3.** *For any tree  $T$  of order  $n$ , the inequality  $\gamma_m(T) \leq \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T)$  holds. Moreover,  $\gamma_m(T) = \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T)$  if and only if  $T \in \mathcal{T}$ .*

*Proof.* We prove it by the induction on  $|T| = n$ .

If  $n \leq 5$ , it can be observed that  $\gamma_m(T) < \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T)$ .

If  $n = 6$ , then with a simple verification, we see that  $\gamma_m(T) \leq \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T)$  and the only tree with  $\gamma_m(T) = \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T)$  is  $P_6 \in \mathcal{T}$ .

Consider the case when  $n \geq 7$  and the statement is true for  $n - 1$  or less. Then

If  $\text{diam}(T) = 2$ , then  $T = K_{1,n-1}$  and we get  $\gamma_m(T) = 1 < \frac{3(n-1)}{4} = \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T)$ .

If  $\text{diam}(T) = 3$ , then  $T = DS_{p,q}$  ( $q \geq p \geq 1$ ) and it can be verified that  $\gamma_m(T) = 2 < \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T)$  as  $n \geq 7$ .

Assume now, that  $\text{diam}(T) \geq 4$  and let  $v_1v_2 \dots v_{d+1}$  denote a diametral path with the property that  $d_{v_2}$  is maximum (possible). Root  $T$  at  $v_{d+1}$ , then:

**Case 1.** If  $d_{v_2} \geq 3$ . Let  $k = d_{v_2}$ . Take  $T' = T - T_{v_2}$ , then any  $\beta_2(T')$ -set (and  $\gamma_m(T')$ -set) may be extended to a 2-IS (and MDS) of  $T$  by adding  $k - 1$  leaves adjacent to  $v_2$  ( $v_2$ ). Therefore  $\beta_2(T) \geq \beta_2(T') + (k - 1)$  and  $\gamma_m(T) \leq \gamma_m(T') + 1$ . Consequently, the induction hypothesis yield,

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T) &\geq \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T') + \frac{3}{4}k - \frac{3}{4} \\ &\geq \gamma_m(T') + \frac{3}{4}k - \frac{3}{4} \\ &\geq \gamma_m(T) - 1 + \frac{3}{4}k - \frac{3}{4} \\ &\geq \gamma_m(T) + \frac{3}{4}k - \frac{7}{4} \\ &> \gamma_m(T). \end{aligned}$$

**Case 2.** If  $d_{v_3} \geq 3$ .

Let  $v_3$  have  $t \geq 1$  children with depth 1, and  $\ell \geq 0$  children with depth 0. If  $t \geq 2$ , then let  $T' = T - T_{v_2}$ . Suppose that  $xyv_3$  be a path in  $T$  with  $d_y = 2$  and  $d_x = 1$ . Assume that  $S'$  be a  $\beta_2(T')$ -set. If  $v_3 \in S'$ , then  $|S \cap \{x, y\}| = 1$  and  $S = (S' - \{v_3\}) \cup \{v_1, v_2, x, y\}$  is a 2-IS of  $T$ , and if  $v_3 \notin S'$ , then  $S = S' \cup \{v_1, v_2\}$  is a 2-IS of  $T$ , so  $\beta_2(T') + 2 \leq \beta_2(T)$ . On the other hand, by including  $v_2$  in any  $\gamma_m(T')$ -set, we may get a MDS of  $T$ . Therefore,  $\gamma_m(T) \leq \gamma_m(T') + 1$ . Therefore, the induction hypothesis yield  $\frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T) > \gamma_m(T)$ . Now let  $t = 1$  and  $T' = T - T_{v_3}$ . Since  $\text{deg}(v_3) \geq 3$ , we have  $\ell \geq 1$ . Clearly, a 2-IS of  $T$  can be obtained from any  $\beta_2(T')$ -set by including all children and descendants of  $v_3$ . So,  $\beta_2(T') + 2 + \ell \leq \beta_2(T)$ . On the other hand, by including  $v_2, v_3$  in any  $\gamma_m(T')$ -set, we may get a MDS of  $T$ . Therefore, we have  $\gamma_m(T) \leq \gamma_m(T') + 2$  and the induction hypothesis yield:

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T) &\geq \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T') + \frac{3}{2} + \frac{3}{4}\ell \\ &\geq \gamma_m(T') + \frac{3}{2} + \frac{3}{4}\ell \\ &\geq \gamma_m(T) - 2 + \frac{3}{2} + \frac{3}{4}\ell \\ &\geq \gamma_m(T) - \frac{1}{2} + \frac{3}{4}\ell \\ &> \gamma_m(T). \end{aligned}$$

**Case 3.** If  $d_{v_3} = 2$ .

Considering Case 1 and the choice of diametrical path, we may assume that any child of  $v_4$  with depth 2, is of degree 2. We divide this case as:

**Subcase 3.1** If  $d_{v_4} \geq 3$ . Let  $x_1^1, x_1^2, \dots, x_1^k (k \geq 1)$  be the children of  $v_4$  with depth 2, and  $v_4 x_1^i x_2^i x_3^i$  be a path in  $T$  for  $1 \leq i \leq k$ . Assume  $y_1^1, y_1^2, \dots, y_1^t$  be the children of  $v_4$  with depth 1, and  $v_4 y_1^j y_2^j$  be a path in  $T$  for  $1 \leq j \leq t$ . Assume that  $v_4$  has  $\ell$  children with depth 0. Let  $T' = T - T_{v_4}$ . Clearly, by including all children and descendants of  $v_3$  except the children with depth 2 in any  $\beta_2(T')$ -set, we may get a 2-IS of  $T$ . Therefore,  $\beta_2(T') + 2k + 2t + \ell \leq \beta_2(T)$ . On the other hand, by including  $v_4, x_2^i, y_1^j$  for  $1 \leq i \leq k, 1 \leq j \leq t$  to any  $\gamma_m(T')$ -set, we get a MDS of  $T$ . Therefore,  $\gamma_m(T) \leq \gamma_m(T') + k + t + 1$  and the induction hypothesis yields,

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T) &\geq \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T') + \frac{3}{2}k + \frac{3}{2}t + \frac{3}{4}\ell \\ &\geq \gamma_m(T') + \frac{3}{2}k + \frac{3}{4}t + \frac{3}{4}\ell \\ &\geq \gamma_m(T) - k - t - 1 + \frac{3}{2}k + \frac{3}{2}t + \frac{3}{4}\ell \\ &= \gamma_m(T) + \frac{k}{2} + \frac{t}{2} + \frac{3}{4}\ell - 1. \end{aligned}$$

If the equality holds, then we must have  $\frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T') = \gamma_m(T')$ , and  $\frac{k}{2} + \frac{t}{2} + \frac{3}{4}\ell = 1$ . Therefore  $k = t = 1$  and  $\ell = 0$ . Now we show that  $v_5 \in W_{T'}^1$ . If  $v_5 \notin W_{T'}^1$ , then  $\gamma_m(T) \leq \gamma_m(T' - v_5) + 3 < \gamma_m(T') + 3$  which is a contradiction. Hence  $v_5 \in W_{T'}^1$ , and  $T'$  with  $O_1$  produces  $T$ , thus  $T \in \mathcal{T}$ .

**Subcase 3.2** If  $d_{v_4} = 2$ .

Let  $v_5$  have  $\ell$  children with depth 0. Also assume that  $z_1^1, z_1^2, \dots, z_1^t$  be the children of  $v_5$  with depth 1, and  $v_5 z_1^l z_2^l$  be a path in  $T$  for  $1 \leq l \leq t$ , and let  $y_1^1, y_1^2, \dots, y_1^k$  be the children of  $v_5$  with depth 2, and  $v_5 y_1^j y_2^j y_3^j$  be a path in  $T$  for  $1 \leq j \leq k$ . Let  $x_1^1, x_1^2, \dots, x_1^s$  be the children of  $v_5$  with depth 3, and  $v_5 x_1^i x_2^i x_3^i x_4^i$  be a path in  $T$  for  $1 \leq i \leq s$ . Considering above cases and subcases, we may assume that all above paths are pendant paths. Take  $T' = T - T_{v_5}$ , then by including all children of  $v_5$  with depth 0,  $x_1^i, x_3^i, x_4^i$  for  $1 \leq i \leq s, y_2^j, y_3^j$  for  $1 \leq j \leq k$ , and  $z_1^l, z_2^l$  for  $1 \leq l \leq t$  in any  $\beta_2(T')$ -set we may get a 2-IS of  $T$ . Hence,  $\beta_2(T) \geq \beta_2(T') + 3s + 2k + 2t + \ell$ . On the other hand, let  $D$  a  $\gamma_m(T')$ -set. If  $\ell = 0$ , then by including  $x_3^i, x_1^i v_5, y_2^j, z_1^l$  for  $1 \leq i \leq s, 1 \leq j \leq k, 1 \leq l \leq t$  in  $D$ , we get an MDS of  $T$ . Hence  $\gamma_m(T) \leq \gamma_m(T') + 2s + k + t$  and the induction hypothesis yield

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T) &\geq \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T') + \frac{9}{4}s + \frac{3}{2}k + \frac{3}{2}t \\ &\geq \gamma_m(T') + \frac{9}{4}s + \frac{3}{2}k + \frac{3}{4}t \\ &\geq \gamma_m(T) - 2s - k - t + \frac{9}{4}s + \frac{3}{2}k + \frac{3}{2}t \\ &\geq \gamma_m(T) + \frac{1}{4}s + \frac{1}{2}k + \frac{1}{2}t \\ &> \gamma_m(T). \end{aligned}$$

If  $\ell \geq 1$ , then by including  $v_5, x_3^i, x_1^i v_5, y_2^j, z_1^l$  for  $1 \leq i \leq s, 1 \leq j \leq k, 1 \leq l \leq t$  in  $D$ , we get an MDS of  $T$ . Hence  $\gamma_m(T) \leq \gamma_m(T') + 2s + k + t + 1$  the induction hypothesis yield:

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T) &\geq \frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T') + \frac{9}{4}s + \frac{3}{2}k + \frac{3}{2}t + \frac{3}{4}\ell \\ &\geq \gamma_m(T') + \frac{9}{4}s + \frac{3}{2}k + \frac{3}{4}t + \frac{3}{4}\ell \\ &\geq \gamma_m(T) - 2s - k - t - 1 + \frac{9}{4}s + \frac{3}{2}k + \frac{3}{2}t + \frac{3}{4}\ell \\ &\geq \gamma_m(T) + \frac{1}{4}s + \frac{1}{2}k + \frac{1}{2}t + \frac{3}{4}\ell - 1 \\ &\geq \gamma_m(T). \end{aligned}$$

If the equality holds, then we must have  $\frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T') = \gamma_m(T')$ , and  $\frac{s}{4} + \frac{k}{2} + \frac{t}{2} + \frac{3}{4}\ell = 1$ . Therefore  $k = t = 0, \ell = s = 1$ . Finally, we show that  $v_6 \in W_{T'}^2$ . If  $v_6 \notin W_{T'}^2$ , then  $\gamma_m(T) \leq \gamma_m(T'; v_6) + 3 < \gamma_m(T') + 3$  which is a contradiction. Hence  $v_6 \in W_{T'}^2$ , and  $T'$  along with  $O_2$  produces  $T$ . Thus  $T \in \mathcal{T}$  and the proof is completed.  $\square$

### 3. Conclusion

In this research paper, we consider the problem of 2-independent set and mixed domination in trees and we proved that for any tree  $T$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}\beta_2(T) \geq \gamma_m(T)$ . Also we characterized all those trees which attain the equality. As a future study, it is interesting to investigate this problem in the classes of unicyclic graphs and bicyclic graphs, and so on.

### Acknowledgments

This work is supported by the 2019 teaching reform project of Guangdong Polytechnic of science and technology, JG201926, Research on the course construction of exhibition data analysis under the background of digital economy, and Guangdong Provincial Education Department, 2017GGXJK020, “Internet plus” technology service and management platform research and design.

### Conflict of interest

The authors wish to confirm that there are no known conflicts of interest associated with this paper and there has been no significant financial support for this work that could have influenced its outcome.

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