

## **Elderly Perceptions Regarding Changes in the Parent-Child Relationship in the Modern Era: A Case of Coast Region, Tanzania**

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**Abstract:** This study aimed at establishing elderly perceptions regarding changes in the parent-child relationship in the Coast region through cross-sectional design. Both probability and non-probability techniques were used to select the sample. The study managed to collect data from 394 respondents. Data was collected through a questionnaire survey, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. The study findings revealed that older people perceived changes in the parent-children relationship as negative and detrimental. This marks a contrasting difference in the parent-child relationship between the traditional and modern eras. Further, the elderly had a perception that the current generation of adult children has tremendously failed to keep and preserve values, norms, folklore and taboos that used to maintain the parent-child relationship in the past. This has led adult children to lack respect, proper consultation and regular communication with their elderly parents. Modernization and urbanization were perceived as the main causes of changing parent-child relationships in modern days. It is recommended that the government and the community should ensure that traditional norms and values which enforced children's obedience towards their parents when are old are maintained. Further, the traditional communal parenting system whereby the whole community was responsible for the children's upbringing should be emphasized. Additionally, the community and the government at large should ensure that adult children are taught the importance of the elderly in the community, given their vast wisdom and experience. Moreover, there is a need for the government to collaborate with community leaders to ensure that modernization and urbanization do not alter the norms and values of most Tanzanian societies.

**Keywords:** Perceptions; family changes; the elderly; parent-child relationship' adult children.

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### **Introduction**

Families are tremendously changing in the modern era than they used to be in traditional

societies (Park, Phua & McNally, 2006). Changes in the family are manifested in the structures, formations and functions (Keasberry, 2002;

Ocakli, 2017). As part of the changes that are facing families, several studies have shown that the relationship between children and parents (parent-child relationship) is changing both positively and negatively (Beaujot & Ravanera, 2008; Lin & Yi, 2013; Lloyd, 2008). Issues such as industrialization, urbanization, educational expansion and demographic change are said to affect the parent-child relationship. While studies in Africa have indicated the prevalence of changes in the parent-child relationship (Tafere, 2015; Muia, Maina & Mwangi, 2013), there have been mixed views as to when changes in the parent-child relationship started. For example, scholars in developed countries such as Australia, the USA and Canada believe that changes in the parent-child relationship are part of the whole family changes which were observed back in the 1950s through 2000 (Beaujot & Ravanera, 2008; Jelin & Diaz-Muñoz, 2003; Kinnear, 2002; Luxton, 2011; Waite, 2009). In contrast, scholars in Africa have argued that many changes in the family system, especially parent-child relations started during the colonial period and have been accelerated by the emergence of globalization, urbanization and modernization in the early 1990s (Chemere, 2019; Muia, Main & Mwangi, 2013)

Changes in parent-child relationships have been perceived differently in some countries. On one hand, some scholars in developed countries believe that changes exhibited in parent-child relationships are the redefinition of traditional traits into new values and that both traditional traits and new values must coexist (Beaujot & Ravanera, 2008; Jackson & Liu, 2017; Kiilo, Kasearu & Kutsa, 2016; Park, Phua & McNally, 2006). This is to say that the tradition and cultural value of family centrality have been reinvented in the modernization process. It is argued that changing family relationships have not entirely affected norms of solidarity as does family support. For example, according to Beaujot and Ravanera (2008), it was found in Canada that despite existing changes in the parent-child relationship, the solidarity between family members was still strong. Other studies by Jackson and Liu (2017) in China and Kiilo, Kasearu & Kutsar (2016) in Estonia concluded that despite globalization, filial norms among adult children towards their parents were strong.

On the other hand, some scholars in developing countries argue that forces of modernization such

as globalization, urbanization and migration have dismantled traditional traits and invented new values and norms (Chemere, 2019; Ibrahim, 2013; Qamar, Nadeem, Khaliq & Ijaz, 2020; Yusuf, Aliyu & Moshood, 2016). Those studies have shown that modernization and globalization have affected the mindset, attitudes and behavior of adult children in providing support and care for their older parents. It is further reported that urbanization has fled young people from rural areas leaving the elderly alone. Family changes are seen as a wholly negative phenomenon and are attributed to a wider decline in moral values and the unhealthy dominance of selfish individualism over more traditional values of responsibility and obligation. By and large, changes in family have been perceived negatively in the African context. Many issues, which were revered in the traditional era such as bearing many children and caring for older people seem to lose their importance in the modern era (Chemere, 2019; Mayowa, 2019).

The mixed feelings regarding the perceived effects of changes in the parent-child relationship underscore the need to investigate changes based on the existing values and norms in a specific country (Pas, Van Der, Tilburg, Van, & Knipscheer, 2007). This is done to avoid generalizability given the fact that there is no uniform societal development that affects all countries in the same manner (Scabini & Marta, 2006). Aboderin (2004) as cited in Pas, Van Der, Tilburg, Van and Knipscheer (2007) cast doubt on the underlying assumption of uniform societal development, which predicts the same "breakdown" of family relations within different countries and different periods. She also questions whether the process is taking place in the same manner in different countries. In that case, research on changing parent-child relationships needs to consider a wider environment of particular societies, including pre-existing culture, the pace of the development process and the timing of changes (Antonucci, Birditt, Sherma & Trinh, 2011). This justifies that, the perceptions of the effects of changes in intergenerational relationships depend on cultural aspects, the extent to which changes have taken place and the timing of changes.

One of the notable changes in the parent-child relationships in the African context has been the decline of support from adult children to older parents (Aboderin, 2004; Hosegood, 2008;

Manyara, Mwangi & Apollos, 2016). It is argued that changing the parent-child relationship weakens intergenerational solidarity leading to poor transfers from adult children to elderly parents. Further, it is argued that unlike in the modern era, in the traditional era there was a strong parent-child relationship that obliged adult children to support and care for their old parents. Although African scholars have mostly supported this, scholars in western countries do not solely think that less support means less solidarity between parents and adult children (Da Roit, 2007). In his study regarding changing intergenerational solidarities within families in a Mediterranean welfare state, Da Roit (2007) further indicated that although the provision of support tends to be less as compared to the traditional era, that does not justify that intergenerational solidarity has declined. But to put it clearly as Geest (2002) pointed out, some caution must be used when people start praising the past and condemning the present.

Tanzania like any other developing country is also undergoing waves of globalization, modernization and urbanization (Manyama, 2017; Rwegelera, 2012; Worrall et al., 2017). This is to say that the parent-child relationship in the country has been affected as in other countries. However, there has been limited information as to how these changes have been perceived by elderly parents. Older people are the beneficiaries of the strong parent-child relationship since at their advanced ages they solely rely on transfers and emotional support from their adult children. Further, some studies in Tanzania have indicated the decline of support from adult children to the elderly (HAI, 2011; Spitzer, Rwegoshora, Mabeyo, 2009). However, there has been a dearth of information to associate the decline of support and the effects of changes in the parent-child relationship given that little is known about the way changing parent-child relationship has been perceived. Therefore, this study sought to establish how older people perceived changes in the parent-child relationships concerning their welfare. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Is there any difference when comparing the quality of parent-child relationships in the traditional and modern eras?
2. What are the issues that exhibit changes in the parent-child relationship?

3. What are the causes of changes in the parent-child relationship?

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

Research design is the plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived to obtain answers to research questions (Kumar, 2011). This study used an explanatory cross-sectional survey in generating and analyzing data. Cross-sectional design helped the researchers to generate data from a sizeable population within a single time. The study was explanatory because it aimed at explaining how older people had perceived changes in the parent-child relationships in the modern era.

### **Population and Sampling**

To establish the perceptions of elderly people regarding changes in the parent-child relationship, this study picked randomly the Coast region since the region is one of the four leading regions with high proportions (8.5%) of the elderly people in Tanzania. Other regions with high proportions of elderly population in Tanzania are Kilimanjaro (9.7%), Mtwara (9.5%) and Lindi (9.0%) (Agwanda & Amani, 2014). The study took place between May 2020 and early February 2021. The study used both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Sampling was done using a five-stage sampling approach. The first stage included random selection of one region among the four leading regions with high elderly populations. Thus, the Coast region was randomly picked up. In the second stage, the 2 local government authorities (Kibaha Town Council and Mkuranga District Council) were purposively selected given their high elderly population compared to other local government authorities in the region. The third stage comprised a random selection of 4 wards from each local government authority. The 4 wards from Mkuranga DC were randomly selected out of 25 wards while the selected 4 wards from Kibaha TC came out of 14 wards. The fourth stage included a random selection of 2 villages or mitaa from each ward making 16 villages/ mitaa. The fifth stage involved the selection of participants to participate in the study. After accessing elderly registers for each village/mitaa, a simple random technique was used to obtain the actual number of respondents.

The sampling frame included older people from Mkuranga DC and Kibaha TC which amounted to

31,596 older people. The sample size for the respondents who participated in this study was determined by using the Yamane formula as quoted by Creswell & Creswell (2018)  $n = N/1+N(e^2)$  at a confidence level of 95%. Whereby N is the targeted sample population size, n is the sample size and e is the error tolerance level. The percentage proportion was utilized to determine the number of respondents from each village/mtaa. The calculation indicated a sample size of 394 respondents. Thus;

$$\begin{aligned} n &= N/1+N(e^2) \\ n &= 31,596/1+31,596(0.05^2) \\ n &= 394 \end{aligned}$$

### **Data Collection Tools and Procedures**

The study used different data collection tools such as questionnaires, interviews and Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) guides to collect data. For the case of the questionnaires, a semi-structured questionnaire was developed to capture responses from the entire sample. Questions in the form of a Likert scale with five levels were constructed to measure elderly perceptions. Most of the items were meant to elicit respondents' understanding by comparing the quality of parent-child relationships in the traditional and modern eras. The 'traditional era' concept as used in this study denotes the period before and during colonialism. According to Rwezaura (1989), the word 'traditional era' means a period before and during colonialism. Using the definitions from the study of Mayowa (2019), this study refers modern era as the 'post-independence era' characterized by the rise of globalization in the late 1990s.

Given that, this study surveyed people aged 60 years and above, it was clear that most of them were born at the end of the colonial era (pre-independence era). In that case, most of them did not experience life before and during colonialism. However, these older people had parents who possibly were born before colonialism and lived in the period of colonialism and afterwards. The study assumed that through their parents' and grandparents' experiences, respondents had some tastes/clues regarding what transpired in the traditional era. Indeed, having been born in the colonial era and with children who were born afterwards put older people in a good chance to compare the parent-child relationship in both eras. Other studies such as Kalunthantiri (2014) in

Sri Lanka and Mbwete (2015) in Tanzania used the same method when they wanted to ascertain older people's experiences on family matters which have been occurring in different eras.

In the course of questionnaire administration, the study recruited research assistants to support the principal researcher. There were eight research assistants for the entire exercise. Before the exercise has been underway, the principal researcher debriefed assistant researchers on how to conduct the questionnaire survey. The meeting aimed at exposing research assistants to the main themes of the research and ethical issues. Indeed, to have detailed information, the study selected key informants who were subjected to in-depth interviews and FGDs. The selection of participants in the in-depth interviews was merely based on their merits and not by chance. Moreover, the study conducted six FGDs (comprising 8 people each) in both councils of Kibaha TC and Mkuranga DC. As proposed by Creswell & Creswell (2018), groups involving 8-10 older people are far much better for a discussion.

### **Statistical Treatment of Data**

Data analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative approaches. For the quantitative primary data, the IBM Statistical Product and Services Solutions (IBM-SPSS) version 20 was used for processing and analysis. Since the aim of the study was to investigate the perceptions of older people with regards to changes in the parent-child relationship, descriptive analysis was performed whereby responses were presented using frequency tables and graphs.

The data collected through in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and documentary reviews were subjected to qualitative analysis. The researchers read them comprehensively to get a deeper understanding of what they meant concerning the research problem. These data were filtered to get patterns of significant themes. After themes had been identified, data were merged into categories concerning the objectives of the study. The analysis further involved the presentation of respondents' descriptions with verbatim quotations placed under respective themes backed up by some findings obtained from the literature review. Given that, this study used a mixed-method approach. Quantitative and qualitative information were triangulated to get a deeper understanding of various phenomena.

## Results and Discussions

This section presents the results of the study based on research questions that guided the study.

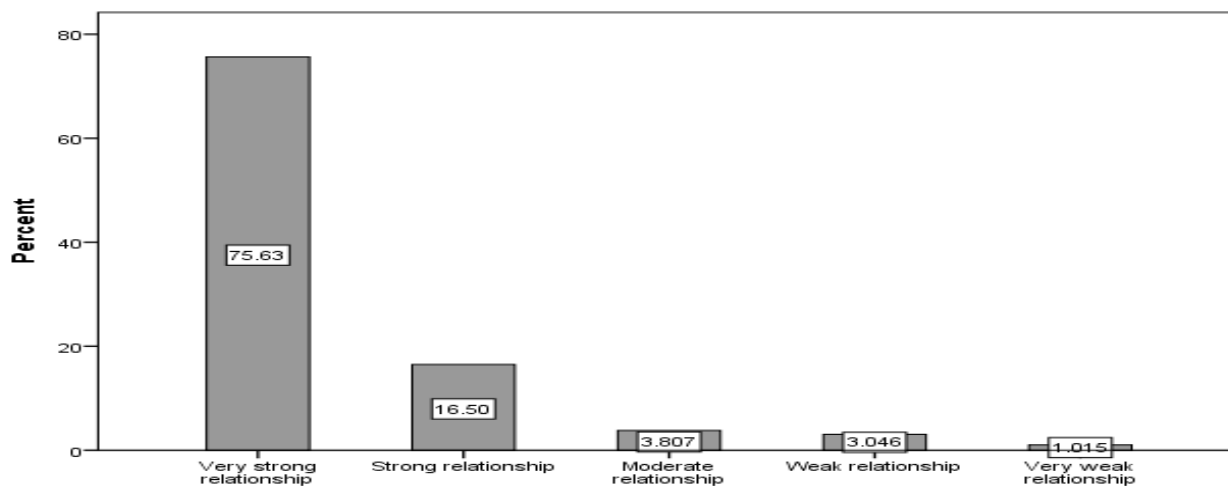
### Demographic information of Respondent

As seen in table 1, the majority of respondents (35.4%) were those within the age category of 60-64 years followed by those who were within the age category of 65-69 years (23.4%). The results further indicate that there was a slight difference between male (51.3%) and female respondents (48.7%). With regards to marital status, the

majority of respondents were married (54.8%) followed by those who were widows/widowers (29.4%). Generally speaking, the socio-economic characteristics of respondents showed that the study fairly included older people of varied ages. This paved a way for the study to have mixed experiences of the older people. Indeed, the near matching of the number of men and women ensured that the study got experiences of both men and women equally. Nonetheless, having only 1.3% of respondents who had never married meant that the majority of respondents had experiences with family matters.

**Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents**

| Age            | Frequency  | Percent    |
|----------------|------------|------------|
| 60-64          | 136        | 35.4       |
| 65-69          | 93         | 23.4       |
| 70-74          | 59         | 14.8       |
| 75-79          | 51         | 12.7       |
| 80 and above   | 55         | 13.7       |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>394</b> | <b>100</b> |
| Sex            | Frequency  | %          |
| Male           | 202        | 51.3       |
| Female         | 192        | 48.7       |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>394</b> | <b>100</b> |
| Marital Status | Frequency  | %          |
| Married        | 230        | 58.4       |
| Divorced       | 43         | 10.9       |
| Widower/widow  | 116        | 29.4       |
| Never married  | 5          | 1.3        |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>394</b> | <b>100</b> |



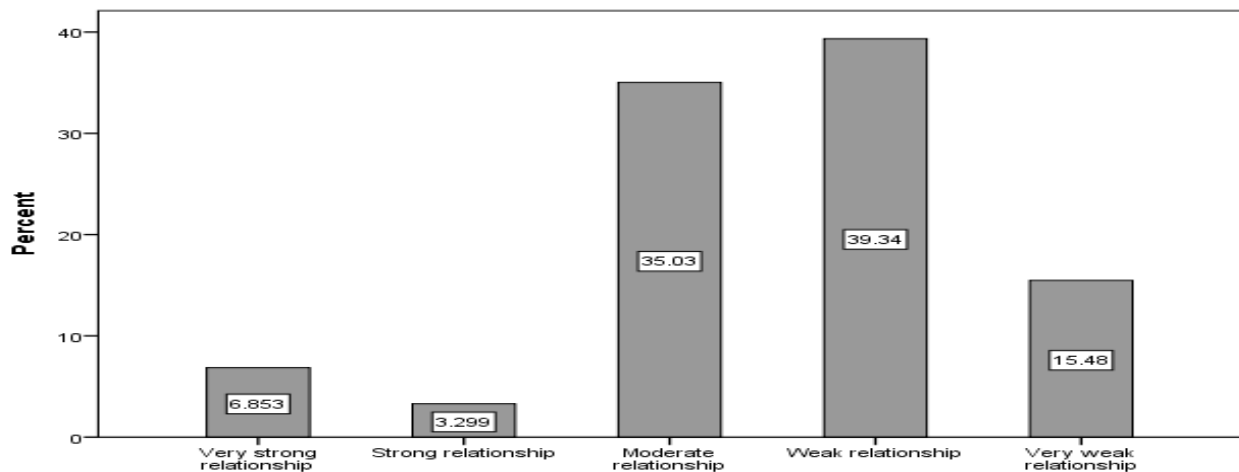
**Figure 1: The strength of the parent-child relationship in the traditional era**

**Research Question 1:** Is there any difference when comparing the quality of parent-child relationships in the traditional and modern eras?

Figures 1 and 2 indicate the responses concerning the strength of the parent-child in both the traditional and modern eras. The results in Figure 1 revealed that majority of respondents (75.6%)

agreed that the relationship in the traditional era was very strong followed by 16.5% of the respondents who reported that it was strong. Further, the results indicated that 3.8% of the respondents showed that the relationship was moderate while 3.0% reported that it was weak. Similarly, around 1% of the respondents opined that it was very weak. On the other hand, Figure.2 informs that the majority of respondents (39.3%)

indicated that the current parent-child is weak followed by the 35.0% of the respondents who reported that it is moderate. The figure further shows that around 15% of the respondents thought that the current relationship is very weak followed by 6.8% of the respondents who reported that it is very strong. Nonetheless, only 3.2% of the respondents were of the opinion that it is strong.



**Figure 2: The strength of the parent-child relationship in the modern era**

The general impression from the results as indicated in Figures 1 and 2 indicates that older people perceived the current parent-child relationship as weaker compared to the past. When the survey results were triangulated with the results from in-depth interviews and FGDs, it was seen that there was a difference between the way the current generation of older people interacted with their parents and the way their adult children interact with them. Cementing on whether the current parent-child relationship is weaker as compared to the past, one respondent was quoted during an in-depth interview saying: “..I have 80 years up to now and I can confidently say that the difference regarding the parent-child relationship between me and my parents and that existing between me and my children is big...” (An in-depth interview at Mwarusembe, 2020).

During in-depth interviews and FGDs, the study established that the major difference that respondents were refereeing to was the way the two generations have been keeping family values, including norms, folklore and taboos. According to Albert and Ferring (2018), family values are defined as traditional and collectivist value

orientations concerning the family with a normative character. Despite the provision of rules on how family members should behave and relate toward each other, they also formulate obligations towards each other and describe the roles of family members (*ibid*). In that case, respondents thought that the current generation of adult children has fallen away from preserving family values that are embedded in the parent-child relationship. Studies in other African countries such as Muia, Maina & Mwangi (2013) in Kenya and Tafere (2015) in Ethiopia contended that there are modifications in the relationship from what used to be. Those studies also have highlighted changes regarding the way the current generations keep and preserve norms, folklore and taboos. Similarly, a study in Indonesia by Setiyani and Windsor (2019) revealed that the views and perceptions of adult children in the current generation have changed somewhat from traditional practices to modern orientation.

**Research Question 2:** What are the issues that exhibit changes in the parent-child relationship?

The researchers sought to elicit information from the respondents regarding issues that manifest changes in the parent-child relationship. The following sub-sections elaborate on the existing issues in detail.

### **Lack of respect towards elderly people**

The concept that adult children were lacking respect towards their parents was reported as one of the issues that differentiated the current parent-child relationship and that of the past. This can be derived from the following quote made during in-depth interviews in the study area:

In the situation of the relationship between children and their parents, there are many changes. In the past, these two entities were closer and to some point, there was much respect between them. However, nowadays it seems like these things have changed. Children lack respect for their parents, lack ethics and even mutual help has changed (An in-depth interview at Kibaha, August 2020).

The above script indicated the lamentation of respondents about the lack of respect among adult children in modern days. The study during in-depth interviews and FGDs revealed that in most cases older people viewed 'lack of respect' as 'disobedience.' It was further revealed that older people felt that their adult children are likely to disobey orders and instructions which they give to them. Older people narrated during in-depth interviews and FGDs that when they were young, they were obedient to whoever was older regardless he/she was their relative or not. They contended that obedience among children was possible because parenting children was a communal thing. It was agreed that in the coastal areas, there was a saying that "*mtoto wa mwenzi ni mtoto wako* (the said saying literally in English means 'the child of your fellow community members is also yours) to justify the accountability and responsibility of each adult individual in parenting. However, the study was informed that currently the parental obligation has been solely left to individual families. There are no communal laws or norms that enforce adult children to obey their parents or sanctions put on those who violate them. Cognizant of disrespecting the elderly parents, the study was informed that adult children have developed new

habits of not greeting, helping and paying attention to older persons who are not their closest relatives. Unlike in the past when children were required to respect all older people, nowadays, adult children pay attention to those who are closer relatives only.

Lack of respect among adult children towards the elderly indicates the difference in the parent-child relationship between the traditional and modern eras. According to Keasberry (2002), previously the intergenerational relationship was generally characterized by the values of showing respect (hormat) towards older and senior relatives. Similarly, other studies such as Manyara, Mwangi and Apollos (2016) in Kenya and Amos (2013) in Ghana have also shown that the current generation of adult children has lost respect and honour towards their parents and even to other people who hold the same status as their parents. According to Amos (2013), the fact that older people in Africa are not respected by adult children is because a lot of them have lost touch with the African values which revere the aged ones and rather imitate other values from the western world. Indeed, the author added that a lot of young people presently no longer give a helping hand to adults and do not offer their seats to the elderly whether in public or private cars.

### **Poor consultation and information sharing**

Another issue that differentiated the current and past parent-child relationship was consultation seeking and information sharing. The study learnt that older people had the view that unlike in the traditional era where children sought regular consultation from their parents, the current generation of adult children has been shying away from seeking consultation. When comparing the level of adult children in seeking pieces of advice from their parents between the traditional era and modern era, one respondent during an in-depth interview had this to say: "...in the previous time, it was not easy for an adult child to look for a mate without prior consultation with his/her parents. However, as of now, our children decide for themselves..." (An in-depth interview at Kongowe, August 2020).

The wider picture from respondents' views is that the current young generation has distanced from the older cohort. Older people had the view that their adult children were feeling good sharing information with their friends than with their

parents especially when they are old. Older people considered this poor consultation as individualism/egoism among adult children as they decide things on their own without even sharing information with their elders. On the other hand, older people felt that in the meantime their adult children are no longer keeping them closer (confidant). Similarly, one respondent in an in-depth interview was quoted saying; "...in the past, our parents and even our elders were our advisors and we were not able to do anything unless we had permission from our parents or any elder... (An in-depth interview at Kimanzichana, August 2020).

The idea that in the traditional era adult children sought consultation from their elderly parents is supported by other findings as well. For example, according to Ojua, Lukpata & Atama (2014) in Nigeria, adult children consulted their parents when choosing their marriage partners. Parents used this to ensure that their children have someone to marry at a due time in life to reduce issues and incidents of separation and divorce. However, the author concluded that, currently, this concept had been altered. The study has learnt that older people thought that their adult children no longer value them as a source of wisdom and knowledge. Being parents, older people thought that their adult children would have appreciated them as wiser and clever. This tenet probably is borrowed from the traditional perspective where older people were revered as wiser and knowledgeable (Abanyan, 2013). Unfortunately, in the advent of the information, communication and technology era, sources of wisdom and knowledge have expanded. Amos (2013) shows that the media has taken precedence in most African families and that adult children are no longer listening to folk stories anymore; rather they are busy with television, the internet, foreign books and computers. It is stressed that these modernization gadgets have limited information concerning African cultural values and proper traditional parenting, which can easily be assessed by all.

### **Irregular Communication**

The study revealed that weak parent-child relationship in the modern era was associated with poor communication between parents and their children. Some older parents reported that sometimes it took months to meet a child who stays just a few kilometres away from their

homes. In a similar vein, one respondent when explaining the same story had this to narrate:

...I have six children of which five of them live in the same village with me while the other lives away from this district. Interestingly, out of the five children who live in the same village as me, it is only one child who regularly visits me. Even the one who stays away from this district hardly calls me unless he hears that I am sick, that is when he can call me...(An in-depth interview at Tambani, July 2020).

The above quotation simply indicates poor reciprocal communication between children and their parents. Probably while it was easy for family members to meet regularly in the traditional era, it seems that currently family members are hardly meeting face to face. The study has learnt that at their advanced ages, older people needed regular communication with their adult children. Closer proximity might influence people to meet each other on regular basis; however, that has not been the case. Studies in other countries have shown that regular communication between parents and their children enhances their quality of life (Ocakli, 2017; Soler, 2012). The fact that adult children are taking a very long time to meet their older parents seemed to affect the family ties. From the elderly perspective, the act of adult children staying away for a long time without considering visiting their parents was translated as a weaker part of the parent-child relationship. Although the existence of the mobile phone has eased communication among people who are distant apart, older people claimed that virtual communication was not enough given their advanced ages. They contended that sometimes they needed to meet their children face to face with ample space.

**Research Question 3:** What are the causes of changes in the parent-child relationship?

Table 2 informs that the majority of the respondents 221 (56.1%) perceived that modernization was largely causing changes in the parent-child relationship followed by around 20.9% of the respondents who indicated that urbanization was the cause. The table also indicates that 15% of the respondents considered rural-urban migration as the cause while 4% of the respondents thought increased education

among adult children to be the cause. Nonetheless, 4% of the respondents thought increased individualization among adult children was the cause.

When the survey results were triangulated with findings from in-depth interviews and FGDs, it was revealed that urbanization and modernization were largely affecting parent-child relationships in the area. To a large extent, these factors are said

to affect the regular communication between parents and their adult children, nurturing new norms and values in contrast to traditional views, lessening the value and prestige of older parents and dwindling the transfers directed to parents from adult children. A detailed explanation regarding modernization and urbanization is given below.

**Table.2: Causes of changing parent-child relationships**

| Causes                                     | Frequency  | %          |
|--------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Modernization                              | 221        | 56.1       |
| Rural-urban migration among adult children | 59         | 15.0       |
| Urbanization                               | 82         | 20.9       |
| Increased education among adult children   | 16         | 4.0        |
| Increased individualization                | 16         | 4.0        |
| <b>Total</b>                               | <b>394</b> | <b>100</b> |

With regards to modernization, there is a consensus that the emergence of mass media such as radio, TV and ICT development has infiltrated new values and norms in adult children. The new values contrast the traditional values and norms. The study learnt that the impact of modernization on adult children was largely shouldered on young adult children (those who were born in the early 1980s). This was because the ICT revolution has taken its place starting in the late 1990s. One respondent during an in-depth interview had this to say about issues of mass media and ICT:

Nowadays social media has brought many problems. I think the issue of TV/Video has brought all these misconceptions and misbehaving. Previously, we used to have cinemas showing issues such as 'Kilimo' [agriculture], 'Ufugaji' [livestock keeping] etc....But nowadays our children via internet watch everything regardless of their age as a result they know many things which they are not supposed to know at early ages.... (An in-depth interview at Kongowe, July 2020).

This finding corroborates with other findings as well. Ojua, Lukpata and Atama (2014) reported that the western media has made the acculturation of westernization in Nigerian societies. Another study by Wachege and Rugendo (2018) in Kenya confirmed that modernization, through social media has provided new opportunities and structures which

negatively influence the inculcation of moral values into adult children. In addition, a study by Qamar,Nadeem, Khaliq & Ijaz (2020) in Pakistan revealed that as part of modernization, uncontrolled exposure to the internet, television, movies and video games seemed to increase drug abuse, violence and related vices. Nonetheless, the study by Geest (2016) concluded that Ghanaian society, adult children were negatively influenced by globalization, which is part of modernization.

Unlike in the western world where technology has eased life, in the African context, it seems that technology has also affected family relations. While using the technology has been easy for family members to get connected, in some cases the time spent when watching television, playing electronic games and communicating with others via social media has increased the isolation of family members and diminished relationships (Butts, Thang, L. L., & Yeo, 2012). The transformation of African society towards modernity, westernization and globalization and its attendant social changes has greatly altered the African traditional family system (Ojua, Lukpata & Atama, 2014). Modernity has brought with it new religious attitudes and has changed traditional cultural norms. In much of African society today, traditional values and practices are routinely challenged (Callahan, 1985)

On the other hand, results from in-depth interviews and FGDs in Mkuranga DC and Kibaha TC have revealed that to a large extent, emerging urban towns have been influencing the mobility of

adult children. The study learnt that majority of older parents were living alone in their homes while their adult children were living in urban centres away from their origin places. It was reported that being a huge commercial city and nearer to the Coast region, Dar es Salaam was attracting many adult children, hence, the majority of them were living and working in it. Geographically, the city of Dar es Salaam and the Coast region are closely located making easy mobility among dwellers within the two regions. Although moving and working in the city was not a bad idea among adult children, the study revealed some negative impacts associated with rural-urban mobility.

First, the city was used as a hiding place for adult children as most of them were hardly coming back to visit their older parents in rural areas. The study learnt that some of the older people knew that their adult children were living in the city but they never knew exactly their living places and the kind of jobs they were doing.

Second, the city was attracting adult children to look for greener pastures, hence abandoning agriculture which was the main activity for older people. While it was thought that, the movement of adult children to the city would instigate remittances back home to substitute for their absence, however, that has not been done. As a result, most of the older people were complaining that they were lacking the labour force for their agricultural activities but also financial resources to hire the labour force. According to Mayowa (2019), as towns grow, young people tend to move away from the villages in which they were raised in search of jobs; however, when missing those jobs they rarely go back to their villages. This was also reported by Muia, Maina and Mwangi (2013) in Kenya who pointed out that, increasing urbanization is eroding the traditional cushion that ensured the elderly lived with the rest of the members of the household. Another study conducted by Alber, Häberlein & Martin (2011) in Togo revealed that the act of young people moving away from their home villages led to serious problems in terms of providing for the old people who were left behind.

Third, it was reported that some of the adult children who live in the city have been bearing children and instead of looking after them, they have been sending them to their older parents in

the rural areas. The study learnt that most of the grandchildren in elderly households had their parents living in towns. As a result of the difficult life in towns, adult children have been reconfigured or adjusted their lives by reducing their family size. In line with this scenario, one respondent was quoted saying:

...I live with six grandchildren whose parents live in Dar es Salaam. It is not my intention to look after them at this age; however, given the difficult life in the city, I have no way. Knowing that life here is not as bad as Dar es Salaam, I have been taking the role of caring for them waiting until when the situation of their parents stabilizes..." (An in-depth interview at Mwarusembe, August 2020).

These findings coincide with the findings of HAI (2011) in Morogoro which revealed that among many children whom older people were forced to take care of, were those grandchildren who were born out of wedlock and/or before marriage. The study revealed that many parents of those grandchildren were living in Dar es Salaam, leaving their children to their parents in Morogoro. It was found that many adult children who work in cities or towns succumb to pregnancies without preparation, hence failing to take care of their children. As a result, they ask their parents in rural areas to look after them while sending little to support parental responsibilities. In principle, this habit increases parental responsibilities to older people who are largely frail and economically weak.

Fourth, the study revealed that urbanization had a bad influence on the habits of adult children which in turn jeopardized their relationships with their parents. The study learnt that there was a huge influence of bad habits and behaviour from the nearby city to the study area. For example, it was reported during FGDs that there were some adult children in areas such as Picha ya Ndege, Mwandege and Kongowe who were abusing drugs and some were engaging in prostitution. The said areas are closely located in the city of Dar es Salaam. It was reported that the involvement of adult children in the use of drugs decreases their capacity to support their elderly parents since drugs deteriorate the health of users. In addition, the act of adult children engaging in prostitution was reported to increase their chances of

contracting HIV/AIDS or unwanted pregnancies. The effects of HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancies among adult children is an increase of grandchildren in elderly-headed households.

While the urbanization process was likely to increase incomes and facilitate economic opportunities in adjacent rural areas, to some extent it has been the source of weakening family ties. Through urbanization, the majority of adult children are absorbed in the realms of economic opportunities which in turn do not yield enough benefits to the newcomers. Older parents are pleased with the fact that their adult children are looking for greener pastures in the growing cities. However, this turned out to be a curtain that inhibits regular communication between parents and their children. By and large, the urbanization process in Africa has failed to create economic opportunities that could have leveraged rural livelihood. Instead, it is offloading able-bodied people from rural areas leaving older people alone. Increasing urbanization has a negative influence on the way parents interact with their children.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### Conclusions

The researchers concluded that elderly people perceive changes in the parent-children relationship as negative and detrimental effect to them in various ways. First, the quality of the parent-child in the modern era seems to be weak as compared with the traditional era. Older people perceived that the current generation of adult children is failing in keeping and preserving values, norms, folklore and taboos which revered the elderly. Second, older people had a strong perception that issues such as lack of respect towards the elderly, the unlikeliness of seeking consultation from the elderly, poor information sharing and irregular communication have manifested weak parent-child relationships in the modern era. Lastly, there is a perception among older people that modernization and urbanization have been negatively playing a huge part in creating changes in the parent-child relationship in one way or another.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that the government and the community at large should ensure that traditional norms and values which enforced children's obedience towards their parents when are old are

maintained. Similarly, traditional communal parenting where the whole community was responsible for the children's upbringing should be upheld. The community and the government should ensure that adult children are taught the importance of the elderly in the community given their wisdom and experience. Additionally, there is a need for the government to collaborate with community leaders to ensure that modernization and urbanization do not alter the norms and values of most Tanzanian societies.

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