

The effects of global migration of male children on left-behind parents' family and social life: The case of Pakistan

Dampak migrasi global anak laki-laki pada keluarga terhadap kehidupan sosial orang tua yang ditinggalkan: Studi kasus Pakistan

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Abstract

As a human phenomenon, international migration has been affecting societies politically, economically, and socially for a more extended period. The present study tried to investigate the trends of international migration and their effects on the social life of the elderly parents left behind by their children, who at this age need love, care, support, and time from their children. The study adopted a quantitative research design by surveying three cities: Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, chosen based on many international migration trends in these regions. A sample of 94 respondents drawn using a snowball sampling technique. The results were gathered through a questionnaire and analyzed statistically. The results show that most parents reported that their social contacts have changed in their children's presence as they get busy with their children. The study finds international migration as affecting the social life (Activities of Daily Life or ADL) of elderly parents. Moreover, many respondents stated that their relatives' attitude was amiable, caring, and respectable in their children's absence. Lastly, a more significant number of respondents agreed that their food and sleep habit changed to tremendous and some extent in their kids' presence. This research concludes that parents need support from their kids and assume themselves as dependents in their aging stage.

Keywords: international migration; elderly parents; social support; family

Abstrak

Fenomena migrasi internasional telah mempengaruhi masyarakat secara politik, ekonomi, dan sosial untuk waktu yang cukup lama. Penelitian ini mencoba untuk menyelidiki tren migrasi internasional dan pengaruhnya terhadap kehidupan sosial para orang tua lanjut usia yang ditinggalkan oleh anak-anak mereka. Di usia tersebut, orang tua membutuhkan cinta, perhatian, dukungan, dan waktu dari anak-anak mereka. Studi ini mengadopsi desain penelitian kuantitatif dengan melakukan survei pada tiga kota: Pakistan dan Azad Jammu dan Kashmir, yang dipilih berdasarkan banyak tren migrasi internasional. Sampel sebanyak 94 responden diambil dengan menggunakan teknik snowball sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner dan dianalisis secara statistik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar orang tua melaporkan bahwa kontak sosial mereka telah berubah di hadapan anak-anak mereka saat mereka sibuk dengan anak-anak mereka. Studi ini menemukan migrasi internasional mempengaruhi kehidupan sosial (Aktivitas Kehidupan Sehari-hari atau ADL) orang tua lansia. Selain itu, banyak responden yang menyatakan bahwa sikap kerabatnya ramah, peduli, dan terhormat jika anaknya tidak ada. Terakhir, lebih banyak responden setuju bahwa kebiasaan makan dan tidur mereka berubah drastis dan dalam beberapa hal terjadi pada kehadiran anak-anak mereka. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa orang tua dalam tahap penuaan membutuhkan dukungan dari anak-anak mereka dan menganggap diri mereka sebagai tanggungan.

Kata kunci: migrasi internasional; orang tua lanjut usia; dukungan sosial; keluarga

Introduction

It is a well-accepted notion that overseas migration and different causes have specific impacts on both sending and receiving countries; however, the considerable magnitude and direction of this prodigy's effects may differ. It needs to be further investigated understood (Antman 2010). Those who migrate not only experience an economic impact in their lives; however, the phenomenon of out-migration

equally affects them socially and psychologically (Adhikari et al. 2011). The increasing process of globalization has changed every pattern, particularly the lifestyles of family and community (Kahanec & Zimmermann 2008). Social changes consider significant to understand the shifts in household and family structure. The transformation process arises from industrialization, urbanization, and migration, which alter the traditional living arrangements caused by globalization (Ruggles 1996). Parents have always been a core element of the discussions in the structure of the households. As the population in North America, Latin America, Europe, and Asia is increasing rapidly, the researchers are curious to comprehend the provisions in the elderly's lives. The epidemiologists and demographers study the benefits for the health and longevity of more elderly persons with a vast network of social support, recognizing that, if reasonable social assistance extends outside of the family, co-resident members represent a crucial source of material resources and emotions (Kanaiaupuni et al. 1999).

Another critical report to analyze the impact of adult children's migration on non-migrant parents left in the country of origin and the impacts of migration becomes evident when one considers the rapid aging of the population in most developing countries and their dependence old-age parents on children for the support. The context is meaningful because it often thought international migration would increase migrants' revenue who transmit remittances more to parents at home. At the same time, the migrants may be restricted from returning to the home and take personal care of the elderly. Additionally, old-age care is essential for the parents, mainly when they are dependent on children both socially and financially. Often earning money abroad and proper care to parents in the internal market is not an option. Since the markets for elderly care do not exist or are out of reach financially for most of the population (Lloyd-Sherlock 2000, Chawla 2007), it is often the result of a history of institutional failure not to ensure professional care quality. The situation exacerbates when migrant workers can provide care to older persons in developed countries, which increases the wages to be paid for a single market to develop.

In this global world, the aging population questioned the public and social institutions responsible for elderly care. Developing countries face an additional burden of accelerated aging due to the rapid demographic transition and lack of institutional support (Palloni & Morenoff 2001). In these contexts, children are the parents' primary caretakers and generally provide support through a residence or the geographical proximity; however, migration, also an ordinary phenomenon in developing countries, breaks this process when their children move away (Kanaiaupuni 2000, Abas et al. 2009, Antman 2010). The separation of families due to the migration presents a stressful event for elderly parents who are left behind, with possible consequences for mental health (Adhikari et al. 2011) and socio-economic life (Ashfaq et al. 2016).

Alaimo (2006) believes that migrants' parents receive more financial contributions from their children when they migrate; however, they do not consider the intensive contribution margin. The study found that the patterns of migration of children significantly affect the activities of the daily life of elderly parents who depend on their children at this age. It has been observed that the social networks of people emigrating at the later stages of their lives tend to be significantly limited (Weeks & Cuellar 1983). Because of its recent arrival, unknown public environment, poverty, poor health, and communication problems, it is not easy to effectively participate in the economic, social, political, and cultural spheres. As a result, they get alienated and isolated from society (Savery & Duffy 1995). Difficulties in understanding the news, reading newspapers and magazines, or public transport to visit friends or stores strengthen their feelings of loneliness and social isolation (Maiter 2003). Due to cultural norms, financial dependency, and the expectation of physical and emotional care, the elderly tend to live in multigenerational households.

Parents traditionally rely on their children for personal care and financial support in every culture, for instance, the culture in Asian countries (Adhikari et al. 2011). A similar situation found in Pakistan (one of the Asian countries) where parents generally rely on their male children for their whole life; however, when they migrate to other nations and parents start living alone, and it generates diverse problems for left-behind parents (Fellmeth et al. 2018, Ariadi et al. 2019). These are the traditional rules of the Southeast Asian states (Jeffery 1996) and demand that the male children are behind the

monetary contribution, while the daughters-in-law are responsible for providing care. Studies on the people of the third age Asian, Muslims, and Hindus, have shown greater psychological well-being among the extended families where three generations of a family life, which is not the traditional rule in many immigrant communities, grandparents live apart from their children and grandchildren (Sonuga-Barke & Mistry 2000). Parents who at this age of life need protection, love, support, and time from their children; however, due to this trend of migration, they live without their children and suffer from various social, psychological, and health problems (Ashfaq et al. 2018, Adhikari et al. 2011). The current study aims to recognize the effects of son's migration on family, the social life of parents left behind, and their daily life activities in the absence of their children who are considered caretakers in such cultures.

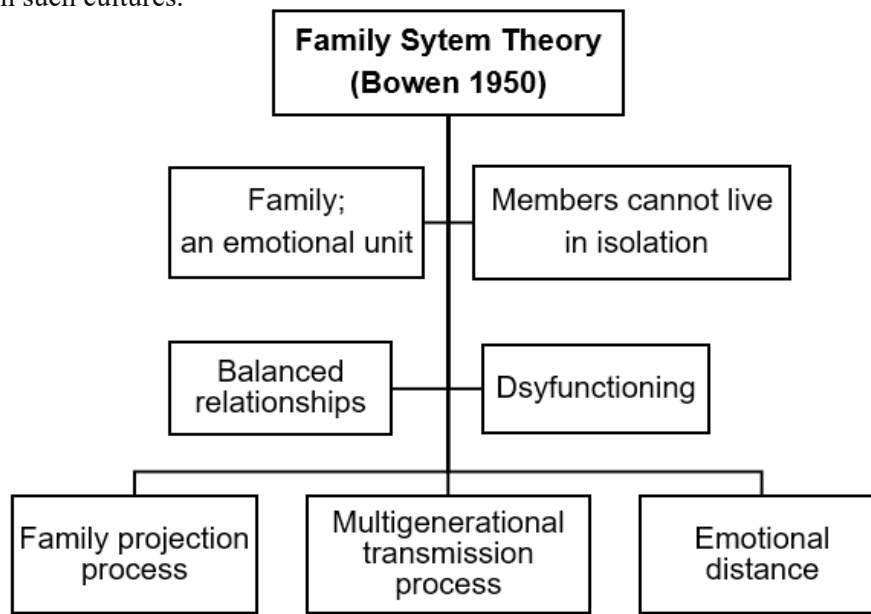


Figure 1.
Graphical representation of the family system theory

Family systems theory represents a theory of human behavior that regards the family as an emotional unit and utilizes the system is the perspective to describe the unit's complex interactions (Figure 1). Bowen (1950) stated, it is the nature of a family that its members intensely connected in terms of emotions. Often people feel distant or disconnected from their families; however, this is more of a feeling than a mere fact. Family members so profoundly affect each other's thoughts, feelings, and actions that it often seems as if individuals are living under the same "emotional skin." People solicit attention, approval, and support and react to others' needs, expectations, and distress. The connectedness and reactivity make the functioning of family members interdependent. Reciprocal changes predictably follow a change in one person's functioning in the performance of others. Families differ somewhat in interdependence; however, it always differs to some extent (Constantine 1986). The emotional interdependence presumably evolved to promote the cohesiveness and cooperation families require protecting shelter, and feed their members; however, heightened tension intensifies these processes that promote unity and teamwork, leading to problems. When family representatives get anxious, the anxiety escalates by spreading infectiously among them. As anxiety goes up, the emotional connectedness of family associates becomes more stressful than comforting. Eventually, one or more members feel overwhelmed, isolated, or out of control.

Accordingly, in this unit, all the members live together, and they are dependent on one another for fulfilling the needs of other members. Entirely all the members have their roles and civic responsibilities, and none can live in isolation. If their roles are correctly performed, it will strengthen the relationships among all family members, and a balanced family household is otherwise dysfunctional. Bowen's theory includes eight interlocking concepts, such as triangles, differentiation of self, nuclear family emotional process, family projection process, multigenerational projection process, emotional distance, sibling position, and societal emotional process. Among these eight, three will be briefly discussed as per their relevance with the present research.

This theory has a good relevance with the present study conducted on left-behind parents' problems where problems occur when family members are not living together, and they have made their living arrangements. Parents; who make this unit and have emotional intimacy with the children they live without while migrating to other countries; generally suffer from an emotional distance. This situation affects the family projection process, which leads the members towards differences with the parents. It further directs the multigenerational transmission process among the members where three generations suffer as the present study claims that when children migrate to foreign countries, they only call their families there without parents. Hence, grandchildren have less intimacy with their grandparents as they rarely live with them. This isolation among all the family members leads to the emotional distance that further hampers the family's balanced relationship.

Research Method

This particular section of the study discusses the procedures and methods adopted to accomplish this research to achieve research objectives—this quantitative research conduct by carrying out a survey. The universe of the present study typically included the selected cities of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir; Gujrat District (cities: Gujrat, Kharian, and Sarai Alamgir), Jhelum District (cities: Jhelum, Dina, and Sohawa), and Mirpur District (cities: Mirpur, and Dadyal). The reason behind choosing this area as a research universe is that these areas have a long history of international migration in Pakistan. Moreover, the areas are among those where the majority of the families have moved across the boundaries.

Furthermore, the researcher also has deep roots in one of these areas, Gujrat District. While the other districts, Jhelum and Mirpur, are in its geographical boundary, enhancing the face validity of the area. The present study's targeted population comprised those elderly parents who were living without their male adult children. The respondents possessing some specific characteristics as a) demographic profile of left-behind parents and b) all their working-age male children must be living in another country, were chosen. Unfortunately, Pakistan has no mechanism to determine the number of left-behind parents whose all-male children have migrated across the boundaries. Therefore, the population hides; it was a recurrent and quite challenging issue for the researcher to explore the targeted population. Hence, the researcher conducted a preliminary survey to meet this challenge for selecting the sample and exploring the population using a snowball sampling technique based on earlier described criteria. About 94 respondents question through this technique. The questionnaire was designed for viewing the indicators of independent and dependent variables of the present study and consisted of both open and close-ended questions. The questionnaire develops after a comprehensive review of existing literature. The data were statistically analyzed and systematically tabulated—Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) used for the analysis. The analysis performs to study various variables and explore the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

Results and Discussion

This specific section contains the discussion on results, including the potential respondents' socio-demographic profile, parent-children interaction, and effects of children's presence on Activities of Daily Life (ADL) of parents.

Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

The respondents' socio-demographic background shows their area of residence, gender, age, family type, and educational qualification. Two districts (Jhelum and Gujrat) from Pakistan and one district (Mirpur) from Azad Jammu and Kashmir selected for the present study. The reason for the selection was a higher tendency of international migration towards European and Scandinavian countries. Among the respondents, 45 belonged to Mirpur, 27 respondents were from Gujrat, and 22 belonged to Jhelum.

Data also depict the gender of the respondents. Fifty-one percent of the sampled respondents were females, while 49% were males. Age is considered a significant indicator for the present study due to the research on elderly individuals. In social research, it is the variable that affects a person's

attitude and behavior at different stages of life. The results of the given data portray the age of the respondents. More than one-third, 38.3% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 81-90 years; however, one-fourth, 25.5% were included in the age group 71-80 years, and 18.1% be in the age group less than 70 years and above 90 years separately.

Education can be measured and described under the illiterate, primary, middle, matriculation, and graduation categories. The data reports that little more than half, 52.1% of the respondents were illiterate. While nearly one-third, 32.0% got primary level education, 6.4% of the respondents had passed middle and matriculation level, and 3.2% had done Masters. The respondents' employment status has been measured through different indicators, such as present employment status, current and previous professions. A significant majority, 97.9% of the respondents stopped being employed, and among those, 41.5% had stopped working entirely, whereas only 2.1% of the respondents were still working. Among those who were earning a living, one respondent does his own business while running an organization as a social worker.

The study provides the respondents' type of family and the living arrangements of the respondents. A majority, 71.3% of the respondents were having a nuclear family system. Besides, the data about the living arrangements of the respondents depict with which they were living. Nature and type of family matters are a lot for defining parents left behind by their migrant male children. Family is a fundamental social unit of human societies. A considerable number, 37.2% of the respondents lived with a spouse, as most of the respondents were having a nuclear family system, and 19.1% of the respondents lived with their siblings, mostly with their brothers, while 18.1% lived alone. There were 12.8% and 11.7% of the respondents living either with their relatives or daughters, respectively. Only one respondent was living with the spouse and daughter.

The family structure experiences significant demographic and socio-economic consequences. Family is a comparatively permanent group of people connected by blood, marriage, and adoption; they live together and form an economic unit (Downs & Robertson 1987). Data separately tell about the total number of male and female children and the number of children (males and females) living abroad. Little more than half, 52.1% of the respondents reported that they were having five or more than five children, while 37.3% were those who had 3-4 children. The rest, 10.6% of the respondents said that they had one or two children. It also entailed the number of male children and the frequency of male children living abroad and was the same as all the male children were living abroad (in different countries). A more considerable number, 52.1% of the respondents had 1-2 male children, and they were inhabiting abroad, whereas one-third of the respondents, 33.0% had either 3 or 4 sons. Among others, 11.7% of the parents said they had 5-6 sons, and only 3.2% had seven sons. The respondents were asked about the number of daughters as well. The majority, 57.4% of the respondents had 1-2 female children, while 22.4% had 3-4 daughters. Among others, 12.8% did not have any female child, while 7.4% had five or more than five daughters. Like male children, most, 78.7% of the respondents said that their daughters live in countries other than Pakistan, while 21.3% were those whose female children lived in Pakistan either with them or separate.

Through socio-demographic profiles, the data reveals the findings of the children's marriage, residential country, the reason for migration, and the type of job of migrant children's left-behind parents. The results depict that the majority, 59.6% of children of left-behind parents got married in relatives who lived abroad. About 36.2% of the respondents responded that their children got marriage in relatives living in Pakistan. These results show that most Pakistani families prefer marriages of their children in relatives who live outside the country. Knodel & Saengtienchai (2007) revealed three significant reasons: work, education, marriage, leaving the parental household, and moving abroad. Moreover, the study gives information about the country of residence of the male children. Most of the migrant male children lived in the UK (46.3%). There were 13.8% and 11.7% of the respondents who reported that their sons lived in the United Kingdom and Norway and the United Kingdom and Spain. About 6.4% of the respondents said that their male children immigrated to Spain, the United Kingdom, Spain and France, and the United Kingdom and the United States of America separately for each country. The rest were living in other European countries: United Kingdom, France, Norway, and Germany.

Table 1.

Distribution of the respondent's information regarding the frequency of their children's visit to Pakistan with and without family (n=94)

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Visit of children to Pakistan with family		
Once in a year	3	3.2
Twice a year	4	4.3
After two years	34	36.2
On events (social & religious)	53	56.4
Visit of children to Pakistan without family		
Once in a year	11	11.7
Twice a year	1	1.1
After two years	16	17.0
On events (social & religious)	52	55.3
Never	14	14.9

Source: Primary research data

Table 1 reveals the frequency of visits made by children in Pakistan with family and without family. Table 1 shows that more than half (56.4% and 55.3%) of the respondent's migrant children visited Pakistan for meeting their left-behind parents with family and without family, particularly on social events, respectively. Among the rest, the respondents replied that their migrant children visited them as follow; once in a year (3.2% and 11.7%), twice in a year (4.3% and 1.1%) or after two years (36.2% and 17.0%) with families and without families correspondingly and few, 14.9% were those whose migrant male children never visited their left-behind parents without families. It is a strong tradition to visit the parents back home, or parents visit their migrant children. A study conducted by Nunta (2009) found the higher frequency of children's visits to parents, particularly on different occasions such as birthday parties, weddings, funerals, or any ordination ceremony.

Table 2 states the results of left-behind parents' emotional feelings regarding their migrant children's visits to particular incidents, visiting with families, or without families in Pakistan. The above results show that most left-behinds, 68.1% had feelings of sadness when their children did not visit them on specific matters. Moreover, 24.5% of the respondents felt isolated in their male children's absence on specific events such as Eid, Islamic festivals, and weddings. There were 5.3% and 2.1% of the respondents who had common sentiments and badly missed their children, respectively. The second indicator for measuring parent's feelings is about male children's visits with or without family. Left behind parents reported their feelings as sad when their migrant children come to Pakistan without their family, while 13.8% reported their emotions as neutral, and 1.1% miss their grandchildren. The rest 5.3% felt happy as they think that their children were with them. Table 2 also illustrates that 88.3% and 11.7% of the respondents felt happy, excited, and gloomy when their beloved migrant male children come with families to Pakistan.

Table 3 reveals the results about sources of contact of parents with their migrant children. The prior results show that more than half, 55.3% of the parents were having contact with their children via phone calls, 39.4% of the respondents responded that they were having contact with their migrant male children via phone calls and the internet. A very few, 5.3% of them, relied merely on the internet as a source of communication with their migrant male children. Communication between left-behind parents and migrant children was further measured by asking about the source from which they seek help for using the internet. More than half 55.3% of the left-behind parents were not using the internet. Among the remainings, 38.3% relied on others for using the internet to talk to their migrant male children. The rest, 6.4% of them were utilizing the internet by themselves. Table 3 depicts the results of the frequency of contact with migrant children. The half population of the study replied that they have a random routine of connection with migrant children. Simultaneously, few of them were

having contacted migrant male children either daily or once in a week, respectively. Parents asked about their feelings in case of less contact with their migrant male children. The slightly high value shared that parents felt isolation when their sons have less contact with their parents; however, in rare contact, the left-behind parents reported feeling sad, depressed, and disappointed, respectively.

Table 2.
Respondent's feelings about the visits of their migrant children (n=94)

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Parent's feeling while children not visiting		
Sad	64	68.1
Isolatef	23	24.5
Normal	5	5.3
Miss them badly	2	2.1
Parent's feeling when children visit without family		
Sad	42	44.7
Very sad	19	20.2
Neutral	13	13.8
Happy	5	5.3
Miss the grandchildren	1	1.1
None	14	14.9
Parent's feeling when children visit with family		
Very happy	83	88.3
Happy	11	11.7

Source: Primary research data

The available scholarship also witnessed the frequent usage of mobile phones for contacting the elderly left-behind parents in case of out-migration of adult children. Mobile phones are considered as a convenient source of communication (Knodel & Saengtienchai 2007). Further investigation about parents having a similar association with children like male and female children or younger has more frequency of connection than other elder siblings. In response to this, they stated that they do not have a similar frequency of link with their children. Moreover, findings showed that their elder and married children respectively contacted them the most, as compared to the bachelor (5.3%), younger (17.0%), middle (7.4%), and others (20.3%). Thus, parents have different views about children's source of the link, connection through the internet, and frequency of correspondence and feelings if they do not contact frequently.

Table 3 concludes that the majority of the parents contacted their migrant children through a phone call. They do not have a similar connection with their young ones and agreed that married and elder children cared more for their parents than younger or bachelor. The quantity and quality of communication and social interaction have been identified as the predictors of wellbeing (Fiorillo & Sabatini 2011). It has been seen that regular contact of children with parents and parents with children is beneficial for parents' health, social support, and behavior in older age. It found out that parents' regular contact with parents combats loneliness, isolation, depression, and anxiety among parents.

Table 4 documents the results about the frequency of visits of left-behind parents to their relatives, frequency of relative's visits to left-behind parents, and relatives' attitudes in children's absence and presence. Table 4 show that most, 43.6% of the left-behind parents occasionally visited their relatives, whereas 29.8% and 26.6% of them responded that they visited their relatives frequently and rarely respectively for overcoming their loneliness, sadness, or depression which they felt because of their migrant children. Table 4 results of the frequency of visits of relatives to the respondents. A significant reported that their relatives visited them occasionally (46.8%) and frequently (43.6%). The rest, 8.5% of them were those whose relatives used to visit them rarely, and only one respondent told that his relatives never visited him.

Table 3.

Frequency distribution of the respondents regarding their contact, sources and frequency of contact with their migrant children (n=94)

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Source of contact with migrant children		
Phone call	52	55.3
Internet	5	5.3
Phone call and internet	37	39.4
Source of using internet		
By own self	6	6.4
With help by others	36	38.3
None	52	55.3
Frequency of contact with migrant children		
Random routine	44	46.8
Daily	26	27.7
Once in a week	22	23.4
Twice in a week	2	2.1
Parents feeling while rare contact with children		
Isolated	37	39.4
Sad	23	24.5
Disappointed	11	11.7
Depressed	19	20.2
Isolated and sad	4	4.3
Similar frequency of contact with all migrant children		
Yes	33	35.1
No	61	64.9
Children contact parents frequently		
Bachelor	5	5.3
Married	23	24.5
Elder	24	25.5
Middle	7	7.4
Younger	16	17.0
All	18	19.2
Bachelor and elder	1	1.1

Source: Primary research data

The prime reason behind their fewer visits to their relatives was that they could not move whenever needed. They told various reasons for further exploration, and dependency was one of them due to health issues. An increasing number of older individuals in ill health restricted to their homes; they may be bed-bound or rely on other people to transport them; however, evidence suggested that they do not want to burden others and are reluctant to move voluntarily (Pekmezaris et al. 2012).

The researcher further asked about their relatives' attitudes, both in the presence and absence of their male children. In response to relatives' attitude in the absence of sons, the percentage shows that their relatives' attitude was amiable. Some shared their experiences and told their relatives to have a respectful, loving & caring attitude in their children's absence. In contrast, the remaining 30.9% of the left-behind parents reported relatives' attitudes as respectful, loving, and caring, while only 6.4% of the respondents were facing harsh and taunting behavior. Similarly, respondents asked about their relatives' attitudes in their male children's presence. An absolute majority (almost all) of the

left-behind parents agreed they got respect, love and care, and friendly attitude by their relatives in the presence of their migrant male children. These results depict the cultural collectivism of Pakistani society. In the absence of children, visits by relatives to left-behind parents and vice versa, the attitude of relatives in the absence and presence of children shows our cultural and moral values and group identity of society as our society. It is based on collectivism, where the kin group has a close bonding and association.

Table 4.

Distribution of the respondents about the frequency of visit to relatives and attitude of relatives with them in the absence and presence of children (n=94)

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Visits to relatives		
Frequently	28	29.8
Occasionally	41	43.6
Rarely	25	26.6
Relatives' visits to the respondents		
Frequently	41	43.6
Occasionally	44	46.8
Rarely	8	8.5
Never	1	1.1
Attitude of relatives in absence of children		
Friendly	44	46.8
Respectful	26	27.7
Loving and caring	22	23.4
Harsh	2	2.1
Taunting	4	4.3
Respectful, loving, and caring	29	30.9
Attitude of relatives in the presence of children		
Friendly	3	3.2
Respectful	22	23.4
Loving and caring	22	23.4
Respectful, loving, and caring	47	50.0

Source: Primary research data

Table 5 reveals the effects of children's presence on the parent's daily life activities: privacy, food habits, sleep, recreation, and social contact. The percentage shows that their privacy is never affected because of children's presence. Whereas a few replied that their privacy gets disturbed to tremendous or some extent in children's presence. Some of them were also agreed that their diet and sleep habit changed to tremendous and some extent in their children's presence, respectively. Almost 75% of the respondents stated their recreational activities were affected by their children to great and some extent. In the same way, 80% of the parents reported that their social contacts also changed in their children's presence as they get connected to children's friends and social circles.

Testing of hypothesis

Firstly, the hypothesis was made to determine the association between parents-children interaction (frequency of visit of children to parents) and the effect of Activities of Daily Life (ADL) of left-behind parents. For this, the Chi-square test was carried out to measure the association between these two variables. The higher the frequency of children's visits to parents, the more will be a change in ADL (privacy, food, sleep, recreation, and social contact). The Chi-square value for the above hypothesis was discovered as 23.983 with df=10, possessing a level of significance 0.008 (Table 6).

Hence, the test has verified that there is a deep association between the frequency of parent-children interaction and ADL of left-behind parents. According to respondents, social life becomes limited without male members at home. They limited face to face interaction with people due to the absence of their male children because it is challenging to move around due to being older; thus, mobility is not easy. The primary reason respondents reported behind their fewer visits to their relatives was that they could not move whenever they want. They told different reasons for further exploration, and dependency was one of them due to health issues. An increasing number of older individuals in poor health restricted to their homes; they may be bed-bound or rely on other people to transport them. However, evidence suggested that they do not want to burden others and are reluctant to move freely (Pekmezaris et al. 2012).

Table 5.

Respondent's opinion regarding the effects of children's presence on parent's Activities of Daily Life (ADL) (n=94)

Effect of children presence on parents' ADL	To great extent	To some extent	Not at all
Privacy	2.1 % (2)	12.8% (12)	85.1% (80)
Food Habits	18.1% (17)	61.7% (58)	20.2% (19)
Sleep	29.8% (28)	56.4% (53)	13.8% (13)
Recreation	39.4 (37)	35.1% (33)	25.5% (24)
Social contact	47.9 (45)	33.0% (31)	19.1% (18)

Source: Primary research data

Table 6.

Association between parents-children interaction and Activities Daily Life (ADL) of the respondents

Variables	Chi-square	df	P-value
Children visit to parents* activities	23.983	10	0.008

Note: *p<0.05

Source: Primary research data

The elderly in a society is the foundation of its existence, symbolizing the past. They are the bearers of the traditions, values, and experience, the light that guides the young without which the society is not complete and loses its stability. The progress that makes the social, cultural, and moral is reflected in how older persons are being treated (Schoeni 1992). The results of the study depict the cultural collectivism of Pakistani society. In the absence of children visits by the relatives to the left-behind parents and parents to their relatives, the attitude of relatives in the absence and presence of children show cultural and moral values, as well as group identity of society as our society, is based on collectivism where the kin group has a close bonding and association.

Conclusion

The present study concludes that the migration of children affects the familial relationships and social life of left-behind parents who, at the elderly stage of their lives, need love, care, and support from their children. The majority of the male migrants lived abroad for more than 15 years, and the children mostly visited the parents on specific events like weddings, Eid (Islamic festivals). Moreover, it found that most of the parents had not visited their children abroad. The present study also investigated the parent's feelings as gloomy, happy, and excited when their children visited them; however, they suffered from agony and sadness when their migrant male children come to Pakistan without their family as they missed their grandchildren. They also reported feeling incredibly sad if their children had not visited them on specific events. Mobile phones constituted the primary source of parent-children communication. Most parents reported experiencing isolation, sadness, and depression when they do not have contact with their children frequently. A majority of the respondents responded that their relatives' attitude was amiable, caring, and respectable in their

children's absence. Most of the respondents thought that ADL gets changed in the presence of their children. Lastly, the present research concluded that the migration trend of male children abroad had a significant impact on the family and social life by contributing money and time (through visiting their parents in the homeland or calling them abroad). The present study has theoretical as well as practical implications for its phenomena. The research might be instrumental for young immigrants and families who are residing in foreign countries. The study also highlights the importance of care of left-behind parents and their living standards.

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