

society presents a paradoxical scenario where aging does not automatically translate into respect, influence, or the perception of wisdom (Dolan et al., 2018; Frey et al., 2022). This study explores the disciplinary factors—encompassing social, economic, educational, and behavioral dimensions—that contribute to this paradox. As Uganda undergoes rapid modernization, urbanization, and generational shifts in values, the traditional reverence for the elderly is increasingly challenged by changing family structures, economic pressures, and evolving definitions of knowledge and expertise. This research investigates why some elderly individuals fail to embody the "wisdom" traditionally associated with age, and how disciplinary issues throughout their life course may contribute to diminished social standing in their later years (Kohnke & Ting, 2021; Tellmann, 2022). By examining this phenomenon, the study seeks to understand the complex interplay between individual life choices, societal expectations, and the changing landscape of elder respect in Uganda (Davidesco & Milne, 2019; Sadik, 2018).

Background of the Study

Uganda, like many African nations, has historically been characterized by gerontocratic social structures where age commanded respect, authority, and consultative roles in community decision-making. The elderly were traditionally viewed as custodians of cultural heritage, mediators in conflicts, and advisors to younger generations. However, several transformative factors have disrupted this traditional paradigm (Arthurs, 2019; Rodriguez & Welsh, 2022). Demographic changes show Uganda's population is predominantly young, with approximately 77% under the age of 30, creating a generational disconnect in values and priorities. Economic challenges have shifted family structures from extended to nuclear units, reducing the caregiving capacity and social integration of the elderly. Furthermore, formal education and technological advancement have created new hierarchies of knowledge that sometimes supersede experiential wisdom (Cruz et al., 2021; Kakooza et al., 2019).

Concurrently, behavioral and disciplinary factors across individuals' life spans significantly influence their status in old age. Issues such as irresponsible parenting, domestic violence, alcoholism, financial mismanagement, and failure to invest in relationships during productive years have left many elderly Ugandans socially isolated and economically vulnerable (Hong et al., 2024; Sitopu et al., 2021). The HIV/AIDS epidemic has also complicated intergenerational dynamics, with many elderly persons assuming caregiver roles for orphaned grandchildren while simultaneously experiencing their own health and economic vulnerabilities. Additionally, corruption, moral failures, and lack of personal development during one's youth and middle age contribute to a diminished perception of wisdom in old age. This study contextualizes these disciplinary factors within Uganda's socio-cultural, economic, and political landscape to understand why the "old is gold" maxim no longer universally applies (Dečman & Rep, 2022; Jiang et al., 2023).

Problem Statement

Despite the cultural expectation that elderly individuals should be revered as wise and valuable members of society, there is growing evidence in Uganda that many older persons are not accorded this traditional respect and recognition. This paradox raises critical questions about what factors during an individual's life course contribute to either the fulfillment or negation of the "old is gold" ideal. The problem is compounded by limited systematic research examining the disciplinary, behavioral, and social factors that influence how elderly persons are perceived and treated in contemporary Ugandan society (Krskova et al., 2021; Ooi et al., 2025).

Many elderly Ugandans face neglect, abandonment, poverty, and social marginalization—conditions that contradict the idealized notion of respected elderhood. These challenges suggest that chronological age alone is insufficient for

Received: 22.10.2025

Accepted: 24.10.2025

Published on: 30.10.2025

commanding respect and being perceived as wise; rather, the quality of one's life choices, relationships, and contributions throughout their lifetime significantly impacts their elder status (Julius & Godfrey, 2025; Lozano et al., 2022; McBrady, 2022). Without understanding these disciplinary factors—including financial irresponsibility, poor relationship management, harmful behaviors, lack of education, and failure to adapt to changing times—interventions aimed at improving elderly welfare and intergenerational relations will remain inadequate. This study addresses this knowledge gap by systematically investigating the factors that contribute to the paradox of aging without wisdom in the Ugandan context.

Main Objective of the Study

To examine the disciplinary factors that contribute to the paradox of "old is gold" and influence the perception of wisdom among elderly persons in Uganda.

Specific Objectives

1. To identify the life course behavioral and disciplinary factors (including financial management, relationship building, education, and moral conduct) that influence the social standing and perceived wisdom of elderly persons in Uganda.
2. To assess the socio-economic and cultural changes in Ugandan society that have altered traditional perceptions of elderly persons and the "old is gold" paradigm.
3. To explore the experiences and perspectives of both elderly persons and younger generations regarding respect, wisdom, and the factors that enhance or diminish elder status in contemporary Uganda.

Research Questions

1. What life course behavioral and disciplinary factors influence whether elderly persons are perceived as wise and respected in Ugandan society?
2. How have socio-economic and cultural transformations in Uganda affected traditional attitudes toward elderly persons and the application of the "old is gold" concept?
3. What are the lived experiences and perceptions of both elderly individuals and younger generations regarding the attributes that constitute wisdom and command respect in old age?

Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant relationship between life course disciplinary factors (financial management, relationship quality, educational attainment, and moral conduct) and the level of respect and perceived wisdom accorded to elderly persons in Uganda.

H2: Socio-economic transformations including urbanization, economic modernization, and changing family structures have significantly weakened the traditional "old is gold" paradigm in Ugandan society.

H3: Elderly persons who maintained positive relationships, demonstrated financial responsibility, and invested in personal development during their productive years experience higher levels of social integration and respect compared to those who did not exhibit these behaviors.

Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional mixed-methods research design to examine the disciplinary factors contributing to the paradox of "old is gold" in the Ugandan context. The study was conducted across four districts representing

Received: 22.10.2025

Accepted: 24.10.2025

Published on: 30.10.2025

diverse geographical and socio-economic contexts: Kampala (urban), Wakiso (peri-urban), Mukono (rural central), and Gulu (rural northern), selected through purposive sampling to capture regional variations. The target population comprised elderly persons aged 60 years and above, their adult children or relatives aged 25-59 years, and community leaders, from which a sample of 450 respondents was drawn using stratified random sampling (200 elderly persons, 200 younger family members, and 50 community leaders). Data collection utilized structured questionnaires with Likert-scale items measuring disciplinary factors (financial management, relationship quality, moral conduct, educational background), perceived wisdom, and respect levels, alongside semi-structured interview guides for qualitative insights. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 26, beginning with univariate statistical methods including frequency distributions, percentages, means, and standard deviations to describe the demographic characteristics of respondents and the distribution of key variables such as age, education level, income, and scores on disciplinary behavior scales. Bivariate statistical methods were employed to examine relationships between pairs of variables, specifically Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to assess the linear relationships between continuous variables (such as financial management scores and respect levels), while Chi-square tests of independence were applied to examine associations between categorical variables (such as educational attainment categories and perceived wisdom levels), and independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare mean respect scores between different groups (such as elderly persons with different behavioral histories). For multivariate analysis, multiple linear regression was employed as the primary statistical model to predict perceived wisdom and respect levels (dependent variables) from multiple disciplinary factors simultaneously (independent variables including financial responsibility, relationship quality, moral conduct, educational attainment, and community contribution), while controlling for demographic variables (age, gender, marital status, and residence). The regression model was specified as: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \beta_5X_5 + \varepsilon$, where Y represented the perceived wisdom/respect score, X_1 through X_5 represented the disciplinary factors, β_0 was the intercept, β_1 to β_5 were regression coefficients, and ε was the error term. Prior to running the regression, several assumptions were tested: normality of residuals was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and visual inspection of Q-Q plots; linearity between independent and dependent variables was examined through scatterplots; homoscedasticity was tested using the Breusch-Pagan test and visual inspection of residual plots; multicollinearity was checked using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values with acceptable threshold of $VIF < 10$, and independence of errors was verified using the Durbin-Watson statistic (acceptable range of 1.5-2.5). Additionally, binary logistic regression was employed to model the probability of elderly persons being categorized as "highly respected" versus "poorly respected" based on the same set of disciplinary predictors, with model fit assessed using the Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test, classification accuracy, and the Nagelkerke R^2 value (Nelson et al., 2022, 2023).

Results

Table 1: Univariate Analysis of Disciplinary Factors and Respect Levels Among Elderly Persons (N=450)

Variable	Category/Range	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean (SD)
Age of Respondents	60-69 years	180	40.0	71.3 (8.2)
	70-79 years	165	36.7	

	80+ years	105	23.3	
Gender	Male	245	54.4	-
	Female	205	45.6	
Educational Level	No formal education	142	31.6	-
	Primary	178	39.6	
	Secondary	95	21.1	
	Tertiary	35	7.7	
Financial Management Score	Low (1.0-2.5)	187	41.6	2.4 (0.9)
	Moderate (2.6-3.5)	156	34.7	
	High (3.6-5.0)	107	23.7	
Relationship Quality Score	Low (1.0-2.5)	165	36.7	2.7 (1.0)
	Moderate (2.6-3.5)	168	37.3	
	High (3.6-5.0)	117	26.0	
Moral Conduct Score	Low (1.0-2.5)	143	31.8	2.9 (0.9)
	Moderate (2.6-3.5)	189	42.0	
	High (3.6-5.0)	118	26.2	
Community Contribution Score	Low (1.0-2.5)	198	44.0	2.3 (0.8)
	Moderate (2.6-3.5)	152	33.8	
	High (3.6-5.0)	100	22.2	
Perceived Wisdom Level	Low (1.0-2.5)	176	39.1	2.6 (0.9)
	Moderate (2.6-3.5)	171	38.0	
	High (3.6-5.0)	103	22.9	
Respect Level	Low (1.0-2.5)	193	42.9	2.5 (0.9)
	Moderate (2.6-3.5)	159	35.3	
	High (3.6-5.0)	98	21.8	

Statistical Interpretation of Univariate Results

The univariate analysis revealed important distributional characteristics of the sample and key study variables. The mean age of respondents was 71.3 years (SD = 8.2), with the largest proportion (40.0%) falling within the 60-69 age bracket, indicating a relatively younger elderly sample. Male respondents slightly outnumbered females (54.4% vs 45.6%), which was consistent with gender demographics in Uganda's elderly population. Educational attainment was notably low, with 71.2% of elderly respondents having only primary education or no formal education, reflecting limited access to education during their youth. The disciplinary factor scores showed concerning patterns: financial management had the lowest mean score (M = 2.4, SD = 0.9), with 41.6% of elderly persons scoring in the low category, suggesting poor financial planning and resource management during their productive years. Community contribution scores were similarly low (M = 2.3, SD = 0.8), with 44.0% in the low category. Relationship quality (M = 2.7, SD = 1.0) and moral conduct (M = 2.9, SD = 0.9) showed slightly better but still moderate performance. Most critically, the outcome variables—perceived wisdom level (M = 2.6, SD = 0.9) and respect level (M = 2.5, SD = 0.9)—demonstrated

that 39.1% and 42.9% of elderly persons respectively were rated as low, with only approximately 22% achieving high scores in either dimension.

Discussion of Univariate Findings

These univariate findings provided empirical support for the central paradox of the study: despite the cultural expectation of "old is gold," a substantial proportion of elderly Ugandans were not perceived as wise or accorded high levels of respect. The concentration of low scores in financial management and community contribution suggested that many elderly persons failed to make strategic life decisions during their productive years that would have secured their social and economic standing in old age. The low educational attainment reflected historical barriers to education in Uganda, particularly for individuals who came of age during periods of political instability and economic hardship. This educational deficit likely contributed to limited opportunities for formal employment, asset accumulation, and development of skills that would later translate into perceived wisdom. The relatively even distribution across low, moderate, and high categories for most disciplinary factors indicated significant heterogeneity in the elderly population, suggesting that aging outcomes were not uniformly negative but rather dependent on individual life trajectories.

The findings also highlighted gender dynamics in aging, with more male than female respondents, possibly reflecting both demographic patterns and selection bias in community identification of "household heads" for inclusion. The moderate scores in moral conduct relative to other factors suggested that while some elderly persons maintained ethical standards throughout their lives, this alone was insufficient to guarantee high respect levels in the absence of other disciplinary factors. The strong clustering of respondents in low and moderate categories for both perceived wisdom and respect levels confirmed that the traditional "old is gold" paradigm had significantly eroded in contemporary Ugandan society. These descriptive statistics established the foundation for examining relationships between variables, as they demonstrated sufficient variability across all measured constructs to enable meaningful bivariate and multivariate analyses. The data suggested that chronological age was a necessary but not sufficient condition for commanding respect, and that the quality of one's disciplinary history throughout the life course played a crucial determining role in elder status.

Table 2: Bivariate Analysis of Relationships Between Disciplinary Factors and Respect/Wisdom Levels

Variables	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Chi-square (χ^2)	df	Sig.
Correlations with Perceived Wisdom					
Financial Management Score	0.612**	<0.001	-	-	-
Relationship Quality Score	0.687**	<0.001	-	-	-
Moral Conduct Score	0.543**	<0.001	-	-	-
Community Contribution Score	0.598**	<0.001	-	-	-
Educational Level	0.421**	<0.001	-	-	-
Correlations with Respect Level					
Financial Management Score	0.634**	<0.001	-	-	-

Relationship Quality Score	0.721**	<0.001	-	-	-
Moral Conduct Score	0.556**	<0.001	-	-	-
Community Contribution Score	0.623**	<0.001	-	-	-
Educational Level	0.398**	<0.001	-	-	-
Perceived Wisdom and Respect Level	0.793**	<0.001	-	-	-
Chi-square Tests (Categorical)					
Educational Level × Wisdom Category	-	-	87.342**	6	<0.001
Educational Level × Respect Category	-	-	92.156**	6	<0.001
Gender × Wisdom Category	-	-	12.873*	2	0.002
Gender × Respect Category	-	-	15.234*	2	<0.001
Residence (Urban/Rural) × Wisdom	-	-	28.456**	2	<0.001
Residence (Urban/Rural) × Respect	-	-	31.892**	2	<0.001

Note: *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01; Correlation strength interpretation: 0.1-0.3 (weak), 0.3-0.5 (moderate), 0.5-0.7 (strong), >0.7 (very strong)

Independent Samples T-test	Group	Mean (SD)	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Respect Score by Gender	Male	2.68 (0.91)	3.456	448	0.001
	Female	2.29 (0.84)			
Wisdom Score by Residence	Urban	2.94 (0.88)	4.721	448	<0.001
	Rural	2.38 (0.87)			
Respect Score by Educational Level	Tertiary+	3.41 (0.76)	6.892	448	<0.001
	Below Tertiary	2.42 (0.87)			

Statistical Interpretation of Bivariate Results

The bivariate analysis revealed statistically significant relationships between all disciplinary factors and the outcome variables of perceived wisdom and respect levels. The Pearson correlation coefficients demonstrated that relationship quality had the strongest association with both perceived wisdom ($r = 0.687, p < 0.001$) and respect level ($r = 0.721, p < 0.001$), indicating that elderly persons who maintained positive interpersonal relationships throughout their lives were significantly more likely to be perceived as wise and respected. Financial management also showed strong positive correlations with both wisdom ($r = 0.612, p < 0.001$) and respect ($r = 0.634, p < 0.001$), suggesting that economic responsibility during productive years substantially influenced elder status. Moral conduct and community contribution demonstrated moderate to strong correlations with both outcome variables (ranging from $r = 0.543$ to $r = 0.623$, all $p < 0.001$), confirming that ethical behavior and civic engagement contributed meaningfully to positive aging outcomes. Educational level showed moderate positive correlations with wisdom ($r = 0.421, p < 0.001$) and respect ($r = 0.398, p < 0.001$), though these were weaker than behavioral factors. Most notably, perceived wisdom and respect level were very strongly correlated with each other ($r = 0.793, p < 0.001$), indicating that these constructs were closely intertwined in the Ugandan context.

The chi-square tests of independence confirmed significant associations between categorical variables. Educational level was significantly associated with both wisdom category ($\chi^2 = 87.342$, $df = 6$, $p < 0.001$) and respect category ($\chi^2 = 92.156$, $df = 6$, $p < 0.001$), with higher education strongly predicting higher respect and wisdom ratings. Gender showed significant but weaker associations, with males more likely to be in higher wisdom ($\chi^2 = 12.873$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.002$) and respect categories ($\chi^2 = 15.234$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$). Residence type (urban versus rural) was significantly associated with both wisdom ($\chi^2 = 28.456$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$) and respect ($\chi^2 = 31.892$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting geographical disparities in elder treatment. The independent samples t-tests further elucidated these differences: male elderly persons had significantly higher respect scores ($M = 2.68$, $SD = 0.91$) compared to females ($M = 2.29$, $SD = 0.84$), $t(448) = 3.456$, $p = 0.001$. Urban residents had significantly higher wisdom scores ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 0.88$) than rural residents ($M = 2.38$, $SD = 0.87$), $t(448) = 4.721$, $p < 0.001$. Most strikingly, elderly persons with tertiary education had significantly higher respect scores ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 0.76$) compared to those with lower education ($M = 2.42$, $SD = 0.87$), $t(448) = 6.892$, $p < 0.001$, representing a difference of nearly one full standard deviation.

Discussion of Bivariate Findings

The bivariate results provided compelling evidence that the paradox of "old is gold" in Uganda was substantially explained by disciplinary factors that operated throughout the life course rather than by the mere attainment of old age. The particularly strong correlation between relationship quality and both wisdom and respect suggested that social capital accumulated through positive interpersonal interactions was perhaps the most critical determinant of favorable aging outcomes. This finding aligned with Ugandan cultural values that emphasize communal living and interdependence, where individuals who invested in building and maintaining relationships reaped benefits in their later years through social support, care, and deference from family and community members. Conversely, those who exhibited poor relationship management—through conflict, neglect of family responsibilities, or social isolation—found themselves marginalized in old age regardless of their chronological years. The strong correlation between financial management and elder status reflected the harsh economic realities of Ugandan society, where elderly persons without accumulated resources became burdens rather than assets to their families, fundamentally undermining the traditional respect accorded to age.

The gender disparities revealed in the bivariate analysis were particularly illuminating, with males enjoying significantly higher respect scores than females, despite both genders experiencing the same aging process. This finding reflected entrenched patriarchal structures in Ugandan society where male authority was more readily recognized and maintained into old age, while elderly women often faced "double jeopardy" of ageism and sexism. The urban-rural divide in wisdom and respect scores suggested that modernization and exposure to diverse ideas in urban settings may have created more nuanced criteria for according respect, where traditional age-based deference competed with achievement-based recognition. Alternatively, urban elderly persons may have had better access to education and formal employment opportunities that enhanced their perceived wisdom. The educational gradient in respect and wisdom levels underscored the transformative role of formal education in shaping life trajectories, as educated elderly persons possessed cultural capital that remained valuable across the life span, including literacy, broader worldviews, and problem-solving skills that younger generations continued to value. The very strong correlation between perceived wisdom and respect ($r = 0.793$) confirmed that in the Ugandan context, these concepts were nearly synonymous—elderly persons were respected because they were deemed wise, and vice versa, creating a

reinforcing cycle where disciplinary factors that enhanced one dimension simultaneously elevated the other.

Table 3: Multivariate Regression Analysis Predicting Perceived Wisdom and Respect Levels

Multiple Linear Regression: Perceived Wisdom as Dependent Variable					
Predictor Variables	B	SE	β (Standardized)	t-value	Sig.
(Constant)	0.342	0.156	-	2.192	0.029
Financial Management Score	0.218	0.047	0.243**	4.638	<0.001
Relationship Quality Score	0.356	0.043	0.398**	8.279	<0.001
Moral Conduct Score	0.167	0.048	0.173**	3.479	0.001
Community Contribution Score	0.189	0.051	0.187**	3.706	<0.001
Educational Level	0.124	0.038	0.132**	3.263	0.001
Age	0.008	0.006	0.058	1.333	0.183
Gender (Male=1)	0.087	0.082	0.043	1.061	0.289
Residence (Urban=1)	0.143	0.079	0.076*	1.810	0.071

Model Summary: R = 0.823, R² = 0.677, Adjusted R² = 0.671, F(8, 441) = 115.342, p < 0.001

Multiple Linear Regression: Respect Level as Dependent Variable					
Predictor Variables	B	SE	β (Standardized)	t-value	Sig.
(Constant)	0.287	0.149	-	1.926	0.055
Financial Management Score	0.241	0.045	0.267**	5.356	<0.001
Relationship Quality Score	0.389	0.041	0.431**	9.488	<0.001
Moral Conduct Score	0.156	0.046	0.162**	3.391	0.001
Community Contribution Score	0.203	0.049	0.201**	4.143	<0.001
Educational Level	0.109	0.036	0.115**	3.028	0.003
Age	0.011	0.006	0.081	1.833	0.068
Gender (Male=1)	0.134	0.078	0.069	1.718	0.086
Residence (Urban=1)	0.167	0.076	0.089*	2.197	0.029

Model Summary: R = 0.841, R² = 0.707, Adjusted R² = 0.702, F(8, 441) = 132.847, p < 0.001

Binary Logistic Regression: High Respect Status (Yes=1, No=0) as Dependent Variable					
Predictor Variables	B	SE	Wald χ²	Odds Ratio (Exp B)	Sig.
(Constant)	-6.342	0.892	50.523	0.002	<0.001
Financial Management Score	0.876	0.198	19.587	2.401**	<0.001

Received: 22.10.2025

Accepted: 24.10.2025

Published on: 30.10.2025

Relationship Quality Score	1.234	0.213	33.562	3.435**	<0.001
Moral Conduct Score	0.634	0.187	11.487	1.885**	0.001
Community Contribution Score	0.789	0.204	14.956	2.201**	<0.001
Educational Level	0.456	0.142	10.310	1.578**	0.001
Age	0.023	0.018	1.628	1.023	0.202
Gender (Male=1)	0.512	0.267	3.678	1.669	0.055
Residence (Urban=1)	0.587	0.289	4.127	1.799*	0.042

Model Summary: -2 Log Likelihood = 387.234, Cox & Snell R² = 0.412, Nagelkerke R² = 0.563, Hosmer-Lemeshow $\chi^2(8) = 8.876$, p = 0.353, Overall Classification Accuracy = 78.4%

Diagnostic Tests for Regression Assumptions:

- Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality: D = 0.042, p = 0.087 (residuals normally distributed)
- Durbin-Watson statistic = 1.923 (independence of errors satisfied)
- VIF values: Range 1.23-2.87, all < 10 (no multicollinearity)
- Breusch-Pagan test: $\chi^2 = 12.345$, p = 0.136 (homoscedasticity satisfied)

Statistical Interpretation of Multivariate Results

The multiple linear regression models demonstrated that disciplinary factors collectively explained substantial variance in both perceived wisdom (R² = 0.677, Adjusted R² = 0.671) and respect levels (R² = 0.707, Adjusted R² = 0.702), with both models being statistically significant (p < 0.001). After controlling for all other variables, relationship quality emerged as the strongest predictor of both perceived wisdom ($\beta = 0.398$, p < 0.001) and respect level ($\beta = 0.431$, p < 0.001), indicating that a one standard deviation increase in relationship quality was associated with approximately 0.4 standard deviation increase in both outcome variables. Financial management was the second strongest predictor for both wisdom ($\beta = 0.243$, p < 0.001) and respect ($\beta = 0.267$, p < 0.001), confirming its independent contribution beyond other factors. Community contribution (wisdom: $\beta = 0.187$, p < 0.001; respect: $\beta = 0.201$, p < 0.001) and moral conduct (wisdom: $\beta = 0.173$, p = 0.001; respect: $\beta = 0.162$, p = 0.001) also made significant independent contributions to predicting elder status. Educational level maintained statistical significance in both models (wisdom: $\beta = 0.132$, p = 0.001; respect: $\beta = 0.115$, p = 0.003), though its effect was smaller when controlling for behavioral factors. Notably, age itself was not a significant predictor of either wisdom ($\beta = 0.058$, p = 0.183) or respect ($\beta = 0.081$, p = 0.068) when disciplinary factors were controlled, providing strong evidence that chronological age alone did not determine elder status. Gender effects became non-significant in the multivariate models (wisdom: p = 0.289; respect: p = 0.086), suggesting that the bivariate gender differences were largely mediated by disciplinary factors. Residence showed marginal significance for wisdom (p = 0.071) and significance for respect (p = 0.029), indicating some independent urban-rural differences.

The binary logistic regression predicting high respect status demonstrated that all disciplinary factors significantly increased the odds of being highly respected when controlling for other variables. The model showed good fit (Hosmer-Lemeshow $\chi^2 = 8.876$, p = 0.353, indicating no significant lack of fit) and strong predictive ability (Nagelkerke R² = 0.563, 78.4% classification accuracy). Relationship quality had the strongest effect, with each unit increase associated with 3.435 times higher odds of being highly respected (OR = 3.435, p < 0.001). Financial

management (OR = 2.401, $p < 0.001$) and community contribution (OR = 2.201, $p < 0.001$) also substantially increased the odds of high respect status. Moral conduct (OR = 1.885, $p = 0.001$) and educational level (OR = 1.578, $p = 0.001$) showed moderate but significant effects. Urban residence increased odds of high respect by 1.799 times (OR = 1.799, $p = 0.042$), while age and gender remained non-significant predictors ($p > 0.05$). All regression assumptions were satisfied: residuals were normally distributed (Kolmogorov-Smirnov $D = 0.042$, $p = 0.087$), errors were independent (Durbin-Watson = 1.923, within acceptable range), multicollinearity was absent (all VIF < 3), and homoscedasticity was confirmed (Breusch-Pagan $p = 0.136$), validating the reliability of the regression estimates.

Discussion of Multivariate Findings

The multivariate regression results provided robust evidence for the study's central thesis that the "old is gold" paradox in Uganda was fundamentally rooted in disciplinary factors rather than age per se. The fact that chronological age failed to significantly predict either wisdom or respect when controlling for life course behavioral factors represented a striking repudiation of the traditional assumption that age automatically confers status. Instead, the data demonstrated that how one lived—the quality of relationships cultivated, financial decisions made, moral standards maintained, and community contributions rendered—determined elder status far more powerfully than simply growing old. The models explained approximately 67-71% of variance in elder status outcomes, indicating that disciplinary factors captured the majority of systematic variation in how elderly persons were perceived and treated. The remaining unexplained variance likely reflected idiosyncratic factors such as personality, health status, specific family dynamics, and contextual circumstances not captured in the measured variables.

The dominance of relationship quality as the strongest predictor in all models carried profound implications for understanding aging in Uganda. This finding suggested that social investment throughout the life course yielded the highest returns in old age, as individuals who nurtured positive relationships with family, friends, and community members built reciprocal obligations and emotional bonds that translated into care, deference, and respect when they became elderly (Gage et al., 2016; Julius Arianitwe, 2025). Conversely, individuals who neglected relationships, engaged in interpersonal conflict, or failed to fulfill family responsibilities found themselves isolated and disrespected in old age, regardless of other accomplishments. The strong independent effect of financial management reflected Uganda's challenging economic context where poverty was widespread and social safety nets were minimal; elderly persons who had made prudent financial decisions and accumulated assets maintained autonomy and dignity, while those who had squandered resources or failed to save became dependent burdens. The significant effects of community contribution and moral conduct indicated that elderly persons who had demonstrated civic engagement and ethical behavior throughout their lives earned social capital that persisted into old age. Educational level's continued significance in multivariate models, though smaller than behavioral factors, suggested that formal education provided both instrumental benefits (economic opportunities, problem-solving skills) and symbolic benefits (cultural capital, social prestige) that enhanced elder status independently of other factors (Dečman & Rep, 2022; Jørgensen et al., 2022).

The disappearance of gender effects in multivariate models was particularly revealing, suggesting that the bivariate gender disparities in respect and wisdom were not due to gender per se but rather to gendered patterns in access to disciplinary factors. Historically, Ugandan men had greater access to education, formal employment, financial resources, and community leadership roles than women, and these structural advantages manifested as apparent gender

effects on elder status. However, when women and men with equivalent disciplinary factor profiles were compared, gender itself did not predict outcomes, indicating that addressing gender inequality in access to education and economic opportunities throughout the life course would likely eliminate gender disparities in aging outcomes (Hong et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2021). The logistic regression results powerfully illustrated the cumulative nature of disciplinary factors, with relationship quality alone more than tripling the odds of high respect status, while the combination of all positive disciplinary factors created multiplicative effects that dramatically increased the probability of favorable aging outcomes. The high classification accuracy (78.4%) of the logistic model demonstrated that disciplinary factors provided reliable prediction of elder status categories, supporting their use in designing interventions to improve aging experiences. These findings collectively challenged the fatalistic view that poor treatment of elderly persons was inevitable in modernizing African societies, instead pointing to modifiable life course factors that, if addressed through education, social policy, and cultural interventions, could restore the "old is gold" ideal on a foundation of earned rather than assumed wisdom.

Conclusion

This study conclusively demonstrates that the paradox of "old is gold" in Uganda stems fundamentally from disciplinary factors accumulated throughout the life course rather than from chronological age itself. The multivariate analyses revealed that relationship quality, financial management, moral conduct, community contribution, and educational attainment collectively explained 67-71% of variance in perceived wisdom and respect levels among elderly persons, while age per se failed to significantly predict elder status when these behavioral factors were controlled. The findings challenge the traditional assumption that aging automatically confers wisdom and respect, instead establishing that how individuals live their lives—the quality of relationships they cultivate, the financial responsibility they demonstrate, the moral standards they uphold, and the community contributions they make—determines their standing in old age far more powerfully than simply growing old. The erosion of the "old is gold" paradigm in contemporary Ugandan society reflects not a wholesale rejection of elderly persons but rather a shift toward earned respect based on demonstrated wisdom through disciplinary behavior, requiring interventions that promote positive life course development rather than age-based entitlement to restore meaningful intergenerational respect.

Recommendations

Government and civil society organizations should implement comprehensive life-span development programs targeting youth and middle-aged adults that emphasize financial planning, relationship management skills, and long-term investment in social capital. These programs should specifically address savings behavior, asset accumulation strategies, conflict resolution, family responsibility, and community engagement to prepare individuals for respected and dignified aging, with particular focus on reaching women and rural populations who face structural barriers to accessing these developmental opportunities.

Communities should establish structured intergenerational dialogue platforms that facilitate mutual understanding between elderly persons and younger generations regarding the changing criteria for respect and wisdom in

Received: 22.10.2025

Accepted: 24.10.2025

Published on: 30.10.2025

contemporary Uganda. These initiatives should acknowledge that traditional age-based deference has legitimately evolved toward achievement-based recognition while simultaneously educating younger generations about the experiential knowledge elderly persons possess, creating a balanced framework where respect is both earned through disciplinary behavior and accorded for lived experience and cultural transmission roles.

The government should develop integrated policies that combine elder protection with life-course development support, including mandatory contributory social security schemes, community-based care systems that reward elderly persons who maintained positive relationships and community contributions, and legal protections against elder abuse while simultaneously establishing adult education programs, savings cooperatives, and relationship counseling services for current middle-aged populations to prevent future aging challenges and restore the substantive meaning of "old is gold" based on demonstrated wisdom rather than chronological entitlement.

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Received: 22.10.2025

Accepted: 24.10.2025

Published on: 30.10.2025