Journal of the Egyptian Mathematical Society (2015) **23**, 62–66

Egyptian Mathematical Society

Journal of the Egyptian Mathematical Society

www.etms-eg.org
www.elsevier.com/locate/joems

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

On the oscillation of a third order rational difference equation

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Received 27 January 2014; revised 28 February 2014; accepted 3 March 2014
Available online 5 April 2014

KEYWORDS

Difference equation;
Locally asymptotically stable;
Periodic solution;
Oscillation

Abstract In this paper, we discuss the global asymptotic stability of all solutions of the difference equation

$$x_{n+1} = \frac{Ax_{n-2}}{B + Cx_n x_{n-1} x_{n-2}}, \qquad n = 0, 1, \ldots$$

where A, B, C are positive real numbers and the initial conditions x_{-2}, x_{-1}, x_0 are real numbers. Although we have an explicit formula for the solutions of that equation, the oscillation character is worth to be discussed.

2010 MATHEMATICS SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION: 39A20; 39A21; 39A23; 39A30

1. Introduction

Difference equations, although their forms look very simple, it is extremely difficult to understand thoroughly the global behaviors of their solutions. One can refer to [1–4]. The study of nonlinear rational difference equations of higher order is of paramount importance, since we still know so little about such equations.

Cinar [5,6] examined the global asymptotic stability of all positive solutions of the rational difference equation

$$x_{n+1} = \frac{x_{n-1}}{1 + x_n x_{n-1}}, \quad n = 0, 1, \ldots$$

and

$$x_{n+1} = \frac{x_{n-1}}{-1 + x_n x_{n-1}}, \quad n = 0, 1, \ldots$$

He also [7] discussed the behavior of the solutions of the difference equation

$$x_{n+1} = \frac{ax_{n-1}}{1 + bx_n x_{n-1}}, \quad n = 0, 1, \ldots$$

Stević [8] showed that every positive solution of the difference equation

$$x_{n+1} = \frac{x_{n-1}}{1 + x_n x_{n-1}}, \quad n = 0, 1, \ldots$$

converges to zero.

In [9], H. Sedaghat determined the global behavior of all solutions of the rational difference equations

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Peer review under responsibility of Egyptian Mathematical Society.

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.joems.2014.03.001

$$x_{n+1} = \frac{ax_{n-1}}{x_n x_{n-1} + b}, \quad x_{n+1} = \frac{ax_n x_{n-1}}{x_n + bx_{n-2}}, \quad n = 0, 1, \ldots$$

where $a, b > 0$.

In [10], the author investigated the global behavior and periodic character of the two difference equations

$$x_{n+1} = \frac{x_{n-2}}{\pm 1 + x_n x_{n-1} x_{n-2}}, \quad n = 0, 1, \ldots$$

In this paper, we discuss the global stability and periodic character of all solutions of the difference equation

$$x_{n+1} = \frac{Ax_{n-2}}{B + Cx_n x_{n-1} x_{n-2}}, \quad n = 0, 1, \ldots \tag{1.1}$$

Consider the difference equation

$$x_{n+1} = f(x_n, x_{n-1}, \ldots, x_{n-k}), \quad n = 0, 1 \ldots \tag{1.2}$$

where $f : R^{k+1} \to R$.

Definition 1.1 [11]. An equilibrium point for Eq. (1.2) is a point $\bar{x} \in R$ such that $\bar{x} = f(\bar{x}, \bar{x}, \ldots, \bar{x})$.

Definition 1.2 [11].

(1) An equilibrium point $\bar{x}$ for Eq. (1.2) is called locally stable if for every $\epsilon > 0, \exists \delta > 0$ such that every solution $\{x_n\}$ with initial conditions $x_{-k}, x_{-k+1}, \ldots, x_0 \in]\bar{x} - \delta, \bar{x} + \delta[$ is such that $x_n \in]\bar{x} - \epsilon, \bar{x} + \epsilon[, \forall n \in N$. Otherwise $\bar{x}$ is said to be unstable.
(2) The equilibrium point $\bar{x}$ of Eq. (1.2) is called locally asymptotically stable if it is locally stable and there exists $\gamma > 0$ such that for any initial conditions $x_{-k}, x_{-k+1}, \ldots, x_0 \in]\bar{x} - \gamma, \bar{x} + \gamma[$, the corresponding solution $\{x_n\}$ tends to $\bar{x}$.
(3) An equilibrium point $\bar{x}$ for Eq. (1.2) is called global attractor if every solution $\{x_n\}$ converges to $\bar{x}$ as $n \to \infty$.
(4) The equilibrium point $\bar{x}$ for Eq. (1.2) is called globally asymptotically stable if it is locally asymptotically stable and global attractor.

The linearized equation associated with Eq. (1.2) is

$$y_{n+1} = \sum_{i=0}^{k} \frac{\partial f}{\partial x_{n-i}}(\bar{x}, \ldots, \bar{x}) y_{n-i}, \quad n = 0, 1, 2, \ldots \tag{1.3}$$

the characteristic equation associated with Eq. (1.3) is

$$\lambda^{k+1} - \sum_{i=0}^{k} \frac{\partial f}{\partial x_{n-i}}(\bar{x}, \ldots, \bar{x}) \lambda^{k-i} = 0. \tag{1.4}$$

Theorem 1.3 [11]. *Assume that f is a C^1 function and let $\bar{x}$ be an equilibrium point of Eq. (1.2). Then the following statements are true:*

(1) *If all roots of* Eq. (1.4) *lie in the open disk $|\lambda| < 1$, then $\bar{x}$ is locally asymptotically stable.*
(2) *If at least one root of* Eq. (1.4) *has absolute value greater than one, then $\bar{x}$ is unstable.*

The change of variables $\sqrt[3]{\frac{C}{B}} x_n = y_n$ reduces the Eq. (1.1) to the equation

$$y_{n+1} = \frac{\gamma y_{n-2}}{1 + y_n y_{n-1} y_{n-2}}, \quad n = 0, 1, \ldots \tag{1.5}$$

where $\gamma = \frac{A}{B}$.

2. Linearized stability and solutions of Eq. (1.5)

In this section we study linearized stability analysis and the solutions of the difference Eq. (1.5). It is clear that Eq. (1.5) has the equilibrium points $\bar{y} = 0$ and $\bar{y} = \sqrt[3]{\gamma - 1}$. During the paper, we suppose that $\alpha = y_{-2} y_{-1} y_0$.

The following theorem describes the behavior of the equilibrium points.

Theorem 2.1. *Assume that $\alpha \neq \frac{-1}{\sum_{i=0}^{n} \gamma^i}$ for any $n \in N$. Then the following statements are true.*

(1) *If $\gamma < 1$, then $\bar{y} = 0$ is locally asymptotically stable and $\bar{y} = \sqrt[3]{\gamma - 1}$ is unstable.*
(2) *If $\gamma = 1$, then $\bar{y} = 0$ is a nonhyperbolic point.*
(3) *If $\gamma > 1$, then $\bar{y} = 0$ is a repeller and $\bar{y} = \sqrt[3]{\gamma - 1}$ is a nonhyperbolic point.*

Theorem 2.2. *Let y_{-2}, y_{-1} and y_0 be real numbers such that $\alpha = y_{-2} y_{-1} y_0 \neq \frac{-1}{\sum_{i=0}^{n} \gamma^i}$ for any $n \in N$. Then the solutions of Eq. (1.5) are*

$$y_n = \begin{cases} y_{-2} \gamma^{\frac{n-1}{3}+1} \prod_{j=0}^{\frac{n-1}{3}} \frac{1+\alpha \sum_{k=0}^{3j-1} \gamma^k}{1+\alpha \sum_{k=0}^{3j} \gamma^k}, & n = 1, 4, 7, \ldots \\ y_{-1} \gamma^{\frac{n-2}{3}+1} \prod_{j=0}^{\frac{n-2}{3}} \frac{1+\alpha \sum_{k=0}^{3j} \gamma^k}{1+\alpha \sum_{k=0}^{3j+1} \gamma^k}, & n = 2, 5, 8, \ldots \\ y_0 \gamma^{\frac{n}{3}} \prod_{j=1}^{\frac{n}{3}} \frac{1+\alpha \sum_{k=0}^{3j-2} \gamma^k}{1+\alpha \sum_{k=0}^{3j-1} \gamma^k}, & n = 3, 6, 9, \ldots \end{cases} \tag{2.1}$$

Proof. We have that

$$y_1 = y_{-2} \gamma \frac{1}{1 + \alpha}, \quad y_2 = y_{-1} \gamma \frac{1 + \alpha}{1 + \alpha(1 + \gamma)} \text{ and } y_3 = y_0 \gamma \frac{1 + \alpha(1 + \gamma)}{1 + \alpha(1 + \gamma + \gamma^2)}$$

as expected by formula (2.1). Now assume that $m > 1$. Then from formula (2.1), we can write

$$y_{3m-2} = y_{-2} \gamma^m \prod_{j=0}^{m-1} \frac{1 + \alpha \sum_{k=0}^{3j-1} \gamma^k}{1 + \alpha \sum_{k=0}^{3j} \gamma^k},$$

$$y_{3m-1} = y_{-1} \gamma^m \prod_{j=0}^{m-1} \frac{1 + \alpha \sum_{k=0}^{3j} \gamma^k}{1 + \alpha \sum_{k=0}^{3j+1} \gamma^k},$$

$$y_{3m} = y_0 \gamma^m \prod_{j=1}^{m} \frac{1 + \alpha \sum_{k=0}^{3j-2} \gamma^k}{1 + \alpha \sum_{k=0}^{3j-1} \gamma^k} = y_0 \gamma^m \prod_{j=0}^{m-1} \frac{1 + \alpha \sum_{k=0}^{3j+1} \gamma^k}{1 + \alpha \sum_{k=0}^{3j+2} \gamma^k}$$

Then