

**PSYCHO-SOCIAL FUNCTIONING OF CHILDREN AGED 15-24 YEARS OLD IN  
POLYGAMOUS MARRIAGE IN COTABATO CITY**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study focused on the psycho-social functioning of children aged 15-24 years old in a polygamous marriage in Cotabato City. It gathered their constructs about polygamous marriage, their experiences in terms of their living conditions, family relationships and communications and what are the effects their constructs and experiences in their psychosocial functioning. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) using a semi-structured interview was conducted to ten (10) respondents where five (5) are males and five (5) are females in Cotabato City.

The findings on each statement of the problem were clustered into overarching themes. Legal in Islam to marry up to four wives but with conditions, not experiencing conditions in a polygamous marriage, weak bond with father, no deep conversation with father, stayed positive through Islam faith, unable to portray my role a child to my father and Distant relationship with father. Symbolic Interactionism and its take on the family that stated shared activities help to build emotional bonds among family members, and that marriage and family relationships are based on negotiated meanings.

The symbolic interactionist perspective emphasizes that families reinforce and rejuvenate bonds through symbolic mechanism rituals such as family meals, time together and holidays. The way the children give meaning and interpret their situation depends on the symbols they create and how they interpret their situation. The roles they portray within their family, may it be through their father, mother, other wives of their father and siblings gives the different interpretations and understanding of their situation. All the matters happening inside their home are factors to the development of self-concept of the children.

*Keywords: Psycho-social Functioning, Polygamous Marriage, Interactionism, Cotabato City*

**INTRODUCTION**

According to Dr. Zakir Naik, "polygamous marriage is a system of marriage whereby one person has more than one spouse. Polygamy can be of two types. One is polygyny where a man marries more than one woman, and the other is polyandry, where a woman marries more than one man. In Islam, limited polygyny is permitted and polyandry is completely prohibited" (<http://www.islamawareness.net>). Under Muslim law, the option of having more than one wife is merely for permission (rukshat) and not the rule (azimat). In other words, monogamy is the general rule under Muslim law and polygamy is only an exception (Sharia Law, Article 27).

The Qur'an only limited the number of wives into four. In the early days of Islam, people who had more than four wives were required to file divorce to the extra wives. In a polygamous marriage, a husband will not be allowed to marry four wives if they cannot provide for them equally. According to the Holy Qur'an Surah an-Nissa, Verse 4:3, "but if you fear that you will not do justice (between them), then (marry) only one..." According to Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi, Islam allows polygamous marriage for as long as the husband could provide and maintain the family and deal with both through fairness and justice. In a polygamous marriage, a husband will not be allowed to marry four wives if they cannot provide for them equally. In the early days of Islam, people who had more than four wives were required to file divorce to the extra wives ([www.islam.org](http://www.islam.org)).

Polygamous marriage is being practiced by several countries as part of their culture and tradition such as Africa, Philippines, Indonesia, India, Malaysia and etc. In line with this, there are various studies and news that says about the negative effects of polygamy especially on children who belongs to this kind of family set-up, which leads to their dysfunction and inability to live a harmonious life. "In accordance with Jordanian study stressed that polygamy affected rate of drop in school among children escalated addiction of alcohol, juvenile delinquency as well as causing too low self-esteem (Al-Krenawi, and Gharaibeh 595)." Furthermore, polygamy has negative effects and influences on the mental health of adolescents and teenagers. It is confirmed that family structure has main efforts on mental health for the children which is why the biggest problem in polygamous marriage is families will most likely to be more aggressive, will have difficulties in communication and adjustment problems. They also have poor self-concept and high rate of attrition in school as well as sexual activity and abuse of the use of drug and alcohol. Children are also suffering from poor well-being due to bad nutrition and low interest and care with children" ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)).

Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) forbade discrimination between the wives or between their children. When we look into the situation, children who belong to each family of the father will

have a different way of living compared to the living of those children living in a monogamous marriage or family set up. There might be cracks and circumstances that the children living in this kind of family set-up are experiencing and has a different perspective on the concept of family. We live in a country that most of the people practice monogamous marriage but some of us also know that there are communities in our country that practice polygamous marriage especially the Muslim community. This is something that the researcher wanted to know more and have more knowledge about especially with the living condition of the children aged 15-24 years old in Cotabato City or what we call the youth living in many different families. In this kind of set-up, children who belong to polygamous marriage have different ways of adjusting our understanding of their situation. We can understand this by looking at their social functioning and exploring their psychosocial functioning. Social functioning is defined as “the relation between the coping activity of people and the demand from the environment” (Bartlett, 1970). It is the ability of a person to interact properly with other people on a constant basis such ability includes the capacity to interact with family members, friends or anyone surrounding him/her. On the other hand, Psychosocial functioning is the way a person thinks, feels, acts and relates to self and others, the ability to cope and tolerate stress and the capacity for developing a value and belief system” (D’amico and Barbarito, 2007).

In the field of Social Work, it is not new to the profession that it is dealing with different kinds of clients, different cases, different stories, different personalities, different beliefs, culture, traditions, and traits. The researcher came up with this study to give awareness and idea that Social Workers should be more aware of cases like this. We live in a nation that is more familiar and used to dealing with monogamous marriage, not being aware that we should also be knowledgeable of polygamous marriage because it is existing in our society and that we should be prepared with the possibility of facing clients who belong to polygamous marriage. This study will help Social Workers to be conscious of the psychosocial functioning of children aged 15-24 years old or what is called the “youth” who are in polygamous marriage. This will help the Social Workers to avoid being just focused on dealing with monogamous marriage but with polygamous marriage also and be aware that there are factors affecting the youth in terms of dealing with their situation of being in a polygamous marriage and it also affects their growth as a person. In this study, the researcher would like to know the psychosocial functioning of the children living in this kind of family set-up and how they are able to adjust, understand and accept their situation or how this kind of family set up affects their behavior and their growth as children and as a human being. There are probably many unique stories about them and how they are living in their own families.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This design of the study was qualitative through the use of the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach to look into the psychosocial functioning of children aged 15-24 years old in a polygamous marriage. IPA is a qualitative approach by Jonathan Smith that aims to provide comprehensive details of lived experiences where this approach can be used to give detailed investigations and interpretation of the constructs and experiences of the respondents being in a polygamous marriage.

### Locale of the Study

This study was conducted in Cotabato City, Philippines. Cotabato City is composed of different religions, tribes, traditions, and cultures. Although the practice of polygamous marriage is not dominant among Islam believers, there are some Islam believers who do practice it, which makes this study appropriate to be conducted in the said location. The diversity that exists in the city is the reason why it is chosen to be the location of this study.

### Unit of Analysis

The respondents of this study involved children ages 15-24 years old who belong to families whose fathers have 3 – 4 marriages, are single and still living with their families. Five (5) males and five (5) females were chosen as the respondents of the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

All respondents belong to the Islam Religion and lives in Cotabato City. The respondents belong to a family of 3-4 marriages and are all single and still living with their respective families.

“Sadam”

Sadam is 22 years old who belongs to the Maguindanaon tribe and is a college graduate, currently working as a government employee. He is the only child in the second family. His father has three (3) marriages where he has 9 siblings in the first family and none in the third family. He only met his half-siblings and wife of his father in the first family when he was 17 years old but wasn't able to meet the third wife of his father. The marriage of Sadam's parents was not agreed by the first wife which made Sadam's father neglecting them and Sadam was solely raised and provided by his mother and didn't grow up having his father with him and can only see him rarely. Currently, Sadam is working and able to help his mother in their daily needs.

“Khalil”

Khalil is 24 years old who belongs to the Maguindanaon tribe and is a college graduate, currently working as a custodian in private company. He is the eldest among four (4) children the third family. His father has four (4) marriages where he has one (1) sibling in the first family, two (2) in the second family and none in the fourth family. He only met his half-sibling and 1st wife in the first family but didn't able to make a stable relationship with them due to their parents' decision of avoiding conflict and live harmoniously on their own and also didn't meet the fourth wife. Sadam is currently living with both his parents and birth siblings and he is already able to help with their family expenses and needs.

“Ali”

Ali is 18 years old who belongs to the Maranao tribe and currently a college student. He is the third child among four (4) children in the third family. His father has four (4) marriages where he has three (3) siblings in the first family, one (1) in the second family and none in the fourth family. He was able to meet the other families of his father but didn't able to make a stable relationship with them. Sadam and his birth siblings are solely raised and provided by their mother because he thinks that his father has his favorites and gives his time and support more to the other families especially the first family.

“Nasser”

Nasser is 16 years old who belongs to the Maguindanaon tribe and currently a senior high student. He is the fifth child among thirteen (13) children where two (2) are deceased in the first family. His father has three (3) marriages where he has one (1) sibling but deceased in the second family and four (4) siblings in the third family. Nasser's mother died due to severe illness that is believed to be caused by depression because his mother didn't accept his father's other marriages. Currently, Nasser is living with his father, birth siblings, third wife of his father and his half-siblings with her whom Nasser treats as his own mother and siblings as well and he only met the second wife once. Nasser's father is providing all their needs for them.

“Samir”

Samir is 19 years old who belongs to the Maguindanaon tribe and currently a college student. He is the third child among nine (9) children and one is deceased in the first family. His father has four (4) marriages where he has no sibling in the second family, three (3) where one (1) is deceased in the third family and one (1) in the fourth family. Samir is currently living with all of his father's family where they live in the same roof but different rooms. His father has a rice field business and is a leader in their Purok. His mother helps his father in their business where they get their source of income and the other three wives are believed to just depend on what his father could give for them. Samir is close to all his siblings and managed to maintain a good relationship with his father's other wives.

“Aira”

Aira is 19 years old who belongs to the Maguindanaon tribe and currently a college student. She is the second child among three (3) children in the first family. Her father has three (3) marriages where she has two (2) siblings in the second family and one (1) in the third family. Aira's father is currently working abroad and can only see him for two months every 2 years. Her father with the help of her mother who has a sari-sari store provides their daily needs and school expenses. Aira is close to her siblings in each family of her father but feels distant from her father who is not expressive and whom she only sees two months in every two (2) years and sharing time with her father's other families where her father divides his time one (1) day per family and them being the first priority. She also has a good relationship with her stepmothers whom she spends time with especially on special occasions such as graduation and eating together.

“Jamila”

Jamila is 21 years old who belongs to the Maguindanaon tribe and is a college graduate, currently working as a sales representative in a private company. She is the first child among

four (4) children in the first family. Her father has three (3) marriages where she has one (1) sibling in the second family and none in the third family. She has a casual relationship with the second wife and her half-sibling with her where they help each other in times of need but doesn't have constant communication. She doesn't have a good relationship with the third wife because her stepmother has attitude problems such as being selfish, jealous and surly which makes Jamila wants to leave their house but still choose to stay for her grandmother and siblings. Jamila's parents are both working abroad who are not in good terms in the present due to Jamila's father's other marriages that wasn't agreed by her mother. Jamila is currently living with her grandmother, siblings, and stepmother (third wife) in the house of their father. She can only see her parents two months in every two years but is more close to her mother than her father who she believes give more time, effort and support to the third wife. Jamila's parents are both providing for their daily needs and school expenses.

"Mariam"

Mariam is 20 years old who belongs to the Maguindanaon tribe and currently a college student. She is the youngest between two (2) children in the second family. Her father has four (4) marriages and Mariam doesn't have idea as to how many siblings she has in each family of her father and only knew one sibling in the first family who she realized share the same school with her but haven't officially met, it was only through her father that she knew about her half-sibling who happens to be her schoolmate. Mariam and her older brother was solely raised by their mother and was neglected by their father who became irresponsible that made Mariam built anger towards her father for not taking care of them and just leaving her mother do everything for them. Her mother was the one who raised and provided her needs and school expenses.

"Naida"

Naida is 23 years old who belongs to the Maranao tribe and is a college graduate, currently working as a government employee. Her father has three (3) marriages and doesn't have an idea on how many are her half-siblings from the other wives of her father. Currently, Naida is the one who is standing as the mother and father of their home because all her father's responsibilities were passed on to her ever since she graduated and got her own job and her mother couldn't help her because she doesn't have job to provide for their family and Naida expressed that her mother got depressed ever since her father married another woman. Naida doesn't have a good relationship with her father because she feels that all responsibilities were passed on to her and that her mother got so affected because of her father's decision of marrying other women.

"Rayah"

Rayah is 22 years old who belongs to Maguindanaon tribe and is a college graduate, currently working as a government employee. She is the second child among three (3) children and one (1) is deceased in the third family. Her father has three (3) marriages where she has seven (7) siblings in the first family and one (1) in the second family. She wasn't able to meet the second family because the second family lived separately ever since the second wife got married to Rayah's father. Rayah's family lived in the same roof with the first family until she was six (6) years old but Rayah lived separately from her father since she was six (6) years old because of her parents' misunderstanding where her mother decided to live separately from her father because her father can no longer provide for them because he doesn't have a stable job and her mother doesn't want to be a burden to the first family and ever since, Rayah, her mother and siblings stayed in the house of their grandmother's house and grew up there. Rayah can only see her father rarely because her mother doesn't allow them to visit him which made her felt a distant relationship with her father and her half-siblings as well.

## CONSTRUCTS OF RESPONDENTS ON POLYGAMOUS MARRIAGE

This section covers the discussion on the second objective of the study, the constructs of children, whose fathers have two or three wives, about polygamous marriage. The literature has shown us various meanings of polygamous marriage. However, it is considered important to look into what are the ideas that define the respondents' understanding of polygamous marriage. Their constructs on polygamous marriage may help identify other dimensions not mentioned in the Qur'an and/or other literature as well as support what is already written in the literature.

**Legal in Islam to marry up to 4 wives but with conditions.** The primary theme for the constructs of the respondents about polygamous marriage is being legally accepted in Islam to marry up to four wives but with conditions. Polygamous marriage being legal in Islam but with corresponding conditions affirms how literature define polygamous marriage. According to Section 3, Article 27 of the Sharia Law or Muslim Law under Rule on Polygamous Marriage," the option of having more than one wife is merely permission (rukshat) and not the rule (azimat). In other words, monogamy is the general rule under Muslim law and polygamy is only an exception. " "And if you have reason to fear that you might not act equitably towards orphans, then marry from among [other] women such as are lawful to you - [even] two, or three, or four: but if you have reason to fear that you might not be able to treat them with equal fairness, then [only] one - or [from among] those whom you rightfully possess. This will make it more likely that you will not deviate from the right course." (Surah an Nisaa - Women, 4:3). A husband should not commit to polygamous marriage if he cannot provide for his wives equally. Sharia Law set

limitations on the number of allowed marriages where four marriages are allowed in polygamy to prevent injustice between the two sexes.

*“Legally accepted in Islam na magkaroon ng maraming asawa hanggang apat ang isang lalaki pero may conditions tulad ng dapat kaya mo buhayin lahat ng pamilya mo.”(Legally accepted in Islam for a man to have multiple wives up to 4 but with conditions like a man should be able to sustain all his families.)*

*Jamila*

The respondents believe that Polygamous Marriage is a legal form of marriage where a man can marry up to four (4) wives but should abide with the conditions such as giving equal treatment to all his families, provide for them equally and that includes emotional support to all his families. Polygamy is most prevalent in Muslim countries and in communities that are more traditional and agrarian. For example, it is common and growing among the 180,000 Bedouin of Israel. It is also repeated among some Mediterranean Jews living in Yemen. But polygamous marriage requires money and should be in a society that allows polygamy that is why 10% to 25% of men actually practice it. Today, as many Muslims are leaving for the city and adopting urban lifestyles, plural marriage is declining ([www.beliefnet.com](http://www.beliefnet.com)).

**More than one mate at the same time.** One of the themes that emerged is the Polygamous Marriage is having more than one mate at the same time. One respondent specifically mentioned that polygamous marriage is the type of marriage where a person is having more than one mate at the same time. This affirms how literature defined polygamous marriage. According to Dr. Zakir Naik (2010), “polygamous marriage is a system of marriage whereby one person has more than one spouse. Polygamy can be of two types. One is polygyny where a man marries more than one woman, and the other is polyandry, where a woman marries more than one man. The definition of the respondents is believed to base on the general term of polygamy but not in a legal way.

*“As far as my knowledge is concern, polygamous marriage is having more than one mate at the same time.”*

*Sadam*

Some respondents highlighted that polygamous marriage is a form of marriage where a person can marry more than one at the same time. The respondents' answer is based on the general definitions that affirm other written literature. Polygamy came from the Greek word polygamia, which means a state of marriage to many spouses. A polygamy is a form of marriage wherein a person owns more than one spouse (Al-Krenawi and Gharaibeh 594). Socio-biologists defined polygamy as a form of any kind of multiple mating. It is evident that the respondent provided a definition of polygamous marriage in a general way but not on the basis of legality in Islam where the respondent belongs.

## **EXPERIENCES OF RESPONDENTS ON POLYGAMOUS MARRIAGE**

This part discusses the second objective of the study, the experiences of the children being on polygamous marriage. This includes their living conditions, family relationships and communication patterns. Living conditions refers to the respondents' situation in terms of shelter, access to daily needs and the like, family relationships refers to how the respondents bond with each of their family members such as father, mother, siblings and stepfamily and communication patterns refers to how the respondents behave within their family and how they describe their communication patterns in the family.

### **Living Conditions**

**Not experiencing conditions of polygamous marriage.** One of the themes for the respondents' experiences in their living condition being in a polygamous marriage is not experiencing conditions of polygamy under the Sharia or Muslim Law from their father. Polygamous marriage is legal in Islam but there are several conditions that a man should abide in order for him to be worthy of marrying in a polygamous but the respondents experienced the opposite where the respondents experienced being neglected, unfair treatment and father having favorites. This is in contrast to the written literature about the conditions of polygamy under the Muslim or Islam Law and these are first is that a man should be able to deal with his families equally and treat them justly, second is that man should discuss the situation carefully with his current family before giving notice to the court, third is that the pre-nuptial agreement should allow him and lastly the law should find him capable of providing for all his families. Respondents experienced the opposite and experienced being neglected, the father having favorites and taken for granted by their father.

*“Sa karanasan ko kasi, hindi kami nabigyan ng fair treatment kasi nakakaramdam kami ng favoritism. Mas nabibigyan ng oras at bonding yung ibang pamilya ng tatay ko. Bihira lang kami magkasama ng tatay ko, bihira lang siya magpunta sa amin. Kapag may kailangan kami, hindi kami napakikinggan kaya masakit yun para sa amin. Kaya para sa akin, hindi talaga nasusunod ng tatay namin yung essence ng polygamy kasi hindi kami nabibigyan ng pantay na treatment kasi may favorite.”*(Because in my experience, we didn't receive fair treatment because we feel like there is favoritism. My father gives more time and bonding to his other families than us. He rarely spends time with us. If we need something, we are not heard by our father that is why it hurts us and that is why for me, the essence of polygamy is not being followed by our father because we feel the unfair treatment because there is favoritism.)

Ali

*“Yung tatay ko, may apat na asawa pangalawa kami. Ever since bata ako, bihira ko makita ang tatay ko kasi dun siya nakatira sa first family niya talaga, dun siya lagi umuwi and pinabayaan niya din kami nila Ina.”*(My father has four wives and we are the second family and I am the second child. Ever since I was a child, I rarely see my father because he lives with his first family and he abandoned us.)

Mariam

Respondents didn't grow up having their father living with them. Some were neglected and didn't have support from their father ever since they were still young and some felt favoritism and unfair treatment, which violates the condition of polygamous marriage which is for a man to give fair treatment to all his family. The conditions under polygamy that a man or a father should abide were not implemented by the respondents' fathers as they were neglected and abandoned by their fathers and let their mothers raised them on their own. This act violates the condition of polygamy in which a father should give fair treatment to all his families and before engaging into this kind of marriage, one should be responsible for all his actions towards his family. The Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) said that "Everyone of you is a protector and guardian and responsible for your wards and things under your care and a man is a guardian of his family members and is accountable for those placed under his charge." that was interpreted by Bukhari and Muslim. This shows that a man should be responsible for all his family but these were not applied to most of the respondents because they were taken for granted by their fathers.

**All on mom.** Another theme that emerged in the experiences of respondents in their living condition is that all provisions from their childhood up to present were all solely provided by their mother. The respondents shared that all provisions like shelter, access to daily needs and their school expenses are all provided by their mothers only. This affirms some written literature about women in polygamous marriage being neglected by husbands. Women in polygamous marriage live in a state of poverty, neglect, and anxiety (Ma'an et al, 2011). The respondents' mothers are the only ones who raised them without the help of their fathers.

*“Lahat lahat ng meron ako ngayon, nanay ko lahat yun. Ever since bata ako, si Mama na ang nagprovide ng needs ko and pag-aaral ko. Yung bahay namin sa nanay ko din. And ngayon, tinutulungan ko na siya kasi may trabaho naman ako”*(Everything I have right now, all are given by my mother and even for my school. Ever since I was a child, Mama provided all my needs on her own. My mother also owns our house. And I am also helping my mother because I already have work.)

Sadam

For some of the respondents, it appears that only their mothers provided all of their needs. Their mothers raised the respondents by herself and provided them everything such as daily needs, school expenses, and personal needs. The respondents' fathers neglected them and took their responsibilities for granted due to their parents' gap where their marriage was unaccepted by the first wife and their fathers didn't fight for their mother that led to a big gap that made them experience living without their fathers. "Women in a polygamous marriage often experience deep-seated feelings of angst that arise over competing for access to their husbands, and conflicts with her co-wife during the early years of marriage tend to be pervasive and marked by outbursts of verbal or physical abuse" (Jankowiak, Sudakov, & Wilreker, 2005). These respondents are the ones who belong to second to the third family whose fathers weren't able to portray their role as fathers and weren't able to be responsible to raise them which is clearly a violation to the rules of polygamous marriage in Islam which is before you engage in this kind of family set-up, one must see to it that he will be able to provide for everyone equally and fairly.

**Provided by parents.** Although there are respondents who experienced the negative side of polygamy with regards their living conditions, there are also respondents who experienced otherwise wherein they experienced being provided for by both their mother and father. It is stated in the Islam belief that a woman should be very obedient to her husband as much as she can (Musnad Ahmad), where a man has authority on the activities of his wife. There are respondents whose mothers chose to have their own source of income as well as have their

husbands provide for them. Three of the respondents shared that their shelter, access to daily and school expenses are both provided by their mother and father, helping them with their daily needs.

*“Sa bahay namin nakatira ang lahat ng asawa ni Ama pati mga kapatid ko. Yung bahay namin, kay Ama lahat nanggaling yon pati pang araw araw namin na mga pangangailangan.”* Asked about her mother and stepmothers, Samir said *“Si Ina, tumutulong kay Ama sa lupa nila sa mga pananim tsaka minsan tumatanggap din ng tahi tulad ng mga simpleng dress tsaka mag-ayos ng mga punit punit. Yung tatlong asawa naman ni Ama, tumutulong din minsan kay Ama pero mostly umaasa lang sila sa kayang ibigay ni Ama.”* (All of my father’s wives and children lives with us. We live in the same house. House is owned by Ama and he provides all the basic needs.) Asked about her mother and stepmothers, Samir said (Ina helps Ama in their rice field and sometimes she accepts sewing of simple dresses and repair torn clothes. My three stepmothers sometimes help Ama in the rice field but mostly they will just depend on what Ama can give them.)

Samir

*“Provided ang house and daily needs ng tatay ko na nagwowork abroad. Pero hindi din lahat inaasa ni Mama kay Papa kasi may sarili siyang sari-sari store kaya nakakatulong din siya sa araw araw na gastusin pati allowance sa school. 3 families ang binubuhay ni Ama, so monthly 3 kaming pamilya niya ang pinapadalhan niya.”* (My father who works abroad provides House and daily needs but Mama does not depend everything with Papa because Mama also has her own business, which is sari-sari store, which helps us with everyday expenses, and allowance for school. Papa raises three family so he gives monthly allowance to all of us.)

Aira

It shows that both the mother and father of the respondents provided for their daily needs, such as school expenses as well as personal needs. Although there are respondents who experienced the irresponsibilities of their fathers, there are respondents who experienced the opposite. Although they are expecting more from their fathers to provide for them, their mothers didn’t let that happen because their mothers looked for ways to provide for them by taking a source of income like a small business such as sari sari store, working abroad and sewing to help their family and provide for them. According to Hutter, “Much contemporary family research from a symbolic interactionist perspective deals with some type of role analysis, such as how the roles of husband and wife are defined during stages of family life”. Roles within the family changes depending on how they analyze and interpret their situation just like how the mother of the respondents also added to their role as being the provider for their family also.

**All on me.** Another theme that emerged in the experiences of the respondents in their living condition is that all responsibilities were given or passed on to them. This affirms some written literature about the negative effects of polygamous marriage on children especially regarding the role of their father. “The experience of polygamy was underlined with negative experiences such as the disintegration of the family unit, a sense of deprivation and social, economic and educational constraints. These experiences, in turn, formed the foundations of the children’s relationship with their fathers” (Pervez et al, 2016). One respondent shared that her father, who became irresponsible, passed on all expenses in their house, access to daily needs, school and personal expenses of her siblings to her.

*“Nung student pa ako, tatay ko lahat gumagastos kasi ang nanay ko housewife pati yung bahay namin sa tatay ko pero simula nung nakagraduate ako, pinasa na lahat sa akin ng tatay ko lahat ng responsibilities sa pamilya namin. Lahat ng bills, every day needs akin lahat pati pagpaaral sa mga kapatid ko. Ang bahay namin matagal na kaya fragile na so ako din nagparenovate lahat (When I was still as student, my father was the one paying for all because my mother is a housewife and even the house was provided by my father. But when I graduated, my father passed to me all his responsibilities to our family. All the bills, every day needs and school expenses of my siblings are all on me. Our house was old and very fragile that is why I decided to have it renovated).*

Naida

Only one respondent expressed that after she graduated and got her own job, her father passed on all responsibilities to her including bills in their house, daily needs, renovation of their house, personal needs of her family and school expenses of her siblings. Naida is the eldest daughter from the first family of her father and all his father’s responsibilities were passed on to her because of being the “eldest” and the only one who has job and when we say all responsibilities this includes all expenses in their home and her siblings’ education and personal

needs and all their house expenses. According to Hutter, symbolic interactionist perspective deals with some type of role analysis such as how the arrival of children and the transition to parental roles change role patterns and interaction patterns, how external events (e.g., parental employment, natural disasters, migration) and internal events (e.g., births, deaths, divorces) affect role definitions, performance, stress, or conflict and how these role-specific variables affect the attitudes, dispositions, and self-conceptions of family members". It shows that Naida's father made her responsible for his own family where even though he is still capable of providing for them, he stopped and let Naida do his responsibility including all of Naida's siblings' school and personal expenses which clearly violates the equal and fair treatment and on should be capable of providing for their family that polygamous is requiring for one to avoid committing huge sin in respect to the belief of Islam.

### **Family Relationships**

**Weak bond with father.** The main theme that emerged in the experiences of the respondents in their family relationship is that they have a weak bonding with their father due to various reasons such as they rarely see their father, their father makes them feel that he has favorites, strict, dominant and not expressive. These are the reasons why the respondents don't share quality time with their father. This affirms some written literature about the weak bonding between a child and a father. According to the study on Bedouin and Arab tribes in the Middle East that suggests that individuals from polygamous households are experiencing a distant and detached relationship with their father (Al-Krenawi et al, 1997). Most of the respondents shared that they do not have a strong bond with their father because of several reasons that which resulted for them to have a solid connection with their father.

*"Madalang ko makita ang tatay ko kaya hindi ko talaga masabi na may bonding kami kasi hindi naman ako lumaki kasama siya and kapag may chance man na magkita kami, casual lang, basta magbatian lang."* Asked if he is longing for his father, Sadam said *"Hindi na nasanay na kasi ako na hindi kami lagi magkasama."* (I rarely see my father that is why I can't really say that we have bonding because I didn't grow with him beside me and if there is a chance for us to meet, we will just greet each other and that is it.) Asked if he is longing for his father, Sadam said (No. Growing up, I got used to live without him.)

Sadam

While Sadam expressed that he barely see his father because he didn't grow up having his father with him and only treat each other casually when they have the chance to see each other that leads to the poor connection between them, Ali expressed that even though he often sees his father, she doesn't share a good bond with him because she observes that her father gives more attention to his half-siblings.

*"Although may times na nagkakasama kami ng tatay ko at iba niyang pamilya, hindi rin talaga kami ganun ka-close. Hindi kami talaga nag-uusap. Basta lang magkita kami pero wala gaanong usap. Kapag nagkikita kami, nasasaktan ako kasi nakikita kong mas close siya sa ibang anak niya."* (Although there are times that our father, his families and us are together, we are not really close with each other. We don't really talk, we just see each other but no long talks. When we are together, I really feel hurt because I can see that he is more close to my half siblings.)

Ali

Nasser, on the hand, expressed that he does not have a good connection with his father because his father is dominant that leads to not talking to each other most of the time and it hinders them for building a good connection to each other.

*"Si Ama kasi strikto, dominant type na father, yung one word is enough kaya kahit pa magkasama kami, parang hindi ko rin maramdaman na andyan siya kasi hindi naman kami nagkakausap."* (Ama is strict and a dominant type of father, one word is enough for him that is why even though we are physically together, I can't feel him because we don't talk to each other so much.)

Nasser

Aira is one of the respondents whose father works abroad and can only see each other two (2) months in every two (2) years, which built the gap between them. Added to this, Aira's father is not expressive that makes Aira do the same thing to her father..

*"Si Papa kasi, most of the time nasa Saudi. Kapag umuuwi, 2 months lang siya mag stay tapos alis na naman kaya hindi rin talaga ganun kasolid ang bonding namin. Hindi rin kasi ganun kaexpressive, hindi malambing, hindi clingy si Papa kaya siguro hindi rin ako ganun sa kanya."* (Papa most of the time is in Saudi. Whenever he goes home, he can only stay for 2



months and then go back to Saudi again that is why we do not have solid bonding and it added that Papa is not expressive, not sweet nor “clingy”.)

*Aira*

The respondents shared that they have a rare bond with their father for several reasons such as they didn't grow up having their fathers living with them and can only see them rarely, their fathers are working abroad and can only stay with them for two months when their father comes home and their fathers are not even expressive towards them. Another reason is that they have a bad relationship with their father that resulted in them having a rare time to spend time together and would rather stay away from their father than spending time with them. Another reason is that although they are seeing their fathers every day, they do not talk to each other that much because their fathers are a dominant type of father in which they couldn't express their selves towards their father. “Polygamous family life weakens the parent-child bond, thus reducing a child's emotional satisfaction and psychological security. This characteristic tends to reduce the amount of supervision and parental attention received by each child, especially from the father” (Elbedour, Onwuegbuzie, Caridine, & Abu-Saad, 2002)

It reflects that the respondents grew up having a disconnected relationship with their father because of the situation of their parents' conflict regarding their marriage in which it resulted for them to live separately but still legally married. The respondents do not have good connection with their fathers because they didn't grow up with their father and their fathers doesn't give them the time that they deserve to have as their children and their father are working abroad and can only spend time with them for few months and their father are not even expressive towards them. They didn't grow up having their fathers with them most of the time because some of them don't share the same roof with their fathers and can only see each other rarely and that gives them a weak connection with their fathers and hinders them to create a consistent communication that could be a way for them to build a strong connection with each other.

**Disagreement between wives.** One of the themes that emerged in the experiences of the respondents in their family relationships is the disagreement between wives. The respondents who belongs to the second to third family shared that their mothers were not accepted by the first wife and vice-versa where the respondents who belong to the first family shared that their mothers didn't accept the other marriages of their father which resulted to having a gap between them and gave negative effect to the relationship of their parents. This affirms the written literature about women's lives in a polygamous marriage. In a polygamous marriage, senior wives reported lower self-esteem and poorer relationships with their husbands compared with those of junior wives (Al Krenawi, 1999). Senior wives are first wives and junior are those came after them. The disagreement between them resulted to the children's family dysfunction where their mother chose to live away from them to avoid conflict and resulted to their father's not being responsible of them and made a choice as to whom he will live with.

*“Sabi ni Mama, hindi daw sila magkasundo ng first wife kaya hindi nangyari na tumira kami sa isang bahay. Tapos ever since, hindi nagprovide ang tatay ko sa kin. Nagtry ako magtanong dati pero ang sabi lang ni mama hindi daw kami kaya panindigan ng tatay ko kasi nga hindi tanggap ng 1<sup>st</sup> wife na nagkaron ng iba.”*(Mama told me that they didn't have a mutual agreement with the first wife of my father because the first wife can't accept my mother back then and that is why it did not happen that we lived in the same roof with the first family. And ever since, my father didn't provide anything for me. I tried asking but my mother only said that my father couldn't stand for us because we were not accepted by the first wife.)

*Sadam*

*“First family kami and may tatlong asawa ang tatay ko. Hindi pumayag ang nanay ko nun na magkaroon ng ibang asawa ang tatay ko kaya nung tinuloy pa din ng tatay ko mag-asawa ng iba, dun na sila nagkaroon ng gap ng nanay ko. Simula nun, not in good terms na sila.”* (We are the first family and my father have three wives. My mother didn't agree to my father having another wife that is why when my father still continued marrying another woman, my father and mother had a gap. Since then, my parents were not in good terms.)

*Jamila*

The respondents shared that because of the unmutual agreement between the wives of their father, it resulted for them to have an aloof relationship between their parents. For the respondents who belong to the first family where their mothers didn't accept the other marriages of their fathers that resulted to their mothers to got so affected which led to a big gap between their parents and led to depression. On the other hand, the respondents who belong to the second to the third family had an aloof relationship with their fathers because their fathers did not raise them and their fathers neglected their mothers and just let their mothers raised them on their own. According to Campbell (2005), Women that are married to the same man might also usually view one another with jealousy and even bitterness and some women in plural marriages view their relationship with co-wives as enriching and valuable. Most of the respondents' father didn't have to get their wives mutually agreed with their polygamous marriages that resulted in a

big gap between their parents and later on affected their relationship with their fathers. This shows that agreement between wives is very important because it affects the relationship of the father and their children that is clearly happening in the current lives of the respondents. a big gap between their parents and later on affected their relationship with their fathers. This shows that agreement between wives is very important because it affects the relationship of the father and their children that is clearly happening in the current lives of the respondents.

**Strong family bond.** One theme that emerged in the experiences of the respondents in their family relationship is that they have strong family bonding with their father, mother, siblings, and stepfamily. This affirms some written literature about having a strong bonding in the family. According to the study by Ibrahim et al (2017), “the favorable relationship between the husband and his children with his wives, on the other hand, is expressed in terms of their father’s fair treatment among his children”. Although there are respondents who expressed to have a weak bond with their fathers, there are two respondents who are experiencing a close bond with their father and family and spend time with them most of the time where they get to eat out together, visit different places, help their siblings with their homework and etc.

*“Dahil magkakasama kami lahat sa isang bahay, most of the time ang bonding namin ay yung kumain lagi ng sabay sabay, makipaglaro sa mga kapatid and tulungan sa school work nila, magtulungan sa gawaing bahay at minsan mag out of town kami pamilya. Minsan, isama kami ni Ama sa palayan niya.”* (Because we are all living in the same roof, most of the time our bonding are eating together, play with my siblings and help them with school work and help each other with house chores and go out of town. Sometimes, Ama would bring us to his rice field.)

Samir

Some respondents expressed their closeness with their father and their family, which makes them, have a strong bond within the family. Although there are respondents who expressed their weak bond with their fathers, there are two respondents who shared that they maintained a strong bond with their father. These respondents are the ones who grew up with their father being with them and able to live having a complete family and able to experience life having to see their fathers all the time and these respondents are also the ones whose father and wives had their mutual agreement even before the polygamous marriage of their father which resulted in having their family accepted by each family member.

It shows that contrary to most of the respondents who expressed their weak bonding with their father, there are respondents who managed to maintain a strong connection with their father and the whole family. These respondents most of the time spend time with their family, bond with them and do family things together like eating outside and help their father with their business and help their siblings with their homework and house chores. This shows that despite the situation of their family of having multiple families, their family still managed to bond with each other and make time for one another. This situation can be related to the take of Symbolic Interactionism with families where its states that symbolic interactionist perspective emphasizes that families reinforce and rejuvenate bonds through symbolic mechanism rituals such as family meals, time together and holidays. A person’s interpretation of their situation is in line with how they bond with their family in their home which greatly affects a person’s growth and how he deals or understands his/her environment or situation.

**Feeling secured with mom and siblings.** Another theme that emerged in the experiences of the respondents in their family relationship is that they feel confident and contented with just having their mother and siblings who were with them ever since they were children and who supported them in every step of the way. This affirms some written literature about children in polygamy who are most likely to be close to their mother and siblings. Some respondents shared that the only people that they only have a strong bond with their birth mother and birth siblings. Due to the division of social and economic resources of fathers, children form closer bonds with their mothers (Al-Krenawi et. al, 1997) and according to a study conducted by Pervez and Batool (2016), children’s relationships with their siblings were largely characterized by love, support, care and sense of independence.

*“Ever since, kami na lang talaga nila Ina at mga kapatid ko ang magkakasama. Sa lahat ng bagay, kami lagi nagtutulungan pati mga kapatid ko.”* (Ever since, it’s just me, Ina and my siblings who are always together. We always help each other in everything.)

Ali

*“Sa bahay kasi ako, si Mama and kapatid ko na babae lang lagi magkasama. Kapag may gusto puntahan si Mama. Sinasama niya kami o tulungan namin siya sa tindahan niya kapag wala kaming pasok. So kami yung laging magkasama sa lahat ng bagay.”* (In our house, it is only me, Mama and my sister that are living together. When Mama wants to go to places, she will let us go with her and sometimes help her with her store whenever we do not have class so it is really just the three of us who are always together.)

Aira

Three of the respondents shared that they have a solid bond with their mothers and birth siblings only. They always get to spend time and built a strong relationship with their mothers and birth siblings only for they only live with them for a long time without their fathers didn't support them and only see their fathers rarely. These respondents grew up having their mothers and siblings with them but not their fathers and that is why they only see and feel their mother and siblings as they go to persons but not their fathers because these respondents are the ones whose fathers took their for granted and are not being responsible for their role to their families and that is why these respondents are only used to sharing time and bond with their mother and siblings most of the time. Most children from polygamous family are experiencing detached and distant relationship with their father, while sympathizing and relying more on their birth mothers for love and support (Al-Krenawi et. al, 1997, 2008, 1990) and "Due to marital conflicts in the family, children may have to undertake the responsibility of the family" (Elbedour et al, 2007).

This shows that the respondents who grew up without their father with them most of the time and whose fathers took them granted and can only see them rarely are more comfortable with just having their mother and siblings who have been with them through thick and thin. The respondents always choose to spend time with their mother and siblings who were there when they needed them and who raised them ever since they were young. This shows that there are respondents who are used to not having their father with them and just always spend time with their mother and siblings.

**Resilient bond with stepfamily.** One more theme that emerged is the strong bond between the respondents and their stepfamily. Some respondents shared that despite their father's multiple marriages, they were able to maintain a strong bond between them and their father's other marriages. Respondents are being treated nicely by their stepfamily and treat them as their own family. The same result came out from the study conducted by Sumagka et al (2016) where the children were treated cared well by their father's other wives and experienced to have a good connection with their siblings.

*"Sa ngayon kasi ang kasama namin sa bahay ay si Ama, mga kapatid ko, yung pangatlong asawa ni Ama and mga anak nila. Siguro kung bonding, minsan sabay sabay kami magkain sa labas, magbyahe sa ibang lugar o magpasyal."* (Currently, we are living in the house of my father together with my siblings and third wife of my father. When it comes to bonding, we eat out together, travel to different places and visit places.)

Nasser

*"Mahilig kami kumain sa labas na initiated din ng mga nanay namin tapos attend ng special occassions together like graduation tapos yung mga kapatid ko kung may mga kailangan sila for school like homework tinutulungan ko. Mas close ako sa 2<sup>nd</sup> wife kesa sa 3<sup>rd</sup> wife kasi andyan na siya bata pa lang ako tapos parang nanay ko na talaga siya and nakadagdag na din na close kami ng mga half siblings ko, parang hindi step mother and turing ko sa kanya, nanay na talaga. Kumbaga, parang dalawa na ang nanay ko talaga."* (We use to eat outside which is initiated by our mothers and attend special occasions together like graduation and whenever my siblings has homework from school, I always help them. I am more close to the second wife of my father than the third wife because the second wife was already there ever since I was a child and she is like a mother to me and it added also that I am close to my half siblings. Growing up, I'm used to having two mothers.)

Aira

The respondents shared that despite their situation with their father having multiple marriages, they still managed to have a strong bond with the other families of their fathers whom they also treat as their own family where they eat out together, visit places, attend special occasions and etc.. Although there are respondents who are not living together with the other families of their father, they still built a good bond with the other wives and children of their fathers. According to Symbolic Interactionism, the interactionist perspective emphasizes that families reinforce and rejuvenate bonds through symbolic mechanism rituals such as family meals and holidays.

This appears that the respondents established a good relationship with their stepfamilies because their mothers managed to establish a good relationship among other wives of their father. These respondents are the ones who already met their stepfamilies since they were young and that even though they do not live in the same roof, they managed to maintain a good relationship with each other and treat each other as a family because their parents especially their mother has a good relationship with the other family or other wives of their family which allows them to get closer to their stepfamily and bond with them with the help of their parents.

**Weak bond with stepfamily.** Another theme that emerged in the experiences of the respondents in their family relationship is that they were not able to build and establish a good connection with them because of jealousy, attitude problems of stepmothers, bitterness and the like. This affirms some written literature about the weak connection between children and their stepfamily. According to a study conducted by Elbedour, Bart, and Hektner (2007), "the

relationships between the children and their step-families are undermined by emotions such as anger, jealousy, and detachment". Some of the respondents shared that although they have met the other family of their father, they haven't made a bond with them instead chose to be casual towards them.

*"Although may times na nagkakasama kami ng tatay ko at iba niyang pamilya kasi pinakilala kami ni Ama sa kanila, hindi rin talaga kami ganun ka-close. Hindi kami talaga nag-uusap. Basta lang magkita kami pero wala gaanong usap."* (Although there are times that our father, his families and us are together because Ama introduced us to them, we are not really close with each other. We don't really talk, we just see each other but no long talks.)

Ali

*"Nakilala namin siya(2<sup>nd</sup> wife) kaso never kami nagkasundo. Nung napangasawa siya ni Ama, 19 years old siya nun kaedad lang siya ng ate ko. May ugali kasi siya na sumbongera, inggitera tsaka selosa."* (We got to meet her (second wife) but we never had a good relationship. When Ama married her, she was only nineteen (19), she is just the same age with my sister. She also has attitude problems like she easily gets jealous and envy.)

Nasser

The respondents said that although they have met some of the other families of their fathers, they do not have a steady relationship with them because of several reasons such as they lived separately for a very long time and due to their parents conflict, their mothers chose to live on their own and avoiding the other families of the respondents' father and another reason is that even though the respondents are living with their stepmother, they do not have a good relationship due to unwanted attitudes such as being jealous and envy. This can be related to the result of the study conducted by Pervez and Batool (2016), which suggests that the children had an uninterested and negative relationship with their stepfamilies which is defined by feelings of jealousy, dislike, hatred, condemnation, indifference, disownment and an effort to empathize with the stepfamily.

With respondents who were able to meet the other families of their father, it is evident that they chose to act civil towards their stepfamily for the sake of their parents and respect to each other. Even though they met their stepfamily, they do not have a close relationship with them because they didn't live together and only see each other rarely and the respondents also chose to live on their own and still show respect for each other.

### **Communication Patterns**

**No deep communication with father.** One theme that occurred in the respondents experience in their communication patterns in the family is their weak communication with their father due to several reasons where most of them where they rarely see their father and their father being a hindrance of their attempt of being open to them because they are strict and not expressive. This experience affirms some written literature about having distant communication with their father. "Separation and individuation may precipitate conflict and diminished feelings of closeness for a time, but the magnitude of these changes and their impact on the relationship should reflect prior to the history of the relationship" (Allen & Land, 1999). Most of the respondents don't talk to their father most of the time and doesn't share deep conversation with them because of the feeling of being away from them and seeing them rarely.

*"Sa tatay ko naman, dahil nga strikto siya, dominant, hind kami ganun ka-open sa isa't isa. Parang laging may pagaalinlangan kasi baka magkamali ako tapos pagalitan ako."* (When it comes to my father, because he is strict, dominant, we are not really open with each other. I am always to scared to make mistakes because he easily gets mad at us.)

Nasser

*"Kapag umuuwi si Papa, hindi din kami talaga nag-uusap. Madalas, tahimik lang ako kasi siguro nasanay na ako na hindi ko naman siya lagi nakakasama and kapag umuuwi siya, hindi rin kami expressive sa isa't isa."* (When Papa comes home, we barely talk. Most of the time, I stay quiet maybe because I'm used to not being with him most of the time and when he is home, we are not expressive to each other.)

Aira

*"Kapag nasa amin siya o umuuwi siya sa amin, saktong batian lang tapos wala na dun lang ako lagi mag-stay sa kwarto ko. Parang ako kung magdating siya, magdating siya. Kung mag alis, mag alis."* (When my father is at home with us, we only greet each other and then I would just

stay in my room. Its like me being used to having my father coming home and going out.)

Naida

Most of the respondents shared that they rarely talk to their father because they feel distant from them. Some shared that they are used to not having their fathers with them most of the time so if there are chances of seeing them, they feel shy and awkward. Some shared that they have wrath against their father for a very long time because they neglected them and some are afraid to voice out because their father is dominant and strict. These are hindrances that make the respondents have distant communication with their fathers. This situation can be related to two types of families. One, "Protective families are high on conformity orientation and low on conversation orientation. Within these families there is no room for open discussion, parents are in power and children must obey" (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994) and two, "Laissez-faire families are low in both conversation and conformity orientation. Within these families, children will have little interaction with their parents and be influenced more by outside forces and peer groups" (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994).

It appears that the respondents have a weak communication towards their father and doesn't share deep conversation with them. Most of the respondents does not have a good communication pattern with their father because they felt that their fathers are not expressive, took them for granted, strict, dominant and doesn't give time for them which makes them have second thoughts of talking to their father and hinders them to be open to their father and share their stories and problems to them.

**Open communication with family.** Another theme that emerged in the experiences of the respondents in the communication patterns is that they open to their family. This affirms some written literature about the family having open communication in the family. Adolescents and parents with a history of sensitive, responsive interactions and strong emotional bonds may experience only temporary communication difficulties, whereas those in poorer quality relationships are more likely to sustain disruption and unresolved issues (Allen & Land, 1990). Two of the respondents the despite their situation being in a polygamous family, they have maintained a good communication towards their family.

*"Open ang relationship namin sa pamilya na pwede kami magshare ng mga problems namin. Andun lagi yung respeto sa lahat, sa mga stepmothers namin, mga kapatid, sa tatay ko at nanay ko. Andun yung respeto at pagmamahal kasi siguro growing up, nasanay na kami na ganito ang set-up ng pamilya namin."* (We have open relationship in our family that we can share problems with each other. Respect with each other is there, respect to all our stepmothers, all my siblings and my parents. There is respect and love because growing up, we got used to this kind of set up in our family.)

Samir

Although the majority of the respondents shared that they do not have a good communication pattern with their family, there are also respondents who expressed their closeness towards their fathers. This can be related to one type of dimension of the family, which is the conversational orientation. "It is the degree to which families encourage open communication and expression of thoughts and feelings" (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2004). The respondents has a good communication with their fathers where they can share their stories, problems and anything to their father because their fathers managed to maintain a close tie within their family where they are free to talk to each other without awkwardness and second thoughts because their family are also open to them and also exerts effort for them to feel comfortable with each other.

**Rare communication with stepfamily.** Another theme that emerged in the experiences of the respondents in their communication patterns is that they only communicate with their stepfamily rarely. The respondents who shared about their stepfamily whom they have met and have a good relationship with shared about the communication pattern they have towards their stepfamily. The respondents, although met their stepfamily, didn't live in the same room and only see each other rarely and doesn't have constant communication with them but treats them respect. This affirms some written literature about individual paying respect to other people even if they are not blood-related. In our society, when an individual shows respect to another individual, it generally means that the person has some value for that other individual and at the very least because that individual is human being regardless of who that person is or what they have or haven't done (steppingthrough.com.au). The respondents still show respect to their stepfamily despite the conflict between their parents and their stepfamilies.

*"Hindi rin(referring to siblings). Kapag may problema man, kay Mama ko lang yun dinidiretso. Hindi rin naman kasi kami(half siblings) palagi nagkikita ng mga kapatid ko kaya hindi rin talaga ganun ka steady ang communication."* (No. If there are problems, I will tell everything directly to

Mama. We rarely see each other that is why we do not have steady communication.)

*Sadam*

*“Kahit nagkita na kami, hindi naman kasi kami close. Kumbaga, respeto yung sa amin kaya nakipagkilala kami.”* (Even though we see each other, we are not really close. It was all out of respect that is why decided to meet with them.)

*Khalil*

Some of the respondents shared that even though they met some of their stepfamily and able to bond with them, their communication with them is rare and they cannot open personal problems with them. They would either keep it with their selves or would go directly to their own family. The casual relationship and a few times of seeing each other makes the respondents have a rare communication with their stepfamily. The casual treatment to each other hinders the respondents to share deep details about them but still show respect to them as the family of their father.

**Only open to mom and siblings.** Another theme that emerged in the experiences of the respondents in their communication patterns is that they are only open to their mother and siblings whom they can share their problems and stories with. Their mothers and siblings were the ones who since childhood supported and cared for them. This situation affirms some written literature about how a constant relationship or people who grew up from childhood to adolescents are the ones you give most of your attention to. “Some relations or interdependence models emphasize the inherent stability of parent-child relationships. In an interdependent relationship, partners engage in mutually influential exchanges and share the perception that their connections are reciprocal and enduring” (Reis, Collins and Berscheid, 2000). The respondents find more comfort in communicating with the persons they grew up with closely.

*“Sa family namin, ang nanay lang namin ang nakakausap talaga namin magkakapatid kasi siya lang din naman ang lagi namin kasama. Sa kanya ako nakakashare ng mga kwento ko pati sa mga kapatid ko. Close kami magkakapatid talaga sa kanya.”* (My mother is the only one we can really talk to because she is the only who’s been there for us ever since. I share my stories to her and to my siblings. We are really close to her, my siblings.)

*Ali*

*“Sa bahay, open relationship naman kami nila Ina and kuya. Maayos naman ang communication namin kasi as much as possible, magtulungan at mag-open kami sa isa’t isa ng mga problema namin or kung may gusto kami i-share sa isa’t isa.”* (I have an open relationship with Ina and Kuya. We have good communication because as much as possible, we will help each other and we are open with each other when it comes to problems or if there are somethings that we want to share.)

*Mariam*

The respondents shared that they only have their mothers and siblings whom they can share their problems with and share their stories. They expressed that it is their mothers that they look up to whenever they have problems and their mothers are the ones whom they talk to most of the time including their siblings. This can be related to the study conducted by the Pervez and Batool (2016) that suggests that mothers are the primary caregivers of children and that their siblings are undertaking the responsibility of the family.

The reality of living with only their mother and siblings makes the respondents feel more comfortable with only their mothers and siblings. For years of living with them as they grow old to make them feel restful and trust their mother and siblings with the happenings in their life, may it be big or small event in their life. These respondents are the ones who grew up with only having their mother and siblings with them that is why they are only used to communicate with them only most of the time. These respondents are the ones whose father failed to portray their role as a father to them where they are left with their mother and siblings when they were growing up.

**Friends are my go-to persons.** The last theme that emerged in the experiences of the respondents in their communication patterns is that in times of need or problems, they would prefer to go to their friends and share their problems with them. That despite the presence of their family, they still choose their friends in order to remove the guilt of adding burden to their family. This kind of situation affirms some written literature about growing children who find comfort in their friends. “Patterns of communication established during childhood are likely to be carried forward into adolescence by both partners, but cognitive advances provide adolescents with a realization that the rules of reciprocity and social exchange that govern with friends are not similar to the interactions with parents” (Youniss, 1980). The amount of comfort that the children get from their parents differ from the ones they get from their friends.

*“Sa totoo lang, mas gusto ko pa i-share ang problema ko sa bestfriend ko and family niya kasi mas makadare pa sila mangamusta sakin kesa sa sarili kong pamilya. Sila yung mga tao na mas pamilya pa ang turing sa akin.”* (Honestly, I would just want to choose to share my problems to my bestfriend and his family because they have more initiative to ask how I am doing than my own family. They are people that made me felt at home.)

*Naida*

*“Honestly po kung may problema ako tulad sa school or personal man, mas nakakashare pa ako sa mga kaibigan ko.”* (Honestly, in times of problems like school or personal, I can mostly share everything to my friends.)

*Rayah*

Some of the respondents shared that they communicate more to their friends when it comes to problems because one reason is that they do not want to be a problem to their family and another reason is that they do not feel any support from their own family that is why they felt the love and support from their friends. According to Degges-White (2018), “When it comes down to it, the people we like to be around are those who make us feel good about who we are, what we believe, and what we enjoy doing. Although not every friend will meet all of those preferences all of the time, the ones who support the aspects of our identities that matter the most are the ones we are most likely to count among our collection of good friends.”

It appears that there are respondents who choose to share with their friends than their own family. The respondents mostly choose to connect and communicate with their friends because they feel more comfortable with them than their own family. They feel that if they share their problems with their family, they will just add on to their family’s problem so they will, as much as possible, share to their friends than their own family and they also feel that they lack support from their family especially their parents that is why they found their home in their friends.

## **Synthesis**

Polygamous marriage is common among Islam families where it is being practiced by the Islam believers due to it being legal in Islam under the rule of Sharia or the Muslim law. Polygamous marriage like monogamous marriage has varying positive and negative experiences for the families. Positive experiences include: provided by parents where even though it is expected for their family to rely on their father, their mother found ways to help their family and provide for their children as well, strong bond with family is also observed to be a positive where despite their family’s situation of having multiple families, they were able to maintain a good relationship with each other, feeling secured with mother and siblings because despite the irresponsibilities of the father, the children were able to find comfort and relief with their mother and siblings who were with them to support and love them all throughout their life and having an open communication also occurred as a positive experience because the children experienced to have a close tie with their family where they were able to have an open communication with them where they were able to share stories and problems with their family.

Literature describes that there are positive experiences, the respondents’ experiences yield negative ones such as not experiencing the conditions of polygamous marriage; being neglected and taken for granted; raised and provided by their mother without the help of their father while some were given a very big responsibility of providing everything on their own because their father passed on everything to them. Negative experiences also include having a weak bonding with their father due to being dominant, strict, having favorites and can only see their father rarely. Likewise, disagreement between wives resulted in the conflict within their family that resulted in some children not living with their father and was solely raised by their mother. There are also negative experiences that occurred in the communication patterns of the children with their family since they do not share a deep conversation with the father because of being dominant, which makes the children feel scared of being open to their father. Moreover, there were respondents who pointed out that their father have favorites, which led to not having a deep conversation between the father and their children.

On the other hand, due to conflicts in the family, the children have rare communication with their stepfamily and only talks to them because of respect and because of being irresponsible of their father, the children are only open to their mother and siblings whom they grew up to be with ever since they were children and because of the conflicts of the children’s parents and disconnection happening inside their home, some would choose to share their problems and communicate with their friends whom they believe understands them more.

It can be gleaned that although polygamous marriage is accepted and widely common among Muslim families, it’s the negative experiences that outweigh the positive. It proves to be detrimental in the growth of the respondents wherein resentment, guilt, shame and jealousy, apathy, hatred, lack of trust is quite evident. Not all families successfully integrate into a blended family. The children suffer the most in this setup and they pay the price for parents who decide to enter into a polygamous one. Polygamy marital structures are underlined through interfamilial

conflicts, parental violence and negative emotions such as jealousy and stress that makes the children progressively vulnerable to psychological dysfunction (Al-Krenawi & Kanat-Maymon, 2017; Patil & Hadley, 2008). Children in polygamous marriage experience different kinds of situation that affects their functioning. In this study, it is evident that although there are positive experiences in the lives of children living in a polygamous marriage, there are more children who experienced the opposite and the effects of these experiences together with their constructs of polygamous marriage will be shown in following pages.

## EFFECTS OF THEIR CONSTRUCTS AND EXPERIENCES IN THEIR PSYCHOSOCIAL FUNCTIONING

This deals with the effects of the respondents' constructs and experiences in their psychosocial functioning. This includes their self-worth, role performances, and relationship to their family. Self-worth refers to how the respondents see or value themselves given their constructs and experiences in polygamous marriage, role performances refers to how the respondents perform their roles in the home; roles towards their father, mother, siblings and stepfamily and relationship with the family refers to how the relationship of the respondents with his or her family members got affected by their constructs and experiences.

According to Skidmore, "Social functioning is the inner and outer forces framework of a person. It is a tool to help the Social Worker explain some of the reasons why individuals may not function well in their environment". It is the person's performing of different roles and these roles are influencing their relationship with other persons and their own feeling of themselves. Also, positive and negative relationship with others may affect their role performance and self-worth. Individual's feeling about him/herself may affect the way he/she perform their roles and the way he/she relate with others. Various studies would show that constructs and experiences may contribute to positive or negative and may affect the individual's functioning. The succeeding part discusses the effects of constructs and experiences in the psychosocial functioning of the children in polygamous marriage.

### Self Worth

**Stayed positive through Islam faith.** One of the themes in the effects of the respondents' constructs and experiences in their self-worth is being positive through their faith in Islam. Despite all the negative impacts of polygamy in their lives, they still found the positive side of their situation through their belief in Islam. Some respondents shared their gratefulness being born in Islam despite their situation. This affirms the written literature of Islam believers who have faith in Allah (s.w.t) that despite their obstacles, still knows that there is good in everything. It was stated in the Holy Qur'an Sural Al-Inshirah, Chapter 94 Verse 5-6 that "With every hardship comes ease". The respondents who are experiencing the negative side of polygamy still find their faith as their way to positive thinking.

*"Thankful ako masyado na I was born in Islam kasi sobrang positive ko lang kahit ganito ang sitwasyon namin ni mama."* (I am so thankful that I was born in Islam because I became very positive despite our situation.)

*Sadam*

*"Siguro sa sitwasyon ko ngayon, I see myself as a thankful being born in Islam kasi naging malawak ang pag-iisip ko at mas naiintindihan ko ang sitwasyon namin."* (In my situation, I see myself as a thankful being born in Islam because I had a wide thinking and understanding about our situation.)

*Samir*

*"Okay basta andyan ang God. Hanggap kaya maging positive, maging positive lang. Kung hindi man maprovide ang responsibilities, ang important ay andyan ang Allah (s.w.t)."* (Okay as long you have God. As much as you can stay positive, be positive. If not all responsibilities can be provided, what is important is that you have Allah (s.w.t))

*Aira*

The respondents expressed their gratefulness of being born in Islam and relying on Allah (s.w.t) despite the happening in their lives being in a polygamous family. They expressed that Islam taught them to be more understanding and patient with their situation and remained positive despite everything. "Religious coping encompasses religiously framed cognitive, emotional, or behavioral responses to stress. It may serve many purposes, including achieving meaning in life, closeness to God, hope, peace, connection to others, self-development, and personal restraint" (Argument, 1997).

It is evident that the respondents still found a positive aspect of their situation despite their experience and remained positive despite their situation and struggles within their family. They are still grateful for having born in Islam that allows polygamy because it teaches them to



be positive and understanding of their situation and hold on to their faith to keep positive with their life's situation.

**Absence of father makes me incomplete.** Another theme that emerged in the effects of the respondents' constructs and experiences in their self-worth is their feeling of longing for their father's love, care and attention makes them incomplete. The situation of the respondents being away from their father and rarely see them, who makes them feel that their father has favorite makes the respondent long for their father. This is in contrast to the written literature where an individual needs to feel protected and loved to in order for an individual to function harmoniously. According to Carl Rogers (1951), an individual needs to be regarded positively by other people where an individual can feel valued, respected, treated with affection and loved. The respondents didn't feel their father's love, care, and attention that resulted in them missing their father and a feeling of being incomplete.

*"Pakiramdam ko ngayon sa sarili ko, incomplete ako. Yung may tatay naman ako pero hindi ko naman maturing na tatay talaga kasi hindi naman kami lagi nagkakasama and mas may time siya sa ibang pamilya niya"* (I feel incomplete. It is like, I have a father but I can't treat him as a father because I rarely see him and he gives more time to his other family.)

Ali

*"I feel incomplete siguro kasi hindi ako lumaki na may tatay. Parang kulang kasi kunwari may pinagdadaanan ako o problema, yung gustong gusto mo mag-share sa magulang mo pero hindi mo magawa."* (I feel incomplete because I didn't grow up having a father figure and my mother isn't always with me. I feel incomplete because in times that I have problems, I always want to share it to my parents but I can't.)

Rayah

The respondents shared that they feel incomplete because they do not have a complete family with them especially due to their father's absence. Although their parents are married, they have a father and mother but they are not in good terms. It affects their feeling of a sense of completeness. They cannot call their family complete because they do not have their father or mother with them. They expressed that even if they wanted to share things with their parents, most of the time, it is impossible to happen because of their parents' conflict. According to Dale (1981), incomplete families that were originally complete may change functioning and homeostasis in a family arising from structural causes. It may involve the loss of a member or a loss of function or change in the role of a member who nevertheless remains present.

The respondents feel incomplete because they didn't grow up having their father with them that even though their father is still alive, they do not share time with each other most of the time and just see each other rarely which hurts them and make them feel incomplete because there are instances that they need their father's support but they cannot have it and it also makes the respondents have the feeling of low self-esteem because they feel that they are not complete knowing that they cannot spend much time with their father because their father give much of their attention to their other family and ignore their needs. This feeling also was the result of their parents' quarrel and conflict, which makes their mothers, chose to live separately from their father and only allows them to see their father rarely. Having to grow without their father with them can greatly affect their development as they grow older. There can possibly more changes when they experience growing having their father with them and can feel the love, care, and attention that they are longing for.

**Father's irresponsibility affects my view of other men.** Another theme that emerged in the effects of the respondents' constructs and experiences in their self-worth is having a different view of men due to father's irresponsibility. The experiences of the respondents greatly affect their view of other men and their interpersonal relationships. This affirms some written literature that children in polygamous marriage tend to have more interpersonal problems than the ones in monogamous. According to Elbedour, Bart, and Hektner (2003), "Children from polygamous households face greater difficulties in socializing and interpersonal relationships when compared to their counterparts from monogamous households". Respondents became frightened of socializing and committing because of their experiences with their father who became irresponsible.

*"Dahil sa pagiging iresponsable ng tatay ko sa amin na pinabayaan niya kami, naging man hater ako. Takot ako magcommit kasi baka mangyari sa akin ang ginawa ng tatay ko"* (Due to my anger towards my fathers because of his irresponsibilities, I became a man hater. I'm afraid to commit because I might experience the same thing my father did to us)

Mariam

The respondents whose fathers became irresponsible of their obligations to them made a big impact on how they view other men that resulted to be frightened of committing to any man because of the thought of possibly experiencing the same thing that their father did to them. According to Bob Alabudra, on the effects of the relationship of a person to his or her father to his

romantic relationship, one of the hardest parts is de-emphasizing the father's influence over the impression of men.

For the respondents whose fathers became irresponsible of their obligations to them resulted to being a man-hater and being frightened to commit to other men because their father didn't portray their role as a father to them by taking them for granted, by not showing care and for being the reason of their parents' gap and misunderstanding which makes the respondents think that they might possibly experience the same thing. According to Mackey (2001), the relationship of a father and child is a unique bond and attachment. And this can be one of the most important and influential relationships in a child's life (Rohner and Veneziano, 2001). Having to grow without their father with them can greatly affect their development as they grow older.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The socio-demographic profile of the children aged 15-24 years old in a polygamous marriage in Cotabato City consists of ten (10) respondents where five (5) are male and five (5) are female and all of them are Islam by religion, single and still living with their family. Most of the respondents are from Maguindanaon tribe and the highest educational attainment of the six (6) respondents was college graduate and half of them are students and half of them are working in government and private companies. More than half of the respondents belong to a number of three (3) marriages and half of the respondents belong to the first family.

The overarching theme in the respondents' constructs in a polygamous marriage is being legal in Islam to marry up to four wives but with conditions such as equal treatment to all family, equal provision to all family and equal emotional support for each member of the family. This is the rule on how polygamous marriage should be implemented in Islam by the Sharia or Muslim Law. But on the other hand, there is another theme that emerged in constructs of the respondents about polygamy which having one mate at the same which is supported by the general definition of polygamy where a person is polygamous when he or she is having one spouse at the same time.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The respondents' definition of polygamous marriage mostly came from the meaning of polygamous marriage in Islam where all of the respondents belong to but there are also some who defined polygamous based on the general meaning of polygamy where a person is having more than one spouse or mate at the same.
2. Findings show that most of the respondents didn't experience the conditions of polygamy because of their father's irresponsibility which resulted in conflicts among parents and affected their relationship with their father.
3. The respondents grew up only having their mother and siblings with them which resulted in the distant relationship of the respondents to their father and feel more comfortable with just having their mothers and siblings with them
4. Father's neglect, being unsupportive, dominant, unexpressive and having favorites made the gap between him and their children.
5. Regardless of the order of marriage, a child came from, they share the same pain with regards to their family's situation.
6. The respondents try to hide and keep everything on their own to protect their mothers and siblings.
7. The respondents still remained positive and understanding because of the knowledge they gained from Islam.
8. The respondents still respect their stepfamily regardless of the conflicts and disagreement of their family.

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