



## ***Duway: An Inquiry on the Psychosocial Wellbeing of Tagakaolo Women in Polygamous Marriage***

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### **ABSTRACT**

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Polygamous marriage involves a husband having the right to choose multiple wives in addition to their first marriage. In the Tagakaolo tribe, men are allowed to choose multiple wives after an agreed-upon dowry, leading the women as passive recipients of this practice. Hence, this qualitative phenomenological study aimed to uncover the lived experiences, psychosocial well-being, and insights of these women. By using the in-depth interviews and FGD guided by a semi-structured interview guide, this study gathered data from a total of twelve (12) Tagakaolo women, selected purposively. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis to unravel themes. The findings revealed three (3) themes in the lived experience of study participants on polygamous marriage: crying in silence, getting used to the "Duway" practice, and abiding with the customs and traditions. The psychosocial well-being of the participants is also described by the following themes: embracing the situation as brought by fate, practicing open communication solves issues, and maintaining a passive attitude. As for the insights, these themes emerged: communication is the lifeline of a relationship, polygamous marriage is never easy, and polygamous marriage is only amiable if with agreement in writing. The findings imply that while polygamy is respected and honored by the Tagakaolo Tribe, it has detrimental implications on women's psychological, social, and emotional well-being.

### **KEYWORDS:**

social studies, polygamous marriage, tagakaolo tribe, lived experiences, phenomenology, Philippines  
**SDG Indicator:** #4 (*Quality Education*); # 5 (*Gender Equality*); #11 (*Sustainable Cities and Communities*)

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Polygamy is practiced in various cultures worldwide, with some societies embracing it while others prohibit or regulate it. Among the different forms of polygamy, polygyny—where a man has multiple wives—is the most common. The prevalence of polygamous marriages is often influenced by social class, cultural traditions, and ecological factors (Zeitzen, 2020). In certain regions, legal frameworks permit polygamy due to deeply rooted cultural norms. However, research has highlighted significant psychological and health-related concerns associated with polygamous unions. Studies conducted in Egypt, Kuwait, the Palestinian territories, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey indicate that women in polygamous marriages often experience heightened stress, anxiety, and emotional distress.

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These marriages can contribute to mental health challenges, family conflicts, and unequal treatment among spouses, ultimately affecting the overall well-being of the individuals involved (Sinai & Peleg, 2020; Lemelson & Tucker, 2021).

For instance, in the country of India, polygamous practice has received critical evaluations pertaining to the psychological significance of a family (Naseer et al., 2021). In their study, Naseer et al. (2021) revealed that women in polygamous marriages have significantly higher rates of dysthymia, posttraumatic stress disorder, somatic symptom disorder, and panic disorder than in other groups (Bahari, 2021). Sinai and Peleg (2020) and Jumlaail (2023) highlighted that social isolation in polygamous marriages leads to emotional neglect, jealousy, and psychological distress due to a lack of support networks.

In the Philippines, it has been widely accepted among the Muslims of the country to practice polygamy. Polygyny, wherein a man has multiple wives simultaneously, is not a widespread practice in Philippine culture. However, it is observed among the Muslim community in accordance

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with Shari'ah or Islamic Law. Another tribe that practices polygyny is the Manobos, and in accordance with a man's wealth, polygyny is a common practice (Barodi, 2021). As Breger and Hill (2021) stated, marriage is an existence between a man and a woman who meets the criteria included in the marriage rule. Based on the definition of marriage, marriage is a bond of allegiance between a man and woman in which there is a responsibility to each other. Moreover, those who deviate from the rule of one man and woman in a marriage are considered polygamous.

In giving light to the concept of polygamy, it can be more concisely defined as a form of marriage in which one person has multiple spouses at the same time or maintains a close relationship with different women. Polygamy refers to social anthropology, sociobiology, and sociology as allowing one to mate with two or more partners (Gyanwali & Dhakal, 2024). Furthermore, polygamous marriages in Israel involve a man marrying two women, although some men marry three or four women (Sinai & Peleg, 2021). Since Shari'ah law permits a man to have multiple wives, it is allowed as long as he can equally fulfill the economic and emotional needs of all spouses and their children. In contrast, Israeli law considers polygamy a criminal offense, punishable by up to five years in prison under Section 176 of the Criminal Code (1977).

About 350 million Indigenous people live in over 70 countries across six continents, accounting for approximately 5 percent of the world population, representing more than 5000 languages and cultures. Most of the 12 million Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines reside in the uplands they claim as part of their traditional territories (Estrada et al., 2022).

To continue, maintaining customary laws may be essential to maintaining the indigenous peoples' cultural heritage and knowledge systems. Indigenous peoples worldwide have repeatedly argued that any legal framework to protect their information must be based on their customs (Lingaas, 2022). Such practices include customs and traditions that are not recorded or documented. However, there has not been any research and literature discussing the perspectives and concerns of individuals belonging to such groups.

Furthermore, this study focuses on the Tagakaolo tribe, an indigenous people of the Philippines. Every culture has traditions, customs, or beliefs transmitted from generation to generation. The Tagakaolo are lumads from Mindanao who belong to the Kalagan community affiliated with the Mandaya/Mansaka Davao Occidental; Davao del Sur and the Sarangani Province are their traditional territories, particularly in the localities of Malungon of the Sarangani Province and Talaguton Rivers, Lais, Sta. Maria, Malalag, and Malita of Davao Occidental, hence their name Tagakaolo, meaning "inhabitants of headwater (olo sa tubig) or sources of rivers and streams (Ragsag, 2020).

Also, acknowledged in the ILO Convention No. 169 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the right of indigenous peoples to preserve their customary laws and systems remains a somewhat unexplored topic in legal literature. Indigenous customary laws rooted in the culture and traditions of Indigenous peoples form an integral and essential part of their way of life and identity. Today, as they maintain their cultural practices and customs, the indigenous communities in the nation reside in their original ancestral lands. Although the Philippine government passed the 1997 Aboriginal Peoples' Rights Act, there are still unresolved problems, including their right to inclusion (Doyle, 2020).

Each tribe has the right to uphold its traditions and beliefs. In Muslim and Islamic wedding customs, various rites and practices, such as dowry-giving and polygamous marriages, are widely observed (Khan, 2024). Similarly, the Tagakaolo tribe follows these traditions. However, as awareness of mental health issues grows, concerns about the psychological and social effects of polygamy have emerged. Abd Razak et al. (2020) noted that a wife's distress does not always signify an abusive marriage, as open communication and structured scheduling among co-wives can contribute to a more stable household. Nonetheless, Lemelson and Tucker (2021) pointed out that in many cultures, adherence to tradition often takes precedence over personal aspirations for justice and equality, as seen in the silent acceptance of Tagakaolo women in polygamous unions. Gadban and Goldner (2020) further explored how cultural norms shape women's passive acceptance of their circumstances, a reality often reinforced by societal expectations.

Polygamy has profound cultural, social, economic, and political origins, a dynamic phenomenon resulting from power relations. This practice continues and is related to women's mental health, although it has been banned in many countries. As a husband-wife relationship involving many women, polygamy arises. The most popular type is polygyny, in which more than one woman marries a man. If the first wife is infertile, if she is physically or mentally ill, or if she is unable to meet her husband's sexual needs, a man may marry a second wife. In order to strengthen his family and his position in certain cultures, the husband will choose a new wife (or many wives) to increase the number of his sons. Even in a food-balanced society, women are often positively associated with men's class, wealth, or good whiteness and strength. This situation is expected to affect the behavior and relationships of family members.

In addition, polygamy is not imposed by Islam, nor is it a common practice. This is considered an excellent place to practice monogamy. Muslims regard polygamy as a system and should only be used under the most necessary conditions. The Code of Muslim Personal Laws of the Philippines stipulates the rule of Filipino Muslim marriage: to face each

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other in an egalitarian society and be treated fairly according to Islamic law, only in special circumstances.

Thus, maintaining customary laws may be essential to maintaining the indigenous peoples' cultural heritage and knowledge systems. Indigenous peoples worldwide have repeatedly argued that any legal framework to protect their information must be based on their customs (Lingaas, 2022). Moreover, as any tribe is entitled to its traditions and beliefs, Muslim marriage and Islamic wedding customs are rites and practices that refer to the Muslim world's prevalent wedding ceremonies and marriage rituals, such as the giving of dowry and polygamous marriages (Khan, 2024). In relation, the Tagakaolo tribe practices the same.

In another study, Gadban and Goldner (2020) and Al-Krenawi (2021) concluded that women in polygamous marriages are less happy, have a lower perception of themselves, and experience more excellent isolation. Another is the uneven distribution of emotion and husbands' funding for wives, a significant cause of family struggles and stresses. Polygamous families have also been shown to be vulnerable to emotional challenges, tension, anxiety, and vulnerability. Polygamy is often correlated with a higher risk of poor mental well-being for women, irrespective of their socioeconomic status and education. Social assistance tends to have positive effects (Daou et al., 2020).

A study by Alhuzail (2020) offers a pioneering perspective on the emotional impact experienced by adolescent girls whose fathers have taken a second wife. The findings provide insight into parent-child relationships within the context of marriage, separation, and family restructuring. Additionally, the study highlights family conflicts that contribute to stress among family members. Three coping patterns among adolescent girls are identified, shedding light on how young women in patriarchal traditional societies may begin to challenge long-standing and widely accepted family practices. The study also proposes macro, mezzo, and micro-interventions.

Moreover, Abd Razak et al. (2020) examined the quality and satisfaction of family members in polygamous marriages in Malaysia, identifying six key themes: greater appreciation and understanding, the application of knowledge in household activities, positive interactions between wives and co-wives, mutual respect for opinions, patience in understanding spouses and co-wives, and children's expectations for their fathers to provide guidance and effective family management. The study concluded that polygamous marriages can foster marital quality and psychological well-being when harmony is actively maintained. Similarly, Abd Razak et al. (2021) explored relationship patterns in polygamous families, interviewing six families and highlighting themes such as warmth and rejuvenation in relationships, multi-way communication, and decision-making, valuing open conversations, feeling well-

treated when comparisons are avoided, maintaining close relationships, and fair and friendly treatment. These findings challenge the perception that polygamous families are inherently dysfunctional, instead suggesting that they can foster strong, positive relationships, sometimes even surpassing those in monogamous marriages.

Furthermore, Al-Sharfi et al. (2020) explored the dynamics of parent-adolescent relationships, psychological well-being, and behavioral issues among adolescents in polygamous families in Saudi Arabia. The findings revealed that in comparison to those from monogamous families, adolescents in polygamous households experienced lower levels of parental care from both fathers and mothers, as well as reduced self-esteem and life satisfaction. They also exhibited higher rates of depression, bullying, and victimization. Moreover, perceptions of parental care, particularly from both parents, were found to influence self-esteem, life satisfaction, and depression significantly. In contrast, motherly care specifically played a role in experiences of victimization.

Moreover, Rahmanian et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis to examine the relationship between marriage type (polygamous and monogamous) and the prevalence of mental health issues. The findings revealed a significant link between marriage type and psychological symptoms, with women in polygamous marriages experiencing poorer mental health compared to those in monogamous unions. However, the study also noted higher self-esteem and life satisfaction among women in polygamous marriages, while family functioning was found to be statistically stronger among women in monogamous marriages. Despite these differences, the two groups had no significant variation in marital satisfaction. The results align with existing research on the mental health challenges faced by women in polygamous marriages. However, they also suggest that these women may experience increased self-esteem and life satisfaction compared to their monogamous counterparts.

In the Philippines, there has been little to no literature discussing polygamy and its effects on the psychosocial well-being of tribal women involved. In relation, however, there have been lawmakers, some belonging to IP groups, reinforcing the legalizations and giving protection against being sued for polygamy (Barodi, 2021). Sumagka et al. (2016) explored the experiences of Muslim children living in multi-married families in the Philippines. There are four themes experienced by Muslim children in multiple marriages, namely: pain and suffering, satisfaction and happiness, tolerance, and economic austerity (as cited by Macabangon, 2022). It is worth noting that literature on polygamy among Indigenous peoples in the country is not lacking, though much of it, such as Sumagka et al. (2016), is already dated.

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The present study aimed to explore lived experiences of Tagakaolo women in polygamous marriage in Davao Occidental including their psychosocial wellbeing and insights. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions: (1) What are the lived experiences of Tagakaolo women in polygamous marriage?; (2) What are psychosocial wellbeing coping mechanisms of Tagakaolo women engaged in polygamous marriage?; (3) What insights can be shared by the Tagakaolo women who experienced polygamous marriage?

Furthermore, Mindanao is a melting pot of diverse cultures in the country. In particular, the Tagakaolo, or what they called "Tagakaulu Kalagan," were not introduced to Islam until Muslim missionaries arrived in the area during the 1500s. About half of the entire group of Kalagan came under Islamic influence at that time, and the group divided. Most of the Tagakaolo became Muslims; however, most of the Tagakaulu Kalagan remained animists (believe that non-human objects have spirits). Today, many are still ethnic religionists, believing in the traditions and religions of their forefathers. Tagakaolo tribe now has been locally recognized to practice polygyny, a type of polygamy wherein a man is allowed to marry multiple wives since they have been introduced to Islamic Law. It is called "Duway," which means that a man can legally have two or more wives. Although the practice of pagduway (having two wives) is permitted within the tribe, it is only allowed if the first wife consents. Without her approval, the husband cannot pursue duway (taking a second wife). Additionally, a man who wishes to have two wives must have the financial means to support them and their children, providing for their essential needs (The Initiative PH, 2018). However, in general, there have been limited amounts of papers and literature discussing polygamous marriages among the diverse tribes of the country.

The theory of patriarchy also serves as the foundation of this study, in which Brooker (2003) defines patriarchy as the form of male fathers or patriarchs. All other people, including male images, belong to them. It is synonymous with "sexual discrimination"; it refers to the general treatment of women; it refers to the evaluation system and family organization; it refers to systemic inequality in employment opportunities, fashion recruitment, and wages; it refers to women with dangerous diseases. Social conditions, health and childcare conditions, and literature supporting data from the represented arts and media sectors reinforce these conditions. The system can then explain the behavior of men and women, leading to inequality between men and women (Lips, 2019).

This theory can be explained by relating it to the patriarchal society wherein the head of the family is the man. At the same time, women are expected to support their families. In terms of polygamous marriage, the man has two

or more wives, which may or may not have effects on the psychosocial well-being of women since they need to have equal love, care, and support from the head of the family, which is the man. This is like what the present study intends to unveil, which is whether polygamous marriages have effects on how IP women feel about their roles in the family since there is more than one wife who will take care of the well-being of all members of the family. Hence, this study seeks to investigate how they feel and how their relationship works with this kind of setup.

This study holds global significance as it aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG Indicators #4 (Quality Education), #5 (Gender Equality), and #11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). Exploring the psychosocial well-being of Tagakaolo women in polygamous marriages addresses gender equality by highlighting their struggles and coping mechanisms. It also contributes to education by offering a deeper understanding of the cultural and social implications of polygamous unions, fostering awareness, and providing educational institutions with relevant insights into the lived realities of Indigenous women. Additionally, this research can support efforts to build stronger and more inclusive communities by guiding policymakers and organizations in developing culturally appropriate programs and interventions that promote the well-being of Indigenous women in such marital arrangements.

On a social level, the study is valuable to the Tagakaolo community, women in polygamous marriages, local government units, educational institutions, and future researchers. It provides a space for Tagakaolo women to share their experiences, allowing their voices to be recognized and their realities to be better understood. By documenting their psychosocial well-being and coping strategies, the research raises awareness within the community and encourages the development of support systems that enhance their quality of life. The local government can use the study's findings to create policies and programs that address the concerns of Indigenous women in polygamous marriages, ensuring their protection and welfare. Furthermore, educational institutions and researchers may use this study as a reference to gain a deeper understanding of how cultural traditions shape marital dynamics and their effects on women's well-being, paving the way for further discussions and solutions to related social issues.

## II. METHOD

This study utilized a qualitative design, which was primarily phenomenology. This approach used individuals' lived experiences of the phenomena (Creswell, 2013). It also focused on research questions such as what it was like to experience a specific event as researchers tried to interpret these life experiences of human life (Bloor & Wood, 2006).



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Further, qualitative research design refers to a study allowing in-depth investigation into real-world scenarios (Tenny et al.,2022). Qualitative research is exploratory or interrogative and tries to get “under the surface.” The aim is to gather insights into how people live, what they do, how they use things, or what they need in their everyday or professional lives (Government Design Service Manual, 2016).

The study adopted a phenomenological approach, which, in basic terms, is a research method aimed at capturing the essence of a phenomenon by examining it through the perspectives of individuals who have personally experienced it (Teherani et al., 2015). The primary objective of phenomenology is to articulate the meaning of an experience, considering both the nature of the experience itself and how it is perceived. Also, the phenomenological methodology is one of the widely used designs in social sciences because of its potential to draw into the experiences of a topic of interest as they live in the world (Neubauer et al.,2019; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In data gathering, the researcher observed appropriate behavior to avoid harm and distress to the respondents. The researcher will first seek permit to conduct the study to the Graduate school in which he was enrolled in. After securing permission to conduct study, the researcher crafted the proposal of the study which entitled, “Duway: Psychosocial Wellbeing of Tagakaolo Women in Polygamous Marriage in Davao Occidental” which will be submitted to the research panel for appropriate critiques and revisions. Then, after revising the proposal given by the research panel, the researcher crafted the interview sheet which was used in gathering data needed in this study. This interview sheet subject for validation of experts in the field which includes the research validator designated by the Graduate School.

After validating the interview sheet, the researcher selected and choose participants of the study which purposive sampling technique was utilized. Letter to the participants of the study seeking permission to participate in this study will be given prior the interview proper. The researcher set schedule for interview among the participants of the study to have an organize way of gathering the data from the participants.

Before the interview, the researcher ensured the following: (1) Secure an approved and recommendation letter from the National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP) office, the tribal chieftain of Tagakaolo tribe in barangay Pinalpalan and the LGUs in the locale to seek opinion, permission to conduct interview with the participants and involve IP specifically Tagakaolo women in this study. (2) Privacy of the respondents. (3) Discuss the topic, the content and the survey for understanding (4) Provide an interview consent form. (5) Inform the respondents that documentation like video and audio recording is part of data gathering. In

getting the data needed in this study, the researcher oriented the respondents about the study and asking for their consent before gathering information to them. A minimum of 30 minutes and maximum of 2 hours will be set for each of the participants in interview process. The researcher read first a written consent statement along with the permission to conduct an interview and observation again before starting the interview. The interview sheet will serve as a guide for researcher in asking questions. After the interview, the researcher will allow the participants to choose their pseudonym.

The participants of the study were twelve (12) Tagakaolo women from the Municipality of Malita, Davao Occidental. To gather the necessary information for assessing their psychosocial well-being, the study employed purposive sampling techniques. The In-depth interviews were composed of five (5) participants and seven (7) for the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), a range of five (5) to twenty-five (25) informants should suffice as data saturation is reached in phenomenological research.

According to Nyimbili and Nyimbili (2024), purposive sampling was a non-probability sampling method in which participants were intentionally selected based on specific characteristics and their ability to provide rich, detailed information relevant to the study. Also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, this technique was the most effective in ensuring the inclusion of Tagakaolo women in polygamous marriages, given their limited number. By focusing on "information-rich" cases, purposive sampling allowed the researcher to obtain meaningful insights and draw well-grounded conclusions about the participants' lived experiences.

Moreover, audio equipment was utilized to record all data during in-depth interviews, ensuring that every detail of the conversation was accurately preserved. This enabled the researcher to review the recordings as needed for further understanding or clarification.

### III. RESULTS

**Crying in silence.** To be married in a polygamous marriage, where the husband has multiple wives, leaves the “duwaya” in emotional turmoil. These women, feeling helpless, and jealous over their husband's interaction with other wives could only express it by crying silently. This experience seems to be a common experience among the duwayas as evident in their narratives.

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**Table 1. Themes on the Lived Experiences of Tagakaolo Women in Polygamous Marriage**

Themes	Core Ideas
<b>Crying in silence</b>	I just hide and cry
	I cry every time see him with his first wife
	It hurts, I would hide and cry
	I just listen and cry
	Feeling jealous I cry
<b>Abiding with the customs and tradition</b>	We accept the “duway” marriage with dowry
	Tribal leaders officiate arrangements between parties
	Arrangements and schedules as to where the husband stays are followed
	There are leaders in between
	We are arranged through the help of the leaders
<b>Getting used to the “Duway” practice</b>	It is normal for men to have more than one wife
	When in a “duway” marriage, it is difficult at first only
	That is how we do it, we accept it as a practice
	We accept the “duway” marriage as many of us here are like that
	I accepted it especially since I have kids

Based on the narratives of Amelia, second wife. Albeit no quarrel or conflicts with the first wife whenever the husband and his first wife would have their scheduled visits or stay at their house alone, she could do nothing to prevent it. In response, she would just cry and keep it to herself.

In a similar situation is Emma, who became a duwaya at 18 to 19 years old with her first husband, and second wife to her current husband, voluntarily participating in a polygamous marriage. She was invited into a polygamous marriage after her first husband died, and to find support she accepted. In the marriage, she was but a wife from another house by which the first wife takes command of the amount and the time she must spend with their husband. Hence, like Amelia, Emma's life with her current situation has only been the constant and silent cries for attention, care, and intimacy of her husband for her and her children.

In addition, another participant, Theresa, has a physically aggressive husband, from lack of emotional and insufficient financial support crying in silence is an almost daily experience. In situations where she attempted to seek her husband's attention and ears to render her needs met, she

was faced with aggression. Feeling helpless and lacking of family to seek assistance from, she lived in a chaotic household while sharing her husband with another.

**Abiding with the customs and tradition.** In the Tagakaolo tribe, polygamous marriage is a respected tradition by the elders. It is a known practice among its tribesmen which the government and its constituents have come to accept and live by. Expectedly, the narratives of the participants of this study participants can be seen as products and a subject of the elder's rigid obedience to their traditions. By which either some are forced by circumstances to enter the marriage, and some are guided by strong hands to marry. Most of these women have been forced into marriage since they were 15-16 years old. By now has been in the same situation for more than five years.

In all of the participants, part of Tagakaolo's polygamous marriage is the dowry or the monetary provision to the woman's family. In all of the participants, a dowry given indicates that a man has the right to decide to keep his wife. Unless the wife is capable of returning the dowry or returning the dowry the full amount to the husband, it is only then can she be allowed to be separated from the husband.

Further, Carmelita also explicitly narrated that polygamous marriage is a difficult situation to be in. Regardless, it is considered part of the culture and traditions of the tribe hence it is clear why despite protests on participating, it is the elders or the other members of the tribe, even your family can force the women of the tribe to participate.

Moreover, there is a need to point difference between simply abiding by customs and traditions as compared to getting used to polygamous marriage. All of the participants of this study are following their tribe's customs and traditions, even the husbands themselves. All followed through the process of dowry and the women who must be with their husbands after it is given. For example, Belinda, who has had her first husband, although dedicated to his first husband, when she was bought out by another who was interested in her, as soon as proper dowry amount was provided, she became his duwaya and left the first husband.

**Getting used to the “Duway” practice.** Most of the participants, particularly those who have been introduced to polygamy in their early years, have come to terms with their lives. During the interviews, the most noticeable observed behavior among these women is their breath of surrender over their situations. Getting used or feelings of acceptance and surrendering to their faith in the absence of ways to get away from the situation is most commonly observed from their narratives. To some extent, the lack of emotional support from their husband is also common and they simply surrender as it is part of their culture, and the men are not obligated to them as "duwayas".

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**Table 2. Themes on the Coping Mechanism to Maintain Psychosocial Well-being of Tagakaolo Women in Polygamous Marriage**

Themes	Core Ideas
<b>Embracing the situation as brought by fate</b>	Because this is life for us...
	I have accepted this fate
	At first, I didn't want to, but because this is my fate, so now, I accepted it.
	This is life, maybe this is my fate
	Just accept what life gave us...
<b>Practicing open communication solves issues</b>	Hard at first, but later, because this is life and fate, okay then
	If my husband and I fight, we talk about it, just the two of us as not to worsen the fight.
	Talk and discuss things to solve the problems
	When we fight, the first wife says, we just talk about it.
	The first wife advises them not to fight but instead, just talk about things
<b>Maintaining passive attitude</b>	If you just talk, the problem can be solved
	Even if it is difficult, it is okay
	He said I can't leave. Okay then
	Happy even if it is difficult
	I just follow what my husband says
	Even if there are not enough resources, still it is okay

For instance, Risa entered a polygamous marriage at 15 years old, had a deceased child, with her first husband deceased, and lived alone. While grieving for the child, their family followed a schedule for their husband's visits, lack of mention of any opportunity or time spent with her while grieving for her child. Upon being asked a question about her perception of it. In addition, Delia, 3<sup>rd</sup> wife, entered a polygamous marriage when she was 18 years old. The participants were asked about a point where there might have been physically aggressive encounters with their husbands or if they did reach a point into arguments where they wanted to live separately.

During the interviews, Delia was quite open about sharing her experiences. Casually talks about her husband's wives, their situation, and their well-being. Although Delia showed openness to experience, her statement indicated evidence of being accustomed to her situation to the point of helplessness in the fruit of having children with her husband.

This same experience is further elaborated by Carmelita's statement.

Carmelita is a second wife and she entered a polygamous marriage at 15 years old. Her narratives delivered that she was invited by the first wife of the husband into the marriage. She was a minor, promised by the first wife that she would be treated fairly and cared for as per her husband's request. Upon receiving a dowry of sixty (60) thousand pesos Carmelita and her family agreed to have her as a duwaya to the husband. From her statement, she implied feeling hurt but at the same time indicated that it is the man's will that is followed in deciding whether a polygamous marriage will be made or not. Over time, Carmelita could only acclimate to her situation.

**Embracing the situation as brought by fate.** In the previous section of this study, the most common experiences of the participants include getting used to their experiences as a duwaya. In relation, this theme reflects the psychological and emotional surrender of the participants to their situations. For the narratives, these women have anchored their experiences as being brought by fate, an arbitrary factor that they believe has led them to polygamous marriage. It is unknown whether this is about their ages, their perspective in life had shifted or could be associated with a coping mechanism that has allowed them to experience their situation to its fullest.

For instance, Delia referred to her daughter's age as a reference for her time spent with her husband and then referred to fate. Implicitly, Delia's life can be summed up as her life with her husband as a duwaya and bearing a child, raising that child, and remaining in that situation even today, she has embraced it fully. Similarly, Belinda attributed her ongoing relationship and life with her husband to fate as well. Believing that in all the difficulties and challenges that they have faced, even reaching the point of supposed separation yet remain together still.

From the statements above, it can be understood that the participants have not expressed any dislike or blame against fate. During the interviews, neither of the participants expressed grievance about how their lives turned out to be. Emotional and psychologically, these women found comfort in the belief that their lives are written as it is, and such a journey is preordained for them. This is also among the mechanisms that let them embrace more readily the consequences of living in a polygamous marriage though reluctant and unsure.

**Practicing open communication solves issues.** Marriage as a whole, regardless if it's monogamous or polygamous deals with marital issues, a more common source of conflicts arises from finances. Moreso, with polygamous marriages, the duwayas do not only deal with their husbands and children, but they also deal and interact with the first wives. Fortunately, with the participants of this study, their

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obedience to their customs and traditions also tugs along with their marital duties. Amelia said that in times when conflicts arise, she and her husband talk about it. This is even more elaborated from Belinda's statement. However, to practice open communication or to speak with another about their issues is not enough. Delia regarded that communications must be spoken with tact. To speak with the husband or with the first wife, either party should be responsible and sensitive in their words.

In addition to that, to communicate how they feel about each other's actions must also be said only between the husband and the wife. This is to not worsen the topic by other's words or interference. Communicating with each other should be done if both parties would seek to keep their marriage going.

**Maintaining a passive attitude.** Based on the experiences of the participants of this study, apparent passive attitude towards their customs and traditions, even towards the demands of the husband is apparent. Upon further investigation of their narratives, these women have also taken part in perpetuating their situations. Importantly, these factors are not limited to conscious motivations.

Risa, the second wife, invited to polygamous marriage at 15 years old is among the participants of the study. They had two children, and one is deceased. After the death of her child, his husband has let her live separately from him. The husband supports their remaining child and still visits her based on their schedule. But despite not living together, the man still considers her as a wife. Risa was asked if she was happy with her situation, for which she answered casually.

From Risa's narrative, she anchors on her husband's decision, she does nothing more to alleviate the situation as well. An act supporting the maintenance of the situation, although unwanted or unpleasant, she continues to depend on her husband's decisions. In the course of the interviews, Risa also failed to share any inputs on actions potentially separating or even to sway her husband's decisions.

In a similar situation is Leni's, a second wife and became a duwaya at 15 years old. As compared to others, Leni withdraws back to her parents in times when she is unable to tolerate jealousy over her first wife and when feeling helpless about the decision-making in their household. The husband courted her parents to ask for her hand as a duwaya, and Leni followed through with her parents' wishes much like a passive observer to the parties deciding her situation. Leni referenced her future, and her children's future to justify the lack of actions taken to remove herself from the unpleasant situation.

**Communication is the lifeline of a relationship.** The participants of this study although reluctant and unsure about being a duwaya at first. It did not prevent them from finding ways to better their relationship with their husband and to become a good mother. Based on their narratives and

insights, it can be derived that communication is the lifeline of their relationship both with their husband and the other duwaya, and the first wife.

On the experiences of Belinda, her communication with his husband maintains their good relationship. It makes her understand how her husband feels about her as she shares her pain and experiences with him. "Lifeline" in this aspect refers to the fundamental capability of the participants to gain control over their situation, not as a whole but at least an aspect of it, ensuring a positive outcome. Good communication with their husbands ensures a harmonious and stable relationship, albeit intimate or fulfilling connection.

**Table 3. Themes on the Insights of Tagakaolo Women on Polygamous Marriage**

Themes	Core Ideas
<b>Communication is the lifeline of a relationship</b>	I talk to my husband
	We talk about it.
	we talk about it, just the two of us as not to worsen the fight.
	When we fight, the first wife mediates and talks to us
<b>Polygamous marriage is never easy</b>	Life is very difficult
	It is unfair sometimes because you have to follow
	The first wife income of the husband to be shared
	Sometimes, my husband beats me, I am locked up.
	Too many children to provide by the husband...
<b>Polygamous marriage is only amiable if with agreement in writing</b>	It is only fair if there is an agreement
	Only okay, when with the agreement
	It has advantages if agreed upon beforehand
	I was young then, no agreement was made, hence issues arise
	My husband beats me, but we don't have the agreement

**Polygamous marriage is never easy.** Societal at large agrees in describing that marriage is a challenging experience, this is especially true for those involved in it. In polygamous marriages, duwayas suffer in living by sharing their husband's time, attention, and finances with the first wife. This is both psychologically and emotionally draining, even to some, physically devastating. In the investigation of the narratives, the participants all shared the same perspective and insights into polygamous marriage within the tribe. It was



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probed when the participants were asked about whether they would suggest polygamous marriage to others, to their children, or if they would want to go through it again.

From the statement of the participants, there was an emphasis on regret, even the idea of going through the same situation again is unbearable. To be a *duwaya* is difficult as it is, having to deal with the first wife and the husband, and life as a whole. During the interviews, the participants have expressed to never again go through the same situation if it were possible. But emphasis must be placed on the individual experiences, polygamous marriage itself is a difficult situation for the women in the tribe, it hampers their ability to as a woman to decide for themselves, and to chase better opportunities for their children.

Polygamous marriage is part of their customs and traditions, but for their children, sisters, and granddaughters, neither would want them to be in the same situation. The participants were passionate about their acquired insights, as they shared them with the researcher-interviewer. Importantly, there was an acknowledgment of the potential removal of this practice in the tribe to widen their future generation's options, but others also expressed that the journey to this might not be easy as it has been practiced for decades and even centuries in the tribe.

**Polygamous marriage is only amiable if with agreement in writing.** In the tribe, polygamous marriage follows a process, though no rituals are performed, it must follow a process for the union to be accepted in the tribe or be called *duway*. In all of the participants, *duway* is possible after a *dowry* is decided, the amount is provided, and a written agreement is exchanged between the parties in the presence of elders of the tribe and representatives of the government. After that, forfeit of the dowry can only done under conditions set in the agreement. Carmelita emphasized this process.

For example, in Amelia's experience, a written agreement states that at a point where the husband would become physically aggressive towards her, the dowry would be doubled and the Amelia would be returned to her parents. Furthermore, much like the participants' obedience to their customs and traditions, and to their husbands, men are obligated to follow the written agreement. Regardless of the content or its provisions, it becomes a legal agreement witnessed by the tribe leaders and the government thereof, which must be followed.

### IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the *duwayas* or the second wives, of the study have common lived experiences that are true to all. The participants subconsciously deal with their situations, surrendering to fate, alleviating and trying to live with it by finding ways to better the situation such as practicing open communications, some

even unknowingly maintain passivity to the point of dependence.

The findings of this study played a pivotal role in probing into the lives of Tagakaolo women in polygamous marriages. To be specific, this study has given a glimpse of their experience, a walkthrough of their womanhood, life as a wife, a mother, and a member of their tribe. I believe these findings are highly relevant in the provision of appropriate psychosocial interventions, and women empowerment activities in the tribe. This is highly relevant for the LGUs, and the private sectors which seek to optimize cultural differences while empowering its constituents, including the betterment of these women's lives.

Lastly, as a social studies teacher, the study has humbled me. This not only gave me insights into the lives of the minority group but I had grasped an understanding of the Tagakaolo tribe's *duway* and its people, though for *duwayas* alone. The tradition by itself is well regarded in their community, respected by the local community, and followed by its tribesmen. However, this is not a representation of the quality of its tribesmen's lives who are governed by this tradition. This is true for the participants of this study. A tradition practiced for centuries or decades does not equate to a quality life for its members. Hence, I must ensure to relay this to future generations and become part of a leap to advocate for the rights of these women while ensuring the tribe retains its individuality.

### IV. DISCLOSURE

This study is conducted in consideration of potential conflicts of interest. This is not conducted for the purpose of satisfying self-interest or prejudice of the researcher. This is conducted as the topic of interest is relevant in to specific institutions and individuals. The researcher is not related by any means to the participants, no professional, familial, or personal relationship with the participants. There was no disclosure of COI nor evidence of conflict of interest in the conduct of this study.

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