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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK

**FACTORS THAT SUSTAIN THE INSTITUTION OF POLYGyny AND THEIR
EFFECTS ON FAMILY WELL-BEING AMONG THE WANGA PEOPLE OF
WESTERN KENYA.**

BY

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DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that this research project is my original work and has not been submitted to any other university for academic credit.

Signature.....

Date

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Declaration by the Supervisor

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University supervisor:

Signature

Date.....

PROF. PRESTON CHITERE

DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my loving father Mr. Mohammed Juma Olunga and my caring mother Mrs. Electine Rugambwa Mecha who tirelessly supported me throughout my studies. Also this project is dedicated to my late aunt (Guardian) Mrs. Gaudencia Khabukwi who inspires my entire academic life. I am so grateful.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	-	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome.
FIDA	-	International federation of women lawyers
HIV	-	Human Immunodeficiency virus infection
K.C.P.E	-	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
K.C.S.E	-	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
NCCK	-	National Council of Churches of Kenya
NHIF	-	National Health Insurance Fund

ABSTRACT

Polygyny is the practice of a man having more than one wife. A related concept polygamy also refers to the state of a man having more than one wife or female mate at a particular time. Polygynous families usually operate like an organization. There are different roles according to certain hierarchical levels.

The aim of the study was to find out Factors that sustain the institution of polygyny and their effect on family well-being among the Wanga people of Western Kenya. The study was guided by the following objectives: To find out the characteristics of polygynous families among the Wanga people of Western Kenya, to find out the role of assets in influencing the well-being of polygynous families, to assess the well-being of polygynous families, to examine the livelihood activities and their well-being of polygynous families and to assess the perceptions of polygynous family heads on polygynous marriages.

This study employed a descriptive research design which is characterized by systematic collection of data from members of a given population through interview schedule guides. The study was carried out in Kakamega County of Western Kenya. The study was confined to Mumias East sub-county, East Wanga ward, Mung'ang'a and Eluche sub-wards which were purposively sampled. Within the two wards, 80 respondents from polygynous families were sampled through snow-ball sampling technique. Data collection was done using interview schedule and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Data was organized in frequencies and percentages and presented using tables which was analyzed qualitatively using SPSS.

The findings of the study showed the majority (40%) of men in the area had married two wives and the Islam religion was widespread with 66.3% of family heads being Muslims. Resource ownership in the families was in form of livelihood activities, crop farming and livestock keeping with backed-up business opportunities. On the well-being of polygynous family, well-being of family and schooling of children were the most important.

The study recommends that women in polygynous marriages to be educated on the importance of family planning, that the Ministry of Agriculture needs to organize educational sessions to help the families obtain surplus food from their farms and the need for good savings and credit initiatives to enhance business among the polygynous family heads in the study area by involving financial institutions.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Polygyny is the practice of a man having more than one wife. A related concept polygamy also refers to the state of a man having more than one wife or female mate at a particular time. In this study the concept polygyny and polygamy are used synonymously (Obonye, 2012). Polygynous families usually operate like an organization. There are different roles according to certain hierarchical levels. They include establishing a managerial hierarchy, giving birth to children, negotiating formal roles, assuming roles based on members' talents, and compromising for the common good of the family members (Ault, 2016).

In the Sahel region countries of Africa, the percentage of women living in polygynous households ranges from 45% to 55%. In West Africa, East Africa, Central Africa and Africa, the percentages are typically in the range from 25% to 35%. In Southern Africa, polygyny is not wide spread since it is under 10% of women living in polygynous households (Bergstrom & Bergstrom, 1994).

The research study was among the Wanga sub-tribe found in Kakamega County and one of the sixteen Luhya sub-tribes found in Western Kenya.

The researcher was drawn by the number of polygynous families among the Wanga people who were living in harmony despite the marriage institution of polygyny. In comparison with other luhya sub-tribes, polygyny was not pleasant especially between the women.

According to Osogo (1965), the Wanga (Abawanga) are a sub-tribe of the Luhya tribe found in Kakamega County. Their neighbors to the North are Bukusu and Banyala to the South Marama to the East Batsotso and to the West Marachi. During the 11th century, Wanga Kingdom of the Abaluhya was the only organized state with a hereditary ruler known as *Nabongo* and a centralized monarch of kingship. Among the luhya tribe, Wanga is the only tribe that had a kingdom and collaborated with the British during colonial period.

Shiracko (2016), clarifies clans of the Abawanga which were formed in generational perspective of the sons of Nabongo. Each member of the clan was to be familiar with others to avoid marrying from the same clan which was prohibited. This was the lists of clans

of Abawanga with reference to females referred to by the term given in brackets: a) Abashitsetse (Bwibo), b) Abakolwe (Nabakolwe), c) Abaleka (Nabaleka), d) Abachero (Njero), e) Abashikawa (Nashikawa), f) Abamurono (Oronda), g) Abashieni (Shieni), h) Abamwima (Namwima), i) Abamuniafu (Ngakhwa), j) Abambatsa (Luleti), k) Abashibe (Nashibe), l) Ababere (Nebere), m) Abamwende (Luchimbo), n) Abakhami (Nabakhami), o) Abakulubi (Akwany), p) Abang'ale (Namang'ale), q) Ababonwe (Nbonwe), r) Abatsoye (Nabatsoye), s) Abalibo (Namwasi), t) Abang'ayo (Nang'ayo), u) Ababule (Nabule) and v) Abamulembwa (Namulembwa).

According to Osogo (1965) traditionally, the extended family and clan was cherished by the Wanga culture. Abawanga practiced polygyny, and a man was given respect depending on the number of wives he had. This is because only a very wealthy man could afford to pay the dowry (bride price) for several wives. The dowry was paid in form of cattle, sheep and goats. Osogo (1965) adds that Islam in the area was highly adopted due to Swahili traders who were allowed by the king to interact with the Wanga people in the region.

In traditional African society it was expected when one wife fell sick, travelled, left or dies her husband and children would still be taken care of by other wives that were the reason behind polygyny being upheld in the rural areas (Whyte, 1980).

Polygyny has been a noticeable practice in most communities worldwide. It is deeply embedded in the early régime of our ancestors. Over the years, polygyny has become the subject of abundant journal articles, books, heated debates, discussion papers, a subject for women activist groups, web pages, and even cable television shows. Consequently, many divergent policies in different communities have been adopted in relation to polygyny. About 83% of human societies have permitted polygyny and also a third of the world's population accepts polygyny (Thobejane & Flora, 2014).

In Africa, polygynous marriages have a range of 20% to 50% of marriages, with high rates reported among rural people and Muslims. In recent years, an increase in the rates of polygyny among highly educated men has been identified especially those who can afford a second wife (Amone & Arao, 2014). Polygynous marriages in Africa concurs with a

study done in Benin about women in polygynous families which indicated that 60% of women were in polygynous families in 1970. However, the figure dropped in 2000 to 40%. Women in polygynous marriages statistics is similar to western Africa countries such as Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Senegal (Bhalotra, 2012). A study in Tanzania by Coast (2014) indicated that 52.6% of currently married men were in polygynous marriages and on average there were 2.7 wives per polygynist.

In Kenya a survey done by Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) indicated a total of 23.5 million are couples across the 47 counties. These statistics were 6.2 % of the adult population are in polygynous unions, about 54.4 % are in monogamous partnerships, 27 % never married and 6.9% are widowed. Polygynous unions were more widespread among rural dwellers at 8.4% than urban 3.1%. In contrast, monogamous unions were highest in urban areas, accounting to about 56.6 % compared to 52.8 % in rural areas (KNBS, 2014). President Uhuru Kenyatta in 2014 signed into law a controversial marriage bill legalizing polygyny. The Marriage Act, 2014 allowed men to marry as many women as they please, and they do not have to consult their wives before doing it (Standard newspaper, 120th e.d, 2014).

“Marriage is the voluntary union of a man and a woman, whether in a monogamous or polygynous union,” presidential statement when signing the bill into law.

1.2 Problem Statement

In the past the problem of divorce, single mothers or street children were a rare phenomenon in the society since polygyny was commonly practiced and women were incorporated in the family despite the circumstance they had (Osogo, 1965). Early married women might initially feel uncomfortable and envious when a new woman enters the household but these sentiments usually faded away to ensure harmonious relationships in situations where there was equal treatment of the wives (Simiyu, 2010). Many women living in a polygynous marriage support plural marriages and appear to find happiness and contentment within their family structures (Thobejane, 2014). Polygynous marriages permitted mutual relationship and support between the co-wives and their husband for the

betterment of their family. They shared the man's resources and supported each other when need arose during raising of their children.

These advantages of polygynous marriages to families have greatly reduced with the support of monogamous marriages among Christians, yet according to traditions of the Wanga people and the Islam religion, polygyny is recognized and practiced. Whereas in the past resources such as land and livestock were abundant, this is no longer the case now owing to vast growth of population and increasing pressure on land.

In the study area where polygyny is supported by traditions and Islam religion, this study examines how far the marriage institution is practiced and whether it contributes to the well-being of families as it was the case in the past.

1.3 Study Questions

1. What are the characteristics of polygynous families among the Wanga people of Western Kenya?
2. What is the role of assets in influencing the well-being of polygynous families among the Wanga people of Western Kenya?
3. What is the impact of health and schooling of children on the well-being of polygynous families among the Wanga people of Western Kenya?
4. What are the livelihood activities and their effect on well-being of polygynous families among the Wanga people of Western Kenya?
5. What are the perceptions of polygynous family heads on polygynous marriage among the Wanga people of Western Kenya?

1.4 General Objective of the Study

To find out factors that sustains the institution of polygyny and their effects on family well-being among the Wanga people of Western Kenya.

1.4.1 Specific Objectives

1. To find out the characteristics of polygynous families among the Wanga people of Western Kenya.
2. To find out the role of assets in influencing the well-being of polygynous families among the Wanga people of Western Kenya.
3. To assess the impact of health and schooling of children on the well-being of polygynous families among the Wanga people of Western Kenya.
4. To examine the livelihood activities and their well-being of polygynous families among the Wanga people of Western Kenya.
5. To assess the perceptions of polygynous family heads on polygynous marriages among the Wanga people of Western Kenya.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study focused on the factors that sustain the institution of polygyny and their effect on family well-being. The study was conducted in Mumias East sub-county, East Wanga ward, Mung'anga and Eluche sub-wards in Kakamega County. The focus of the study was on polygynous men as the polygynous family heads. The few women in the study were in polygynous marriage and they were interviewed in absentia of the man.

1.6 Justification of the Study

Findings would be useful to the National Governments, Ministry of Culture and Tourism and also County government in knowing more about polygynous families.

The study will also be useful to parents, children and youth who are in polygynous families to provide harmonious relationships.

Polygyny is a social institution of marriage, the study will be able to promote peace in families and avoid marital conflicts among family heads.

The study was unique since it had not received much attention from researchers in Kenya.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

Polygyny: The practice of having more than one wife at a time.

Family : A group of people who are related to each other. Example father, mother and child.

Institutions: They are informal or formal social structures which influence the behavior of People and how they live.

Well-being: Is a state of being comfortable, happy and healthy. A state that people perceive that their lives are going on well.

Characteristics of polygynous family heads: This refers to attributes that distinguish a person. Several attributes have been discussed to bring out the differences, they include: age, marital status, gender, religion, number of wives, number of children and occupation. The researchers hold the view that the indicators determined the well-being of polygynous families among Wanga people.

Livelihood activities: This is measured by the following activities; farming, livestock, business and investments of polygynous families

Assets: This is measured by land and properties of polygynous family heads

Perception of heads of polygynous families on polygynous marriages: This is how polygyny is viewed in the society by the individuals. It was measured by determining their advantages and disadvantages of polygynous marriage..

Well-being of polygynous institution: This is measured by health of the family and education of children

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview literature of study topic. The literature is discussed according to study objectives that include: The Characteristics of polygynous families, assets in polygynous families, education and health in polygynous families, livelihood activities in polygynous families and perceptions of polygynous family heads on polygynous marriage. The chapter also covers theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study.

2.2 Characteristics of Polygynous Families among the Wanga people of Western Kenya

A characteristic is a distinguishing feature or attribute of a person. The following characteristics describe a polygynous family among the Wanga people, gender, marital status, number of wives, number of children, age, religion and level of education. These characteristics bring out the uniqueness of a polygynous families among the Wanga people of Western Kenya.

On membership, a polygynous family according to Osogo (1965) was made up of a father (tata), mother (mama) and children (abana). The homestead (litala) was made up of grandfather (kuka), grandmother (kukhu), uncles (papa) aunts (senje), cousins (omwana wefu), grandchildren (abetsukhulu) and great grandchildren (bisoni). In a polygynous family co- wives identify each other as ‘Mwalikhwa’ meaning they are married to one man. Children were highly valued in the family. The first child (mwana wa mberi) was entitled to a lot of privileges compared to the other children. The reason behind it was that the child brought joy in the marriage. The last child (makhokoro) had also privileges since it was believed that the child would take care of the parents during old age. If it was a son then he was supposed to pitch a house in the homestead and stay there with his family and generation to come (Bulimo, 2013).

Barrenness of women in marriage and procreation are entangled and inseparable in Africa. The assumption is that being ready for marriage is being ready to have children. Children are highly valued in society, they are viewed as the continuity of the society especially through naming (Enesis, 2005). In Africa, traditional marriage system is geared towards procreation and promotion of life. Childlessness is not merely an unfavorable incident, but a calamity (Kyalo, 2012) since children are viewed as a stronghold of marriage. In some circumstances gender of children does not matter, but a boy child is mostly valued in many societies. A wife who cannot give birth lacks happiness and most of the times do not enjoy marriage. This makes her get married as a second or third wife. Alternatively, a man with a wife who is not able to bear children often marries a second wife with the hopes of getting children (Newbury, 2017).

Pride and blessings from the supernatural being was associated with the procreation of many children. The children were meant to keep the family heritage and lineage. The naming of children implied that the descendants of the family were being honored in the generation they left behind in both the paternal and maternal households (Okorie, 2015). Age was a common determinant in a marriage. According to Osogo (1965) age was divided into two sections: the middle age man and the old age man. The middle age men (abasatsa) are believed to be energetic. They are the group of men who can build houses and walls of the homestead (Osogo, 1965). The old age (abakofu) were very useful in the society since they were the law makers, counselors and mentors in the society.

All the men in this age group were believed to marry or to continue marrying women. The man was older compared to the women. The first wife was older than the other wives. Marriage was also arranged in the old days. The parents of the boy identified the girl and went ahead to ask a hand in marriage on behalf of their son. Broom (1982) Argues that, girls were promised to men as early as few months old.

Gender roles played in the family were described by Ault, (2016). The husband was the "Manager". He delegates duties, ensures physical, spiritual, and emotional needs are met in the family. Wives are "Councilors" they are in charge of day-to-day family operations.

The adult Children work on the complex family roles or functions for the well-being of the household including provision of labor. The younger children are also a source of labor and also they are entitled to simple tasks assigned by the elder siblings, father or the mother. Daughters are viewed to be a source of wealth, as they will get married and dowry paid to the parents. This was a requirement to help their brothers in paying off dowry to their future wives. Girls are very important as boys thus there is no prevailing rule of bearing children nor the preference of gender on children (Kyalo, 2012).

Number of wives depended on mutual relationship in polygamous marriages seemed to be thriving since the relationship between co-wives revealed genuine love and companionship between the spouses. When a new co-wife arrived in the homestead, envy was showed by the other wives, but this did not last for long, since they were there to improve harmonious relationship in the homestead, thus an equal treatment of the wives by the husband (Thobejane, 2014).

Marital status of an individual in the society was highly valued. Marriage is considered a sacred institution in a community. Polygyny saved widows, single mothers and unmarried aging women by increasing the chances of belonging to a marriage family. Being unmarried or single mother was a diminishing situation in the society and they were looked down upon. Polygyny took care of the widows in the society, widows who needed care, love and affection to be shown to them and the family (Okorie, 2015). Societal pressure to women caused a woman to enter into a polygynous union. This might be caused by later age timings of a reproductive woman hence the fear of staying single. Marriage was believed to be an institution where one shared information and experiences with other women (Naksomboon, 2013).

In regards to religious affiliation the laws of Islam are the basis and foundation upon which the Muslim civilization rests. Its social laws strike a balance between the individual and the community. Man is naturally created to be inter- dependent with fellow mankind to survive. He is expected to have the social virtue of piety, honesty and justice in all his

dealings, toward collective prosperity and success here and in the hereafter (Safiyanu, 2014).

Polygyny is widely practiced by the Muslim communities. A community that is dominated by the Muslims like the Wanga people, always has a doctrine to support their act of marrying more than one wife. The saying of the Prophet (salallaahu `alaihi wassallam) saying of Allāh:

“...marry other woman of your choice, two or three, or four but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with them, then only one...” (An-Nisaa4:3)

So a man is able to marry a free single woman (if she agrees), and it is allowed for him to marry up to four. The plural marriage allows only the one who can establish and maintain justice between his wives. As for the one who is not able to maintain the required justice then he is prohibited from plural marriage (Thobejane & Flora, 2014) Marriage is a culturally accepted and socially respected institution. It is one of the moral principles which Islam made a lawful contract between a man and a woman as husband and wife. Allah ordained marriage as a religious duty and a lawful means of exhausting love for lawful sexual satisfaction and procreation. Each party to a marriage is expected to feel comfortable with the other for the establishment of a sound Muslim family for the survival and sustenance of the society and mankind on earth (Safiyanu, 2014).

The polygynous men in the study area traced their practice to Prophet Muhammad who married nine wives as an exclusive privilege and not for the sake of worldly pleasures, but for the religion he exhibited wisdom to establish. Apart from Aisha bint Abdullahi bin Abi Quhafa, all the other wives were either widows or divorced (Safiyanu, 2014). Prophet Mohammed becomes a role model to most Muslim polygynous marriages. A high percentage of the Wanga people in Western Kenya are Muslims and so they have adopted the marriage method of polygyny.

In Kenya there is a fight for polygyny to be abolished and monogamy to be legalized (Safiyanu, 2014). This is argued out by claiming that, Christian polygamists, who view themselves as strong participants of Christian churches, quote biblical patriarchs to show their contribution on polygyny as something formal and scriptural. The Old Testament provides evidence that polygyny was allowed in Israel (Amone, 2014).

The Bible gives example of existence of polygyny in those days from the book of, Genesis 4 verse 19 holds: “And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other was Zillah.” This implies that during those days polygamy was accepted in the society. Old Testament, Abraham had more than one wife, his son David had one hundred wives, and Solomon is said to be king of polygyny since he had 700 wives and 300 concubines (Thobejane, 2014). This implies that the culture or the concept of polygyny came as a root from the ancestral history of our beginning. Before we existed, polygyny existed so we are following what was there.

The Christian polygynist marriages also have their roots in the Bible and also their role model starting from King Solomon to King David.

Wives are investments of the husband. A first wife has high powers and authority compared to the other wives. She is the manager of the homestead when the husband is not there. She takes control of every activity in the homestead given powers by the husband. This is a sign of social prestige to the wife since her status is being uplifted. Furthermore, in some circumstances, the first wife encourages the husband to marry another wife (Krenawi, 2017). Additionally, in Kenyan communities the same treatment of first wives is observed as the elder of other wives. This is a status that is captured as prestigious and in a ceremonial manner (Oguda, 2012) . In this regards, the wives are treated in a good way for the well-being of the family. In most cultures, women contribute significantly to the wealth of the household and can thus materially benefit from the labour of an additional spouse.

2.3 The Role of Assets in Influencing the Well-Being of Polygynous Families among the Western People of Western Kenya

Well-being is not simply about ‘the good life,’ but it’s about ‘living a good life. It is viewed as something that is going on in people’s lives. For decades the main focus has been on raising living standards through increasing economic growth, employment and household income (White, 2015). Therefore, well-being is a progressive outcome that is expressive for people and for many sectors of society because it shows how people perceive that their lives are going on well which is shown by good living standards. Assets of a polygynous family is in terms of land and properties owned by the family heads.

Land is a major family investment in a polygynous family. Polygyny is most widespread in rural, agrarian areas. In the past, ancestral land was believed to be a property of the family to be handed over to the generation (Bhalotra, 2012). This implies that, households had future plans for the families. Polygynous family heads have assets and investments for the purpose of future family. Polygynous men tend to be wealthy and prosperous as a virtue of family prosperity (Safiyanu, 2014).

Polygynous families is believed to be rich especially in terms of properties owned. Among the Wangya people, the type of house either permanent or semi-permanent houses, ownership of business buildings and vehicles is believed to be wealth. Oguda (2012) gives an overview of a polygynous Luo man and the co-wives. The wives get attracted to the man because of the properties owned. In Luhya culture, it’s the same things that makes a woman agree to get married to a polygynous man since the woman is concern of her well-being and comfort ability of the children (Osogo, 1965).

A polygynous man tend to work hard and smart to be able to maintain the wives in the Wangya community. A tittle of the husband also attracted women to him. The king of the Wangya kingdom, Nabongo Mumia, married several women more than five and they were willing to be his wives since they also owned tittles and he was a rich man. The richness and the association with the Europeans made women to love him so much and they never lacked anything including food, shelter and clothing (Were, 1977)

2.4 The Impact of Health and Schooling of Children on the Well-Being of Polygynous Families among the Wanga People of Western Kenya

Education in a polygynous family is considered by both as providing skills having economic returns (education as human capital), and as a tool used by various agents to modify cultural values and beliefs (education as ideology). Both aspects of education might credibly affect polygyny: education as human capital is likely to empower women on the marriage market and therefore the weight put on their own preferences in the choosing of a husband, as well as their bargaining power when their husband considers taking a second wife. Education as ideology might modify individuals' values and increase their version for polygynous unions (Dupraz, 2017)

Marriage is a matching process, where individuals match on several attributes especially education. Because these attributes are it can be deduced that a woman's education increases the probability of marrying a polygynous man. This is not enough to uncover the preference parameters underlying marriage markets where educated women prefer polygynous men. If there is strong evidence on education, and if more educated men are on average richer and more likely to be polygynous, then it is possible that education increases the likelihood for a woman to be in a polygynous union, even though education does not increase the preference of educated women for polygynous unions (Dupraz, 2017)

Among the Wanga people of western Kenya, education is an aspect that depends with an individual and cultural notion of being enlightened. Due to women roles in the society especially when they get pregnant while in school, women get minimal time to be educated compared to men (Bulimo 2013).

The health of the children is taken into serious consideration. In Africa, traditional marriage system is geared towards procreation and promotion of life, mothers and children health is viewed as the basis of the family (Kyalo, 2012). This statement concurs with that of Newbury (2017) when he viewed polygamy in a positive manner especially when the first wife is barren, a second wife is married to the husband to give birth to children. Furthermore, the following wives married take care of the first wife if she when sick.

Women and men tend to view wives as “property” of the husband and believe that men should have full control over reproductive decisions they make.

Polygyny in traditional Africa was to ensure that every woman in the village had a husband in order to procreate. Polygyny also enabled the husband to take a second wife if the first wife was barren or unable to give him a son. Polygyny in traditional Africa was an adaptive practice, which ensured all women were married and had children that contributed to the survival of the community. One of the reasons that has been highlighted for men to take additional wives was that if they assumed the wife to be barren then additional wives would bear him children (Mkhize & Singh, 2016).

According to (Kyalo, 2012), mortality rates of men consistently exceeded those of women, polygyny could be seen as a resolution to the “deficit” of males and the “surplus” of females. Socially, co wives and their children may enhance status and prestige as members of large households. In societies that provide no institutionalized role for unmarried women, the status of a co wife may be preferable to that of a single woman. Polygyny can also have a positive effect on maternal and child health. During postpartum recovery, for instance, co-wives can usually rely upon each other to perform the most strenuous work of the household. By creating opportunities for sexual companionship among the other members of the marriage, polygyny also supports the once common expectation that women will remain sexually abstinent for two or more years beginning in the last months of pregnancy. This practice fosters adequate birth spacing for the mother to recover from the physiological and emotional stresses associated with pregnancy, lactation, and the care of a young child (Oguda, 2012).

2.5 The Polygynous Families Well-Being and Their Livelihood Activities Among the Wanga People of Western Kenya

The largeness of clans has been linked up with economic advantage of the society, thus improving the social power and prestige of the community. Therefore, several wives and plenty of children from polygynous unions can assist in the economic development of the clan or the family (Obonye, 2012). Women and children are considered as labor

providers. Wives produce children and attend to gardens, while a girl child will have dowry paid for by the husband. They work in the farms thus contributing positively to income generating activities. The head of the homestead shares the income and the produce to the households equally (Thobejane, 2014)

In terms of occupation, polygyny can be caused by a career or transfers. When a man works in a different town or country from that of the wife. Due to the long distance between the couple and sometimes it may take months or years for them to be together because of work, a man decides to marry another wife in the area or town he works to avoid adultery (Stafford, 2006). The *Wanga* people practice commercial and subsistence farming. Sugarcane being their large scale crop, they also practice small scale farming by growing maize, beans, cassava, sweet potatoes and some fruits. They also keep livestock, mainly dairy cattle (Shiracko, 2016).

Polygynous households have lower acquiesce differences between spouses and thus are more productively efficient. Cooperation among co-wives in a polygynous household has more determination in the socio-economic activity that is measured by occupation (Mccarthy & Damon, 2016). This statement is in agreement with Osogo (1965) who gives an uplifting hand to the cooperation among luhya's co-wives in terms of farming.

According to Maillu (1988), marriage takes place when the man is well established in either his business or profession. Men who view themselves to be rich or wealthy are in a viable position to marry more than one wife because they are capable of taking care of them and the children without any difficulty. Shorter (1977), embraces this comment by saying that due to wealth, women get married to such men even if in a polygynous family since they are sure of their bride price.

Farming among the polygynous families is the key livelihood activity that contributes immensely to income that sustains the families. The economic activity is simple since there is collaboration of the family members and sharing of work load. Some of the farming crops are basic and other cash crops. Majority of polygynous families since the outcome is

high number of members in the family, basic needs is very important to them especially food (Mccarthy 2016).

2.6 The Perception of Polygynous Family Heads on Polygynous marriage among the Wanga people of Western Kenya

Polygyny is perceived more positively in that there is good in it if the rules are followed. Polygyny save women financially and provide her need emotionally. Men marry more than one woman to avoid adultery. The advantage of polygyny is when the flow is good and when there is cooperation. Jealousy is normal on the part of the woman but to cope up with this at least justice is prevailed. Most polygynous men assert that it's difficult for women to be equal but at least there is justice. 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 (Ebrahim & Lingga, 2018).

For a polygynous family to be happy, the woman must accept the marriage based on faith in Supreme Being while the husband has to fairly treat and provide for his families, the wives must instill good character and respect for each other, and all family members must maintain open communication and good relationship. Married men perceive polygyny as a matter of personal choice, and thus they marry according to their wish and will (Okorie 2015).

The Wanga polygynous men embrace polygyny for the sake of the family, cultural, religious and personal well-being. Polygyny among the Wanga people is sororal type in that the wives are not related at all. Due to this action, the marital relationship is mutual and fair (Osogo, 1965).

Kinship system is a foundation of family strengths, networks and the growth of family households. The notion of the affinity implies an accepted relationship and understanding of members in the family, the husband, wives and children contribute freely to the kinship ties of the family (Naksomboon, 2013) .The foundation of a family structure and maintenance depends on the family goals such as financial stability, child birth, child

rearing, and the overall well-being of the household. Investment from the family members is a key initiative in a polygamous family that is guided by a mutual relationship of the members of the family. There has to be cooperation among the members (Ault, 2016).

Despite certain advantages to both sexes, polygynous families can be fraught with bickering and sexual jealousy. In order to dampen strife, many groups accord seniority to one wife, usually the first. Women married to the same man might commonly view one another with jealousy and perhaps even animosity, while some women in plural marriages view their relationship with co-wives as enriching and valuable. Relationships with co-wives are alleged to be providing critical and economic provision, companionship, and childcare aid. The relations between co-wives have been found to be beneficial to women's economic and political influence where there is a familial relationship between the co-wives (Ebrahim & Lingga, 2018).

2.7 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Functionalism Theory. Merton's (1998) observes that, every decision made in research is guided by a theory. A Theoretical framework provides insights and a firm footing for a given study. Structural functionalism theory and social action theory were also adopted.

2.7.1 Structural Functionalism Theory

This theory was developed by Spencer (1820-1903). He viewed society as a structure with interrelated parts which are intended to be able to meet social and biological needs of individuals. Spencer linked society to the human body. He argued that human beings have body parts that work together for the well-functioning of their well-being and that the individuals in the society work together to keep the social order. The parts of the society that Spencer was referring to include social institutions such as: education, family, government, religion, economy and healthcare.

Different scholars applied the theory to their studies, for example, Emile Durkheim in his study of a complex system that is made of interrelated and interdependent parts that work together so that stability is achieved (Wright, 1059).

Radcliff-Brown (1881-1955) embraced the functionalism theory by arguing out that any recurrent activity has an identified role that it plays in a society and the social life of an individual thus contributes to the social stability and continuity of the society.

The theory is relevant to the study since polygynous marriage is a social institution that contributes to the well-being of families. The members of a polygynous family are allocated different roles in households which facilitate their smooth running. The husband as the head of the family has his roles including maintaining sexual interaction between the several wives. The wives also have roles stipulated for them including economic, social, religious and also child-bearing and child care. On the other side, the children are a source of cheap labour, security and raise the social status of the parents in the society. The family is made up of several people (Husband, wives and children) that work together for the well-being of the family.

2.7.2 Social Action Theory

It was developed by Max Weber (1864-1920). The theory also applies in the study since it narrows down smaller groups in the society. The theory examines how human behaviors work together for the benefit of the society. Weber related development as an important aspect in understanding the society and social changes. Weber discussed four major types of social action which were: purposive or goal oriented actions, value oriented actions, emotional or affective motivations action, and traditional action.

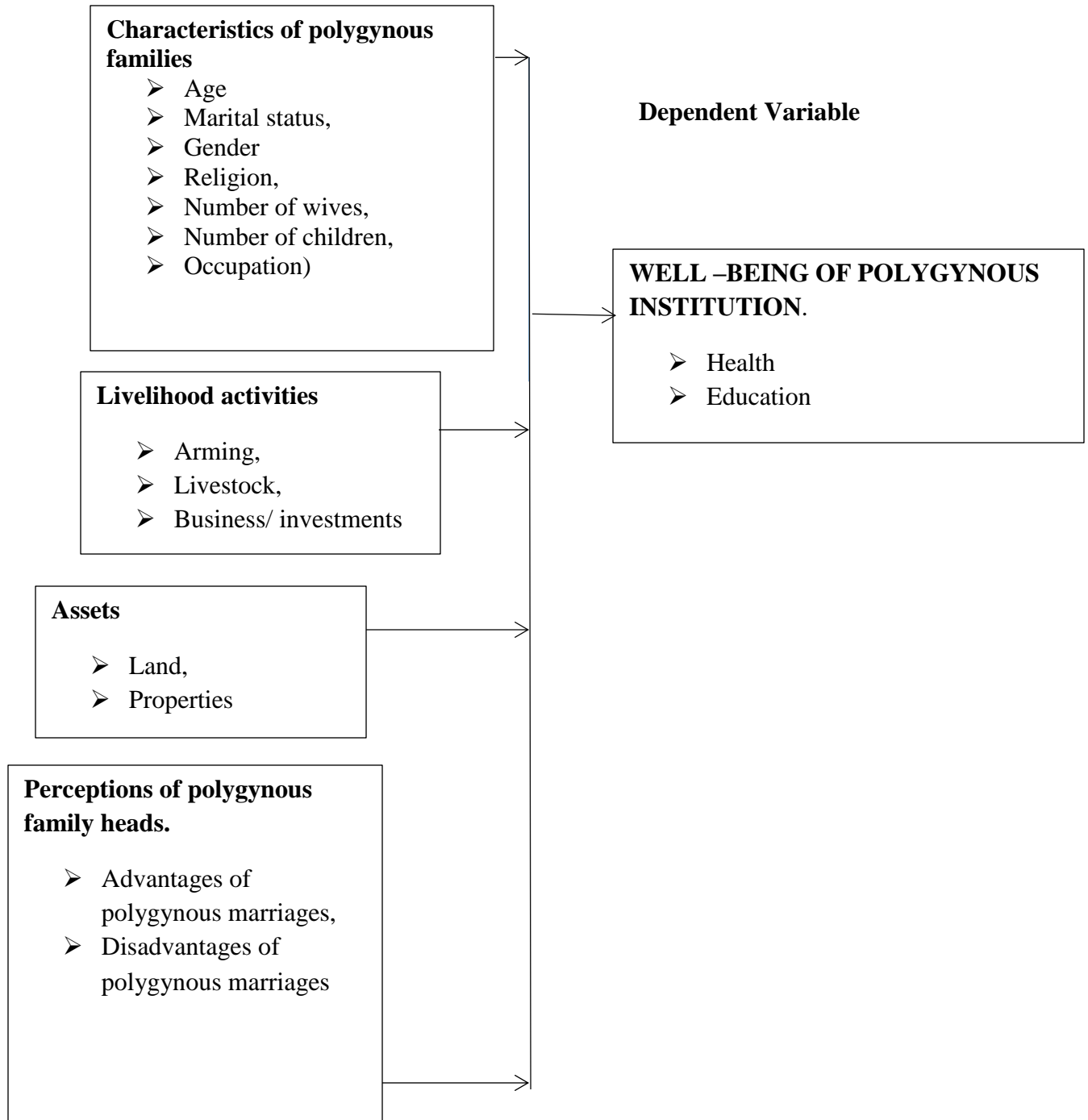
This study is closely related to the theory since polygyny as a social institution is focused on the well-being of the family. Action should be taken by all the parties in the family to promote mutual relationship and development in the families and society.

2.8 Conceptual Framework

Orodho (2004) describes a conceptual framework as the use of drawings to explain the relationship between variables. This study consists of the dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable is the institution of polygyny while the independent variables that influence directly the dependent variable include: The characteristics of polygynous families and the perception of polygynous family heads on polygynous marriage.

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Independent variables



CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines generally how the study was undertaken. This chapter is organized into the following areas: study site, research design, unit of analysis and units of observation, target population, sample size, sampling method, research instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis. In addition, field experiences and ethical considerations in social research have been addressed at the end of this chapter.

3.2 Description of the Study Site

The study took place in Kakamega County which is in the Western region of Kenya. It is dominated by the Luhya tribe of people. It covers an area of 3,224.9 square kilometers and a population of 1,789,989 as estimated in 2012. The County has 12 sub-counties that include Shinyalu, Navakholo, Mumias East, Mumias West, Matungu, Malava, Lurambi, Lugari, Likuyani, Khwisero, Ikolomani and Butere.

The study chose Kakamega County because it is the only County where the Wanga people are found and also the County is dominated by polygynous families from different Luhya sub-tribes. The study was conducted in Kakamega County, Mumias East sub-county, East Wanga ward, Mung'anga' and Eluche sub-wards.

East Wanga Ward was chosen because it is densely populated by inhabitants of the Wanga people. Also it was chosen due to limited time and resources.

3.3 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design which is characterized by systematic collection of data from members of a given population through interview schedule guides. This design followed procedures such as identifying target population, development of interview schedule guides, selection of relevant sample and administering the interview schedule and guide in person (Orodho, 2003).

Kothari (2004), states that the design is concerned with existing relationships or conditions, opinions, ongoing processes and emergent trends in the society. The design was considered suitable since it allowed collection of qualitative data such as those on thoughts and opinions (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

In the study, qualitative method encompassed Key Informants and polygynous heads. The reason for views of Key Informants was due to the fact that they are the ones in charge of the study area and they can give in-depth information concerning the study topic. The qualitative design helped the researcher to collect diverse information from the family heads and the Key Informants. The approach brought out clear answers to the research questions that brought about a complete understanding on factors that sustain the institution of polygyny and their effect on family well-being among the Wanga people of Western Kenya.

3.4 Unit of Analysis and Units of Observation

The unit of analysis is the majority entity around which the variables of interest to the researcher vary (Singleton, 1988). This is what the study attempts to understand. For purposes of this study, unit of analysis was polygynous marriage.

Units of observation were polygynous family heads the men and women and Key Informants such as community leaders (chiefs) and village elders.

3.5 Target Population

Bless (2006), describes target population as the set of elements that the research focuses upon. The results obtained by testing the sample should be generalized. The target population was polygynous family heads that included polygynous men or women in Mumias East sub- county, Mung'ang'a and Eluche sub-wards, in Kakamega County. Both polygynous family heads were involved because they were in a position to determine the well-being of a polygynous family.

3.6 Sampling of the Study Units

A sample is a representative subject of the population and sampling is the process of identifying a given number of individuals for a study in that the individual singled out represents the group drawn (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003). The study units include: polygynous family heads and Key Informants.

3.6.1 Polygynous Families

The sampling method used was snowball sampling. The rationale for choosing snowball sampling was that it would ensure representativeness of the sample as well as enable generalization of the findings to the entire population. Snowball sampling was used since a list of polygynous families was not available in the sub-wards sampled. Snowball sampling was used since there was no survey data carried out on polygynous families in the County. The researcher in consultation with the chiefs and village elders identified a polygynous family head in Mung'ang'a sub-wards and interviewed him/her thereafter, the researcher requested the respondent to identify another polygynous head and so on. The same procedure was used in the second sub-ward of Eluche.

Polygynous family heads sampled were 40 in Mung'ang'a and 40 in Eluche sub-wards, (25 polygynous men and 15 polygynous women in Mung'ang'a and Eluche sub-wards) thus giving a total of 80 respondents. The polygynous men were higher compared to women since the women represented the family head in a situation where the man was not available. The women were interviewed in no specification on the number of wife she was.

3.6.2 Key Informants

Four key informants were selected, two area chiefs and two village elders from both sub-wards. The key informants were purposively selected on the basis of knowledge of the issue that the study sought to address which were the factors that sustain the institution of polygyny and their effects on family well-being in the area.

3.7 Data Collection and Analysis

Is the process of acquiring information and interpreting it. Research instrument, data collection procedure and data analysis is discussed.

3.7.1 Research Instrument

The main data collection tool used was interview schedule guide developed by the researcher. Interviews offer in-depth information since they enable the researcher to ask more questions and clarify items that may not be clear. The interview schedule guide was preferred due to illiteracy level of respondents in the area and the economic activities practiced thus it saved time.

An interview schedule questionnaire was used for key informants and contained key issues to be raised during the interview which ensured that the interview remained as focused as possible and relevant to the study objectives. Interview schedule questionnaire yielded qualitative data that was used in the analysis.

3.7.2 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher obtained a letter of permission from the University of Nairobi then proceeded to the study area. The researcher first approached the head of Mumias East sub-county then given a go ahead to seek permission from the ward administrator who referred the researcher to the chiefs of Mung'ang'a and Eluche sub-wards. Each of the chiefs with the help of village elders identified polygynous families in the area. The researcher then interviewed heads of the family and requested the respondent (him/her) to take the researcher to a neighboring polygynous family head. This process was repeated up to a point where the required sample size of 40 polygynous heads was obtained in each sub-ward. The respondents knew each other since the women and men belonged to the same mosque or church, same merry go round 'chamas', same working institution example school and in overall they belonged to the same sub-ward.

3.7.3 Data Analysis

Kombo and Tromp (2006) refer to data analysis as examining what has been collected and making inference based on it. During the field work, field notes and all completed interview scheduled were crosschecked daily and data cleaned to check for completeness, consistency and accuracy. The researcher developed a template using the codes which were used to enter data in statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Frequencies were done to identify and correct any possible coding and data entry errors. Data was presented using frequencies and percentage tables.

3.8 Field Experiences

Field work experience in this section includes the challenges faced during the field work. An authorization from Kakamega County was needed by the Mumias East sub-county representative to be able to give the researcher a go ahead to meet the ward chiefs. The researcher had a permissive original letter from the University of Nairobi which was accompanied with a valid good conduct certificate, valid student identity card and national identity card that made the researcher to be given a go ahead to meet the chiefs of the study areas.

During the fieldwork, the researcher came across a number of uncooperative respondents. Some of the respondents were asking for payment before they accepted to be interviewed. The researcher took time to explain that the research was academic and there was no funds to pay. Furthermore, the researcher clarified to the respondents that the collected data would give an overall perspective on the factors that sustain the institution of polygyny and their effect on family well-being in the area. This would help in future organizations and government interested in initiating projects targeting polygynous mariages. The researcher avoided giving promises to the respondents about immediate benefits resulting from the research.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The respondents were informed that they were free to terminate the interview in case they felt uncomfortable at any point during the interview. Questions and comments were invited

before the interview began. This ensured that the respondents had fully understood the purpose of the research. Confidentiality of respondents' identity was adhered to and non-disclosure of information provided was assured to the respondents. Further, the researcher guaranteed all respondents that the information provided was only to be used for the purpose of conducting research.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the findings of the study as per the research objectives and interprets the findings that are drawn from the qualitative data collected.

4.2 Rate of Response

The interview schedule for this study was administered to polygynous family heads in Kakamega County, Mumias East sub-county, East Wanga ward, Munga'nga' and Eluche sub-wards. The sample size for the study was 80 respondents. Men respondents were 50 an equivalent of 63% while women were 30, an equivalent of 37%. The response was 100%. According to Babie (2010), a response rate of 50% is believed to be adequate for analysis and reporting. That of 60% is considered good while above 70% response rate is said to be very good. The information is presented in the Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Response of respondents

Category	Target Population	Sample Size	Percent
Men	427	50	63.0
Women	735	30	37.0
Total	1,162	80	100.0

4.3 Characteristics of Polyganous Families

The first objective of this study sought to examine the characteristics of polyganous families. The characteristics were: Gender, marital status, number of wives, position of wives, age, religion, occupation and level of education.

4.3.1 Gender of the Respondents

Gender of the respondents is presented in Table 4.2 where more men were interviewed.

Table 4.2: Gender of respondents

Gender	Number	Percent
Male	50	63.0
Female	30	37.0
Total	80	100.0

The findings on gender of the respondents show that majority (63%) of men belonged to a polygynous marriage this was because the men were the determinants of the polygynous marriage. They were the ones who married the women. Women were included in the sample since a marriage union includes two people for it to be considered a marriages (Mkhize, 2016). Thus wives of the polygynous men were interviewed to give their opinion on the polygynous union. The women respondents were included in the study since some of them were widowed but still belonged to a polygynous family that the husband left behind.

This is the reason why more men were interviewed compared to women. The women were comfortable with the aspect since the husbands were soul providers. The findings are in agreement with the findings of Kyalo (2012) who asserted that African traditional values and roles of women are still incorporated in their daily marriages.

4.3.2 Marital Status of Family Heads

Marital status has a critical influence on the well-being of polygynous families. Therefore, the study examined the marital status of the family heads. Table 4.3 outlines the findings on the marital status of the respondents.

Table 4.3: Marital status of polygynous family heads

Marital status	Number	Percent
Married	74	92.5
Widowed	6	7.5
Total	80	100.0

Table 4.3 shows the total number of polygynous family heads who were married and widowed in polygynous families. The widowed were women since men couldn't be widowed yet has other wife or wives. But for a woman who was not remarried after the death of the husband become a widow. The men (100%) were married. This explained how widower got remarried after a short period of time or on the other hand they were typically polygynous since men had more than one wife. The findings are in agreement with the findings of Mailu (1988) that indicated that a man couldn't stay without a wife for long after he was widowed. This was echoed by a male respondent from Mung'ang'a sub-ward:

“let me tell you something....my first wife died after 8 years in marriage, luckily I had a younger second wife in the homestead...after 5 years I married again the second wife...I am wealthy and a businessman...I am not yet done marrying since I still have a mistress having my son whom I want to make a wife and bring her in the homestead soon.”

One of the widowed women who decided to stay widowed yet she was in a polygynous marriage had to say this:

“...Men expect children in marriage and I am old now I can't give birth...my beloved husband died 10 years ago and I am his first wife with 11 grandchildren... I have co-wives younger than me...if they want to get remarried it's okay and if they want to remain widowed is their wish because we are friends, we help each other in terms of finance and also advice for children.....her children are my children...”

4.3.3 Number of Wives in a Polygamous Marriage

This question was only answered by men. A total of 50 men took part in the study. Out of this majority (40%) had two wives, 28% had three wives, 24% had four wives and the least 8% had more than five wives. This information is presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Number of wives

Number of wives	Frequency	Percent
Two	20	40.0
Three	14	28.0
Four	12	24.0
Five Above	4	8.0
Total	50	100.0

In Table 4.4, majority of polygamous men had two wives (40%) which implied that in this area, many men opt to marry few women so that they can take good care of them and the children. The reason of marrying few women is because of the men level of education and religion, most of them are Islam and according to their holy book it's a commend to marry women whom you can take good care of without favoring. . Literate men marry few women. The finding is in agreement with the findings of White (1988) who indicated that a cause of polygyny can be the level of economy of an individual. This was echoed by a key informant, the chief Mung'ang'a sub-ward:

“...in this time and error, I only married two wives because of level of education I have and the economy status of the country. This cannot be compared to the past where our grandparents and fathers married more than four wives... I take good care of them and they are best friends... I have gone to school and I have only two wives...”

4.3.4 Wives in the Family

This question was answered by wives of a polygynous man. Polygynous women were open and willing to share their wife number in the family.

Table 4.5: Position of wives in the family

Position of wife	Frequency	Percent
First	6	20.0
Second	11	36.7
Third	8	26.7
Fourth	4	13.3
Fifth and above	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

Table 4.5 illustrates the position of wives in the family. Majorities (36.7%) were second wives and third wives were 26.7% of women. The least recorded was 3.3% who represented wives above the fifth number. The majority of the wives were second wives and the age gap between first and second wife was realistic. Second wives came as helpers in the marriage since the first wife had not satisfied the husband in terms of children, conjugal rights, or they came to help a sickly wife. Even some of the second wives were closely related to the first wives. A female key respondent from Eluche sub-ward noted:

'...we are two wives, I am the second one...the first wife is a distant relative to my mother, I came to stay with her when I was 16 years, she could not give birth and she is always sickly...with due respect, my aunt approached me and requested to be second wife and bear children for his husband...my mother and elders agreed to the idea and I was married off officially to him...I have children and I take good care of my aunt who is my co-wife...'

4.3.5 Age of the Respondents

Age is an important variable while explaining characteristics of any population of an area. The study findings reveal the disparity of age among polygynous men and women sampled. Table 4.5 summarizes the findings of the age of respondents among polygynous men and women.

Table 4.6: Age of respondents

Age	Total	
	Number	Percent
29 and Below years	9	11.0
30-39 years	25	31.0
40-49 years	23	29.0
50-59 years	13	16.0
60 and Above years	10	13.0
Total	80	100.0

Majority (31%) were 30-39 years age bracket on the other hand, the least (11%) were below 29 years. This age structure displayed by the findings concurs with the findings of population survey carried out by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2009) that implied women are younger than men in marriages. Majority of the women got married at an early age and immediately started giving birth (KNBS report, 2009). A female adult key respondent from Eluche sub-ward alluded that:

“I was married even before I started my menses...immediately I entered into puberty stage, my beloved husband had already spotted me.....he took care of me until I became a woman....and now I am 65years, happily married with my 3 co-wives”

A Key Informant, a male village elder from Mung’ang’a sub ward asserted that:

“...it’s a risk sometimes marrying a woman who is older than you...they claim to know it all and view the husband as not grownups...but what I can say is that it depends with the relationship that both of them have...for me is NO I can’t marry a woman who is older than me... all my wives are younger than me.”.

4.3.6 Religious Affiliation

Religious affiliation was considered as one of the major causes of polygyny. The implication of a respondent belief of faith was determined by finding out the denomination of the respondents. Table 4.7 shows the religious affiliation of the respondents.

Table 4.7 shows that the majority (66.3%) of polygynous heads are Muslims while 33.7% of the family heads were Christians.

Table 4.7: Religious affiliation of respondents

Religion	Number	Percent
Muslim	53	66.3
Christians	27	33.7
Total	80	100.0

Furthermore, table 4.7 shows the frequencies of polygynous men and women with their religious affiliations. Majority (66.3%) of polygynous family heads were Muslims. This implies that the Wanga people of Western Kenya had embraced Islam doctrine and thus the Islamic law and condition found in the Quran were being practiced. Since this is what they believed in, the wives tended to agree to it and promote harmonious relationship in their families. A few (33.7%) respondents were Christians who practiced polygyny. Both the respondents in Islam and Christian denominations embraced the marriage practice since it was upheld by leaders in their holy books the Quran and Bible.

A Key Informant had to say this concerning his leadership and religion in the area.

“I am the chief in this area...I am a staunch Muslim and my family is Muslim too....my father was a sheikh and in our homestead we have built a mosque...i have 3 wives one of them was made Muslim since she was a Christian.....my wives know about polygyny in the Quran sura 4:3 and they have no problem with that so long as their children go to school and they have food...”

In addition, another Key Informant a village elder Munga'nga' sub-ward said:

“...as the village elder, I am a Christian and polygyny is not bad, actually starting from Abraham, David and Solomon were polygynous yet they were leaders...being polygynous is someone's choice and it's not a sin so long as the wives are comfortable and know each other...polygyny is helping each other in life.”

4.3.7 Dependents of the Family Heads

Table 4.8: Number of dependents

Dependents	Number	Percent
Children	60	75.0
Relatives	18	22.5
Other	2	2.5
Total	80	100.0

Table 4.8 elaborates more on the dependents of the family heads. A polygynous family sometimes includes extended family members. 75% of the respondents had children as their dependents in the family while 22.5% had relatives depending on them. The least 2.5% of family heads had friends who depended on them. For the well-being of polygynous family, children and relatives and always dependents of family heads either socially, financially or economically. As a polygynous man, they get ready to take care of wives close relatives example sisters and brothers in laws.

A Key respondent the chief Mung'ang'a sub ward noted:

“...if you agree to be polygynous man then be ready to take care of wives family members...her sisters and brothers will need your help always like paying school fees...when you marry a wife you enter into commitments with her family members too...this is normal.”

4.3.8 Occupation of Respondents

The current study endeavored to examine the occupation of polygynous family heads in the study area. The socio-economic status of an individual is directly linked up with the wage rate found in occupation. Table 4.9 shows the occupation of the respondents.

Table 4.9: Main occupation of the respondents

Occupation	Number	Percent
Formal employment	5	6.3
Casual employment	13	16.2
Business	24	30.0
Farming and livestock	38	47.5
Total	80	100.0

Table 4.9 shows that the vast majority (47.5%) of polygynous heads were farmers and livestock keepers. Crops planted included: maize, beans, vegetables, millet, and sugarcane. The livestock kept were mostly dairy cows and poultry. The 30% of respondents who were in business mainly dealt with retail shops, mini supermarkets, ‘juakali’ businesses, carpentry and hardware. Those in casual employment (16.2%) were employed in shops and farms while the few in formal employment (6.3%) were teachers in primary and secondary schools, and policemen. It was also clear that those who were in formal employment majority were working out of town and thus their wives stayed in the homestead to continue with farming activities. Those working in other towns had married other women in those working towns to avoid adultery.

A Key Informant, the chief Eluche sub-ward alluded:

“...as a polygynist man, and a chief, I am also a farmer since my wives are farmers...i help in monitoring farming inputs in the homestead and assist with ideas.”

4.3.9 Education of Respondents

The level of education of the respondents was examined and was categorized in the following levels: lower primary (class 1-4), upper primary (5-8) secondary (form 1-4), College/ University and none which meant they never went to school This is the level of education of leaders of the polygynous families.

Table 4.10: Education level of polygynous family heads

Level of education	Number	Percent
Non	11	13.5
Lower primary	20	25.0
Upper primary	30	37.5
Secondary	12	15.0
College/University	7	9.0
Total	80	100.0

Table 4.10 shows that 37.5% of polygynous family heads had attained upper primary level which means they had attained KCPE or CPE certificates. Only 9% of the respondents had gone to colleges or universities. Vocational trainings and professional trainings for example, teaching was one of the training achieved by some polygynous family heads.

An adult female key respondent from Eluche sub-ward said:

“...I don’t know how to read because I never went to school...while I was 35years of age my husband took me to a ‘gumbaru’ school since I couldn’t fit in the nursery class...children will laugh at me... to be able to write my name and develop a signature...but now my children have gone to school...actually all of my co-wives had not gone to school...this made us depend on each other for the well-being of families while helping each other finding a way to read a letter.”

A Key Informant, a village elder from Munga'nga' sub ward reported:

“I am a retired primary school teacher...I have 5 wives and they are cooperating with each other....my last wife is a nurse and she helps the other wives in terms of reading and writing since they are illiterate.”

4.4 Assets of Polygynous Families

This was the second objective of the study. The assets are items owned by the family. The items owned contribute to the well-being of the family. The assets were: Land and properties owned by the family heads.

4.4.1 Land

Having a piece of land in the Wanga community is very important and ancestral land is not allowed to be sold since it is inherited from the fore fathers (Osogo, 1965).

Table 4.11: Response on farm sizes

Item	Number	Percent
2 and below acres	9	11
3-5 acres	41	51
6-9 acres	18	23
10 above acres	12	15
Total	80	100

Table 4.11 shows that the majority (51%) of the respondents owned 3-5 acres of land. The least (11%) owned land below 2 acres, of who owned land below 2 acres majority of them sold their land for the well-being of the family members. Others lost the land because of family fights. The most important thing was that they owned a piece of land on their own. Land owned by a wife or a husband was viewed as a property of the family and not individual. On the other hand, men owned a big share of land since they were the immediate inheritors of their fathers land. Land that was acquired by their fore fathers in the area was not allowed to be sold to a stranger other than be given out to sons.

“As an elder of this area I belong to a great polygynous family of the king of Wanga kingdom...I am Nabongo’s grandchild and polygynist...I have 6 acres of land that I inherited from my father...I am a farmer in nature...all my wives have their own piece of land and a homestead....they live happily and contended...”(Village elder Eluche sub-ward)

The researcher also found out if the respondents had other pieces of land (plots) used for other purposes.

Table 4.12: Plots owned by respondents

Item	Number	Percent
Homestead	32	40.0
Farming	26	32.0
Rental houses	22	28.0
Total	80	100.0

Table 4.12 shows that a majority (40%) had plots used as homesteads. The homesteads were for the families of their sons who had moved from the ancestral land. Some of the polygynous family heads had plots elsewhere that they had built a rental house that brought income to the family. A plot is part of properties added from the inherited properties from family.

A male key respondent from Mung’ang’a sub-ward reported:

“...I have 3 acre piece of land which I was luckily given by my father’s because I was the only child. As an orphan before I got married in a polygynous family...I own the land legally because my husband helped me to get a title deed...my husband and I built semi-permanent rental houses in Echinga market that helps us in our day to day expenses...the income generated from the business pays rent to my co-wives children as school fees since all my children are grown up and working.”

Properties

These properties were measured by the following items: Type of houses, Vehicles, plots, and other owned properties.

Table 4.13: Types of main houses

Item	Number	Percent
Permanent	38	48.0
Semi-Permanent	42	52.0
Total	80	100.0

Table 4.13 displays that, majority (52%) of the respondents live in semi-permanent houses as the main house. while 48% of the respondents live in permanent houses. Permanent and semi-permanent houses are houses that are cemented and others with roughcast surfaces on the outer side. This type of house compared to the traditional or local house which is grass roofed and cemented by mud. The permanent and semi-permanent houses are viewed to be expensive, modernized thus promoting the well-being of the family since shelter is a basic need of a human being.

Table 4.14: Type of vehicle

Item	Number	Percent
Commercial vehicle	22	28.0
Personal vehicle	15	19.0
Non	43	53.0
Total	80	100.0

The findings show that a majority (53%) of the respondents had no vehicle, 28% had vehicles for commercial use while 19% had personal vehicles. Vehicles used for commercial activities by the polygynous heads included pick-ups, lorry, tractors and passengers vehicles. Tractors were used especially for plowing land. The researcher was interested to find out about water sources for the families.

Table 4.15: Main water source

Item	Number	Percent
Bore –hole	31	39.0
Piped water	21	26.0
Other	28	35.0
Total	80	100.0

Table 4.15 shows the findings of water sources among polygynous families. Majority (39%) had boreholes this implies that the families never got shortage of water in all seasons and the children concentrated on school work rather than going to the river to fetch water for domestic use. On the other hand, 26% of the families had piped water from the city council which was not reliable daily, about 28% of the respondents had water from the river or sometimes got water from the homes that had boreholes and piped water. Water is a basic need in the family and since majority of the polygynous families had boreholes this implied their well-being concerning health and personal grooming together with the livestock and farming.

4.5 The Impact of Health of Family and Schooling of Children Well-Being of the Polygynous Families

The third objective of this study was to determine the well-being of polygynous families. Health in a family is an important aspect of the well-being of the members. Well-being indicators include: Health of the family and education of children.

4.5.1 Health of the Respondents' Families

The respondents were asked whether they were covered by any health insurance which could attend to their hospitalized family members.

Table 4.16: Response on medical covers

Type of Medical Cover	Number	Percent
NHIF	67	84.0
Other	8	10.0
None	5	6.0
Total	80	100.0

Table 4.16 illustrates the type of medical insurance family heads had. Majority (84%) of the respondents families were covered by National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) which is a government medical scheme that covers all the people in the country at a very low rate of monthly payment. The majority said that they are covered with NHIF because it's easy to pay for it monthly and for those who were in employment it was a must to be covered by NHIF since the payments were deducted directly from the salary. Each of the family heads paid the insurance cover on their own.

A key informant from Eluche sub-ward noted:

“...NHIF is good since we only pay 500 ksh every month...when we go to deliver it we don't pay anything since they only ask for an active account of NHIF.”

Also the cover has no limit of dependents in the family. About 10% of the respondents were covered by other insurance companies' for example jubilee insurance and most teachers were covered by AON and was compulsory for them also to be covered by NHIF. Well-being of the family members in terms of health was important since polygynous families had a lot of dependents.

Family heads who had no cover were 6%. They had sick dependents in the family and most of them raised their money through harambee, both spouse's catered for the bills on their own.

4.5.2 Schooling of Children

A polygynous family is dominated by children in the household. The well-being of children in the family was measured by the following levels: children not yet in school, children in primary, children in secondary, children in colleges and universities, children employed and children unemployed.

Table 4.17: Schooling of children

Item	Frequency	Percent
Children not attained school going age.	50	25.0
Children in primary	50	25.0
Children in secondary	40	20.0
Children in colleges and universities	30	15.0
Children employed	20	10.0
Children unemployed	10	5.0
Total N=80	200	100.0

Table 4.17 shows the general number of children by polygynous family heads had in each category. Majority (25%) had children in secondary school, while 5% had children who were unemployed yet they had finished college/ university. Children not yet in schools (25%) had not attained the age of going to school. While other children who were of age and not yet in school were because of health their conditions such as their disability status. In general, 10% of children were employed some formal and others were informal and thus they were of great help in the families. About 5% of children were unemployed because of health status or recently graduated from college/ university. The unemployed children helped in farming/ livestock keeping, taking care of the siblings and participating in family business.

According to this finding, polygynous families tended to rely on the number of children they had. A key respondent supported this by saying:

“...children in a polygynist marriage are highly valued...the more children you have the more wealthy you are viewed...especially when all the children are successful and the younger ones are living a comfortable life.”

In terms of payment of school fees, majority (48%) of both spouses contributed in payment. Table 4.18 shows the person responsible for paying school fees for children in school and colleges/Universities. About 11% of the respondent’s children were paid for school fees by the government and other scholarship programs.

Table 4.18: Payment of children school fees

Item	Number	Percent
Spouse	33	41.0
Both	38	48.0
Other	9	11.0
Total	80	100.0

4.6 Livelihood Activities of Polygynous Families and their Well-being

The fourth objective of the study was the livelihood activities of the polygynous family heads. This is discussed in relation to the following: farming, livestock keeping, business and investments.

4.6.1 Farming

Farming is a socio-economic practice in the study area. Polygynous heads indulge in farming activities that enable them to raise income and food for their families. The main crop planted in the area was sugarcane as their cash crop. Recently the sugar company (Mumias Sugar Company) that was functioning for years collapsed but neighboring sugar companies like Nzoia and Kabararas had taken control of sugarcane farmers. Other crops included maize, beans, sweet potatoes, cassava, and vegetables.

Table 4.19: Response on main crops planted

Crops	Frequency	Percent
Maize	70	31.0
Beans	68	30.0
Sugarcane	76	33.0
Vegetables	13	6.0
N=80	227	100.0

Table 4.19 shows that sugarcane is the most (33%) planted crop in the area and thus the income obtained from the yield could sustain families for a period of time. Other than sugarcane, maize, beans and vegetables were also planted for commercial and household uses. Maize (31%) was also planted in the area as a staple food for the Wanga people. Beans (30%) were planted for home consumption and for commercial. Proportionally, only 6% planted vegetables. Maize, beans and vegetable were marketed locally. Schools, hospitals, prisons need supply of the food stuffs.

A Key Informant, the chief Mung'ang'a sub-ward noted:

“Farmers in this area could not stop planting sugarcane since this was the main cash crop since years back. Though the farmers had experienced a lot of challenges since Mumias sugar collapsed, we were very lucky to have other sugar companies (Nzoia and Kabarar) come in and take over sugarcane farming activities in the area. With the help of the government, farmers were able to get what they lost before the company collapsed.”

The researcher further sought to find out whether the yield obtained was enough to sustain them to the next harvest.

Table 4.20: Harvest Sustainability

Item	Number	Percent
Surplus	33	41.0
Buying	47	59.0
Total	80	100.0

The findings show that majority (59%) of yield did not sustain them to the next harvest and thus they had to buy food. This implied that they had to find other means to obtain food for the families. The surplus food (41%) did not sustain them to the next harvest fully. A key respondent from Eluche sub-ward said:

“Families grow day by day, year by year, maize, beans, millet and other crops planted for family use are not sufficient to be used the following year...this is a polygynous family and living in a homestead where extended family is...communal sharing is the key aspect in the families”

The income found in farming is as shown in table 4.21.

Table 4.21: Respondents seasonal income earned from farming.

Income	Number	Percent
10,000-19,000	26	32.0
20,000-40,000	19	24.0
50,000-70,000	22	28.0
80,000 and Above	13	16.0
Total	80	100.0

Table 4.21 shows the findings of income earned by farm produce after every seasonal harvest. Majority (28%) of the polygynous family heads earned ksh 50,000-70,000 after every seasonal harvest. This was in addition of their other payments attained either when one was in formal employment or casual. Above 80,000 Kenyan shillings were received by only 16% of the respondents. The amount of money from the farm produce depended on the quantity of the output. This also was determined by the pre-planting

preparations of the farmer. If they used improved seeds, chemical fertilizers or organic fertilizer and how they planted the crops.

4.6.2 Livestock Keeping

A part from crop farming in the area, respondents were also asked to state whether they practiced livestock keeping as a source of income. The response on livestock keeping was 100% from the polygynous family heads. Livestock was kept for family use and also for commercial purposes. The respondents were further asked to state the types of livestock they kept. Their responses were recorded in Table 4.22.

Table 4.22: Response on types of livestock

Type of livestock	Frequency	Percent
Cattle	75	48.0
Poultry	68	43.0
Bee hives	4	3.0
Fish	10	6.0
N=80	157	100.0

Majority (48%) kept cattle as their source of income and domestic use. There were different types of cows kept by the respondents. Some were improved cows and others local cattle. About 43% of the respondents kept poultry for commercial purposes and domestic use. Some had both broilers and layers for business and home use and others had local poultry or both. Only 3% of the respondents who practiced bee keeping. About 6% of the respondents had fish ponds in their homes and others went fishing in the rivers in area. A Key Informant, a village elder from Eluche sub-ward noted:

“Wanga people are very good in livestock keeping...a cattle is highly kept by the polygynous families. They are used to produce milk, sold to slaughter houses and a sign of wealth too. Cattle are kept also for dowry payment for the wives and married daughters dowry in the families....on the other hand a family or home cannot miss a chicken in the homestead actually it’s a taboo... a week cannot end without solving a case on either poultry or cattle.”

From the livestock keeping, the researcher found out the approximate income earned from the sales each month and presented the responses in Table 4.23.

Table 4.23: Monthly income earned from livestock keeping

Income	Number	Percent
10,000-19,000	24	30.0
20,000-40,000	33	41.0
50,000-70,000	16	20.0
80,000 and Above	7	9.0
Total	80	100.0

The findings of Table 4.23 revealed that majority (41%) of polygynous family heads earned 20,000-40,000 Kenyan shillings per month from livestock sales. The least (9%) earned above 80,000 Kenyan shillings. This category of people are the ones who had improved cattle's. A key respondent from Mung'ang'a sub-ward said:

“Nowadays there are so many dairy factories that we sell our surplus milk and they pasteurize the milk...I keep more than 5 cross breed dairy cows that produce more than 15 liters of milk in a day...I can't use all of that...I also have layers and broiler chicken that give a lot of eggs...most of the time I get orders from hospitals and private schools to supply milk and eggs.”

4.6.3 Business

Business is another livelihood activity that the polygynous family heads engage themselves for the purpose of well-being of their families.

Table 4.24: Main type of business

Type of business	Frequency	Percent
Sole proprietorship	35	56.0
Partnership	28	44.0
N=80	63	100.0

The findings implied that majority (56%) of polygynous family heads owned business that are driven by themselves, while 44% had business with other people. Most of the business in partnership were carried out by the respondents since they belonged to a ‘chama’ or a round table group. The business in partnership yielded profit that was invested then they used to divide among themselves at the end of every year. Sole proprietorship (56%) enabled the heads to have food stuffs shops, supermarkets, ‘sukari nguru’ business, hardware’s, clothes stales , groceries stalls , plowing carts and also operates posho –mills.

A Key Informant, the chief Eluche sub-ward said:

“...these women belong so many chamas....some of the groups own very good poultry business...they sell a lot of eggs and chicken...some of the business they do is making clean energy stoves(Jiko) and improved ones...The market level is very high and thus they are very hardworking.”

The researcher had to find out the approximate income earned by the business through table 4.25.

Table 4.25: Monthly incomes earned from Business

Income	Frequency	Percent
10,000-19,000	24	38
20,000-40,000	19	30
50,000-70,000	14	22
80,000 Above	6	10
N=80	63	100.0

Findings of table 4.25 shows that, majority (38%) earned ksh 10,000-19,000 every month while only 10% of the polygynous family heads business earned above ksh 80,000 every month from their business. The 10% which earned above ksh 80,000 were partnerships.

4.6.4 Investments

This is a process that involves endowing money for profit.

Table 4.26: Types of investments

Item	Frequency	Percent
Shares	23	16
Sacco	33	23
Banks	39	27
Merry go rounds	48	34
N=80	143	100

Table 4.26 shows that majority (34%) of the respondents invested in merry go rounds also known as chama's. There were a variety of chama's in the area to cater for all the income level of the individuals. The shares were brought by (16%) from sugar companies in the area, especially, Mumias, Kabaras and Nzoia sugar companies.

4.7 Perceptions of Polygynous Family Heads on Polygynous Marriages

The fifth objective of this study was to find the perceptions of polygynous heads on polygynous marriage in the area. These are personal views of the heads. The indicators were: advantages, disadvantages and the future of polygyny.

4.8 Respondents Perception on Advantages of Polygynous Marriage

These are the benefits of polygynous marriage among the polygynous family heads. The researcher wanted to find out the extent to which having more than one wife was advantageous to the family and also if the residents of the County Wards supported the practice of marrying more than one wife.

Table 4.27: Advantages of polygynous marriage.

Item	Number	Percent
Improved social relations	41	51.0
Improved emotions affiliations	22	28.0
Improved standards of living	17	21.0
Total	80	100.0

Table 4.27 shows that the majority (51%) attests to polygyny having improved their social relations in terms of connections with the community, good relation with the family and good relations with the community members. The 28% of the respondents implied that polygyny had improved their mentioned relations in terms of social respect, fulfillment of social obligations and it had made them feel secure and safe in the family. Furthermore, 21% of the respondents show that polygyny had improved their standards of living especially in terms of material provision of food, shelter, assets and capital.

A Key Informant, the chief Eluche sub-ward said:

“polygyny is very good since if a wife dies and she was rich then the man automatically inherits the property and adds to what he has...this helps in taking care of the children left behind...this is not stealing but taking care of wife’s property.”

Marrying more than one wife in the area was something that was carried forward from their fore-fathers and also the Islam Sharia Law that allowed them to marry up to four wives. Naksomboon (2013) asserted that a marriage institution is where the wives share information and experiences in the community, with this, the man’s social status is embraced. Bhalotra (2012) concurred with Naksomboon (2013) by indicating that women were good in agriculture thus food production in the family was assured.

The women had to give their own views why they married a polygynous man.

Table 4.28: Reasons for marrying a polygynous man

Item	Frequency	Percent
Golden ager	6	20.0
Health issues	4	13.0
Abusive previous marriage	8	27.0
Wealth	12	40.0
Total	30	100

The findings show that, majority (40%) of women married a polygynous man because of wealth. This was because they tend to see the future of the children and the families where they come from. A man with wealth is a sign that dowry will be paid and the woman will live a comfortable life. The least 13% of the women got married to a polygynous man because they were disabled and no man was approaching them rather than a polygynous man.

A female adult key respondent from Mung'ang'a sub- ward said:

“...I am paraplegic, I use a wheelchair but I have all the organs that any other woman have...I have feelings too...I got married to a man who is 63 years and I am 42 years now with one child...he saved my social life and I am happily married as his 5th wife.”

4.8.1 Respondents Perception on Disadvantages of Polygynous Marriages

These are the weaknesses of polygynous marriages. The shortcomings were categorized as followed:

Table 4.29: Disadvantages of polygynous marriages

Item	Number	Percent
Jealousy/ Hatred	33	41.0
Witchcraft	22	28.0
Dependency	25	31.0
Total	80	100.0

Table 4.29 shows that the majority a (41%) of the respondents asserted that jealousy/ hatred is what is killing polygyny. Jealousy is mostly among the women themselves. Sometimes they pretend a lot that everything is okay yet the man can see. Witchcraft which was a supernatural practice that 28% of the respondents believed to cause favors among the polygynous men and also men used witchcraft to make the wives not to leave them. Dependency was also a big challenge in the polygynous family. The reliance of a specific head of family's represented by 31%. This implied that most women depend on the men

on everything even if they could help out, they tended to keep for themselves so that they could help their families.

A Key Informant, the chief Mung'ang'a sub-ward said:

“Jealousy and hatred are the main problems even if all the women were treated equally. This affects children from all the wives since if the mothers have cold war then children will not be fully free with each other. Witchcraft is also a problem in the polygynous marriages. The reason behind it is for women to get more attention or favor from the husband. In some families, the man is the sole bread winner. The wives and children fully depend on him. This makes the man to work tirelessly to be able to sustain his family. Even if the wives are working, they cannot support their husbands in raising the children or providing basic needs for the family.”

These views are consistent with the findings of (Safiyanu, 2014) who asserted that the Islam religion practice of polygyny has challenges especially to the polygynous man who is viewed to be the head and thus the provider of the whole family.

4.8.2 Respondent Perception on the Future of Polygyny

The researcher found out the forthcoming of polygyny in this current society.

Table 4.30: Future of Polygyny

Item	Number	Percent
Stop	29	36.0
Continue	38	48.0
Other	13	16.0
Total	80	100.0

The findings of this table indicate that the majority (48%) viewed polygyny to be continued and enhanced among the Wanga people while 36% of respondents opposed the practice. The respondents who did not know their stand were represented by 16%.

Most of the respondents were positive about polygyny being endorsed in the future since it's a marriage institution that every person wished in life. Some respondents viewed polygyny collapsing due to sexual transmitted disease like HIV/STI and other related diseases.

A Key Informant, the village elder from Mung'ang'a sub-ward said:

“polygyny should continue to be encouraged since the population of women is higher than men...since it is legalized now in Kenya, there is nothing to hide for men...if a woman agrees to be a second, third, fourth or fifth wife, please marry her”

4.9 Conclusion

On the characteristics of polygynous families the findings established that majority of Wanga men married two wives. The reason behind it was the rise in economy and Islamic law of marrying women who could be taken good care of. Concerning age of respondents, polygynous heads aged (40-49 years) practiced the higher rate of polygyny. Basing on the marital status, all (100%) of the men were married in polygynous families even though they were once widowed they don't stay for long without being remarried, while most women who were widowed, they never got remarried, again after their husbands died.

On the well-being of polygynous marriages Health and children education was discussed immensely to bring out the well-being aspect of the polygynous heads. On assets, land and properties came out strongly as the possessions of the family heads. On the livelihood activities, farming, livestock keeping, business and investments were the indicators.

The finding on the perceptions of polygynous heads on polygynous marriages was based on: advantages and disadvantages of polygyny and the future of polygyny in the days to come. The respondents were comfortable and contented in polygynous marriages though the expression of some challenges in the marriage were witchcraft (28%), jealousy/hatred (41%) and dependency (31%) were experienced.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The main aim of the study was to find out the factors that sustain the institution of polygyny and their effect on family well-being among the Wanga people of Western Kenya.

The study sought to determine the merits of the practice of marrying many wives among the Wanga people of Western Kenya. The study was based on the Wanga people who were found in Kakamega County, Mumias East sub-county, East Wanga Ward, Eluche and Mung'ang'a sub-wards. Data was collected through interview scheduled of 80 polygynous family heads and 4 Key Informants. The study adopted purposive- snowball sampling method.

The background of the study was laid upon by the literature review. It focused on the characteristics of polygynous families, the role of assets in influencing the well-being of polygynous families, the well-being of polygynous families, the livelihood activities and their well-being of polygynous families and finally the perceptions of polygynous family heads on polygynous marriages. The research was based on structural functionalism theory and social action theory. Snowball sampling was adopted in sampling the respondents.

Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the coded raw data into themes and concepts. Data analysis was done by SPSS and presented using frequency tables. The recommendations of the study were derived from the findings established by the researcher. The findings were summarized according to the objectives as explained below.

5.1.1 Characteristics of Polygynous Families

The research findings showed that majority (92.5%) of polygynous heads were married while 7.5% of the respondents were widowed. Those widowed were women since they never got remarried after their husbands died. The women refused to be remarried because of old age, health or by choice. It was also established that the majority men (40%) had married only two wives compared to 8% who had married more than five wives. Marrying wives was by choice of men and since majority of them were Muslims, they are allowed to marry upto four wives. On the age of respondents, majority (36%) of men were aged 40-

49 years while majority women (40%) were of aged 30-39 . The study also revealed a majority (66.3%) of respondents belonged to Islam religion compared to 33.7% of respondents who belonged to Christianity. Polygynous family heads who were the majority followed strictly the holy book of Quran (Sura 4:3) especially the verses that concerned polygyny. On determining the dependents of the family heads, the majority (75%) were children and relatives were 22.5% as dependents of the family heads. The relatives were both from the wife and husband sides, especially, siblings who were in school and parents. In determining the level of education, the majority (37.5%) of polygynous heads had completed upper primary level which meant that according to the Kenyan education system they had attained the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E) while 13.5% 18% of family heads had never gone to school.

The researcher found out that the family heads had different occupations. A majority (47.5%) of polygynous practiced farming and livestock, followed by 30% who were in business while 16.2% were casual and 6.3 % were in formal employment.

5.1.2 The Role of Assets in Influencing the Well-being of Polygynous Families

On assets, land and property determined the well-being of the family. Majority (51%) of the polygynous heads owned 3-5 acres of land while 15% of the respondents owned above 10 acres. Properties owned by the polygynous men included houses. Majority (48%) of the respondents owned permanent houses as main house while 52% of the respondents owned semi-permanent houses. On vehicles, 28% of the respondents owned commercial vehicles, example lorry, pick-up, tractors and Nissans for passengers travel. On water sources, 39% of the respondents had bore -holes at homes for frequent water supply for family and domestic use.

5.1.3 The Impact of Health of Family and Schooling of Children on Well-Being of Polygynous Families

This was determined by health of the family and education of children. On health of the respondents the majority (84%) had used NHIF Medical scheme to cover their families. Additionally, 10% of the respondents used other insurance covers especially AON since

the family heads were teachers. Teachers in Kenya only use AON and NHIF medical covers. The least (6%) did not have any cover for the family members.

On schooling of children, their children went to school and the parents were determined to take the children to higher educational ladder for them to achieve what their parents had not achieved in education.

The researchers found out that majority (25%) of children in school were in primary level, while 5% of the children were unemployed. The unemployed children had recently finished college or universities or they were unemployed due to health reasons. The children not yet in school (25%) had not reached school going age thus they were fully dependent to the parents. Employed children 10% they were both employed formal or informal and they contributed to the well-being by helping their parents especially financially.

5.1.4 Livelihood Activities of Polygynous Families and their Well-Being

The next indicator of the well-being was livelihood and income. In farming, majority (33%) of the crop planted in the acres was sugarcane as a cash crop follow closely by maize (31%) then beans 30%. For maize and beans, they used them for domestic use and commercial too. Vegetables also scored 6% where they planted variety of vegetables and sold to schools, hospitals, prisons and on markets.

On livestock keeping, cattle were kept by a majority (48%) followed by poultry (43%). The cattle kept were improved dairy for milk. The cattle products included milk, meat and also the skin which were sold to get income. On poultry, most of them keep improved one for the sake of their produce which were eggs and meat. Bee keeping is not common in the area since it had only 3% respondents.

Business practice was a livelihood for the polygynous heads. The majority (56%) are sole proprietors while 44% are partnership. For sole proprietors, shops, supermarkets, groceries, plowing carts while for partnership the business was mostly from women groups. Majority earned 10,000-19,000 Kenyan shillings every month from the business. On investments,

majority 27% invested on chamas while 23% invested on Saccos. This enabled them to do their savings and borrowing money too for the well-being of their families.

5.1.5 Perception of Polygynous Heads on Polygynous Marriages

This were personal views about polygynous marriage from the respondents. On the advantages of polygynous marriages, majority (51%) attested that it improved their social relations in terms of connections with the community, good relation with the family and good relations with the community members. About 28% of the respondents improved their emotional affiliation in terms of social respect, fulfillment of social obligations and it had made them feel secure and safe in the family. Additionally, 21% of the respondents showed that polygyny has improved their standards of living especially in terms of material provision of food, shelter, assets and capital. These findings conquered with Oguda (2012) and Kyalo (2012) who found out that a man had a reason for marrying several wives.

The findings showed that challenges encountered by polygynous heads included: witchcraft, jealousy and hatred among wives and children. A majority (41%) of the respondents said that the main challenge of polygyny was jealousy and hatred among women. Witchcraft noted by 28% which was believed to be done by polygynous heads especially women so that they can get favors from their husbands. Dependency as a challenge had 31% of the respondents since the family heads had dependents from siblings or the extended families.

The findings on the future of polygyny showed that the majority (48%) of the respondents wished this practice to continue in the community and even to be adopted by other communities. On the contrary, 36% of the respondents wished to stop due to spread of HIV/AIDS and other chronic diseases.

5.2 Conclusion

The findings led to the conclusion that the institution of polygyny contributes to the well-being of families. Polygynous marriages were upheld among the Wanga people of Western

Kenya since they were no disputes among the wives and children. It is an assumption that the practice was there and it should be continued by future generations.

5.3 Recommendations

The findings of this study have portrayed important implications on the factors that sustain the institution of polygyny and their effects on family well-being. Based on these findings, we make the following recommendations that could ensure the well-being of polygynous families studied. Recommendations for further research are also provided.

5.3.1 Policy Recommendations

- a. Since most of the polygynous families practice farming and livestock keeping as their livelihoods, the Ministry of agriculture represented by the Kakamega County, should organize workshops and seminars for farmers so that they can increase their produce both for home consumption and sale.
- b. Financial institutions in the area should assist the families to make savings and take credit to enhance their livelihoods.

5.3.2 Recommendations for Further Research

- a. There is need for a study to be undertaken on the well-being and challenges faced by polygynous families in Western Kenya.
- b. There is need for a study to be carried out in other Counties on the factors that sustain the institution of polygyny and their effects on its well-being
- c. There is need for a study to be undertaken on the role of the government especially its policies in supporting polygynous marriages in the study area and Kenya as a whole.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR POLYGYNOUS FAMILY HEADS

My name is Saumu Brigid Ashuma, a post-graduate student at the University of Nairobi. I am carrying out a study on **Factors that sustain the institution of polygyny and their effect on family well-being among the Wanga people of Western Kenya**. The information collected will be used for research purpose only and will be confidential. I will highly appreciate your participation.

Name of the Sub- Ward:

SECTION A: Characteristics of Polygynous Families

I want to interview you on matters related to marriages of more wives. I will start by asking:

1. Gender
Male ()
Female ()
2. Marital status
Married ()
Widowed ()
3. **For men**, how many wives do you have? Or you had?
Two ()
Three ()
Four ()
Above Five ()
4. **For women**, what is your position among your husband's wives?
First ()
Second ()
Third ()
Fourth ()
Above fifth ()
5. What is your Age? (Years)
Below 29 ()

30-39 ()

40-49 ()

50-59 ()

60 and above ()

6. What is your religious affiliation?

Christian () Other (Specify)

Muslim ()

7. . What is your highest level of education?

None ()

Lower primary (level 1-4) ()

Upper primary (level 5-8) ()

Secondary ()

University/ college ()

8. How many children or dependents' do you have?

	Self	1 st wife	2 nd wife	3 rd wife	4 th wife and above
Number of children					
Number of dependents					

8 What is your occupation?

Item	Self	1 st wife	2 nd wife	3 rd wife	4 th wife and above
Formal employment					
Casual employment					
Business					
Farming / Livestock keeping					
Retiree					

9 What is your approximate income per month from this occupation?

	Self	Spouse
Below 9999		
10,0001-19,000		
20,001-40,000		
50,000-99,999		

SECTION B: The role of Assets in influencing the well-being of polygynous families.

10 . Do you own land?

Yes ()

No ()

If yes, what is your size of land?

2 and below Acres ()

3-5 Acres ()

6-9 Acres ()

10 and above Acres ()

11 . Which of the following properties do you have for the family?

Item	Tick appropriately
Type of houses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent • Semi-permanent • Local/ Traditional 	
Posho- Mill	
Tractor	
Vehicle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial • Personal 	
Commercial buildings	
Plots	
Borehole / piped water connection	
Carts	

SECTION C: The well-being of polygynous families.

a.) Health of family members

12. Are you covered by health insurance scheme?

Yes () No ()

If yes, which one?

.....

13. Have members of the family become sick or very sick?

Yes () No ()

If yes, was any of them hospitalized?

Yes () No ()

14. Approximately, how much money did you spent on their treatment in ksh?

.....

15. How did you raise the money?

Self () Spouse () Both () Other ()

b) Schooling of children

17. What is the status of schooling of your children?

Item	Number
Children not yet in school	
Children in primary	
Children in secondary	
Children in colleges and universities	
Children employed	
Children unemployed	

18. Who pays school fees for the children?

Self () Spouse () Both () Other ()

19. Is some of the school aged children not in school? Why?

.....

.....

SECTION D: Livelihoods activities and their well-being of polygynous families.

a) Farming

20. Do you practice farming?

Yes () No ()

If yes, which crops did you plant last season?

.....

21. Of the crops you planted last season, which of the following inputs did you use?

Item	Maize	Beans	Other
Improved seeds			
Chemical fertilizers			
Planted in lines			
Yield obtained			

22. Was the yield obtained sufficient to last your family to the next harvest?

Yes () No ()

If no, how did you obtain food to reach your family to next harvest?

.....

.....

.....

23. Of the yield, was there surplus?

Yes () No ()

If yes, how much did you sell?

Maize (bags/ kgs).....

Beans (bags, kgs).....

Other.....

24. If you sold some of your produce in cash, how much money did you earn?

Below 9,999 ()

10, 0001-19,000 ()

20,001-40,000 ()

50,000 99,999 ()

Above 100,000 ()

a) Livestock

25. Do you keep livestock?

Yes () No ()

a.) If yes, which type of livestock do you keep?

Type of livestock	No. local	No. Improved
Cattle(cows,goats,sheeps)		
Poultry		
Bee hives		
Fish farming		

b.) Approximate, how much income do you get from their products?

9,999 9and below ()

10, 0001-19,000 ()

20,001-40,000 ()

50,000 99,999 ()

100,000and above ()

b) Business

26. Do you practice business for a living?

Yes () No ()

a.) If yes, what type of business do you practice?

Sole proprietorship () Partnership ()

b.) Do you have employees?

Yes () No ()

If yes, how many?

.....

c.) What is the approximate value of stock of your business?

9,999 9 and below ()

10, 0001-19,000 ()

20,001-40,000 ()

50,000 99,999 ()

100,000 and above ()

d.) Did your business yield profit last month?

Yes () No ()

If yes, approximate how much in ksh?

.....

c) Investments

27. Have you made investments for your family?

Yes () No ()

If yes, which one?

.....

...

If No, why?

.....

28. Do you belong to any income generating groups?

Yes () No ()

a.) If yes, which one do you belong?

Merry go round () Chamas () Sacco ()

b.) How has it helped you to sustain family living?

.....

.....

.....

SECTION E: Perception of polygynous family heads on polygynous marriages

a) Advantages of polygyny

29. Why did you marry the wives?

.....

.....

30. **For women**, why did you marry a polygynous man?

.....
.....
.....

31. Are the wives in one homestead?

Yes () No ()

If no why?

.....
.....
.....

32. What other three advantages of being in a polygynous marriage?

i).....
.....
ii).....
.....
iii).....
.....

33. What are three disadvantages of being in a polygynous marriage

i).....
.....
ii).....
.....
iii).....
.....

34. What is your view of the future of polygyny with the increase in societal changes?

.....
.....
.....

Thank You!

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS

My name is Saumu Brigid Ashuma, a post-graduate student at the University of Nairobi. I am carrying out a study **Factors that sustain the institution of polygyny and their effect on family well-being among the Wanga people of Western Kenya**. The information collected will be used for research purpose only and will be confidential. I will highly appreciate your participation.

Section A : Demographic Factors

Age of respondent	
Gender	
Sub-county	
Ward	
Position	

Kindly, comment on the following:

1. What are the characteristics of polygynous families?

.....
.....
.....

2. What are the assets of polygynous families?

.....
.....
.....

3. Explain the livelihood activities of polygynous families on:

a.) Farming

.....
.....
.....

b.)Livestock

.....
.....
.....

c.)Business

.....
.....
.....

d.)Investments

.....
.....
.....

4. Explain the indicators of well-being in a polygynous marriage

.....
.....
.....

5. What are your perceptions on advantages and disadvantages of polygynous marriages?

.....
.....
.....

6.What is your view on the future of polygyny?

.....

APPENDIX III: THE LUHYA TRIBES IN KENYA

Luhya sub-tribe	Luhya languages	Region
Bukusu	Lubukusu	Bungoma (Kenya)
Idakho	Lwidakho	Kakamega (Kenya)
Isukha	Lwisukha	Kakamega (Kenya)
Kabras	Lukabarasi	Kakamega (Kenya)
Khayo	Olukhayo	Busia (Kenya)
Kisa	Olushisa	Butere/Mumias (Kenya)
Maragoli	Lulogooli	Maragoli, Vihiga (Kenya)
Marachi	Olumarachi/Bumarachi	Busia (Kenya)
Marama	Olumarama	Butere/Mumias (Kenya)
Banyale	Lunyala(east), Lunya(west)	Busia (Kenya)
Banyole	Lonyole(Uganda),Olunyore (Kenya)	Vihiga (Kenya),Tororo (Uganda)
Basamia	Lusamia	Busia, (Uganda)
Tachoni	Lutachoni	Lugari, Malava (Kenya)
Tiriki	Lutirichi	Vihiga (Kenya)
Tsotso	Olutsotso	Kakamega (Kenya)
Bawanga	Oluwanga	Butere/Mumias (Kenya)