

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Intra-Cultural Issues on Polygamous Marriages in Ghana: A Case Study of the People of Anlo in the Volta Region

Emmanuel KodwoAmissah

Lecturer, Department of Art Education, University of Education, Winneba Ghana

Theresa Amporful

Teacher, Senya Senior High School, Senya Bereku, Central Region, Ghana

Abstract:

Polygamous marriage is persistently prevalent in several sub-Saharan countries and remains a socio-cultural issue in the world. A considerable body of research has concluded that polygamy has impacts on children's and wives' psychological, social and family functioning but not much was done on this in Ghana. From a case study of the people of Anlo in the Volta Region of Ghana, this study aimed to examine the socio-cultural issues on polygamous marriages among the people and its impact on the family especially on women and children. A random sample of 61 respondents from 61 different families (31 senior high school children and 30 women) were used. Structured questionnaires on socio-demographics, socio-cultural practices of polygamy, family relationship qualities and four psychosocial scales were used to elicit responses from subjects for analysis. The results indicated high prevalence of polygamy in the study area with inverse relationship between education and attitudinal acceptance of polygamy. The study concludes that polygamy affects family quality; creating acrimony, tension, jealousy and competition among co-wives and step-siblings. It also affects psychosocial life of the family members, predominantly in women and children. Targeted sensitization, awareness of the implications of polygamy, educational and economic empowerment are key steps to address this, while focusing on children as the potential key entry points to addressing this in the next generations.

Keywords: Polygamy, family, exogamy, Anlo, marriage

1. Introduction

Marriage as a socio-cultural institution, aims at continuity of culture and society. Polygamy remains common in much of Africa. In several Sub-Saharan countries, more than 10% of married women are into polygamous union (Tertilt, 2005 as cited in Fenske, 2011). Even though, polygamy has been practiced all over the world for many centuries, there is an argument whether polygamy is beneficial or detrimental to the society. The institution of marriage encompasses far more than sexual relations, but extends to a host of other functions, such as property rights, family alliances and the raising of children. Marriage, also called matrimony or wedlock, is a socially or ritually recognized union between spouses that establish rights and obligations between them, between them and their children, and between them and their in-laws. The definition of marriage varies according to different cultures, but it is principally an institution in which interpersonal relationships, usually sexual, are acknowledged. Marriage is the oldest social institution ordained by God to give legitimacy to sexual relationship and reproduction for legitimate children (Parker, 2007). The institution of marriage is influenced by the culture and the society, and the form it takes as part and parcel of the culture of that people. Individuals may marry for several reasons, including legal, social, libidinal, emotional, financial, spiritual, and religious purposes. Whom they marry may be influenced by socially determined rules of incest, prescriptive marriage rules, parental choice and individual desire. In some cases, arranged marriage, child marriage, polygamy, and sometimes forced marriage, may be practiced as a cultural tradition.

In Ghana, marriage is constructed according to the custom of ethnic group of which the couple live. Usually this includes a religious ceremony and a civic registration ceremony commonly known as a wedding. Generally, marriage in Ghana is recognized as a union between a man and a woman with the knowledge of both families of the bride and the groom. It is a union between a man and a woman who agree to live together as husband and wife and have gone through all procedures recognized in the society for such a purpose. The purpose of marriage is to provide companionship for the couple, the means to offer support for each other, and a legitimate avenue for sexual satisfaction and reproduction.

Culturally, in accepting a potential spouse, certain important conditions are required. Members of each family are screened for incurable or contagious diseases, criminal backgrounds, violent behaviour, respectfulness, employment status or standard of living, and religious background. Generally, many people prefer a spouse who is hardworking and respectful, peaceful (not violent or do not advocate violence), and preferably of the same or compatible religious background. Christians

and Muslims do not generally intermarry. Generally, there are three primary criteria in classifying the marriage process in Ghana, these are customary, civic registration and religious marriages

Customary marriage forms the basis of all three types. Enquiries are made by both families to ensure the family of the prospective son-in-law or daughter-in-law is respected. Usually violent behaviour, immorality, which craft, incurable or contagious diseases, and insanity in a family are not approved. The customary rites or marriage ceremony, as practiced by the woman's ethnic group, are performed by the man's head of family, by the father or uncle or any member of the family who is recognized by the community as honorable. Presentation and acceptance of drinks and gifts known as dowry bride wealth signifies the consent of family members to the marriage. It is also a sign or a token of support for the marriage and is used to compensate the parent for the loss of the services of their daughter. The dowry or the bride wealth does not represent the prize at which the woman has been sold to the man. Customary marriages differ among societies. Despite the differences, drinks and cash are widely used. Although cash is involved in the northern part of Ghana, drinks and cola nuts are also used. One characteristic of customary marriage is that it allows polygamy thus it allows the man to marry more than one woman. However, Christians who complete a religious marriage usually abide by the biblical principle of "one man one wife". Religious marriage involves administration of the marital union by a Priest, Religious Minister or Imam. However, the customary marriage and the registration of the marriage in the court or district metropolitan assembly should occur before Christian marriage.

Polygamy has coexisted with a primitive system of agriculture where women do most of the farm works (Boserup, 1970). In a society of subsistence food production, a large number of children are needed to provide labour force for each family, instances where the average rate of child mortality is very high, the presence of children for continuity of the family line, through male heirs is paramount. Amankwa (1997) argues that polygamy reduces the risk of infant mortality through a complex web of intermediate factors such as prolonged breastfeeding and longer durations of the inter-birth intervals. In Africa, children are valued assets for their labour, emotional support, and old-age security for parents. The practice of polygamy however, becomes socially acceptable and it is considered the surest means of achieving societal ideals or goals. In a society where its subsistence depends on agricultural produce, and production relies on manpower of the household, specifically on the production value or capacity of the women, "each family tends to use its surplus income to increase its labour force; that is the number of co-wives and children in the household (Clignet 1979 as cited in Klomegah, 1997). Typically, when a man gets a new wife, he clears a field for her, and later her children to cultivate. Any interested male who could afford to pay additional bride-wealth could, therefore, increase his household. This meant that women were valued not only for their roles in the subsistence economy, but also for the reproduction of children to reinforce the family labour force (Omar, 2011).

It is not only a mistake to view polygamy and extra-marital affairs as the same, but it is also a mistake to view marriage in terms of sexual relations alone. The institution of marriage is influenced by the culture and the society, and the form it takes as part and parcel of the culture of that people. Polygamy is a highly contested practice and lends itself to wide spread misunderstandings. Polygamy can best be understood when it is examined in the light of it being an integral part of the holistic culture and society. Polygamy almost exclusively takes the form of one husband with multiple wives.

The social significance of polygamy can be understood better when one considers the economic and cultural functions that it plays in the society. Polygamy serves as a means to maintain the line of birth and rebirth which is endless. This is to empower and strengthen the family as well as the status of the old patriarch through the growth in family size and the expansion of conjugal linkages to other clans. This perhaps might be the central focus for polygamous marriage among the indigenes of Anlo.

There are three basic facts of human existence "birth, copulation and death." in every society, according to (Hillman 1975 as cited in Klomegah, 1997). These three basic facts seek to devise and construct a complex set of social institutions, with their corresponding network of interrelationships. For example, the outcome of a mating is children. Mating therefore, requires certain rights and obligations; therefore children must be protected, raised or socialized and integrated into the society. Similarly, there must be provisions made in order to fill the gaps that may be left by death, pertaining to the rules of inheritance. The prospect of begetting additional children and heirs for a man's family and group who will remember him after death might be one of the most important motivating reasons for taking on additional wives. All these social provisions are geared toward ensuring the continuity of the society.

Polygamy remains a socio-cultural issue in Ghana as well as in many countries around the world. Some are of the view that polygamy is helpful to career women who might have to work late, and then go home and take care of the husband and the children. On the contrary majority believe that polygamy is inappropriate as it has a huge negative effect to the family. It is undeniable that polygamous marriages often times are associated with higher risk of low self-esteem, depression, stress, quarrels, neglect and emotional instability. The conflict among wives usually arises in management of the family. Despite the Human Rights guarantees of Chapter 5 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana (Republic of Ghana, 1993) and the impact of modernity diminishing some obsolete customs, a woman faces a raft of abuses through the inequalities and vulnerabilities imposed through customary, polygamous marriage.

Polygamy has been a common practice in a typical Anlo tradition in the Volta Region but research into this and to document the issues associated with polygamous marriage in regards to wives and their children in this setting is lacking. This

study therefore aimed to examine the socio-cultural issues on polygamous marriages among the people of Anlo in the Volta Region of Ghana and the impact on the family, particularly women and children.

It is in light of the foregoing, that, the premise of this research is being developed, to explore the relevance of polygamy in the light of modernization in Anlo. To consider, the relevance of polygamy, in a continuously changing world where present societal norms and demands concerning the family's roles and functions is slapping on the face. Then also, consider the practice of polygamy and its impact on the people of Anlo.

2. Methodology

A mixed research approach with a cross-sectional descriptive survey research design was used in this study. The descriptive survey design involves the collection of data in order to answer questions concerning the current state of a phenomenon (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). According to Fraenkel & Wallen, (2009), descriptive survey produces a good number of responses from numerous people at a time, provides a meaningful picture of events and seeks to explain people's perception and behaviour on the basis of information obtained at a point in time. A descriptive survey design was used with greater confidence with regards to particular questions which are of special interest and value to the researcher. The design aims at determining the nature of a situation as it exists at the time of study (Creswell, 1994). In addition, using mixed method study (both qualitative and quantitative techniques) helped the researcher to probe more on issues.

The theoretical population for the study includes all polygamous and monogamous families including teachers, lawyers, security officers, youth groups, traditional and religious leaders, artisans among others from the study area. The accessible population for the study comprise women (30) in both polygamous and monogamous marriage and children (31). The sample for the study is made up of 61 respondents (31 Senior High Students and 30 women) of 61 different families. A sample is partial, piece, or segment that is representative of a whole. Observing the characteristics of the sample, certain inferences about the characteristics of the population was drawn. Purposive sampling was used for the study. Thus, certain elements of the population are deliberately selected on the judgment of the researcher. Frankel and Wallen, 2009, refer to sampling as any group of people from which information is obtained. They further categorize purposive sampling into two. First category being those that the researcher believes to be representatives of the population while the second category being those who possess the necessary information about the population. From the above submission, purposive sampling was used to solicit data from the research. As such, the researcher targets those persons and places that could provide the most detailed information needed from addressing the research questions of this study.

The study involved primary data collection through questionnaire by employing research instruments. The instruments used for the study were self-designed questionnaire and a number of standardised psychometric and anthropological scales. A questionnaire was used because large quantity of data was collected in a relatively short period of time, a wide variety of information was obtained from participants particularly where questions had multiple choices, data was collected from participants in distant places and in the absence of the researcher and it is a much quicker means of collecting data from relatively large population or sample (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Thomas, 2003)). High score of 25- 29 means satisfied. Average score of 20 – 24 implies average life satisfaction. Slightly below average of 15 – 19 persons are slightly below average in life satisfaction. Below average of 10 – 14 persons are Dissatisfied (low life satisfaction). Far below average score of 5 – 9 implies Extremely Dissatisfied. Individuals who score in this range are usually extremely unhappy with their current life often due to dissatisfaction in multiple areas of life. Whatever the reason for the very low level of life satisfaction, it may be that the help of others are needed – a friend or family member, counseling with a member of the clergy, or help from a psychologist or other counselor (Diener et al, 1985).

3. Discussions

3.1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

This section presents the characteristics of personal attributes of the individual respondents. In all 61 respondents consisting of 61 different families were used; 31 children (senior high students) and 30 women. Socio-demographic characteristics of Children

Indicator	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Age of children	31	16	23	18.81	1.922
Father's Age	31	37	71	53.10	7.295
Mother's Age	31	38	57	45.90	5.735

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Age of Children and Their Parents

With the minimum and maximum age 16 and 23 years respectively, the average age of children involved in this study was 18.81. The average ages of the children's parents were 53.10 and 45.90 years for fathers and mothers respectively. The average age of the children used in the study is indicative of the fact that they are children who understand situations and can express what they feel about what they encounter.

Gender	Number	Per cent
Male	23	74.2
Female	8	25.8
Total	31	100

Table 2: Distribution of Children by Gender

Out of the 31 children (Senior High Students) that responded, 23 representing 74.2% forming the majority were males while the remaining 8, representing 25.8% were females.

Education	Number	Per cent
None	8	25.8
MSLC	10	32.3
Basic	4	12.9
GCE/Sec/SHS	3	9.7
Vocational/Technical/Commercial	6	19.4
Total	31	100.0

Table 3: Educational Background of Mothers of Children

Education level of mothers was generally low with only 10 (32.3%) and 6(19.4%) having middle school leaving certificate and Vocational/Technical/Commercial certificates respectively. None had higher education and 25.8% did not have any form of formal education.

Education	Number	Percent
None	2	6.5
MSLC	9	29.0
Basic	3	9.7
GCE/Sec/SHS	8	25.8
Vocational/Technical/ Commercial	4	12.9
Cert A	2	6.5
Dip/Degree	3	9.7
Total	31	100.0

Table 4: Educational Background of Fathers of Children

From the results of Table 4, only 2 representing (6.5%) were formally unschooled, 9, representing 29.0% and 3 representing 9.7% respective attained middle school and higher education with 2 representing 6.5% having professional post-secondary teaching qualification.

Occupation	Number	Percent
None	1	3.2
Farming	2	6.5
Trading	26	83.9
Skilled Informal	1	3.2
Formal/Professional	1	3.2
Total	31	100.0

Table 5: Economic Characteristics of Mothers of Children

The result revealed that only 1, representing (3.2%) of the mothers of the responding children each was not economically engaged, skilled informal and formal. Majority of 26 representing (83.9%) of the mothers engaged in buying and selling of various items as means of sustaining their family economically.

Occupation	Number	Percent
Farming	8	25.8
Trading	12	38.7
Skilled Informal	5	16.1
Formal/Professional	6	19.4
Total	31	100.0

Table 6: Economic characteristics of fathers of children

As high as 12 fathers representing 38.7% engaged in trading as their main sources of income while 8 representing 25.8% were into farming. Those into skilled informal and formal/professional sectors were 5 representing 16.1% and 6 representing 19.4% respectively. A random selection of 31 Senior High Students indicated that perhaps more than half (54.8%) of them were from polygamous homes. The socio-demographic information from tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 indicate that the level of education of the children's parents was generally low in the study and was much lower in women. This perhaps could account for why the main occupation of the indigenes is petty trading with low economic status. This might imply that there may be some socio-demographic imperatives that occasionally encourage the practice of polygamy (Al-Krenawi, 2013).

3.2. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Women

Educational Level	Number	Percent
None	7	23.3
MSLC	4	13.3
Basic school	7	23.3
GCE/Secondary	2	6.7
Diploma/Degree	10	33.3
Total	30	100.0

Table 7: Educational Level of the Women Respondents

Majority of 10 women representing (33.3%) surveyed, had higher education of diploma/degree but 7 representing 23.3% of them were not formally educated at all. The least was those having General Certificate Examination/Secondary school certificate as their highest educational attainment.

Economic Activity	Number	Percent
Farming	5	16.6
Trading	14	46.7
Formal/Professional	11	36.7
Total	30	100.0

Table 8: Economic Activities of the Women Respondents

Out of the 30 women, 14 been the majority (46.7%) were traders followed by 11 representing (36.7%) in formal/professional sectors while the remaining 5, representing 16.6% were farmers.

Economic Status	Number	Percent
Not good at all	1	3.3
Not Good	5	16.7
Somehow Good	21	70.0
Very good	3	10.0
Total	30	100.0

Table 9: Perceived Present Economic Status of Women

According to the results of Table 9, 70% of the women stated that their present economic status was moderately good while 16.7% said it was not good but one person affirmed that it was not good at all. This result perhaps may explain the economic status of the women respondents.

Age	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Dev
Women's Age	30	24	70	42.13	2.415	13.227
Women' Age at marriage	30	20	36	26.77	0.845	4.629
Husband's Age	30	28	93	48.93	3.274	17.935
Husband's age at marriage	30	22	53	33.27	1.593	8.725

Table 10: Descriptive Statistics of the Age of Women And Their Spouses

The result indicated that the women included in the study were just slightly less old than their husbands on an average (means of 42.13 and 48.93 for women and men respectively). The result also revealed that women married earlier (average of 26.77years) than men (average of 33.27 years).

3.3. Nature and Practice of Polygamy in the Study Area

Family Type	Number	Percent
Monogamy	14	45.2
Polygamy	17	54.8
Total	31	100.0

Table 11: The Family Type of Children

The result of table 11 indicated the high prevalence rate of polygamy in the study. Out of the 31 senior high students selected randomly, 17(54.8%) of them were from polygamous home. However, all (100%) children stated that they will not practice polygamy and cited reasons such as the economy is hard, hatred in the family and religious reasons for their decision not to practice polygamy.

Wives in one house	Number	Percent
Children		
No	15	88.2
Yes	2	11.8
Total	17	100.0
Women		
No	10	66.7
Yes	5	33.3
Total	15	100

Table 12: Residence Arrangement in Polygamy Reported by Children and Women

It is very obvious from the result of Table 12 that majority of fathers practicing polygamy prefer their wives to live in separate homes as reported by both children and women from polygamous family. Perhaps fathers of children in polygamous homes want to control acrimony among their wives.

Marital Position	Number	Percent
First	8	47.1
Second	8	47.1
Third	1	5.9
Fourth and above	0	0
Total	17	100

Table 13: Marital Position of Women in Polygamy

The result clearly indicated that out of the 17 polygamous families, no child from a home where the father had four or more wives. However 8 women indicating (47.1%) each of the mothers were first or second wives with only one person been the third wife (Table 13).

Any Advantage	Number	Percent
Yes	6	19.4
No	25	80.6
Total	31	100.0

Table 14: Children's View on the Advantages of Polygamy

Twenty-five (25) out of the 31 children, consisting of 80.6% indicated that they did not see any advantage of polygamy. Six or 19.4% of the children, however, opined that polygamy is advantageous (Table 14) which includes economic support from step mother and siblings, socialisation and learning of how to live mutually with opponents. Education could perhaps possibly prevent children from engaging in polygamy because 80.6% of them stated that they did not see any concrete advantage of polygamy (Table 14) and all (100%) of them absolutely confirmed that they will not practice polygamy due to serious adverse implications associated with it. Some disadvantages listed were conflicts, hardship, economic burden, hatred or resentment, too many children, and lack of love or connection with the father, resources or money, and lack of role model and some religious ones stated that it is a sin.

Marriage Type	Number	Percent
Women		
Monogamy	15	50.0
Polygamy	15	50.0
Total	30	100.0

Table 15: Marriage Type of Women Respondents

There were equal number of women in polygamy and monogamy and 18 (60%) was used to investigate how polygamous marriages were contracted in the study area (Table 15). Fifty (50%) of women reported that they contracted polygamous marriage. These results clearly imply that polygamy is prevalent in the study area and could persist to the next generation since it is a socio-culturally accepted practice in many tribes and communities in Africa (Anderson, 2000).

Blood Relation	Number	Percent
None	19	63.3
Father's side	1	3.3
Mother's side	6	20.0
Both sides	1	3.3
Distant relation	3	10.0
Total	30	100.0

Table 16: Blood Relationships between Women and Their Husbands

Majority (63.3%) of the women stated that they had no blood relation with their husbands but 6 (20%) married from their mother's lineage while half of this number (3, 10%) had distant relation with their husbands. One each married from their father's side and both father and mother sides. The finding in Table 16 revealed that 11(36.7%) of women for some reasons were practicing endogamy (married from their family lineage) which sometimes occurs within the extended family via first cousins, in others it is within the ethnic group. Even-though Anlo's marriage culture does not encourage marriage between members of the same lineage or between any two people known to be blood-related to some degree, the relatively dispersed residence pattern of the Anlo kin and ties that are further removed and easily forgotten account for possible marriages between uterine kin without any repercussions (Nukunya, 1969).

Among those women in monogamy, majority of them (36.67%) had no blood relation with their husbands but 13.33% of them related to their husbands at their mother's side. Although 26.67% of women in polygamy had no blood relation with their spouses, a general observation of Fig 1 disclosed that women in polygamous marriages were more blood related than those in monogamy.

Perhaps this concept of intra-lineage marriage in the study area influenced polygamy because table 16 disclosed that comparatively, women in polygamous marriages were more blood related than those in monogamy. Since marriage is part of customary practices, several factors might influence the nature of polygamy whereby a woman unwillingly or willingly marry (and even a married) man related to her by blood. Another key factor which perhaps might influence the nature and practice of polygamy is the marital background of the parents of the concerned spouses.

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Dev.
Woman's number of children	30	1	20	4.30	0.649	3.554
Father's number of wives	30	1	4	2.03	0.176	0.964
Husband's number of wives	30	1	3	1.77	0.157	0.858
Husband's number of children	30	1	15	5.80	0.709	3.881

Table 17: Descriptive Statistics of Number of Children and Wives Reported by Women

The result indicated that the minimum number of children for both woman and her husband was one but varied in the maximum number of children. On average, a woman had 4 children while the husband had 6 due to polygamy. The result also indicated that on average, a woman's husband had almost the same number of wives as that of her father but could get to a maximum of four for the father and three for the husband (Table 17).

3.4. Number of Children of Husbands by Marriage Type and Influence of Father's Marriage Type on That of the Daughter

In considering the number of children by marriage type, the study apparently indicated that polygamous men had almost twice the number of children as that of those practicing monogamous marriage. Although about 33.33% of women in

monogamy were daughters of polygamous fathers, a comparative observation of the result in study showed that most of the women practicing polygamy (43.33%) had their fathers also practicing polygamy. The study indicates that a woman is likely to practice polygamy if her father is polygamous. This is because as the home is the first and major place of socialization, children acquire socio-cultural practices and behaviours from their parents and the sons and daughters mostly imitate the father and mother respectively.

3.5. Payment and Acceptance of Bride Price by Marriage Type

The study showed that it was only very few instances (twice in polygamy) where bride prices were not paid and accepted before women entered into marriage. Thus majority of the marriages either polygamous or monogamous was built on payment and acceptance of bride prices and this was slightly common in monogamy than polygamy. Payment and acceptance of bride price is the main and inevitable attribute of traditional marriage and the finding of this study explicitly indicated that majority (46.67% and 43.33% for monogamy and polygamy respectively) of the marriages were based on the acceptance of bride price by the family elders. This further re-affirmed that community accepts polygamy as integrate part of their cultural marital practice. The few marriages without bride price will not be regarded as true marriage but either boy-friend-girl friend relationship or cohabiting and the man will face charges by traditional elders should something bad happen to the woman. Comparatively, however, twice the number of women in polygamy as those in monogamy whose bride price were not paid implied that it is more common and easier for a polygamous man to add a "wife" than a monogamous man.

3.6. Agreement Level of Women to Polygamy by Marriage Type

All the women in monogamy disagreed with polygamous marriage in all circumstances as against those in polygamy where only very few of them disagreed. Most (33.33%) of those in polygamy confessed that they agreed to polygamy only under certain conditions while 10% of such women agreed absolutely to polygamous marriage. All the women in monogamy disagreed to polygamous marriage irrespective of any prevailing circumstance. Most women in polygamy agreed to polygamy. This is a clear-cut indication that entry into polygamous marriage in the study area is not a family or peer pressure or ancestral or cultural demands but rather a wilful decision from both the man and the woman. This endorsed findings elsewhere, including Al-Krenawi (2013) indicating that some proportion of women would agree to enter into polygamy if offered such an option. Previous studies also found out that many women living in polygamy support plural marriage and appear to find happiness and satisfaction within their family structures.

3.7. Factors Contributing to Polygamy

Why Entered Into Polygamy	Disagree N (%)	Agree Somehow (%)	Agree N (%)
I was the first wife and cannot divorce him	6(40)	3(20)	6(40)
I do not know that he had wife/wives already before I married	9(60)	1(6.7)	5(33.3)
I love him and did not mind to be a co-wife	6(40)	5(33.3)	4(26.7)
There is shortage of men	13(86.7)	1(6.7)	1(6.7)
I just need a man in my life	8(20)	1(6.7)	6(40)
He is a good life-partner for me in most respects	3(20)	4(26.7)	8(53.3)
I just need economic support from a wealthy/resourced man	9(60)	3(20)	3(20)
To share the burden of work with co-wives	11(73.3)	4(26.7)	0(0)
To have additional socio-economic and child rearing supports from co-wives	12(80)	2(13.3)	1(6.7)
Peer influence	10(66.7)	3(20)	2(13.3)
Ancestors' decision to marry him	14(93.3)	1(6.7)	0(0)
Family pressure to marry him	9(60)	2(13.3)	4(26.7)
Due to unplanned pregnancy for him prior to the marriage	6(40)	1(6.7)	8(53.3)
Just like him to be my husband	4(26.7)	2(13.3)	9(60)
He is very handsome/attractive	2(13.3)	3(20)	10(66.7)
My first husband died and I just need a man in my life	13(86.7)	0(0)	2(13.3)
My first husband died and have to marry him as next of kin as custom demands	15(100)	0(0)	0(0)

Table 18: Reasons Why Women Entered In Polygamous Marriage

With the exception of three of the factors listed; death of first husband and marrying of next of kin by custom demands, ancestors' decision and sharing of labour with co-wife/wives, women agreed absolutely or somehow to a number of factors as the driving elements into polygamous marriages. Thus more than half (50%) of the 15 women into polygamous either absolutely or somehow agreed to six factors as the reasons why they entered into polygamy. These factors were: been

the first wife and cannot divorce my husband (60%), love him and did not mind to be a co-wife (60%), a good life-partner in most respects (80%), unplanned pregnancy for him prior to the marriage (60%), just like him to be my husband (73.3%) and due to handsomeness/attractiveness (86.7%). From the findings in Table 18, 60% of women in polygamy said that they have no other option than to cope with the polygamous marriage because they were the first wife and cannot divorce their husbands due to addition of other wife/wives. This decision could be due to the fact that socio-culturally, divorce is not acceptable and more often than not women are blamed for the divorce.

This in addition to wives' strong allegiances to their husbands (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997) and perhaps socio-economic support being received from the husband, first wives find it very difficult to divorce their husbands when the man decides to add another woman. Other women (60%) in polygamy also said that they love the man and did not mind to be a co-wife. Thus although it is the man that made the marital advances, the non-first wife could overturn the offer upon realising that the man is married but love seemed to be too strong to hinder the polygamy. This is further buttressed where as high as 80% of women in polygamy declared that the man is a good life-partner in most respects, while others just like the man to be their husband (73.3%) and some due to handsomeness/attractiveness (86.7%). The unplanned pregnancy for him prior to marriage as reported by 60% of polygamous women is a vivid indication of extramarital affairs by married men. Because although it is completely and socio-culturally wrong for a Ghanaian woman to be found in extramarital affairs, the society and culture does not completely disdain a married man engaging in extramarital affairs since polygyny is socio-culturally embraced. If not abortion (which is a taboo in some tribes), the next option to the woman if she is pregnant for the married man is to enter into polygamous marriage as co-wife.

This implies that polygamy could also be reduced if men could be sexually discipline and avoid extramarital affairs. One of these key factors was reflection/sign of potency. This is to state that within typical socio-cultural setting and believes, the potency of man is measured by the number of wives and children he has. As reviewed in the literatures, this study also reiterated that the social status and prestige accorded to polygamous men lure some men into polygamy for social recognition and respect by peers, especially among rural less educated folks. Perhaps, intense sexual gratification especially in young men and other tradition believes could account for why majority of the men contract polygamy to satisfy their sexual drives. For instance in some traditional belief and practiced by some Anlos, it is a taboo for a man to have an affair with a woman during her menstrual period. This compelled some men into polygamy so that they could have a woman for their sexual satisfaction during instances when it is forbidden to have affair with the other wife/wives.

3.8. Effect Family Type of Children's Relationship with Their Father

This assertion did not indicate much difference in the relationship children built with their fathers by the family type. No child from monogamous family was very dissatisfied but it was revealed that children from polygamous family had slightly better relationship with their fathers. Polygamous marriages often lead to family dissolution thus separating the children from one of the primary caregivers and leaving the children vulnerable whereby children who are left behind may experience feelings of grief and abandonment, and lower levels of parental supervision (Exposito, 2016).

The study, however, failed to indicate any apparent relationship between children and their parents with regards to the type of family. This might be possible because all children sampled were second and third year senior high students who for sometimes spent most of their time in school away from their parents and interacting presently more often with their colleagues and teachers.

Family Type	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Monogamy	14	26.36	4.634	1.239	0.127	0.90
Polygamy	17	26.18	2.921	0.708		

Table 19: A T-Test Analysis of General Family Functioning of Children by family type

df = 21.06, t-critical = 1.96, p = 0.05

In t-test analysis, if the t-test is less than or equal to t-critical (or p-value greater than 0.05) the null hypothesis is retained which implies that there is no significant difference in GFF between the two groups of children. On the other hand, a t-test value greater than the t-critical value (or p-value less than 0.05) implies a significant difference exists between the two groups of pupils variables. The result of Table 19 indicated that the family types of children had no statistically significant impact on the general family functioning reported by children but slightly higher in monogamy (mean = 26.36) than polygamy (mean = 26.18) at $t < 1.96$, $p > 0.05$. This implies that the effect of the nature and practice of polygamy within the study area on the general family functioning per the children's judgments is the same irrespective of the family type of children. This finding also means that in both monogamous and polygamous families within the study area and perhaps due to socio-cultural believes systems; children were not involved in planning family activities and decision making. However, large family size in polygamy may offer some yet insignificant assistance emotionally and socially to children

Family Type	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Monogamy	14	19.79	7.547	2.017	0.817	0.424
Polygamy	17	17.94	4.175	1.013		

Table 20: A T-Test Comparison of the Effect of Family Type on Life Satisfaction of Children
Df = 19.38, T-Critical = 1.96, P = 0.05

The life satisfaction of children from monogamous households is greater than those from polygamous home but the output of the t-test established that this difference is not statistically significant (mean = 19.79, SE = 2.017 for monogamy and mean = 17.94, SE = 1.013 for polygamy) at $t_{cal}(19.38) < 1.96$, $p > 0.05$ (Table 16). Although not significant, children from monogamous households has greater (mean = 19.79) life satisfaction than those from polygamous home (17.94). This finding is an indication that children from monogamous were within the average score, implying average life satisfaction. To them most of their domains of lives were satisfied but have one or two areas where he/she would like to see large improvements. On the contrary, polygamous-home children were slightly below average in life satisfaction where they usually have small but significant problems in several areas of their lives, or have many areas that are doing fine but one area that represents a substantial problem for them (Diener et al, 1985). Thus monogamy provides more life fulfilling environment for children than polygamy but this was not significant and may need an improvement to support child development.

3.9. Effects of Polygamy on Women

A statistical analysis to find out if there is any significant difference in the marriage satisfaction of women per their marriage type is presented in Table 21 below.

Marriage Type	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Monogamy	15	43.73	5.161	1.333	1.67	0.11
Polygamy	15	38.53	10.914	2.818		

Table 21: A T-Test Comparison of the Effect of Marriage Type on Marriage Satisfaction of Women
Df = 28, T-Critical = 1.96, P = 0.05

The result indicated that women in monogamy were more satisfied with their marriage (mean = 43.73, SE = 1.333) than their counterparts in polygamous marriage (mean = 38.53, SE = 2.818) but this was not statistically significant at 0.05 significance level where $t_{cal}(28) < 1.96$. The psychological or psychosocial and sociological performances of women in monogamy were greater than women in polygamy, indicating less subjective well-being for polygamous women (Al-Krenawi, 2013). The entire family setting in polygamous marriage may create discomfort, conflict, competition and unsupportive behaviours from co-wives and her children will definitely result in lower life satisfaction, marital satisfaction and self-esteem.

Marriage Type	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Monogamy	15	33.07	3.035	0.784	3.86	0.01
Polygamy	15	29.27	2.314	0.597		

Table 22: A T-Test Analysis of the Effect of Marriage Type on General Family Functioning of Women
Df = 28, T-Critical = 1.96, P = 0.05

Establishing statistically significant difference between the two groups of women with independent-samples t-test, the result in Table 20 pointed out that women in monogamous marriage experienced significantly greater GFF (mean = 33.07, SE = 0.784) as compared to those engaged in polygamous marriage (mean = 29.27, SE = 0.597), $t(28) = 3.86$, $t_{cal} > 1.96$, $p < 0.05$. With regards to general family functioning, Table 4.24 pointed out that women in monogamous marriage experienced significantly greater GFF (mean = 33.07, SE = 0.784) as compared to those engaged in polygamous marriage (mean = 29.27, SE = 0.597), $t(28) = 3.86$, $t_{cal} > 1.96$, $p < 0.05$.

The higher scores on this scale indicated more problems in the monogamous family's general functioning than polygamous family. This finding aligned with that of the children as well and implies that despite the numerous negative impacts of polygamy, it may a mutual platform to offer some economic, emotional and social supports to wives and children from co-wives and step-siblings. As result, the general family functioning could be lower, indicating less problems in the family which is possible when there is mutual understanding and cooperation among co-wives and children. Thus just as a large number of children and wives caused higher probability of conflicts and competition in the family, the reverse is also possible where high number of socio-economically established individuals with remarkable cooperation could lessen burdens for family members.

Majority (7) of the women were first (oldest or senior) wives and only one (1) wife out of the 15 wives in polygamous marriage was the fourth and above wife (newest wife). The results of the study indicated that marital position in polygamy also influenced the self-esteem, life satisfaction and marriage satisfaction of women and general family function but not in a regular pattern for all the psychometric indicators. Satisfaction in marriage and perhaps in life of married women depend to a large extent on the amount of support received from their husbands. Even-though previous study by Gwanfogbe et al (1997) found out that senior wives receive less support from husbands and were significantly less happy and less satisfied with their lives than junior wives, this could also vary depending on the behaviour of the wife.

Preference to support junior (newest) wives will be high initially but the general behaviour, emotional, moral and economic supports from the wives to the husband and at times reproduction will eventually determine who the husband will love most and in turn support. That is to state that new wife does not necessarily mean best or better wife with best or better character. This could account for why the second wives had the greatest marriage satisfaction while the third wives were least in the marriage satisfaction and the newest wife had the highest average life satisfaction and self-esteem but encountered most problems on general family functioning (greatest GFF). As stated earlier, competition among the co-wives to satisfy and support the husband as a sign of love may also influence the amount of support received from their husbands which will reflect in the wives' worthiness. This study also indicated that residency arrangement of wives in polygamous marriage should also be considered to ensure satisfactory marriage and non-problematic general family functioning. The results indicated that wives in polygamy that live in separate houses had greater satisfaction and less problem in general family functioning but slightly lower life satisfaction and self-esteem than those wives that lived on the same compound.

Marriage Type	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Monogamy	15	24.93	3.348	0.864	3.95	0.00
Polygamy	15	18.80	4.989	1.288		

Table 23: A T-Test Comparison of the Effect of Marriage Type on Self-Esteem of Women
Df = 28, T-Critical = 1.96, P = 0.05

Statistical comparison of the self-esteem of women from monogamous and polygamous marriages exposed higher and statistically significant performance in the self-esteem of women of from monogamous marriage (mean = 24.93, SE= 0.864) than women who contracted polygamy (mean = 18.80, SE = 1.288) since $t_{cal}(28) > 1.96$ and $p < 0.05$ (Table 23). To evaluate the effect of the type of marriage of a woman on her life satisfaction, a t-test analysis was performed to compare the mean scores of life satisfaction between the two groups of women (see Table 26).

Marriage Type	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Monogamy	15	29.33	3.063	0.791	4.34	0.00
Polygamy	15	20.67	7.108	1.835		

Table 24: A T-Test Comparison of the Effect of Marriage Type on Life Satisfaction of Women
Df = 19.03, T-Critical = 1.96, P = 0.05

The result of the analysis statistically indicated that there was a significant difference in the life satisfaction of the two groups of women and that those women from monogamous (mean = 29.33) felt better satisfied in life than those into polygamous marriage (mean = 20.69) at 5% significance level and $t_{cal}(19.03) > 1.96$, $p < 0.05$ (Table 24).

Turning to marital quality, with reference to this research [Table 16 and 24] shows that polygamous marriages are more likely than monogamous marriages to be affected by spousal conflict, tension and jealousy. In a polygamous home, the father/husband will have to share everything of his ranging from time and private time, economic and emotional supports, physical attachment, favour, and attention with all his multiple wives and large number of children equitably. Since equity (including sexual satisfaction) will be very difficult, jealousy, anxiety, depression, acrimony and other psychological and psychosocial effects will certainly emerge. Even in instances where there is a formalized "egalitarian" rotation of domestic and conjugal duties, husbands may still display emotional and sexual favouritism as well as divide and conquer strategies to prevent their wives and children from uniting in collective passive resistance (Cignet, 1970; Dorjahn, 1988).

Marital position	N	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std. Error
First	7	19.86	12	31	2.798
Second	5	19.40	11	30	3.501
Third	2	21.50	19	24	2.500
Fourth and above	1	31.00	31	31	.

Table 25: Life Satisfaction of Women in Polygamy by Marital Position

Majority of the women were first wives. The newest wife (fourth and above marital position) had the highest average life satisfaction score of 31.00 while the second wives ranked lowest at 19.40 (Table 25). Satisfaction in marriage and perhaps in life of married women depend to a large extent on the amount of support received from their husbands. Even-though previous study by Gwanfogbe et al (1997) found out that senior wives receive less support from husbands and were significantly less happy and less satisfied with their lives than junior wives, this could also vary depending on the behaviour of the wife. Preference to support junior (newest) wives will be high initially but the general behaviour, emotional, moral and economic supports from the wives to the husband and at times reproduction will eventually determine who the husband will love most and in turn support. That is to state that new wife does not necessarily mean best or better wife with best or better character. This could account for why the second wives had the greatest marriage satisfaction while the third wives were least in the marriage satisfaction.

Relation and perception	Yes, n(%)	No, n(%)	Total, n(%)
Jealousy and competition among co-wives	13(86.7)	2(13.3)	15(100)
Feel inferior to co-wife/wives	3(20)	12(80)	15(100)
Husband displays sexual satisfaction favouritism	6(40)	9(60)	15(100)
Tension created among children/wives in resource distribution	9(60)	6(40)	15(100)
Acrimony among co-wife and step siblings	11(73.3)	4(26.7)	15(100)

Table 26: The Relation and Perception of a Wife with Her Co-Wife/Wives

Out of the 15 women in the polygamy, 13(86.7%) of them said that they were experiencing jealousy and competition with their co-wife/wives but 80% of them felt that they were not inferior to their co-wife/wives. Majority of them (60%) confirmed that their husbands displayed no sexual satisfaction favouritism. Sixty percent (60%) of them stated having to handle tension created during distribution of resources among them (wives) or their children. A high percent (73.3%) of them concluded that there were acrimonies among them the wives and step siblings (Table 22).

The present study disclosed significant differences between women in polygamous and monogamous marriages in the following parameters: life satisfaction, marital satisfaction and self-esteem. The psychological or psychosocial and sociological performances of women in monogamy were greater than women in polygamy, indicating less subjective well-being for polygamous women (Al-Krenawi, 2013). The entire family setting in polygamous marriage may create discomfort, conflict, competition and unsupportive behaviours from co-wives and her children will definitely result in lower life satisfaction, marital satisfaction and self-esteem. Turning to marital quality, research shows that polygamous marriages are more likely than monogamous marriages to be affected by spousal conflict, tension and jealous. In a polygamous home, the father/husband will have to share everything of his ranging from time and private time, economic and emotional supports, physical attachment, favour, and attention with all his multiple wives and large number of children equitably. Since equity (including sexual satisfaction) will be very difficult, jealousy, anxiety, depression, acrimony and other psychological and psychosocial effects will certainly emerge.

Even in instances where there is a formalized "egalitarian" rotation of domestic and conjugal duties, husbands may still display emotional and sexual favouritism as well as divide and conquer' strategies to prevent their wives and children from uniting in collective passive resistance (Clignet, 1970; Dorjahn, 1988). This creates and imposes dilemma, tension and competition among wives and children as evident in Table 26 on the relation and perception of a wife with co-wife/wives. Competition could be most fierce around a husband's investment in the education, health and attainment of their children. This could create imbalances that both co-wives and their respective children will not like, resulting in psychological and psychosocial dissatisfactions in polygamous households. Moreover, in some polygamous communities, women's self-worthiness is linked to the number of children they bear and, therefore, having time with their husband is also critical to promote their status within the family and community (Al-Krenawi, 2013). So the practice of polygamy has implications for entire familial structures and function, and for current and future families and communities.

4. Conclusions

The study investigated socio-cultural issues on polygamous marriages among the Anlos in the Volta Region of Ghana and the impact on the family. It could be concluded in this research that polygamy is still prevalent and remains a socio-cultural problem, particularly in the sub-Saharan countries. The study revealed that although it is socio-culturally accepted, people enter into polygamous marriage not under any cultural ultimatum but wilfully and influenced by socio-cultural, socio-economic and demographic factors. For instance, education and attitudinal acceptance of polygamy are inversely correlated. The nature of the practice of polygamy common in the area is exogamy. Polygamous men prefer to separate their residence from the wives and also keep the wives in separate houses.

Another obvious issue emerging on the nature of practicing polygamy is the influence of marital structures of parents on polygamy where sons and daughters from polygamous homes are most likely to practice polygamy. Polygamous family structures therefore have the socio-cultural effect of furthering those structures that lead to poverty and to other psychosocial problems. Polygamy affects both family quality (creating acrimony among children, tension among children and co-wives, jealousy and competition among co-wives and step-siblings) and psychosocial life of the family members. These effects of polygamy are mostly detrimental to women and children. Polygamy may compromise a woman's maternal and wifely roles which reduces a woman's social statuses, reflecting in the marriage satisfaction, self-esteem and life satisfaction. Because per socio-cultural principle, mother's maternal roles and identity enables them to interact mostly with children, their psychosocial effects easily reflect in the children. Since men benefit most from the polygamous union, their marriage satisfaction might be high but economic burden and general family function could affect them in other psychosocial dimensions such as overall life satisfaction and self-esteem as revealed in this study. The devastation that women and, by extension, children experience from polygamy can be far reaching.

In conclusion, community opinion leaders, stakeholders, social work practitioners and policy makers need to be aware of the psychosocial, psychological, familial and economic effects of polygamy on women and children with the associated long-term implications. Awareness of the implications of polygamy is the first step in addressing them. The findings in the present study are therefore potentially powerful.

5. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the key findings in this research.

As the first step in improving a community's ability to address polygamy and its associated problems, optimal and socio-culturally acceptable strategies should be determined to transfer the key findings and the knowledge to the community.

The study clearly established more negative than positive effects of polygamy on wives and children. Hence awareness creation and sensitization of the indigenes on the effects of polygamy should be initiated and implemented by and through opinion leaders, social work practitioners, non-governmental organizations, other stakeholders and policy makers.

Although very difficult but practically possible, both men and women practicing polygamy are encouraged to promote mutual understanding and cooperation to minimize the tension, jealousy and acrimonies in the family. This will also reduce other psychological and psychosocial negative effects of polygamy.

Realising the tremendous negative impacts on women and children, women should try as much as possible to abstain from entering polygamous marriage.

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