

**ECONOMIC RESOURCES DISTRIBUTION AND WOMEN WELFARE IN  
POLYGYNOUS MUSLIM FAMILIES IN LIKONI SUB-COUNTY, MOMBASA  
COUNTY, KENYA**

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for the Master of Arts Degree in Women, Gender and Development Studies of Egerton  
University**

**EGERTON UNIVERSITY**

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## DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

### Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for award of degree in this or any other institution.


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### Recommendation

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my daughters, Umukulthum Thany Hassan and Maisarah Thany Hassan for teaching me resilience.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Muslim community embraces polygyny as a form of marriage because it is allowed by the Islamic religion. As a result, polygyny is rampant among the Muslim community in Kenya. While the Islamic religion allows men to marry up to four wives, the impact of this on the welfare of the women has not been studied. This study sought to assess the influence of polygyny on distribution of economic resources to wives in the families. The specific objectives of the study were to examine the distribution of economic resources; analyse the living standard of women, and investigate the psychological welfare of women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County. This is important in understanding gender equality in polygynous marriages. The study utilized data that was collected through a survey with wives in polygynous Muslim families and interviews with Muslim religious leaders in the study area. Clustered and snowball sampling techniques were used to select the sample of polygynous families. The population was subdivided into four clusters in line with the four wards in Likoni and 10 polygynous families selected from each ward using the snowball sampling technique to form a total sample of 40 families. Data was collected from wives in these families using semi-structured questionnaires. One Muslim religious leader was selected purposively from each of the four clusters for interviewing purposes. Analysis of the data using the Cronbach alpha method showed that the questionnaire was reliable with an alpha value of 0.729. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the survey data and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to perform the analysis. The thematic content analysis technique was used to analyse the interview data. Results showed that more than 50% of women in polygynous Muslim families are subjected to unfair distribution of economic resources. Results also showed that women in polygynous union suffer from psychological challenges such as loss of self-esteem and anxiety due to financial difficulties, conflicts with other wives, and reduced intimacy with husbands. Based on these findings, the study recommends that policymakers strengthen policy that gives women equal rights to own property. Programmes that encourage women participation in economic activities and interventions for addressing the psychological challenges of the women are necessary.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

ANOVA-	Analysis of Variance
FGDs –	Focus Group Discussions
KNBS-	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
NACOSTI-	Education for all
SE –	Self -esteem
SPSS-	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SSA –	Sub- Saharan Africa
SWLS –	Satisfaction with life scale

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Despite significant progress towards gender equality in the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), there still exist gender gaps that limit the social and economic empowerment of women. Ihalainen et al. (2020) show that women in the region are still disadvantaged because of the existing gender disparities. Several factors have been identified as key to propagation of gender inequality. The most cited include low participation of women in labour markets, access to education, religion and social norms (Dilli et al. 2018; Ihalainene et al., 2020). However, little attention is focused on understanding gender inequality at a micro-level, that is, at family level (Pedavic et al., 2019). According to Pedavic et al. (2019), gender inequality is more persistent at family level and a focus on gender inequality at macro level may not give a true reflection of gender inequality.

Families differ in structure as a result of different types of marriages. The most common types of marriages are monogamy where one husband is married to one wife and polygamy, which involves marrying multiple spouses. Polygyny is the most prevalent form of polygamy, which is defined as a man marrying multiple wives at the same time (Bahari et al., 2021). It is estimated that approximately 2% of the global population live in polygynous families (Kramer, 2020). This marital structure continues to persist even in countries where it has been outlawed. For instance, in the United States of America, there are an estimated 150,000 people living in polygynous unions despite the illegal nature of this marital arrangement (Faucon, 2014).

Polygyny is still rampant in SSA despite socioeconomic transformation of families in the region. According to Arthi and Fenske (2018), about 25% of women in SSA are in polygynous marriage and about the same proportion of children are born in polygynous family setups. Much of the prevalence of polygyny in the region is attributed to social and cultural factors (Lawson et al., 2015). Religion is also one of the factors contributing to polygyny in the region. In particular, the Islamic marriage law and practices permit polygyny (Moosa, 2009). For instance, Islam permits polygyny as long as the husband treats all wives equitably. Hence, the interaction of religion and culture affect marriage and family structure, which may be sources of gender equality or inequality.

Kenya is one of the most economically unequal countries in the SSA not only from an economic sense, but also from a gender perspective. Kenya ranks number 39 on the list of most unequal societies in the world (United Nations Development Programme, 2024). This is worrying since the country has recorded phenomenal social and economic progress in recent decades. The most worrying is the huge gender disparities in income. Employment is the most common source of income disparities between genders. According to the World Bank (2019), female labour participation rate in Kenya is about 62% compared to 68% for male. The unemployment rates for female and male gender in 2017 were 15.3% and 7.9%, respectively. About 52.3% of the wage and salaried employees are men compared to 21.4% female (World Bank, 2019). These statistics reveal huge gender inequality in income because employment is the primary source of income for most families.

Polygyny is legal and almost practiced in all regions in Kenya. It is accepted in almost all communities and, in fact, it is practiced regardless of people's religious affiliation. In some Kenyan communities, polygyny is one of the most distinctive features of marriages. Statistics from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) (2023) indicate that about 10% of the married population in Kenya is polygamous. However, it is argued that polygyny results in undesirable outcomes that negatively affect women. Given the prevalence of polygyny in Kenya, it is expected that women in such marriages are resource poor. This is because a majority of women in polygynous marriages are dependent on their husbands for economic provision.

Family wealth in polygynous marriages is under the control of men (Whitehouse, 2023). The tendency of men neglecting one wife and her family leaves most women impoverished. Wife favouritism make the distribution of resources especially wealth or income unequal (Jansen & Agadjanjan, 2020). Furthermore, poor access to productive economic resources makes it difficult for women to secure their livelihoods as well as those of their children. As a result of lack of individual ownership of assets, women in Kenya are usually unable to access credit for productive activities. These occurrences contribute not only to gender inequality from an economic sense, but also inequality in marriages from a social perspective.

Polygyny is widespread in the coastal region, but disproportionately distributed among counties. Mombasa is one of the counties in the region with the lowest prevalence (1.3%) of polygyny only higher than Taita Taveta (0.9%) (Magadi et al., 2020). Given that Mombasa is cosmopolitan and the most urbanized county in the region, it is expected that it should have

the least prevalence of polygyny. However, 1.3% prevalence could be attributed to high proportion of the population that is Muslim. It could also be attributed to a diverse culture in the city that encourages polygynous unions.

Despite the level of modernity in Mombasa, polygyny is accepted as a form of marriage. At this point, it is important to note that research into gender appreciation of polygyny in the county and the entire coastal region is missing. Therefore, the impact of polygyny on distribution of family wealth among wives and the potential inequality are not well explained in existing literature. This study, therefore, links a small but developing body of knowledge examining the impact of polygyny and resource distribution on Muslim women

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Polygynous unions, where one man has multiple wives, are common in many societies around the world. This form of marriage is widely practiced among the Muslim families. Whereas it is legal in Islamic religion to marry multiple women at ago, polygyny can result in undesirable outcomes that negatively affect the social and economic empowerment of women. The distribution of economic resources within these unions is often unequal and can lead to conflict and dissatisfaction among the wives. Several studies have focused on gender equalities but there is little empirical evidence on how polygyny contributes to inequalities within Polygynous Muslim families. This study therefore sets out to fill that gap with the aim of generating evidence that will aid the development of fair and equitable practices for the distribution of economic resources within polygynous unions and provide legal protection for the wives in these unions.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The general objective was to assess the influence of economic resources distribution in polygynous unions on welfare of women in Likoni Sub-County in Mombasa County, Kenya. This was achieved by the following specific objectives:

- i. To examine the distribution of economic resources in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County.
- ii. To analyse the living standard of women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County.
- iii. To investigate the psychological welfare of women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County.

### **1.3.1 Research Questions**

- i. How are economic resources distributed among women in Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County?
- ii. How does the distribution of economic resources influence the living standard of women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County?
- iii. How does the distribution of economic resources influence the psychological welfare of women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County?

### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

This study was confined to Likoni Sub-County in Mombasa County because this location has high rates of polygyny. The study focused on Muslim families because polygyny is highly prevalent in these families. The study was also confined to the assessment of distribution of family resources among polygynous women and how it affected the wellbeing of these women. Focus on women is largely informed by previous studies that show that women are often disadvantaged when it comes to distribution of resources in families. The study was confined to only the women in polygynous unions who had been married for at least five years because the researcher intended to get women with in-depth experience of polygynous marriages. The study made use of structured questionnaires and interview guide for data collection. It was conducted between June 2023 and December 2023.

### **1.5 Justification of the Study**

Polygynous marriages represent important types of relationships that men choose to have with multiple spouses. Polygyny is a right that is legal from a legislative point of view and religiously correct from an Islamic perspective. Because it enjoys the backing of Islamic marriage law, marriage is expected to elevate women status by not only fulfilling their emotional needs, but also enjoying their husband's wealth. Unfortunately, majority of Muslim women in polygynous marriages lack bargaining power and do not influence decision on resource distribution in the family (Matz, 2016).

The understanding of distribution of economic resources among women in polygynous Muslim marriages is important to enhancing gender equality. The result of the study may be used to highlight key gender issues rising from polygyny and resource distribution, and how these issues affect Muslim women's health and social development. It does not only benefit women, but also men by reducing women dependency on marital property. In addition, output from the study may form crucial input in matrimonial legislation. It may enable the

government to take necessary measures to protect Muslim women's economic rights through a legislative framework that is accepted by all genders.

This study is significant to policy makers in the State Department of Gender and Affirmative Action as well as in the national and county assemblies. The study sheds lights regarding the distribution of resources in polygynous Muslim union and how it shapes the well-being of women in these unions. These findings are useful in informing policies that will enhance the wellbeing of women in these unions.

The study is also of value to practitioners in government, non-governmental and private organizations that deal with gender and women welfare. These organizations can use these findings to inform interventions aimed at improving the welfare of women in polygynous Muslim families.

The study is also useful to Islamic religious leaders as it may inform their approach towards polygynous marriages. The findings may inform the clerics approach to issues like marital counselling and resolution of marital disputes. The findings provide knowledge that will enable the religious leaders to promote proper conduct among polygynous Muslim families.

Lastly, the findings are important to researchers and scholars in the field of women, gender and development studies because it enriches existing literature on welfare of women in polygynous unions. Further, this study provides a strong foundation for future research and establishes an open dialogue on the significance of equality in resource distribution in household development among the polygyny practicing Muslims.

### **1.6 Limitation of the Study**

This study was limited by respondent reservation to provide precise information concerning their marriage experiences. However, intense questioning and examining during data collection improved the precision of data collected. The respondents were also assured of high level of confidentiality and anonymity in handling and reporting the information that they provide.

## **1.7 Definition of Terms**

**Distribution:** The way in which resources are allocated or spread out among wives in polygynous Muslim families

**Economic Resources:** Money, materials and monetizable assets such as land, livestock, and vehicle among others.

**Household:** It is a defined and bounded group of people who live together in the same house Sondra Hale (1995).

**Living Standard:** A measure of access to materials and services that are essential to the physical support of life such as nutrition, shelter, healthcare, and water and sanitation.

**Muslim:** Refers to an individual practicing Islam religion/faith.

**Polygynous family:** The husband, wives, and children.

**Polygyny:** A man marrying multiple wives at the same time.

**Psychological welfare:** A positive mental state characterized by positive emotions, feelings of happiness, and positive relationship.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents an overview of the literature related to polygyny, economic resources distribution, and women welfare. The specific areas covered include distribution of economic resources in polygynous families, material welfare of women in polygynous families, and psychological welfare of women in polygynous families.

#### **2.2 Economic Resources Distribution in Polygynous Families**

Polygyny is strongly embedded in societies and a number of studies have indicated that it is less beneficial to women. For instance, Tertilt (2005) and Schoellman and Tertilt (2006) vehemently object the argument that women benefit economically from polygyny. In particular, Tertilt (2005) and Schoellman and Tertilt (2005) argue that polygyny in SSA represents an important obstacle to economic development of the region for it is oppressive and denies women economic autonomy and opportunities. Green et al. (2009) explain that polygyny encourages early marriage which, according to Ickowitz and Mohanty (2015), is detrimental to women autonomy. Ickowitz and Mohanty hold that polygyny as a social institution encourages differences in access to resources among co-wives and between men and women. Further, Ickowitz and Mohanty explain that polygyny causes differences in access to education which is attributed to early marriage.

Resource distribution is critical to the economic progression and overall well-being of women. Studies have demonstrated that enhancing women's access to economic resources and property ownership enhances the general wellbeing of women (Gaddis et al., 2020). Egalitarian distribution of property between husband and wife as well as between wives is correlated with wife's participation in the making of decisions within the household. Equality in the distribution of economic resources within a marriage also makes women less vulnerable to domestic violence and mistreatment. Gahramanov et al. (2021) found that joint land ownership and joint house ownership by the husband and wife was statistically and negatively associated with domestic violence in Latin American countries. This means that women who owned land and/ or houses jointly with their husband reported fewer cases of domestic violence than their counterparts who did not have ownership to these properties.

Substantive empirical literature on drivers of economic resources distribution among polygynous marriages is limited. Nevertheless, a few studies have indirectly shed light on the

possible factors that condition distribution of economic resources among co-wives. Gibson and Mace (2007) shed light on polygamous family structure in Ethiopia and found that the share of resources among wives in polygynous marriages was associated with the rank of the wives in marriage. The study also established that first wives' children tended to have better educational outcomes compared to the co-wife's children. Results by Gibson and Mace (2007) seem to suggest that educational achievement of children is correlated with the likelihood of disparities in resource distribution since it may be a reflection of the positive economic implication of high educational levels.

Results by Gibson and Mace (2007) were reiterated by Mammen (2009) and Kazianga and Klonner (2009) in studies that were conducted in Côte d'Ivoire and Mali respectively. Mammen (2009) found that polygynously married women were in constant competition for resources. Income distribution among the wives was determined by the rank of the wife. Mammen (2009) explained that the rank of the wives influenced their bargaining power for resources. Kazianga and Klonner (2009) reiterated the finding by Mammen (2009) by indicating that junior wives in Malian polygynous marriages had least bargaining power which explained the extent of their access to resources.

Dunbar et al. (2013) studied intra-household resources distribution with the view of establishing drivers of child poverty among Malawian households. The study established that children command significant share of household resources. However, the study reported that the resource share of children in a household were not sufficient to shield them from poverty. Dunbar et al. (2013) indicated that the number of children in a household influenced the level of their share of household resources. The results can be construed to imply that income distribution to wives may be dependent on the number of children that wives have given birth. The current study sought to build on the findings by Dunbar et al. (2013) in establishing how the number of children per wife determined resource distribution in polygynous families.

In a similar study but focusing on the Ethiopian context, Matz (2016) emphasized how the bargaining power of the wife and her children interacted in determining resources that a wife could consume and invest. According to Matz, the pathway towards higher bargain for family resources by a wife in a polygamous context is her productivity. The study suggested that the wife order determined the mechanism through which the wives-controlled family income. The term wife order refers to the sequence in which wives enter into a polygynous union often denoted by terms like first wife or second wife among others. However, the study

indicated that woman's productivity, measured by their contribution to family income, was significantly associated with her bargaining power for family income which, in turn, influenced resources spent on her household consumption and investment. The conclusion from the study by Matz (2016) is that although wife order is important in explaining the distribution of family income, productivity negates its effect by increasing woman control over resources.

Solanke et al. (2018) applied econometric analysis models in establishing factors that conditioned women access to resources in Gambia, Nigeria and Sierra-Leone. The study found that polygyny explained women access to resources in Nigeria but did not affect Gambian and Sierra Leones women access to resources. In particular, Solanke et al. (2018) associated disparities in women access to resources in polygynous marriages to educational and economic level of women in such marriage structures. In addition, the authors explained that the disparities were possibly explained by disparity in age and wealth between the wives and their men. The study by Solanke et al. (2018) is informative of the crucial socio-economic factors that influence resource distribution among wives and will be instrumental in providing empirical approach to the implementation of the proposed study.

The study by Hidrobo et al. (2019) further established that second and third wives in polygynous marriages contribute more to the family common pot than the first wife yet receive less than the first wife. The study targeted a semi-nomadic pastoralist population in Northern parts of Senegal. In particular, the results showed that polygynous husbands met more than 51% of their first wives resource needs while contribute an average of 46% towards their second and third wives resource needs. On the other hand, second and third wives contribute 48% towards the family common pot while the first wives contribute an average of 42%. Hidrobo et al. (2019) also found that polygynous men do not contribute more than monogamous men to the common pot. These findings demonstrate that unequal distribution of resources is prevalent reality in polygynous marriages, which could be having an adverse impact of the welfare of women in these marriages. The proposed study seeks to determine whether this problem persist among Muslim polygynous families in Likoni Sub-County.

### **2.3 Implication of Polygyny on Living Standard of Women**

Marriages, to a considerable extent, are considered by social economists as imperfect markets. This is in the sense that both men and women participate but unequally. Polygyny

has been cited to be beneficial to men but isolative to women. This implies that polygyny is an institution that isolates women socially, economically and emotionally. To this end, several studies have examined the implication of polygynous family structures on various women welfare constructs. For instance, Tertilt (2005), Gould et al. (2012), and Lawson et al. (2015) examined the socio-cultural and socio-economic effects of polygyny on women. Other studies such as Bove et al. (2013) and Cleuziou (2015) focused on the effect of polygyny on reproductive health of women and Daradkeh et al. (2006), Hamdan et al. (2008), Abbo et al. (2008), and Hinks and Davies (2008) on mental health.

Empirical studies have demonstrated mixed results on socio-economic effect of polygyny. Tertilt (2005) demonstrated that banning of polygyny had a potential of contributing to increased savings and productivity in SSA. The study reported that polygyny results in underdevelopment since it reduces women participation in decision-making. Non-participation in decision-making reduces women economic returns (Tertilt, 2005). In Cote d'Ivoire, Gould et al. (2012) found evidence that polygyny stunted development by reducing investment in children and burdening women. In contrast, Lawson et al. (2015) found no evidence that polygyny is socio-economically harmful to women in Tanzania. Lawson et al. (2015) indicated that co-wives are more likely to benefit from polygyny because polygynous marriages increased their access livelihood-specific forms of wealth. Conclusion drawn from this study is that polygyny may be economically and socially beneficial to women something that the current study sought to cross-validate.

In their study, McCarthy et al. (2016) found that polygyny in Tanzania reduced the agricultural productivity of land by lowering the level of inputs allocated to plots managed by women. Specifically, the study found that plots that were managed by polygynous families were characterized by lower use of fertilizer and use of low-quality uncertified seeds. According to the authors, polygyny reduces the bargaining power of women in a family leading to lower allocation of resources towards their needs. This tends to affect their living standard as lower productivity leads to diminished ability to meet basic needs. Gross and Frempong (2012) also found that polygyny was negatively associated with the women's probability to participate in off-farm formal employment in Ghana. The study further revealed that participation in off-farm income generating activities strengthened women decision-making power and enables them to get money that they spend on themselves. It also enhanced women financial inclusion with all the surveyed women who reported being

employed off the family farm having an operational bank account. Therefore, by reducing women's participation in the off-farm activities, polygyny negatively affects the living standard of the women in this marriage type.

On the other hand, Cudeville et al. (2017) found that polygyny had a positive effect on women participation in the labour force in Senegal, which translates to improved living standard. According to the authors, the positive effect of polygyny on women labour participation may be as a result of the strategic choice by women in these marriages to increase their autonomy. Cudeville et al. (2017) also argues that higher labour force participation by women in polygyny could be associated by the sharing of domestic chores by co-wives, which reduces the domestic burden of these women. The positive effect of polygyny on women's living standard is also reinforced in the study by Boltz and Chort (2019), who observed that polygyny, was associated with increased savings by women in formal and informal institutions.

However, the study by Boltz and Chort (2019) further revealed that the increased savings by the women came at the cost of reduced consumption in terms of household food expenditure and wives private non-food expenses. This implies that the heightened savings by polygynous union could actually have a negative implication on the women's living standard as they have to sacrifice expenditure on crucial needs such as health and nutrition in order to save. The study by Farrell (2014) found that contrary to expectations being in polygynous union was positively associated with the use modern contraceptive by women in Benin, Burkina Faso, and Senegal. This finding suggests that polygyny has a positive influence on access to healthcare, which is an important dimension of standard of living. On the other hand, Anjorin et al. (2020) found that polygyny increased the risk of wasting, underweight, and stunting among under-5 children raised in these families. Underweight, wasting, and stunting are indicators of inadequate access to nutrition, which is another dimension of material welfare. Therefore, the results of the study suggest that polygyny is negatively associated with access to nutrition.

Food security is one of the indicators that are commonly used to measure living standards. The study by Owoo (2018) found that polygyny is positively associated with household food security in Nigeria. The study used a longitudinal design that entailed analysing three year data from the World Bank Living Standards Measurement Survey. Results showed that polygynous households had better food security than monogamous household. However, the

relationship between family structure and food security was moderated by family size, household wealth, and wife order. On the other hand, Anjorin et al. (2020) found a negative association between polygyny and food security in their study that analysed secondary data from Demographic and Health Surveys conducted in 32 sub-Saharan African countries. Results showed that polygynous households were more likely to have under-5 children who are underweight or wasting. These two studies show that the effect of polygyny on food security is not clear and may vary from one context to another. The current study sought to examine this effect in the context of polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County.

Another indicator that is used to assess standard of living is access to health care. The study by Millogo (2022) observed that women in polygynous unions in 10 West African countries were less likely to use family planning services than women in monogamous families. The study utilized secondary data from the Demographic and Health Surveys conducted in these countries to arrive at their conclusion. Access to family planning services not only indicates the women access to health care services but also is a proxy indicator of the women over quality of life. This is because access to family planning services enables women to control their fertility and ensure that they get the number of children that they can comfortably take care. Okunrobo (2022) also observed that individuals in polygynous families in Nigeria have low access to health insurance because the Nigerian National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) has requirements that limit the number of dependants that a subscriber can have. The NHIS policy stipulates that a subscriber can only insure one spouse and a maximum of four biological children. Lack of health insurance limits access to health care services by individuals in polygynous families.

#### **2.4 Implication of Polygyny on Psychological Welfare of Women**

Polygyny has also been linked with the psychological well-being of women. In their study involving a sample of 108 women in polygynous marriages in Turkey, Yilmaz and Tamam (2018) found that first wives in polygynous unions had significantly higher depression scores than women in polygynous unions. However, there was no significant difference in the depressive scores between junior wives and wives in monogamous marriages. These findings imply that polygyny has a negative influence of the psychological welfare of senior wives. Al-Krenawi and Maymon (2015) also found that women in polygynous union in Syria had significantly lower self-esteem, life satisfaction, and mental health than their counterparts in monogamous marriages. According to Ryff (1989), self-esteem/ acceptance is one of the six

dimensions of psychological welfare. Other dimensions include autonomy, positive relations with others, environmental mastery, personal growth, and a sense of purpose in life.

The issue of autonomy was captured in the study by Boltz and Chort (2019), which found that women in polygynous marriages had higher savings tendencies because they view financial savings as a means of achieving autonomy. Cudeville et al. (2017) also observed that women in polygynous unions were more likely to engage in off-farm employment in order to increase their independence. On the other hand, Lawson et al. (2015) noted that it is low women autonomy that drives women to polygyny rather than the other way round. When a woman has little autonomy, she has little say on her marriage placement making her vulnerable to polygyny. Women with high autonomy only join polygynous unions out of their own will. The relationship between polygyny and the positive relationship with others dimension of psychological welfare was also captured in the study by Tabi et al. (2010), who found that women in polygynous unions in Ghana were characterized by unhappiness, sense of competition, loneliness, lack of intimacy, and jealousy. These traits tend to affect the social functioning adversely. There is a scarcity of empirical studies examining the link between polygyny and other dimensions of psychological welfare identified by Ryff (environmental mastery, personal growth, and sense of purpose).

Further, empirical studies have focused on health-related effects of polygyny on women. Daradkeh et al. (2006) estimated the impact of several factors associated with mental disorders among women in Jordan. They found that post-marital status and marriage structures were important determinants of women mental health. For instance, being the second wife had deleterious effect on women mental health. For Abbo et al. (2008), polygyny was a major correlate of psychological distress among women in Uganda. In mixed methods analysis of polygyny, Bove et al. (2014) found that polygynous married women had limited access to paid medical treatment. Low access to health care services among of polygynous wives was attributed to, among many other factors, men's emotional and material bias in the allocation of resources and unequal health and fertility among the women. Besides attributing health-related problems among women to polygyny, Bove et al. (2014) seemed to underscore the effect of resource distribution on wives' health.

The study by Ebrahim and Atteraya (2021) found an association between polygyny and emotional abuse of women in Ethiopia. Data collected revealed that women in polygynous unions were 1.82 times more likely to experience emotional abuse by their husbands than

their counterparts in monogamous marriages. However, there was no significant difference in the exposure to physical and sexual violence between polygynous women and those in monogamous unions. On the other hand, Jansen and Agadjanian (2020) found that senior wives in polygynous unions in Mozambique were more likely to experience higher rates of violence than junior wives and wives in monogamous marriages. The findings suggest that polygyny not only subjects women to psychological abuse but also to physical violence and that senior wives are more vulnerable. The current study sought to establish whether this is the case in Muslim polygynous families in Likoni Sub-County.

## **2.5 Theoretical Framework**

This study was based on the theory of marriage and family. The functionalist perspective of marriage and family anchored the study. The functionalist view of marriage is that family plays an important role in the society (Lamanna et al., 2018). Therefore, marriages are institutions that uphold the social importance of families. Each member in a family has a status and role in marriage or family and performs certain functions that stabilize and develop societies.

Regulation of sexual relations between individuals is one of the family functions that facilitate the prosperity of the society (Lamanna et al., 2018). According to the functionalist perspective of marriage and family, family is a legitimate sexual outlet for adult members of the society that is responsible for reproduction. In the context of the functionalists, reproduction is important for ensuring survival of the society. This implies that marriage and family are sexual and reproductive institutions that contribute to the continuity of the society.

Marriage and family are also important economic institutions in the society. According to functionalist view of marriage and family, men play a central role in the family (Lamanna et al., 2018). Typically, men's role involves working outside the family and contributing to the financial or economic wellbeing of the family. The economic role of men in the society is to establish family status. On the other hand, women typical roles involve work inside of the family. Women provide emotional support to the family and take care of children. The functionalist view is that the differentiation of roles is important to ensuring that families are well coordinated and balanced.

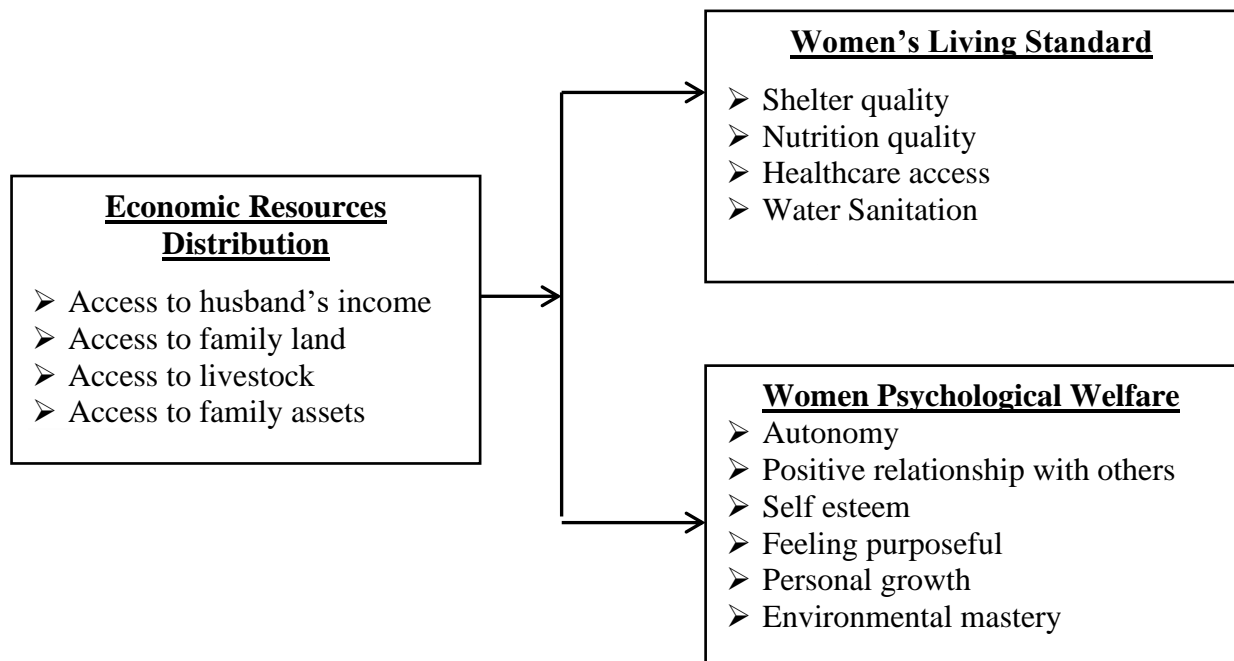
Men must have access to resources to enable them perform their economic roles. However, access to resources is unequal in almost all societies. Mulder (1988) asserted that inequality in resource ownership by men make women to prefer resource-rich men because such

marriages would guarantee achievement of their reproductive fitness as compared to resource-poor men. Higher inequality in male ownership of resources, which the theorists refer to as polygyny threshold, is linked to higher probability of polygyny. The theory holds that polygyny is more prevalent in societies with large inequalities in male wealth as female are still better-off economically as second wives than first wives of poor men (Chaudhary et al., 2015).

An important question for such an assumption is whether polygyny is economically beneficial to women. Arguments against polygyny portray that polygyny is harmful to women as it violets gender equality because women have to rely on men for the provision of productive resources. In such circumstance, injustice may emanate in situation where men do not equitably distribute basic resources to resources to women and children. Hence, the current study also relied on the capability framework. The capability framework envisages the removal of obstacles to the empowerment of people and enabling them to improve their potential as they seek to attain a given lifestyle (Solankeet et al., 2016). The global agenda that recognizes the need for women empowerment is best explained by the capability framework. Polygyny is one of the obstacles to gender equality and women empowerment and, therefore, the capability framework is critical to assessing the effect of polygyny on women welfare.

## **2.6 Conceptual Framework**

Figure 1 presents a conceptual framework of the expected interrelationship among explanatory and outcome variables. Literature reports that polygyny is both beneficial and harmful to women welfare (Lawson et al., 2015; Tertilt, 2005). In this context, polygyny is expected to lead to inequality in resources distribution among the co-wives which eventually impacts on women welfare. The study anticipates men are not just in the distribution of resources among wives as a result of the likelihood of favouritism of one wife or wives against the other. Wives bargaining power, level of education, number of children and employment status are expected to influence resource distribution in polygynous marriage structure. In turn, polygyny, and demographic factors are also expected to impact on women welfare outcomes such as self-esteem and satisfaction with life. Polygyny is expected to result in psychological distress among women, attributable to disproportionate allocation of resource, competition among wives and lack of emotional satisfaction.



**Independent Variable**

**Dependent Variables**

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

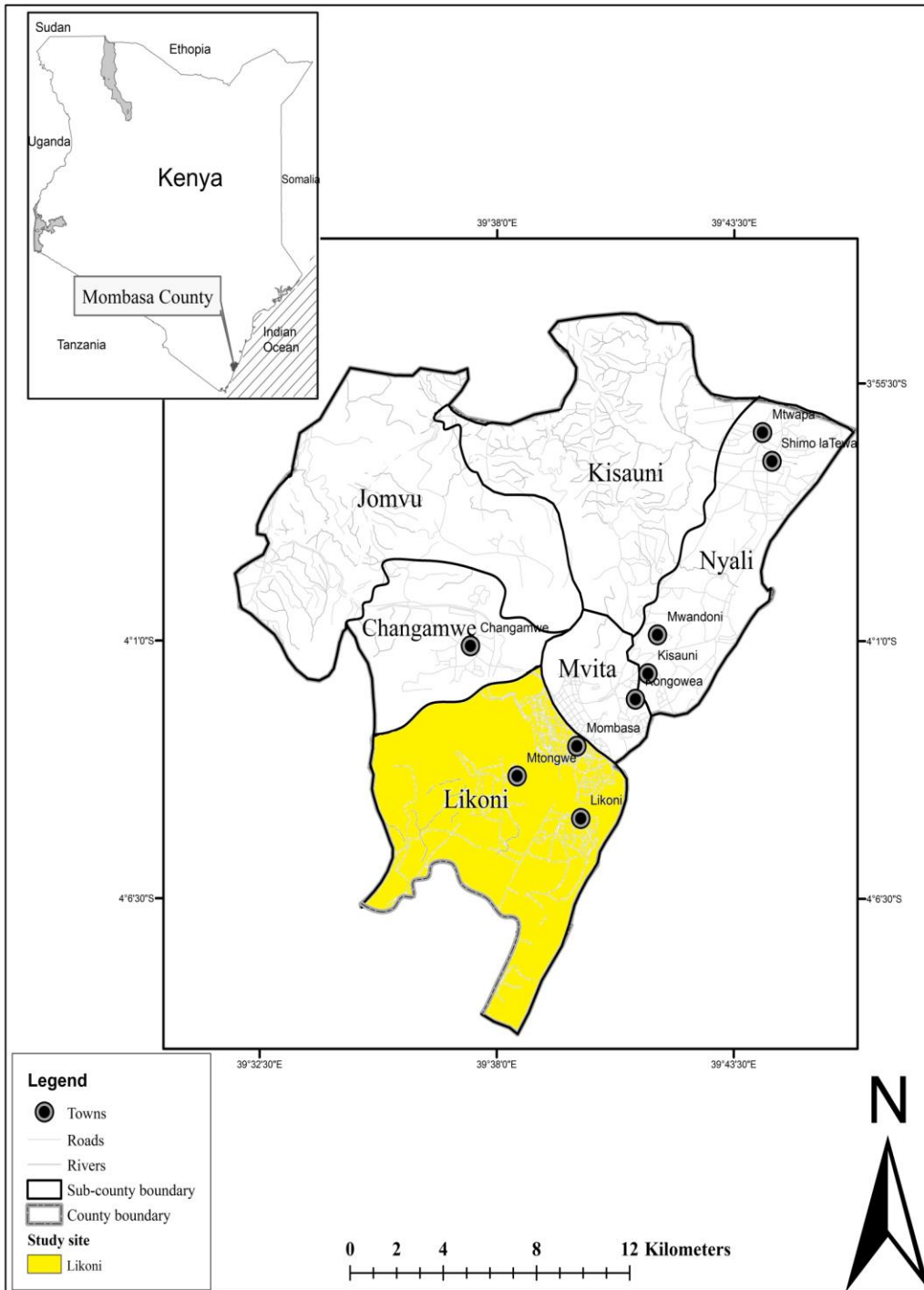
This chapter describes the research design, the location of the study, the population of the study, sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection and data analysis.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

This study used the mixed method research design that combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This is informed by Creswell and Planoclarck (2011) who note that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches, in combination, provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone.

#### **3.3 Location of the Study**

This study was undertaken in Likoni Sub County in Mombasa County of Kenya. Likoni is the southern terminus of the Likoni ferry. The areas covered within Likoni Sub County included Bofu, Shikadabu, Likoni, Timbwani and Mtongwe wards (KNBS, 2019). This Sub County is densely populated with about 166,008 people. This location was selected because it has high rates of polygyny. According to the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2022, 13.6% of women in the region were in polygynous families compared to 11% in the Kenyan general population (KNBS, 2023). The region also has a high population of Muslim families making it a suitable area of study. According to the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census, 60% of residents of Likoni County were followers of the Islamic religion. The region is also cosmopolitan in nature; therefore, it provides an opportunity to get information from respondents of diverse cultural beliefs and orientations. This area is represented in Figure 2.



**Figure 2: Map of Likoni Sub-County**

### 3.4 Population of the Study

Population is a well-defined set of people, group of things or households that are being investigated or examined (Gatara, 2010). In this study the population of interest comprised of polygyny practicing Muslim families in Likoni Sub-county whose population size is

unknown. The study targeted women married in these families because it was presumed that they were best placed to provide information regarding their standard of living and psychological welfare. The study also targeted Muslim religious leaders in the study area because they are close to the community and thus are likely to be privy to information regarding the experiences of women in polygynous unions.

### **3.5 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size**

The study made use of purposive sampling methods to select a sample of polygynous families. Purposive sampling entails relying on the researcher's judgement when choosing study participants from the target population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Purposive sampling was used to identify 10 women living in polygynous families in each of the four wards in Likoni Sub-County (Timbwani, Likoni, Mtongwe, and Shika Adabu). This translated to a total sample size of 40 women. This method was appropriate because the study targeted a hidden population with no official records or data for tracking them. In each ward, the researcher worked with Islamic religious leaders to identify and recruit 10 women living in polygynous unions.

### **3.6 Data Collection**

Data was collected using two instruments: Questionnaire for Women in Polygynous Unions and Interview Guide for Muslim Leaders.

#### **3.6.1 Questionnaire for Women in Polygynous Unions**

Semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect data from the women. The questionnaire was administered by administered face-to-face by the researcher to overcome language barrier. It captured information on the basic socio-demographics (age, number of children, education, rank within the polygynous union, and household resource endowment). It also collected information regarding resource distribution, living standard, and psychological welfare of the women.

#### **3.6.2 Interview Guide for Muslim Leaders**

To validate and gain deeper understanding of the study issues, semi-structured interviews were also conducted with Muslim religious leaders in the study area. The interview guide has a list of uniform questions for each interviewee, but the researcher was able to ask probing question based on the interviewee responses to the uniform questions. The probing questions differed from one interviewee to another.

### **3.7 Credibility, Validity and Reliability**

The study used mixed methods research design. This implies that various research instruments and measurement tools were utilized. For instance, semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect survey data at household level. On the other hand, interviews were used to collect qualitative data. Therefore, an important task was ascertaining the validity and reliability of the semi-structured questionnaire as well as the interview guide. The validity and reliability tests were important in ensuring that the survey instruments and measurement scales will measure the intended research concepts (Bolarinwa, 2015).

Interview guides suffer from reliability problem, but are strong with respect to validity. Cognisant with the reliability problem, the study minimized the problem by face validity checks. The questionnaire and interview guide were subjected to expert review with the view of establishing that the instrument measures themes of interest. Face validity checks evaluated the items captured in the instrument and check whether they match the conceptual domain of the research concept. Credibility checks by experts also enhanced the quality of the instrument (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Content validity analysis and criterion-related validity were used to establish the validity of the semi-structured questionnaire that was administered at household level. Both scale level content validity and item-level content validity was performed. The reliability of the questionnaire was enhanced through pilot test of the questionnaire. The pre-testing of the survey instrument covered a sample size of about 10 families and 2 religious leaders from their neighbouring Mvita Sub-County because it shares similar characteristics as the study area. The data collected from the pilot test was analysed using the SPSS statistical software. The Cronbach alpha measure was utilized in establishing the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire was accepted because the Cronbach alpha coefficient for all the scales was higher than 0.70 (Bolarinwa, 2015).

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Quantitative data collected using questionnaire was coded and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 25 where it was analysed using descriptive statistics. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), descriptive statistics focus on summarize data about variable in order to identify patterns and make inferences. The descriptive statistics are used to summarize data on distribution of resources in the polygynous Muslim families,

material welfare of women in these families, and the psychological welfare of women in these families. Descriptive statistics used include percentages and frequencies.

Qualitative data collected through interviews was analysed using the thematic content analysis technique. The analysis followed six steps:

**Table 3.1: Thematic Analysis Framework**

<b>Step</b>	<b>Action</b>
Step 1	Familiarization of the data
Step 2	Generating initial codes
Step 3	Search for themes
Step 4	Review of themes
Step 5	Define themes
Step 6	Write-up

Results of the quantitative analysis is presented using tables and figures while results of the qualitative analysis is discussed using narratives and supported by illustrative quotes. Table 3.2 presents a summary of data analysis plan.

**Table 3.2: Data Analysis Plan**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Analysis Method</b>
1	Polygyny	Resource Distribution	Percentages, Frequencies, means, chi-square, t-test and Thematic Content Analysis
2	Polygyny	Living Standard	Percentages, Frequencies, ANOVA, Pearson correlation, and Thematic Content Analysis
3	Polygyny	Psychological Welfare	Percentages, Frequencies, ANOVA, Pearson correlation and Thematic Content Analysis

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

The study was conducted in a manner that complies with ethical standards for research. This was achieved by observing the following guidelines for ethically acceptable research.

- i. The researcher sought approval of supervisors, principal investigators, the department, faculty and graduate school before the commencement of project activities.
- ii. Research permit and introductory letter was sought from NACOSTI and Egerton University respectively before the beginning of the study.
- iii. The participants were informed beforehand on the objective of the study.
- iv. The study upheld the principle rule of confidentiality by informing participants that the data would only be used for research purpose and would not be shared to other parties except the research team and the university.
- v. Ensuring that the participants are not harmed or victimized in any way as a result of participating in the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

The study sought to establish the distribution of economic resource in polygynous unions in Likoni Sub-County, Mombasa County Kenya. To realize this end, quantitative data was collected using questionnaires and analysed using descriptive statistics while qualitative data was collected through interviews and analysed using the thematic content analysis technique. This chapter presents the results of the analysis and a discussion of the findings. It is organized into three main sections namely: the respondents' demographic profile, results section, and the discussion section.

#### 4.2 Respondents Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of respondents was assessed including their age, education level, occupation, number of biological children, number of children who were staying in the household at the time of the study, and the position of the respondents among the wives. As Varma et al. (2021) explain, reporting the demographic profile of respondents enables readers of the study to judge the representativeness of the study sample. It also enables the consumers of the research to determine the transferability of study findings to their own settings as well as any possible limitations. Reporting of respondents' demographic profile also enables replication of the studies that may be conducted in the future (Jones et al., 2020). Table 4.1 summarizes results of demographic factors that were measured on a continuous scale.

**Table 4.1: Respondents Demographic Profile**

<b>Demographic Trait</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
<b>Age</b>	41.53 years	22 years	62 years
<b>Biological Children</b>	3.38 children	0	7
<b>Children living with the respondents</b>	2.75 children	0	11

Results in Table 4.1 show that the average age of the women who were involved in the study was 41.53 years. This implies that most of the women in polygynous unions in Likoni County are middle aged. This result could imply that the practice may be on a decline. The result is consistent with the study by Oh et al. (2017), which also found that polygyny was on a decline across the globe due to factors such as increasing education levels, reduction in wealth inequality, and socioeconomic changes. However, current results indicate that the

sample was quite diverse in terms of age with the youngest respondents being 22 years old and the oldest being 62 years.

On average, the sampled women had 3.38 biological children, which is similar to the national fertility rate of 3.4 children per women as captured in the 2022 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KNBS, 2023). This implies that the fertility rate of women in polygynous union in Likoni Sub-County is not different from the fertility rate of women in other family structures. It suggests that women in polygynous families in Likoni are exposed to similar factors that affect fertility as women in monogamous unions. For instance, the finding suggest that the women in polygynous unions are not disadvantaged when it comes to access to healthcare, family planning services, and information on family planning. However, the sample was also diverse in terms of fertility as there were some respondents who did not have any child while there were others who had as many as 7 children.

On the other hand, results showed that respondents were living with an average of 2.75 children at the time of the study. This mean is lower than the mean value for the number of biological children. It could imply that in some of the sampled household, some biological children had moved out of the household due to factors like marriage, employment or education. It could also indicate that some children may not be living with their biological parents due to socio-economic factors like migration or divorce. There were households where no child was present while there were others with as many as 11 children present. Table 4.2 presents results of demographic variables that were measured on a discrete scale

**Table 4.2: Respondents Demographic Profile**

Demographic Trait		Categories	Frequency	Percent
<b>Highest Level</b>	<b>Education</b>	No education	3	7.5
		Religious education	2	5.0
		Primary	14	35.0
		Secondary	14	35.0
		Vocational	6	15.0
		Bachelor degree	1	2.5
<b>Primary occupation</b>		Domestic chores	9	22.5
		Salaried employment	7	17.5
		Wage labour	3	7.5
		Self-employment	17	42.5

	Retired	4	10.0
<b>Position among the wife</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Wife	16	40.0
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wife	17	42.5
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wife	5	12.5
	4 <sup>th</sup> Wife	2	5.0

Results in Table 4.2 shows that 35% of the respondents had the primary level of education while another 35% had the secondary level. The results also show that over 82.5% of the respondents had not gone past the secondary education level. This finding is congruent with the study by Mabaso et al. (2018), which found that women in polygynous unions were less likely to have tertiary education when compared to their counterparts in monogamous unions. These results suggest notable educational disparities indicating that a majority of women in polygynous unions have low levels of education. The results underscore the existence of an association between education levels of women and odds of getting into a polygynous union. Educational attainment is closely tied to economic opportunities and empowerment and thus, low education attainment among women in polygynous unions may signify economic constraints among these women. This situation may reflect broader societal norms that prioritize early marriage, motherhood, and domestic roles for women. Such norms may restrict female agency and limit their ability to pursue higher education or engage in the workforce perpetuating cycles of dependency and inequality.

Regarding occupation, the largest proportion of the respondents (42.5%) were self-employed while 17.5% were in salaried employment and 7.5% were in waged labour. These results imply that more than two thirds (67.5%) of women in polygynous unions in Likoni Sub-County are engaged in some form income generating activities. Consequently, these women are not completely dependent on their husband economically. This independence could have positive impacts on the women's self-esteem and their roles within the household and community, which may shift traditional power dynamics in polygamous relationships. The largest proportion of the respondents (42.5%) were second wives, 40% were first wives, 12.5% were 3<sup>rd</sup> wives while 5% were fourth wives. The fact that many are self-employed (42.5%) indicates a drive for autonomy and may reflect an adaptive strategy to manage family finances when in a polygamous union. The predominance of self-employment may also suggest a lack of access to more formal employment opportunities due to factors like educational constraints or systemic barriers in the labour market. Self-employment may offer

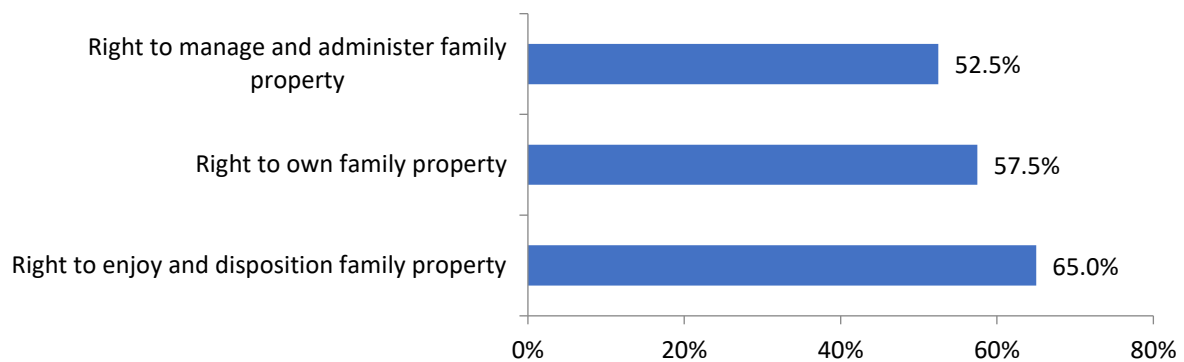
flexibility allowing women to balance multiple roles within the household. However, it can also present challenges like unstable income, lack of benefits, and limited job security, which are important determinants of the women's social and economic well-being.

### 4.3 Results

This section presents results of the analysis of data on the distribution of economic resources in polygynous Muslim families, living standard of women in polygynous Muslim families, and psychological welfare of women in polygynous Muslim families.

#### 4.3.1 Distribution of Economic Resources in Polygynous Muslim Families

The first objective of the study was to examine the distribution of economic resources in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County. To realize this objective, respondents were asked to indicate whether they had equal rights with respect to ownership of family property, management and administration of family property, and enjoyment and disposition of family property. Figure 3 summarizes their responses:



**Figure 3: Proportion of Respondents with Equal Rights to Family Property**

Results in Figure 4.3 show that 65% of the respondents have the right to enjoy and disposition family property. However, only 57.5% of respondents stated that they have the right to own family property. Results further indicate that 52.5% of the respondents have the right to manage and administer family property. These results imply that while over two-thirds of women in polygynous union in the study area derive some benefits from family resources, the proportion of women who have ownership and control over family property is slightly above half. In this case, the term ownership refers to having documents that present these women as legitimate owners of family properties like land and vehicles among others.

Results indicate existence of gap between perceived enjoyment and actual legal ownership of property.

The discrepancy between enjoyment and ownership may reflect cultural norms that prioritize male ownership of property. In many Kenyan societies, inheritance practices favour men reinforcing the notion that women are mere beneficiaries rather than equal stakeholders in family resources. Lack of ownership leaves the women in vulnerable positions in the unfortunate event of the husband demise. The absence of documents that make the wives legitimate owners leave a loophole for the wives to be disposed by the husband’s families (Deere et al., 2013). The presence of multiple wives can complicate property dynamics. Women might have to navigate relationships with co-wives, which could influence their rights to property. Understanding these social dynamics is crucial to addressing the inequalities in property rights. Lack of ownership also reduces the women’s capacity to access capital and consequently, limits their chances of engaging in economic activities. These results highlight wider issues related to property laws and regulations that may need to be address to reduce the vulnerability women in polygynous Muslim families. The study sought to establish how education level and occupation shape property ownership of women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni by cross-tabulating these variables. Table 4.3 presents the results.

**Table 4.3: Cross-Tabulation of Education, Occupation, and Property Ownership**

Factor	Right to Own Property				X <sup>2</sup> (df)	P
	No		Yes			
	N	%	N	%		
<b><u>Education</u></b>					4.399 (3)	.221
No formal education	3	60.0	2	40.0		
Primary	5	35.7	9	64.3		
Secondary	8	57.1	6	42.9		
Tertiary	1	14.3	6	85.7		
<b><u>Occupation</u></b>					10.988(4)	.027
Domestic chores	4	44.4	5	55.6		
Salaried employment	0	0.0	7	100.0		
Wage labour	3	100.0	0	0.0		
Self-employment	7	41.2	10	58.8		
Retired	3	75.0	1	25.0		

The education variable was recoded to reduce the number of categories in order to increase the sensitivity of the chi-square test. The number categories were reduced from six to four. However, results of the chi-square test in Table 4.3 shows that education level ( $X^2= 4.399$ ,  $df= 3$ ,  $p=.221$ ) does not have a statistically significant effect on right to own property by women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni. The findings are not in agreement with the study by Solanke et al. (2018), which found that education level enhances the bargaining power of women in polygynous unions. The findings suggest that educational attainment among women does not play a major role in shaping women's rights in the context of Muslim polygynous families in Likoni Sub-County. This implies that other factors like cultural norms and religious traditions are more dominant in influencing women property rights than education. Even with higher education, women in polygynous Muslim families may still face systemic barriers to property ownership. These barriers might be preventing educated women from asserting their property rights effectively. Results also suggest that education attainment alone does not capture the entirety of the preparedness or ability of women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni for their rights.

On the other hand, results in Table 4.3 show that occupation ( $X^2= 10.988$ ,  $df= 4$ ,  $p=.027$ ) has a statistically significant effect on the right to own property by women in polygynous Muslim families. The descriptive statistics show that all respondents (100%) who were in salaried employment had rights to own property as compared to 58% of those in self-employment, domestic chores (55.6%), retired (25.0%), and wage labour (0%). These findings imply that it is women engagement in economic activities that give them bargaining power in the family rather than education level. It also highlights that women in salaried employment are more likely to have greater bargaining power probably because salaried jobs are more stable and have higher pay. The results suggest that economic empowerment through stable employment is crucial for women in asserting their property rights. Enhancing women's access to formal employment could be a critical focus area for policy and community initiatives aimed at improving women's rights in these contexts. Salaried positions might provide women not only economic independence but also social acceptance and legitimacy in their claims.

The lower percentages of property rights among women in self-employment, domestic chores, and wage labour highlight the need for greater recognition and support of informal work and its contribution to household economies. Legal frameworks may need to adapt to accommodate and support such roles. Providing legal education and resources to women in

self-employment and informal sectors may empower them to assert their rights more effectively. This finding is congruent with the study by Matz (2016), who observed that economic productivity is one of the factors that give women in polygynous union greater bargaining power within the family. Women with greater economic productivity are highly likely to play a role in the acquisition of family property, which gives them a high bargaining power. These findings are also supported by qualitative data from the interview where one of the respondents explained that women who have alternative income and are not completely dependent on the husband often have an economic advantage:

*(1) Women who have alternative income, accept whatever the husband brings. But for women who are solely dependent on the husband, even a lot is never enough. Number of children and family size also determine how economic resources are distributed (Interviewee 1, 2022).*

The excerpt also introduces the issues of number of children and family size as being among the factors that shape distribution of resources within polygynous families. The study cross-tabulated position of respondents among the wives with data on right to own property with the view of establishing how wife order affects distribution of resources. Table 4.4 presents the results.

**Table 4.4: Cross Tabulation of Wife Order and Property Ownership**

Factor	Right to Own Property				X <sup>2</sup> (df)	P
	No		Yes			
	N	%	N	%		
<b>Wife Order</b>					3.764(3)	.288
1 <sup>st</sup> Wife	5	31.3	11	68.8		
2 <sup>nd</sup> Wife	7	41.2	10	58.8		
3 <sup>rd</sup> Wife	4	80.0	1	20.0		
4 <sup>th</sup> Wife	1	50.0	1	50.0		

Results in Table 4.4 show that wife order ( $X^2= 10.988$ ,  $df= 4$ ,  $p=.027$ ) does not have a significant effect on right to own property by women in polygynous union in Likoni. The finding implies that sequence in which wives join the marriage does not significantly affect the distribution of resources within the Muslim polygynous families in the study area. The findings contradict the study by Gibson and Mace (2007), who observed that wife order or

rank had an effect on distribution of resources in polygynous families with the first wife being favoured over others. Current findings suggest that this is not the case in Muslim families in Likoni. The difference may be attributed to cultural differences between Likoni and Ethiopia. In many cultures where polygyny is common, the first wife usually holds a primary status with certain rights and privileges. However, the results of this study indicate that such cultural hierarchies do not translate into property rights in the context of polygynous Muslim families in Likoni. This could reflect evolving norms around gender equity and women rights. The result could also be an indication that other factors such as the wife’s contribution towards household income outweigh the influence of wife order in property ownership. The effect of age, number of biological children, and number of children living in the wives’ household on distribution of economic resources was analysed using the independent sample t-test. Table 4.5 presents the results.

**Table 4.5: Age, Biological Children, Children in Household and Property Ownership**

Factor	Right to Own Property				t (df)	P
	No		Yes			
	N	Mean	N	Mean		
Age	17	38.82 years	23	43.52 years	1.482 (38)	.147
Biological children	17	3 children	23	3.65 children	.990(38)	.328
Children in household	17	2.76 children	23	2.74 children	.037	.971

Results in Table 4.5 show that age ( $t=1.482$ ,  $df=38$ ,  $p=.147$ ) had no significant effect on right to own property by women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County. In many communities, cultural expectations regarding age, maturity and gender roles shape women’s access to property. The result suggests that in this specific population, age does not serve as a determinant in property rights. This is an indication that there is a progressive or less rigid cultural stance on women’s rights in the polygynous Muslim population in Likoni when compared to other contexts. The insignificant results indicate a more equal distribution of property ownership rights among women in different age groups. This reflects broader progress towards gender equality within the community. It could also mean that there are other factors that outweigh age in determining distribution of property ownership rights in the polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County. For instance, Solanke et al. (2018) found that it is not the age of the wife the influence access to matrimonial property per se but rather

the age disparity between the wife and the husband. A huge age disparity reduces the wife's access to matrimonial property.

Similarly, results in Table 4.5 show that number of biological children ( $t=.990$ ,  $df=38$ ,  $p=.328$ ) and number children who are currently living in the respondent's household ( $t=.037$ ,  $df=38$ ,  $p=.971$ ) had no significant effect on right to own property by women in polygynous Muslim families. These results suggest the ability of women in polygynous Muslim families to secure property rights is not influence by their reproductive role or family size. In many polygynous societies, the number of children a woman has determines her perceived status or value within the family unit. Typically, having more children increases a woman's bargaining power or influence. However, results of this study challenge the validity of this assumption in the context of polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County. These findings are contrary to the study by Dunbar et al. (2013), who found that number of children in the household influenced the distribution of resources in polygynous families in Malawi with households that had many children receiving a greater share. Current findings suggest that property rights of women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni are influenced by other factors that transcend motherhood and family size.

#### **4.3.2 Living Standard of Women in Polygynous Muslim Families**

The second objective of the study was to analyse the living standard of women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County. The study used a number of indicators to examine living standards. One of the indicators was household income. Respondents were asked to provide information regarding the income of their household for the last 12 months. Table 4.6 summarizes their responses:

**Table 4.6: Distribution of Respondents by Household Income for the Last 12 Months**

<b>Annual Income Brackets (in Kenya Shillings)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than 500,000	10	25.0
500,000- 999,999	10	25.0
1,000,0000- 1,999,999	17	42.5
2000,0000 and above	2	7.5

Results in Table 4.6 show that the largest proportion of respondents (42.5%) were living in households that had an annual income of between Kshs 1 million and 2 million. About 25% had incomes of between Kshs 500,000 and 1 million while another 25% had household incomes of less than Kshs 500,000. About 7.5% of the respondents had household income of more than Kshs 2 million per annum. This income distribution suggests that Muslim polygynous families have higher household income than the average household in Kenya. The Household Budget Survey 2019 showed that most families in Kenya have an annual income of less than Kshs 180,000 (KNBS, 2022). However, the survey showed major disparities in the income of rural household and household in major urban areas such as Likoni in Mombasa County.

The survey shows that households in urban areas had significantly higher income than those in the rural areas. Therefore, the urban setup of the current study explains why sampled household had higher household income than the national trend. Results suggest that polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County are financially more secure than the general population, which challenges the stereotypes about polygynous families being economically disadvantaged. High household income often translate to better access to basic needs like foods, shelter, clothing, education, and health care. It also affects women rights to own property and control resources within the family. However, the study established in most of the income with the households was generated by the husband and; therefore, was shared by all the wives. Therefore, income data does not provide conclusive position regarding the living standards of women living in polygynous unions in Likoni Sub-County. Consequently, others indicators had to incorporated to measure living standard. The next indicator was household expenditure on food. Table 4.7 summarizes this information.

**Table 4.7: Household Expenditure on Food**

<b>Period</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Daily expenditure	40	200	5000	770.00
Weekly expenditure	40	1200	58800	5210.0
Monthly expenditure	40	4800	28000	15147.50
Annual expenditure	40	57600	336000	181770.00

Results in Table 4.7 show that on average, the polygynous Muslim families in Likoni spent Kshs 181,770 on food in the 12 months before the study. The family with the lowest

expenditure spent Kshs 57,600 while the family with the highest expenditure spent Kshs 336,000 on food. Table 4.7 also breaks down the monthly, weekly, and daily food expenditure for the sampled households. The demographic analysis showed that the sampled household had an average of 3 children and; thus, if it is assumed that each household has two adults, the average number of people in the household would be five. This would imply that the monthly food expenditure per person in the households is about Kshs 3030, which is above the food poverty line of Kshs 2,551 set for Kenyan urban areas. According to the World Bank (2022), Kshs 2,551 is what an individual in Kenyan urban areas need to obtain the minimum daily recommended food intake of 2,250 kilocalories.

The current results thus imply that women living in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni have better living standards where access to food is concerned than the average family in urban area. Results suggest that women in these families are more likely to meet their basic nutritional needs on a consistent basis. Access to basic nutritional needs has a positive implication on the overall health and wellbeing of the women. The ability of the polygynous Muslim families to spend more on food suggests relative economic stability and higher economic empowerment compared to the general population. In polygynous households, the dynamics of food procurement may involve collective efforts in budgeting and spending, allowing for better resource allocation. The pooling of resources might lead to improved food security than in more individualistic family structures. This finding is congruent with the study by Owoo (2017), who found that polygynous households in Nigeria have better food security outcomes than monogamous households. Damon and McCarthy (2019) also found that polygynous agricultural households where land is jointly managed by husbands and all the wives had greater productivity than monogamous households. This is because the polygynous households had greater labour force than the monogamous households. The finding is also reinforced by accounts provided by some interviewees. One of the interviewees expressed that the living standard of women in polygynous Muslim family depends on economic position of the wives. Wives who engage in income generating activities get better quality of life than those who choose to rely on the husband:

*(2) For women who have other income, they manage a decent life, but for women who don't, their living standards are between average and below. In case all women are homemakers; their lives and living standards rely on the capability of the husband (Interviewee 1, 2022).*

However, the majority of the interviewee gave contrary views. Most were of the view that women living in polygynous union have low standards of living because they tend to compete for husband resources.

*(3) Their lives change drastically. The first wife provision will decrease and so is the degree of love and affection due to new wife favour. The living standards of the first wife decrease because the distribution of resources will be lowered to cover all wives (Interviewee 2, 2022).*

*(4) Majority of first wives living standards change drastically due to increase in economic strains. Wives are mostly neglected and all economic resources are channelled towards the children. Hence, women often sacrifice their wellbeing for their children and that lowers their living standards (Interviewee 3, 2022).*

*(5) Most women do not live in good living standards due to economic strains. They experience a lot of difficulties in life scrambling to get everything from the one man who might not be able to reach their demands. For comfortable living of all women in these unions, economic stability of a man is vital (Interviewee 4, 2022).*

The views captured through excerpts are consistent with the findings by Anjorin et al. (2020) who found that polygyny increases the risk of underweight and wasting among children under five years in 32 sub-Saharan African countries. The excerpts also make reference to the first wife and husband economic position suggesting that the living standards of women in the polygynous Muslim families is dependent on demographic factors such as wife order, husband occupation, and wife occupation among others. As new wives are added to the household, there's a clear implication that the financial resources available to the first wife are diluted. This can lead to a direct decline in her living standards, as she may now share not only the affection of her husband but also the economic support that was once more concentrated.

The second interviewee emphasizes the economic challenges imposed on first wives. The narrative that resources are often funneled towards children instead of wives underscores a critical aspect of household dynamics. This diversion of funds can lead to feelings of neglect and insecurity among first wives, who may feel their needs are secondary to those of the children and newer wives. The idea presented in the second excerpt where women sacrifice their well-being for that of their children points to a poignant emotional and social reality.

This selflessness, a common theme in many cultures, can perpetuate a cycle of hardship among women in polygynous marriages. The commitment to prioritizing children's needs often comes at a significant personal cost, detrimental to their mental and physical well-being. Sacrificing personal needs for family stability is a multifaceted issue. Women might experience emotional exhaustion, feelings of inadequacy, and a loss of identity as they navigate the complexities of their roles. The emotional toll of seeing diminished affection and attention from their husband toward themselves can be challenging to articulate but is critical to understand. The third interviewee's perspective on the struggles women face in obtaining the necessary resources from a husband who may not be able to meet all demands paints a picture of significant socioeconomic pressure. In polygynous households, the expectation is often placed on women to manage a delicate balance of needs, desires, and strategies for financial stability. The interviews reveal the influence of cultural norms, suggesting that women's sacrifices and heightened challenges in polygynous marriages are partly shaped by societal expectations that prioritize the well-being of the family unit over individual women. As caregivers, women often find themselves marginalized in terms of access to resources and decision-making.

The One-Way ANOVA test was conducted to examine the effect of wives' education level, occupation, and wife order/ rank on household food security as an indicator of living standard. It was theorised that education is an essential factor influencing household decision-making and resource management. Higher education levels may correlate with better employment opportunities, increased income, and improved knowledge regarding nutrition and food procurement, ultimately contributing to a household's food security level. The study had also theorized that the occupation of the wife could have direct implications on household income and stability, as well as indirectly affect dynamics within the household that support food security. It was expected that different occupations would offer varying income levels, job security, and working hours, which can influence the household's overall ability to secure adequate and nutritious food. The rank or order of a wife in a polygynous arrangement was assessed because it often reflects her status and decision-making power within the family. It was expected that higher-ranking wives would have more influence over resource allocation including food potentially leading to better food security outcomes. This factor also helps explore dynamics of power and resource distribution within the household. Table 4.8 presents the results.

**Table 4.8: Education, Occupation, Wife Order, and Monthly Food Expenditure**

Factor	Food Expenditure per Month		F (df)	P
	N	Mean		
<b><u>Education</u></b>			1.102 (3, 36)	.361
No formal education	5	11580.00		
Primary	14	17200.00		
Secondary	14	14142.86		
Tertiary	7	15600.00		
<b><u>Occupation</u></b>			3.139(4, 35)	.037
Domestic chores	9	11111.11		
Salaried employment	7	17071.43		
Wage labour	3	10266.67		
Self-employment	17	17294.12		
Retired	4	15400.00		
<b><u>Wife Order</u></b>			0.338 (3, 36)	.798
1 <sup>st</sup>	16	16043.75		
2 <sup>nd</sup>	17	15152.94		
3 <sup>rd</sup>	5	12720.00		
4 <sup>th</sup>	2	14000.00		

ANOVA results in Table 4.8 illustrate the wives' education level ( $F= 1.102$ ,  $p=.361$ ) and wife order ( $F=0.338$ ,  $p=.798$ ) do not have a statistically significant effect on monthly food expenditure of the households. However, wife occupation had a significant effect ( $F=3.139$ ,  $p= .037$ ). This implies that wife occupation has a significant effect on the food security of polygynous Muslim families in Likoni. The descriptive statistics show that women who are self-employed and those employed on salary had high mean food expenditure of Kshs 17,294.12 and Kshs 17,071.43 respectively while those in wage labour and domestic chores had the lowest mean food expenditure. These results imply that being self-employed and employed on salaries enhances the living standard of women in polygynous Muslim families while being a homemaker or employed on wages has a negative effect. These results reinforce the sentiments expressed by some of the interviewees.

Pearson correlation test was conducted to examine whether there is an association between wives' age, number of biological children, number of children currently living in the household, and household food expenditure. Table 4.9 presents the results;

**Table 4.9: Age, Biological Children, Children in Household, and Food Expenditure**

Factor	Statistic	Monthly expenditure on food
Age	Pearson Correlation	.337*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.034
	N	40
Number of Biological Children	Pearson Correlation	.290
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.069
	N	40
Number of Children Currently Living with Respondent	Pearson Correlation	.243
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.131
	N	40

Person correlation results in Table 4.9 show that age ( $r=0.337$ ,  $p=.034$ ) is statistically associated with household food expenditure but the number of biological children ( $r=0.290$ ,  $p=.069$ ) and number of children currently living in the household ( $r=0.243$ ,  $p=.131$ ) are not statistically associated with household expenditure. These findings imply that only wife's age has a significant effect on food security in polygynous Muslim families and consequently the living condition of wives. The correlation coefficient ( $r=0.337$ ) is positive, which implies that there is a positive association between wife's age and food security. This implies that as age increases, household food expenditure tends to also increase, indicating that older wives spend more on food than younger wives. This trend may be attributed to the issue of resources where older wives have more resources to allocate towards food than younger wives.

Several factors may explain the resourcefulness of older wives including the fact that older wives may have working children who may be supporting their household economically. The older wives are also more likely to have developed coping mechanisms such as self-employment to address the challenges they have experienced. The relationship between wife's age and food expenditure may also be explained by family need. Households of

older wives may have greater need for food based on their life stage or family dynamics. Older wives are also more likely to have gotten time to start income generating ventures. The lack of statistically significant associations with the number of biological children or children living in the household suggest that families do not proportionally increase their food expenditure as the number of children rises potentially indicating efficient budgeting strategies or financial constraints that limit food spending regardless of family size. Similarly, the families may have found alternative methods to manage food costs that may have obscured the relationship between the number of children and total food expenditure.

The women's living standards was also examined by analysing the respondent's household expenditure on various non-food items per annum. The year duration was preferred because some non-food items such as clothing and health care services are rarely purchased on a monthly or frequent basis. Table 4.10 presents the results of the analysis

**Table 4.10: Household Expenditure on Non-Food Items for the Past 12 Months**

<b>Expenditure Item (Annual)</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>Non Food Expenditure</b>				
Clothing and bedding	40	0	42000	7773.75
Electricity	40	1000	30000	11095.00
Fuel	40	1000	81000	22382.50
School fees, books and school supplies	40	0	167000	17007.50
Healthcare	40	500	240000	8955.00
Religious and social contribution	40	0	12000	625.00
Travel and communication	40	10,000	120000	13920.00
Total expenditure on rent/ mortgage	40	0	240000	18181.82
Total expenditure on utility bill	40	10,000	84000	7551.52
Total expenditure on remittances paid	40	0	84000	5242.52
<b>Total Non-Food Expenditure</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>19,100</b>	<b>389,600</b>	<b>107313.08</b>

Table 4.10 shows that the average annual non-food expenditure for sampled household was Kshs 107,313.08. The household with lowest expenditure spent Kshs 19,100 while the highest expenditure was Kshs 389,600. The data indicates a wide disparity in non-food expenditures among the polygynous Muslim population in Likoni Sub-County, which could

be indicative of factors such as income inequality, varying household needs, and differing financial strategies or resources available to families. Households with varying expenditure levels may prioritize resource allocation differently with those at the lower end emphasizing survival needs over discretionary spending. Higher expenditure could indicate better economic conditions linked to salaried jobs, stable business activities, or remittances.

The average annual expenditure translates to a monthly per person expenditure is about Kshs 1790. This amount is lower than the poverty line for non-food items that is set at Kshs 3,444 per person living urban households in Kenya (World Bank, 2022). These results suggest that when considering access to non-food items such as health care, electricity, and education, women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County are worse-off than their counterparts living in other family structures. This discrepancy highlights a concerning situation regarding economic well-being. Households spending less than the poverty line often face challenges in meeting basic needs, which may have direct implications on health, education, and overall quality of life. The finding suggest that polygyny has a negative effect on women living standards when it comes to access to non-food items.

Lastly, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with several statements related to their living condition on a four- point scale (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= agree, and 4= strongly agree). Table 4.11 presents the findings.

**Table 4.11: Respondents Access to Essential Needs**

SN	Statement	N	Mean
1	I have access to family planning care	40	2.90
2	I easily get treatment whenever I fall sick	40	3.03
3	I have two pairs of all-weather shoes	40	3.05
4	I have enough money to keep my house a decent state of repair	40	2.50
5	I have access to clean drinking water throughout the year	40	3.03
6	I have an active health insurance	40	2.48
7	On a normal day, I can afford two meals	40	3.07
8	I have access to a balanced diet	40	2.97
9	I have access to transport services whenever I would like to move around	40	2.95
10	I am able to make regular savings for use in rainy days	40	2.72

Table 4.11 indicate that respondents on average agreed with all the statements apart from statement 6, which claimed they have an active health insurance. The mean of 2.48 rounds off to 2, which in the scale represents disagree. This implies that the majority of the respondents disagreed with the assertion that they have health insurance. This result suggests that most of the women married in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County do not have access to health insurance. Health insurance enhances individuals' access to health care whenever they fall sick especially when the sickness requires expensive treatment. Current finding thus suggests that the women in the polygynous family are exposed to the risk of being devastated by major illness.

Lack of health insurance could be attributed to the regulation by the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF), which is the primary health insurance organization in Kenya, which requires husbands to pay an extra Kshs 500 for each additional wife. NHIF has also set a limit on the number of children that can be covered at a maximum of five children. This position is supported in the study by Okunrobo (2022), who observed that restriction on the number of dependants by the Nigerian National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) has negatively impacted access to health insurance by members of polygynous families. Lack of healthcare insurance could also be attributed to competition for husband resources by the wives and the numerous expenditure items.

On the other hand, respondents agreed (item 1, mean= 2.90) that they have access to family planning care. This indicates that, on average, wives in polygynous Muslim unions feel positively about their access to family planning services. The results suggest that the wives believe they have some agency regarding family planning, which is essential for empowering women in reproductive health. This finding indicates a potential confidence in the availability of family planning services, which can be a precursor to individuals actively seeking and utilizing these services. Accessibility can lead to better family planning practices and, ultimately, improved maternal and child health outcomes. These findings are not consistent with the study by Millogo et al. (2022), who found that women in polygynous unions are less likely to use family planning than women in monogamous unions.

In addition, respondents agreed (item 3, mean = 3.05) that they have two pair of all-weather shoes, have enough money to keep their house a decent state of repair (item 4, mean= 2.50), and have access to clean drinking water throughout the year (item 5, mean = 3.03). These results suggest that women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni are satisfied with

investment in their personal needs and housing. The responses regarding all-weather shoes and access to water reflect a degree of economic stability as both can be considered basic necessities for health and comfort. High agreement on access to clean drinking water is crucial, as it suggests that public health initiatives or infrastructure in the area might be relatively effective. Access to clean water is fundamental for preventing waterborne diseases and ensuring overall community health.

The respondents agreed that they can afford two meals in a day (item 7, mean =3.07) and that they have access to balanced diet (Item 8, mean= 2.97). These items measured the women's access to nutrition. The responses reinforce earlier findings, which showed that the polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County have higher per capita expenditure on food than an average urban household in Kenya. The results confirm that women living in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni have adequate access to food and nutrition. The higher mean score of 3.07 regarding the ability to afford two meals a day reflects a positive sense of food security among respondents. This finding indicates a relatively stable economic situation for many. Consistent access to at least two meals can contribute to better overall health, productivity, and quality of life. The score of 2.97 for access to a balanced diet presents a somewhat positive view regarding the quality of meals accessed by women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni. However, the results may raise important questions about what respondents understand by "balanced diet" as the study did not delve deeper into this issue. Scores on both items (access to two meals and access to balanced diet) are moderately high but not exceedingly so. This reflects a stable but not wholly secure food situation. The slight gap between the two means that while respondents feel they can afford meals, there may be hesitancy or concern regarding the quality and nutritional adequacy of what they can access.

Lastly, respondents also agreed (item 9, mean= 2.72) that they are able to make regular savings for use in rainy day and that they have access to transport services (item 10, mean= 2.95). These results give insight into the financial well-being, food security, and mobility of women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni. The ability to save regularly for unexpected expenses is critical for financial stability. The mean score of 2.72 indicates that while some respondents can save, there might be financial pressures that limit their capacity. This suggests a need for programs aimed at improving financial literacy and savings mechanisms to help individuals develop a buffer for emergencies. A mean score of 2.95 indicates that respondents generally feel they have access to transport services. Adequate

transportation is crucial for accessing job opportunities, education, and healthcare and thus has a major implication on overall well-being.

#### 4.3.3 Psychological Welfare of Women in Polygynous Muslim Families

The last objective of the study was to investigate the psychological welfare of women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County. The study analyses psychological welfare by assessing the respondents' marital satisfaction. Respondents were presented with five statements regarding their marriage and asked to indicate their level of agreement with each on a seven-point scale: 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Slightly disagree, 4=Neither agree nor disagree, 5=Slightly agree, 6=Agree 7=Strongly agree.

**Table 4.12: Respondents Marital Satisfaction**

SN	Statement	N	Mean
1	In most ways, my polygynous marriage life is close to my ideal.	40	3.70
2	The conditions of my life in polygynous marriage are excellent.	40	3.68
3	I am satisfied with my polygynous marriage.	40	4.05
4	So far I have gotten the important things I wanted in life.	40	4.60
5	If I could live my life over, I would not move out of polygynous marriage.	40	4.68
<b>Marital Satisfaction aggregate score</b>		<b>40</b>	<b>4.14</b>

Results in Table 4.12 illustrate that on average respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the first three statements in the scale. This implies that the majority of the women living in polygynous unions are indeterminate on whether their marriage life is close to ideal, the condition of their life in polygynous marriages are excellent, or whether they are satisfied with their polygynous unions. The neither agree nor agree response may imply that the respondents are satisfied with some aspects of their polygynous union and dissatisfied with other aspects. These results reveal several critical social, cultural, and psychological dimensions that merit exploration. The indeterminate status of these women's feelings towards their marriages suggests a complex emotional and psychological landscape. These women exhibit feelings of ambivalence or conflict between their cultural beliefs, social expectations, and personal experiences (Ebrahim & Atteraya, 2021). This ambivalence could stem from a combination of factors such as personal circumstance, the dynamics within the

family, and societal norms regarding polygamy. It is common for women in polygynous societies to experience pressure to conform to the norms and values associated with such unions leading to dissonance between individual feelings and cultural expectations. This situation can encourage women to become indifferent rather than dissatisfied or contented. The result may also indicate a social conditioning that discourages open dissent regarding marital arrangements.

On the other hand, respondents slightly agreed with the statements 4 and 5. This implies that on average, women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni have gotten the important things they wanted in life and that they would choose to be in polygynous union if they could live their life over. These results indicate that while some women believe they have achieved key life goals and would choose polygyny again, there may be lingering doubts or complexities not captured by the scale. This ambivalence could imply that while polygyny might offer certain benefits, it may simultaneously come with significant challenges. The finding that respondents feel they have gotten the important things they wanted in life may point to a degree of personal fulfillment, stability, or social support that polygynous unions can provide. This could relate to material well-being, motherhood, social status, or community acceptance. It indicates that, for some women, the realities of polygynous marriage may fulfill certain expectations or aspirations, reinforcing the perceived value of these relationships within the social context. The suggestion that respondents would elect to enter into a polygynous union again if given the choice reflects a complex relationship with this marital arrangement. It could signify the recognition of the social and familial benefits these unions may provide, reinforcing the importance of family ties, loss of social stigma, or economic advantages inherent within these structures. The findings challenge an earlier study by Al-Krenawi and Maymon (2015), who found that women in polygynous union in Syria had significantly lower life satisfaction than their counterparts in monogamous marriages. However, the modest level of agreement in the current study indicates that this choice may not be wholly free of reservation. Women may feel constrained by cultural expectations or social pressures to conform to the norm of polygyny, complicating their perspective on choice. Their replies could represent a pragmatic acceptance of their situations rather than an enthusiastic endorsement of polygamy as an ideal form of marriage. Qualitative results from the interview also suggest that women in polygynous union experience some dissatisfaction due to factors like favouritism, lack of adequate affection from the husband, conflict between wives, financial difficulties, and low self-esteem.

*(6) Some women suffer right from the beginning; shock of additional wives and question themselves. This results to self-esteem issues. Love and wife favouritism causes other wives to suffer psychologically, (Interviewee 1, 2022).*

*(7) Women are psychologically tortured due to limited affection, sharing of status or losing status, and financial difficulties. First wives are more impacted. Second wives also fight for authority and affection, (Interviewee 2, 2022).*

*(8) Depression is prone to occur due to constant thoughts of her life that she sacrificed. Low self-esteem and feeling of neglect or uselessness, (Interviewee 3, 2022).*

*(9) There is an increase in non-communicable disease such as high blood pressure, heart disease and depression. This is a result of failure of most marriage to follow fundamental Sharia of polygamy, (Interviewee 4, 2022).*

These excerpts from the interview suggest that most women in polygynous unions suffer psychologically and are likely to exhibit low marital satisfaction. This implies that most of questionnaire respondents may have ticked they neither agree nor disagree option because it was the most socially acceptable position. As Latkins et al. (2017) explained, one the downside of self-reported data is that it is prone to social desirability bias where respondents give answers that project positive image of themselves or that matches society expectations. The extracts illustrate the multifaceted impact of marital dynamics on women's well-being, shedding light on the interplay of social, cultural, and psychological factors. One issue that emerges from these excerpts is that some women experience significant self-esteem issues stemming from the shock of welcoming additional wives into their marriages. The introduction of co-wives creates emotional turmoil and lead to feelings of inadequacy making the first wife to question her worth and social standing within the family structure.

Another issue that emerges from except is that first wives are disproportionately affected by psychological challenges. The excerpt suggests that first wives experience more psychological impairment because at the time they are getting married, most are usually not aware that their marriages will eventually turn-out to be polygynous. Additional analyses were therefore conducted to examine other factors that influence the psychological wellbeing of women in polygynous Muslim families. The mention of love and wife favoritism suggests a hierarchical dynamic where certain wives receive preferential treatment from the husband.

This favoritism can exacerbate feelings of jealousy and insecurity among the wives, contributing to psychological distress and an unhealthy family environment.

The One Way ANOVA test was conducted to examine the effect of wives education level, occupation, and wife order/ rank on marital satisfaction as an indicator of psychological wellbeing. Table 4.13 present the findings.

**Table 4.13: Education, Occupation, Wife Order and Marital Satisfaction**

Factor	Marital Satisfaction Score		F (df)	P
	N	Mean		
<b><u>Education</u></b>			1.140(3, 36)	.346
No formal education	5	3.88		
Primary	14	4.00		
Secondary	14	4.07		
Tertiary	7	4.74		
<b><u>Occupation</u></b>			1.255(4, 35)	.306
Domestic chores	9	4.04		
Salaried employment	7	4.86		
Wage labour	3	4.20		
Self-employment	17	3.91		
Retired	4	4.05		
<b><u>Wife Order</u></b>			0.707(3, 36)	.554
1 <sup>st</sup>	16	3.93		
2 <sup>nd</sup>	17	4.38		
3 <sup>rd</sup>	5	3.92		
4 <sup>th</sup>	2	4.40		

Results in Table 4.13 show that wives' education level ( $F= 1.140, p=.346$ ), occupation ( $F=1.255, p=.306$ ) and order/ rank ( $F=0.707, p=.554$ ) do not have a statistically significant influence of marital satisfaction of women living in polygynous Muslim families. These results imply that education level, occupation and wife order do not have a notable impact on the psychological wellbeing of women in polygynous Muslim families. Although higher education levels are often associated with increased personal agency and improved quality of life, this finding suggests that, within the context of polygynous Muslim families in Likoni

Sub-County, education does not correlate with greater marital satisfaction among wives. This could imply that other dynamics play a more prominent role in determining satisfaction than educational attainment alone. Similar to education, the lack of a significant link between occupation and marital satisfaction could indicate that job status or career achievements do not directly influence the emotional climate of a polygamous household. The responsibilities that come with various occupations may have less impact than the interpersonal relationships or traditional roles played within the family setting in shaping marital happiness. The rank or order of a wife appears not to significantly affect marital satisfaction either. This also suggest that other factors are more vital in influencing satisfaction levels. This finding challenges assumptions that a wife in a higher rank would automatically experience greater satisfaction due to perceived status.

The Pearson correlation test was used to examine the relationship between wives' age, number of biological children, number of children currently living in the household and marital satisfaction. Table 4.14 presents the findings:

**Table 4.14: Age, Biological Children, Children in Household and Marital Satisfaction**

Factor	Statistics	Aggregation marital satisfaction
Age	Pearson Correlation	.098
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.546
	N	40
Number of Biological Children	Pearson Correlation	-.213
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.187
	N	40
Number of Children Currently Living with Respondent	Pearson Correlation	-.302
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.058
	N	40

Results in Table 4.14 also show that wives' age ( $r=0.098$ ,  $p=.546$ ), number of biological children ( $r=-0.213$ ,  $p=.187$ ), and number of children currently living with the wife ( $r=0.302$ ,  $p=.058$ ) have no significant effect on marital satisfaction of women in polygynous Muslim families. These results imply that age, number of children, and household size may not be a crucial factor in determining how satisfied wives in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni

feel in their marriages. The results suggest that other factors play a more essential role. Another indicator that was used to measure psychological wellbeing of women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni was life satisfaction. Respondents were given a set of 10 statements and asked to indicate their level of agreement with each on four-point scale: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= agree, and (4) strongly agree. Table 4.15 presents the results.

**Table 4.15: Respondents Life Satisfaction**

<b>SN</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
1	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	40	2.80
2	At times I think I am no good at all.	40	2.48
3	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	40	3.10
4	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	40	2.78
5	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	40	2.30
6	I certainly feel useless at times	40	2.37
7	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	40	2.80
9	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	40	1.98
10	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	40	3.30
	<b>Life satisfaction aggregate score</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>2.84</b>

Results in Table 1 show that respondents on average agreed with statements 1, 3, 4, 7, and 10. These questions were positively worded to indicate high level of life satisfaction. Therefore, the respondents' agreement with these statements indicates they are generally satisfied with their lives. On the other hand, respondents disagreed with statements 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9. These were negatively worded questions that signify dissatisfaction with life. Therefore, respondents' disagreement with these statements also indicates that they are generally satisfied with their lives. The negatively worded questions (2, 5, 6, 8, and 9) were reverse coded and an aggregate life satisfaction score computed to show the overall life satisfaction of the respondents. The life satisfaction aggregate score was 2.84, which when rounded off to the nearest whole number become 3 out of a possible highest score of 4. This score implies

that the majority of the women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni have high levels of life satisfaction. The ANOVA test was conducted to examine whether wives' life satisfaction is associated with the education level, occupation, or order/ rank among the wives. Results of the analysis are presented in Table 4.16.

**Table 4.16: Education, Occupation, Wife Order and Life Satisfaction**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Life Satisfaction Score</b>		<b>F (df)</b>	<b>P</b>
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>		
<b><u>Education</u></b>			1.918(3,36)	.144
No formal education	5	2.72		
Primary	14	2.74		
Secondary	14	2.84		
Tertiary	7	3.10		
<b><u>Occupation</u></b>			1.436(4,35)	.243
Domestic chores	9	2.72		
Salaried employment	7	3.07		
Wage labour	3	2.73		
Self-employment	17	2.78		
Retired	4	3.00		
<b><u>Wife Order</u></b>			1.709(3,36)	.182
1 <sup>st</sup>	16	2.79		
2 <sup>nd</sup>	17	2.96		
3 <sup>rd</sup>	5	2.62		
4 <sup>th</sup>	2	2.65		

Table 4.16 shows that education ( $F=1.918$ ,  $p=.144$ ), occupation ( $F=1.436$ ,  $p=.243$ ), and wife order ( $F=1.709$ ,  $p=.182$ ) do not have a significant effect on the life satisfaction levels of women living in polygynous Muslim families. This implies that these demographic variables

do not have a notable impact on the psychological wellbeing of women in the polygynous Muslim families. These results suggests that education, often seen as a marker of empowerment and personal development, may not directly translate into higher life satisfaction for women in polygynous contexts. Similarly, the results indicate that while occupation is commonly linked employment and personal satisfaction, particularly regarding financial independence and personal achievement, employment status alone does not provide the expected enhancement to life satisfaction among women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni. In addition, results show that the importance of rank in terms of life satisfaction is overshadowed by other factors.

The Pearson correlation test was used to examine the relationship between wives' age, number of biological children, number of children currently living in the household and life satisfaction. Table 4.17 presents the findings:

**Table 4.17: Age, Biological Children, Children in Household and Life Satisfaction**

Factors	Statistics	Aggregate life satisfaction
Age	Pearson Correlation	.171
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.292
	N	40
Number of Biological Children	Pearson Correlation	.114
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.485
	N	40
Number of Children Currently Living with Respondent	Pearson Correlation	-.121
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.456
	N	40

Results in Table 4.17 also indicate that age ( $r=0.171$ ,  $p=.292$ ), number of biological children ( $r=0.114$ ,  $p=.485$ ), and number of children currently living with the wife ( $r=-0.121$ ,  $p=.456$ ) are not statistically associated with the level of life satisfaction among women living in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni. The findings imply that these factors do not have a meaningful impact on the psychological wellbeing of the women.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This study purposed to assess the influence economic resources distribution in polygynous unions on welfare of women in Likoni Sub-County in Mombasa County, Kenya. This chapter presents the conclusion made from the study and recommendations.

#### 5.2 Summary of Findings

This section presents a summary of the key findings of the study. It is organized in line with the objectives of the study.

##### 5.2.1 Distribution of Economic Resources in Polygynous Muslim Families

This study sought to assess the influence economic resources distribution in polygynous unions on welfare of women in Likoni Sub-County in Mombasa County, Kenya. The first objective of the study was to establish how economic resources are distributed among women in Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County? Results showed that over 40% of the women living in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County do not have the right to own property. This result suggests that a substantial proportion of women in polygynous Muslim families may be subjected to unfair distribution of economic resources. According to Gaddis et al. (2020), ownership of property by women is a major determinant of their well-being as it gives them a voice and greater bargaining power at home. Women who own property within their marriages have greater voice when it comes to making decisions on key issues that affect their wellbeing such as reproductive health and number of children to have.

Another way in which right to own property enhances the wellbeing of married women is by making the wives less vulnerable to intimate partner violence (Gahramanov et al., 2021). Women who completely depend on husbands tend to be more vulnerable to intimate partner violence because they often feel pressured to remain in their marriages even when being subjected to abuse. Property ownership by women within their marriages also translates to better children outcomes. This because women control over household resources leads to increased spending on food, health, education, and other items that have a major implication on the wellbeing of children.

Results further showed that the right to own property is significantly affected by the occupation of the wife. Women who are employed on salary basis and those who are self-employed are more likely to own property than home makers, those employed on wages, and

retirees. These findings reinforce the study by Matz (2016), who found that one of the key determinants of property ownership by women within their marriages is the productivity of these women. Current findings support this position. Women who have stable occupation are more likely to make notable contributions towards acquisition of family property. Consequently, they are likely to have greater bargaining power when it comes to distribution and ownership of family property. Current findings do not support the existence of an association between wives age, education level, order/ rank, number of biological children, number of children in the household and distribution of economic resources in the polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County.

### **5.2.2 Living Standards of Women in Polygynous Muslim Families**

The living standards of women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni were measured using several indicators. The first indicator was household income. Results showed that most of the respondents were living in households that had an annual income of between Kshs 1 million and 2 million. These results suggest that most of women in polygynous Muslim families lived in household with higher income than the average Kenyan households, which according to the KNBS (2022) have an average household income of Kshs 180,000. However, income data did not provide an accurate picture of the living standards of women in the polygynous Muslim families because most of the income was generated by the husband and; consequently, shared by the wives. Consequently, other indicators had to be incorporated.

The next indicator was household expenditure on food. Results showed that on average, the polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County spent Kshs 181,770 on food in the 12 months before the study. This amount translates to a monthly food expenditure of Kshs 15147.50 per household and a per person food expenditure of Kshs 3030. The per person monthly food expenditure is higher than the food poverty line for urban areas that is set at Kshs 2,551. These results imply that in terms of access to food and nutrition, women in polygynous Muslim families have higher standard of living than the average families in Kenya urban areas. Access to nutrition has a positive effect on women physical health as it safeguards them from conditions associated with malnutrition such as underweight (Khanna, 2020). Access to proper nutrition also safeguards women from unhealthy food choices that lead to morbidities such as obesity, hypertension, diabetes, and heart diseases. Access to nutrition not affects women physical health positively, but it also has a positive implication of

women mental health. Rahman et al. (2021) observed that food insecurity during the Covid-19 pandemic was associated with increase stress level among women in Southwest region of Bangladesh.

Results further showed that access to food and nutrition was positively associated with women's occupation and age. Women in stable occupation such as self-employment or salaried employment recorded higher household expenditure on food. The most plausible explanation is that when the wife is engaged in stable economic activities, household income tends to increase leading to increased expenditure on food. These findings also reinforced the study by Gahramanov et al. (2021), who observed that access to economic resources by women increases expenditure on items such as food, health, and education within households. Results also showed that older wives were more likely to exhibit higher household food expenditure.

The final indicator that was used to measure standard of living was expenditure on non-food items. Results showed that on average, polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Kshs 107313.08 on non-food items per annum. This amount translates to a monthly expenditure of Kshs 8,943 per household and a per person monthly expenditure of Kshs 1,789. The per-person expenditure is lower than the non-food poverty line of Kshs 3,444 per person living urban households in Kenya (World Bank, 2022). This implies that women in polygynous Muslim families do not have adequate access to non-food items like healthcare and clothing. The findings suggest that most of the families could be directing most of their resources towards food expenditure.

### **5.2.3 Psychological Wellbeing of Women in Polygynous Muslim Families**

The final objective of the study was to investigate the psychological welfare of women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County. Two indicators were used to measure psychological wellbeing. The first indicator is marital satisfaction. Results showed that respondents were indifferent when queried regarding their level of marital satisfaction. However, qualitative data collected from the interview indicate lower levels of marital satisfaction among the women. Several themes emerged from the interview portraying issues that diminish the marital satisfaction of women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni. These issues include struggle for resources among the wives, shock among first wives at the introduction of a second wife, diminished self-esteem due to introduction of second wife,

wife favouritism, financial difficulties, loss of status in the community, and conflicts between wives.

The study by Al-Krenawi and Graham (2006) also found that Bedouin-Arab women in polygynous unions exhibited higher levels of psychological distress, had more family functioning problems, and lower marital satisfaction. Current findings are also congruent with Mengistu et al. (2022), who found that women in polygynous unions in Ethiopia experienced a myriad of psychological challenges including emotional distress, mistrust, anger, emptiness, loneliness, and lack of intimacy with their husband. Current findings further revealed that marital satisfaction of the women was not significantly associated with demographic variables such as the women's age, education level, occupation, wife order/ rank, or number of children.

The second indicator was life satisfaction. Results showed that the majority of the women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni have high levels of life satisfaction. Most of the respondents affirmed that they are happy with themselves and that they get most of the things that other married women get. Life satisfaction was also not significantly associated with any of the women's demographic variables such as age, education level, occupation, and number of children.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

Based on the findings, the study concludes that more than 40% of women in polygynous unions are subjected to unfair distribution of economic resources. The study has established that these women do not enjoy the right to own property. Lack of equitable distribution of economic resources hampers the wellbeing of the women by reducing their bargaining power in household decision-making, limit the economic progression, and making them susceptible to domestic violence. The study also concludes that the distribution of economic resources is shaped by the occupation of wives. Wives who have stable income generating occupation are more likely to be treated equally when it comes to distribution of marital property.

Regarding the standards of living of women in Polygynous Muslim families in Likoni, the study concludes that the women have high standards of living when it comes to access to food and nutrition. This access has a positive implication on the physical and mental wellbeing. The study also concludes that access to food and nutrition by the women is shaped by the occupation and age. Women in stable occupation and older women have greater access to food and nutrition. However, the women have lower than average standards of living

when access to non-food items such as health care, education, and housing are considered. In particular, the study revealed that most of the women do not have access to health insurance. This could be attributed to NHIF requirements that restrict the number of wives and children that a subscriber can list as dependants.

Concerning the psychological wellbeing of women in polygynous Muslim families, the study concludes that the majority of the women have low levels of marital satisfaction. Most women are dealing with a myriad of marital challenges including financial difficulties, loss of self-esteem, reduced love and intimacy from the husband, conflicts between the wives, and emotional distress. However, the women have high levels of life satisfaction. This implies that most of the women have learned to cope with their marital situation and to find joy in other areas of their lives.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Policymakers at the national assemblies and the department of gender should strengthen existing policies that are aimed at ensuring women have equal access to marital property. The policy should increase awareness on the nonmaterial contribution that women make towards a home and how this affects their economic progression. It is also critical to enforce existing laws protecting women's property rights and to increase awareness about these rights among women in polygynous unions, empowering them to seek legal recognition and government support. In addition, there is a need for educational initiatives aimed at informing women and the polygynous Muslim families at large about women legal rights to property ownership. Such initiatives could educate families not only on legal rights but also on the positive impacts of equitable property ownership on family welfare and community development.

Policymakers and practitioners in social organizations should also develop programmes for creating awareness among women in polygynous Muslim families regarding economic opportunities that exist in their environment. In particular, the women should be made aware on how they can access finances and start income generating ventures. The women should also be trained on how to manage simple income generating ventures and make them sustainable. They should also create supportive environments for entrepreneurship through lowering the cost of doing business and creating market linkages because results indicate that most women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni depend on self-employment. Results have shown that women who have stable occupation are more likely to be treated equally in the distribution of economic resources.

Religious leaders also have a duty to enlighten husband regarding the importance of ensuring fair distribution of economic resources in the family. Efforts could be made to encourage a shift toward recognizing individual wives' needs within the family unit. The husbands should also be informed about the importance of allowing their wives to start income generating ventures and supporting these ventures. Muslim religious leaders hold significant authority and are trusted figures within the Islamic communities. They can serve as agents of change by conveying and teaching values of justice, equity, and mutual support within families that are consistent with Islamic doctrine.

Regarding living standards, the NHIF needs to reconsider its policy that caps the number of wives that a subscriber can list at 1 wife and the number of children at 5. Husband are compelled to pay an additional Kshs 500 to add another wife and another set of 5 children. This policy has hampered the penetration of health insurance among polygynous families. This has left the family in the danger of being impoverished by major illnesses.

Social organizations should encourage women in polygynous Muslim families to take their own medical cover if their husbands are unable to list them as dependants. The social organizations should focus on enlightening women regarding the importance of having health insurance and other forms of social protection such as retirement benefits schemes.

Social organizations need to develop interventions for assisting women in polygynous unions to overcome psychological challenges that they experience in their marriages. The interventions may entail forming social networks when the women can meet other women who are experiencing similar challenges, share experiences, learn from each other, and deliberate on plausible solutions.

### **5.5 Areas of for Further Studies**

The current study focused on women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni County, which is an urban setting. Future studies should replicate this study in rural Muslim setups such the North Eastern parts of Kenya. This will enable readers to compare the experiences of women in rural areas with that of urban women. It will also support the generation of study findings. Although the current study explored the influence of several factors like level of education and wife order on property ownership, the list of factors was not exhaustive. Further research is warranted to explore alternative factors like family support, legal literacy, socio-economic status, extended family structure, legal literacy of women, and community attitudes toward women's property rights.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Women in Polygynous Unions' Questionnaire

#### Introduction

Thank you for volunteering to take part in this focus group. You have been asked to participate as your point of view is important. I realize you are busy and I appreciate your time. This questionnaire is designed to assess your current thoughts and feelings on how polygyny has influenced income distribution and welfare of women in this area. This exercise will take no more than one hour. You should try to answer and comment as accurately and truthfully as possible.

#### Location and Identification

Date (dd/mm) \_\_\_\_\_ Time started \_\_\_\_\_ Time ended \_\_\_\_\_ Questionnaire No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Ward \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

#### Personal and Family Information

1. Age of the respondent: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Education level of the Respondent. \_\_\_\_\_

Codes: 0=No education 1=Religious education 2=Adult Education 3=Primary 4=Secondary 5=Tertiary/college 6=University 7=Post-graduate

3. Your primary occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Codes: 1=Domestic chores 2=Salaried employment 3=Wage labor 4=Self-employment 5=Retired 6=Other specify \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many biological children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Number of children that are currently living with you. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Your position among the wives. \_\_\_\_\_

#### RESOURCES DISTRIBUTION

7. Do you think that you have equal right in this family with respect to the following statements? Codes: No=0, Yes=1
  - 7.1. Ownership of family property \_\_\_\_\_
  - 7.2. Management and administration of family property \_\_\_\_\_
  - 7.3. Enjoyment and disposition of family property \_\_\_\_\_

## LIVING STANDARD

8. Kindly fill in details in the table

Income source	Did the household earn income? 0=No; 1=Yes	Who earned income? Code: 1=Husband 2=Wife 3=Other Members			Total income for the past 12 months		
		1	2	3	4	Cash (KES)	In-kind (cash equivalent in (KES))
1. Income from salaried employment							
2. Income from casual labor (off-farm)							
3. Income from own businesses (shops, saloons etc)							
4. Pensions							
5. Remittances from family members/friends who do not live in the household							
6. Revenues from leasing/renting out land							
7. Government transfers							
8. Sale of property							
9. Other sources (specify).....							

9. Expenditure on food and non-food items

9.1. On average, how much do spend on food? Daily \_\_\_\_\_ Weekly \_\_\_\_\_  
Monthly \_\_\_\_\_

9.2. Fill the table for non-food items

Expense Item	Total number of times bought in the year	Average quantity each time	Total quantity per year	Average per unit price (Kshs)	Total cost of purchase (Kshs)
B1	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8=6*7
1. Clothing and beddings					
2. Electricity					
3. Fuel (wood, charcoal and kerosene)					
4. School fees and school books and supplies					
5. Health care					
6. Religious and social contributions					
7. House building/construction					

8. Travel expenses and Communication					
9. Kitchen utensils and hygiene					
10. Furniture (tables, chairs, beds etc)					
11. Home repairs					
12. Purchase of bicycle, motorcycle, vehicles					
13. Repairs for vehicles, bicycles fuel for vehicles, etc					
14. House rent					
15. Utility bills (water, telephone etc)					
16. Remittances paid					

10. Please indicate whether the following statements are true. Use the following scale:

**Scale:** 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Slightly disagree, 4=Neither agree nor disagree

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have access to family planning care				
I easily get treatment whenever I fall sick				
I have two pairs of all-weather shoes				
I have enough money to keep my house a decent state of repair				
I have access to clean drinking water throughout the year				
I have an active health insurance				
I am able to make regular savings for use in rainy days				
On a normal day, I can afford two meals				
I have access to transport services whenever I would like to move around				
I have access to a balanced diet				

## PSYCHOLOGICAL WELFARE

11. Satisfaction with polygynous marriage life questions

**Scale:** 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Slightly disagree, 4=Neither agree nor disagree, 5=Slightly agree, 6=Agree 7=Strongly agree

11.1. In most ways, my polygynous marriage life is close to my ideal. \_\_\_\_\_

11.2.The conditions of my life in polygynous marriage are excellent. \_\_\_\_\_

11.3.I am satisfied with my polygynous marriage. \_\_\_\_\_

11.4.So far I have gotten the important things I wanted in life. \_\_\_\_\_

11.5.If I could live my life over, I would move out of polygynous marriage. \_\_\_\_\_

12. Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself in polygynous marriage. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.


Feeling	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.				
At times I think I am no good at all.				
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.				
I am able to do things as well as most other people.				
I feel I do not have much to be proud of.				
I certainly feel useless at times				
I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.				
I wish I could have more respect for myself.				
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.				
I take a positive attitude toward myself.				

## **Appendix II: Interview Guide for Muslim Religious Leaders**

1. Please share your age: .....
  
2. What is your highest education level? .....
  
3. What is your marital status? .....
  
4. Please share your thought regarding the experiences of Muslim women married in polygynous unions in Likoni Sub-County.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What are your views regarding how economic resources are distributed among women in polygynous Muslim families this area?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Please share your thoughts regarding the living standard of women in polygynous Muslim families?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. In your opinion, how does the distribution of economic resources among wives influence the living standard of women in polygynous Muslim families?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Please share your views regarding the psychological wellbeing of women in polygynous Muslim families in this area.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 9 In your opinion, how does the distribution of economic resources among wives influence the living standard of women in polygynous Muslim families?

*Thank you for taking the time to talk to us!!*




## Appendix III: Snapshot of Published Article




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### Psychological welfare of women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-county, Kenya

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#### Abstract

This study sought to investigate the psychological welfare of women in polygynous Muslim families in Likoni Sub-County. The Muslim community embraces polygyny as a form of marriage because it is allowed by the Islamic religion. As a result, polygyny is rampant among the Muslim community in Kenya. While the Islamic religion allows men to marry up to four wives, the impact of this on the welfare of women has not been studied. The study utilised data that was collected through a survey of wives in polygynous Muslim families and interviews with Muslim religious leaders in the study area. Clustered and snowball sampling techniques were used to select the sample of polygynous families. One Muslim religious leader was selected purposively from each of the four clusters. The survey data was examined using descriptive statistics, while the thematic content analysis technique was used to analyse the interview data. Results showed that women in polygynous unions suffer from psychological challenges such as loss of self-esteem and anxiety due to financial difficulties, conflicts with other wives, and reduced intimacy with husbands. Based on these findings, the study recommends that policymakers and practitioners should strengthen policies and interventions for addressing the psychological challenges of women.

**Key words:** Gender equality, policymakers, polygyny, psychological welfare, religious leaders.

