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# The habibs' polygamy lives with ahwal women (A case study in Banjar regency, South Kalimantan, Indonesia)

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**Article Info**

**Abstract**

Polygamy studies are never done; there are always pros and cons. This study aims to reveal the lives of polygamous marriages between *habib*s with *ahwal* women in Banjar district. This study uses a qualitative approach. Data collection is done through interview, observation and documentary techniques. The study results indicate that polygamous marriages performed with the knowledge and consent of the first wife create a harmonious polygamous marital life between the habibs and women; they interact and communicate, their lives are peaceful, and there is a loving and affectionate relationship between wives and husbands. Polygamous marriages performed without the knowledge and consent of the first wife are not harmonious; conflicts often arise between the wives because they compete against each other to gain control over their husband's love and affection, which eventually leads to divorce.

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## Introduction

Polygamy is the practice of marriage with more than one wife (Jaiz, 2007). The survey results from the collaboration of LSI, Goethe Institute (2011) muslim youth survey. Friedrich Nauman Stiftung and Fur Die Freiheit showed that of 1496 respondents, 52.9 percent of respondents rejected polygamy, 32.9 percent strongly opposed polygamy, only 12.7 percent agreed with polygamy, 0.8 percent strongly supported polygamy, and 0.6 percent of respondents abstained (Sari, Indriana, & Fauziah, 2014). In polygamous households there are strong feelings of sacrifice for a wife, who must be willing to share her husband with another (Marselina & Salam, 2016).

Most women reject the practice of polygamy in their families for various reasons. However, there are still women who accept polygamy and there are even women who behave in favor of polygamy, for example, they elect candidates for wives and even propose to other women for their husbands. This may be due to their understanding of the danger of the increasing number of unmarried women, and the negative impact it has on social lives or their sense of responsibility, their love for their sisters from old virgins to widows and even to their husband's economic status (Ardhian, Anugrah, & Bima, 2015). The experiments of *Women*, a magazine founded by Mormon women in 1872, often brings editorials to defend the practice of women who support polygamous marriages (Hayes & Bohanan, 2017).

In polygamous households, harmony is difficult to achieve because a husband will share his love with more than one family (Muhsin, 1994). The negative effects of polygamy can cause wives to experience jealousy, and competition. In such cases, the social and psycological implications of polygyny are associated with power and prestige (Slonim-Nevo, Al-Krenawi, & Yuval-Shani, 2009).

There are two different tribes, namely the Arab tribe of the family of the Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h. called *habib* and non-arab called *ahwal*. These two tribes conduct polygamous marriages; What is the life of polygamous habib households with ahwal women like? Are their households not harmonious like other polygamous households?

Based on research by experts, polygamous households are not harmonious; however, based on the author's observations in Banjar district, polygamy marriage performed by *habib*s with *ahwal* woman is harmonious; their interaction and communication within the family healthy, the husband and wives love each other. Their family life is very harmonious and peaceful.

To get a clear picture of the life of habibs' polygamy marriages with *ahwal* women, a study was carried out: The life of habibs' polygamy marriages with *ahwal* women (case study in Banjar District, South Kalimantan in Indonesia).

## Literature Review

### The Concept of Families

Bakry (1993) provides a definition of a household, which is the smallest community consisting of husband and wife, children, parents, and so on. Households are manifested in a legal manner in accordance with religion and law (Bakry, 1993). Home includes an understanding that gives a strong image, a sense of serenity, security, love and compassion (Soeroso, 2010).

A harmonious family, is a family full of peace, tranquility, love and affection, descent and continuity of generations, complementing and helping each other and working together (Qaimi, 2002). A harmonious family is called a *sakinah* family, that is, a family that is fostered based on a legitimate marriage, is able to fulfill the inner life needs, spiritual and material, that is feasible, able to create an atmosphere of mutual love, affection, and able to instill and implement the values of the faith, virtuous charity and noble character in the family and sociallives (Subhan, 2004).

### The Concept of Polygamy

Various systems of marriage exist in the world, such as: 1. Monogamy, the marriage of a man and a woman; 2. Polygamy that consists of: a. Polygyny, the marriage between a man and several women; b. Polyandry, the marriage between a woman and several men; and 3. Polygynandry (or also called group marriage), the marriage in husband and wife spouses sharing system (Sa'adah, Fitria, & Widiastuti, 2015). In popular usage, the term "polygamy" refers to the simultaneous union of a husband to multiple wives at the same time. Polygamy has equally been defined as a practice or condition of having more than one spouse, especially a wife, at one time (Adebayo & Bankole, 2019).

According to marriage laws in Indonesia, polygamy can be practiced in several conditions, including: the wife cannot carry out her obligations as a wife, the wife has a disability or illness that cannot be cured, and the wife cannot give birth to a child (Aulia, 2019). Polygamy is regulated in Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam (Wartini, 2013). Cameroon (Africa) in particular, the government is explicitly fighting polygamy and trying to impose a monogamous model of marriage (Andre & Yannick, 2019).

Indonesian marriage regulations and laws accept only polygyny. Polygamy has a complex history that is linked to changing socio-legal perceptions. The challenges of polygamy are: to protecting moral and spiritual illness and the abuse of womanhood; protecting orphans and avoiding divorce from infertile women; to provide another opportunity for women whose first marriage has collapsed and who are willing to try again; to provide husbands for widows who have not yet passed the age of marriage.

There are still women who accept polygamy in their families, and there are even some women who behave in favor of polygamy, for example, they elect candidates for wives and even propose to other women for their husbands. This may be due to their understanding of the danger of the increasing number of unmarried women, and the negative impact it has on social lives or their sense of responsibility, their love for their sisters from old virgins to widows, and even to their husband's economic status (Ardhian, Anugrah, & Bima, 2015). The problems of polygamy are: Polygamy is closely related to patriarchal culture. Men assumed superiority over women so visibly that women are placed as second class humans who only play a role in domestic areas (family affairs) (Ahmadi, Hefni, & Mutrofin, 2019). Many of the children may be exposed to adverse conditions associated with membership in polygamous households (Arthi, & Fenske, 2018). Polygamy causes rivalry between wives regularly (Munro, & Kebede, 2019).

It is concluded that marriage in Islam according to Quranic is monogamy. Polygamy is only possible for a husband in certain circumstances, such as the inability of a woman to become pregnant (Olsen, 2009).

## Methodology

The study was conducted on four cases that describe the *habibs'* polygamous domestic life with *ahwal* women in Banjar Regency. This study is a qualitative study. Some considerations in carrying out the qualitative study were: 1.The nature of the problem under study or the focus of the research problem is more appropriate when examined qualitatively than quantitatively. 2. To uncover and understand something behind complex socio-cultural phenomena that is difficult to understand by quantitative methods. 3.To get new insights about something or provide other alternatives in explaining phenomena which are not all positivistic (Strauss & Corbin, 2009). A qualitative approach means that the data collected are not in the form of numbers, but rather the data come from interviews, field notes, personal documents, and memos (Moleong, 2017).

### Participants

The respondents in this study were the *habib's*, *sharifa* women and *ahwal* women who were in polygamous marriages and resided in Banjar Regency. Another informant in this study was the chairperson of *Rabithah Alawiyyah* Board. Before communicating directly with respondents, the data were first collected from *Rabithah Alawiyyah* management about habib polygamous marriage with the *ahwal* women. Then, the *habib's* and *sharifa* and the *ahwal* women were interviewed to get information describing their domestic life.

*Data Collection*

Data collection was done through interviews, observation and documentation. Interviews were used to gather social data about interaction and communication in the households, tranquility in the family, love and affection of husbands and wives, and justice in the households. Observations were made on the subject and subject behavior during the interview, the interaction of the subject with the researcher and the things considered to be appropriate so as to provide additional data on the results of the interview. Documentation is a technique for collecting data from sources other than human sources. These data already exist, so researchers only need to access such to complete the data obtained through interviews and observations.

*Data Analysis*

The analysis of data begins with the data collection process. All data collected in one stage are then analyzed by examining the data, sorting it into units or giving certain codes, synthesizing, trying to find patterns and finding something important or unique which needs to be studied scientifically. A decision is then made, and finally it is written systematically into a research report. Data analysis was also carried out by content analysis.

**Results and Discussion**

This study examined four cases of the life of polygamous habib households with *ahwal* women in Banjar District. This was is because not all *habibs* were willing to disclose information about the life of their polygamous household. The reason for the *habib* not being willing to reveal the polygamy household life is because by revealing the life of the household with other people it means revealing all the good and ugliness of the household, which is actually prohibited in religion. According to the description of household, life is something that should be kept secret.

Description of *Habibs*' Polygamy Domestic Life with *Ahwal* Women in Banjar Regency: Interaction and communication in the households: First case; husband with the first wife good interaction and communication. Husband with the second wife, good interaction and communication. First and second wives, good interaction and communication. Second case; husband with the first wife, interaction and communication were not good. Husband with the second wife, good interaction and communication. First and second wives, interaction and communication were not good. Third case; husband with the first wife, good interaction and communication. Husband with the second wife; good interaction and communication. First and second wives, no interaction and communication. Fourth case; husband with the first wife, good communication. Husband with the second wife, good interaction and communication. First and second wives, good interaction and communication.

Tranquility in the Family: Peace in the households: First case; the household of the first and second wives was calm, peaceful and there were no conflicts. Second case; the household

was in an unpeaceful state because of a dispute by the first wife both to the husband and to the second wife. Third case; a calm and peaceful household, no dispute between the husband and the second wife. Fourth case; households in conditions of calm, peace, no disputes occur.

Love and Affection of husbands and wives: Love and affection of the husband with the first wife; First case, love each other. Second case, no longer loving, husband and wife in the process of divorce in the religious court. Third case and Fourth case, love each other.

Love and affection of the husband with the second wife; First, second, third and fourth case, love each other. Love and affection of the first wife with the second wife. First case, the first and second wives loved each other. Second case, there was no affection between the first and second wives. Third case, there was no affection between the first and second wives. Fourth case, the first and second wives loved each other.

Justice in the households: Husband's fair treatment of the first wife; First case, tried to be fair to the wives. Second case, no longer being fair. Third case and Fourth case, Was fair to the wives. Husband's fair treatment of the second wife; First case, was fair to the second wife. Second case, more inclined to the second wife. Third case and fourth case, was fair to the wife.

Household harmony can be measured by good interaction and communication between the first wife and the next wife. The household life in peace and calm. Love and affection of fellow wife and her husband, and husband fair in his household. Households are not harmonious, if the opposite occurs.

*Interaction and Communication in the Domestic Life*

Social interaction is the existence of relationships between people individually, between groups of people, and individuals with groups (Setiadi, Hakam, & Effendi, 2017). Interaction occurs when several people meet and social interactions begin when they greet one another, greet each other, shake hands, talk to each other and so on. Of the four cases of *habib's* polygamy life with *ahwal* women in the district of Banjar, the interactions and communication between the husband and the first wife in three cases went well while the interaction and communication between the husband and the first wife in one other case did not go well. Finally, the two parties underwent a divorce process in the religious court. The interaction and communication that occurred between the husband and second wife in the four cases went well. Even in the second case, the husband was always in the second wife's residence. Furthermore, the interactions and communication between the first and second wives were well interwoven in two research cases. On the contrary, the interaction and communication between the first and second wives in the other two cases did not go smoothly. The lack of communication between wives in both cases was due to the divorce process being carried out and the residence of each wife being far apart. In polygamous domestic life, it cannot be denied that wives often feel jealous in getting love and affection from their husbands so competition and conflict cannot be avoided. However, peace can be realized again when the wives realize that their husbands' love

and affection are shared. This is as happened in the first case in this study. Social processes can manifest in various forms and can be classified into several types; Cooperation; Competition; Disputes; Accommodation is carried out by ceasefire or compromise (Pelly, 1997).

Communication is essential in maintaining the continuity of a family's domestic life. If family life is not accompanied by open communication between family members, there will be no harmony in the family. Domestic life becomes quiet due to the lack of conversation, dialogue, exchanging ideas and so on. As a result, relationships between family members become vulnerable. Therefore, communication between husband and wife, or between wives in a polygamous family, and between parents and children, really needs to be harmonious. In the first case in this study, the *habib* married his second wife without first communicating with or asking for the blessing of his first wife to carry out his polygamous wishes. Such *habib* actions eventually lead to conflicts that lead to domestic disharmony in the family.

Like in the second case in this study, the *Habib* married his second wife without prior notice to or requesting the blessing of his first wife to carry out his polygamous wishes. Such habib actions eventually lead to conflict, which leads to disharmony in the family. With the trust that is built in the husband and wife relationship, there will be a sense of comfort between the two as happened in the first case in this study. Therefore, the communication built in the *habib's* polygamy lives with the *ahwal* women in Banjar district created harmonious family life, except in the second case where interaction and communication did not run smoothly.

*Tranquility in the Family*

In domestic life, obtaining a life full of peace and tranquility does come automatically. and must be sought by both parties, husband and wife. Of the four cases of the habibs' polygamy lives with ahwal women in Banjar Regency, three cases could be categorized as harmonious polygamy family, and one household was categorized as a non-harmonious family.

From a sociological perspective, a family becomes the main social group where children or family members learn to be social humans. Families become the first and foremost place for social learning. If communication in the family is not good, then it is likely that the social interaction is not good, so the possibility of a conflict in the family is very great. In-family conflicts will occur when there is an attempt by family members to get attention, power and authority to play certain roles. Family members often carry out negotiations in achieving goals to compete with each other, so verbal or physical interaction conflicts will very likely occur. Conditions like this certainly disrupt family harmony. A sociologist Jetse Sprey, in Su'adah (2005) describes the family as a system, where conflict occurs more often when compared with harmony, although many writers assume that a household in one family is an organism that struggles to achieve balance (Su'adah, 2005). This is reflected in the second case in this study, where family conflicts occurred in *habib's* domestic life, which began a divorce process at the Martapura religious court.

A person's connection to values is relative and even emotional. Therefore, value can be seen as a guideline for people to act. In the cases examined, the trigger for the start of conflict in the family is because the husband and wives no longer heed the values that must be maintained in the family. Amina *Sharifa* said about Ali *Habib* polygamy family: "When Ali *Habib* remarried with an *ahwal* woman, he did not respect me at all, he married the woman without my knowledge and permission. Before I asked for divorce with Ali *Habib*, I first considered the values of goodness and badness, if there was a divorce in the marriage. The value system is to show the rules of the relationship between husband and wife reciprocally. Cultural value systems have a function as the highest guideline for human behavior. This cultural value system is inherently strong in a person, making it difficult to change in a relatively short time.

Conflicts in polygamy families often occur between the first wife and the other wives due to jealousy. Jealousy can be a source of ridicule and is not common for some people. However, the feeling of jealousy that is felt is actually an overflow of affection because of the unwillingness of the partner to turn to someone else.

However, feelings of jealousy are sometimes not communicated to the couple because of shame and fear of having that particular feeling like the *habib's* polygamy life with *ahwal* women in the first case. According to Hj. Rukayah, at first, when her husband was polygamous, feelings of jealousy arose when her husband wanted to go to his second wife's residence. However, after getting her husband's explanation that he did not distinguish between his wives, she suppressed her jealousy as much as possible. It could be that jealousy is actually part of the very nature of women. Jealousy can be explained as negative feelings, such as fear of being left behind, resulting in being angry when you see someone who is loved by others. To overcome jealousy, open communication with a partner should be attempted as this is the key to managing jealousy.

*Love and Affection of Husbands and Wives*

Although the element of love and affection is very important in domestic life, it is the attitude and behavior of the husband or wife which inflames or extinguishes that affection. As in three of the four cases in this study, domestic life was fostered with love and affection, disputes could also be controlled so that a peaceful and harmonious household life is realized. On the contrary, without love and affection between husband and wife, a marriage bond will be destroyed. This is reflected in the second case of this study, where domestic life, which was initially fostered with love and affection, finally ended in the divorce process in the religious court of Martapura. This was caused by the *habib* in the case of practicing polygamy without the knowledge and permission of his first wife, which then triggered suspicion and jealousy in his first wife. In the end, the first wife could not control her jealousy, which then often triggered a fight. From this case it can be learned that the permission and consent of the wife, even though it is not a valid requirement for polygamous marriage, remains a consideration for a husband in making a decision on

polygamy. The readiness to undergo a polygamy marriage is not only needed by the husband, but also the wife and children. Careful consideration in terms of material and non-material aspects is also needed to begin the life of a polygamous family. The conditions of autonomy that women can experience in multiple relationships and the lack of self-determination and choice experienced by women and girls living in polygynous relationship show that traditional polygyny is "inherently unequal" and harmful to women, heightening their economic dependence and negatively impacting their health (Gouweloos, 2016).

As in the first and fourth cases in this study, after the first and second wives competed for *habib*'s love and affection as their husband, they finally realized that the contested husband was the husband of both and they each needed that husband. In this case, each wife accepted the fact that they were polygamous. Self-acceptance is a positive attitude towards oneself, acknowledging and accepting shortcomings and strengths and feeling positive about past lives. Self-acceptance is included in healthy personal characteristics. An individual who accepts his condition feels emotionally secure to be able to cope with frustrating and painful events because he realizes that painful things are also part of life itself. However, in the second case examined, it turned out that accommodation was done by adjudication, namely the settlement of a case or dispute in court.

### Husbands Fair Attitudes in Polygamous Marriages

Of the four cases examined in the study, in three cases, namely the first, third and fourth cases, the *habibs* tried their utmost to be fair to their wives, especially regarding the distribution of living in the homes of the wives. However, the habib in the second case could not carry out justice with his wives. Even in the last period of this research, the *habib* was always at the home of the second wife. In a polygamous domestic life, justice is something that must be upheld because justice provides a balance between wives and children by giving each their rights without reducing or exaggerating them. In the first case, each wife worked to support herself and her children. Before polygamy, the husband and wife agreed that the household income was guaranteed by each wife.

Al-Krenawi and Kanat Maymon (2009) stated that economic problems, cultural interaction and social hierarchies influence the experience of a woman in a polygamous marriage. Ideally, family units must make decisions that will benefit all members, but the fact is that each family member experiences differences in accessing family resources. Sometimes decisions are made as if they support certain family members. This family structure tends to force the wife to work in fulfilling the family needs and at the same time they must submit to the authority of the husband and be constantly involved in the competition for love, husband's attention and family resources. Therefore, polygamy creates a uniqueness, a vulnerability to the dynamics of domestic power. The husband's approach and treatment of women and their children determines how the family will function as a unit, research conducted by Alean Al-Krenawi and Yaniv Kanat-

Maymon (2009) findings reveal. Senior wives in polygamous marriages experience lower self-esteem, lower life satisfaction, and more mental health symptoms than women in monogamous marriages. There are many different mental health symptoms; noteworthy is the increase in somatization, depression, hostility and psychoticism (Kanat, Krenawi, & Yanif, 2017).

Polygamy, if done properly as a religious teaching, will sociologically add to creating new families, lineage, and network and further strengthen the structure of the community. For this reason, justice in polygamous families is not only subject to its implementation, but also the system. In a psychological perspective, husbands are allowed to practice polygamy as long as they are in accordance with predetermined conditions, especially physical and psychological health requirements.

The life of a polygamous family in the three cases of this study can be classified as a harmonious family. In the three polygamous families, interaction and communication between the family members have been formed positively and the husband has been fair to his wives and children. The opposite happened to the family in the second case of this study, and this condition was caused by the interaction and communication in the family, that did not run smoothly, and the husband's injustice towards his wives and children. Therefore, the polygamous family in the second case can be identified as an unharmonious family. Harmonious polygamy households, namely, polygamous households that always communicate and interact, are calm and peace loving and love each other, are formed with the permission of the oldest wife and where the husband can give justice to his wife.

### Conclusions

Based on the previous discussion about the life of *habib*s' polygamy with *ahwal* women in Banjar District, Kalimantan, Indonesia, it can be concluded that the family life of polygamy marriages performed by the *habib*s with the *ahwal* women is harmonious. Family members interact with each other, communicate well, have peaceful and quiet household, and love each other, and the husband is fair to his wives. This is because the first wife and second wife agree on polygamy. Meanwhile, for the life of the *habib*s' polygamy family with the *ahwal* woman carried out without the knowledge of the first wife, interaction and communication are not good, the household is not calm, not loving each other, the husband cannot be fair. The situation leads to divorce.

The research implication at the theoretical level, is that the results of this study help enrich the treasures of the theory of *ushul fiqh,* because of one of the *ushul* theories in custom, which strengthens social science theory. Based on the paradigm that develops in social definitions, this research can have logical consequences for the emergence of a community perspective on polygamous marriage.

### Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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