

Research Article

Love Against all Odds: Unveiling the Triumphs of Pre-arranged Marriage in the B'laan Culture

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Abstract.

Pre-arranged marriages, deeply rooted in various cultural traditions, involve the orchestration of unions by families. This practice has unique challenges, adjustments, and triumphs within this marital context. However, this practice has received little attention and understanding in the locality, hence the study was conducted. Mainly, the paper focused on exploring the challenges, dynamics, and outcomes of pre-arranged marriage within the context of the B'laan culture in Davao del Sur, Philippines. A qualitative case study was employed with three (3) participants from Davao del Sur who were carefully selected and willingly took part in the study. Findings revealed that in pre-arranged marriage, couples struggled to establish communication, accept unpleasant habits, establish intimacy, and adjust individual preferences in their relationship. Nevertheless, they could cope with this by building connections, sharing responsibility, and having quality time nurturing their union. The study's findings reflected the uniqueness of individuals, their life choices, paths taken, and subsequent consequences. These success stories of pre-arranged marriage in B'laan culture can provide valuable perspectives on how couples navigate challenges, build trust, and maintain strong relationships. The implications of this study are for society to create safe spaces for these individuals and implement programs that would offer valuable insights and perspectives that could benefit various groups, contributing to greater understanding, empathy, and support for couples in pre-arranged marriages.

Keywords: case study, Philippines, pre-arranged marriage, psychology, triumphs

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1. Introduction

Love is an exquisite sentiment, a choice made when one finds the perfect person. However, imagine being thrust into a situation where the bonds of matrimony are imposed upon you with someone you do not cherish. What unfolds in such a circumstance? This kind of situation is often called pre-arranged marriage in traditional practices. Pre-arranged marriages are cultural practice in which the union between two individuals is orchestrated by their families rather than being based solely on their personal choice. However, there is limited understanding and portrayal of pre-arranged marriage within the B'laan culture. The absence of comprehensive studies addressing the dynamics, experiences, and outcomes of pre-arranged marriage in the B'laan community leaves a significant gap in knowledge and understanding. This gap restricts a more nuanced view



of pre-arranged marriage, hindering efforts to appreciate the cultural context, triumphs, and potential benefits of such unions within the B'laan culture.

Pre-arranged and child marriages in Europe had critical issues rooted in gender inequality, poverty, and social instability. This practice affects one in three girls before the age of fifteen and violates their personal choice, inflicting profound physical and psychological trauma. Girls coerced into marriage often endure a life of servitude and abuse, as justifications rooted in cultural, economic, and security (1). Similarly in Britain, individuals often encounter psychological challenges as they grapple with the shift from individual autonomy to familial expectations on the practice of pre-arranged marriages.

In the Philippines, in a journal written by Matas (2), the traditional practice of pre-arranged marriages and dowries among the B'laan indigenous people in the Philippines persists despite modern ideals of freedom and individual choice. While the practice of pre-arranged marriage comes with the prevalence of child marriages and associated abuses, such as mental anguish, physical exploitation, and financial constraints, which infringe upon children's rights and limit their future prospects. Muslim families' pre-arranged marriages are not always successful and some couples face challenges such as communication problems or understanding each other's personalities, preferences, and communication styles before marriage can result in difficulties in expressing thoughts and feelings effectively. Additionally, due to the nature of pre-arranged marriages, couples may not have had the opportunity to develop emotional connections.

Locally, in the Municipality of Kiblawan, Province of Davao del Sur there is families that experienced fixed marriage known for the B'laan tribe as Buya. Both families will arrange a marriage for their child. The male and female both didn't know each other and will only meet at the ceremony of their marriage. Parents agree and decide to engage their child in a fixed marriage where the child cannot do anything to oppose their parent's decision. Love matches in this type of marriage often spark curiosity and intrigue among others, prompting questions about how these relationships function and how couples navigate their circumstances.

Studying this topic is imperative due to its potential to impart valuable knowledge and insights to various stakeholders, particularly couples navigating similar circumstances, parents, and tribal groups involved in pre-arranging marriages. The urgency lies in the need to address and understand the complexities inherent in these unions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Major Struggles Experienced by Pre-arranged Marriage Couple

Pre-arranged marriages are deeply embedded in cultural traditions and values, and that cultural factors play a significant role in shaping the experiences of couples in these marriages (3). A circumstance where the parents of two people, often from similar cultural origins, are predestined to be married by their parents or a third party is referred to as an arranged marriage. Although practically all of the cultures that we are aware of have a tradition of marriage and all of them have families, there is a great deal of cross-cultural diversity in the traditions that surround these facets of social and cultural life. There are differences in the number of marriages that can take place simultaneously, the types of partners who can be chosen for a marriage, and whether or not elaborate ceremonies are required. Families can either be very huge multigenerational families and homes or very small independent groups (4). The practice of pre-arranged marriage is especially prevalent in eastern civilizations, such as those of India, Japan, and China. Yet, western culture once enjoyed a similar level of popularity. High society parents frequently set up weddings between their offspring during the Elizabethan era in order to preserve their bloodlines and financial standing, which they highly valued.

Marriage practices and family life are evolving all over Asia, younger people are delaying their nuptials, fewer couples are having kids, and more people are getting married. Several Asian nations are beginning to show similar trends like Japan, and more recently South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore. Similar to the changes that occurred, current trends include later marriage, reduced marital fertility, and higher participation of married women in the labor force earlier in the North American and European industrialized nations. In addition, the ways in which family institutions have evolved in the West and how components of family life are still quite different in Asia. Asian couples are less likely to cohabit outside childbirth outside of marriage is incredibly uncommon. The majority of people consider marriage as a long-term commitment, and despite rising divorce rates, the majority of Asian countries remain fairly low. Women now have jobs outside the house (5).

All starting with India, pre-arranged marriage have been a tradition in India since the very beginning. The procedure wasn't all that difficult. Even though she was only 17 years old, a young woman wanted a spouse, and the closest relatives to them would set up

possibilities for them to meet (6). Before the 1800s, women were hardly ever permitted to talk to or even meet their future husbands. Parents would spread the word to everyone in their village when they thought their child was prepared for marriage. Moreover, in Indian tribal culture in Arunāchal Pradesh, India, although uncommon, marriage at the age of 6 to 8 years old is customary. Negotiations start when the parents of the bride and the bridegroom concur on the marriage union. Yet, during this process, the bride's price is not decided. If the parents regrettably discover that the conditions do not favor creating such a marriage relationship, they abandon their present ambitions. They interpret it as meaning that aai-nomshi-ba-ba has not predetermined their fate to include such a relationship. This phase of the Monpa fixed marriage process is also known as Thotma-mi-bri-yu. If everything proceeds as planned, a bride price is officially determined for domestic purposes, and the marriage process is formally started (6).

A study conducted by France (7) in Southern Iraq, province of Misan, there's this specific tribe that practices fixed marriage in a way of marrying only for blood relation and that they must only marry their relative for them to continue the bloodline. A case scenario was presented wherein a 22-year-old woman was forced to marry her cousin who is already a father of two and has no wife. It affected her mental health so much that it resulted in her rebelling and engaging herself multiple times in failed self-harming because she cannot accept it. However, women are married off in one tribal tradition known as "fasliya" as atonement for bloodshed between two clans. Women's rights advocate Karima al-Tai from Misan claimed that her own family had been devastated by the practice. The other clan's member was murdered during a battle between my tribe and another twenty years ago, according to Tai, 50. In an effort to broker a peace agreement, Tai's tribe offered the rival tribe "five virgins," among them her cousin Sahar, who had been wed to the victim's brother. According to Tai, Sahar endured "20 years of misery" of abuse at the hands of her husband's relatives. Even her kids were called "children of the fasliya" in public. However, Tai claimed that if Sahar begged her family for assistance, "they would tell her, 'You're a fasliya. Accept your fate.'" Fasliya is still a practice today. A clan in Basra's southern province wed 50 women and girls to another tribe as part of a truce in 2015.

Furthermore, somewhere in the land of Kenya, there was a young girl sold into pre-arranged marriage in a community in Baringo County, Kenya, some 50 kilometers from Marigat, among a group that practices genital mutilation as a rite of womanhood. She will be paid for with 20 goats, 10 cows, and a couple of camels over a period of weeks. Her response is also tragic. How much more did her struggles during their marriage?

She attempts to flee while wearing brightly colored clothing and ceremonial beads, balling up her fist and pounding the ground with her bare feet (8). However, a man takes her up from behind and drags her away from her house. Reuters photographer Siegfried Modola photographed the action as it happened in the Pokot tribe over the weekend and provided a description of it. His images depict a Pokot custom in which parents hand their girls away, typically around the outset of puberty. The girls are wed to tribesmen after being sold for (8). According to the girl's family, she was unaware of the arrangement her father had made with her future spouse, according to Reuters. They were afraid she might flee if they told her. She was picked up by a group of tribes, who then took her to the village for a two-day ritual.

In addition, there are tribes in the tehsil Padder of district Kishtwar and in Ladakh who belongs to Buddhism. The Buddhist women of Padder are very active and some of them are found to run retail shops in the district of Kishtwar town. Buddhist women also have greater say in the matters of the household. Marriages among Buddhist are usually arranged by parents but the consent of boys and girls is taken while deciding the marriage of a girl. In Gujjar tribes, the majority of unions are between child marriage occurs between the ages of 12 and 17. The bridegroom will be kept at the girl's home to provide services for the girl's father for a few years, as decided by the family's parents and elders.

In the local setting, here in the Philippines, pre-arranged marriage have long been a custom among Maranaos, claims Roconsalam Amer, president of a women's organization in Lanao del Sur. Roconsalam, a leader of the Women's Association on Turmeric Production, a project supported by Oxfam Pilipinas and other non-profit organizations promoting women empowerment in the area, explained that marriage between relatives is preferred because it is thought to strengthen relationships among clans and to be able to prevent feuds and misunderstandings between formerly warring clans. Nowadays, arranged weddings are carried out to retain one's dignity (Maratabat), prevent premarital sex, and escape poverty.

2.2. Major Adjustments of Couple in Pre-arranged Marriage

The adjustments of couples in pre-arranged marriage are a critical aspect to explore in order to understand the dynamics and challenges faced by individuals in such unions. Pre-arranged marriage involves the union of two individuals who often have limited or

no prior acquaintance, and their adjustment to this new relationship can have significant psychological implications.

In the global setting, a study conducted by Ghuman (9) in United Kingdom about Psychological adjustments of women in pre-arranged marriage involve a complex process of developing emotional bonding, which can vary depending on cultural backgrounds, individual personalities, and support systems. Ghuman's qualitative study on women in pre-arranged marriage found that initial feelings of unfamiliarity and limited emotional connection gradually transformed into fondness, trust, and intimacy as couples communicated, received support from family and friends, and shared experiences (9).

Sometimes in the United States, marriages brokered by third parties involve immigrants and their offspring. Although the practice is still debatable due to issues with choice and the treatment of women, violence is not a common occurrence in pre-arranged marriage. Many people voluntarily opt into pre-arranged marriage because they think their parents are qualified to select a mate for them for the rest of their lives. Communication, adultery, the death of romance, arguments over money, and differing parenting ideas are just a few of the problems faced by those in pre-arranged marriage, who occasionally turn to counsel to find solutions. Therapists working with clients in pre-arranged marriage must be sensitive to cultural norms and may need to look more closely at some of the problems that are typical in pre-arranged marriage (10).

A study conducted by Karney and Bradbury (11) stated that marital communication is one of the important dimensions of the marital satisfaction and stability. Marital distress will develop if couple cannot maintain mutual and constructive communication patterns. As constructive patterns are viewed more positively, these patterns promote intimacy and help spouses to solve the problem to reduce stress on relationship. Hence, great a deal of attention is paid on communication patterns of spouses in low and high marital adjustment.

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include substance abuse, excessive spending, lack of communication, anger issues, or neglecting responsibilities, among others. In addition, bad habits can create tension and strain between spouses (13). For instance, if one partner has a habit of excessive spending, it might lead to financial stress and conflicts within the marriage. Thus this adjustment made by the couples made their relationship more nourishing and were able to surpass those hardship by understanding one another. In pre-arranged marriage, partners typically have low expectations of each other since they do not have strong emotional connections, and the level of acceptance is very low in this situation (14).

Feelings also affect couples wanting to start a family, not only impacting the wedded individuals themselves, but also their children. Social ostracism of children may arise, which may form a barrier toward individuals who might otherwise want to pursue this type of marriage. An arranged relationship, in some cases, can allow the partners' time to develop a better understanding of each other (15). The time factor may not be the main reason behind the success of marriages. a study conducted by Epstein, et.al., (16) investigated various psychological factors contributing to the success of pre-arranged marriage. The study highlighted that positive attitudes towards the pre-arranged marriage system, commitment, and marital satisfaction were interrelated and played significant roles in marital adjustment and success within pre-arranged marriage.

In the context of Asia, a study conducted by Arshad et al (17) about Psychological Adjustment and Marital Satisfaction in Arranged and Love Marriage explores the psychological adjustment and marital satisfaction of individuals in arranged and love marriages, specifically in the Pakistani context. Pre-arranged marriage, prevalent in various cultures including Pakistan, have been the subject of numerous studies examining psychological adjustment. These studies have yielded mixed outcomes, with some indicating lower levels of psychological distress among individuals in pre-arranged marriage, while others pointing out challenges related to autonomy and marital satisfaction. Study adds to this body of literature by focusing on the Pakistani context and investigating the psychological adjustment and marital satisfaction of individuals within pre-arranged (17). Similar study in India, Trust and intimacy are crucial aspects of any successful marriage, and couples in pre-arranged marriage face unique psychological adjustments in building these foundations. In pre-arranged marriage, couples often have limited knowledge about each other before marriage, necessitating a gradual development of trust (18).

The psychological adjustment in arranged and love marriages is influenced by a multitude of factors, including cultural norms, family expectations, individual agency, and marital dynamics. Arshad et al (17) study emphasizes the significance of considering

these factors when investigating psychological adjustment. However, further research is needed to explore the interplay between these factors in more depth, considering their complex and dynamic nature, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of psychological adjustment in different marriage types.

Some studies have found positive outcomes, such as increased marital satisfaction and stability. The study also highlighted emotional distress and dissatisfaction. Limited autonomy and control over life choices can contribute to high levels of anxiety, depression, and lower self-esteem. Support systems, such as strong familial ties and counseling services, play a crucial role in mitigating negative impacts. Promoting empowerment and autonomy through education, economic opportunities, and decision-making involvement can positively affect emotional well-being.

2.3. Activities of Married Couples to Help Nurture Their Relationship

Married couples engage in various activities to nurture their relationship and strengthen their bond. These activities are important for fostering emotional intimacy, improving communication, and promoting overall success in relationship. Globally, In Denmark, couples often value equality in domestic and childcare responsibilities. Sharing responsibilities can foster a sense of fairness, reduce stress, and enhance relationship quality (19). Collaborative approaches to household chores, child-rearing, and decision-making can strengthen the marital bond and promote a sense of teamwork. When couples collaboratively approach tasks such as household chores, child-rearing, and decision-making, it promotes a sense of teamwork within the relationship. This shared responsibility allows both partners to contribute to the functioning of the household and the well-being of their children. A study by Kluwer (2013) found that couples who adopt a collaborative approach report higher levels of relationship satisfaction and lower levels of stress. The equal distribution of domestic and childcare responsibilities can also contribute to a more balanced power dynamic within the relationship. When both partners are actively involved in decision-making and responsibilities, it reduces the likelihood of one partner feeling overwhelmed or unfairly burdened. This equitable distribution of responsibilities has been linked to greater relationship stability and decreased conflict (20). Furthermore, by sharing domestic and childcare responsibilities, couples can create more opportunities for quality time together. When both partners contribute to household tasks, it frees up time for leisure activities, shared hobbies, and

strengthening their emotional connection. Spending quality time together is associated with increased relationship satisfaction and overall marital happiness (19).

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Engaging in joint rituals and traditions is a prevalent and significant activity for nurturing marital relationships in Asia. Thompson et al (21) study provides valuable insights into the positive impact of actively participating in cultural and religious rituals on relationship satisfaction. The research indicates that couples who actively engage in these activities experience higher levels of relationship satisfaction compared to those who do not. . In addition to religious ceremonies, celebrating traditional festivals is another prevalent activity in Asia that nurtures marital relationships. Traditional festivals are deeply rooted in cultural values and practices, and couples who actively participate in these celebrations create a sense of shared identity (21).

However, nothing is more exciting for two individuals at the start of a relationship than getting to know one another and figuring out the give-and-take of getting along. Long-term relationships have the potential to deepen and become more intimate, but without proactive maintenance, they run the risk of disintegrating as partners repeat the same behaviours and expect the same responses. So, engaging in shared rituals or traditions fosters a sense of unity and connection within a marital relationship. Research indicates that participating in shared activities and traditions positively impacts marital satisfaction and relationship stability (22).

Physical affection and intimacy also play crucial roles in maintaining a healthy relationship. Engaging in activities that promote physical closeness, such as cuddling, holding hands, or intimate conversations, can enhance marital satisfaction (23). Moreover, sexual

motivation plays a significant role in intimate relationships. Research suggests that higher levels of sexual motivation are associated with greater relationship satisfaction (24). Couples who are motivated to maintain sexual intimacy and prioritize their sexual relationship tend to report higher levels of relationship satisfaction. Couples who experience greater sexual satisfaction are more likely to maintain a fulfilling and enduring relationship. Several factors contribute to sexual satisfaction in intimate bonds. These include sexual compatibility, effective communication, and relationship satisfaction. Understanding each other's desires, openly discussing sexual needs, and maintaining relationship satisfaction are crucial for fostering sexual satisfaction (25)

2.4. Insight of Couples in Pre-arranged Marriage

Fixed or pre-arranged marriage has been a topic of interest for researchers exploring the intersection of culture, tradition, and modernity. In a review of literature by Samad and Eade (26) the prevalence and perceptions of pre-arranged marriage were examined in different parts of the world. In the context of realizations of couples in their fixed marriage life, studies have shown that communication is a key factor in maintaining a healthy and satisfying relationship. According to a study by Schramm et al. (27), communication is not only important for resolving conflicts but also for expressing affection, validating emotions, and fostering intimacy between partners. Certainly! Pre-arranged marriage or fixed marriages, are still practiced in many cultures around the world as a means of ensuring compatibility between partners and maintaining family traditions.. The lack of choice and control in the partner selection process may lead to mismatched expectations and unmet needs, which may contribute to the lower satisfaction levels.

Similarly, in Turkey, a meta-analysis covering the period between 2006 and 2016 demonstrated that 28.6% of couples had an pre-arranged marriage while 71.4% chose their own spouse and got married after dating (28). In a study conducted by (29), it was revealed that pre-arranged marriage continue to be a common practice among couples, with 33.5% of participants reporting that their marriage was arranged. Furthermore, 24.5% of the participants reported that although they chose their marriage partner through arrangement, they had the opportunity to go on dates before getting married. This finding supports the notion that pre-arranged marriage have evolved over time, with individuals being given more agency and opportunities to get to know their potential partners before tying the knot. Qadir and Irfan (2018) also highlighted the continued

prevalence of pre-arranged marriage in their study, noting that this practice is deeply rooted in many cultures and religions.

In the Asian Context, a study conducted in India, where the rate of pre-arranged marriage is the highest in the world, examined the trends in marriage choice between 1970 and 2000, and showed that pre-arranged marriage is still common in the country although the rate of “love marriage” has increased especially in the northern part of India (30). The partners have ample time to know one another and explore the good and the bad things concerning them before entering into a marriage. In most cases, the couple dates for some time before deciding to settle down. Love marriages in nations such as India, are a recent phenomenon, which only allowed its first civil marriage in 1872. India's decision on this issue allowed for couples to join in civil marriages, even though those marriages ignored traditional religious and community expectations, thereby opening the door for love marriages.

The B'laan indigenous people of the Philippines have cultural beliefs and practices related to marriage that were explored by (2). Their study revealed that B'laan marriages are typically arranged by parents or community elders with the aim of fostering stronger social ties and alliances between families and clans. (2) further noted that B'laan women in pre-arranged marriage face challenges concerning limited autonomy and expectations to conform to traditional gender roles, but also reported a strong sense of commitment and loyalty to their spouses and families. Additionally, in Muslim cultures, forced marriage occurs when individuals are compelled to marry a specific person through threats or emotional manipulation. In pre-arranged marriage, the couples have the opportunity to get to know each other over time and love develops naturally (30). In the past, pre-arranged marriage were common in Western cultures, but as society evolved, love marriages became more popular due to their democratic nature. The study conducted a study on the experiences of women in pre-arranged marriage. The study found that while women faced limitations in terms of autonomy and conformity to traditional gender roles, they also felt a strong sense of commitment and support from their spouses and families. This study also investigated the role of religiosity and spirituality in shaping marital satisfaction among Muslim couples in pre-arranged marriage (31). The study found that couples who shared similar religious and spiritual values reported higher levels of marital satisfaction, and that religious and spiritual practice played an important role in maintaining the unity of the couple. The study found that couples who had more egalitarian views on gender roles and engaged in effective communication reported higher levels of marital satisfaction. The study (32) studied the experiences of

Muslim women in pre-arranged marriage and their perceptions of marital satisfaction. The study found that while women in pre-arranged marriage faced limitations in terms of autonomy and conformity to traditional gender roles, they also felt a strong sense of commitment and support from their spouses and families. Research indicates that couples in pre-arranged marriage can experience high levels of marital satisfaction and commitment. Khaleque and Rohner (33) found that pre-arranged marriage couples reported satisfaction and loyalty towards each other.

3. Methods

This study employed the Multiple Case Design of a Qualitative Research Approach in this design multiple cases are examined to identify patterns, similarities, or differences across cases. It allows for comparison and generalization of findings beyond a single case. Multiple case study design was used by the researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and dynamics of pre-arranged marriage within the B'laan culture. In utilizing this method the researcher involve selecting cases by identify a diverse set of pre-arranged marriage within the B'laan culture to include in the study. Consider factors such as geographic locations, socio-economic backgrounds, and varying lengths of marriages to capture a range of experiences. Obtain data by developing specific research questions that explore the triumphs, challenges, and dynamics of pre-arranged marriage within the B'laan culture. For example, how do couples navigate the process of getting married, what are the major adjustments of the couple in pre-arranged marriage, what are Activities of the pre-arranged married Couples to help nurture their relationship, and what are the insights of B'laan couples on pre-arranged marriage? Then gather data through various methods by conducting interviews with couples, family members, and community members to understand their perspectives and experiences. Employed a systematic and comparative analysis of the data collected from each case. Look for patterns, themes, and variations across the cases to identify commonalities and differences using cross-case analysis techniques to categorize and organize the data. By utilizing a multiple case study design, researchers can provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the triumphs and complexities of pre-arranged marriage within the Blaen culture. This approach allows for the exploration of individual stories and experiences while also identifying broader patterns and themes that contribute to the overall understanding of the topic.

The researcher ensured that the participants selected for the study met the specified criteria. Interviews were generally conducted with individuals who had first-hand knowledge of the particular event, circumstance, or experience being studied (34). Additionally, data were gathered from documents and observations to supplement the research. This information was meticulously reviewed multiple times to identify recurring words and themes, which were then organized into meaning clusters. Through this method, the researcher was able to derive a universal understanding of the event, circumstance, or experience, leading to a deeper insight into the phenomena. In-depth interviews were conducted with carefully selected participants who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria, ensuring the relevance and richness of the data collected for the study's goals. For the inclusion criteria, we visited certain B'laan community located in Kiblawan, Davao del Sur. Researchers opt to find potential B'laan couple who have been experienced an pre-arranged marriage for 25 to 40 years. The couples may have 2 to 10 children, and have unique strategy to cope up with the struggles in their relationship to make it successful over the year of their union. Researchers also insured that the participants are willing to share their personal experiences, struggles and successes in their relationship. For the exclusion criteria, participants that undergone pre-arrange marriage and who have been residing outside of the Municipality of Kiblawan, Davao del Sur was highly excluded in the research study.

Purposeful Sampling was employed in selecting the participants of this study. Purposeful sampling involves deliberately selecting cases that are deemed informative and relevant to the research objectives (34). Researchers choose cases based on specific criteria, such as their uniqueness, typicality, or ability to provide in-depth insights into the phenomenon under investigation. Creswell (34) emphasized that this sampling approach allows for focused and targeted data collection, ensuring that the selected cases contribute to the research aims.

The primary data sources for this research were obtained through conducting Key Informant Interviews (KII) with three (3) pre-arranged marriage couples. By using interviews with key informants, the research gathered information from the actual narratives of the B'laan couples and delved deeper into the participants' experiences and the success of their marriages. This approach provided a better understanding of the challenges they faced and allowed for a more comprehensive collection of information. Additionally, KII was used as a tool to engage with communities and stakeholders impacted by the research, allowing them to share their experiences and perspectives with the researcher.

Interview guide was completed by the researcher's prior data collection. The interview methodology undergoes through a series of validation process run by professionals to accurately evaluate the validity and reliability of the research instrument. As we received the signal for conducting the study, we approached the relevant offices. The researchers first visited the said community located in Kiblawan, Davao del Sur, and coordinated with their barangay captain and other officials to inform and asked for their permission to conduct a research study. Then, after coordinating with local officials regarding the permission for allowing us to proceed with the study then that's the time to do a house-to-house survey until we find our potential study participants. Later on, after the potential participants were found for this study, the participants were initially questioned about their willingness to participate and their availability for the interview. The formal informed consent was then introduced after the initial verbal agreement by the researchers through giving a hard copy of the document. Then they went through with the participants' key details of the study, their obligations, and their rights. The researchers emphasized more detail about the project's advantages and any potential hazards. Afterwards, informed consent was signed by the participants in order for the researchers to move forward with the interview if they would accept the terms, conditions, boundaries, and restrictions outlined in it. The schedules of the participants and the researchers were agreed upon. The interview took place after the meetings scheduled, time and location were set. Since conventional content analysis is better suited for use when there is minimal literature to support and provide knowledge on particular topic, it is also known as inductive category development. This technique has a specific way of handling the categories included in the analysis process. Thus, data were gathered using the conventional content analysis approach wherein coding categories are derived directly from the text data so responses was be recorded, transcribed, and translated. Following the data collection, the participants were given the opportunity to independently verify, clarify, add, rephrase, and/or delete any term or quote through member verification. Once there are no more errors, clarifications, or comments to make, participants was requested to sign the participants' verification form to confirm that the data is reliable and credible in support of the study's objectives.

Cross-Case Analysis was used to analyze data for this Multiple Case Design of a Qualitative Research approach. In accordance to Creswell (34) cross-case analysis is a valuable method in qualitative research as it allows researchers to generate rich and nuanced findings by considering multiple cases within a broader context. By analyzing patterns and variations across cases, researchers can develop more robust theories,

make broader generalizations, and gain a deeper understanding of the research topic. The researchers implemented this method by categorizing similar responses from all participants into specific categories. Each category established was explained, then researchers proceeded in discussing how the participants' responses contributed to unveiling the results sought in the study. Subsequently, the research incorporated supporting articles to bolster the relevance and validity of the findings.

4. Result and Discussion

The personal accounts of the three participants are presented followed by a cross-case analysis. Selected verbatim blocks are illustrated in italics. The researchers systematically gather the data which main target was the experiences of the participants. The discussion, limitations and implications of the study are included in this section as well.

4.1. Major Adjustments of Couples in Pre-arranged Marriage

The participants in general revealed that they have experienced difficulties in adjusting to their partner specifically in psychological and emotional forms. All cases shared that this difficulty somewhat affects their living, especially in the early years of their marriage. The experiences and difficulties are summarized in the following narratives.

4.1.1. Case 1 (Sweet Couple)

Parents decided this union and at the age of 13 and 16 they got married without knowing each other. That's how our first case describes their destiny to pre-arranged marriage. Our first case couple was 38 years living together with 10 children; however, 3 of them died at an early age and only 7 children remain living with them in the same compound. We observed in the interview every after they answered the question they watched each other and slightly pushed each other shoulders. So, we coded them Sweet Couple because they were sweet to each other. We had three meetings with them. The first meeting was an initial inquiry for participation and verbally asked permission to participate in our study then at the same time was locating their parents and tribal leader; second was on the main intention of the study; and lastly was on the confirmatory aspects of the results or member checking. During the first meeting, our interaction was casual, primarily aimed at acquainting ourselves with the

respondents and gathering personal information. This was important in determining if they were suitable respondents for our study. Subsequently, in our second meeting, we conducted a face-to-face interview with the couple, delving into their experiences. During this session, Mrs. Sweet disclosed that in their culture, marriage agreements are typically arranged by their parents. Following her parents' agreement, Mrs. Sweet was apprehensive about getting close to another man due to the fear of parental disapproval. She mentioned that she meet her partner only on the day of the ceremony. Mrs. Sweet expressed that her major challenge in their union was communication and feelings towards her partner, as she was compelled into the marriage and initially did not feel a connection. Consequently, she felt hesitant to engage in conversations or establish closeness. Conversely, Mr. Sweet shared that his primary adjustment revolved around understanding his wife. He explained that he had to gradually adjust his heart to their situation and consistently humble himself, as his wife was prone to getting easily upset.

Years of their marriage, Sweet Couple have struggled in adjusting to each other especially in understanding each other's preferences, habits, personalities, and values. This adjustment phase encompassed various aspects of their lives, requiring continuous efforts to bridge differences and find common ground within their relationship.

"Fara didó, dú dó i lagih, dó luon i smabot sok malbút i daméh gú, agtulén gú nga akontrol gú i fúfúng gú, na ko get fyé fara di gami"(Mr. Sweet, Transcript 2 lines 51-53)

("For me sir, I am a man after all. Sometimes, our heads clashes when our wives get angry, only then I realized to control my heart and mind to understand my wife and know what's good and what's not. That's how it goes. ")

"Non gal gú man non li gu pagmahay agú do kamú gú ti fksal, dú mlimah snabot i arat an, kabay ande amgimó gú, lo gú loon dnawat dú ta nún nga mi, sok gal hubog la gal guron santorya filé do sngé gamtulen" (Mrs. Sweet, Transcript 3 line 65-68)

("For me sir, as being Buya I can sometimes say I regret it, it's true. I regret it, sir, because I struggled and I can't stand his habits. Eventually, I have to endure his habits then told to control himself as we have children. When my husband gets drunk, I won't speak to him until two days after he sobers up. ")

The Sweet Couple highlighted the intricate nature of relationships, emphasizing the necessity for patience, understanding, and compromise. They revealed the delicate balance between setting boundaries and navigating emotional complexities within partnerships. Mrs. Sweet confessed that in dealing with her husband's behavior, she constantly reminded him that he is no longer a young man and is getting older. She

emphasized that they have children who are studying, so he shouldn't indulge too much in his habits. She stated that she would scold him if he would not listen to her. Mr. and Mrs. Sweet revealed that the practices in their marriage that have helped them endure together involved understanding one another, planning together, and respecting each other's desires for the betterment of their relationship and their children.

While having the interview, we laughed because the couple seemed so sweet reminiscing their journey being together. After that moment one researcher ask Mr. and Mrs. Sweet about the practices in their marriage that have helped them to endure together then responded that mutual respect forms the bedrock of their relationship. We valued each other's opinions, choices, and personal space (Mr. Sweet). Mrs. Sweet added that his respect has enabled us to support each other's individual growth while growing together as a couple.

4.1.2. Case 2 (Happy Couple)

As pre-arranged married couples, they are aware that it is really hard in this kind of situation. Case 2: The couple revealed that in the early years, specifically in the first year of marriage, they seemed to be nothing to each other. They did not talk to each other and didn't even sleep together. There were also times when the women ran away from home because she didn't like being in that kind of situation where she was forced to get married.

Our first meeting was done face to face. This gave us an opportunity to make some observations aside from the verbal response of the participant. On that same day, we conducted the interview to her parents.

We assigned a code name for the couple as Smiling Couple because during our interview we observed they were sweet and always smiling when talking with us. They are 23 years married Mrs. smiling was 37 years old and got married at the of 14 and Mr. Smiling was 45 years old and got married at the age of 22. they had 5 children 2 girls and 3 boys. They shared their journey being together. As they mentioned:

“Mahal gud sir kun buya gi Kai ko gamsa ilagi la di fewdin afdarong didali, gafdarong gi d gali kun ta afngi gamu aknasal, kun gamsala ayo lati gu GANAhan talo alwo yo la sa askaye . Mlima gyud kun g sige mli d gali gigayon, di muna Kay LA sa gara am l dad balo.”(Mr. Smiling, Transcript 1, Lines 5-6)

(“It is really different when you are in pre-arranged marriage because before getting married you can’t get closer to your future wife only in the day of marriage and when you already got married you cannot talk to her because she didn’t like you. It is really difficult in adjusting to each other at first because we didn’t know each other and I don’t know her personality”)

“Di kagnú gú, la gyud mayé agú amwe demeh dú tabó gú ngà di gambet aye. Gal agu kmarew di kagnú gú. Nun usahay sok agú mulé di gumné la bayan agu di agwé gú déméh, kabay kanton amló ta agdawat gu i kagnú mi kanton nun ngà mi” (Mrs. Smiling, Transcript 1-2, Lines 17-20)

(“In my situation, I didn’t want to get married because I felt I was too young for it. I used to cry a lot during that period. There were times when I went home because I genuinely disliked that person. However, in the long run, we simply accepted our situation because it was what our parents wanted. Eventually, we had children.”)

While having the interview, we observed that they were really sweet to each other. One of the interviewers asked about the difficulties they personally confronted when attempting to adjust to your partner’s conduct or attitudes. Mr. smiling happily said that he had no problem in adjusting to his wife because she was understanding and always obeyed what is good for them. On the other hand Mrs. Smiling revealed that she only struggled in handling the habit of Mr. Smiling which is drinking alcohol. She added, so far he was a good husband, caring and hardworking and Mrs. Smiling felt lucky marrying him.

The Smiling Couple was indeed fortunate in their relationship as their parents supported them whenever they faced difficulties. Besides the parental support, the Smiling Couple always worked together to strengthen their relationship. Mrs. Smiling mentioned that the secret to maintaining their bond is mutual respect. She also added that they consistently agree on what is best for both of them.

On the second interview, we got the chance to interview the parents of the Mrs. Smiling our conversation with them lasted shortly because they are already old. Mrs. Smiling mothers confessed that during the early year of the marriage she always told her daughter to follow her husband. She was not allowed to hang out with friends. Mrs. Smiling’s mother added that she didn’t notice that they are fought. She also added that she advised her daughter to work harder for their children.

“Nimú mi kduún di familya mi fara agweh la i kak fankingamot mi. Gambet di màh la na satú mah la” (Mrs. Smiling Parents Transcript 4, Line 25-28)

“We really try our best at home, so they can also see and learn from our efforts. We demonstrate our endeavours to show what kind of efforts his father makes, what efforts his uncle makes, and what efforts I make for our home.”

4.1.3. Case 3 (Shy Couple)

Case 3 had been married for 38 years. Mrs. Shy, aged 54, got married at 16, while Mr. Shy, aged 56, got married at 18. They had 8 children, but unfortunately, 4 of them passed away at an early age, while the remaining 4 are alive and have families of their own. During our initial meeting with Case 3, we only managed to interview Mrs. Shy as her husband felt too shy to be interviewed. However, he was present beside Mrs. Shy during our interview, and we made sure to gather necessary information from her about her husband, which was crucial for our data collection.

On that day, Mrs. Shiny shared that her situation in a pre-arranged marriage is not easy because it cost her so much distress and pressure. *“He never courted me, so when our engagement was arranged, I never really had a say. Because according to my father, that’s who you will marry... Will you refuse? Will you not marry him? What do you want, you will live alone? ...I didn’t want to get married (she said). If you don’t want to get married, I’ll shoot you with gun (her father).’ That’s why I got scared and felt pressured. That’s when my father asked for a dowry; What my father asked for was quite a lot - two cows, four horses, and money... it was a lot, about twelve things were asked for. So, I felt forced, and I couldn’t disagree because I was afraid he might really kill me. That’s why it’s so difficult; it’s a very hard situation.”* (Mrs. Shy Transcript 2. Line 85-90)

Marriage was a challenging journey for Mrs. Shy. After getting married, it took one year before she and Mr. Shy formally began living together as a couple. She never grew close to her husband, avoiding conversation and separate sleeping arrangements, mainly due to her fear of being married to a stranger. They coexisted under the same roof as if nothing bonded them. However, over time, she gradually adapted to their situation and developed feelings for him.

During the initial years of their marriage, Mrs. Shy experienced depression. Yet, her husband stood by her side every day, assuring her of enduring everything for the sake of their relationship. Despite this support, Mrs. Shy confessed;

“Tag big ako mlima asmabot d kanin balo, samot d kanin bisyo, ka bay gay gu man d kanin na big giti big aflana i gay am kninom dun nun nga ti” (Mrs. Shy, Transcript 3. Lines 92-97)

(“I struggled with one of his habits—his tendency to drink alcohol. As a result, I continually remind him to control his habit because we had already children.”)

We coded them as Shy Couple because we observed that they are not really into communicating with other people and they will just speak when being ask. Our meeting for that day lasted for 30 minutes only because they have a small grocery store and there are customers who are buying. At the end of our interview, she managed to remind us researchers the importance of getting married at the right time and when we are ready emotionally and physically.

4.2. Activities of Pre-arranged Marriage Couples to Help Nurture Their Relationship

For most participants of the study, taking care of their children, quality time, shared responsibility, communication and mutual respect to one another is the primary coping activities they had made to develop their relationship and to foster understanding, trust, and intimacy. They said that these coping activities didn't just serve as actions; they were foundational pillars that helped bridge differences, foster closeness, and build a sense of togetherness in their union. The collective effort in prioritizing family, sharing responsibilities, communicating openly, and respecting each other's perspectives played an important role in their relationship development and building of their marital bonds. Below are the individual stories of the participants about how they were able to successfully nurture their relation through various activities.

4.2.1. Case 1 (Sweet Couple)

The Sweet couple revealed the activities that helped them survive and strengthen their relationship, nurturing their love throughout their marriage. During our first meeting with them, we had to wait a while because, as per their neighbour, they were on their farm. Observing them approaching us was heart-warming, as we could visibly perceive the tenderness they shared with each other. After a short wait, we commenced our interview. Mrs. Sweet apologized for the delay, mentioning that they had a 'date' on their farm with her husband, laughing as she made the joke. She emphasized that working on the

farm was a significant leisure activity for them, allowing them to bond. Additionally, she highlighted how farming not only helped them spend quality time together but also provided for their children's needs. While working, they could communicate and plan for their household, strengthening their connection further.

“Di gami e ki bi mi dad nga mi kay tuo importante, kula magkasinabot gami lo lana fara dedad nga mi.” (Mrs. Sweet, Transcript 5, Lines 150-151)

(“In our case, it’s really in taking care of the children; if we don’t understand each other it feels like the misunderstandings between us get away when it comes to our children.”)

“Ko non gu gatu an gal gu nagin, ku la gal agu gagin, tamdok nawa gu. Agtulen gu kantun agu faila-ila dedad kaliwat an, beg agu malifay du agdawat lagu.” (Mr. Sweet, Transcript 8, Lines 232-233)

(“If she had somewhere to go I always follow her and sometime if I can’t go where she is I felt sad. I recalled we went visiting to her relative and she introduces me to them. It was helpful, I appreciate them because they are always welcoming to me. I felt because they accept me warmly”)

The responses of the Sweet Couple from the interview emphasized the responsibility of parenting becomes a shared goal, where both partners align their efforts in raising and caring for their children. This shared responsibility not only strengthened their bond but also acted as a focal point where misunderstandings between the couple seemed to dissipate. The welfare of their children became a unifying force, encouraging mutual understanding and cooperation despite any underlying disagreements (Mrs. Sweet). Mr. Sweet also highlighted that when one partner feels welcomed and embraced by the other's relatives, it fosters a sense of belonging and support within the marital relationship. The warm reception from the spouse's family members can positively impact the dynamics within the marriage, promoting a feeling of acceptance and appreciation.

In our next meeting with them, it was a sort of member check which is part and parcel of a qualitative research. We presented the transcripts and assured them that their anonymity would be maintained.

4.2.2. Case 2 (Smiling Couple)

Smiling couple confessed that they did not experience to go out on a date in a coffee shop or even in a formal restaurant. However doing household chores was there quality

time because for her it is better to spend free time at home. Mr. Smiling was laughing while saying that they engage sex to help their relationship stronger and Mrs. Smiling agreed because for her it helped them know that they really liked each other.

In the interview Mr. smiling expressed wide understanding toward his wife, he stated that in the early stages of their relationship and in the initial conversations he had with his wife, he made it clear that her feelings about their relationship were important. He emphasized that if she didn't have strong feelings for their relationship or if she felt that their connection wasn't genuine, they could discuss the possibility of parting ways. He wanted to ensure that she understood he wouldn't insist on her staying if she didn't genuinely want to continue our relationship. It was important for him to prioritize her feelings and choices, assuring her that her happiness and comfort mattered significantly in their partnership. When the researcher asked Mrs. Smiling about her response to Mr. Smiling she simply comply because that was the practice of their tribe. Below are the selected lines:

"De tuo munan fala gu nangman nga kula bong nawan do, aska gami nalang, la pnugos go"(Mr. Smiling, Transcript 5, Lines 103-105)

("During our early years and in my initial conversation with my wife, I expressed to her that if she didn't feel strongly about our relationship, we could consider separating. I assured her that I wouldn't force her to stay if she didn't want to.")

"Adnawat go nalang kay la fweden sa ku la ftuman li, ande gemo go kay aye sa tribo mi, aye eh sansabot" (Mrs. Smiling, Transcript 5, Lines 112-114)

("I just agree, since it's impossible to disagree anyway. He already gave everything what my parents asked for. What else can you say about that? That's the condition in our tribe.")

Mr. and Mrs. Smiling stressed that having a connection in a relationship is very important to achieve what they wanted in their marriage. They also added by having a strong connection to one another would lead them in better understanding one another for the sake of their children.

"Nimo mi ikdii para gabli mi ko git i kibo i dadnga mi para gafngi li i gali kaeskwela para gwo li igali pangandoy d gali kinabuhi." (Mrs. Smiling Transcript 7, Lines 151-153)

("We worked hard together for our family, to provide our needs and send our children to school so that they can reach their dream")

4.2.3. Case 3 (Shy Couple)

Mrs. Shy confessed that being married to someone she didn't know was very challenging, particularly because she had no idea what kind of man she was with. She had to find different ways to improve their living situation. In fact, she shared that the primary activity that helped them nurture their relationship was bonding with family. She emphasized the importance of having a connection with one's partner because, through this, it could foster feelings that lead to love each other more. She also added that establishing a connection with her partner helped them understand each other better. Her answer:

"Gay gami liwa alwo, ku ni gusalun li agu ditu. Gay an man few kun salngad ali amda d aksugod salo d aktua." (Mrs. Shy, Transcript 5, Lines 137-140)

("We used to go out, have dates, wherever he was, I was with him. He used to say that he wished we had been like this before, when we were young, so that we could have been like this, affectionate, before growing old.")

"Gal gami sakyu duh gal gamtabeng di gal mi aksagin kabay amdah d aksa satu mi amneh ta gimat asfaleh mi Lande ti gal sakyu." (Mrs. Shy, Transcript 5, Lines 143-144)

("We engaged in sexual activity because it strengthened our relationship, but honestly, in the initial stages of our relationship, we didn't have sex for a year.")

"Nimo mi i ikdii para jud la ti amlima gani, Tabig gami malbik dito di lagad para nun gu gamwu mi pilak para nun bayad mi amsi, du para gamtigum gami para few kahintang d gami pamilya, fngin agbayad me kun git i kayi mi, para gaskwela idadnga." (Mrs. Shy, Transcript 6, Lines 174-178)

("We strive hard, we won't struggle. We work in our farm, search for plants to grow, we exert effort because we want to gain income, because we have saved up for the future of our family. This hard work will help us to buy what we and help to send our children to school.")

Mrs. Shy highlighted that they worked really hard together with her husband to provide their needs, understood each other and always consulted to one another about their plans so that they would not go into quarrel because for her if they always fight it is like a curse to their living. On that same day, we had the chance to have an interview with her parents. Mrs. Shy's father confirmed that her daughter was really a hard working and sweet no wonder that they had successful relationship with her husband. He even recalled.

“Dari gu na gamsala agu nin d muna na big gu li ti abnahad, nun yi la jud mag mahay agu du few i gali akni ani .” (Mrs. Shy Parents, Transcript 4. Lines 99-101)

(“I know I was wrong before that I threatened her before but I never regret that because if I didn’t do that she wouldn’t have this wonderful family.)

Our meeting then lasted for almost an hour and during the last part she shared heartfelt words to us. While she was talking we observe that she had teary eyes while saying that she was very lucky to have a caring, understanding and hardworking husband. She added that she had a handsome man and then we laugh to one other.

4.3. Insights of Participants of Being Arranged Married Couple

The participants were asked to provide insights into pre-arranged marriage. Initially, they expressed disappointment and anger towards their parents for forcing them into a marriage with someone they didn’t like. However, they acknowledged that they had no choice but to comply with their parents’ wishes out of pity. Over the years of their married life, they came to realize that it was acceptable because they eventually developed love for each other. They also felt fortunate to have encountered a partner who respected and loved them unconditionally. The following are the detailed insights shared by the participants themselves.

4.3.1. Case 1 (Sweet Couple)

As a ‘buya’ couple, Mrs. Sweet shared how challenging it was to accept an arranged marriage, especially with someone she didn’t like. She expressed a wish to have had the freedom to choose her husband. During our interviews, she emphasized their inability to oppose their parents’ decisions and their obligation to comply. Moreover, she mentioned that an pre-arranged marriage becomes problematic when the husband does not consider the wife’s desires, leading to a lack of understanding in their plans together. Throughout the interviews, Case 1 shared a poignant statement about being a ‘buya’ couple:

“Ta baling go adnawat ikdiin, do yi sa i faltulus d gwata d du” (Mrs. Sweet, Transcript 10, Lines 291-293)

(“I simply accept it, sir, because that’s the rule of the Almighty. What He gives you is what you accept, not dispute, sir, because it’s a hardship.”)

Mrs. Sweet also highlighted that despite being a 'buya' couple, they found security in their union due to the guidance from tribal leaders, assuring them that they would be together indefinitely, with the only separation being death. She articulated this during the interview:

"Diduh Sir duh ta ani sa nan im kagakah, billing ngam kanduh ko sim tuh l'm afnakasal lam duh ani sa im dad fatakaran deh tribuh mi taseh sa Leh Kuh amngabal aguh mahal tuh ba am ta gikat aguh de tuh afnakasal guh. Duh ayeh sin im atduh eh dad Yeh mi kluh Ma mi isip im tua mi." (Mrs. Sweet, Transcript 11, Lines 324-329)

("For me, Sir, that's how things are. We're mature now, I tell him. Seeking another person when you're committed is incorrect, and that's why we argue. It goes against the norms of B'laan culture. It's simply not right to be in a relationship while desiring someone else. They instill this in us, and it's something I'll always remember.")

4.3.2. Case 2 (Smiling Couple)

When asked about their insights about arranged marriage, the Mr. Smiling said he's fine with it. Mrs. Smiling, on the other hand, didn't like her husband initially, but as time passed and they had children, she came to understand and love him. She shared that agreeing to pre-arranged marriage is okay if the husband is kind, but not if he's bad.

"Fanglanglitan la fye i balo, nun jud gu kil na ska, amda ayi muli ali dito d gali tua, afngin anwo li balik ku git i bli li ditto," (Mrs. Smiling, Transcript 9, Lines 186-187)

("If not, it's very difficult. Because there is a chance that still separating. You'll return to your parents. And then they'll ask for their dowry back because they'll demand it.")

Mrs. Smiling confessed of feeling pressured into an pre-arranged marriage because she didn't like the idea of being married to someone she didn't even know yet. But her parents decision will always being followed. They chose her husband without considering her feelings or allowing her to speak up.

"Kaye I dad toa gu antafa lande gimo go ye sa Kanye li di du." (Mrs. Smiling, Transcript 10, Lines 213-215)

("My parents liked the guy, and I can't do anything about it because even if I tried to speak up, they would stop me "Don't try to speak up because this is all we want" and that's what makes arrange marriages difficult.")

When we asked them if they could prefer choosing their partner or continuing the traditional arranged marriage, the Mr. Smiling preferred the traditional way but

mentioned talking to the girl before marriage. However, the girl expressed her wish to choose her own husband if given the chance.

“Dad tua to imalik, kafngen lahgarah Lidon git i glut balo Inalik li.” (Mrs. Smiling, Transcript 11, Lines 157-158)

(“Because you already know his attitude. If the parents choose, they’re not sure if they’ll choose a good man. They’re not the ones living in.”)

4.3.3. Case 3 (Shy Couple)

When asked about her views, Mrs. Shy expressed how beneficial pre-arranged marriage is to her. She believes the dating phase often involves many promises that aren't fulfilled in the end. She shared pre-arranged marriage presents a significant challenge because both parties are unaware of each other's true attitudes, unlike others who gradually develop compatibility during the dating phase. In pre-arranged marriage, both individuals need to adapt their attitudes until they eventually fall in love.

“Baling few kun ta sakdo gamu, fngin nun jud uras na ta sakdo gamu nun jud tag sa ad na la jud kibo an . Baling few kun ta synikat la gamu da an du la dili yu isit isit, fngin landi nan sa ad na big tuo atnuman, kaman idapat am ni mu is sigim banli higayun. .” (Mrs. Shy, Transcript 6. Lines 182-187)

(“It seems nice because when someone courts you, sometimes, a lot of promises are made until they don't come true, they can't fulfill them. But in this arranged marriage, let me tell you, pre-arranged marriage is very good because you don't know what, you're unaware, the man doesn't know your behavior, and you don't know his either.”)

Mrs. Shy also provides brief and clear answers about being part of a buya couple, expressing that she feels safe and secure with her husband due to his kindness, understanding, and hardworking nature. She also confessed that the difficult aspect of pre-arranged marriage is the inability to choose the partner. She confessed, if given a chance, she would choose a partner to marry based on her preferences, especially regarding physical appearance.

“Para d du baling few gyud nga du imalik d do lagi na anwi gu dimi, samut kon gampila g few bawi, big sin du kalipay d few bawi igalik idad tua gu, du idarimi man gud du ta toa i lagi kaysa d libon, ku ta yi jud ipagbuot d gali tag yi ta landi nan kibo idadnga.” (Mrs. Shy Transcript 7. Lines 230-235)

“It’s you who chooses, and it’s really important that you make the choice, especially considering appearance. It’s similar to my situation where my parents chose for me, the one picked by my dad. I accepted because I didn’t want to choose if we weren’t a good match. We continued what our parents started; they selected our partners as elders often do. Similarly, like others, while their children are still young, they also end up marrying elderly folks with gray hair.”)

Cross Case Analysis

To recap the findings from each distinct case and allow for comparison, outcomes are profiled and explained in this section. The following themes or categories were developed from the interview transcriptions based on the three research questions

4.4. Major Adjustments of Couples in Pre-arranged Marriage

Four categories emerged from the participants’ data. Each is highlighted in Table 1 with selected participant extracts. A brief discussion follows thereafter.

Establishing Communication. Our participants highlighted the initial adjustment they faced in their marriages, including difficulties, establishing a connection, and adapting to the unfamiliarity of their partner’s personality and preferences because of lack communication especially in earlier stages of their marriage. Our participants revealed that communication was really hard for them during the time of asking their hands from the parents to the earlier stages of their marriage. Case 1 and 2 revealed they struggled to communicate openly due to the lack of familiarity. There’s a sense of discomfort stemming from the initial stages of getting to know each other, leading to moments of shyness and difficulty in discussing plans. In Case 3, it is intense it expresses a strong reluctance to engage with the partner because from various reasons such as fear and simply not feeling emotionally connected.

Accepting Unpleasant Habits. Case 1, 2 and 3 mentioned struggles and an inability to tolerate certain habits exhibited by their partners. Wives shared the bad conduct poses by their husband such as drinking alcohol without control and gambling. This behavior is negatively impacting the relationship and causing distress to the other person involved. Overall, conflicts in adjusting in the attitude of the couples are arising from habits or behaviors which lead in difficulties in coping with certain aspects of each other’s personalities or actions

TABLE 1: Cross Case Analysis of the Couple’s Major Adjustment in their Marriage.

Category	Selected Participant Data Excerpts		
	Sweet	Smiling	Shy
Establishing Communication	<p>“We tried to talk to each other sir for our plans but sometime we got shy to each other because we just barely know each other. (Mrs. Sweet, transcript 1, lines 10-11)”</p>	<p>“It is really different when you are in pre-arranged marriage because before getting married you can’t get closer to your future wife only in the day of marriage and when you got married already you cannot talk to her because she didn’t like you. It is really difficult in adjusting to each other at first because we didn’t know each other and I don’t know her personality.” (Mr. Smiling transcript 1, lines 5-6)</p>	<p>“For me sir I never get closer to him, I used to ran away and I don’t want to talk to him.” (Mrs. Shy transcript 2, lines 55-56.)</p>
Accepting Unpleasant Habits	<p>“For me sir, as being Buya I can sometimes say I regret it, it’s true. I regret it, sir, because I struggled and I can’t stand his habits” (Mrs. Sweet, transcript 3, line 65-68) “She get upset if she didn’t get what she planed, since she’s the girl I have nothing to do with and sometimes we get fight.” (Mr. Sweet, transcript 3 line 62-63)</p>	<p>“Sometimes because his drinking alcohol he got home late at night and I didn’t notice he gets home already. I always told him if he didn’t control his attitude I told him it’s up to you.” (Mrs. Smiling, Transcript 2. Lines 40-42)</p>	<p>“The bad conduct he showed to me is his habit in always getting drunk and gambling.” (Mrs. Shy Transcript 3. Lines 90-91)</p>
Establishing Intimacy	<p>“That when slowly to accept and adjust your heart since you’re the man.” (Mr. Sweet, transcript 3, line 60)</p>	<p>“There were times when I went home because I genuinely disliked that person. However, in the long run, we simply accepted our situation because it was what our parents wanted. Eventually, we had children.”(Mrs. Smiling, Transcript 1-2, Lines 17-20)</p>	<p>“At first, I didn’t like him, and during the time we lived together, we never slept in the same bed. Sometimes, I would sleep under the bed or in the attic because I was afraid of him. However, over time, I’m okay and I became more comfortable with him.” (Mrs. Shy, Transcript 2. Lines 32-34)</p>
Adjusting Individual Preference	<p>“For me sir, I am a man after all. Sometimes, our heads clashes when our wives get angry, only then I realized to control my heart and mind to understand my wife and know what’s good and what’s not. That’s how it goes.” (Mr. Sweet, transcript 2 lines 51-53)</p>	<p>“We helped each other and agreed on each other’s plans, ensuring that they were beneficial to follow. It wasn’t just one person’s decision to follow; it had to be a mutual agreement.” (Mrs. Smiling, Transcript 2. Lines 52-53)</p>	<p>“What he told me was, ‘It’s up to you where you want to sleep.’ He always understands me, never hurts me, cares for me, and never commands me. He works tirelessly for both of us.” (Mrs. Shy Transcript 2. Lines 36-38)</p>

Establishing Intimacy. Among all the selected participants, Case 1 revealed how the husband understands the wife so much which he even mentioned he accept it and slowly adjust his heart for his wife. While for Case 2 and 3 showed intense reluctant but later learned to accept their situation. Case 2 statement; *“There were times when I went home because I genuinely disliked that person. However, in the long run, we simply accepted our situation because it was what our parents wanted. Eventually, we had children.”* Case 3 shared, *“At first, I didn’t like him, and during the time we lived together, we never slept in the same bed. Sometimes, I would sleep under the bed or in the attic because I was afraid of him. However, over time, I’m okay and I became more comfortable with him.”* . All participants depicted the journey from initial apprehension or dislike towards eventual acceptance and Establishing Intimacy as comfort in their marriage.

Adjusting to Individual Preference. All participants shared the significance of Adjusting to Individual Preference, mutual cooperation, and supportive dynamics within pre-arranged marriage. Case 1 highlighted the importance of self-control in understanding their partner’s perspective and discerning what is beneficial for their relationship, indicating an evolving understanding of their spouse. In case 2, the couple works together, ensuring that plans are beneficial for both parties. It emphasizes the importance of mutual agreement in decision-making, emphasizing that decisions are made together rather than being unilaterally imposed by one person. While Case 3 speaks about her partner’s supportive nature, expressing that they are not controlling and always considerate of their feelings. The partner’s relentless efforts for the relationship’s well-being reflect a committed and nurturing partnership.

4.5. Activities of Pre-arranged marriage Couples to Help Nurture Their Relationship

Despite the difficulties encountered by the participants, each couple found their unique ways to navigate and adapt to their situations. Presented in Table 2 are the coping mechanisms of a successful pre-arranged marriage.

Connection. During our interviews, participants revealed how a strong connection between individuals within a relationship is fundamental for problem-solving, achieving common goals, ensuring the well-being of children, fostering understanding, and preventing conflicts or arguments. Cases 2 and 3 hugely acknowledged the important role that connection played in achieving the mutual goals and the importance of connection

TABLE 2: Cross Case Analysis of the Couple’s Activities to help Nurture their Marriage.

Category	Selected Participant Data Excerpts		
	Sweet	Smiling	Shy
Connection	“...ahh the problem won’t be solved sir if there is no connection at all.” (Mrs. Sweet, transcript 6, Line 175)	“It is important so that we will achieve the plans we want for our marriage...Connection is important also for our children.” (Mrs. Smiling, Transcript 5. Lines 37-38)	“Connection is important so that we will understand each other and there will be no arguments.” (Mrs. Shy, Transcript 5. Line 160)
Shared Responsibility	“Whenever he would go to the mountains, I would accompany him to plant and harvest.”(Mrs. Sweet, transcript 8, Lines 221-222)	“We will just strive hard for the education of our children and sustainability.” (Mrs. Smiling, Transcript 7, Lines 151-153)	“...working hard together so that we can provide for our family’s needs.” (Mrs. Shy, Transcript 2. Lines 32-34)
Quality Time	“When he goes somewhere, I want to go with him. Sometimes, he doesn’t want me to go with him, I feel a bit upset... angry even. But when I really like something, I surprise him. Like when we go to a specific place, He enjoys it a lot.” (Mrs. Sweet, transcript 8, Lines 232-233)	“Help each other, agree on the plan, and both follow it. It’s not okay if you’re the only one following it and he don’t agree.”(Mrs. Smiling, Transcript 2. Lines 52-53)	“Yes, we used to spend time together, go on dates wherever he was, I’d be with him. Back then, He used to say something like, ‘I wish when we were young and married yet, we could have been affectionate like this.’ He mentioned it would have been nice to show affection when we were young.”(Mrs. Shy, Transcript 5, Lines 137-140)

not only for the couple but also for the well-being of their children, which contribute in nurturing their relationship together particularly during the initial year of marriage. Conversely, Case 1 offered a distinct perspective; nevertheless, she stated that without a strong connection between individuals, problems within the relationship cannot be resolved effectively.

Shared Responsibility. All of the gathered participants had similar answers regarding how hard work helped their relationship to last longer, the planning together and planting foods to help sustain the family especially their wants and needs did play a huge part. They revealed the importance of partnership, commitment to family, and

dedication to providing for their needs. Case 1 revealed how she would accompany her husband to the mountains to help harvest and plant which shows the importance of mutual support and a shared interest in each other's pursuits. However, Case 2 and 3 admitted the hard work really is needed to sustain their needs and to survive their relationship; it is as if, it is their only way to strengthen their bond together. This also emphasized the importance of collective effort by both partners to strive for the well-being of their family.

Quality Time. Couple 2 highlighted a unique aspect of their bond while they do not typically go on conventional dates. They shared meaningful experiences by sharing their plans in life together and sometimes going to the farm with her husband. This nurturing gesture strengthened their connection. Similarly, Case 1 expressed a strong desire that When her husband goes somewhere, she want to go with him. She felt a bit upset or angry when she could not go with him and she loves doing a surprise date for him. Their togetherness signifies the importance of companionship in their relationship. Couple 3 shared that they experience the same way around. In the interview, she elaborated. *“Yes, we used to spend time together, go on dates wherever he was, I'd be with him. Back then, He used to say something like, 'I wish when we were young and married yet, we could have been affectionate like this.' He mentioned it would have been nice to show affection when we were young.”*

4.6. Insights of Participants as Pre-Arranged Married Couple

At the outset, participants of the study shared their insights about their experiences, difficulties and realizations in their successful journey of as an Arranged Married Couple

Obligation and Helplessness. All participants emphasized complex emotional struggle where personal desires conflict with a perceived sense of duty or obedience towards parental expectations. They highlighted the internal conflict faced when individuals feel compelled to comply with parental wishes despite their own preferences or wishes. Case 1 revealed during the interview that out of pity for her parents, she decided to sacrifice and just obliged even if she did not really like the idea of getting married. Same also for Case 2 wherein she also sacrificed herself for she did not have the voice and courage to contradict her parents because according to her, “Even if you talk, it would be useless since they have already chosen the man they want for you.” While it was a bit blurry for Case 3 since she just did not like the fact that she could choose on her own. She was deprived with the autonomy in making personal choices

TABLE 3: Cross Case Analysis of the Insights of successful Pre-Arranged Married Couples.

Category	Selected Participant Data Excerpts		
	Sweet	Smiling	Shy
Obligation and Helplessness	"...I really don't like the idea but I pity my parents so I obliged." (Mrs. Sweet, Transcript 9. Lines 263-265)	"If the parents want the guy, we cannot really do anything about it so I just agreed since I don't have the voice and the courage to contradict." (Mrs. Smiling, Transcript 10, Lines 213-215)	"I don't like it because I cannot choose who I want but I have to." (Mrs. Shy, Transcript 7. Line 204)
Fulfilment	"Buya is good for me since I have felt the certainty and contentment with my husband." (Mrs. Sweet, Transcript 11, Lines 324-329)	"...It's good since I will be owning my wife for the rest of our lives." (Mr. Smiling, Transcript 7. Line 24)	"Buya is good for me since I feel like I won a lottery because my husband doesn't make me sad now." (Mrs. Shy, Transcript 6. Line 195)
Negative Sentiments	"It's bad when there's a situation wherein my husband doesn't listen to me..." (Mrs. Sweet, Transcript 10. Lines 298-301)	"Buya is bad for me during the time where I cannot go near him to talk and get to know each other." (Mrs. Smiling, Transcript 5. Line 35)	"It was bad at first since I will be sleeping now with the man I barely knew." (Mrs. Shy, Transcript 7. Line 197)
Traditional Preservation	"If given the chance sir, I would agree to my parents but I will be the one to choose the man." (Mrs. Sweet, Transcript 11. Line 340)	"I don't have a problem with the tradition only if we had a chance before the wedding to talk and get to know more." (Mr. Smiling, Transcript 7. Lines 241-243)	"I just trusted my parents tho but if given the chance, I have to be the one to choose..." (Mrs. Shy, Transcript 7. Lines 230-235)

Fulfilment. All cases revealed the positive aspects of marriage, highlighting the commitment, emotional satisfaction, contentment, and a sense of ownership within the context of a committed and fulfilling relationship. In the situation of Cases 1 and 3, Buya was good for them since she felt safe and certain with their husbands throughout the years of being together and has felt the feeling of like winning a lotto because of how good and hardworking their husbands are. While it is greater for Case 2 since according to the husband, it is good for she owns her wife for the rest of their lives.

Negative Sentiments. In the interview all participants collectively revealed challenges and negative aspects within the context of their relationships, such as communication

issues, limitations in getting to know one another, and discomfort arising from unfamiliarity in marriage. Buya is bad for Case 1 when there's a circumstance in the relationship wherein her husband doesn't listen to her as a wife and that it would affect their union as married couple. While for Case 2, it is bad because they cannot choose on their own and that they cannot talk at all. Bad for Case 3 as well since it is out of her belief to sleep with a man she barely knew.

Traditional Preservation. During the interviews of the selected participants, Cases 1, 2 and 3 shared almost the same sentiments on how they really want to preserve the tradition of their tribe with only little changes that is up to their wants. Moreover, according to the participants, if there was the chance to practice it again, they just wish to choose the man they want and that they can talk and be part of the negotiation during the asking of their hands from their parents so that it is not that agonizing for them. All participants wanted a delicate balance between respecting familial expectations and desiring personal autonomy in choosing a life partner. They underscore the importance of both parental guidance and individual choice in the decision-making process regarding marriage.

5. Discussion

This study explored on the challenges, adjustment and success story of pre-arranged marriage in the B'laan culture. Four major adjustments we extracted from the participants experiences include establishing communication, accepting unpleasant habits, establishing intimacy and adjusting to individual Preference. All participants shared how these factors affect in nurturing their relationship. It is evident when our participants revealed that establishing communication was really hard for them during the time of asking their hands from the parents to the earlier stages of their marriage which Case 1 and 2 experienced struggled to communicate openly due to the lack of familiarity. Similar study conducted by Karney and Bradbury (11) stated that marital communication is one of the important dimensions of the marital satisfaction and stability. Marital distress will develop if couple cannot maintain mutual and constructive communication patterns. As constructive patterns are viewed more positively, these patterns promote intimacy and help spouses to solve the problem to reduce stress on relationship. Hence, great a deal of attention is paid on communication patterns of spouses in low and high marital adjustment. In the context of pre-arranged marriage, communication can help

the couple understand each other's expectations, values, and goals. It can also help them build trust and intimacy, which are crucial for a successful marriage.

Additionally, participants in this study struggled in accepting unpleasant habits of their partners, where it was highlighted by all our participants their inability to tolerate certain habits exhibited by their partners. Wives shared the bad conduct posed by their husband such as drinking alcohol without control and gambling. This behavior is negatively impacting the relationship and causing distress to the other person involved. Parallel to the idea of McCutcheon et.al., (12) bad habits exhibited by one or both partners can influence the dynamics and overall health of the marriage. These bad habits might include substance abuse, excessive spending, and lack of communication, anger issues, or neglecting responsibilities, among others. Similar result to Case 3, Birdit et al (35) stated that bad habits can create tension and strain between spouses. For instance, if one partner has a habit of excessive spending, it might lead to financial stress and conflicts within the marriage. Thus, this adjustment made by the couples made their relationship more nourishing and were able to surpass those hardship by understanding one another.

Another adjustment revealed was establishing intimacy made by the participants all throughout their journey. Among all the selected participants, In Case 1, the husband demonstrated a deep understanding of his wife, acknowledging and accepting her traits or behavior that might have initially been challenging for him. This intimacy indicates a significant level of emotional maturity and commitment in their relationship. His willingness to adjust his emotions and attitude toward his wife reflects a genuine desire to make their marriage work and cultivate harmony despite potential differences. Cases 2 and 3 depicted a similar trajectory, where initially, there was intense reluctance or resistance towards certain aspects of their relationships. However, over time, these individuals learned to acknowledge and eventually accept their circumstances. This acceptance likely involved a process of introspection, communication, and perhaps compromise, leading to a level of comfort and understanding within their marriages. In pre-arranged marriages, partners often enter the relationship with low expectations due to the lack of strong emotional connections, resulting in a low level of acceptance (30). According to Prakash and Singh (18) the acceptance process in pre-arranged marriages tends to be gradual, potentially leading to significant negative emotions toward the couple. These feelings can influence the couple's decision to start a family, affecting not only the partners but also their children. Social ostracism of the children might

occur, creating a barrier for individuals who might otherwise consider entering into such marriages.

The results of the study help us prove that all participants discovered how the significance of adjusting to individual preference within pre-pre-arranged marriage contributes to the successful journey of the lived experiences of our participants. The experience of the participants highlighted the evolution of relationships, where individuals gradually learn to navigate challenges, make joint decisions, and foster an environment of care, respect, and consideration for each other's perspectives and emotions. Arranged relationships can sometimes give partners the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of each other over time (15). However, the success of a marriage may not primarily depend on the duration of the relationship. A study conducted by Epstein, et.al.,(16) investigated various psychological factors contributing to the success of pre-arranged marriage. The study highlighted that positive attitudes towards the pre-arranged marriage system, commitment, and marital satisfaction were interrelated and played significant roles in marital adjustment and success within pre-arranged marriage.

Pre-arranged marriage, prevalent in various cultures including Pakistan, have been the subject of numerous studies examining psychological adjustment. These studies have yielded mixed outcomes, with some indicating lower levels of psychological distress among individuals in pre-arranged marriage, while others pointing out challenges related to autonomy and marital satisfaction (17)

Apart from the major adjustment in their marriage, our participants shared about their coping mechanisms such as Connection, Shared Responsibility, and Quality Time. Since they concentrate on how each of them handles the circumstance personally, these two strategies namely Connection and Shared Responsibilities are regarded as internal strategies for it helped them nurture the internal relationship as well. In addition to these internal methods, the participants use external coping mechanisms in the form of Quality Time, which is emphasized while looking for outside assistance from those they may think of a big help in order to survive the relationship. During our prolonged engagement with the participants, they have shared how important it is for relationships to have a solid connection between people in order to solve problems, accomplish shared objectives, protect children's welfare, promote understanding, and avoid confrontations or disputes. Thus, they have also shared the value of cooperation, fidelity to one's family, and hard work to meet one's own needs.

Universally, couples who are in pre-arranged marriage employ diverse coping strategies. Studies by The foundation of a lasting connection in pre-arranged marriage lies in the development of emotional intimacy. In cases 2 and 3, it was clearly recognized how crucial connection was to reaching common goals and how vital it was for the children's well being as well as the couple's, all of which helped to strengthen the couple's bond, especially in the first year of marriage. This was supported by the study of Prakash and Singh (36) tackling effective communication acts as a bridge connecting the emotional landscapes of pre-arranged marriage partners. This also underscores the importance of open and honest communication in building and maintaining connections.

Furthermore, participants also shared their approach to nurturing their relationship, such as embracing shared responsibilities. Throughout our extensive interaction with the participants, we had the opportunity to listen to their life stories. Case 1 illustrated the value of mutual support and a shared interest in each other's endeavors when it was revealed that she would go to the mountains with her husband to assist with planting and harvesting. But Cases 2 and 3 acknowledged that in order to meet their demands and maintain their relationship, hard work is actually necessary; in fact, it seems that this is the only way for them to get closer. This underscored how crucial it is for both partners to work together in order to pursue their families' well-being. Thus, this was agreed by (18)saying that in pre-arranged marriage, the distribution of domestic responsibilities holds particular significance. Also suggests that when couples actively collaborate in managing household duties, they experience a more balanced and harmonious relationship.

Additionally, because of their strong cultural and traditional roots, pre-arranged marriage frequently struggle to develop a close and meaningful emotional bond. In this section, we will elucidate the value of quality time in pre-arranged marriage and how deliberate time investment fosters enduring, solid relationships between couples with the lived experiences of our chosen participants. Case 2 revealed a special side of their relationship, although they don't usually go on traditional dates, they enjoy significant moments by talking about their future aspirations and occasionally taking her spouse to the farm. Their bond is strengthened by this caring act. Case 1 similarly conveyed her intense desire to accompany her husband wherever he goes. She enjoys planning a surprise date for him and gets a little disappointed or irritated when she can't go with him. The fact that they are together shows how important companionship is to them. Couple 3 mentioned that they have similar experiences. She gave more details throughout the interview. However, in the context of pre-arranged marriage, balancing

responsibilities is crucial. Prakash and Singh (18) argued that viewing time as a shared resource allows couples to collaboratively manage responsibilities, ensuring that both partners have opportunities for personal growth and shared moments in quality time.

Moreover, bolstering the quality time of pre-arranged marriage couples as one of their coping strategies, sex has been playing a big role in their intimacy towards each other that helped nurture their relationship. In the course of one of our interviews, Case 2, a happy couple admitted that they had never gone on a date in a formal restaurant or even a coffee shop. But since she preferred to spend her free time at home, doing housework was their quality time. They would have sex to strengthen our relationship, the husband laughed as he said, and the wife agreed, stating that it lets her know and feel that they genuinely love each other. Although sex alone cannot repair a dysfunctional relationship, studies indicate that a healthy sex life is linked to greater overall relationship satisfaction. Emotional security and effective communication significantly contribute to addressing sexual challenges, but a good sex life can also enhance these aspects (37)

All the aforementioned experiences are corroborated by the study titled “Enhancing Dyadic Coping in Pre-arranged Marriages: A Randomized Controlled Trial of Couples Coping Enhancement Training (CCET),” which introduced a dyadic coping strategy encompassing both positive and negative aspects. Positive supportive dyadic coping involves active measures, such as assisting with daily tasks, offering advice, and providing empathetic understanding. In symmetrical dyadic coping, both partners equally engage in addressing a problem, utilizing methods like joint problem-solving, sharing emotions, and demonstrating mutual commitment. Conversely, supportive dyadic coping occurs when one partner aids the other in managing their stress. In common dyadic coping, both partners are affected by the stress and attempt to manage it together, but one partner often assumes responsibilities to alleviate the other’s stress. This form of coping is most frequently employed in response to stressors (18). Thus, this truly emphasized the influence of the participants’ coping mechanisms in surviving their arranged marriage, just as how the three cases in this study were narrated.

On their insights, participants shared the advantage and disadvantages and their opinions based on their valuable experience. First, they shared their experience about being Obligated and feeling helpless. They highlighted the internal conflict they faced when feeling compelled to comply with parental wishes despite their own preferences or desires. They struggled and sacrificed their own wants, obliging the idea of getting married due to their parents’ expectations. In a study conducted by Ahmad et al. (2015),

it was found that within traditional Indian arranged marriages, women are encouraged to respect hierarchical positions by showing the highest regard for their elders. They are also expected to uphold family honor by acting obediently and ensuring that they do not bring shame to their families. Additionally, the participants expressed also the positive aspects of finding Fulfilment in marriage, attaining contentment, and fostering committed and fulfilling relationships. Both Cases 1 and 3, highlighted that pre-arranged marriage was good for them since they felt safe and certain with their husbands throughout the years of being together. In a comparable study conducted by Çağ and Yıldırım (29) it was observed that in marriages characterized by success, couples typically experience physical, social, and emotional affection. They also perceive themselves as being loved, esteemed, and respected by their partners. More so, the participants also expressed in the interview the Negative Sentiments they encountered during their marriage they revealed their challenges and negative aspects in their relationship. They said that buya was not good according to case 1 because there's a circumstance in the relationship wherein her husband doesn't listen to her and it would affect their union as married couple. In this study, men also underlined cultural conflict as a reason for marriage problems. Meanings people attribute to events, persons, relationships, words and behaviors are shaped by dynamics of the culture in which they live (38). While for Case 2 and 3 it is bad for them because they cannot choose on their own and that they cannot talk at all. Participants also emphasized the importance of Traditional preservation. For Cases 1, 2 and 3 shared almost the same sentiments on how they really want to preserve the tradition of their tribe with only little changes that is up to their wants. Moreover, according to the participants, if they were the chance to practice it again, they just wish to choose the man they want and they can talk and be part of the negotiation during the asking of their hands from their parents. Similarly to Yizengaw, Kibret, Gebersuli, and Sewasew's (39) observations, individuals whose marriages were arranged by their families and those who chose their own spouses expressed satisfaction with their marriages, given that they were age-appropriate. Additionally, the participants sought a delicate balance between honoring familial expectations and desiring personal autonomy in selecting a life partner.

Taken together, their experiences from the time they got married at an early age were not easy, and difficult for them to adjust to each other despite their parents' wants and they needed to comply and comply with their decisions. The Participants slowly accept their fate and obey their cultural norms. They also realized that they are lucky after all the doubts in their early marriage life because they encountered a good, caring and loving

husband who understands them deeply. Showed genuine support in every decision they made. Perhaps, the best experience we came across in this study was the fact that we were able to hear the stories of the participants; Unveiling the Triumphs of Pre-arranged Marriage in the B'laan Culture. Most of us assume that they are already want to get married the time that their parents fixed their marriage that it has no problem with them in the first place. Little did we know that they are also struggling by the decision that they couldn't say anything and express their feelings of what their decisions are. But they still remain strong and continue their journey as a happy married couple. Therefore, we were able to know how the theories of Emile Durkheim's Structural Functionalism and Henri Tajfel and John Turner's Social Identity Theory offer valuable insights into understanding the success stories of pre-arranged marriage within cultural contexts. We were able to understand how pre-arranged marriage are often deeply embedded in the social structure of many cultures, contributing to social stability, continuity of traditions, and the maintenance of family ties.

These marriages are seen as a way to fulfil societal expectations, maintain social order, and ensure the smooth functioning of the community. Putting all together the experience of our participants on where did their relationship started, we concluded that it started in their cultural norms. In that case, it was explained by Tajfel and Turner's in Social Identity Theory where individuals often prioritize the interests of their family and community over personal desires. Social Identity Theory suggests that individuals may willingly enter pre-arranged marriage because it aligns with their social identity and fulfills their sense of belonging within their cultural group. The pressure to conform to societal norms and expectations regarding marriage can be strong, influencing individuals to participate in pre-arranged marriage as a means of maintaining their social identity and belonging. These two theory help us understand their situation and were able to the unveiled the triumphs of pre-arranged marriage in the B'laan culture.

6. Concluding Remarks

Pre-arranged marriage are a practice deeply embedded in various cultural contexts across the world. The concept involves families, often parents or elders, taking an active role in selecting a spouse for their children or relatives. Thus in this study unveil a rich tapestry of challenges, adjustments, coping mechanisms, and insights that paint a comprehensive picture of the complexities within these marriages. The participants revealed that in adjustment phase, particularly in the early years of marriage, appears

to be a common challenge among all of them. Communication barriers, differences in personalities, and unfamiliarity with each other's habits and preferences become significant hurdles. Yet, despite these difficulties, each couple found their unique ways to navigate and adapt to their situations. The insights shared by the participants depict a transformational journey. From initial reluctance and pressure to eventual acceptance and even love, the participants acknowledge the complexities of pre-arranged marriage. While some express gratitude for their partners' kindness and unconditional love, others still harbor sentiments about the lack of choice and the challenges inherent in these unions.

We could say that the conduct of the study turned out to be an opportunity to the participants to share their experience and become a model of successful marriage. Listening to their stories helped us have a full understanding in their culture. Finally, we are cheerful that the results of this study did not only benefit us and the participants but also it might offer valuable insights and perspectives that could benefit various groups, contributing to greater understanding, empathy, and support for couples in pre-arranged marriage.

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