

Influence of adolescence progression factors, interpersonal nature and gender on adjustment to loss and grief among orphaned secondary school students in Kenya.

Orphan hood due to loss of parents disposes adolescents to adjustment to loss and grief crises as they trudge through progression factors. Since adolescence primarily is a time of internal turmoil, any additional turbulence may throw adolescents off balance of physical, emotional, social and cognitive maneuver of progression changes. In the 21st Century, death of parents has been the other crisis for adolescents. Socio-economic, cultural and emerging trends have created a paradigm shift that grieving adolescents seldom have someone to fall back to. Most adolescents are struggling with loss and grief as schools have become academic-mean oriented and psychosocial support has been relegated to 'silence'. Unfortunately, the orphaned adolescents are still suffering under the weight of progression factors and grief. The purpose of this study therefore was to explore the Influence of Adolescence Progression Factors, Interpersonal Nature and Gender on Adjustment to Loss and Grief among public secondary school students in Kisumu Central Sub-County, Kenya. The research objectives were: to establish the influence of adolescence progression factors on adjustment to Loss and Grief, to find out the influence of students' interpersonal nature on adjustment to Loss and Grief, to examine whether there are gender differences on adjustment to Loss and Grief and to find out the strategies for adjustment to loss and grief among orphaned secondary school students in Kisumu Central Sub-County. The study was informed by Erikson's Psychosocial Theory of Human Development and Kübler-Ross Cycle model of loss and grief. Mixed method research approach was used and within it, concurrent triangulation design was adopted. The target population consisted of 47 schools, 20 Focus Group Discussion students, 10 Personal Interviews and 1,245 Form 3 orphaned students from public secondary schools in Kisumu Central Sub-County. A sample size of 453 students from 15 secondary schools was sampled for the study using stratified random sampling technique. Reliability of the instruments was ascertained through a pilot study of 9% of the population that did not participate in the final study. Internal consistency was also used to determine the reliability of questionnaires and coefficient values of $r=0.784$, 0.0771 and 0.0767 were reported for the three questionnaires. Face validity of the instruments was ascertained by pilot testing the questionnaires and also by seeking expert judgment by university lecturers. Data was collected by use of questionnaires, in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions. Quantitative data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic framework. Trustworthiness of qualitative data was ensured by analyzing the framework as fronted by Lincoln & Guba. The study findings revealed that progression factors such as physical, emotional, cognitive and social significantly influenced adjustment to loss and grief. Physical progression factors influenced adolescents' adjustment to loss and grief at $r=0.157$, emotional factors were influential at $r=0.365$, social factors were influential at $r=0.319$ while cognitive progression factors were equally influential at $r=0.356$. In addition, there were significant differences on adjustment to loss and grief on the basis of interpersonal nature. However, there were no statistically significant gender difference on adjustment to loss and grief. The study also found out that some coping strategies for loss and grief included: engaging on positive thinking, seeking peer therapy and support, seeking professional guidance and counselling services, engaging in group therapy, involvement in letter writing therapy, engaging in journaling therapy, reflections of past events, adoption of grandma's philosophy and engaging in self disclosure. The study recommended that schools should introduce adapting-parenting model among teachers to take care of the orphaned students.