

**INFLUENCE OF GRIEF ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND SELF-CONCEPT
AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS: A CASE OF MOLO DIVISION,
NAKURU DISTRICT**

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BY

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**A Research Project Report Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial
Fulfillment of the Master of Education Degree in Guidance and
Counselling of Egerton University**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my original work and has not been previously presented for the award of a degree in any university.

Sign HP Date 25/6/07

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RECOMMENDATION

This research report has been submitted for examination with my approval as a University Supervisor.

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2008/73236 X

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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate my work first to my entire family-husband and children who encouraged and supported me during the studies. I also wish to dedicate it to all respondents who have gone through the grieving process and encourage them that life has to continue.

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ABSTRACT

Grief is the experience of psychological and physical pain due to some form of loss such as death of a loved one. Everyone may experience grief sometime in life. The young student in secondary school is not spared this experience. This may emanate from factors like death of a guardian, a sibling or a parent. Currently, death of parent, guardian or sibling is high in Kenya due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. By 2004, the Ministry of Health in Kenya reported that 1.6 million children had been orphaned by HIV/AIDS since 1984. Grieving seems to leave a majority of students confused and withdrawn leading to poor academic performance and low self-concept. The purpose of this study therefore, was to investigate the influence of grief on student's academic performance and self-concept. The research design was *ex post facto*. The accessible population of the study was 672 form three students in seven mixed secondary schools in Molo Division. The number of respondents were 159 students among form three students who were purposively sampled to form the sample size. A questionnaire was administered as the instrument for data collection. The data collected was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics included percentages, frequencies and means. The inferential statistics used were Chi-Square and Pearson correlation. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 9 aided in this analysis. The research hypotheses were tested at $\alpha = 0.05$. The findings of the research indicated that grief did not have a significant influence on both academic performance and self-concept of secondary students. It was realized that self-concept was influenced differently from academic performance by grief. Influence of grief on both academic performance and self-concept were found to be independent of gender. Emotional interaction among students and intervention from teachers were found to be helpful for students to overcome grief. It was recommended that grieving students be encouraged to have peer interaction in order to heal from grief faster.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired ImmunoDeficiency Syndrome
GOK	Government of Kenya
HIV	Human ImmunoDeficiency Virus
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TIQET	Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In Kenya, acquisition of education from primary to university takes eight years in primary, four in secondary and four in University. The system has been criticized as being examination oriented (GOK, 1999). As such the future of an individual is pegged on academic performance. A child who performs high academically is likely to have a high self-concept. Several factors influence academic performance and self-concept of a student. Few among these factors include drug use and abuse, intelligence quotient and retardation, student's attitude towards subject and indiscipline (GOK, 2001). Students involved in drug and substance abuse are likely to suffer withdrawal symptoms or have low self-concept in school. This interferes with their concentration in school work and may lead to low academic performance and low self-concept. In addition, a family's social economic background and gender are also factors which have been attributed to high or low academic performance (Chepchieng' & Kiboss, 2004). It has also been noted that stress in life can cause temporary disruptions in cognitive performance. Such stress can be caused by life events like parental divorce or death (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989). Loss of a parent(s), guardian or sibling on whom a student is dependent can be very destabilizing. This is because love, care, financial attention and security formerly provided by the deceased may be unattended (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989).

Some physical manifestations of grief like headaches and other migraine (Aiken, 1994) and vomiting due to acid increase (Van Praagh, 2000) are quite destabilizing to the student. A student experiencing such is unlikely to concentrate fully in class and hence this may influence his or her academic performance-which may in turn influence his self-concept (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989). They further state that children experiencing grief may have

behavioural difficulties in school. Such children may be exposed to regular punishments, which consume a lot of class time. This may lead to low academic performance. Similarly, a student involved in punishments is likely to be isolated by his peers, which may lead to low self-concept (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989). By 2001 the Ministry of Health reported that 1.5 million Kenyans had died of HIV/AIDS and related diseases. Molo region is no exemption from HIV/AIDS and related diseases calamities. In the 1990's Molo experienced ethnic land clashes which left many children orphaned. There was need to study how grief due to loss of a parent, guardian or sibling would have influenced a child's academic performance and self-concepts.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Parents, teachers and educational stakeholders are all concerned when a child fails to perform well in national examinations like Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (K.C.P.E) and Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E). Researchers in Kenya for sometime have investigated what really contributes to high academic performance, but no study has been done in the country on how grief influences academic performance. Grief could be one of the factors that influences a child's self-concept and academic performance because it usually destabilizes an individual socially, emotionally and even physically. As such, the present study attempted to establish the extent to which grief has influenced the academic performance and self-concepts of secondary school students in Molo division of Nakuru district.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of grief on secondary school students academic performance and self-concept in Molo division of Nakuru district.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

- (i) Establish the influence of grief on academic performance among secondary school students;
- (ii) Find out the influence of grief on self-concept among secondary school students;
- (iii) Establish whether gender differences exist in the influence of grief on academic performances and self-concepts among secondary school students; and
- (iv) Compare the influence of grief on self-concepts and academic performance of secondary school students.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

- H_{01} : There is no significant influence of grief on the academic performance of secondary school students.
- H_{02} : There is no significant influence of grief on the self-concept of secondary school students.
- H_{03} : There is no significant influence of grief on the academic performance and self-concept of boys and girls in secondary schools.
- H_{04} : There is no significant difference on the influence of grief on the secondary school students' academic performance and self-concept.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The results of this study may educate the society on the need to address grief and the grieving process among the youth in secondary school. Proper intervention in the grieving process may help reduce a lot of the indiscipline cases in schools, may help the affected students process the grief, perform better academically and interact socially with peers in school. The

study may help the Ministry of Education effect their recommendation of the Task Force on Education (GOK, 2001) that schools should have professional counsellors.

1.7 The Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study covered secondary schools in Molo division of Nakuru district. Form three students from mixed schools provided the sample of the study. The study confined itself to the influence of grief on students academic performance and self-concepts. Molo is a multi-ethnic community hence providing a fertile ground for the study. The area has in the past been the centre of tribal clashes, leaving several children orphaned. The presence of Kenya-Uganda highway has also contributed to the spread of HIV/AIDS occasioning many deaths hence leaving children orphaned. The limitations of the study were: -

- (i) The study was conducted within Molo division and involved mixed schools. The population of Molo is multi-ethnic and hence it is hoped that the results might be generalized to all secondary schools in Kenya.
- (ii) Grief being a sensitive issue, the respondents, might have given socially acceptable views rather than their true personal experiences.

1.8 Assumptions of the Study

The study was based on the following assumptions:

- (i) That the students would co-operate and give honest responses; and
- (ii) That the cultural background of the students would influence the responses provided by the students.

1.9 Definition of Terms

The terms used were defined as follows for the purpose of the study.

Acceptance:	This is the art of believing that demise of a loved one has taken place and nothing can change it.
Academic performance:	This is the achievement of overall termly grades of a student.
Anger:	This is a fierce feeling of displeasure, usually leading to a desire to hurt or stop the person or thing causing it.
Bargain:	This is an agreement, especially one to do something in return for something else.
Bereavement:	This is considered as the state of loss of one's beloved which involves a sense of dispossession of the loved one.
Denial:	This is the failure to accept the reality of something that has taken place.
Depression:	This is a feeling of sadness and hopelessness.
Gender:	This means the state of being male or female.
Grief:	This is the psychological and physical pain experienced due to loss of one's parent(s), guardians (s) or siblings. It is the emotional response to loss of significant others.
Guardian:	This referred to someone who undertook to care or provided for the needs of a child whose biological parents or those who had legally adopted a child died. This included elder siblings to a child.
Guilt:	This is the responsibility for something wrong, the knowledge or belief that one has done wrong.

Influence:

This is the response of the student to the stimuli of grief.

Parent:

This is taken to stand for one who had biologically begotten or legally adopted a child.

Sadness:

This is the feeling, showing or causing grief or sorrow or unhappiness.

Self-concept:

This is the totality of one's regard of the self. This was either positive or negative. Positive regard led one to be proud or appreciated the self. When one's self-concept was negative, one detested the self and had a poor self-regard. A person who has an inaccurate self-concept is likely to be maladjusted.

Shock:

This is the state or strong feeling caused by something unexpected and usually very unpleasant.

Sibling:

This referred to a brother or sister to a secondary school student.

CHAPTER TWO : LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, relevant literature on the study was reviewed and the various stages of grief have been covered. Symptoms of severe depression during grief follows and the various symptoms of physical manifestation of grief are documented. Influence of grief on the secondary school student and the help that may be offered to such a student was also highlighted. Each stage of grief and the influence it could have on the student's academic performance and self-concept was also discussed. The theoretical framework of the study based on the humanistic and social learning theories was also presented. A conceptual framework of the study was also included.

2.2 Causes of Grief

Kubler-Ross states that any form of loss, from death of a loved one, still births, transfer from one place of work to another, separation from a friend, loss of a house (property) through fire and even abortion are all causes of grief (Aiken, 1994). However, Brunner cites handicapping accidents as cause of grief (Aiken, 1994). This refers to a situation where an individual has been physically normal, but due to some accidents like fire or motor accidents he/she loses some organs like eyes, legs or the arms. Handicapping accidents cause grief to the individual and to the relatives as they incapacitate the individual to shift from being physically independent to being dependent. Aiken (1994) identifies miscarriage as a cause of grief. Miscarriage refers to the termination of a pregnancy due to natural factors before time for delivery is due, at a time when the foetus cannot survive independently. This situation causes grief in that the woman had adjusted to the state of expectancy, and then unexpectedly, she loses her dream child. Some women are not able to conceive afterwards due to stress. Moreover, Aiken (1994) cites abortion as a cause of grief. Abortion is the

deliberate termination of a foetus from the womb with and/or without the consent of the woman. These researchers state that the woman in this situation later suffers psychological torture and guilt which some are unable to overcome. In addition, Kubler-Ross states that death of a loved one causes grief since it is the eminent loss or departure of the loved one physically (Aiken, 1994). Those that outlive the deceased suffer psychological and physical loss. They may have treasured the jokes, games, company and advice that they may have shared with the departed. In the case of a parent(s) or guardian, a child suffers mostly since he/she is left dependent on others. The transition from dependency on the deceased to another is usually very difficult.

2.3 Stages of Grief

Researchers have variously given five stages of grief that include denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance (Saylor, 1983) and (Aiken, 1994). However, Van Praagh (2000) gives the stages of grief as seven, that include shock, denial, bargaining, anger, guilt, sadness and depression and finally, acceptance. Shock is the experience of a deep-rooted psychological pain on experiencing or encountering a bitter truth like death, which implies permanent loss of a loved one. Kubler-Ross states that adolescents and young adults in shock may have silent withdrawal or wild outbursts of screaming (Craig, 1996). A student who suffers silent withdrawal symptoms due to grief is unlikely to learn properly. He/she may withdraw from the teacher(s) who offer instructions in a learning environment in secondary school. This means that the student may fail to receive learning instructions and is likely not to perform well when examinations are administered. He may also withdraw from his/her classmates. The other students might decide to ignore such a student and hence not offer any academic assistance. When this happens, the student might not perform well during examinations. When he isolates himself and others pull off from him, then the student feels

like he is neglected by others and may lack a sense of belonging. This might lower his self-concept and hence influence the overall performance during examinations. Similarly, a student who expresses shock by wild-outbursts of screaming may find other students shying away from him and the teachers likewise. Under such circumstances, receiving learning instructions might prove very difficult and thus influence academic performance. A student with wild outbursts of screaming, when isolated by others might interpret this scenario as being neglected which might influence his self-concept negatively (Lutomia & Sikolia, 2002).

Anger is the strong feeling that one experiences when something has happened that they think is bad and unfair, and it is the second stage of grief (Wehmeier, 2000). Anger is easily noticeable in a person's interactions with other people. A wide variety of symptoms can signal the presence of hidden anger: depression, accident proneness, irritability, erratic sleep patterns, fatigue, excessive drinking or overeating, headaches, backaches and many other physical complaints. Unresolved anger can lead to a need to become ill, a need to fail or a need to sabotage our own happiness. Hidden anger can even be the source of suicidal feelings and direct attempts at destroying one's own life (Stearns, 1992). Sometimes a person may yell at someone or scream for no apparent reason. The more a person bottles up his feelings the more likely one is to explode. This is especially true of teens whose parents or guardians may have suddenly died untimely death (Stearns, 1992). A student who is facing these uncontrollable bouts of anger is unlikely to interact well with teachers and peers. He may thus not receive learning instructions and this may lead to poor academic performance. Someone who suffers bouts of anger is unlikely to have friends (peers) willing to help him in class (Mutie & Ndambuki, 1999). When this person realizes that others isolate him, he may develop low self-concept that is detrimental to academic performance.

Bargaining is the third stage of grief in which the person attempts to blackmail nature (Van Praagh, 2000). He attempts to negotiate, that something can be done to alter the reality of things. Van Praagh is of the opinion that, at this stage, one is likely to discover talents unknown before the loss. For instance, a student who may lose both parents may come to the realization that other siblings rely on him for guidance and material support. He is likely to work hard academically with the hope of getting a job placement. This may also help him to develop a positive self-concept on the basis that siblings view him as a leader. A student who is at this bargaining stage may also decide to work very hard to fulfill the desires of the departed parents. In this case, the grief helps improve the self-concept of the individual and is likely to uplift the academic performance. Papalia and Olds (1979) state that those children who believe that they are capable of doing something are ready to attempt, to take risks and usually succeed. This improves their self-concept and people appreciate them, they can cope with peers. On the other hand, a child who may feel that he cannot meet the demand of his siblings may develop low self-concept. He does not manage to cope with peers (Stearns, 1992). For the student in secondary school, approval or disapproval of peers is a powerful shaper of self-concept and behaviour (Papalia & Olds, 1979). A student with this low self-concept is unlikely to perform highly academically.

Denial is the fourth stage of grief as indicated by Van Praagh (2000) which leads to failure to accept the reality of something that has taken place. According to Saylor (1984) this is a defense mechanism where the individual tries to distort what he thinks or perceives as traumatic, including the death of a loved one. It is trying to exclude from one's awareness the sad feelings of the moment and pushing them to the unconscious mind. This happens when facing the reality becomes temporarily impossible. Aiken (1994) state that young people, like the students in secondary schools attempt suicide, mainly those who tend to be

impulsive, to have poor control and to have low tolerance for frustration and stress. These are states of mind, which occur when a student experiencing grief is in this denial stage. Such a student is unlikely to concentrate on academic matters, hence may suffer low academic performance for that term. Besides, if one attempts suicide and survives, he is likely to develop low self-concept, to be isolated and rejected by peers and hence may not perform well academically.

Guilt is the fifth stage of grief in which one blames himself for the death of the loved one. Guilt is the irrational blame on the self for the loss in which one feels as though he would have done something to prevent the demise (Van Praagh, 2000). A normally active child who becomes withdrawn, or a normally quiet child who becomes hyperactive may be struggling with guilt (Stearns, 1992). Without help a child in this stage of guilt is likely to engage in self-destructive behaviour such as excessive drinking and eating, accident proneness and carelessness toward personal hygiene (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989). Van Praagh (2000) states that in this stage, the student needs to honestly evaluate the situation whereby failure to analyze the situation leaves one fixated. One needs to ask himself how the death of the parent or guardian or sibling can change their life. For some, there are profound new lessons and when these are applied on the self and others, they can be helpful. Stearns (1992) states that new lessons in life learnt in this guilt stage are an indication that one is choosing to heal from grief and continue living, rather than walk in guilt. A student who may learn to move on, that life must continue despite the demise of parent(s) or guardian is likely to concentrate on his studies and achieve highly. This may help in molding high self-concept.

Sadness and depression is the sixth stage of grief according to Van Praagh (2000). Van Praagh states that sadness is the emotion most apparent after a loss in which one experiences

the depth of despair after a loss. This makes one to move into self-imposed isolation where he feels lonely and totally hopeless. Van Praagh (2000) states that this is one of the hardest stages to go through and may last a considerable time. Often, sadness and depression are undercurrents that run through the entire grieving process. At this stage, one realizes that what he has lost will never come back physically. One experiences helplessness and questions the meaning of life. One develops anxiety, fear and worry which sometimes manifests itself in physical symptoms.

According to Van Praagh (2000) and Kubler-Ross (Aiken, 1994) some of these symptoms are like withdrawal from normal social life, dizziness, loss of appetite, loss of memory and lack of concentration, insomnia and other sleep disturbances. Some also develop elimination problems like diarrhoea and constipation. If one is withdrawn, he may not seek assistance from peers. One suffering insomnia cannot concentrate in class work during the day. One lacking in appetite may require medical attention, one suffering from diarrhoea may require to move out of class often, causing distraction for self and others. Such a student is unlikely to concentrate in class work and is likely to suffer rejection from peers. This is likely to lead to low self-concept and influence academic performance negatively.

Acceptance is the final goal of the grieving process, a stage in which one acknowledges the situation for what it is. He realizes that there is need to accept the loss so that he can heal the wounds and move on with life. One starts viewing life, the people and situations in a new way. Van Praagh (2000) states that, with acceptance, one comes to the understanding that life is given to us with a certain amount of limitations. With acceptance, one is able to ask the self about the knowledge and wisdom gained in the grieving process and how much that affects one's perception of life. One is able to plan how to help the self and others with this

new knowledge. Johnson (1998) states that, when one moves beyond fear, he feels free to explore what is beyond in life.

For a student, criss-crossing through the various stages of grieving process is hard. But, once one is finally able to go beyond, he adapts to the change and develops some coping skills. For instance, a girl who may find herself assuming motherly responsibilities following the demise of a mother can make a time schedule. She can programme herself a few hours of house chores. The short time left, of maybe two hours she can make a timetable for schoolwork and with a lot of determination, she can excel in her academic performance and in self-concept when she finds herself coping with both roles. On the other hand, the one who lives by lamenting the death of the mother may perform house chores poorly and may drop in academic performance. This would eventually lead to low marks in class work, which may lead to low self-concept hence prompting eventual dropout from school altogether.

2.4 Symptoms of Severe Depression during Grief

Van Praagh (2000) observed that during grief, many people including the youth like secondary school students manifested several symptoms. Some examples are losing interest in life, being withdrawn from peers, drastic changes in diet and sleep patterns, frequent and uncontrollable outbursts of crying and suicidal thoughts. Some also develop feelings of absolute hopelessness and helplessness. A student with all or many of these symptoms is surely unlikely to concentrate in class work. He is likely to have low self-concept because other students might not understand the changes happening in him. The peers might isolate him and thus fail to assist him in academic improvement.

2.5 Physical Manifestation of Grief

Studies have demonstrated that younger people show more physical symptoms in a process of mourning than older people (Stearns, 1992). Van Praagh (2000) states that the fear and anxiety experienced by people including students during grief can be expressed in some of the following manifestations. Some people experience temporal loss of memory and lack concentration in whatever work they have. Migraines, dry mouth, stomach cramps and elimination problems like diarrhoea are not uncommon. Sweaty palms, inability to swallow, increase of acid leading to frequent vomiting, muscular pains and lack of daily hygiene are observable (Stearns, 1992 and Van Praagh, 2000). Self-centredness is almost always an essential aspect of separation from someone that has been lost.

According to Stearns (1992), a student experiencing many of these symptoms may become distracted from class work due to these discomforts. On the other hand, he may become a distraction to others in class as he frequently asks for permission to move out. He may also perform poorly due to lack of concentration. Some conditions like frequent vomiting and muscular pains may need medical attention. As one goes to seek for these services, class time is wasted which may contribute to low academic performance. Low marks lead some students to develop low self-concept Hormuth (1990). Hormuth states that a person's self-concept cannot be unaffected by changes in the environment. A person can either change the environment, or place and role of others in it, or he changes the self-concept. Based on this is the general idea that the study of person in the face of changes in the person may be crucial for understanding the process related to self-concept change. Stearns (1992) state that our self-concept helps us to understand ourselves and also to control or regulate our behaviour. A student who may develop low self-concept due to experiencing the stated symptoms of grief is unlikely to direct his energies into working hard in future.

2.6 Influence of Grief on Students

Grief has serious influence on the students in secondary school which may influence both academic performance and self-concept of the students. Some of them are as follows:- sometimes when one parent dies, the survivor may find himself/herself unable to cope with the responsibilities of the family. This can be physically, economically and psychologically. This inability may make the survivor suicidal and vulnerable to serious illness, creating a vicious cycle of grief for children (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989). Children who may lose both parents within a short range of time may not have the desire to work hard in school, they are confused. Reactions of a child to a parent's death are varied and appear to be influenced by a child's age, level of emotional closeness to the surviving parent and the child's cognitive development (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989). The surviving parent's withholding of emotional expression, overrestraint and inability to share the child's grief has a great impact on the child's adjustment. This is because a child is emotionally disturbed and lacks maximum concentration in classroom situation. He suffers from low self-concept due to neglect from the surviving parent. The parent's prolixity, inconsistency, that is inability to move past his/her virtue grief into structuring the child's world, seem to have the most effect on a child's adjustment (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989).

The death of a parent(s) makes a child experience a part of himself/herself dying, (Van Praagh, 2000). This is because parents are part of us and we cling to them from childhood. Their death reminds us of our own mortality and vulnerability as physical beings (Stearns, 1992). When this happens, a student may lack concentration and as he pre-occupies himself with thoughts of death, he may develop low self-concept. Some contemplate suicide and such a child can rarely perform well academically (Cater & McGoldrick, 1989). Carter and McGoldrick (1989) state that the death of parent(s) and siblings affects a child in several

ways. The child experiences being haunted by the dead, being fearful and counter phobic, and resurrecting the dead by leading two lives; they are unable to separate themselves from the dead parents. The child spends a lot of his time thinking about the loss. Thinking about the dead parent has influence both on the academic performance and on self-concept positively or negatively. In the academic area, if the deceased parent was an achiever, the child may feel like he is letting down the deceased by not working hard. This may influence him to work hard, to fulfill the wishes of the deceased. Miskell and Miskell (1994) state that if the child achieves academically, he is happy and his self-concept is boosted, if he doesn't achieve academically, he feels frustrated and low self-concept sets in.

Grieving death of a parent may be manifested by physical illness in a child who was emotionally attached to the deceased (Carter and McGoldrick, 1989). Such illnesses may be headaches, stomachaches and diarrhoea. This kind of a student is likely to spend quite some time seeking medical attention, reducing time for class work. He may start viewing himself as a sickling and hence have low self-concept. These perceptions of the self-negatively are likely to lead to poor academic performance. Carter and McGoldrick (1989) state that a grieving student may suffer maladaptive responses including suicidal thoughts. Carter and McGoldrick (1989) state that a child with maladaptive responses cannot interact well with teachers and classmates as he views the self as a failure. This kind of a student may not consult teachers or peers for assistance in class work, hence performs poorly which aggravates his low self-concept.

Grief may also interfere with issues of family communication. Mothers are responsible for the emotional and communication aspects of their families. Thus, the death of a mother often leaves the father with tasks for which he feels ill prepared (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989). The

father may not discuss the grief he is experiencing with the children. This may lead to confusion and a long grieving process. When the grief process takes long, it interferes with the learning process in school. On the other hand, such a student may identify with a teacher who provides a mother figure for him in school (Stearns, 1992). These interactions might influence the child to act positively to please the teacher. If assisted, such a child may adjust quickly to the changes, concentrate on class work and perform well in academics. The student may also feel a boost in self-concept, which further helps him interact well with other teachers and peers in class.

Taking up adult roles by children is also another influence of grief on students. Carter and McGoldrick (1989) state that the death of a parent(s) sometimes results to children adjusting to take adult roles. A girl takes up motherly responsibilities like cooking, fetching water and firewood and other house chores. A boy may also undertake fatherly chores in a family like seeking child employment as the breadwinner. Children in these situations have little time left for class work. Many drop out of school and a few who remain lack concentration. This situation is witnessed in Kenya today due to many deaths resulting from HIV/AIDS related diseases. Papalia and Olds (1992) state that the grieving effects are also influenced by the kind of death. For HIV/AIDS deaths, the children are stigmatized whereby a student's self-concept is lowered, thus affecting one's academic performance.

Desperation is also at times associated with loss of a parent where the student feels inadequate to provide or uncertain about the life ahead. Stearns (1992) states that some adolescents suffer depression which psychologists, physicians and psychiatrists relate to loss of a parent(s). They relate physical conditions like cardiac disease to early loss of a parent. Aiken (1994) associates severe depression and some suicidal tendencies in some adolescents to loss of a parent, a view shared by (Mutie & Ndambuki, 1999). These suicidal tendencies

may occur in adolescents yet the loss was experienced in early childhood (Stearns, 1992). Stearns (1992) gives the example of the renowned psychologist Sigmund Freud to illustrate this point. He states that Freud lost his infant brother in childhood yet this experience implanted a seed of reproach that affected the intensity and neurotic quality of all his adult friendships. All this illustrates that depression and other maladaptive behaviour resulting from grief of a parent may influence academic performance and self-concept of a student.

Interactions with peers are also greatly influenced by grief of a parent. Aiken (1994) states that bereavement from loss of a parent has a great significance for adolescents. It may be traumatic to make any idea of future intimacy painful and impossible. Students in secondary school are adolescents. If a student is in a mixed school and fails to develop intimate friendship with peers, he/she may be isolated as a loner. With isolation, the student may suffer from loss of self-esteem, leading to low self-concept, which may further lower the academic performance. The opposite is also possible whereby, if accepted, he/she may develop high self-esteem, leading to high self-concept with which he/she may work extra hard towards academic performance.

Child abuse has also been cited as a result of grief since when children are orphaned, they are usually left in the hands of relatives. Soon, the relatives tire of the added responsibility and neglect them (UNICEF, 1997). Orphaned young girls may turn to prostitution in order to meet their needs which leaves them with little time for learning. Besides, when other students learn of this behaviour, the young girls are stigmatized. With stigma comes low self-concept and hence inability to concentrate in class work. Others turn to menial jobs for economic sustenance where some end up suffering child labour and sexual harassment from employers. Some perform street work, where children spend hours in streets selling items to supplement family income (UNICEF, 1997). A child who has to perform menial jobs to

supplement the family's economy, who has to offer domestic service to other families to raise money may neither have high self-concept nor time for class. Both of these then are bound to influence his academic performance.

UNICEF (2000) observed that far too many children of secondary school going age turned to street life after loss of their parents. Some become outright-delinquents and are unable to continue with their education. Even when governments attempt to rehabilitate such children back to school, they are stigmatized. Such a student develops low self-concept and only very few are able to perform well in academics. They do not interact well with peers who isolate them. In Kenya for example, UNICEF (1999) observed that delinquent children put in remand with adults. In these remands, they live in appalling circumstances, sleeping on bare floor with vermin infested blankets, in rooms pervaded by stench and overflowing toilets. They suffer sex abuse and become stigmatized. After release, such children cannot cope well with peers and teachers in their schools. This impacts negatively on their self-concept and may lead to low academic performance.

In some countries, juvenile delinquents are executed just like adults as illustrated in the following cases. UNICEF (1999) observed that countries like Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and U.S.A executed nine juvenile delinquents between 1990-1998. Surely, when one dies, his self-concept dies with academic performance. Inability to establish useful human relationship with peers is another influence of grief on a student Kubler-Ross (Aiken, 1994). Kubler-Ross (Aiken, 1994) also observed that grief influences students to the extent of inability to establish useful human relationships. This psychologist observed that adolescents who lost their parents had difficulties establishing their adult identity. In this confusion, it is hard for a student to concentrate on schoolwork; hence poor self-concept may set in leading to poor academic performance.

Thormton and Voigt (1992) state that when adolescents engage in delinquent actions, they can hit teachers and peers as well. They can set buildings on fire, commit robbery and engage in wanton vandalism. If students are delinquent due to loss of a parent and they indulge in these activities, then this impacts negatively on their self-concept. They may be suspended or even expelled from school. In Kenya, this behaviour has been witnessed in schools like Kyanguli, St. Kizito and Bombolulu (GOK, 1999). A student who is frequently suspended may not perform well academically and is likely to have a low self-concept. However, not all delinquent behaviour among adolescents in secondary schools is due to grief.

2.7 Help for Secondary School Students who have Suffered Grief after Loss of a Parent(s) or Guardian or a Sibling

Stearns (1992) states that those children who become delinquents, probably also due to grief can be referred to a psychoanalyst therapist. This therapist is to help them establish the origin of their delinquent behaviour. He is to assist the delinquent to set specific goals to overcome the problem and learning coping skills. Stearns (1992) suggests that delinquent children should be sent for transactional analysis. These are institutions in which they are to be taught to appreciate the talents they have, develop them and thus start to have a positive self-concept. This is bound to improve academic performance as the student views himself positively.

Feldman (1997) suggests that children with learning problems may be due to grief be approached through eclectic or milieu therapy. This involves utilizing whatever counselling technique may be found appropriate. It is a combination of different counselling techniques to achieve the desired end. In this case, the desired end is overcoming grief, developing a

positive self-concept leading to high academic performance for the student. Students who have lost a parent(s) or guardian may also be encouraged to join encounter groups. They are encouraged to avoid people who will hurt them and involve themselves in self-care activities (Stearns, 1992).

A student in school operates as an individual but whatever happens in his family, like loss of a parent, guardian or sibling influences his work. In this case, his work is academic performance. This is explained in Figure 1. A summary of factors which influence self-concept in children is demonstrated in Figure 2.

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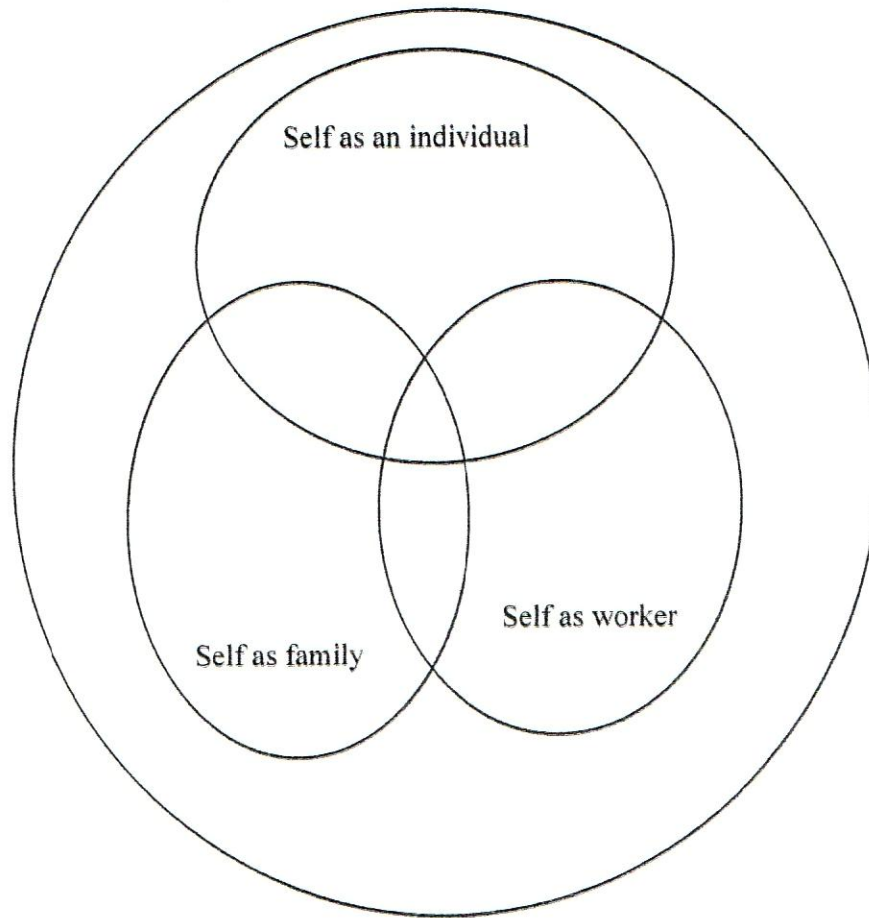


Figure 1. Interactions among the self as an individual, a family member and a worker.
Adapted from Craig (1996) p 507.

The three systems of adult development systems involve dynamic interactions among the self as an individual, a family member and a worker. These interactions take place in the broad context of community and culture. According to Erikson a primary task during adolescence and early childhood is to establish an identity through intimate relationships and work (Craig, 1996). A student who may be influenced by grief and fails to establish his identity may suffer problems in his personality and work in future.

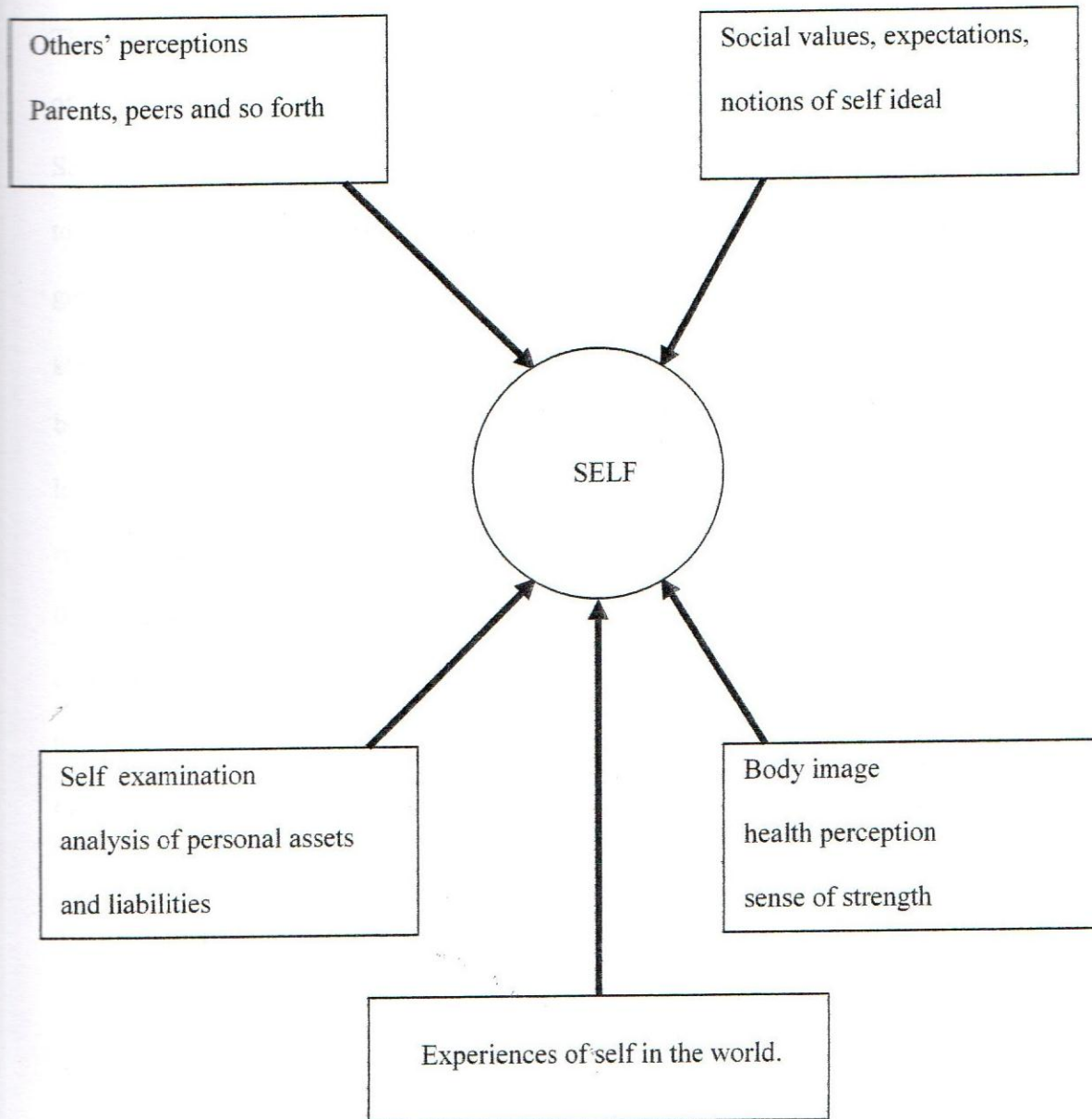


Figure 2: Factors influencing self-concept in children: Adapted from Craig (1996) p 96

The self-concept include both a real and an ideal self, that is the self we believe we are and the self we think we ought to be. The individual who perceives these selves as similar will be better prepared to mature and adapt than the one who sees the real self as much inferior to the ideal one. Self-concept may be self-rewarding or self-punishing.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

The study was built on various theories in psychology in an attempt to investigate the effect of grief on the academic performance and self-concepts of secondary school students. Stanovich (1998) states that the use of theory in science is basically to provide a framework to test existing hypothesis and to generate new ones. Following the death of parent(s), guardian or sibling, it is generally believed that one experiences severe loss which causes grief. To heal from this grief, it is generally believed that certain psychological tasks need to be accomplished. The survivor needs to accept the reality of the loss and to realize that the loss causes some pain. Meir, Minirth and Wichern (1982) state that the survivor must rechannel the emotional energy that he or she had previously invested in the relationship with the deceased. There are many patterns of grieving depending on personality, age, sex, cultural traditions and the relationship with the deceased (Craig, 1996). Various psychological theories may be applied in helping students who suffer grief. Some of these theories are like Gestalt which is humanistic and the social learning theories.

2.8.1 Humanistic Theories

Gestalt therapy is a humanistic therapy developed by Fritz Perls (1893-1970) in which the therapist questions and challenges clients to help them become more aware of their feelings and face their problems (Feldman, 1996). Gestalt therapists utilize techniques such as encouraging individuals to be open about their feelings, to develop self-awareness and to actively control their lives. They also encourage role playing either by client, the therapist or both (Santrock, 2000). Gestalt therapists set examples, encourage congruence between verbal and non-verbal behaviour. Confronting the client is encouraged. Gestalt therapists are very directive to the client with the goal that individuals may better manage their feelings instead of letting their feelings control them (Santrock 2000).

Examples of how this theory is applicable are given below. A student may absent himself from school citing mistreatment from a relative as the cause of his lack of concentration in class work. In confronting the student, a Gestalt counsellor may inform him that he is just giving a lame excuse. He is directed into how he can keep himself busy with schoolwork, be obedient to the relative, for as long as the demands are moral. He can be guided into better methods of concentration in class and avoiding flimsy complaints of mistreatment. Once the student adheres to directives from the counsellor, it is likely that the relative will realize the seriousness of the student and thus set him free to study. In this way, the student overcomes his grief, concentrates in class work and does not feel his self-concept lowered.

According to Carl Rogers (Craig, 1996) the person-centred theory insists on the person being offered unconditional positive regard. In the person centred theory the therapist creates a warm and caring environment, never disapproving of the client (Santrock, 2000). The warm supportive atmosphere offered by the therapist to the individual helps to improve his self-concept and gain insight (Feldman, 1996). The techniques utilized are genuineness, accurate empathy and active listening and the therapist is non-directive to the client (Craig, 1996). With unconditional positive regard, human beings are believed to be resilient. They can push into hostile environment, adapt, develop and become the self (Proctor, 1979). A student approached with these humanistic therapeutic techniques is likely to recover from grief, improve his self-concept and may also improve his academic performance. For instance, a teacher counsellor may provide active listening to a grieving student, be empathetic and show genuine concern to the needs of the student. In this approach, the learner may confide in the teacher such that he/she replaces the relative that is deceased. This approach would help the student to continue with his studies without feeling that his self-concept has been ruined by

the demise of the deceased relative. Therapy under person centred aims to assist individuals in their growth process so as to cope better with issues at present and in the future (Corey, 1991).

2.8.2. Social Learning Theories

Social learning theories assume that the observable wrong behaviour is the problem as stated by Sloan and Mizes (Santrock, 2000). They try to eliminate the unwanted behaviour, for instance lack of concentration in class rather than giving the student insight (Feldman, 1996). They utilize the technique of systematic desensitization and aversive conditioning in classical conditioning approaches (Santrock, 2000). For instance, a student who performs poorly citing the loss of a loved one as the cause, may be given the example of several others who are better performers yet they have suffered the same fate. For effective behaviour modification, aversive conditioning may be utilized. For instance, if a student is an attention seeker (due to the loss of a loved one) he may be advised that on being serious with class work, he may achieve highly and will thus be recognized by being given a badge for best performer or best improved. In this case, the concentration in class work is the aversive issue, while recognition, that is the reward is what is desired. In the operant conditioning approaches, the techniques utilized are behaviour modification (Santrock, 2000). This is the application of operant conditioning principles to change human behaviour. Its main goal is to replace unacceptable, maladaptive responses with acceptable adaptive ones, (Santrock, 2000) A conceptual framework is summarized in figure 3.

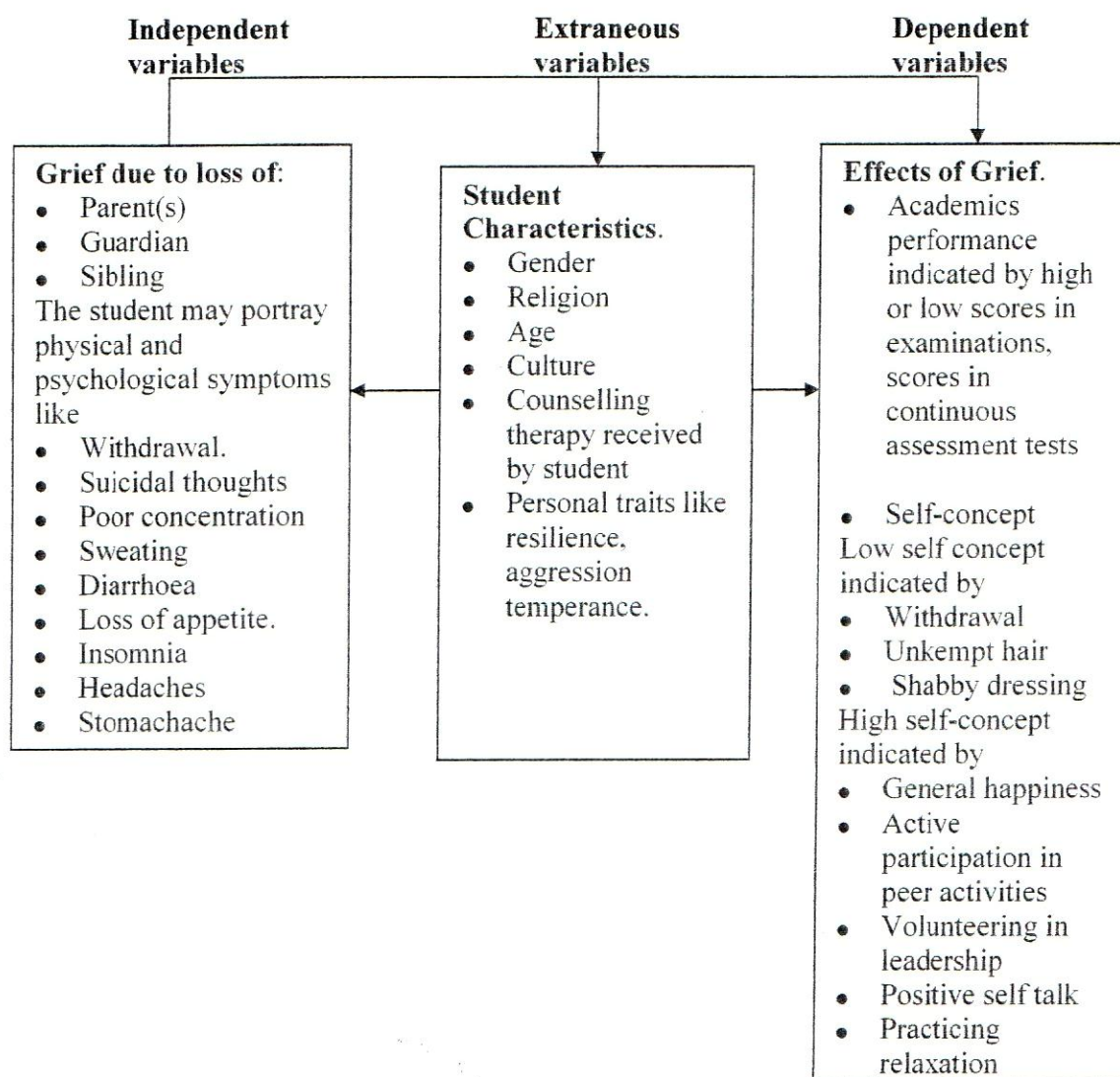


Figure 3. Relationship between grief and student's academic performance and self-concept.

Secondary school students like any other human beings may experience grief on losing a parent, guardian or sibling. During the grieving, the student may portray one or many of the physical and psychological symptoms listed above. The grief may influence a student's academic performance or self-concept or both. However, the effects may be influenced by the underlying student characteristics referred to as extraneous variables above. These were controlled by holding them constant. Grief is the independent variable while academic performance and self-concept are the dependent variables.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter deals with the methodology of the research, the research design, the location, the population and sampling procedures. It also deals with the instrumentation, data collection and data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The research design for the study was *ex post facto*. This design was found appropriate because no treatment was given to the respondents before filling the questionnaire (Kathuri & Pals, 1993). The study was aimed at looking at how the loss of a parent(s), guardians or siblings (which had already occurred) resulted to grief among secondary school students and how this influenced their academic performance and self-concepts. The results obtained from the sample were used to draw inference for all secondary schools in the country.

3.3 Location

The study was conducted within Molo division. Only students from mixed schools within the divisions were selected for the purpose of this study. The choice of the region was influenced by a number of factors, for instance characteristics of student respondents was possible to get. The location's proximity to the Great North Road has also occasioned deaths from HIV / AIDS related diseases and motor accidents leaving children orphaned. There are eight mixed secondary schools from which grieving students were selected. The researcher is also familiar with the region having worked there for over a decade.

3.4 Population of the Study

To get the population of the study, seven secondary schools were used whose target was 600 respondents, though the schools provided 672 respondents. There were 376 boys and 296 girls in the four classes of the target schools. Table 1 presents the accessible population for the study.

Table 1

Accessible population for the study

School Name	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
A	15	18	33
B	48	33	81
C	39	21	60
D	114	121	235
E	114	53	167
F	21	20	41
G	21	20	41
H	4	10	14
Totals	376	296	672

From Table 1, mixed schools were used for the study. The schools were selected purposively to provide both male and female respondents. There were objectives dealing with comparisons of grief influence on gender in academic performance and self-concept.

3.5 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The researcher used purposive sampling in selecting the student respondents in form three classes who had suffered grief. The form three students are in the formal operational stage of human development (Craig, 1996). They can think systematically about possibilities, project into the future or recall the past and reason by analogy and metaphor. Assistance was sought

by the researcher from class teachers and counsellors in identifying those students who had experienced grief. Kathuri and Pals (1993) indicated that in purposive sampling, the researcher chooses the sample that presents the necessary variables for the study. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) state that in purposive sampling, the researcher selects cases that offer indepth information and are less extreme. Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by gender in the sampled schools.

Table 2

Distribution of respondents by gender in the sampled schools

Name of the school	Gender by frequency		
	Male	Female	Total
A	3	3	06
B	11	07	18
C	07	06	13
D	30	32	62
E	22	10	32
F	03	07	10
G	11	07	18
Totals	87	72	159

From Table 2, it is illustrated that the number of identified grieved students was 159. These were 87 males and 72 females who were then requested to fill the questionnaire after a brief encounter with the researcher. The researcher visited the sampled schools, three times each. The first visit was to seek permission from the head teachers and meet teacher counsellors. Dates for the administration of the questionnaires were set in consultation with the teacher counsellors. In the second visit, the sampled respondents had a one hour encounter with the researcher. She counselled the respondents on grief, she gave a self-disclosure on her loss of her dear first born. This ensured that the respondents' ethical issues were taken care of. They

were also assured that the research aimed at assisting in adding knowledge to students on grief. Confidentiality of the research information was also guaranteed to the respondents. On the third visit, the respondents were requested to fill the questionnaire with the researcher present in the classrooms. After the exercise, the students had free counselling from the researcher.

3.6 Instrumentation

The researcher developed a questionnaire for use in collection of information from students. The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The section was on student's background and gender. It also consisted of the aspects of grief. The second section investigated the individual's self-concept. The third section dwelt on assessing the student's academic performance. All the one hundred and fifty nine students who had suffered grief responded to the questionnaire. To ensure validity of the instrument, the researcher sought the expertise of the supervisor regarding the test items included in the questionnaire. This determined the relevance in relation to the subject of grief, academic performance and self-concept.

To determine reliability of the instrument, a questionnaire was piloted on a small sample of ten respondents chosen from a school not included in the sample. The respondents were presented with the questionnaire on two different occasions in a time interval of twenty days. This method of estimating reliability is called test - retest reliability (Cloninger, 1996). A reliability coefficient on the two occasions was found to be 0.807 which was quite acceptable. Slight amendments were done by the researcher on the instrument for clarity to the respondents. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a reliability coefficient of 0.80 or more implies that there is a high degree of reliability of the data. The reliability was therefore, found to be high enough for the instrument.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

For data collection, the researcher sought permission from the Ministry of Education, through the Divisional Education Office at Molo. Once permission was granted, the researcher visited the seven sampled secondary schools within Molo division to further seek the permission from the principals and familiarize herself with the schools. Dates for the administration of the questionnaires were set. The researcher visited the sampled schools three times each. The first visit was for seeking permission from the head teachers and meeting teacher counsellors. In the second visit the sampled respondents had a one hour encounter with the researcher. She counselled the respondents on grief, she gave a self - disclosure on her loss of her dear first born. This ensured that the respondents ethical issues were taken care of. They were also assured that the research aimed at assisting in adding knowledge to studies on grief. Confidentiality of the research information was also guaranteed to the respondents. On the third visit, the respondents were requested to fill the questionnaire with the researcher present in the classrooms. Filled up questionnaires were collected after the exercise, thus ensuring non interference from non - respondents. The questionnaires were serialized to ensure none of them got lost giving a return rate of 100%. After the exercise, the students had free counselling from the researcher.

3.8 Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire was organized, coded and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 9. The SPSS is the tool recommended for data analysis in social science research. There were hypotheses to be tested. Descriptive statistics was used where there were frequencies and means while inferential statistics were used where Chi-square and Pearson correlation analysis were needed. The level of alpha used was $\alpha = 0.05$.

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CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and discussions of the research project report on grief influence on student's academic performance and self-concept in Molo division of Nakuru district. It presents the findings and discussions on the research hypothesis. An understanding of this knowledge may be useful to school administration and teachers on how to intervene in assisting grieving students. The data collected from the respondents was analyzed. All tests of significance were at $\alpha = 0.05$. The data was analyzed using computer Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows version 9. The analysis was guided by the research objectives and research hypothesis. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized in the analysis.

4.2 Distribution of Respondents by Age

The researcher found it necessary to establish the distribution of respondents by age as presented in the sampling procedure section in Table 2.

Table 3

Distribution of respondents by age

Age	Frequencies	Percent
15 – 16	29	18.2
17 – 18	116	73.0
19 – 20	14	8.8
Total	159	100.0

From Table 3, it is clear that the majority of the respondents are in the category of age bracket of seventeen and eighteen years. This was 73% of the respondents with only 18.2% being below the average age. The table therefore, suggests that the respondents generally are in the formal operational stage of human development according to Piaget (Santrock, 2000). At this stage, the student's thought process changes from childhood, he can think logically and in an abstract manner. Santrock (2000) further says that at this age, a student requires peer support. All these changes are critical in a student's life and therefore, are likely to be influenced by grief. Stearns (1992) found that resilient students have a supportive network of family, teachers and other key adults who act as backups when parents were unavailable through death.

4.3 The Influence of Grief on the Academic Performance of Secondary School Students

The first objective of the study was to establish the influence of grief on the academic performance among secondary school students. The scores of grief were categorized among the respondents as indicated in Table 4.

Table 4

Categorization of scores of grief of the respondents

Grief score		Frequency	Percent
High	(69 – 87)	28	17.6
Moderate	(48 – 68)	121	76.1
Low	(30- 47)	10	6.3
Total		159	100.0

From Table 4, the results indicated that all the respondents experienced some amount of grief when they lost a loved one. However, the grief experiences differed among the respondents.

The scores were categorized into high, moderate and low. Majority of the respondents were at the moderate level of grieving, which was 76.1 % of all respondents. However, there was a small group of respondents whose levels of grief was very low, comprising of 6.3%. This small group of respondents with low grief levels supports earlier findings by Stearns (1992) who stated that some people experience low level of grief at the time of loss. Stearns (1992) further stated that such people experience delayed grieving later in life which is hard to cure. Having established the level of grief among the respondents, it was possible to establish the influence of the same on student's academic performance. Pearson correlation was utilized to establish this influence and is indicated in Table 5.

Table 5

The Relationship between grief and academic performance of students

Grief score	Academic performance	
	Coefficient of Correlation (r)	Sig (2 tailed)
	.084 ^{ns}	.294
ns – not significant	$\alpha = 0.05$	$r = .084$ $P > 0.05$

Basing on the information in Table 5, the Pearson correlation of coefficient score of .084 is considered to be very low, (.294 > 0.05). The findings therefore indicate that though grief influences the academic performance of secondary school students it is not significant. In effect the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of grief on the academic performance of secondary school students is accepted. This supports earlier findings by Papalia and Olds (Feldman, 1997) that resilient students are able to take risks while grieving and may end up succeeding in academic performance despite the grieving situation. Both Stearns (1992) and Van Praagh (2000) found out that at the guilt stage of grief, it is possible for some students to evaluate and analyse their grief situation. They argue

that some students are able to learn new mechanism of coping with stress and by so doing they avoid suffering much. For such students, then, grief cannot influence their academic performance. The results from Table 5 may be indicative that the majority of the respondents were likely to be beyond the guilt stage of grief.

4.4 The Influence of Grief on Self-concept among Secondary School Students

Objective two of the study was to establish the influence of grief on the self-concept of secondary school students. There was need to assess the level of self-concept among the respondents before analyzing the influence of grief on the same. The scores were categorized into high, moderate, low and very low. Table 6 gives the levels of self-concept of respondents.

Table 6

Categorization of scores of self – concept of the respondents

Self concept score	Frequency	Percentage
High (70 – 89)	44	27.7
Moderate (50 – 69)	108	67.9
Low (30 – 49)	5	3.1
Very Low (< 29)	2	1.3
Total	159	100.0

The results of Table 6 indicate that majority of the respondents, 95.6% had high and moderate self-concept. Only a negligible number, 4.4 % of the total respondents had low self-concept. The results suggest that having suffered grief, the respondents had high and moderate scores of self-concept to enable them perform well academically. To assess the influence of grief on self-concept of the secondary school students, correlation analysis was done and the results are given in Table 7.

Table 7

The relationship between grief and self-concepts of secondary school students

		Self – concept	
Grief Score		Coefficient of Correlation (r)	Sig (2tailed)
		.096 ^(ns)	.229
$\alpha = 0.05$	ns – not significant	$r = .096$	$P > 0.05$

The results in Table 7 indicate that there is some correlation between grief and self-concept of secondary school students though this is not significant (.229 > 0.05), it indicates that there is no significant influence of grief on the self-concept of the secondary school students. This led to accepting the second null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of grief on the self-concept of the secondary school students. These results are in agreement with the earlier findings by Santrock (2000) who found out that, students who suffer grief can adopt multiple coping skills. Some of these skills are like engaging in problem focused coping, adapting positive self-talk, seeking social support and practising relaxation. The school environment offers social support from student peers and relaxation through physical exercises. Such skills help grieving students not suffer negative self-concept, hence the results on correlations between grief and self-concepts in this study.

In an attempt to find out why grief did not have a significant influence on the self-concepts of the respondents, the researcher sought to find out whether the students had role models among their teachers. The findings are presented in Table 8.

Table 8**Students ability to identify role models among their teachers**

Stage of establishing a role model	Frequency	Percent
Initial stage of establishing a role mode	32	20.1
Already firmly established role mode	127	79.9
Totals	159	100.0

Table 8 presents the fact that the highest percentage of students had already established role models among their teachers whether male or female or both. A student who identifies a role model from a mature person is able to wade through life struggles because he gets support and guidance (Stearns, 1992). This supports earlier findings by Stearns (1992) that role models play a crucial role in a students academic performance and self-concept. The findings also support earlier studies by Weaver and Hybels (2001) that self-concept is made up of three elements, namely reflected appraisals, social comparisons and self-perception. A student who has a role model obviously receives appraisals from him or her. In case one has low self-concept, it is likely to be improved from encouragement from the role model.

4.5 Relationship Between Gender of Grieving Students and their Academic Performance

Objective three of the study was to determine whether gender differences existed in the influence of grief on academic performance and self-concepts among secondary school students. In order to assess this difference, Chi-square analysis was done. There were categories of male and female among the respondents, while the academic performance scores were categorized into high, moderate, average and low Table 9 presents the details on academic performance.

Table 9

Relationship between gender of grieving students and their academic performance

Gender	Academic Performance				Total
	High Above 80	Moderate (60 – 69)	Average (45 – 59)	Low Below 44	
Male	43 (46)	35 (33)	8 (6)	1 (2)	87
Female	41 (38)	25 (27)	3 (5)	3 (2)	72
Total	84	60	11	4	159

n = 159

$$\chi^2_c = 3.17 \quad d.f = 3 \quad \chi^2_t = 7.814 \quad \alpha = 0.05$$

Table 9 indicates that only four respondents were performing below average, eleven were average, sixty were moderate while eighty four were high performers. The Chi-square statistics reveal that there was no gender disparity in the academic performance of students who suffered grief. This led to accepting the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of grief based on gender on the academic performance and self-concept of secondary school students. This could be attributed to the support from surviving family members like father, mother and other relatives. This support may help students maintain their academic performance, thus conceding with studies done earlier (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989). From the school, support given to grieving students by teachers and peers is necessary to help them to improve their academic performance (Stearns, 1992).

4.5.1 Relationship Between Gender of Grieving students and their Self-Concept

To assess the difference on gender in the self-concepts of students who suffer grief, Chi-square statistics was used. This was found appropriate in that there was categorization of gender into male and female while self-concept scores were categorized into four. Table 10

gives the details of the relationship between gender of grieving students and their self-concepts.

Table 10

Relationship between gender of grieving students and their self-concepts

Gender	Self – Concept Score				Total
	70 – 80	50 – 69	30 – 49	Below 29	
Male	26 (24)	57 (59)	2 (3)	2 (1)	87
Female	18 (20)	51 (49)	3 (2)	0 (1)	72
Total	44	108	5	2	159
$\chi^2_c = 3.35$ $df = 3$ $\chi^2_t = 7.814$ $\alpha = 0.05$					

The findings in Table 10 led to the conclusion that there is no gender disparity in the self-concepts of students who suffer grief this therefore led to accepting the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of grief based on gender on the academic performance and self-concept of secondary school students. Factors like positive support from their peers, teachers and surviving relatives may account for the finding. This agrees with earlier findings that peer support is especially very necessary in shaping a student's self-concept (Stearns, 1992). It is also in agreement that when a student reaches acceptance level of grieving, he or she gains new knowledge. He or she can help others who fall into grieving (Van Praagh, 2000). He can move on with life and have high self-concept (Johnson, 1998).

4.6 Comparison Between the Influence of Grief on Academic Performance and Self-Concept Among Secondary School Students

Objective four of the study, sought to determine whether there was a relationship in the influence of grief on the means of self-concept and academic performance. Analysis was therefore done to establish whether any difference existed between the students' self-concept score and academic performance score. The two sets of scores were compared using the independent samples T-test and the test statistic determined. Details of the two samples that were tested are given in Table 11.

Table 11

A comparison between the influence of grief on both academic performance and self-concept of the respondents

Self-concept	Academic performance
$n_1 = 159$	$n_2 = 159$
$\text{mean}_1 = 63.8$	$\text{mean}_2 = 77.9$
Standard deviation = 11.4	Standard deviation = 5520
Variance = 130.7	Variance = 230.4
$t_c = -9.34$	$t_{\text{critical}} = 1.96$
$\alpha = 0.05.$	

On the basis of t_c falling on the critical region, the decision was made to reject the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the influence of grief on the secondary school students academic performance and self-concept. This meant that there was a difference in the level of self-concept and academic performance among the respondents after suffering grief. The mean of self-concept (63.8) is less than that of academic performance (77.9). This means that self-concept is influenced more than academic performance by grief. This is in support of earlier studies especially on the various stages of grief. Grief influences self-concept and academic performance of students both positively and

negatively. At the guilt stage, a student's self concept is influenced negatively for instance to involve himself in self-destructive behaviour. Such behaviour would include excessive drinking, involving in an accident, proneness to risk and negligence of personal hygiene as was stated by Kubler-Ross (Feldman, 1997). Positively, at the acceptance stage of grief, a student is likely to learn new lessons in life and decide to move on, thus having the self-concept influenced positively, agreeing with earlier studies (Van Praagh, 2000).

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations from the study. The chapter also provides suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary of Findings

Based on the study's objectives, the research hypothesis and the analysis of the study in chapter four, the summary of the findings are as follows:

- (i) There is no significant influence of grief on students' academic performance.
- (ii) There is no significant influence of grief on students' self-concept in secondary schools.
- (iii) There is no significant difference based on gender in the influence of grief on secondary school student's academic performance and self-concepts.
- (iv) Grief influences student's self-concept and academic performance differently.

5.3 Conclusion

From the study, it can be concluded that grief does influence both academic performance and self-concept of secondary school students. Both gender is influenced similarly by grief but self-concept is influenced more than academic performance. Self-concept can be influenced by grief positively, thus making the student a better person when he/she gains insight at the acceptance stage. On the other hand, grief can influence a student's self-concept negatively if he fails to reach the acceptance level, or if he delays in the guilt stage due to lack of assistance either from peers or teachers. A student requires to be assisted through the grieving process to heal faster, improve his self-concept and perform highly academically.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study, several recommendations were made. The research has reported that there is some minimal influence of grief on both academic performance and self-concept of secondary school students. However minimal the influence, the finding would enable teachers, school principals and other policy makers to strategize on how to help students heal from grief, improve their self-concepts and perform highly academically.

- (i) Teachers need to be educated on grief in order to lay strategies to assist students heal from grief.
- (ii) The Ministry of Education should strategize on encouraging many teachers to acquire counselling skills to enable them to help students to heal from grief.
- (iii) Students should be encouraged to get involved in many school activities since this would help the affected to heal faster than when isolated.
- (iv) Teachers are encouraged to become proactive in preventing indiscipline cases and to be empathetic with grieving students. They could do this by interacting with students even in co-curricular activities.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The following areas have been suggested for further research.

- (i) A replication of this study should be done in a wider scope to confirm the present findings.
- (ii) A study should be done to establish when grief influences both academic performance and self-concept significantly. It would be necessary to determine at which stage of grieving both self-concept and academic performance would be influenced equally.
- (iii) There is need for a study to determine why the self-concept of students is influenced differently from the academic performance.
- (iv) There is need for a study to determine why gender is influenced similarly by grief.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Dear Respondent,

My name is Priscah M. Ndungu, a second year Guidance and Counselling masters student at Egerton University. Part of the study requirement involves writing a research project. My project is on grief and its influence upon secondary school students academic performance and self-concept. Your school has been sampled for the study and you are kindly requested to participate in answering a questionnaire. Any data collected will be treated with utmost sincerity and confidentiality. The research findings are expected to help educational stakeholders and providers to proactively facilitate the healing process for grieving students. Thank you very much for your participation.

Faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of the letters 'MP' followed by a long horizontal line.

Priscah.

APPENDIX B : STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME OF THE RESPONDENT.....

NAME OF SCHOOL

FORM.....SEX.....AGE.....

SECTION A

Please indicate whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), are uncertain (U), disagree (D) or strongly disagree (SD) with the statements below.

	S	A	U	D	SD
1. I feel fatigued very easily even before I accomplish class assignments, unlike before the loss of my father/ mother/ guardian.					
2. I am usually absent from school these days than before the loss.					
3. Schoolwork doesn't seem interesting any longer.					
4. I praise myself for any accomplishment especially in my class work.					
5. I often don't feel like working on my school work.					
6. I have committed myself to regularly discussing set books in literature with some classmates which helps me to feel useful to others and hence respect myself.					
7. I appreciate kind words said to me by friends.					
8. I cry often when I think about my late father/ mother/ guardian.					
9. The loss of my father/ mother/ guardian's/ siblings left me yearning for unfulfilled dreams.					
10. I appreciated people who told me the truth about the loss I had suffered immediately following the loss. Like... You can never fully recover from the loss.					
11. I often imagine the loss of my surviving parent and the effect it would have on me.					
12. I have often blamed my departed parent for abandoning me through death.					
13. I have often wept in the middle of an achievement as I remembered my loss.					
14. Nowadays, I can go for several months without experiencing anxiety or terrifying dreams upon my departed father/ mother/ guardian.					
15. Nowadays, I am able to maintain friendship even with classmates who discuss about my parents death.					
16. Nowadays I am able to continue my class work without frequent periods of lack of concentration.					

17. Nowadays, I take time to maintain self-care like combing my hair, proper feeding, brushing of teeth unlike the period soon following the demise of my parents.					
18. I no longer rely on my friends in decision making.					
19. I have quit the 'smokers club' which I had joined for 'support' following my parent' demise					
20. I am able to discuss about my father's / mother's / guardian's life without experiencing undue sorrow now.					
21. Nowadays I can enjoy laughter, pay more attention to life events, and enjoy conversation with friends without experiencing guilt.					
22. I recently decided to try my hand at athletics / soccer / netball / debating / drama club unlike the time I lost my father / mother / guardian months/ year ago.					
23. I've once or severally indulged in anti-social behaviour like drug taking, telling a lie or stealing in school since the loss of my father / mother / guardian.					

SECTION B

24. I am highly motivated by the desire to succeed like my late father / mother / guardian / sibling and therefore put a lot of effort in my schoolwork					
25. I dress in a shabby manner since I believe I don't matter to anybody.					
26. I often feel solace in isolation from peers and classmates					
27. I often take drugs like chang'aa and cigarettes to build confidence among my peers					
28. I feel that I value myself highly regardless of what others say or behave towards me.					
29. I can arguably support my answers in class without fear of intimidations by classmates.					
30. Since I lost my father / mother/ guardian I rarely interact with my classmates.					
31. I don't feel others are better than I am because they can do some things better than me, in and outside classroom situation.					
32. I feel I am warm and loving towards myself regardless of my limitations like having lost my parent(s) /guardian.					
33. I do not feel ashamed when positively criticized by my friends / classmates.					

34. I appreciate facing problems in life rather than blaming others for their occurrence.					
35. I often volunteer to lead and accept leadership positions in school and other areas without feeling inadequate					
36. I do not feel I must always please others even when they may be in the wrong					
37. I accept defeat positively in a healthy competition.					

SECTION C

Please answer the questions below as accurately as possible:-

38. Between academic performance and self-concept, which one was affected more by the loss you suffered? Tick the correct one.

A. Academic performance.

B. Self-concept.

39. Explain your feelings immediately on being informed about your father's/mother's/ guardian's death

.....

40. How soon were you able to go back to your school activities? State number of days
weeks..... months..... years.

41. Explain what you experienced as you tried to catch up with your class work.

.....

42. Explain how you go about your class work today.....

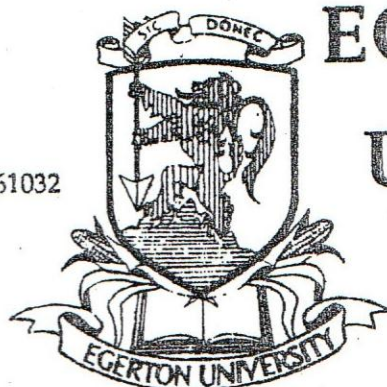
.....

43. Indicate details of your performance in grades as follows:-
- a) before the loss.....grade_____
- b) after the loss grade_____
- c) projections for the future. grade_____
44. What would you like to become after your secondary life?.....
.....
45. Indicate the three subjects mainly related to your career choice and your performance last term.
- i) grade
- ii) grade.....
- iii) grade.....
46. How do you relate with your female teachers in case you lost your mother?
.....
47. How do you relate with your male teachers in case you lost your father?
.....
48. Have you identified any teacher as your role model to assist you in your schoolwork?
.....
49. How do you feel your work has been influenced by the wishes of your late parents / guardian?
.....
50. Does your future career depend on the wishes of your late parent /guardian?
.....
51. Does your performance in many subjects keep fluctuating from high to low as you think about your late parent/guardian or sibling.....
.....
52. How often do you complete your class assignments?
- a) Always b) Often c) Never.

Telephone: Nakuru 61620, 61031, 61032

Telegrams: UNIVERSITY, Njoro

Telex: 33075



EGERTON UNIVERSITY

P.O. Box 536
Njoro, Kenya.

In reply quote Ref:

Date:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING STUDENTS' RESEARCH

The above programme is offered in our University at Master's level. In order to complete their study requirements they have to carry out a research. They are currently seeking a place to do so and have found your institution a valuable place to enhance their learning.

I wish to introduce to you PRISCILLA M. MUNGU registration number EM 16/0825/03 for your kind assistance in their study.

Please, accord them the help they may need in order to achieve this objective. While they are carrying out a research, they are familiar and bound by the ethical standards of collecting information, safeguard of the same, and using the findings pro-actively.

On behalf of the University, we wish you well and thank you for your partnership in the training of our students.

Sincerely,

CHAIRMAN
EGERTON UNI.
EDUC. PSYB COUN.
P.O. BOX 536 NJORO

DR. FR. STEPHEN MBUGUA NGARI
CHAIRMAN, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL, PSYCHOLOGY AND
COUNSELLING

For: Vice Chancellor – Egerton University

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