# BEREAVED STUDENTS' AND TEACHER-COUNSELLORS' PERCEPTIONS OF AN APPROPRIATE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT FOR BEREAVEMENT RECOVERY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MUMIAS DISTRICT, KENYA

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**EGERTON UNIVERSITY**

**MARCH, 2013**

## DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

### DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been previously presented for a degree or diploma in this or any university.

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EM20/1826/07.

### RECOMMENDATION

This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as University Supervisors.

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## DEDICATION

With love and affection to my husband Eric and my children: Elaine, Seth and Caecurius.

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## ABSTRACT

Bereavement is a state of loss of a loved one through death. It triggers a reaction called grief which has negative physical, social and emotional effects on the bereaved child. Bereaved students need an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery to help them to deal with the negative effects of grief because the surviving parent and the significant others who are supposed to help them at home may be pre-occupied with their own grieving. The bereaved students also need to continue with their schooling away from the home environment yet the grieving process may take a long time. The purpose of this study was to establish the bereaved students' and teacher-counsellors' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery among secondary school students. A descriptive survey research design was employed in this study. The target population was 17200 secondary school students out of which an accessible population of 634 students who had lost one or both parents through death was selected for the study. Also, 49 teacher-counsellors were targeted out of which a sample of 23 participated in the study. A sample size of 170 students who had lost one or both parents through death participated in the study. Purposive sampling was used to identify students who had lost one or both parents through death. The data was collected using questionnaires. The collected data was analyzed by both descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0 for windows. The descriptive statistics included means, frequencies, percentages and standard deviations whereas inferential statistics involved a t-test. All tests were done at a significant level of $\alpha = 0.05$. The findings of the research indicated that both bereaved students and teacher-counsellors positively perceived the school as an appropriate environment for bereavement recovery among secondary school students. However, the female students had a more positive perception of the bereavement recovery environment than the male students. It was recommended that teacher and peer counsellors be trained to effectively help bereaved students to overcome grief. The findings of the research are expected to benefit the Ministry of Education, parents and teacher-counsellors to help bereaved secondary school students to effectively work through grief and adjust well in the absence of the deceased parent or parents.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

**AIDS:** Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

**HIV:** Human Immune Deficiency Virus

**GOK:** Government of Kenya

**KCSE:** Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education

**SPSS:** Statistical Package for Social Sciences

**MOE:** Ministry of Education

**MOH:** Ministry of Health

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study

According to Balk (1999), bereavement is universal to mankind and is even experienced in other species of animals such as the geese, dogs, elephants and non-human primates. Bereavement which is a state of loss of important things in one's life such as a pet, a car, a house through fire and a significant other person through death triggers a reaction called grief. Grief is manifested in a set of behaviours called mourning. Talitwala (1999) suggests that grief is a universal reaction to loss that is manifested by mental pain, distress, deep violent sorrow and bitter feelings of regret for something that is lost. Similarly, in Kenya people loose valuable items such as property through fire, vehicles through road accidents and even lives of their loved ones through death among others. The desolation, restlessness and raging against loss through death shown in olden days is also familiar to us today and as a result there is no loss without pain (Peyne, Horn and Relf, 1999).

Both Weirzsbicka (2004) and Neimeyer (1998) concur that ancient stories and legends speak of the struggle the human kind has been long engaged in to come to terms with the finality of death and deal with its aftermath in individuals and the society. Bereavement is a source of physical, social and emotional disturbance and as a result various organizations have been put in place to help bereaved people work through their grief successfully (Corr, 1999). The hospice in the United States of America provides humane care to the dying and bereavement services to the survivors while in Kenya, non –governmental organizations (N.G.O), churches and professional counselling groups among others help people to deal with the negative effects of grief. The Ministry of Education (M.O.E) has established and strengthened guidance and counselling programmes in secondary schools following recommendations of education reports. These reports stressed on implementation of Guidance and counseling in schools, giving it a priority and use of peer counsellors and trained teacher-counsellors in counselling students (G.O.K, 1964; G.O.K, 1988 & G.O.K, 1999). However, as noted by Sindabi (1992) these programmes have concentrated on counselling in academics, careers and other personal life issues. The area that has not been adequately addressed by these programmes is bereavement counselling and yet

the number of orphans is on the increase in Kenya due to a high death rate of people caused by road accidents, fire outbreaks and HIV/AIDS and other related illnesses (Ndung'u, 2007; G.O.K, 2005).

Bereaved students just like adults, experience disturbing physical, social and emotional problems that need to be worked out in an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery (Madara, 1999; Talitwala, 1999). The bereaved students resume school when they are still aggrieved because the surviving parent or significant others who are supposed to help them at home are pre-occupied with their own grieving (Ndambuki & Mutie, 1999). The grieving process may also take long yet these students need to continue with schooling away from the home environment. The school is often 'cold' to the special needs of bereaved students due to ignorance of the pain that is experienced by such students. The teacher-counsellors may also have inadequate knowledge and skills on how to help the bereaved students.

The bereavement recovery environment should provide adequate social and psychological support that will ensure unconditional positive regard, communication of accurate empathy, provision of warmth, love and care towards the bereaved students and attending of funerals and memorial services of the deceased parent. The bereaved students should also be taken care of physically by provision of a balanced diet, medical care, physical fitness exercises and allowed enough sleep (Weirzbicka, 2004). However, the process and pattern of grieving vary in individuals due to circumstances of death, differences in personality, culture and anticipation of death among others (Doreen, 2000). The bereavement recovery environment should be flexible in addressing individual needs of the bereaved students. The appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery can be established and enhanced to adequately address the needs of bereaved students basing on the perceptions of teacher-counsellors as the administrators and the orphaned students as the consumers of this recovery environment in secondary schools in Mumias District.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Bereavement usually disturbs an individual socially, physically and even emotionally (Mathew, 1999; Matlin, 2004). Bereaved students need to be helped by teacher-counsellors and peers to effectively work through the negative effects of grief at school in an appropriate school environment. The surviving parent and significant others who ought to help them at home are often pre-occupied with their own grieving making the bereaved students resume school when still aggrieved. The grieving process may take long yet the bereaved students need to continue with schooling away from the home environment. Currently, some schools have put in measures through Guidance and Counselling to create a school environment for bereavement recovery but they are inadequate in helping bereaved students to effectively work through grief. There is therefore need to establish the bereaved students' and teacher-counsellors' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery in secondary schools in Mumias District.

## 1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the bereaved students' and teacher–counsellors' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery in secondary schools in Mumias District of Kenya.

## 1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

(i) To establish the bereaved students' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery in secondary schools in Mumias District.

(ii) To establish the teacher-counsellors' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery among bereaved secondary school students in Mumias District.

(iii) To determine whether differences exist in the bereaved male and female students' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery in secondary schools in Mumias District.

(iv) To determine whether differences exist in the male and female teacher-counsellors' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery among bereaved secondary school students in Mumias District.

## 1.5 Research Questions

(i) What are the bereaved students' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery in secondary schools in Mumias District?

(ii) What are the teacher-counsellors' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery among bereaved secondary school students in Mumias District?

## 1.6 Research Hypotheses

**$Ho_1$**: There is no statistically significant difference in the bereaved male and female students' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery in secondary schools in Mumias District.

**$Ho_2$**: There is no statistically significant difference between male and female teacher-counsellors' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery of bereaved secondary school students in Mumias District.

## 1.7 Significance of the Study

Bereavement is a source of social, physical and emotional disturbance yet it has not been given adequate attention in secondary schools. It may lead to poor academic performance, indiscipline and even psychological problems such as depression, isolation and suicidal thoughts when not well addressed. The findings of this study may educate secondary school administrators and the society leaders at large on the need to address the concerns of bereaved students. Once these needs are adequately addressed, the negative physical, social and emotional effects may be eliminated. The bereaved students may therefore adjust to the loss of a parent and move on well with school activities. The findings of the study may also help the M.O.E to come up with

guidelines that may help bereaved students to effectively work through grief in an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery.

## 1.8 The Scope of the Study

The study involved secondary school students who had lost either one or both parents through death in Mumias District of Western Kenya. The study confined itself to bereaved students and teacher-counsellors perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. The bereaved secondary school students were selected because they are teenagers who are at an age to understand and comprehend the concept of death. They are greatly affected by the loss of their parents.

## 1.9 The Limitations of the Study

The study on grief and bereavement was bound to negatively affect students and teacher-counsellors. The researcher gave them a briefing before and after administration of the questionnaires to take care of their ethical issue and ensure that they are not negatively affected by the information in the questionnaires. She also assured them of the confidentiality of their responses and informed them that the findings of the study were meant to contribute to knowledge on bereavement.

## 1.10 Assumptions of the Study

This study was based on the following assumptions:

(i) All parents are care givers and as a result their demise negatively affects their children.

(ii) The bereaved students and teacher- counsellors gave honest responses.

(iii) The intensity of negative effects of grief on bereaved students vary depending on the care they had given them.

### 1.11 Definition of Terms

The terms have been operationally defined as follows:

**Academic performance**: Achievement of overall term grades of a student in a school.

**Appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery**: Required conditions and treatment that is given to a bereaved student to enable him or her accept the loss through death, work out grief and adjust to life again in the absence of the deceased parent.

**Bereavement**: A state of loss of a student's parent through death.

**Bereavement recovery**: The integration of feelings about the loss of a parent by a student through death in the current circumstances and moving on well in life.

**Bereaved student**: A student who has lost one or both parents through death.

**Co-educational schools**: Schools with both boys and girls learning together.

**Death**: An irreversible end to the life of student's parent.

**Gender**: Being male or female students and the attributes associated with it.

**Grief**: A reaction to the loss of life of a student's parent through death.

**Mourning**: The social or public expression of grief that varies from one culture to another.

**Perception**: The views and opinions of students and teacher-counsellors about the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery.

**Significant others**: People who are close to the bereaved student and to whom they can turn to for social support during bereavement.

**Teacher-counsellor**: A teacher who has been assigned the duty of guiding and counselling students in a school.

# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, relevant literature on the study has been reviewed. The concept of grief and bereavement, response to grief and the grieving process that involve normal and abnormal grieving have been discussed. The factors that influence grief and the counselling interventions for bereaved students have been explained. Various theories that inform the study on death and bereavement such as the cognitive therapy, social learning theories and psychosocial transitions theories have been presented. The conceptual framework of the study has also been illustrated.

## 2.2 The Meaning of Grief and Bereavement

The society is complicated with many terminal illnesses, ethnic violence, road and fire accidents among others that have claimed the lives of many people (Nduri, 2008). Death is the ceasation of the integrative action between all organs of the body. It marks the end and the finality of a life that has ceased to be. It is described as a road on to which the 'traveller' never returns (Palmer & Macmahon, 2000). The death of a parent for an adolescent is one of the most traumatic and stressful experience of life (Matlin, 2004). This is because the child at this age has double loss that of a parent and a caregiver as well (Mathew, 1999).

The news about death of a close person is received with great shock and disbelief by the bereaved people (Balk, 1999). It is followed by grief which is the emotional reactions and certain behaviour patterns associated with bereavement that enables an individual to overcome the effects of loss (Talitwala, 1999). Furthermore, it is an instinctive and universal response to separation with the function of promoting union. It may also be experienced when people loose other things that are important to them such as a car through a road accident, a house through fire or good health through a terminal illness and even separation of people from their loved ones (Peyne, Horn and Relf,1999). Grieving involves mourning which is the social or public expression of grief that includes rituals and formalized rites (Palmer & Macmahon, 2000). This

implies that bereavement is the loss of a significant other person that triggers a reaction called grief which is manifested in a set of behaviours called mourning.

## 2.3 Response to Grief

Both Matlin (2004) and Peyne, Horn and Relf (1999) concur that grief hurts physically, socially and emotionally. Bereaved people feel as if they have lost part of themselves. In fact, loss of a loved one is the most traumatic experience that any human being can suffer. The desolation, restlessness and raging against death shown in the olden days is familiar to us today. It is therefore impossible to lose without feeling pain which is expressed through physical, cognitive and behavioural reactions (Balk, 1999).

Bereaved people experience an alarming array of physical problems in the aftermath of bereavement. They may experience fatigue (the loss of energy), insomnia (loss of sleep and changes in sleep patterns), anaeroxia (loss of appetite) or bulmia which is excessive eating habits (Corr, 1999; Talitwala, 1999). Furthermore, they may experience body aches such as headaches, back pain, muscular aches and tightness of the throat or chest (Palmer & Macmahon, 2000). Moreover, Matlin (2004) cites gastrointestinal changes such as nausea, vomiting, feeling of choking, perception of a lump in the throat or abdominal fullness; constipation or diarrhea as physical reactions to grief. More worryingly for them, they may experience similar symptoms as those of the deceased. They may also become more vulnerable to other infections (Madara, 1999). This implies that the bereavement recovery environment should enable the bereaved to access medical care to relieve their physical illnesses. They should also be given a balanced diet and their eating habits monitored so as to restore their physical health.

Talitwala (1999) suggests that there are no emotional consequences of grief except psychological distress. In fact, its absence in the bereaved among the western societies is regarded as pathological. The most common emotions experienced by the bereaved are sadness and depression characterized by loss of pleasure response and low mood. Moreover, Mathew (1999) notes that anxiety is experienced as an exhausting physical tension that gives rise to muscular aches because the bereaved people are fearful about how they will cope with the present situation. Palmer and Macmahon (2000) cite anger, hostility and guilt as common particularly if

the death is attributed to certain events or people. For example, a murder is likely to be associated with a feeling of anger towards the perpetrator. On the other hand, a suicide may leave the survivors with a feeling of guilt which may be expressed as self-blame for some aspect of the deceased's death or care during dying. Neimeyer (1998) states that the anger may be directed to the deceased for leaving them to struggle all alone in life. For example, the bereaved students may feel that they have been left to fend for themselves and their siblings at a tender age. Anger may also be directed towards an 'unfair God' for taking their loved ones away. In addition, Matlin (2000) notes that the bereaved are angered by the feeling of being cheated about a future to be shared together with the deceased. This implies that the anger felt by the bereaved stems from what they think about the deceased and the circumstances of the death. The bereaved child should therefore be offered appropriate social and psychological support into which to rechannel their emotional energy. This will help them to concentrate on their class work.

Like Palmer and Macmahon (2000), Talitwala (1999) recognizes that social expressions of bereavement include agitation or restlessness characterized by constant searching for the deceased. The bereaved may display feelings of hostility and irritability. As a result, they may engage in verbal attack of others or objects, self-mutilation and withdrawal from social contact. In addition, Balk (1999) cites crying characterized by wailing as other physical reactions. Overwhelming isolation is also experienced even when the bereaved is surrounded by others. Both Papilia (2002) and Ndambuki and Mute (1999) agree that these reactions to grief may cause disturbance leading to learning problems and failure to maintain school progress. The social and psychological support should be there for the bereaved student, actively listen to them and offer unconditional positive regard to enable them to fully express themselves (Rickey & Cristiani, 1993).

### 2.3.1 The Grieving Process

According to Madara (1999) grieving is the painful work that a person must accomplish if readjustment to normal life is to take place after loss of a loved one. It entails the expression of emotional, psychological, physical and behavioural responses experienced in early phases of bereavement in an attempt to relieve the pain that accompanies the loss of a loved person. Grieving enables the grief stricken person to come to terms with irreversible absence of the

deceased. The key goal of grief work is according to Matlin (2004) to psychologically heal the bereaved in all aspects of their experience that includes cognitive, affect, behaviours and systems of meaning. This will help the bereaved to experience a less psychologically painful existence without the deceased and assist them to have within the self an awareness of movement through grief and towards a more adaptive relationship with the deceased.

Grieving makes us human because we are vulnerable, we love and we bond whether to an idea, a perception, a way of being and the highest bonding to our loved ones. It is therefore natural to grieve and suppressing it is not natural human behaviour and it is unhealthy (Taylor 2010). Grieving as noted by Doreen (2002) involves the task of untangling oneself from the ties that bind one to the deceased, readjusting to their absence and forming new relationships. The process of grief as noted by Matlin (2004) takes long because effectively part of the self is lost when a significant death or loss is experienced. In essence the soul and the brain are in conflict because it is so difficult to relinquish the bonds, connections and the ties that are a part of our most intimate relations. The recovery environment for the bereaved should ensure effective grieving because grief has no cure but one is only helped to go through it safely. Interfering with any stage would only 'short circuit' the process leading to abnormal grieving.

### 2.3.2 Normal Grief

Both Palmer and Macmahon (2000), Doreen (2002) and Taylor (2010) concur that the grieving process varies in people due to the differences in personality, culture, circumstances of death and anticipation of death. There is neither a particular laid down pattern of grieving nor is there a right or wrong way to grieve. Although modern life cultural values may determine how we express our loss. Attig (2010) cautions that trying to hide one's feelings so as not to embarrass yourself or others is certainly not the way. There is no particular laid down pattern of grieving. The recovery environment should not be rigid but treat individual cases uniquely as they arise. However Peyne, Horn and Relf, 1999) and Talitwala (1999) argue that despite the variations in individual grieving process, grieving may follow the grief stages outlined by Rose Kubler. These stages include denial, numbness, shock, anger; bargaining, depression and acceptance. News about death is received with shock and disbelief because it implies a permanent loss of a loved person. The bereaved deny the reality of loss, its meaning, and the fact that death is irrevocable.

They long for a reunion with the deceased. They may also withdraw silently. Denial serves to protect an individual from experiencing the intensity of loss. This is followed by numbness exhibited by shortness of breath and tightness in the abdomen (Matlin, 2004; Balk, 1999). As more awareness of the loss sinks, the initial numbness gives way to overwhelming sadness expressed either by wild outbursts of screaming or silent withdrawal. The bereaved student should be helped through talk therapy and viewing of the body of the deceased to acknowledge the death and work through denial. A bereaved student may also faint out of shock and should be helped to recover through appropriate first aid measures.

Anger is a strong feeling that one experiences when something that a person feels is bad or unfair has happened (Ndungu, 2007). Once the truth through death begins to be accepted by the bereaved students, they become angry. The anger may become intense and directed towards self, other people or objects and even to the deceased person (Peyne, Horn and Relf, 1999). Anger towards self may be expressed verbally by negative comments of self-blame as a regret to have been absent during the death. The students may also show self-mutilation behaviours such as hitting themselves or tearing their own clothes in attempt to punish themselves for not being able to stop the death of a loved one. Furthermore, the bereaved may hit the corpse or its coffin, destroy his property or verbally blame the deceased for abandoning them as expression of anger towards the deceased (Weirzbicka, 2004).

Talitwala (1999) regards expression of anger as a normal occurrence during grieving because it eases the pain felt by the bereaved individual. More so, Weirzbicka (2004) notes that unresolved anger can lead to illness and attempts to destroy one's own life through suicide. However misdirected anger may lead to alienation of the bereaved student hampering social support that is crucial to the recovery process. The social support should provide a conducive environment of unconditional positive regard and communicate accurate empathy to enable them fully express their anger. They should be helped to direct their anger to the actual cause of the death to avoid alienation. The peers should be helped through training to understand that expression of anger by the bereaved students is not aimed at hurting them. This will help them to accommodate angry students following the loss of a parent without making them feel that their actions are abnormal. As the reality of loss begins to sink, they bargain with God to seek or negotiate a compromise.

Individuals may ruminate over what could have been done to prevent loss. This can provide insight into the impact of loss that may result into feelings of remorse or guilt that may hinder the healing process. For example, they may ask God to reverse the situation and in return they will always attend church services or be good to other people (Peyne, Horn & Relf, 1999). However, Weirzbicka (2004) argues out that bargaining rarely provides a sustainable solution to death because it is irrevocable. This implies that while it is normal and helpful to bargain with God after death of a parent, the bereaved student should be helped to bargain for things that are possible and achievable. For example, a bereaved student may be encouraged to bargain for his or her own good health and the ability to do well academically so that he or she can be able to take care of his or her siblings in future.

Weirzbicka (2004) further notes that when bargaining seems not to work and re-union with the deceased is impossible, the bereaved sinks into depression. They experience overwhelming feelings of sadness accompanied by self-blame. Corr (1999) and Talitwala (1999) note that the bereaved students may blame themselves for not being present during the death, not being able to stop the death or for a stormy relationship they had with the deceased. They therefore feel guilty which is the irrational blame on self for loss in which one feels as if he or she could have done something to prevent the demise. A bereaved guilty student is likely to engage in self-destructive behaviours such as excessive drinking, accident proneness and carelessness towards personal hygiene (Weirzbicka, 2004). This implies that the self-destructive tendencies may harm the student, hamper the healing process and should be worked out in an enhanced appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery.

The appropriate social support may help the bereaved students to understand that death is natural and that at some stage in our lives, we all face the loss of someone or something we greatly care about. In almost every case, there is absolutely nothing we can do to prevent the loss or change the circumstances under which it occurs. Inevitably then, we all must deal with the fact that no matter how devastated we may feel due to the loss, the world around us will go on as if nothing has changed (Clements, 2008). They should appreciate that they would not have done much to stop the death. They should be encouraged to work out through their unfinished business with the deceased and make an effort to move on in life. Symptoms of depression such as diarrhea and

constipation should be given medical attention. A special and balanced diet such as a meal a student likes should be given to provide the energy needed for grieving. This will ensure good health and prevent resultant health problems thereby enhancing the recovery process.

Peyne, Horn and Relf (1999) recognize that once bereaved students overcome depression they accept the loss by acknowledging the situation as it is. They start viewing life, people and situations in a new way and accept their new identities, for example from being a son or a daughter to an orphan due loss of both parents. Acceptance involves developing new skills in order to manage new experiences. They withdraw the emotional energy from the deceased and re-invest it into new relationships (Weirzbicka, 2004). Taylor (2010) observes that one of the great fears of the bereaved is that over time they might forget all about their loved one and that if they don't think about them every day they are in some way betraying their memory. However, Fenn (2010) challenges the bereaved to understand that their memory of the deceased does depend on remembering them or saving of as many of their things as possible. We carry with us their influence, beliefs and values. They live on in our thoughts and activities and ultimately give us permission to live the rest of our lives knowing that their life made a real and indelible difference to ours. However, Corr (1999) notes that they do not have to give up on the deceased but find an appropriate place for him or her in their emotional lives.

According to Kanga (2002) and Steve (1999), the rechanneling of the energy from deceased should be done in such a way that the memories of the deceased bring fond feelings mixed with sadness rather than sharp pain and longing for the deceased. The bereaved therefore misses the deceased but clearly understands that life must go on even in the absence of the deceased. Through social support, the bereaved should be helped to realize the changes that have occurred and appreciate that life may never be the same again after the death of a parent. For example they may now be under the care of a guardian and they have to adjust accordingly. The enormous energy that was put in a loving and trusting relationship with the deceased parent should now be redirected into establishing a new relationship with the guardian, peers and other family members. The bereaved should therefore be challenged to work hard and make maximum use of the available learning opportunities in order to be self-dependent in future.

### 2.3.3 Abnormal Grief

According to Neimeyer (1999) and Doreen (2002) abnormal grief is also referred to as pathological or complicated grief. It is characterized by exaggerations or deviation from normal grief that is mainly manifested through absent, delayed or chronic grief. It arises from the circumstances of death or the nature of the relationship with the deceased person. As noted by Palmer and Macmahon (2000) absence of grief is sparked by persistent denial and disbelief of the reality of loss through death. It is a normal defense mechanism to protect an individual from intense effect of the strong news about death. However, it is pathological when it persists because it hampers grieving and the setting on of the process of grieving. This implies that the bereaved in persistent denial should be challenged to accept the reality of loss through death and ponder on its implications to their lives in a recovery environment.

According to Steve (1999) the bereaved should be taken to view the body of the deceased and challenged through talk therapy to acknowledge the fact that a parent has died. This will help to spark on the anger that is necessary for grieving. Peyne, Horn and Relf (1999) observed that delayed grief is characterized by either absent or distorted grief. There may be a little sense of loss of a loved one and ambivalent syndromes in absent grief. On the other hand, distorted grief is indicated by over activity following death of a loved one such as social withdrawal, physical illness or clinical depression. For example, the bereaved students may be busy working or studying for long hours during early stages of bereavement. This means that such a student may begin to grieve much later when people least expect and as a result they may not receive enough social support .The recovery environment should therefore help set the stage for grieving by challenging the bereaved to acknowledge the loss through death in good time.

Both Talitwala (1999) and Weirzbicka (2004) concur that chronic grief is manifested by exaggerated and persistent grief that is experienced following death in a highly dependent relationship. The stages of normal grief such as denial, anger, bargaining, and depression persist without ever reaching acceptance of the reality of loss. Talitwala (1999) indicates that the bereaved may become fixated in certain stages. For example, students who are fixated at anger stage continuously blame themselves for the death of a parent. As a result, they may neglect themselves by refusing to eat, bath and clean their clothes. Through social support such students

should be made to understand that death is natural and is beyond any one's control including themselves. They should be encouraged by the teacher - counsellors to direct their anger to the actual cause of death and avoid punishing themselves as this would only intensify the pain they are already experiencing. Bereaved students may therefore undergo either normal or abnormal grief as illustrated in figure 1.

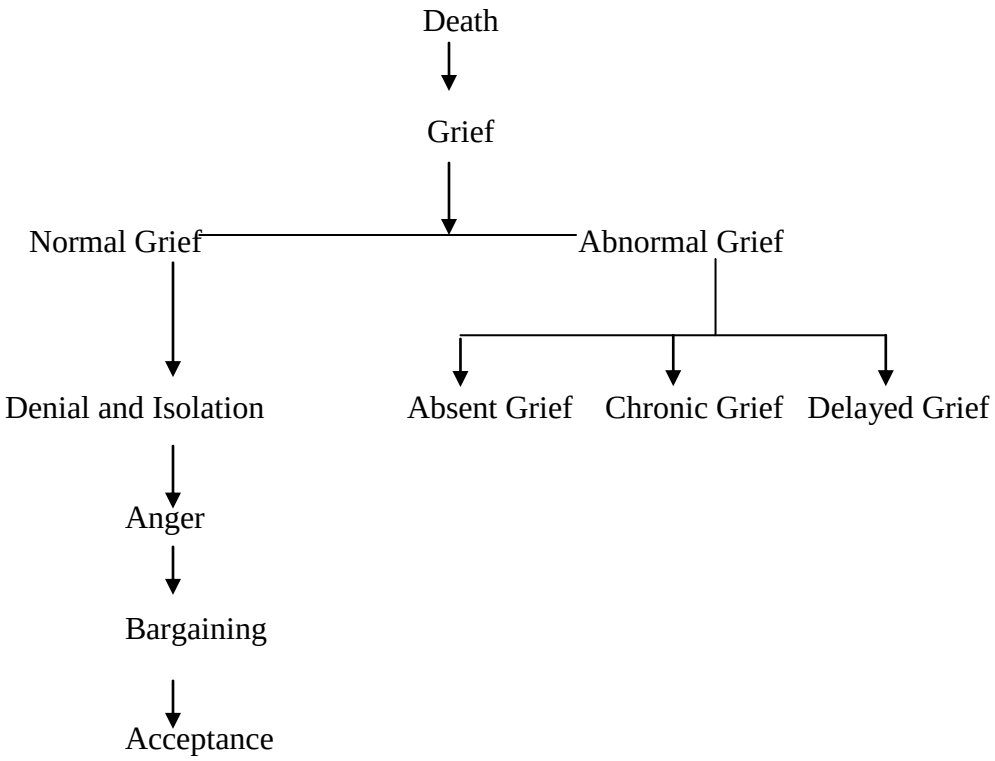


Fig 1. The grieving process. Adapted from Peyne, Horn and Relf (1999) p 77

## 2.4 Factors that Influence Grief

As stated earlier by Palmer and Macmahon (2000) there is no laid down pattern of grieving that is followed by all the bereaved people. The pattern and duration of grief vary in individuals due to the differences in personality, circumstances of death, nature of relationship with the deceased, culture, gender, religious and spiritual beliefs and culture. Like Palmer and Macmahon (2000), Balk (1999) notes that personality and coping styles affect grief. A normally resilient person who gets over setbacks in daily life easily is likely to recover from grief more easily than one

who is vulnerable even to minor challenges. The teacher-counselor should therefore understand the personality of the students. This will help him or her be prepared to go an extra mile in assisting a student who usually has difficulties in getting over problems in life.

As noted by Balk (1999), circumstances of death such as unanticipated death that is sudden through heart attack, an accident or an act of violence may be more difficult than grief felt when a loved one dies after a long illness. During a long illness, anticipatory grief is experienced long before death making the bereaved to recover faster from bereavement. This is because anticipatory death prepares them for the actual loss by withdrawing emotionally from the person who is about to die. However, Doreen (2002) notes that the normal process of grief still occur even after anticipatory grief but the bereaved person recovers faster. This implies that students whose parents have died suddenly are more likely to have difficulties in grieving than those whose parents have died after a long illness. The teacher-counsellor should therefore know the nature of a parent's death in order to help the bereaved student appropriately.

The nature of the relationship between the bereaved and the deceased person affects the grieving process. People who had a warm and loving relationship are more likely to recover from the effect of loss of a loved one through death faster and more easily than those who had a "stormy" relationship (Weirzbicka, 2004). People who experienced parental rejection are anxious and insecure. They show frequent and urgent attachment behaviours such as clinging on even when the situation does not warrant them. They lost confidence in the availability of the attachment figure when they needed it and strive to maintain close proximity. As a result, they are likely to experience chronic grief (Doreen, 2002). This explains why people are affected by the death of a person they are no longer close to. For example, the deaths of a parent with whom children are separated for many years through a difficult divorce are unlikely to recover from the loss. Furthermore, Doreen (2002) notes that people who had a compulsive self-reliant relationship due to a disabled parent who needed their care may find it difficult to accept love and care from others. The teacher-counselor should therefore maintain a data bank of students' background information to be able to provide an appropriate environment for recovery. Students who experience grief for the first time face it with anxiety and fear of the future without the deceased unlike those who have been bereaved before (Madara, 1999). The bereaved should therefore be

assisted to integrate their experiences with the deceased into their current and future plans in order to recover fully.

According to Peyne, Horn and Relf (1999) men and women often experience grief differently because they are differently socialized and so the expression in some cultures that "men do not cry". Men are therefore less likely to reach out for help and talk out to others freely to express their grief. They are more likely to take action rather that express grief. For example bereaved boys are likely to turn to destructive and avoidant behaviour such as alcoholism and drug abuse. On the other hand, girls are more likely to express their grief and receive social help from others. This implies that bereaved girls are more likely to recover faster than boys. The helping environment should therefore give appropriate help to both boys and girls. However, Madara (1999) notes that like girls, boys should also be encouraged to express their emotions and seek for help from support groups and take action to return to routines that are helpful.

Weirzbicka (2004) and Talitwala (1999) concur that virtually all religions provide guidance and meaning for the experience of death for both the dying person and the bereaved. They offer explanations for which people may use to give meaning to death. Religion also guides behaviour regarding death and mourning. More so, it functions as community social support by providing companionship, practical help and supporting self-esteem via shared values and beliefs. However, Peyne, Horn and Relf (1999) cautions that no assumptions should be made that those who label themselves as belonging to a specific religion will necessarily subscribe to all its beliefs and practices because people vary in their degree of orthodoxy. In addition Corr, (1999) notes that bereaved people may feel let down or angry at their religion if it does not provide anticipated help or support. This implies that the teacher-counselors need to understand the religious background of their students in order to offer appropriate help basing on their beliefs about death or make appropriate referral. This should be cautiously done because it can lead to loss of faith in their God or religion and nullify the meaning of life they have known all along. For example basing on Christian and Muslim faith, the bereaved could be made to look forward to a reunion with the deceased because there is life after death. They can therefore be encouraged to live a righteous life like avoiding suicide so that they can go to heaven when they die and meet the deceased parent. However, Talitwala (1999) cautions that a bereaved student should not be

told that God has taken the parent away. The child may view God as being unfair to take away their caregiver for them to remain alone and suffer. The bereaved students may as a result loose trust in their faith and God. The teacher-counsellors should therefore be able to make appropriate referrals of bereaved students to religious leaders whenever need arises.

Mourning rituals vary from one culture to another. Each culture has its own norms and rituals that function to enable a bereaved student to go on functioning well in spite of the loss that has occurred. In some cases it will involve efforts to return to the status quo before the loss such as instant remarriages at the graveside to provide the missing parent to the bereaved student. In other cases it may be necessary to incorporate a permanent change in some aspect of life. (Peyne Horn & Relf, 1999). The teacher-counsellor should have an understanding of the bereaved students' culture to balance the group needs of the society and that of the individual student in helping the recover from grief.

## 2.5 Grief Counselling and Therapy

Grief counseling involves helping people to facilitate uncomplicated or normal grief to a healthy completion of tasks of grieving within a reasonable time frame. It is necessary when a person is so disabled by grief, overwhelmed by the loss to the extent that normal coping processes are disabled or shut down. In fact, it facilitates the expression and thought about the loss including sadness, anxiety, anger, loneliness, guilt, relief, isolation, confusion or numbness thereby facilitating the process of resolution in the natural reaction to loss. On the other hand, grief therapy is a psychotherapy used to treat severe or complicated traumatic grief reactions usually brought about by loss of a close person. It utilizes specialized techniques to help people with abnormal or complicated grief reactions to resolve the conflicts of separation (Balk, 1999). Its goal as noted by Clements (2008) is to identify and solve the psychological and emotional problems that appear due to grief. They may be manifested through bodily or behavioural symptoms outside psychiatrically defined normality. However, Jarrett (2008) notes that grief therapy offered during normal grieving may turn it pathological. It is most appropriate for people who suffer from usually prolonged or complicated responses to bereavement.

Corr (1999) compares grief to an "illness" to which intervention provides a "cure" by helping people to work through their grief. Counselling the bereaved entails helping them to go through the painful process of grieving and subsequently adjusting to life in the absence of the deceased person. The guiding principle should be the wish of an individual and the pace that is set should be one that they are able to cope with (Mathew, 1999). Palmer and Macmahon (2000) caution that the counsellor should never assume that he or she knows all that the bereaved person needs. They should be guided by the belief in the dignity and worth of an individual in which people have a right to their own opinion and thoughts and are in control of their destiny. This implies that bereaved students should be helped to work through their grief basing on their individual differences. The steps and the pace of recovery should not be dictated to the individual.

Weirzbicka (2004) recognizes that social and psychological support enables an individual to talk about their situation and thereby review and relearn inner assumptions about the world. By providing suppor, helpers may become agents of change and "midwives" at the "birth "of new identities. According to Peyne, Horn and Relf (1999) bereavement will only be stressful if the bereaved student's coping resources are inadequate. This is because the aim of support is to compensate for deficits in social support and bolster the individuals' resources in order to avoid risks associated with bereavement (Kanga, 2002). This implies that the recovery environment at school should provide social support that will actively listen and be there for the bereaved to help them deal with their emotional feelings. This is because bereaved students feel isolated and lonely. They may find it easier to freely share their feelings with peers who have been through the same experience than their close relatives at home.

The social and psychological support provided should identify with the bereaved students and communicate their concern and empathy to help them cultivate trust that will set a stage for the recovery process. The teacher-counsellor should act as a fellow traveler with the bereaved student rather than a consultant, sharing the uncertainties of the journey. He or she should walk alongside rather than leading the grieving individual along an unpredictable road towards a new adaptation (Neimeyer, 1998). This will help them to open up and talk out their inner feelings of bereavement that need to be expressed and acknowledged in a place of honour and safety .The feelings of loss as noted by Fenn (2010) the bereaved can express their feelings of grief through

writing, video filming, collage of the person's life, reading about grief, painting or drawing and life imprint (examining how we are like the deceased) among others. Furthermore, Scrutto (1999) notes that bereaved students are happy when their teachers and peers identify with them by attending a parent's funeral and sending condolence cards. However, Mathew (1999) cautions that the social support given should not hurt the client more. It is therefore necessary that peers and the teacher counsellors should know the background of the bereaved to avoid incidences of encouraging them to lean on the surviving parent who may as well be deceased.

According to Clements (2008) and Corr (1999) death and grief are the least understood and talked about parts of our existence. In fact, Taylor (2010) points out that we often forget or choose not to think about the fact that death is part of our life cycle and it comes to us all. When we lose a loved one through death, many of us are not prepared for the total devastation that death can cause emotionally. Fenn (2010) further notes that children too are rarely prepared for the death of a parent yet studies reveal that mourning is aided by foreknowledge of the imminence and inevitability of death. They should also be included in the grieving process. Children who are forewarned have lower levels of anxiety even among children of the same family. The helping environment at school should infuse pre-counselling programmes on death and bereavement in their general counselling programmes. This will help students to acknowledge the inevitability of death and its consequences so that they are less affected when the death of their loved ones occur. Bereaved students need social and psychological support to work out grief in an appropriate recovery environment as shown in figure 1.2.

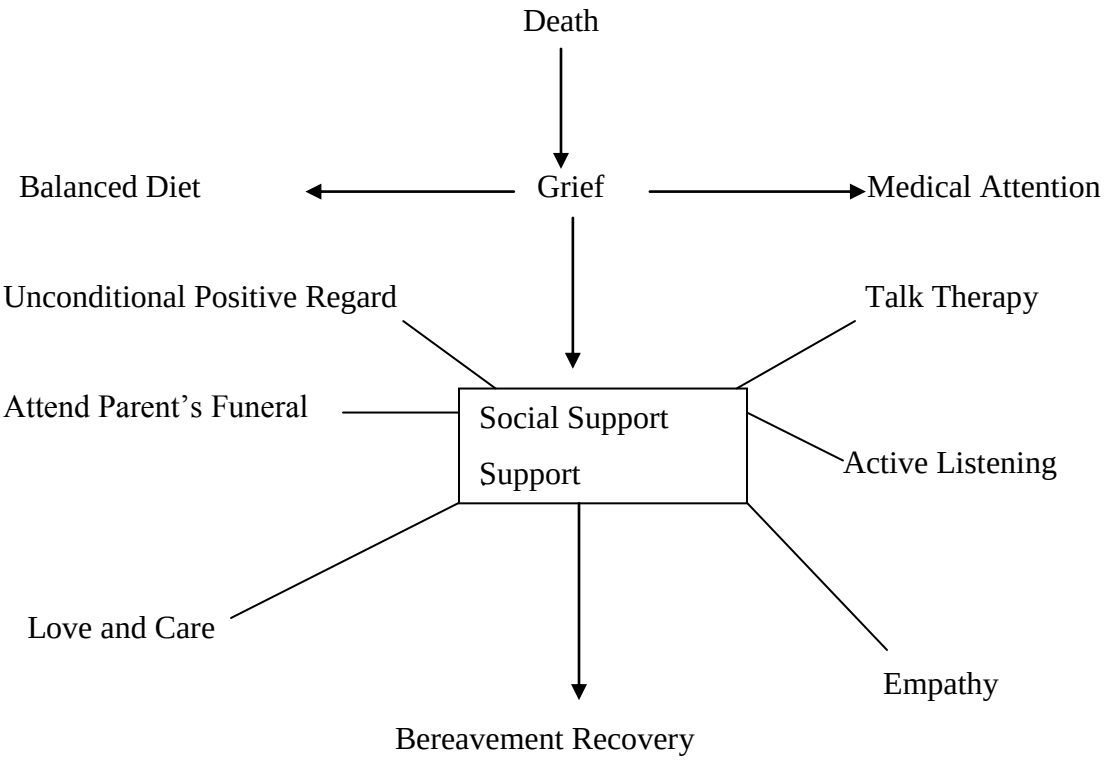


Fig.2 Counselling interventions for the bereaved students. Author: Researcher.

## 2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study will be informed by the following theories:

(i)The cognitive theory

(ii) Social learning theories

(iii) Psychosocial theories

### 2.6.1 Cognitive Theory

George Kelly in his cognitive therapy bases on the idea that psychological problems result from processes such as faulty learning, making incorrect inferences on the basis of inadequate information and basing behaviour on unrealistic attitudes (Smith, 1993). This theory can be used by the teacher-counsellor to change the perception of bereaved students about the circumstances of the death of their parent and its implications on their lives by focusing on negative and

unrealistic ways of thinking. For instance, bereaved students who blame themselves for not being with their parent at the time of death should be challenged to realize that death is inevitable and their presence could not have stopped its occurrence. They should also be made to understand that they have a life to live beyond the death of their parent. However, Rickey and Cristiani (1993) caution that the teacher-counsellor should act as a guide and be empathic to the bereaved student s to think as they do and to see the world as they see it while remaining objective and logical about the students' thinking and situation. This will encourage bereaved students to trust their teacher-counsellors and open up their feelings to them in order to change their unrealistic perceptions as a key step towards bereavement recovery.

### 2.6.2 Social Learning Theories

Smith (1993) notes that the social learning theory put forward by Bandura is concerned with how social relationships, learning mechanisms and cognitive processes jointly contribute to behaviour. Learning experiences affect people through thought processes. Both Rickey and Cristiani (1993) and Smith (1993) concur that the theory employs a technique of social modeling in which clients are helped to modify their behaviour towards that of an observed model. It is used to help clients to learn new behaviour, strengthen or weaken existing one. This theory can be used to change unacceptable behaviour of bereaved students that stems from unrealistic perceptions of death through an enhanced school environment for bereavement recovery with appropriate role models. For example, bereaved students who may think that the death of their parent(s) is the end of life can be shown other orphans in the school that have fully recovered from grief and are moving on well with their life. This will help them to be realistic in their perception of the loss that has occurred and positively perceive the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery in order to ensure faster and effective recovery from bereavement.

### 2.6.3 Psychosocial Transitions Theory

Collin Murray Pearks in his theory of psychosocial transitions proposed that grieving is a period of identity transition in which roles, relationships and cognitive schemata are renegotiated because of the changes that have occurred (Talitwala, 1999). He further notes that bereavement

brings about the pain of change and the challenges of readjusting one's taken for granted ways of living. This theory challenges bereaved students to perceive and accept that a change has occurred and strategize to incorporate this change in their new lives. The teacher-counsellor should help bereaved students to develop new identity that is appropriate to new circumstances. For instance, a child who has been identified as a daughter or a son becomes an orphan upon loss of both parents. They should be encouraged to accept this new identity and move on well in life. In addition, they may recreate the deceased's identity in their personality or leisure pursuits. For example, a student may be encouraged to study hard in Sciences and Mathematics in order to pursue medicine and become a doctor like his deceased father. This ensures successful grieving through development of a new identity that integrates the deceased in the life story of the survivor (Weirsbicka, 2004; Doreen, 2002).

## 2.7 Conceptual framework

From the theoretical framework and the variables under study, the research has been conceptualized as shown in figure 3.

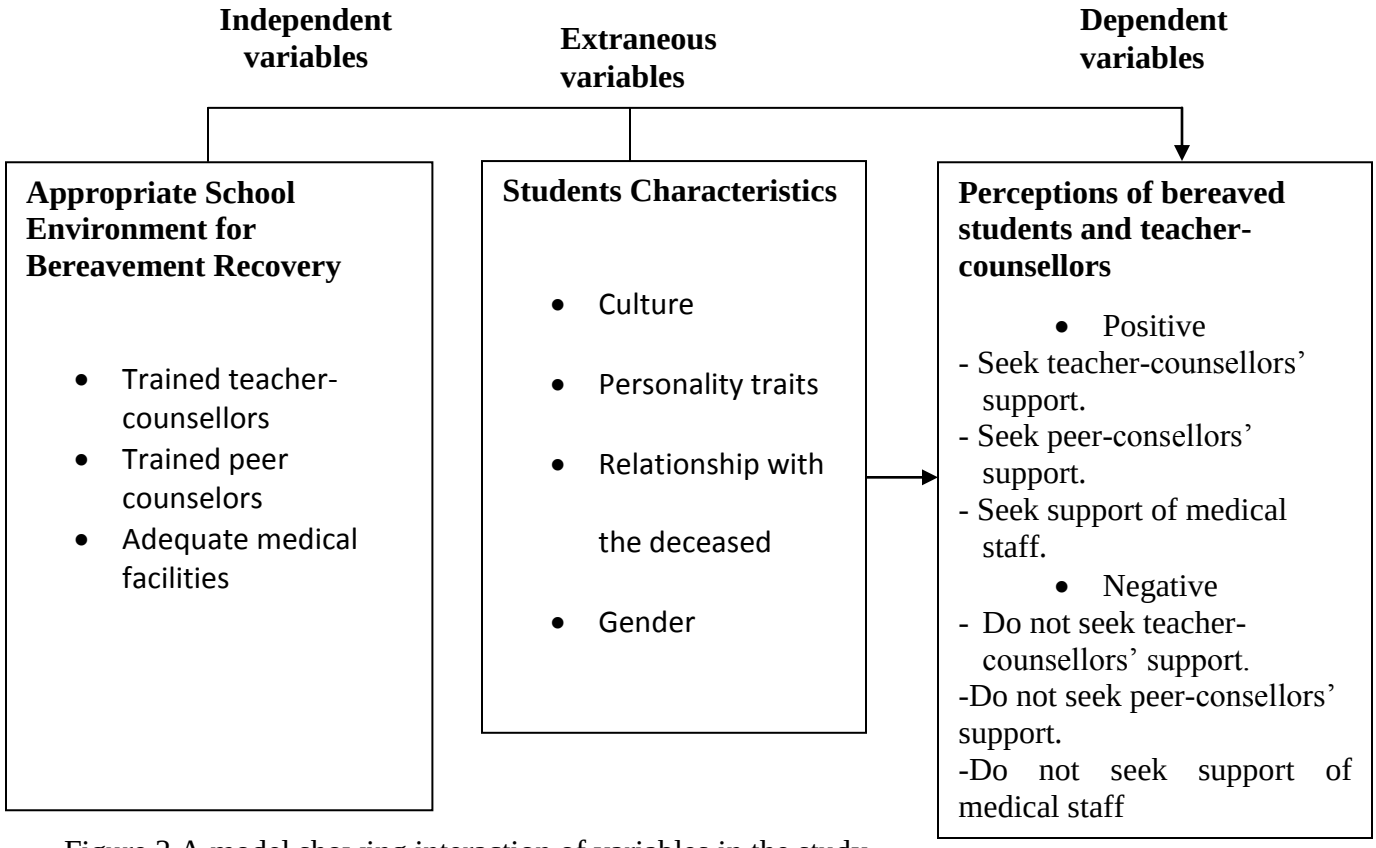


Figure 3.A model showing interaction of variables in the study

In the conceptual framework illustrated in figure 3, the independent variable is the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery while the dependent variables are the perceptions of bereaved students and teacher-counsellors of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. The way the components of the appropriate school environment are put in place and function may affect the perceptions of bereaved students and teacher-counsellors either positively or negatively. Students with positive perceptions may seek help while those with negative perceptions may not seek help from the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery in order to work through grief. Positive perceptions of the teacher-counsellors of the appropriate school environment for bereavement may encourage them to assist bereaved students to overcome the negative effects of grief. Teacher-counsellors with negative perceptions may not effectively help bereaved students to recover from grief. The extraneous variables which are the students characteristics may also influence the students and teacher-counsellors' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery either positively or negatively. The perceptions of students and teacher-counsellors of the bereavement recovery environment at school may be helpful in establishing an appropriate one that can help the bereaved students to effectively overcome the negative effects of grief.

# CHAPTER THREE

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents research design, location of study, population of study, sampling procedures and sample, instrumentation, data collection procedures and data analysis.

## 3.2 Research Design

A descriptive survey research design was employed in this study. The purpose of descriptive survey is to explore and describe characteristics, attitudes, behaviour and values of a population as they exist at the time of the study (Borg & Gall, 1996; Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). It was useful in obtaining evidence about the existing conditions in order to come up with standards with which the present situation was compared for the purpose of drawing guidelines that can help bereaved students to overcome grief. This design is relevant because the purpose of this study was to establish the bereaved students' and teacher-counsellors' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery among secondary school students in Mumias District.

## 3.3 Location of the Study

The study was carried out in Mumias District of Kenya. Mumias like any other part of this country has experienced death of many people of which some are parents of secondary school students through road accidents, excessive alcohol consumption, HIV/AIDS and other related illnesses. It provided adequate sample of orphans for the study yet there are no adequate measures put in place in the secondary schools to help bereaved students to effectively overcome the negative effects of grief. The findings of the study may also be used to make a generalization of the entire population of orphans in Kenya because the District has one of the leading sugar cane milling factory that has attracted employees from different ethnic groups across the country. The District was also convenient to the researcher due to its proximity.

## 3.4 Population of the Study

The study comprised of a target population of 17200 secondary school students in Mumias District. An accessible population of 634 students who had lost one or both parents through death participated in the study. Secondary school students were selected for the study because they are of an age to understand and comprehend the concept of death. They are greatly affected by it because they not only loose a parent but a caregiver as well (Matlin, 2004). Besides the students' population, the study also involved an accessible population of 49 teacher-counsellors from the 49 secondary schools in Mumias District.

## 3.5 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

Purposive sampling was used to identify bereaved students who had lost one or both parents in secondary schools in Mumias District. The researcher obtained a list of secondary schools and the number of orphans in them from the office of DEO. A formula provided by Kathuri and Pals (1993) was used to arrive at sample size of 23 schools that participated in the study. A simple random sampling was done to select them. Stratified random sampling was done to get 14 co-educational schools, 6 boy schools and 3 girl schools maintaining a ratio of 6:5:3 respectively. The number of bereaved students identified through purposive sampling was further stratified into males and females to attain a ratio of 1:3 for girls and boys (42 girls and 128 boys) as a desired representation of the various sub- groups in the population (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003; Orodho, 2004). The sample size of bereaved students who had lost one or both parents through death was 170. This was done using a formula given by Kathuri and Pals (1993) that is used to estimate the sample size of a known population. Besides the students sample size, one teacher-counsellor from each of the 23 selected schools participated in the study giving a sample size of 23 teacher-counsellors.

**Table 1: Sample size of students**

| Type of school | Number of Schools | Sample size of bereaved Students | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Percentage (%) | Number |
| Boy schools | 6 | 26 | 44 |
| Girl schools | 3 | 13 | 22 |
| Co- educational schools | 14 | 61 | 104 |
| **Total** | **23** | **100** | **170** |

### 3.6 Instrumentation

The researcher developed two sets of questionnaires for use in collection of data from the respondents. The two questionnaires were code-named the bereaved Students' Questionnaire (BSQ) and the Teacher-Counsellors Questionnaire (TCQ). The BSQ was used to collect data on students' perceptions whereas the TCQ was used to collect data on the teacher-counsellors' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery among secondary school students respectively. Each of the two sets of questionnaires consisted of three sections that addressed background information that gave the students' details and a 5-point Likert scale of closed items to assess the bereaved students' and teacher-counsellors' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery among secondary school students. The open ended items captured the details that were not addressed by the closed ended items.

#### 3.6.1 Validity

To establish validity of the research instrument, the researcher came up with questions in close examination of the study by clearly scrutinizing its objectives. The instrument was also validated by carrying out a pilot study on respondents who were not part of the study. The expertise of supervisors and researchers were sought regarding the test items included in the questionnaires in order to determine their relevance in relation to bereaved students' and teacher-counsellors' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery among secondary school students. They also assessed the objectives measured by the instruments to ensure that the items were accurately represented (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

### 3.6.2 Reliability

Reliability of the research instruments was determined by piloting the questionnaires on 1% of the total sample size of the respondents chosen from a school that was not included in the sample of the study (Orodho, 2004). Necessary adjustments were done on the questionnaire to ensure that it is relevant in collecting the required data. The student's responses were scored and then treated using Kuder-Richardson (K-R 21) formula that requires a single administration of the instrument. It is also good at determining internal consistency of the responses. A reliability coefficient of 0.798 was obtained indicating that the instrument was reliable in collecting the required data. This is because a reliability coefficient of 0.7 indicates a high reliability of the instrument in collecting the required data for the study (Kathuri & Pals, 1993).

## 3.7 Data Collection Procedures

Permission to collect data from respondents was obtained from the National Council of Science and Technology and the principals of the selected schools. The researcher visited the selected schools and administered the questionnaires to the respondents with the help of a teacher – counsellor who did not participate in study. The researcher gave a briefing to the respondents before administering the questionnaire to take care of their ethical issues. She also assured them of the confidentiality of their responses and informed them that the study was aimed at contributing knowledge to grief and bereavement. The researcher then administered the questionnaire to students. The questionnaires were collected immediately upon completion to ensure a high return rate and avoid interference by non- respondents. The respondents were then given a briefing on grief to ensure that they could not be negatively affected by information in the questionnaires. The researcher then administered the teacher – counsellors' questionnaire to the teacher – counsellors in their office and collected it immediately upon completion to ensure a high return rate.

## 3.8 Data Analysis

The study collected quantitative data. The data was organized, coded and analyzed by both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics was used to summarize and organize raw data using means, frequencies, percentages and standard deviations (Mugenda & Mugenda,

1999). Inferential statistics that involved a t-test was used to establish whether differences existed among groups of respondents such as the bereaved male and female students and teacher-counsellors. The level of alpha was $\alpha = 0.05$. A Statistical package for social sciences (S.P.S.S) version 17.0 was used to analyze data. The closed ended questions were analyzed using the Likert scale while the open ended ones were analyzed by establishing a trend in the responses (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003; Kathuri & Pals, 1993).

# CHAPTER FOUR

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and discussions of the study on bereaved students' and Teacher-counsellors' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery among secondary school students in Mumias District of Kenya. The data collected was analyzed by both descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0. The findings were supposed to achieve the following objectives:

(i) To establish the bereaved students' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery in secondary schools in Mumias District.

(ii) To establish the teacher-counsellors' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery among bereaved secondary school students in Mumias District.

(iii) To determine whether differences exist in the bereaved male and female students' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery in secondary schools in Mumias District.

(iv) To determine whether differences exist in the male and female teacher-counsellors' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery among bereaved secondary school students in Mumias District.

## 4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Bereaved Students

The demographic characteristics are useful in understanding the respondents in the study. These characteristics include age of students, period of bereavement, nature of parent's death and caregiver at post bereavement period.

**Table 2: Distribution of Bereaved Students by Age**

| Age category | Frequency (f) | Percentge (% ) |
|---|---|---|
| Below 15 years | 34 | 20.0 |
| 15 to 18 years | 115 | 67.6 |
| Above 19 years | 21 | 12.4 |
| **Total** | **170** | **100.0** |

The distributions revealed that 67.6 % of the respondents are of an average age of between 15 and 18 years while those below 15 years constitute 20 % of the sampled students. Most of the students who have lost one or both parents are teenagers between 15 and 18 years of age. The study involved students at a very critical age of teenage hood. Neimeyer (2000) and Francis (2010) note that teenagers may respond to loss of a parent through death by delinquency or they may become over-achievers. They do things repetitively in order to stay above grief. They therefore need enough social and psychological support to prevent long term psychological harm.

**Table 3: Distribution of Bereaved Students by period of Bereavement**

| Duration of Orphan hood | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Below 3 months | 15 | 8.8 |
| 4-9 months | 26 | 15.3 |
| Above 1 year | 129 | 75.9 |
| **Total** | **170** | **100.0** |

As shown by Table 3, majority of the respondents (75.9 %) were bereaved for more than 1 year from the time of the study. Less than 10 % were bereaved in less than 3 months from the date of study while very few had been bereaved for less than three months. Njenga (2010) indicated that the acute phase of grief lasts for about two months while milder symptoms may last for a year and over. The teacher-counsellors should pay closer attention to students who are bereaved for

less than three months and at the same time watch out for milder symptoms of bereavement much later.

**Table 4: Nature of Parents' Death**

| Nature of parent's death | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Short illness | 86 | 50.6 |
| Long illness | 84 | 49.4 |
| **Total** | **170** | **100.0** |

The information in Table 4 indicated that death of the students' parents either occurred after short illness or as a result of a long illness with an almost 50-50 distribution. The findings concur with Corr (1999) that death is eminent and inevitable. Furthermore, Clements (2008) notes that at some stage in life, we all face the loss of someone that we care about greatly. In almost every case, there is absolutely nothing we can do. It will occur either suddenly or after a long illness. The teacher-counsellors should be well equipped to deal with both groups of bereaved students whose parents either died suddenly or after a long illness. This is because Francis (2010) and Neimeyer (2000) note that students whose parent(s) died after a long illness are likely to recover from grief faster because they would have suffered anticipatory grief and withdrawn emotionally from them. The death of their parent could also have come as a relief from the pain of the illness.

**Table 5: Distribution of Bereaved Students by Care Giver**

| Care Giver | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Relative | 63 | 37.0 |
| NGO | 18 | 10.6 |
| Surviving Parent | 89 | 52.4 |
| **Total** | **170** | **100.0** |

The distributions in Table 5 revealed that in the case of partial bereavement the surving parent became the sole care giver to the respondents. However, 37 % of respondents were being taken care of by relatives while slightly over 10 % were under the guardianship of NGOs.The findings

concur with Njenga (2010) that most of the partially orphaned students lean on the surviving parent for love, care and continued financial support. They will therefore have less severe reaction to the death of their parent. Jarrett (2008) also encourages bereaved students to lean on friends and family members who care about them even if they take pride in being strong and self sufficient. They should draw loved ones as close as possible rather than avoiding them.They should communicate to them what they need and accept the assistance they have to offer. The teacher-counsellor should liase with the care giver of the bereaved students in order to help them recover effectively.

### 4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Teacher-counsellors

The demographic information is important in understanding the teacher-counsellors and guiding the findigs of the study. It includes gender, age, parental status and professional status of the teacher-counsellors.

**Table 6: Distribution of Teacher-counsellors by Gender**

| Gender | frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 9 | 39.0 |
| Female | 14 | 61.0 |
| **Total** | **23** | **100.0** |

Most of the teacher-counsellors (61.0 %) were female while a few (39.0 %) were male.This was in agreement with Peyne, Horn and Relf (1999) who noted that men and women are differently socialized. This is because women believe in companionship to support feelings and meet intimacy needs. They find support in groups. Men grieve on the inside and their work is more cognitive. They appreciate time alone to think it through. Furthermore, Attig (2000) notes that women are encouraged to focuss on affiliation, connectedness and intimacy while men are taught to be less self-disclosing, less expressive and less interdependent. Men unlike women are therefore less likely to reach out and talk freely to the bereaved students in attempt to help them deal with the negative effects of grief. However, Clements (2008) cautions that some individuals choose not to talk about their feelings yet they do feel. The event for some may be beyond

expression or words but it is felt deeply. This must not be misconstrued as 'cold' or unfeeling. Fenn (2010) also notes that gender may contribute to a particular style of grieving due to socialization rather than gender itself.

**Table 7: Distribution of Teacher-counsellors by Age**

| Age Category | Frequency(f) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Below 30 years | 2 | 09.0 |
| Between 30-45 years | 12 | 52.0 |
| Above 45 years | 9 | 39.0 |
| **Total** | **23** | **100.0** |

The results in Table 7 indicate that majorities (52.0 %) of the teacher-counsellors are aged between 30 and 45 years while a few (39.0 %) are above 45years and very few (9.0%) are below 30 years of age. This indicates that the teacher-counsellors are energetic and have acquired enough experience with which they can use to help the bereaved students deal with grief.

Table 8: **Distribution of Teacher-counsellors by Parental Status**

| Parenthood Category | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Both parents alive | 15 | 65.0 |
| Both parents dead | 3 | 13.0 |
| One parent alive | 5 | 22.0 |
| **Total** | **23** | **100.0** |

Table 8 indicates that among the teacher –counsellors there are those who have experienced grief as a result of loss of their parent(s) just like the bereaved students. They can draw from their own experiences of bereavement in order to help bereaved students to overcome grief. The successful teacher-counsellors who are also orphaned can act as role models to the bereaved students. Furthermore, Attig (2000) notes that sharing of the experiences of grief with others who have been through similar experiences can be more helpful. This can help cultivate the trust of

bereaved students in their teacher-counsellor as it will make them understand that they are not the only ones who have felt the way they feel. On the other hand, Clement (2008) and Jarrett (2008) challenge the bereaved to recognize the uniqueness of each individual because what works for one person is important but may not work for the other. Grief cannot be experienced in the same way by everyone. The stages of grief are experienced differently and the bereaved undergo each stage differently. One may move back and forth between the stages of grief before realizing a more peaceful acceptance of death. The bereaved students are also encouraged by Jarrett (2008) to seek social and psychological support from other people such as friends, family and even the untrained teacher-counsellors. Talking to other people that they trust may help to ease the burden of grief and facilitate healing.

**Table 9: Distribution of Teacher-counsellors by Training status**

| **Training Status** | **Frequency (f)** | **Percentage (%)** |
|---|---|---|
| Trained Teacher-counsellors | 4 | 17.0 |
| Non- trained Teacher-counsellors | 19 | 83.0 |
| **Total** | **23** | **100.0** |

Table 9 reveals that a majority of the teacher-counsellors in secondary schools in Mumias District are untrained. There is need to train teacher-counsellors because both Clements (2008) and Taylor (2010) note that bereaved students can be effectively helped by a trained teacher-counsellor who are equipped with proper skills and techniques of counseling. Fenn (2010) also observes that the untrained teacher-consellors may be as helpless as the bereaved students in dealing with grief. They may do it in a way that does not make sense to the bereaved students because of lack information on bereavement counselling. However, Jarrett (2008) encourages the bereaved to lean on other people that they can trust like friends and family members for social and psychological support. Talking to people that they trust about their loss makes the burden of grief easier to carry and connecting to others helps them to heal.

## 4.4 Perception of Bereaved students on the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery

The first objective sought to establish the perception of bereaved students on the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. They were asked to respond to a set of 14 statements. The responses were organized into a five-point likert scale rated strongly agree to strongly disagree. A high score indicated positive perception on the bereavement recovery environment while low scores indicated negative perception. The findings in Table 11 gave mean scores and the corresponding standard deviation of each item in the questionnaire. The average mean and standard deviation were also indicated.

**Table 10: Means and Standard deviations on Bereavd Students' Perceptions of Appropriate School Environment for Bereavement Recovery**

| Perception of bereavement recovery environment | Score | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Mean** | **Std. Dev.** |
| 1. Talking about the death of my parent with peers was an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 2.7118 | 1.30288 |
| 2. Love and care at school is an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 4.9765 | 0.15203 |
| 3. Attending of my parent's funeral by my peers and teachers was an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 4.9765 | 0.15203 |
| 4. Medical care at school when my parent died served as an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 2.7118 | 1.30288 |
| 5. Availability of a teacher-counsellor during the first few days of bereavement was an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 4.9353 | 0.26965 |
| 6. A teacher-counsellor who helped me without judging me based on my behaviour during bereavement provided an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 4.8706 | 0.33665 |
| 7. A teacher-counsellor who understands my background served as an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 4.1765 | 0.98721 |
| 8. An empathic teacher-counsellor enhanced my trust in him providing an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 4.2353 | 0.77912 |
| 9. A teacher-counsellor who has experienced bereavement is the best counsellor in an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 4.4824 | 0.50116 |
| 10. Pre-bereavement counselling provided an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery because it facilitated my recovery from grief. | 1.9706 | 0.90643 |
| 11. Physical exercise during bereavement served as an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 5.0000 | 0.00000 |
| 12. A balanced diet facilitated my recovery from grief serving as an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 5.0000 | 0.00000 |
| 13. A private office for counselling during bereavement provided an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 5.0000 | 0.00000 |
| 14. Trained peer-counsellors were more helpful during bereavement serving as an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery | 4.9525 | 0.21239 |
| **Average mean score and standard deviation** | **4.2849** | **0.47635** |

The findings in Table 10 indicate that the average mean was 4.2849 with the lowest and highest means being 1.9706 and 5.0000 respectively out of a maximum 0f 5 points for every item. The

average mean of 4.2849 out of a maximum of 5.0000 was positively skewed. This implies that most of the students had a positive perception of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. The standard deviation was ranged between 0.0000 and 1.29014 with an average of 0.47635. This shows that the spread around the mean did not reflect wide variations in the bereaved students' responses and thus they had similar perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. The findings agree with Matlin (2004) that bereaved students need social and psychological support at school because the grieving process takes long and as a result they resume school while still in grief. The surviving parent and other relatives are usually pre-occupied with their own grieving and may not give them enough social and psychological support at home. Furthermore, friends and family members may be too close to be objective about their grief. A trained teacher-counsellor may be more useful to the bereaved student in the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery (Clements, 2008). However, both Attig (2000) and Jarrett (2008) encourage bereaved students to draw friends and family members close to them instead of avoiding them. They should communicate to them what they need and be ready to accept what they are offered in an attempt to help them recover from bereavement

## 4.5 Perceptions of teacher –counsellors' on the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery

The second objective sought to establish the perception of teacher-counsellors on the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery of bereaved students. They were asked to respond to a set of 14 statements based on a five-point Likert scale with the rating ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. High scores indicated positive perception while lower scores indicated negative perception of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery of the bereaved students. The findings were presented in Table 12 in form of mean score and the corresponding standard deviation. The average mean score and standard deviation were also indicated.

**Table 11: Means and Standard Deviations of the Teacher-counsellors' Perceptions of the Appropriate School Environment for Bereavement Recovery**

| Perception of bereavement recovery environment | Score | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Mean** | **Standard deviation** |
| 1. Talking about the death of deceased parent by bereaved students provides an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery | 4.7826 | 0.42174 |
| 2. Bereaved students need love and care in an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 4.6522 | 0.71406 |
| 3. Attending of funerals of students' deceased parents facilitates their recover. | 1.1304 | 0.34435 |
| 4. Medical care for bereaved students is necessary for an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 5.0000 | 0.0000 |
| 5. Bereaved students need a teacher-counsellor most during the first few days of bereavement in a school environment for bereavement | 54.7391 | 0.44898 |
| 6. Helping bereaved students without judging them based on their behaviour during bereavement facilitates their recovery. | 4.8261 | 0.38755 |
| 7. An understanding of the background of bereaved students by the counsellor contributes to bereavement recovery. | 4.1739 | 0.38755 |
| 8. An empathic teacher-counsellor enhances the trust of bereaved students in him serving as an appropriate school environment for bereavement | 5.0000 | 0.0000 |
| 9. A teacher-counsellor who has experienced bereavement is the best counsellor in an appropriate school environment for bereavement | 4.8261 | 0.38755 |
| 10. Pre-bereavement counseling provides an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 5.0000 | 0.00000 |
| 11. Physical exercises during bereavement served as an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 4.8261 | 0.38755 |
| 12. Training of teacher-counsellors will enhance their performance in helping bereaved students in an appropriate school environment for Bereavement recovery. | 2.7391 | 0.91539 |
| 13. There is need to have and train peer-counsellors for them to be more effective in helping bereaved students in an appropriate school Environment for bereavement recovery. | 1.3043 | 0.47047 |
| 14. Provision of a balanced diet helps to replenish body reserves of bereaved students as part of the school environment for recovery. | 5.0000 | 0.00000 |
| **Average mean and standard deviation** | **4.1553** | **0.34751** |

The findings in Table 11 show that lowest mean was 2.8727 and the highest was 5.0000 with an average mean of 4.5338 out of a maximum of 5 points in each item. This implies that like the orphaned students the teacher-counsellors too had a positive perception of the appropriate school

environment for bereavement recovery. The average standard deviation ranged from 0.0000 to 1.03051 indicated that the spread around the mean did not reflect wide variations in the teachers-counsellors' responses. This implied that they had similar perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. The findings concur with Peyne, Horn and Relf (1999) that bereavement will only be less stressful to students whose coping ability is adequate. The bereaved students therefore need social and psychological support in an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery because the grieving process may take long yet they need to continue with schooling away from the home environment (Matlin, 2004). Trained teacher-counsellors at school may be more useful to the bereaved students (Clements, 2008).

## 4.6 Gender Difference in Bereaved Students' Perceptions of the Appropriate School Environment for Bereavement Recovery.

The third objective aimed at determining whether differences existed in the bereaved male and female students' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. A comparison of the mean score of male and female students' perception for each of the 14 statements on appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery was carried out using an independent samples t-test whose findings are shown in Table 12.

**Table 12: Itemized Bereaved Students' Gender Difference in Perceptions of the Appropriate School Environment for Bereavement Recovery**

| On Perception of bereavement recovery environment | Score | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Female** | **Male** |
| 1. Talking about the death of my parent with peers was an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 2.978 | 2.608 |
| 2. Love and care at school is an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 4.956 | 4.984 |
| 3. Attending of my parent's funeral by my peers and teachers was an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 4.956 | 4.984 |
| 4. Medical care at school when my parent died served as an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 2.978 | 2.608 |
| 5. Availability of a teacher-counsellor during the first few days of bereavement was an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 5.000 | 4.912 |
| 6. A teacher-counsellor who helped me without judging me based on my behaviour during bereavement provided an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 5.000 | 4.824 |
| 7. A teacher-counsellor who understands my background served as an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 4.844 | 3.936 |
| 8. An empathic teacher-counsellor enhanced my trust in him providing an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 4.489 | 4.144 |
| 9. A teacher-counsellor who has experienced bereavement is the best counsellor in an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 4.356 | 4.528 |
| 10. Pre-bereavement counselling provided an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery because it facilitated my recovery from grief. | 1.689 | 2.072 |
| 11. Physical exercise during bereavement served as an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 5.000 | 5.000 |
| 12. A balanced diet facilitated my recovery from grief serving as an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 5.000 | 5.000 |
| 13. A private office for counselling during bereavement provided an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 5.000 | 5.000 |
| 14. Trained peer-counsellors were more helpful during bereavement serving as an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery | 4.978 | 4.944 |

To test the Null Hypothesis 1, which stated that there was no statistically significant difference in the male and female orphaned students' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery among secondary school students in Mumias District, an Independent sample t-test was conducted using the perception index as the dependent variable. The bereaved

students' perception index was computed by summing up the scores of the 14 statements posed to bereaved students. The findings of the analysis were presented in Table 13.

**Table 13: Independent Samples t-test for Gender Difference in Perception**

| Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t-value | df | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male Student | 125 | 59.5440 | 3.1354 | 3.101 | 168 | 0.002* |
| Female Student | 45 | 61.2667 | 3.3602 | | | |

*Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$.

As shown in Table 14, there was a statistically significant difference in perception between male and female students (t-value = 3.101, p-value = 0.002) since the p-value is less than the acceptable significant level of alpha = 0.05. Bereaved female students have a more positive perception of the bereavement recovery environment they were exposed to as compared to their male counterparts. This concurs with Peyne, Horn and Ref (1999) that men experience grief differently from women because of the way they were socialized. Women are encouraged to focus on affiliation, connectedness, and intimacy while men are taught to be less self-disclosing, less expressive and less interdependent (Clements, 2008). Attig (2000) also notes that women talk about their feelings of grief freely but men are stoic and appear to lack feelings. Furthermore, women easily seek companionship to support feelings and meet intimacy needs while men grieve on the inside and their work is more cognitive. They appreciate time alone to think through issues. Men do not therefore easily reach out for help like the women. The boys are therefore less likely to embrace the school environment for bereavement recovery provided for them as compared to the girls.

On the contrary, Clements (2008) observes that some individuals choose not to talk about their feelings yet they do feel. The event to some may be beyond expression or words but it is felt deeply. This must not be misconstrued as 'cold' or unfeeling. He further notes that gender may contribute to a particular style of grieving due to socialization and not gender itself. All in all, Madara (1999) encourages boys to also express their emotions of grief and seek for help from support groups and take action to return to routines that are helpful in their recovery from bereavement.

## 4.7 Gender difference in teacher-counsellors' perceptions of the appropriate environment for bereavement recovery

The fourth objective purposed to determine whether differences existed in the male and female teacher-counsellors' perception of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. A comparison of the mean score of male and female teacher-counsellors perception for each of the 14 statements on appropriate environment for bereavement recovery for students was carried out using an independent samples t-test whose findings are shown in Table 14.

**Table 14: Gender Difference in Teacher-counsellors' Perception**

| Perception of bereavement recovery environment | Score | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Male** | **Female** |
| 1. Talking about the death of deceased parent by bereaved students provides an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery | 4.6667 | 4.8571 |
| 2. Bereaved students need love and care in an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 4.2222 | 4.9286 |
| 3. Attending of funerals of students' deceased parents facilitates their recovery providing an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 1.3333 | 1.0000 |
| 4. Medical care for bereaved students is necessary for an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 5.0000 | 5.0000 |
| 5. Bereaved students need a teacher-counsellor most during the first few days of bereavement in an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 4.5556 | 4.8571 |
| 6. Helping bereaved students without judging them based on their behaviour during bereavement provides an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 4.8889 | 47857 |
| 7. An understanding of the background of bereaved students by the counsellor contributes to an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery | 4.3333 | 4.0714 |
| 8. An empathic teacher-counsellor enhances the trust of bereaved students in him serving as an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery | 5.0000 | 5.0000 |
| 9. A teacher-counsellor who has experienced bereavement is the best counsellor in an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 4.7778 | 4.8571 |
| 10. Pre-bereavement counseling provides an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 5.0000 | 5.0000 |
| 11. Physical exercises during bereavement served as an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 3.1111 | 2.5000 |
| 12. Training of teacher-counsellors will enhance their performance in helping bereaved students in an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 5.0000 | 5.0000 |
| 13. There is need to have and train peer-counsellors for them to be more effective in helping bereaved students in an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 1.4444 | 1.2143 |
| 14. Provision of a balanced diet helps to replenish body reserves of bereaved students as part of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | 5.0000 | 5.0000 |

Findings in Table 14 indicate that there was significant difference in the mean score of perception between male and female teachers on six items of the 14 statements. Consequently the gender difference in the mean score of 11 statements was not statistically significant while mean scores of six statements were similar for male and female respondents.

To test the second null hypothesis, which stated that there was no statistically significant difference between male and female teacher-counsellors' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery among secondary school students in Mumias District, independent-samples t-test was carried out using perception index as a dependent variable. The index was computed by summing the scores of the 14 statements. The index ranged from a possible minimum of 23 and a possible maximum score of 115. The findings of the independent samples t-test are presented in Table 15.

**Table 15: Independent Samples t-test for Gender Difference in Perception**

| Teacher's Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t- value | Df | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male Teacher | 9 | 58.333 | 1.0000 | 0.587 | 21 | 0.564* |
| Female Teacher | 14 | 58.0714 | 1.071 | | | |

*Not significant at $\alpha = 0.05$.

Findings presented in Table 15 show that the gender difference in mean perception of appropriateness of the school environment for bereavement recovery of students is not statistically significant. This is because the p-value of 0.564 is more than the significant level of acceptable alpha = 0.05. Therefore, male and female teacher-counsellors have similar positive perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery of bereaved students. The findings concur with Weirzbicka (2004) that bereaved students need an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. In fact, Ndambuki and Mutie (1999) note that the school is supposed to quickly adapt to the ever growing complexities of the society and prepare bereaved students for the challenges that face them due to bereavement in an appropriate environment for bereavement recovery. This will enable them to talk about their feelings of grief

and thereby review and relearn inner assumptions about grief. They may find it easier to freely share their feelings with peers at school who have been through the same experience than their close relatives. Furthermore, both Rickey and Cristiani (1993) and Smith (1993) note that bereaved students can employ social modeling concept in which they can modify behaviour towards that of an observed model. They can learn to change their unacceptable behaviour that stems from unrealistic perceptions of death in an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. The students need social and psychological support in an appropriate environment for bereavement recovery because the grieving process takes a longer time and yet the bereaved students need to resume schooling away from the home environment (Matlin, 2004).

On the contrary, the findings disagree with Peyne, Horn and Relf (1999) who note that men and women have different perceptions of the bereavement recovery environment because of the way they were socialized. Clements (2008) notes that women largely focus on connections and interdependence; they explore emotions while men's language focus on independence and self-reliance with the external world as priority for maintaining control. Men unlike women may not appreciate the school environment for bereavement recovery because they are less likely to reach out and help bereaved students talk about their feelings and express grief.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the major research findings, conclusions arrived at from the findings and recommendations drawn from the conclusions.

## 5.2 Summary of Research Findings

Based on the objectives, hypotheses and analysis of the study, the following major findings were established:

(i) Both bereaved students and teacher-counsellors had a positive perception of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery among secondary school students in Mumias District.

(ii) The bereaved female students had a more positive perception of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery among secondary school students in Mumias District as compared to the bereaved male students.

(iii) There was a statistically significant difference in the orphaned male and female students' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery among secondary school students in Mumias District.

(vi) There was no statistically significant difference in the male and female teacher-counsellors' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery among secondary school students in Mumias District.

## 5.2 Conclusion

The following conclusions have been arrived at basing on the analysis of data presented in chapter four:

(i) Both the bereaved students and teacher-counsellors had positive perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. As a result the bereaved students may embrace and seek the help of the school recovery environment in order to

effectively recover from grief. The teacher-counsellors may also be encouraged to adequately assist bereaved students to overcome grief.

(ii) The female students had a more positive perception of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery than their male counterparts. This implies that the bereaved female students are more likely to recover faster from bereavement than the bereaved male students.

(iii) Both the male and female teacher-counsellors had similar positive perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery because it is essential in helping bereaved students to grieve more effectively. This is because the surviving parent and the significant others who ought to help them at home are usually pre-occupied with their own grieving. Bereaved students also resume school when still in grief because the grieving process takes long.

## 5.3 Recommendations

The findings of the study reveal that bereaved female students have a more positive perception of the appropriate environment for bereavement recovery at school than the male students. Both the bereaved male and female teacher-counsellors have positive perceptions of the appropriate environment for bereavement recovery. The findings of the study would enable the Ministry of Education, parents and teacher-counsellors to help bereaved students to effectively work through grief and adjust well in the absence of their deceased parents.

(i). There is need to train teacher-counsellors in order to equip them with knowledge and skills needed to help bereaved students to overcome the negative effects of grief.

(ii). Peer counselors should be identified and trained to effectively help the bereaved students overcome grief.

(iii). A private office should be established for counseling bereaved students at school.

(iv) Teacher-counsellors should carry out pre-bereavement counseling to help bereaved students recover faster from grief.

## 5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The following areas have been suggested for further research.

(i). The study should be replicated on a wider scope to confirm the findings.

(iii). There is need to investigate the appropriate recovery environment for students who have lost only a father, a mother or both parents.

(iii). A study should be carried out to establish the mode of selection of teacher- counsellors and their effectiveness in the guidance and counselling of students in secondary schools.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: INTRODUCTION LETTER

Dear Respondent,

I am Margaret O. Andanje, a second year student taking a course in Master of Arts degree in Guidance and Counseling at Egerton University. I am carrying out a study to investigate into the Bereaved students' and teacher-counsellors' perceptions of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. Your school has been sampled for the study and you are kindly requested to participate in answering a questionnaire. The data that will be collected will be handled in confidence. The research findings if adopted will help the stakeholders to come up with guidelines to assist bereaved students to work through their grief and recover effectively.

Thank you very much for giving your time in answering this questionnaire.

Yours Faithfully,

Margaret.

## APPENDIX B: RESEARCH PERMIT

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THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

Prof./ Dr./ Mr./ Mrs./ Miss.....MARGARET OCHANGO ANDANJE.....

of (Address) ....EGERTON UNIVERSITY P.O. BOX 536, EGERTON.....

has been permitted to conduct research in .....

..... Location,

MUMIAS .....District,

WESTERN ..... Province,

on the topic.....Students' & Teacher-Counsellors' perceptions of an appropriate environment for bereavement recovery Secondary School Students in Mumias District, Kenya.....

for a period ending.....31st October, 20..11...

PAGE 3

Research Permit No....NCST/RRI/12/1/SS/945

Date of issue..11/11/2010.....

Fee received ....SHS 1,000.....

.....
*Applicant's Signature*

.....
*Secretary National Council for Science and Technology*

APPENDIX C: BEREAVED STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

**SECTION 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Kindly give your honest opinion by putting a tick in the boxes below.

1. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

2. Age: Below 15 years ☐ 15-18 years ☐ Above 19 years ☐

3. Are you a total orphan? Yes ☐ No ☐

If no which of your parent passed away? Mother ☐ Father ☐

4. Approximately how long have you been orphaned?

Below 3 months ☐ 4 -9 months ☐ Above one year ☐

5. Who is your current caregiver?

Surviving parent ☐ Relative ☐ NGO ☐

Any other? Please specify……

6. What caused the death of your parent?

A short illness ☐ A long illness ☐

Any other? Please specify.

**SECTION II**

Please indicate whether you strongly agree (A), are undecided (U), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD) with the following statements by putting a tick in the appropriate box:

| | **SA** | **A** | **U** | **D** | **SD** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **On Perception of bereavement recovery environment** | **5** | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |
| 1. Talking about the death of my parent with peers was an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| 2. Love and care at school is an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| 3. Attending of my parent's funeral by my peers and teachers was an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| 4. Medical care at school when my parent died served as an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| 5. Availability of a teacher-counsellor during the first few days of bereavement was an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| 6. A teacher-counsellor who helped me without judging me based on my behaviour during bereavement provided an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| 7. A teacher-counsellor who understands my background served as an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| 8. An empathic teacher-counsellor enhanced my trust in him providing an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| 9. A teacher-counsellor who has experienced bereavement is the best counselor in an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| 10. Pre-bereavement counselling provided an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery because it facilitated my recovery from grief. | | | | | |
| 11. Physical exercise during bereavement served as an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| 12. A balanced diet facilitated my recovery from grief serving as an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| 13. A private office for counselling during bereavement provided an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| 14. Trained peer-counsellors were more helpful during bereavement serving as an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |

**SECTION III**

Kindly answer the following questions as accurately as possible by putting a tick in the appropriate box:

1. (a) Do you feel that you recovered from bereavement following the death of your parent fully and can go on fairly well in life?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(b) i. If yes, how long did it take you to recover from bereavement?

Less than 3 months ☐

Between 3 and 6 months ☐

Over 6 months ☐

Never recovered at all ☐

ii. What facilitated your recovery?

Appropriate social and psychological support at home ☐

Appropriate social and psychological support at school ☐

iii. If no, what hindered your recovery?

Inadequate social support at home ☐

Inadequate social support at school ☐

2. What do you think should have been done at school to facilitate your recovery by:

(a) Your peers

(b) Your teachers

(c) Any other person

3. How has the death of your parent affected you:

(a) Positively?

(b) Negatively?

Thank you.

## APPENDIX C: TEACHER-COUNSELLORS' QUESTIONNARE

### SECTION I: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please give your honest opinion in answering the following questions by putting a tick in the appropriate box:

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

Age: Below 30 ☐ Between 30 - 45 ☐ Above 45 ☐

Number of parents alive: Both ☐ One ☐

Are you a trained counsellor? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, up to which level? Certificate ☐ Diploma ☐ Degree ☐

Please indicate whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), undecided (U) or strongly disagree (SD) with the following statements by putting a tick in the appropriate box:

| | **SA** | **A** | **U** | **D** | **SD** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **On perception of appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery** | **5** | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |
| | **SA** | **A** | **U** | **D** | **SD** |
| 1.Talking about the death of deceased parent by bereaved students provides an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery | | | | | |
| 2.Bereaved students need love and care in an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| 3.Attending of funerals of students' deceased parents facilitates their recovery providing an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| 4.Medical care for bereaved students is necessary for an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| 5.Bereaved students need a teacher-counsellor most during the first few days of bereavement in an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| 6.Helping bereaved students without judging them based on their behaviour during bereavement provides an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| 7.An understanding of the background of bereaved students by the counsellor contributes to an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery | | | | | |
| 8.An empathic teacher-counsellor enhances the trust of bereaved students in him serving as an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery | | | | | |
| 9.A teacher-counsellor who has experienced bereavement is the best counsellor in an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| 10.Pre-bereavement counselling provides an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| Physical exercises during bereavement served as an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| 11.Training of teacher-counsellors will enhance their performance in helping bereaved students in an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| 12There is need to have and train peer-counsellors for them to be more effective in helping bereaved students in an appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |
| 13.Provision of a balanced diet helps to replenish body reserves of bereaved students as part of the appropriate school environment for bereavement recovery. | | | | | |

Kindly answer the following questions by giving your honest opinion:

(a) Do all bereaved students adjust to life in the absence of the deceased parent?

Yes ☐

No ☐

(b) If yes, what facilitates their recovery?

Adequate social and psychological support at school ☐

Adequate social and psychological support at home ☐

Competent teacher-counsellors ☐

Competent peer-counsellors ☐

(b) If no, what hinders their recovery?

Inadequate social and psychological support at school ☐

Inadequate social and psychological support at home ☐

Incompetent teacher- counsellors ☐

Incompetent peer- counsellors ☐

2. What are your strengths as a school in helping bereaved students?

3. What are your weaknesses as a school in helping bereaved students?

Thank you.