

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LOSS OF PARENTS AND  
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG SELECTED SECONDARY  
SCHOOL PUPILS IN MUFULIRA DISTRICT, ZAMBIA**

**BY**

**MUMA PAXYLDAH**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Zambia in Partial Fulfilment of  
the Requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in  
Educational Psychology**

**UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA**

**LUSAKA**

**2017**

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**2017**

## DECLARATION

I declare that the work presented in this dissertation entitled “**The relationship between the loss of parents and academic performance among pupils in selected secondary schools in Mufulira**” is to the best of my knowledge and belief my own work and that it is original. The dissertation contains no material that has been accepted for an award of degree or diploma by the University of Zambia or any other institution. All the works that are not mine have been acknowledged.

Signed.....  Luka: .....

Date..... 2<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER, 2017 .....

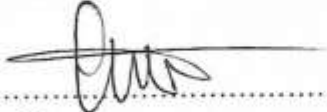
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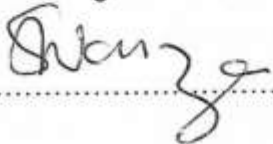
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## CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

We the undersigned recommend that this dissertation has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree of Master of Education in Educational Psychology of the University of Zambia.

Signed..........Date.....*December 2, 2017*.....

Signed..........Date.....*4/12/17*.....

Signed..........Date.....*4/12/17*.....

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my husband Henry Nondo Siwakwi for being heaven sent. To my mother, Beatrice Luka (the Iron lady) who has tirelessly supported the education of all her children. To my elder brother Whyson Musonda for his impartial distribution of love and guidance. To my children Emmanuel and Grace who were at one time denied a mothers' love, to all my siblings for believing in me and to my God for his unfailing love.

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## ACRONYMS

AGMs	Annual General Meetings
DEBS	District Education Board Secretary
ECZ	Examinations Council of Zambia
ESO	Education Standards Officer
GCT	Guidance and Counseling Teacher
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
MESVTEE	Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education
MOE	Ministry of Education
PTA	Parent Teachers Association
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UNESCO	United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between the loss of parents and academic performance of grade 11 and 12 pupils in selected secondary schools in Mufulira District. The six Secondary Schools that participated in the study were purposively sampled because they had been in existence for more than eight years and were co-education government institutions. Orphans were also purposively sampled and the basis for using this method was to target those pupils who had been in the same school for three years and had traceable records of their academic performance.

The study used the Ex Post Facto research design because this design is ideal where the independent variable (which in this case was orphanhood) had already happened. The dependant variable was academic performance. The study was guided by Bowlbys' attachment theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The sample for the study was 118 respondents consisting of eighty-two (82) orphaned pupils, twenty-four (24) Grade teachers, six (6) Guidance and Counselling teachers and six (6) School managers. Data was collected using questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. Qualitative data was analysed using themes while the quantitative data was analysed quantitatively using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences to generate descriptive statistics.

The findings of the study revealed that some orphans exhibited varying psychological reactions as a result of the encounter they had with the death of their parents. The study also revealed a decline in the academic performance of the orphans owing to the various challenges they faced such as adjusting to new environments when they were moved from their original homes to those of their new guardians, lack of psychological care from the siblings of their late parents or relatives, noninvolvement of guardians in their education activities, and working to raise money for school fees and food.

The study recommended that school managers, guidance and counseling teachers and grade teachers should take keen interest in the affairs of the orphans and provide them with individualized attention so that they (orphans) can concentrate on their academic work. Government and other stakeholders should set-up more facilities where orphans could be accommodated with foster parents and encouraged to concentrate on their studies.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives and research questions that guided the study, significance of the study, delimitation, and limitations of the study, the theoretical framework and ends with operational definitions of terms used in the study.

### 1.1 Background

Many countries world over believe that education is one of the fundamental human rights.

There are no exceptions as to who should access education as one's status is of no significance in doing so. As a result of this belief, efforts are being made to ensure that as many people as possible attain some form of education. The need for education cannot be over emphasised because much as it helps to enhance the well-being of people by improving the quality of life, it is also important for one's professional development and emancipation from poverty. Education is a form of learning in which knowledge, skills and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next (Kelly, 1999). The world conference on Education for All held in Thailand in 1990 emphasised on offering education that would benefit the child, youth and adult. This would be done by ensuring that the basic learning needs were met and also by universalising access to education while broadening the means and scope of basic education (UNESCO, 1990).

The attainment of basic education has been set as a major millennium development goal. Battle and Lewis (2002), forward the view that education must be looked at as the first step for every human activity especially now that there is globalisation and advancement in technology and owing to the vital role that it (education) plays in developing human capital. Increase in productivity leads to new sources of earning, thereby enhancing the economic growth of a country. As indicated by Educating our Future (1996), Zambia like other countries has acknowledged that education is a right for each one of its citizens. Education is said to be a means for ensuring not only the wellbeing of individuals but also the quality of the lives of the society as a whole. Being the custodian of human rights, the government has had the enormous role of seeking to create, promote and support the conditions within which education can realise its potential in society. Education has received a lot of attention from many sectors of the Zambian society because of the

important role it plays in the development of human resource which in turn is the root of all other development. In order to determine the effectiveness of an education system, assessment items are administered to the recipients at various levels and academic performance thus, becomes the basis for the analysis of delivery.

Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (2011) alluded to the fact that academic failure at whichever level raised a lot of anxiety to stakeholders because it reflected not only the waste of precious time to all involved but also the waste of the difficultly accessed resources. Tests and examinations are meant to reflect the quality of education taking place in the various institutions of learning. The readiness of pupils and students to proceed to the next higher level or the readiness to be integrated into the field of work is also assessed through the administration of the same (tests and examinations). In most cases, the education system is condemned for not living up to the expectations of the general public when after publishing results the performance of candidates goes down. However, much as it maybe the desire of every nation to have an educated citizenry, there are many factors that greatly influence the well-being of children and their attainment of education.

Psychologists, Sociologists, Economists and Demographers have for a long time showed and continue to show interest in comprehending how family structures especially parental absence affect the well-being of children. Some scholars have attributed the varying trends in academic performance to internal characteristics such as, intelligence, self-concept, locus of control and many others while other scholars have emphasised external characteristics ranging from family, social status, and educational environment (Munsaka & Matafwali,2013; Woolfolk, 1995)

The family lays the psychosocial, moral and spiritual foundations in the overall development of the child. While the mother's significant role cannot be over-emphasized, studies on father-child relationship suggest that the presence of a father in the home significantly influences the development of a child (Agulanna, 1999). Thus, parenthood is a responsibility requiring the full cooperation of both parents who must ensure the total development of their offspring(s).The absence of a parent(s) is thus something undesired in as far as child development is concerned.

The home has great influence on the students' psychological, emotional, social and economic state. In the view of Ajila and Olutola (2007), the state of the home affects the individual since the parents are the first socializing agents in an individual's life. This is because the family background and

context of a child affect his reaction to life situations and his level of performance. Although, the school is responsible for the experiences that make up the individual's life during the school period, parents and the individual's experiences at home play tremendous roles in building the personality of the child and making the child what he/she is.

Among the most prominent external factors that have led to an increase in the number of children experiencing parental loss or absence are divorce, domestic and international migration and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. There have also been a number of high-mortality natural disasters in recent years which have brought about sudden increases in the number of children without parents much to the arousal of interest not only to the media but also organisations concerned about the welfare of children (Suliman 2003). Arriving at the impact of the loss of parents on a child's well-being is a mammoth task because there is a difference between a family in which parents have died and others where it is not so, owing to the fact that parents' death would affect a child's outcomes.

Among the other causes of parental death are accidents, old age, diseases and suicide. In Mufulira district, there has been an increase in the death of parents resulting in the rise of the numbers of orphans. When parents die, children suffer psychological traumas and various aspects of their lives are affected. The death of parents typically ends a child's relationship with people of central emotional importance. Additionally, death has the potential of straining a child's relationship with other care givers while worsening the family's economic status and living situation. Children are in some cases pressured as a result of the death of parents to take on responsibilities of the dead parents and be isolated from friends (Worden, 1996; Tremblay and Israel 1998; Stokes, Reid and Cook, 2009).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Research elsewhere has shown that the death of parents has a profound negative effect on student's academic achievement, as parents play a large role in most children's academic development (Case and Ardington, 2006; Gertler, Levine and Ames, 2004). Makhonza (2006) conducted a research in South Africa's Vryheid District with Primary school orphaned learners on factors that contribute to orphaned learners' academic achievement. The study revealed that societal and family factors like availability of food at home, time to do homework, availability of someone to assist with homework at home influenced the academic achievement of the orphaned learners.

Kasonde-Ng'andu (2007) also conducted a study in Mpika and Lusaka in Zambia among grade 5 pupils in which empirical evidence was provided to show that the loss of parentage plays a negative role in pupil performance. However, this study seeks to provide information on the situation of secondary school pupils as it may be argued that such pupils are older and have a much deeper understanding of death and are as such more likely to be more devastated by the death of their parents. The studies referred to above did not specifically look at orphaned secondary school learners. As such, this study sought to bring out experiences that the orphaned secondary school learners go through and whether the experiences affect their academic performance.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to establish whether or not there was a correlation between the death of parents and academic performance among pupils in selected secondary schools in Mufulira District. The study further sought to gain insight into the lived experiences of the identified orphans.

### **1.4 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Establish the prevalence of parental loss among pupils in selected secondary schools in Mufulira district.
2. Find out if orphaned pupils manifested any psychological reactions as a result of the death of their parents.
3. Determine the lived experiences of the orphans in the selected secondary schools and how they affect the academic performance.
4. Assess the extent to which the death of parents affects pupils' academic performance.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The research questions were as follows:

1. What is the prevalence of parental loss among pupils in the selected secondary schools in Mufulira district?
2. Do orphaned pupils in secondary schools manifest any psychological reactions as a result of the death of their parents?

3. What are the lived experiences of the orphans in the selected secondary schools and how do these experiences affect their academic performance?
4. To what extent does the death of parents affect pupils' academic performance?

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

The study was intended to provide information on the relationship between the loss of parents and academic performance and help in re-enforcing already existing mechanisms intended to improve the learning opportunities of orphans. Furthermore, it was hoped that the study would help provide information useful to various stakeholders to generate new strategies in mitigating the plight of orphans so that the unique needs of orphans are met and the quality of school leavers at secondary school is not compromised.

### **1.7 Delimitations of the study**

This study was anchored within the field of Educational Psychology and confined to selected secondary schools in Mufulira district. Mufulira is a mining town on the Copperbelt Province of Zambia. At the time of the research, the district had a total of 10 government schools. Three of the schools were only upgraded to secondary status in January, 2014 and were not part of the study. The units of analysis were only grade 11 and 12 orphaned pupils.

### **1.8 Limitations of the study**

Like all studies, this study had its own limitations and these relate to sampling and generalisation of the study outcomes. The study cannot be generalised to all grades and not beyond the selected secondary schools in Mufulira district.

### **1.9 Theoretical framework**

The theories guiding this study are Bowlby's attachment theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Attachment is an affectional bond between a child and the primary caregiver. This is according to Ainsworth, Beegle & Koda (2005). Since Bowlby (1969/1982) generated an ethological theory of mother-child attachment relations, the attachment theory has been instrumental in guiding both research in emotional development and clinical intervention through the lifespan. The theory asserts that attachment to the primary caregiver develops over the course of the first 18 months or so (Bowlby, 1969/1982). Infants are born with a propensity to direct precursory attachment

behaviours to kins. These behaviours elicit caregiving and bring the caregiver into close proximity with the infant or child, ensuring protection from environmental dangers and a sense of security.

Mangal (2013) advanced the view that Abraham Maslow presented that human beings had a set of five basic needs which included; self-actualisation, esteem needs, belonging and love needs, safety needs and physiological needs. At the bottom of the pyramid were the physiological needs, while the psychological ones were at the top. Maslow argued that every individual strived for the satisfaction of the physiological needs (which were the first in the hierarchy) and then the psychological needs (which were of the higher order). Motivation for behaviour usually resulted from striving to meet one or the other level of needs. When a need was satisfied, it ceased to be a need and was thus no longer a driving force. The realisation of another need in the higher category then becomes the motivating factor. This therefore meant that once a need in the lower order was gratified, one would be motivated to strive for the satisfaction of needs in the higher level.

Bowlby's theory was picked for the study because of the role that significant others play in people's lives. Munsaka and Matafwali (2013), advance the view that parents play a major role in shaping a child as he or she grows. Children are able to achieve goals and reach higher heights because of the motivation that they receive from their parents and the edge to please them. Furthermore, Santrock (2011) presents that the way in which parents treat their children conform mainly to the stereotypes prescribed by society. This is easy and possible because of the strong attachment that exists between parents and their children. The loss of parents to death brings in an abrupt separation. This study sought to establish if children faced any challenges in adjusting to new situations after the death of their parents and whether their academic performance would be affected as a result.

The study also fitted well in Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory because the death of parents results in the loss of care-givers that help to provide material as well as emotional support to satisfy the needs in the pyramid that Maslow advanced. The satisfaction of the physiological needs leads to the satisfaction of the psychological needs. Disturbance in the satisfaction of the needs creates instability in the personal development of the individual.

### **1.10 Definitions of terms**

***Academic performance:*** a product of pupils' or students' learning and information on the rate of individual learning and can be assessed through visible behaviour

and by way of administering assessment items which may be in form of tests or examinations.

**Board user fees:** this is the money paid to the school yearly by every pupil. This is meant to subsidise the grant given by the government for the operations of the school.

**Children:** refers to persons still attending school and dependent on either parents or guardians for care, support and guidance.

**Environment:** a network of social interactions wherein a child grows physically, emotionally and intellectually.

**Family conditions:** the way children live in a home after the demise of a parent or parents.

**Guardian:** an elderly relative to an orphan, looking after or managing the life of an orphan.

**Prevalence of parental loss:** the number of pupils whose parents have died at a given time.

**Orphan:** means a child whose parents have died.

**Orphanhood:** the state of being an orphan.

**Parental involvement:** any help given to the child to foster his /her academic wellbeing.

**Parental loss:** refers to the death of both biological father and mother

**School Manager:** person managing the daily activities of a Primary or Secondary school.

### 1.11 Summary

This chapter has laid a foundation for the study by first giving the background. The background begins by stressing the fact that education is a fundamental human right and should as such be accessed by every human being. The chapter further presents that even though education should be attained by all, there are obstacles from the outer systems that are slowing down the rate at which this education is acquired or factors that hinder the acquisition of the same. It further reviews some studies and surveys that bring out challenges faced by children who lose their parents have in gaining access to such needs as food, shelter and education. The statement of the problem brings about the need to examine the pressure that the loss of parents exerts on secondary school pupils. The chapter also presents the theoretical frameworks guiding the study and ends with operational definitions used in the study.

### **1.12 Organisation of the remaining chapters**

Chapter two which follows presents a review of research-based literature related and relevant to the problem under discussion in this study. Chapter three presents the methodology used in the study, while chapter four presents the findings. Chapter five is the discussion while chapter six presents the conclusion and recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviewed significant relevant literature on what was already known about how the death of parents affected the academic performance of pupils. The chapter also examined relevant literature on how people reacted to stress and the social changes that took place in the lives of children following the loss of parents. The chapter is divided into sections in the order presented.

#### **2.1 Psychological reactions to death**

Generally regarded as the permanent end of the life of a person, death is one of the most dreaded topics among human beings. Its inability to be fully comprehended makes it not only dreaded but also a mystery. Death strikes both the prepared and unprepared and it also cuts across age groups. When death occurs, people react differently. According to Parkes (1996), psychological constituents of grieving include fear, anger, guilt and gaining new identities. Parental loss can be stressful as it removes a key relationship in one's emotional life. One of the most common effects of grief is that an individual may feel detached from his or her own life as though in a dreamlike state. Furthermore, owing to the fact that death is a circumstance that cannot be changed, it may leave one chronically anxious or tense like a motor that stays revved up (Awake, 2014).

On the other hand, when something happens that is beyond our ability to control, we are often faced with feelings of anger, resentment, frustration, fear or helplessness. Children, who are even more vulnerable to the effects of such tragedies, will often act out with explosive emotions. Grief is a natural reaction to the experience of loss of loved ones, friends and relatives. Grief may also result from the loss of treasured possessions, self-esteem, status and security, hopes, dreams and expectations. Mangal (2002) argues that grief in itself is not harmful when it is allowed to complete itself. It becomes dangerous when it is suppressed because it causes illness and stress that may last for months. Naturally, one of their first thoughts is that they want their parent back, but they know that they are incapable of making this happen. With no opportunity to change their circumstances, the feelings that are associated with them are often vented through explosive bursts of emotion or negative behaviour.

The loss of a parent can have long term emotional and developmental effects on a child. Parental love and care are important for proper child development. UNICEF (2002) as reported by

Kasonde- Nga'ndu (2007) points out that the lack of a parent figure exacerbates the social and psychological challenges attached with growing up in orphans. In her study about loss of parents, academic performance and psychosocial adjustment of grade five children in Zambia, Kasonde-Ng'andu concluded that parental loss affected pupils' academic performance in a negative way. Kasonde-Ng'andu's (2007) study focused on effects of loss of parents, academic performance and psychosocial adjustment of grade five children in Zambia. However, the focus of the current study is on grade 11 and 12 pupils in secondary school in Mufulira, Zambia.

The age range of pupils in grade 11 and 12 pupils in Zambia is between 17 to 20 years old. The mental development of pupils in this age range is more advanced and as such they have better understanding of issues compared to the grade fives which was Kasonde-Ng'andu's focus. The expectations of society from children in the age range above are different and so is the pressure exerted on them. This study also examined the lived experiences of the orphaned children, their psychological reactions and the effects that the experiences had on their academic performance.

## **2.2 Academic Performance**

Academic performance in educational psychology is looked at as a product of pupils' or students' learning and information on the rate of individual learning and can be assessed through visible behaviour. Seif (2009) citing Hillgard and Bauer explains the distinction between learning and performance by stating that the distinction between learning and performance is the same as the distinction between knowing how to do a job and actually doing it. Seif (2009) further says that there is a general belief that individual performance is highly affected by motivation, emotion, environmental conditions, tiredness and illness.

Academic performance is mostly gauged by way of administering assessment items which may be in form of tests or examinations. Examination is an integral part of the education system because it helps to measure pupils' or students' progress towards predetermined objectives. Ahmed, (1993) states that every education system has an examination system which is intended to show the qualities and abilities of students even though there may be factors that affect the performances.

Tests are equally important as they too reflect students' levels of comprehension in selected topics covered over a period of time against set objectives. The intervals at which tests are administered vary depending on the programmes being pursued and the type of school. However, most schools in Zambia, and Mufulira in particular administer tests to pupils or students fortnightly or at the end

of grouped topics. End of term tests are mandatory whether or not other tests were administered within the term. As required by their job description, subject teachers keep records in their teaching files of the progression rates of their pupils. In addition they (teachers) also transfer the same marks on to the master score sheet for each class which is then kept either in the Deputy School manager School manager School manager's office or the career and guidance office for future reference of the performance of pupils in a particular school.

The record of the pupils academic reports help to determine the progress or retrogression of the individual pupils. In an ideal situation pupils are expected to move from one higher level to another. The loss of parents usually impacts negatively on the lives of the concerned pupils and thus affects their academic performance much as it affects other areas of their lives. Mangal (2013) alludes to the fact that there is a negative correlation between the upsurge of emotions and intelligence. Under emotional experiences, the reasoning and thinking powers are decreased. The emotions that result from the loss of parents are likely to impact negatively on the pupil's performance. Lishomwa (2013) established further that, learners with both parents alive tended to perform better than their orphaned colleagues who did not and also that most foster parents neglected to provide adequately for the orphaned children. Further, literature identifies multiple factors that negatively affect the creation and maintenance of an enabling environment that assists orphaned pupils to discover their place in the school community and cultivate and acquire the necessary competencies, talents and skills needed to perform their functions effectively as learners.

### **2.3 Family conditions**

School authorities that are concerned with the academic performance of their pupils tend to draw up deliberate programmes to counsel and provide guidance to parents on how the home environment can be made conducive to foster academic performance (Marzano, 2003). The home environment is, in most cases, disoriented with the death of a father, though children spend much of their time with their mothers, because traditionally, a 'father' means love, protection, security, sustenance, and identity for a family. Steger (2014) stresses the importance of a father when he says that a father gives a name to the family and keeps its members together.

In a research conducted in Pakistan on factors affecting students' quality of academic performance at secondary school level by Farooq, et al. (2011) it was revealed that the academic performance of students heavily depended on the involvement of parents in the academic work of their children.

The absence of parental involvement brought about by death thus affected performance negatively. However, the revealed literature still leaves a knowledge gap in that it does not bring out information to specifically look into the effects of loss of parents at secondary school level which the current study investigated.

Scholars have further argued that since deaths from accidents were less predictable than death from chronic illnesses, identifying the causal effect of Orphanhood were more credible in studies that were less predicated on this element of surprise. In another study carried out in Indonesia by Gertler, Levine and Ames (2004) it was discovered that parental death was associated with reduced school enrollment among children. The results suggested further that children who were elder, especially daughters that had younger siblings, were at higher risk of dropping out of school when a parent died.

It can be noted from the study above that after the death of parents, the older children felt the need to take up some of the adult responsibilities in order to care for their siblings and this resulted in reduced school attendance or complete abandoning of school when they became engrossed in income generating activities. When circumstances compel pupils not to attend school regularly, they miss out on content and skills and this results in poor academic performance.

Case, Paxson, and Ableidinger (2004) also conducted a study which sought to establish if parental death had an impact on children and their academic progression. The research was conducted in 10 sub-Saharan African countries and the study findings showed that orphan hood was associated with reduced school attendance. This reduction was especially noted among children who lived with distant relatives or caregivers reduced school attendance resulted in poor academic progression. The more the lessons pupils missed, the less the academic progress they made.

Nyamukapa, et al. (2008) on HIV associated orphan hood and children's psychosocial distress in Zimbabwe showed that there was poor school attendance and academic performance among orphans in homes headed by members of the extended family. The studies referred to above showed that parental love and emotional support are important factors in children's academic performance. This therefore shows that there is a relationship between the loss of parents and academic performance because as revealed in the study above, when parents who are supposed to

show and give love an emotional support are not there, children lack the drive and motivation to forge ahead.

Kasonde-Nga'ndu (2007) contends that parental loss due to a number of causes, but mostly HIV and AIDS leaves children in very difficult living conditions. She points out that in homes where resources are scarce and a choice has to be made pertaining who should go to school, orphans are likely to be excluded. Orphans from HIV and AIDS may also face the problem of stigma and discrimination (UNICEF, 2006). A study by FHI (2002) as cited by Lishomwa (2013) reports that the lives of orphaned children may be on the verge of disintegration as a result of confusion and uncertainty about their future. The same study revealed that a number of orphans felt unhappy, had trouble with sleeping and experienced nightmares. The unexpected changes in the family conditions emanating from the loss of parents catch families unawares and in desperate efforts to adjust, in some cases, pupils were given responsibilities which may lead to missing classes.

Kelly (1999) also advances the view that several orphaned pupils in Zambia carry responsibilities that are way beyond them after the demise of their parents. In most cases they assume the role of finding food and earning money for self-survival and other siblings. This is in addition to the trauma brought about by the death which they have to live with. There is therefore a negative impact on such pupils' academic performance as their attention is divided. As such, there exists in such cases a disparity between what Maslow (1970) advances in his theory of the hierarchy of needs that the needs in the lower hierarchy which include physical needs such as food, clothing and shelter must be satisfied for personal development to be well attained. Orphans who are left to care for themselves or are attached to super extended families lack affection and security and are thus at a risk of developing negative self-esteem and not reaching self-actualisation. The literature reviewed above shows that when there are sudden negative changes in the family set up and provision of basic needs, children tend to be disturbed physically and psychologically. The reactions extend to school attendance and performance. It can further be noted from the discussion above that when the families from which the pupils come are enjoying peace and there is stability, these will be extended to the classroom and pupils will focus more on what is being taught. Instances of pupils being absent minded or pre-occupied with non-academic ideas will be minimal.

## **2.4 Social conditions**

Society has contributed to the problem of street kids. Most of the relatives who offer to look after orphans end up mistreating them. This leaves the children angry, lonely and depressed due to lack of parental care which includes love and security thereby contradicting the attachment theory advanced by Bowlby. The bond that is supposed to be there between a parent or other care givers and the child is no longer there. Some orphans go out begging on the streets in order to survive and end up being hooked on drugs and alcohol. They see society as cruel and resort to criminal activities such as stealing, murder and rape cases (the believers' homepage.htm). Kundu and Tadoo (1998) note that children who come from continually tense social environments tend to display inappropriate emotional behaviour as a result of being neglected by society.

In addition, Barnett and Whiteside (2006) in a research conducted in South Africa also present that AIDS orphans who are not taken in by relatives end up on the streets of towns and cities while others are drawn into soldiering. Orphans, who turn to the street, have physical needs and their financial desperation makes them vulnerable to crime, substance abuse and sexual exploitation. This is because these orphans on the street lack shelter and protection or because selling sex is their only means of survival. All the above studies generally discuss the effects of loss of parents on academic and social well-being of the orphans but do not delve into the levels of education (in this case secondary school) which is the concern of the current study to see how death of parents affect pupils at this level.

## **2.5 Lived experiences**

Rooyen, et al. (2012) conducted a study of the experiences of AIDS orphans living in a township in South Africa. After analysing the qualitative data collected according to the steps of qualitative data analysis proposed by Tess (Creswell, 1994), two major themes came out. The first theme was that children experience devastating changes in their life circumstances when they became AIDS orphans. These devastating changes were brought about as a result of the abandonment of the children by extended family members who were supposed to embrace them at a crucial time of their lives when they should be cared for.

Rooyen et al. (2012) also present that among the other lived experiences of orphans was loneliness. The feeling of loneliness arose because of the loss of parents and rejection by family members and also the ridicule they sometimes faced at school and in the community by friends. This was in

addition to the experience of being uncertain about the future owing to the fact that the parent or parents they depended upon were on more.

The second theme brought out how the children-discovered hope to persevere. Rooyen et al (2012) found that the orphans that were studied expressed that they experienced feelings of hope when friends and community members started reaching out to them. When the community demonstrated care through practical giving which included giving food, shelter clothes, kindness and a sense of belonging and love, the children were consoled.

The literature reviewed generally shows that there was poor school attendance and academic performance among orphans in homes headed by members of the extended family. However, the literature reviewed still showed knowledge gap in terms of the effects of loss of parents at senior secondary. This knowledge gap makes the current study significant.

## **2.6 Gaps in literature**

Most of the studies in the West, Asia and African countries tend to focus on the effects of loss of parents such as psychological constituents of grieving which include fear, guilt, resentment, frustration, helplessness and gaining new identities. There has been little or less concentration on the twist that life takes after the death of parents. This illustrates the existence of a gap worth investigating.

Centred on the literature reviewed in this chapter, it is observed that a key theme hardly mentioned in the global discussion on the relationship between the loss of parents and academic performance relates to how the loss of parents affect pupils at different levels of education. Orphans cope with the many challenges that they encounter in the absence of support from their biological parents as is the case in Zambia. Most of the studies reviewed focused on the general effects of loss of parents and neglected to discuss the effects that the loss of parents has on the pupils at different levels of education and coping strategies that orphaned pupils resorted to in the absence of their biological parents. This study therefore, addresses both the challenges of Orphanhood at different levels of education and coping strategies used by the orphans. The contribution of this study in this area makes it justifiably significant.

As mentioned earlier, literature on the subject recognises that producing a competent learner involves interaction among various actors whose individual impact may not be easy to separate. Poor care by foster parents has been known to have the potential to affect the competence,

effectiveness and efficiency of academic performance among the orphans. Farooq et al. (2011) noted that the academic performance of students heavily depended on the involvement of parents in the academic work of their children. The absence of parental involvement brought about by death thus affected performance negatively. While studies have produced useful results, they tend to be biased in one way or the other. The majority of the studies globally have tended to focus on the general effects of loss of parents and neglecting finding out how these affects the learners at different levels of education. This study hopes to fill this gap in the literature.

## **2.7 Summary**

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to review the related literature on the relationship between the loss of parents and academic performance among selected secondary school pupils. The literature reviewed centred on studies conducted globally and locally on Orphanhood and academic achievement of the learner. The literature clearly shows a number of things; predominantly is the recognition of the importance and necessity of the role of parents in the lives of the pupils. Children need their parents for physical, social, moral and emotional support in addition to many other needs of life. The studies referred to also indicated that after the death of parents, some orphans have had to abandon school because they leave their original homes to be looked after by guardians who have other responsibilities and who have had to choose between the education of their own biological children and that of the orphans in their custody due to economic challenges. Furthermore, studies on the lived experiences of the orphaned children were also consulted to examine the life led by the orphans later and these showed that in most cases the orphans did not get the attention they deserved from both the community and other members of their late parents' families.

This chapter reviewed the literature which informed and guided this study. The next chapter presents the methodology employed in the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

A research methodology is a broad term involving all strategies that describe how, when and where data is to be collected and analysed (Patton, 1990). This chapter, therefore, discusses the methodology which was used in the study. It begins by giving an overview of the research design of the study and then gives the population of the study and sample size including the tools and instruments that were used to collect data. It further explains how the data was analysed and ends with the ethical consideration.

#### **3.1 Research design**

Kombo and Tromp (2006) citing Orodho (2003) explain research design as a scheme, outline or plan a researcher uses to arrive at answers to the set research questions. The ex post facto research design was used in the study. This design is used when the independent variable has already occurred and then there is an examination of the effects or impact that the independent variable has on the dependent one. In this particular research design, variables are not manipulated by way of experimentation but sampling procedures.

The researcher used the ex post facto research design. Koul (2009) advances that the Ex post facto or Causal-comparative design is one that a researcher uses when not only seeking to explore what a phenomenon is like but how and why it happens. The researcher aimed at establishing the similarities and differences among phenomena to find out the circumstances or factors that went with or caused the happenings noted. The research design in question is used when a researcher cannot manipulate the independent variable and come up with the controls that are required in experiments.

By the time of the research, the pupils who participated had already been orphaned and had varying periods of experience. In addition, the researcher wanted to be better placed to present the actual reality of the ground between loss of parents and academic performance and also tabulate the facts accordingly.

### 3.2 Study sites

The study sites were as shown in Table1 below.

**Table 1: Study sites**

Province	District	Site
Copperbelt	Mufulira	Butondo Secondary School Chankwa Secondary School Ipusukilo Secondary School Kantanshi Secondary School Mufulira Secondary School Tang-up Secondary School

### 3.3 Target population

Mungenda (1999) define the target population as a complete set of individuals, cases or objects having some observable characteristics. The target population for this study was all head teachers, guidance and counseling teachers, grade teachers and pupils in their 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>grades.

In any study, the unit of analysis is the major entity being analysed. This focuses on ‘who’ or ‘what’ is being considered in the study. As such, Yurdusev (1993) and Babbie (2009) presented that typical units of analysis consisted of social artifacts, organisations, individuals, and groups of people.

### 3.4 Sample Size

Sample size is defined as the number of items selected from the population of the study (Kothari, 2004). The sample for this study consisted of six school managers, six teachers for guidance and counseling, twenty-four grade teachers and eighty- two orphaned pupils.

### 3.5 Sampling Procedure

The term sampling refers to the procedure a researcher uses to gather people or things to study (Kombo and Tramp, 2006). The six government secondary schools were selected because of their enormous sizes and ability to accommodate pupils from all walks of life and because they had been in existence for a longer period of time than the private schools.

The two of the three government secondary schools that were omitted in the study were only three years old in terms of offering senior secondary education as they were only recently upgraded while one was used to pilot the study. The private schools in the district were not selected for the study because they had no double orphans at the time of the study. The school managers, careers or guidance and counseling teachers and the grade teachers were sampled by employing expert and availability sampling because these units of analysis that deal with the management of institutions are not a huge population.

In line with the assertion put across by Gay and Airasian (2000) that in qualitative researches, researchers generally rely on purposive sampling to select their participants to ensure they target groups of people believed to be most useful to the kind of study being done. The research purposively selected pupils from grade eleven and twelve because they had been in school long enough and were familiar with the teachers and subjects offered. The pupils in grade ten were omitted from the study because they were a mixture of both new and old pupils. The new group would have little experience of life in the schools that were selected to participate in the study.

This conscious selection of subjects based on the participants' membership of the group under investigation is sometimes referred to as judgmental sampling Hiansbottom, (2004). Kombo and Tromp (2006) also advance that the power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth analysis. Pupils who participated in the research were those who were in the started grades and were available on the days that the researcher was collecting data from the particular schools.

### **3.6 Data Collection Instruments**

The researcher used a variety of data collection instruments. This was to facilitate the triangulation of the research findings. Triangulation helps to eliminate biasness and detect error in addition to facilitating comparison of data across different sources hence increasing the trust worthiness of data (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998). The data collection instruments that were used included the questionnaires, interview guides, focus group discussion guides and document analysis. These research instruments were considered sufficient in addressing the research problem at hand. Data quality was enhanced through the use of the tape recorder, triangulation and a pilot study. The four instruments used in data collection are described in detail in the sections that follow.

### **3.6.1 Questionnaires**

Questionnaires which had both closed and open ended questions were used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data from the pupils and the grade teachers respectively. Ghosh (2006) argues that qualitative data enables the researcher to give thorough descriptions. Questionnaires were used because Kombo and Tromp (2006) state that questionnaires are employed in data collection because of their being cheap and easy to administer, and are completed at the convenience of the respondent without the influence of the researcher.

### **3.6.2 Interview Guides**

Interview guides were used by the researcher to collect data from the school managers. Kothari (2004) assert that the interview method is an important method of collecting primary data. It involves oral-verbal questions and corresponding oral verbal responses to the queries made and this is done with the help of a structured schedule. Interviews are conducted either personally or through telephones. Sidhu (2006) also describes an interview as a two way method which allows as exchange of ideas and information. Interviews are conducted to facilitate the construction and understanding of reality.

### **3.6.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

Kombo and Tromp (2006) describe a focus group discussion as a special group in terms of its purpose, size, position and procedure. FGDs are used to assess needs, develop interventions and test new ideas and programmes. The researcher used FGD to collect data from the orphaned pupils because these discussions prove to be a very effective tool for gathering in-depth information and are time saving.

### **3.6.4 Document Analysis**

McDonald (2001) defines document analysis as things that we can read and which relate to some aspect of the social world. Like in other studies where qualitative data is collected, this study made use of documentation to search for data relevant to the topic of interest. Documents were a rich source of information in this study. Documentation can be in form of letters, diaries, memorandum, personal documents, biography, autobiography, written reports and administrative documents (Mangal&Mangal, 2013).The main advantages cited for document analysis include stability, unobtrusive, exact and broad coverage while the weakness include irretrievability, biased selectivity, biased reporting and deliberate withhold of access. Caution when using documents or

text data can be taken by evaluating the documents for their genuineness, trustworthiness and representativeness (Creswell, 1994).

The main documents used in the study were the mark schedules that were prepared by subject teachers every time continuous assessment items were administered to the pupils. The mark schedules helped to show the progression or retardation rate of the pupils during the period that they were in school and move from one grade to the other. The entries on mark schedules for the classes are the ones that are transferred to the pupils report forms or booklets and availed to parents or to the mark schedules for locally or zone administered assessment items. In addition grade twelve result analysis sheets were also used to gather the necessary data for the study. These sheets are compiled to assess the performance of pupils in the various subjects offered after examinations are written. The analysis sheets also help to an overview of the academic performance of classes or groups of pupils within given schools.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedure**

Data collection was preceded by informing the District Education Board Secretary about the study and seeking permission to visit seven of the government secondary schools in Mufulira District. The researcher then sought consent from the school managers of the seven selected secondary schools where data was collected from. In the schools, the researcher made appointments with the school managers. In three schools the appointments had to be rescheduled three times due to workshops and other events the school managers were involved in. The researcher however managed to hold formal meetings with the school managers where the study was discussed and logistics on how the study would be conducted were put in place.

In many cases the school managers proposed names of grade teachers to whom questionnaires for the grade teachers were to be given citing that even among the grade teachers there were those who had little or no information on the status of their pupils and as such would not give accurate informative information. Because of the support and co-operation given by the school managers, the researcher was able to administer questionnaires to the pupils and the grade teachers, conduct interviews with the school managers and careers or guidance and counseling teachers. Focus group discussions with the pupils were also held. The school managers and career teachers ensured that the targeted respondents received prior notice before the data collection and venues arranged in advance to avoid wasting of time and unnecessary disruption of school programmes.

The researcher used both primary and secondary methods of data collection. Primary data collection involved gathering information directly from the respondents through face to face interviews with the respondents. The researcher followed the steps outlined by Creswell

(1994:148) in data collection which included, ‘setting the boundaries for the study, collecting information through interviews, documents and establishing the protocol for recording information.’ The researcher recorded the conversations during the interviews that lasted between 25 to 30 minutes. The interviews were used to obtain information on the general academic performance of the orphans in the schools and the type of disciplinary cases orphans were involved in whereas the focus group discussions were used to collect in-depth data from the pupils concerning their academic performance. The interview and the focus group discussions were both recorded with the permission of the participants.

The focus group discussions were made up of four to six pupils in each case. The recorded data was transcribed verbatim at the end of the activity. Primary data was further gathered through the use of questionnaires that were administered to both the grade teachers and the pupils

### **3.8 Qualitative Data Analysis**

In this research, qualitative data included information from the Focus Group Discussions and the interviews. The researcher analysed qualitative data using content analysis. This involves creating a structure to arrange open-ended information. Patterns and themes arose as follows:

- Identification- units of analysis were identified
- Arrangement- the raw data identified was thereafter arranged according to the units of analysis for example, responses to particular questions.
- Organisation – data was then arranged using the categories created prior to the field work by the researcher. The researcher would use other categories if need arose after field work.
- Classification – the data units were then grouped into categories that were identified until a sensible classification was arrived at.
- Reduction – this was done in order to lessen on the volume of the texts while ensuring that valuable information was not lost. Composite responses were created by the use of ‘quotations’ to reflect the content of responses in each category.

### **3.9 Quantitative data analysis**

Quantitative data was mostly drawn from questions from the questionnaires. The statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. The analysis was preceded by the coding of questions and the raw marks obtained by the pupils in various subjects in the end of term tests before and after being orphaned. This was in order to come up with frequency tables, percent distributions, means, and standard deviations for numeric variables in order to describe the phenomena.

### **3.10 Ethical consideration**

The researcher sought ethical clearance from the University of Zambia Ethics Committee and also sought permission from the DEBS and the managers of the schools where the research was conducted. Before the questionnaires were administered or the interviews and FGDs were conducted, the researcher explained the aim of the research to the participants. This was then followed by the availing of the letter which explained the purpose of the study and the forms for the informed consent to the participants. After the informed consent forms were signed by the respondents, the researcher assured the respondents of confidentiality for the information provided and that they would remain anonymous and untraceable in the research.

Participants were further assured that they would suffer no harm as a result of participating in the research and that they were free to ask for clarification at any point of the exercise and to inform the researcher if they felt uncomfortable about any procedure in the research. They were also informed that they were free to withdraw at any point from the exercise if they felt so without any penalty.

### **3.11 Summary**

The chapter presented the methodology that was used in the study. The Ex Post Facto research design was used in the study. The design employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to explore and describe the psychological reactions towards the death of parents, the social and family conditions of the orphaned pupils as well as their academic performance and the lived experiences. One hundred and eighteen (118) respondents participated in the study. They were all selected using purposive sampling. This type of sampling was used so as to arrive at respondents who were rich in information to facilitate for in-depth analysis. The sample consisted of six (6) school managers,

six (6) guidance and counseling teachers, twenty four (24) grade teachers and eighty-two (82) orphans. The instruments used in data collection included; questionnaires, interview and focus group discussion guides and the recorder. Data was analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Ethical issues were also highly upheld.

The chapter has presented the methodology which was used in this study. The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the research findings of the study which sought to investigate the relationship between the loss of parents and academic performance of grade 11 and 12 pupils in selected secondary schools in Mufulira District. Data was collected from the school managers, teachers and orphaned pupils. The presentation of findings is sequenced in such a way that the findings from the orphaned pupils are presented first then followed by the findings from the teachers, and then the school managers. In addition, the findings are presented according to the themes that were derived from the study questions. The study questions were: What is the prevalence of parental loss among pupils in the selected secondary schools in Mufulira? What psychological reactions do pupils manifest upon losing their parents? To what extent does the loss of parents affect pupil's academic performance? What are the social conditions of orphaned pupils? What are the lived experiences of the identified orphans in the selected schools?

#### 4.1 Demographic Information of Respondents

Table 2: below shows the characteristics information of the participants who took part in this study.

**Table 2: Demographic Information of Respondents by Gender**

Status of respondents	School location						Total
	Low Density		Medium Density		High Density		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Pupils	10	7	12	8	26	19	82
Grade Teachers	2	2	4	4	6	6	24
Guidance and Counseling Teachers	1	-	1	1	3	-	6
School Managers		1	1	1	3	-	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>118</b>

*Source: Filed data*

## 4.2 Biographical Data of the Respondents

### 4.2.1 School Managers, Guidance and Counseling Teachers and Grade Teachers

As regards the biographical data of the school managers, guidance and counseling teachers, and the grade teachers, their distribution was as shown in Table 3 below. As can be seen from the table, out of 36 teachers who participated in the study, six were School managers among whom four were males while two were females. Further, there were six guidance and counseling teachers. Of these, five were males while one was female. The table furthermore shows that there were 24 grade teachers who took part in this study among whom 16 were males whereas eight were females. Table 3 shows their distributions.

**Table 3: Biographical data of the School Managers, Guidance and Counseling Teachers, Grade Teachers**

Age range	Status of respondent								
	School managers			Guidance and counseling teachers			Grade teachers		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
35 – 39	-	-	-	1	-	1	6	3	9
40 – 44	-	-	-	1	1	2	8	4	12
45 – 49	1	1	2	3	-	3	2	1	3
50 - 55	3	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	4	2	6	5	1	6	16	8	24

*Source: Filed data*

### 4.2.2 Biographical data of the Orphans

In terms of orphans, Table 4 shows their biographical information and gender and age range. Out of the 82 orphans who participated in the study, 48 were males while 34 were females and were aged between 17 and 22 years old.

**Table 4: Biographical information of orphans**

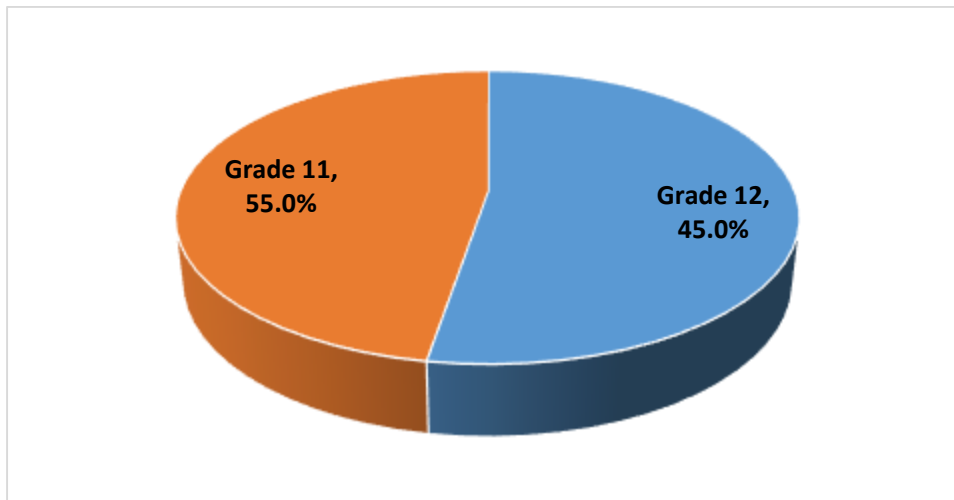
Age range (in years)	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
17 – 20	44	34	78
21 – 22	4	-	4
Total	48	38	82

*Source: Filed data*

The study involved a total of 82 double orphaned respondents. These respondents were drawn from selected grade 11 and 12 pupils in the schools that participated in the study.

#### **4.2.2.1 Distribution of the Orphan Respondents by Grade level**

In terms of the number of orphans that took part in this study, their distribution was as shown in Figure 1 below. As can be seen from the figure, 45 (55.0%) were from grade 11 and 37 (45.0%) were from grade 12 classes.



**Figure 1: Percent Distribution of the Orphan respondents by Grade Level (n = 82)**

*Source: Filed data*

### 4.3 The prevalence of parental loss

The prevalence of Orphanhood as at 31st December 2014 as documented by the District Education Board Secretary's office was as shown in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Number of double orphans in the selected schools**

Name of Secondary School	Males	Females	Total
Butondo	42	34	76
Chankwa	38	26	64
Ipusukilo	41	30	71
Kantanshi	43	31	74
Mufulira	53	24	77
Tang-up	54	50	104
Total	271	195	466

*Source: Filed data*

Table 4.4 shows that there were 466 double orphaned pupils in the selected secondary schools in Mufulira District. Of these, 271 were males and 195 were girls.

### 4.4 Psychological reactions to death

The study sought to explore the psychological reactions of the orphans as a result of the death of their parents. Interviews with some school managers and teachers revealed that orphans presented varying psychological reactions following the death of their parents regardless of their sex or age. Some of the reactions included being reserved, resentful, becoming deviants and looking down upon themselves.

#### 4.4.1 Becoming reserved

A review of teachers' responses on the psychological reactions noticed in some orphans revealed variations in the way pupils or children reacted to death especially that of biological parents. This was because from at least the age of twelve onwards children are able to conclude that death was a permanent end of the life of a person. Teachers acknowledged encountering orphans who tended to be abnormally reserved or withdrawn much of the period they were in school. One female teacher said the following:

*Some orphans appear extra quiet and seem to be lost in their own thoughts and when called upon to give answers during lesson time they end up with wrong answers while others look hopeless.*

#### **4.4.2 Being resentful**

The responses from the pupils showed that most orphans developed feelings of resentment as a result of the loss of their parents. Resentment was further established through the revelations from the Focus Group Discussions with the pupils. The resentment is often perpetuated by remarks from extended family members who openly indicate their unwillingness to provide material and moral support to the orphans. One grade 12 female orphan stated that:

*My father was the first to die in Ndola Central Hospital just after having a headache for two days .He died without even saying bye. I was encouraged by the fact that mum was still alive and would at least take care of us. For the two years that we lived with mum after the death of my father life was not that hard. Things became really bad when mum collapsed and died after the quarrels she had with my late fathers' sisters. I feel very bitter and angry that my parents died like that while other people still have their parents. I often wonder why these things happened to me.*

Another female grade 11 orphan in the focus group discussion said that:

*I have been trying my best to accept the death of my parents but the feelings of anger are usually brought back by the comments and attitude of my uncle and his wife. Sometimes when I ask for money and other things they tell me that they don't have and that my parents did not live any money to give me for all the things I want. It's better for them to just say we don't have money or we don't want to give you rather than mentioning my late parents. But they easily find money to give to their children.*

#### **4.4.3 Becoming deviants**

In interviews with school managers and teachers, it was revealed that not all the orphans simply grieved over the dead parents but later some exhibited deviant behaviour. This behaviour was mostly noted after three or more months; in some cases after the death of one parent or that of the surviving one. One male school manager said:

*Two of the orphans in this school have become withdrawn and have also developed low self-esteem. This has greatly affected their relations with their fellow pupils and teachers. They don't actively participate in the social or academic activities of the school. They have become deviants because they miss classes and have taken to heavy drinking and dagger smoking though they are sponsored by a religious organisation. I wonder who the funder of the drinking spree is.*

Another male school manager revealed that, at his school two orphans of the opposite sex who were both in their twelfth grade had eloped and were living in a cabin at the residence of the boys' family and the girl even conceived.

A female school manager lamented that the academic performance of orphans compared to non-orphans showed a decline on the part of the orphans. She said that the main reason for the decline was that some of the orphans had become truants. In her own words she narrated the following:

*Orphans are more indisciplined than non-orphans. Out of the eight pupils on maternity leave, six are orphans. One of them was impregnated by a fellow grade twelve orphan who is heading a household in a township near the school.*

#### **4.4.4 Losing self-confidence**

The question on how the orphans looked at themselves in the academic circles received varying responses. Some of them (orphans) stated that they could not perform as their other friends because they did not have all it took to be good performers. One grade 11 female orphan stated:

*I feel that even if I come to school, I am just troubling myself because my grandmother tells me that there is nothing I will do which will be different from what my mother did in terms of school performance. I am made to believe that mum failed to get good results at school because she was just dull and in my mothers' family there are only two people who are educated out of the seven children grandmother had. What is the point of forcing myself to work harder if people already believe that I will not go far with this same education?*

Commenting on the same question (whether the orphans believed they could perform just as well as those who were not orphaned) a male grade 11 orphan said:

*I don't think I can perform better than those whose parents are still alive because no matter how much I try I fail to understand some subjects.*

An analysis of the responses from grade teachers also revealed that some orphans lacked self-confidence. This was reported by eight teachers out of the 24 who participated in this study.

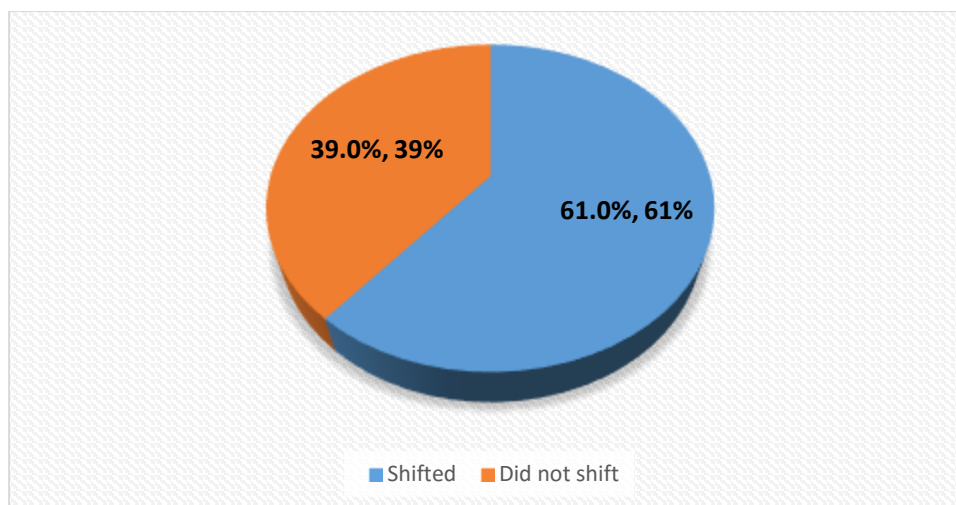
However, responses from the school managers revealed that some orphans had the potential to perform far much better than those that were not orphaned but they lacked confidence in their own abilities. A male school manager who had been in his position for the past eight years had this to say:

*Some orphans tend to lose confidence in themselves as a result of some challenges that arise after the loss of their parents and end up convincing themselves that they are 'underdogs' in the academic world. There is however, one exceptional case at this school. One male pupil has been consistently good in school work and the school at the beginning of this year (2015) bought him full uniform as a way of encouraging him to work even harder.*

## **4.5 Family conditions**

### **4.5.1 Change in the living conditions**

On whether the orphaned children had to shift from their original home and live with other family members, the study findings revealed that most of the orphans had to move in with extended family members following the death of their parents. Figure 2 shows their reactions. Of the 82 orphans who participated in the research, 50 indicated that they have had to shift from their original homes while 32 did not.



**Figure2: Whether the orphans shifted from their original home after the death of their parents (n = 82)**

*Source: Filed data*

One female grade 12 orphan narrated the following:

*My mother was the last one to die between my parents and after her burial, there was a family meeting involving our uncles and aunties from both my mothers and my father's sides. In that meeting a question was asked on who was going to start looking after us. We are six in our family and I am the third born. The family members said that it was going to be very difficult for one person to adopt all of us because we were many. They later agreed to divide us among themselves. This meant that we would go separate ways. I did not like it because we as children had heard so many stories about some of them on how badly they treated their own children but there was nothing we could do about it since no one among us was working.*

Another male grade 11 orphan from the same school said the following:

*The one who died last was my father. His brother decided that he would keep all of us in addition to his four biological children. I think he volunteered to do so because it was said at the meeting that was held after my father's burial that the one who would take the children was also going to take everything in the house because the family members agreed not to share our parents' property. We were happy that we were not going to be divided but he does not keep us well even though the mines gave him as the administrator 20% of our fathers' benefits. He does not control*

*much of what goes on at his house and we are not treated well by his wife and children most of the times.*

A grade 11 boy in a FGD at another school said that:

*My elder sister took me soon after the death of our mother .My sister was already married by then. She promised that she would pay my school fees and take good care of me. This has, however, not been the case because ever since I went to stay at her home she sends me to do work at home and at their farm more than her own children. She said that she trusts me more than anybody else at her home because I am her blood brother but the things I do are so many .I usually feel very tied most of the time and fail to concentrate on my school work even though I go to school every day.*

Another grade 12 male orphan had this to say:

*When the time came to talk about who would start taking care of us after my father's death, my step mother said that she would not manage to do so because she was not working. She said she could only manage her two children so we are staying in the same house because our father bought the house but we look for our own food.*

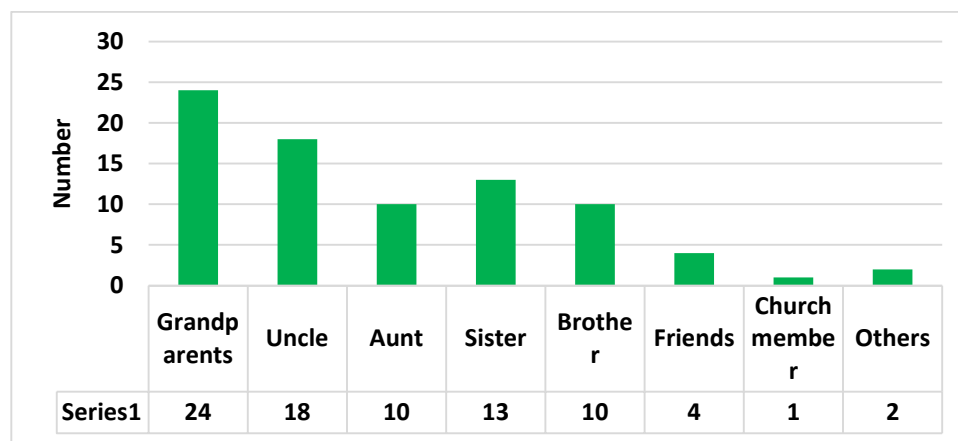
A grade 12 female orphan said the following:

*I am now staying with our church pastor because they were good friends with my late parents' .The pastor and his family invited me to stay with them when they saw that life was becoming difficult for me after the death of my parents. We are all girls in my family and I am the only one who is still at school .All the others have stopped.*

A grade 12 female orphan prefect said:

*We did not live the house after the death of our parents because it was bought by our mother who used to work for the mines as a nurse. My grandmother from my mothers' side is the one who came to start living with us. She sells at the market and likes complaining about the way we do things and ever since she came to live with us, three others of our aunties have also come to live at our house. We have no freedom to do what we want now.*

As regards who the orphaned pupils lived with, Figure3 shows the distribution of the guardians keeping the orphans after the death of their biological parents. Out of 82 orphaned pupils, 24 indicated that they lived with their grandparents, 18 with their uncles, 10 with their aunties. The findings further showed that 13 lived with their sisters and 10 lived with their brothers, four of them lived with their friends while one lived with a church member and two of them lived with their single male teachers and are categorized as living with 'others'.



**Figure 3: Persons orphaned pupils lived with (n = 82)**

*Source: Filed data*

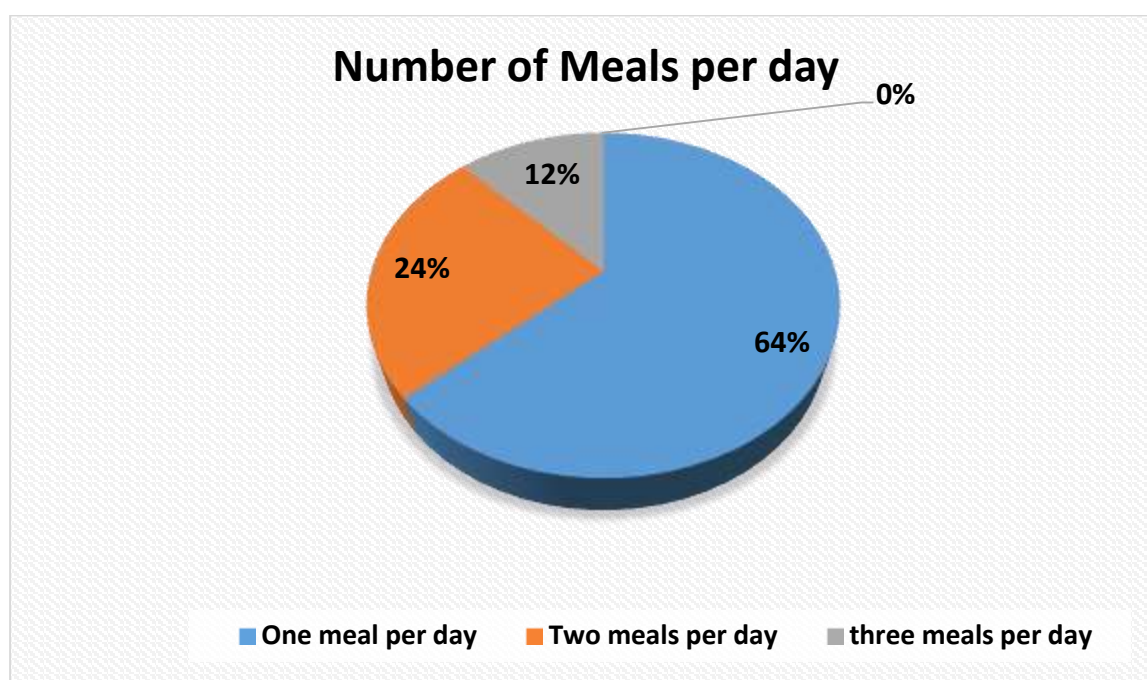
During the FGD a grade 11 male orphan who said the economic status of his guardians was very bad (so as to be termed very poor) categorically stated that before the demise of his parents, he had no problems with getting money for Board User Fees because his parents were well to do and they always took keen interest in knowing how much was to be paid in a given year and they would plan how to pay it. He lamented that things were a lot different in his current position.

Another grade 12 orphan made the following statement:

*I have been sent away from school sometimes because of failing to pay the school fees. It is not that my uncle cannot afford to pay but that he is not just serious with what he does or maybe he is stingy. We are paying only K850.00 per year. He pays for his own children and buys them whatever it is that they need for school but when I ask for something he does not even pay attention. Maybe he does not want me to finish school.*

#### **4.5.3 Number of meals per day**

The orphaned pupils were asked to indicate the number of meals they had per day. This question was intended to establish the economic status of their guardians. Figure 4 below shows their reactions. Of the 82 orphans who participated in this study, 52 indicated that they had at least one meal per day while, 20 of them indicated that they had two meals per day. Only ten of them said that they had three meals per day.

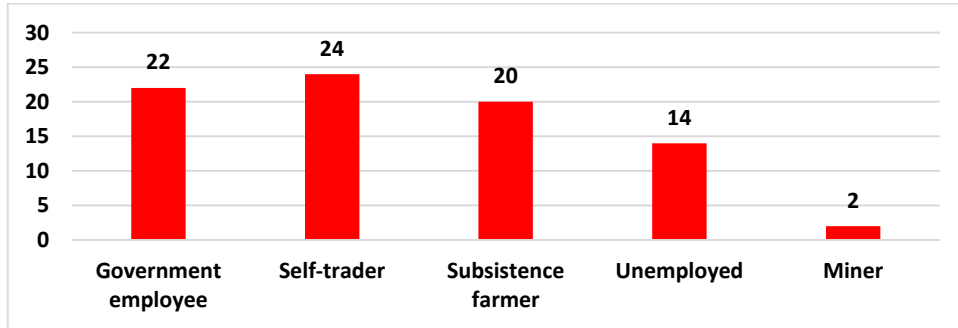


**Figure Meals that 4: the orphans had per day (n = 82)**

*Source: Filed data*

#### 4.5.4 Distribution of occupations of guardians

Pupils were asked to state the occupations of their guardians to establish the economic activities of their guardians which might have an effect on the economic status of the family. Their responses were as shown in Figure 5.



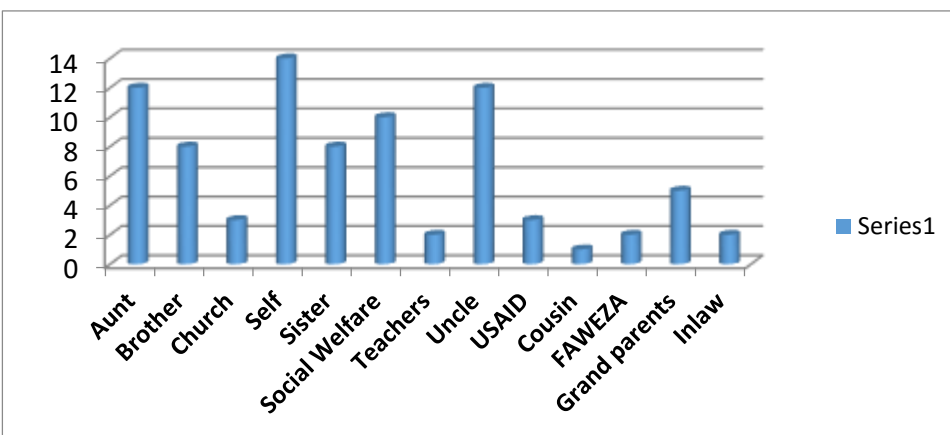
**Figure 5 Distribution of guardians by type of occupation (n = 82)**

*Source: Filed data*

As can be seen from the figure above, most of the pupils indicated that their guardians were self-traders while 22 said their guardians were government employees. However, 20 said that their guardians were subsistence farmers whereas 14 were not engaged in any income generating activities while two were working for the mines.

#### 4.5.5 Persons responsible for paying school fees for the orphans

The orphans were asked to indicate who was responsible for paying their school fees. Their responses were as shown in Figure 6.



**Figure 6: Persons responsible for paying school fees for the orphans (n = 82)**

*Source: Filed data*

As can be seen from Figure 4.6, 14 indicated that they fended for themselves, while 12 indicated that they were helped by their uncles. Further, 12 of them said that they were helped by their aunt, 10 said that they were helped by the Social Welfare and 8 each were helped by their brother and sister, respectively. However, 5 of them indicated that their grandparents paid for their school fees, whereas 3 of them said USAID paid their school fees. Other responses were: 2 orphans reported that they were receiving help from the teachers, 2 from FAWEZA, 2 others from their in-laws respectively, whereas 1 of them said that the cousin helped in providing the school requirements and 3 were being assisted by their Churches.

Orphans, who fended for themselves, had a lot to say, especially about their guardians. Some of their feelings were as quoted below:

A grade 11 female prefect pupil said:

*What really surprises me is that this same aunty I am now staying with used to benefit a lot from my mother when we were staying with her. My late mother never used to complain to buy things for her before she finished school. But when I ask her for help with school requirements she says that she has no money and that she is not paid a lot of money.*

Another female orphan in grade 12 complained in this manner:

*Things were okay before my uncle went to work at Lumwana mine. I could talk to him about what I needed at school and I could also ask for money for my small personal things. Now I do not know if he just does not send enough money to aunt or what because she gives me very little money or nothing at all. I have not even finished paying my school fees.*

#### **4.5.6 Orphans involvement in income generating activities**

Regarding orphans being involved in income generating activities, the responses from the pupils revealed that 48 (59%) of them said that they were involved in some odd jobs to raise some money either for their fees or other school requirements, while 34 (41%) indicated that they were not involved in any income generating activities.

The involvement in of orphans in income generating activities was further confirmed in the FGD with the pupils. One of them, a grade 12 male orphan said the following:

*Sometimes I have missed school because I am working somewhere in order to raise money to pay for my studies and also help my grandmother take care of the home requirements. I asked one of the members of my church if she could allow me to be helping her with house chores on weekend to realise some money for my BUF. The lady agreed and so I go to work at her home every Saturday. I don't get the money myself. Instead she pays the school bursar and only gives me the receipts.*

Findings from the grade teachers also confirmed that orphans involved themselves in income generating activities. Of the 24 grade teachers who participated in the study, 18 of them indicated that pupils did some gardening or farm work to raise money for school while six of the teachers indicated that they assisted to connect orphans to people who gave them work for payment. However, of the six School managers interviewed, five stated that they had to relax the rules on the payment of school fees for the orphans who were not sponsored by any well-wishers so as to prevent them from staying away from school and missing lessons. Below were some responses from the school managers.

A male school manager said:

*Some orphans owe the school a lot of money for school fees. I have had to send them away from school on two or three occasions just to force their guardians to come over so we can plan together but this has not helped. After waiting for the feedback for some time, I tell the teachers helping with the collections to just allow them to be in school.*

A female school manager said:

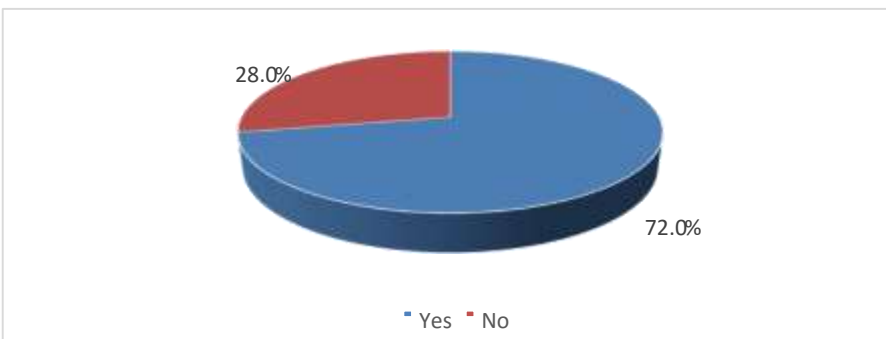
*The issue of orphans is a really challenging one. Instead of helping them with their fees and other school requirements, some guardians are simply not concerned. As a school we allow them to learn even without settling their fees because we are hopeful that education would better their future lives especially that their parents were no more.*

A male school manager stated the following:

*Education is a human right even for orphaned children so even when they do not pay their school fees we still allow them to learn with all the other children.*

#### **4.5.7 Psychological / emotional support from the extended family**

Orphaned pupils were asked to indicate whether they were given psychological/emotional support by other family members. Their reactions were as shown in Figure 7.



**Figure : 7 Whether orphaned pupils received psychological/emotional Support from the extended family (n = 82)**

*Source: Filed data*

The figure above shows that the majority of the pupils, 59 (72.0%) indicated that they did not receive any psychological/emotional support from other family members or extended family. However, 23 (28.0%) of them said that they received such support.

In the FGD with the pupils, one grade 12 female orphan said:

*Before our uncles and aunties left after the funeral of my mother, they assured us that they would be coming to see us from time to time. It is now one year and four months since they left and none of them has ever come back. No one has ever even invited us to go for holidays to their homes.*

Another grade 12 male orphan said:

*My uncles also don't visit or call us to find out how we are or what we need for school or just at home. They don't even encourage us in any way. It is like they have abandoned us maybe because they are afraid that if they called us to greet us we*

*would start asking for things. I feel very bad and I have just decided to mind my own business now.*

A female grade 11 orphan also said:

*Had it not only been for the death of our elder sister's husband, we would have been all by ourselves with no one to give any encouragement. It is good that our sister decided to come back and live with us. These other relatives are nowhere to be seen and it appears they don't really want to be associated with us. But is not always that we ask for money or whatever things, sometimes it is just good to greet each other and encourage each other. They gave so many fake assurances during the funerals.*

A grade 12 female orphan had this to say:

*Before our relatives left for their homes after the burial of mother, they promised that they would be visiting us and helping us out with the things we would need but surprisingly, a full year has passed without anyone from either our father's or mother's side showing up. I wonder why they made all those promises and what their silence means.*

#### **4.6 Social conditions**

The school communities are as important to the orphans as the communities in which they lived. The attitudes of the people in these areas influence the general wellbeing of the orphans. To this effect the orphaned pupils were asked to indicate the attitude of the community members towards them. Findings from FGD with the pupils revealed a number of things. For instance, a grade 11 male pupil reported in this manner:

*I arrived home to a rude shock when I found that my uncle and his entire family had shifted from the house without telling me. When I left home in the morning, there was no sign that they had even planned such a move. The neighbours too were surprised when after finding a deserted home I went to ask them of what transpired.*

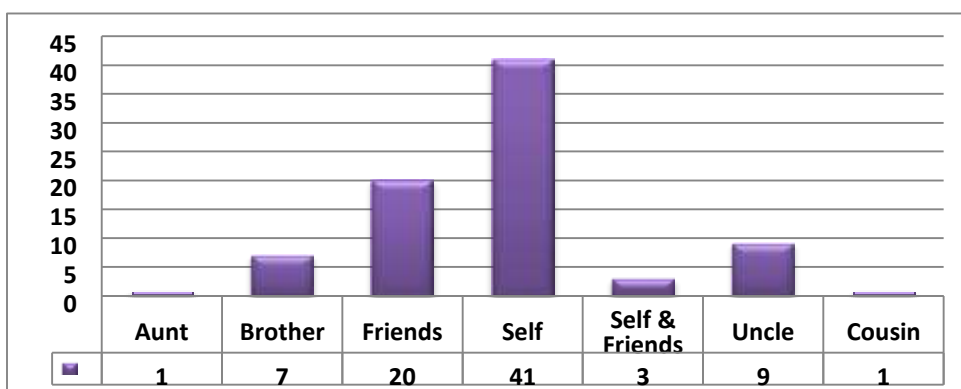
*Had it not been for their kindness, I don't know where I could have spent that night. I thank God for the School manager and the Guidance and counseling teacher who made arrangements for me to live with one of the teachers until I finish my school next year.*

#### 4.6.1 Discrimination of orphans in school and community

Orphaned pupils were asked to indicate whether they faced any stigmatisation in the school or the community they lived in. All the 82 (100.0%) orphaned pupils refuted having been stigmatised. Further information from their grade teachers also revealed that there was at no time that they received information that these pupils were stigmatised. However, one Guidance and Counseling Teacher did indicate that he once experienced a situation where an orphan did not feel comfortable informing his grade teacher that he was a double orphan for fear of being stigmatised.

#### 4.6.2 Guidance on how to tackle homework

The orphaned pupils were asked to indicate whether they received any help and guidance in handling their homework. Their reactions were as shown in Figure 8 below.



**Figure 8 : Persons helping the Orphans with their homework (n = 82).**

As can be seen from the figure above, the majority of the pupils, 41 indicated that they depended on themselves while 20 of them said that they relied on their friends. Further, nine of them said that they got assistance from their uncles, whereas seven indicated that their brothers assisted

them with their homework. Furthermore, the figure shows that three of the respondents said that they depended on themselves and their friends while one of them indicated having been assisted by the cousin and aunt respectively.

#### 4.7 Academic performance

The study also sought to establish the academic performance of the orphaned pupils. Data for this variable was gathered from the three mandatory end of term tests done every year. To arrive at the academic performance of these pupils, extracts of raw scores from the end of term one and term two tests were observed. In each case, two tests were recorded for each child, that is, before being orphaned and after being orphaned. The findings for this variable were as presented below.

To argue the above assertions, a one-sample statistics T-test was carried out and the findings were as presented in Table 6 for term one results and Table 7 for term two test results in the six schools that participated in the study.

##### 4.7.1 Performance in term one

In order to establish the performance of pupils in English, Mathematics, Science, Biology and Religious Education/Art in the schools that participated in this study, a desk analysis was conducted. This involved analysing the raw scores for the pupils “before being orphaned” and “after being orphaned”. The findings were as presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Analysis of academic performance of pupils in term one

Subject	Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
English	Before	81	55.8025	12.38085	1.37565
	After	75	43.0933	11.65863	1.34622
Mathematics	Before	75	53.2800	12.78889	1.47673
	After	72	40.3889	12.15227	1.43216
Science	Before	75	51.9200	9.45367	1.09162
	After	73	42.2466	12.92584	1.51285
Biology	Before	75	56.4933	11.68086	1.34879
	After	69	43.5652	9.19955	1.10750
Religious Education/Art	Before	79	61.9620	10.27125	1.15561
	After	78	47.0385	10.62885	1.20348

As can be seen from the table above, the performance of the pupils in English, Mathematics, Science, Biology and Religious Education/Art before the demise of their parents were exceptionally average. However, after the death of their parents there was a steady decline in the

academic performance of the pupils with means scores of 43.0933 from the previous 55.8025 in English with standard deviations of 11.6563 and 12.38085 respectively; 40.3889 from 53.2800 in Mathematics with the standard deviations at 12.15227 and 12.78889. Further, in Science, the mean score dropped from 51.9200 to 42.2466 with the standard deviations at 9.45367 and 12.92584 respectively. The same trend continued even in Biology and Religious Education/Art.

To substantiate the above claims, another analysis was done, this time with term two results in the same subjects with a view to establish any changes in the way pupils performed in these subjects.

The results were as shown in Table 7 below.

**Table 7: Analysis of academic performance of pupils in term two**

Subject	Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
English	Before	81	53.3580	9.91124	1.10125
	After	78	43.0513	8.96877	1.01551
Mathematics	Before	77	49.3117	9.89585	1.12774
	After	75	42.9200	9.81692	1.13356
Science	Before	78	51.9487	9.02795	1.02221
	After	78	40.5385	10.02165	1.13473
Biology	Before	80	55.5625	11.62477	1.29969
	After	75	42.9200	8.86652	1.02382
Religious Education/Art	Before	79	58.5696	10.85532	1.22132
	After	77	45.3636	9.50057	1.08269

Like the findings done on term one results, term two results show similar trends in academic performance of pupils before and after the death of their parents. Taking for instance English, the mean score before the death of parents was 53.3580 and it dropped to 43.0513 after the death of the pupil's parents. To argue the statistics in Tables 6 and 7, a correlation test was performed to determine if there were any statistically significant differences in the performance of pupils in English, Mathematics, Science, Biology and Religious Education/Art, before and after the death of the parents. The null hypothesis being that loss of parents negatively affected the performance of pupils in these subjects. The statistical tests were run at significance level of 0.01. Significant levels (p values) which were less than or equal to 0.01 were significant. Scores were compared on

the following variables: performance in English, Mathematics, Science, Biology and Religious Education/Art before and after the death of parents. Table 8 shows the results.

**Table 8: Correlations between subject areas**

Average Scores before and after death of parents			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. ENGLISH before	Pearson Correlation		1									
	Sig. (2-tailed)											
	N		100									
2. ENGLISH after	Pearson Correlation		.696	1								
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000									
	N		100	100								
3. MATHS before	Pearson Correlation		.308	.477	1							
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002	.000								
	N		100	100	100							
4. MATHS after	Pearson Correlation		.193	.484	.903	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.055	.000	.000							
	N		100	100	100	100						
5. SCIENCE before	Pearson Correlation		.506	.319	.862	.726	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.001	.000	.000						
	N		100	100	100	100	100					
6. SCIENCE after	Pearson Correlation		.468	.760	.705	.878	.567	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000					
	N		100	100	100	100	100	100				
7. BIOL before	Pearson Correlation		.113	-.188	-.563	.264	.318	.013	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.264	.061	.000	.008	.001	.896				
	N		100	100	100	100	100	100	100			
8. BIOL after	Pearson Correlation		-.008	.268	-.104	.317	-.157	.574	.656	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.939	.007	.303	.001	.120	.000	.000			
	N		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100		
9. RE/ART before	Pearson Correlation		.392	-.176	-.647	.667	.340	-.400	.666	-.043	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.080	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.669		
	N		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
10. RE/ART after	Pearson Correlation		.275	.147	-.776	.716	.668	-.300	.529	.189	.527	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)											
	N											

As can be seen from Table 8, the results indicate statistical significance on the following items: English before and after death of parents ( $r = .000$ ;  $p = .696$ ), Mathematics before and after death of parents ( $r = .000$ ,  $p = .903$ ), Science before and after death of parents ( $r = .000$ ,  $p = .567$ ), Biology before and after death of parents ( $r = .000$ ,  $p = .656$ ) and Religious Education/Art before and after death of parents ( $r = .000$ ,  $p = .754$ ).

These results imply that loss of parents of the secondary school going children significantly affected their performance in English, Mathematics, Science, Biology and Religious Education/Art. The null hypothesis that loss of parents affected the performance of pupils in the subjects under study is therefore upheld. It was found that the performance in English, Mathematics, Science, Biology, and Religious Education/Art differed before and after the loss of parents.

#### **4.8 Summary**

The chapter presented the findings of the study based on the study objectives and questions. It started by presenting the Demographic and Biographical information of the respondents. The findings revealed that orphans showed various psychological reactions as a result of their parents' death. Among the reactions were, being resentful, being reserved, becoming deviants while others even lost self-confidence. The chapter also presented that there were also changes in the living conditions of the pupils after the death of their parents. Some of them had to shift from their original homes to join members of the extended families or friends who belonged to various economic classes. Furthermore, the findings showed that the orphans had challenges in sourcing sponsors for their school fees. As such, some of them had no choice but to involve themselves in income generating activities which led into them missing classes because they were required to work. The chapter ends with the presentation of test results for the pupil /orphaned respondents for two terms to compare the marks obtained before and after.

The succeeding chapter, which is Chapter Five, discusses the key findings of the study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

In this chapter, the findings of the study on the relationship between the loss of parents and academic performance among selected Secondary School pupils in Mufulira District, Zambia are discussed. The findings are discussed under the themes derived from the study objectives.

#### **5.1 Prevalence of parental loss**

The study found that there was a high prevalence of parental loss among the pupils in the schools that participated in this study in Mufulira district. Documented data in 2014 showed that a total number of 466 pupils were orphaned. Of these 271 were males and 195 were female (DEBS Report, December, 2014). This number surely shows that more and more pupils become orphans due to various reasons which include the HIV and AIDS. This leaves children in the care of relatives which in some cases may have some effects on the child's education.

MESVTEE (2011) alludes to the fact that academic failure at whichever level raised a lot of anxiety to the investors in education as it did not only reflect the waste of precious time to all interested parties but that it was also a waste of the difficultly accessed resources. Further, the Ministry of Education in Zambia like other countries, has acknowledged education as a key right of each of its citizenry. It is a means of not ensuring of the well-being of individuals and quality of the lives of the society as whole. It is for this reason that the government has a major role to play in seeking to create, promote and support the conditions within which education can realise potential, especially among the orphaned children.

The above revelations cannot be taken as a surprise owing to the fact that most of the orphaned pupils are under marginalised in society. As a result, this has led to the many such pupils dropping out of schools.

#### **5.2 Psychological reactions due to death**

As regards psychological reactions by the pupils towards the death of their parents, the findings of this study have shown that these pupils presented varied psychological reactions, regardless of

their age and sex. The reactions ranged from being involved in deviant behaviours which, as reported by the head teachers and teachers of the schools that participated in the study, were in most cases manifested after three or more months after the demise of their parents.

The study further revealed that some pupils become withdrawn and have also developed low self-esteem which has greatly affected their relations with their teachers and fellow learners including active participation in the social or academic activities of the school. In most cases, these pupils miss classes and have taken to heavy drinking and dagger smoking. It is saddening to note that among these learners, there was a report of two grade twelve pupils having eloped and living in the boy's family house and the girl has since conceived.

As regards the frequency at which pupils manifested deviance, 67% of the school managers reported that the orphaned pupils always manifested deviance in their daily lives. It is also worth noting that the remaining 33% of the school managers also reported that these pupils occasionally exhibited deviance behaviours.

Further, the study also showed that there were other psychological reactions to the death of the parents. These included being resentful, reserved, and losing self-confidence. It was found that 37% of the orphans occasionally became bitter and angry over the death of their parents. Only a small proportion of the respondents (12%) were never bitter nor angry. Resentfulness can be well reported considering some of the reactions from the pupils like;

*My father was the first to die in Ndola Central Hospital just after having a headache for two days .He died without even saying bye. I was encouraged by the fact that mum was still alive and would at least take care of us. For the two years that we lived with mum life was not that hard. Things became bad when mum collapsed and died after the quarrels she had with my late fathers' sisters. I feel very bitter and angry that my parents died like that” and “I have been trying my best to accept the death of my parents but the feelings of anger are usually brought back the comments and attitude of my uncle and his wife. Sometimes when I ask for money and other things they tell me that they don't have and that my parents did not live money to*

*give me for all the things that I want. But they easily find money to give to their children.*

As regards to loss of self-confidence, this was confirmed by 50% of the school managers, 33% of the class teachers and the orphans themselves. This situation was also echoed by the orphans. For instance, one male orphan who said:

*“I don’t think I can perform better than those whose parents are still alive because no matter how much I try I fail to understand some subjects.*

This statement surely shows how hopeless some pupils become. However, some school managers were of the view that given a chance, the orphans could perform as better as the non-orphans academically. It was also noted that some pupils became more reserved after the death, especially that of their biological parents. One teachers noted that orphans appear to be extra quiet and seem to be lost in their own thoughts such that they lose attention in class. Such pupils when called upon to respond to questions during lessons always gave wrong answers because their mind were always preoccupied with other thoughts.

From the above, it could be said that the death of the parents have a greater effect on the academic and growth of the child. It is, therefore, imperative that the stakeholders in the care of children should seriously consider counseling pupils, especially on how to handle the issue of death of parents. This could be achieved through the guidance and counseling teachers who are already deployed in most of the schools country-wide.

### **5.2.1 Lived experiences of the orphans**

The study revealed that there were changes in the living conditions of the orphans. The changes involved either moving in with other family members or other family members moving to go and live with the orphans to assume guardianship. In both cases, the orphaned pupils had to enter into a phase where they would have to adjust their lifestyles in order to fit into the ‘new environment’ or in order to accommodate the parenting style of the ‘new’ guardian. The home environment is of great importance in the growth of the personality of adolescents and the amount of help a child receives from home has great influence on their academic performance. However, the findings of

this study revealed that there were guardians who were not involved in the academic activities of their wards. This lack of involvement often affected the performance of the orphans negatively. This finding contradicts the assertion made by Kundu and Tutoo (1998) who said that parents played an important role in the development of the physical and psychological growth in adolescents. The attitude of father and father-figures affects behaviour tendencies among adolescents. Henderson and Berla (1994) also conducted studies in America which revealed that the family was crucial to the academic achievement of students in Washington DC. The performance of the children was enhanced when teachers and parents worked together in the education of the children.

In addition, Mthembu (1996) also argued that there was overwhelming evidence that when parents rendered their support towards their children's education, there were positive effects on the school life of children and later lives. MoE (1996) argued that parental involvement in education is of special significance because the first responsibility for the education of children lies with parents and thereafter, the wider community in which the family lives. From the preceding discussion, the importance of parental involvement in the education of children cannot be overemphasised. The absence of such, is therefore, a hindrance to the academic achievement of the child.

### **5.2.2 Change in the economic status of family**

The study revealed that there were a number of orphans who were involved in some income generating activities in order for them to raise money for their school fees and other school requirements. The death of parents (in most cases) brought about negative changes in a family's economic structure which affect the living standards of its members. Therefore, depending on the amount of resources available, orphans are faced with a challenge of dividing time between school and income generating activities. This fact was also noted by Kelly (1998) when he stated that being children who had lost both parents, orphans become casualties of broken or incomplete families as such they (orphans) lacked security and the multifaceted support that was needed to successfully lead them into adult life. This lack of security and the much needed support in areas of life usually led to child labour. In line with the above, the study found out that forty-eight (48) orphans were involved in income generating activities to help themselves and their guardians. This

division of attention between school and work, as projected in the findings of this study, results in a compromise in the academic performance.

It was revealed that in an effort to raise money to help meet the school fees and other school requirements, orphans absented themselves from school and hence missed lessons. The home environment of a child is of great importance in the education of a child. A child who is in a home that is able to provide the necessary things needed in life and an atmosphere that is conducive to learning stands a higher chance of performing well academically. After the death of their parents, some children have had to migrate to other families a situation that has resulted into the swelling of those families. More often than not, extended families that accept to absorb orphaned children are generally poor and thus have to consider stretching their resources in order to accommodate the 'new' members. As postulated by Mugabe et al. (2002) foster families that offer to live with orphaned children resort to reducing the number of meals as well as the amount of food to be consumed at each meal. Spending on educational activities is also restricted. In line with Mugabe et al. (2002), only 12% of the orphans reported having the privilege to have three meals in a day. The inability to provide three meals per day was due to the fact that most guardians had inadequate resources.

An analysis of the household survey data by CSO, (2004) indicated that large families usually had members with lower levels of education. This was because such families were not managing to support all the academic work of their children and let alone that of the extended families. Given a situation where resources were few, preference was always given to the biological children. Further, research that was conducted by Fuller and Chantavanich (1976) in Thailand on *Factors affecting scholastic achievements of primary school pupils* also furthered the view that when the number of people at home was large, the environment was not conducive for studying for the children in that setting. The above research also agreed to that of Townsend (1997) where a comparison was made in Australia and the United States of America on what made schools effective. The reason being that the children would be competing for the attention of the parents/guardians which reduced the attention (if any) given to the members.

### **5.3 Psychological / Emotional care**

As regards this aspect, the study has shown that most of the orphans (72%) reported not having received any psychological / emotional care from the extended family. This finding contradicts those of Kuppuswamy (1991) who claimed that affection was probably the most important human emotion because of the great influence it had on a person's entire growth and development. Much as an individual's upbringing depended on the amount of affection they received from elders, education is dependent on the same. In order for a child to be more focused on education, there was great need for affection because this affection was enough to show that the child was appreciated. With affection, a child's self-esteem grows and this gives rise to a desire to encouragement to venture into new experiences and learn from them. In addition,

Bowlby (1960) presented the view that children direct attachment behaviour towards more than one attachment figure as soon as they started to show discrimination between care givers. That is to say children attach themselves even to other family members. These attachment, however, are arranged hierarchically with the principal attachment figure at the top. Kobak and Madsen (2008) add that when the attachment figure is unavailable or unresponsive, separation distress occur. Threats to security in both children and adults arise from prolonged absence, emotional unavailability, breakdown in communication and any signs of rejection. The lack of psychological / emotional care from the extended family members thus has a negative effect on the orphaned pupils.

### **5.4 Social conditions**

Families are the first communities that children are socialized into or interact with. Children are therefore affected by the feelings of the family towards them. The family has the ability to either build or destroy children's perception of things. The family further extends to the neighborhood in which children find themselves. Bronfenbrenner (1979) acknowledges the fact that the environment affects the way a child grows and develops. He states that there are intertwining interactions that affect a child directly or indirectly. These interactions are in the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. For example, a child is affected by his own interactions with his /her parents; the interactions of the parents with the teachers; the interactions of the parents with their work places; and his/her interactions with cultural values. It can be noted from

Bronfenbrenner's argument that society also has a role to play in the development and wellbeing of a child though not as profound as the influence of the child's biological parents.

#### **5.4.1 Attitude of the members of the community**

According to the findings of this research, orphans did not encounter any form of rejection or segregation from members of their communities. Most communities are committed to helping the orphans. Some of the orphans reported that they drew comfort from other people they congregated with and church members. In the case of the orphan referred to in the presentation of findings who arrived home to a rude shock when he found the uncle had shifted without his knowledge, it was the neighbours who relayed the information about his uncle's whereabouts to him. In addition the teacher who volunteered to keep him was also a member of the general community. Furthermore, none of the orphans attested to any form of discrimination or stigmatisation.

#### **5.5 Academic performance**

Academic performance is usually measured through assessment items. Assessment is a process of obtaining valid, reliable and useful information concerning learner achievement. This information once obtained helps in making decisions on how to help the learner or keep them in the right direction. As such, institutions of learning plan test items which are both subjective and objective in order to measure the amount of learning that has taken place in a specified period of time after covering some prescribed content.

Grade teachers attributed the decline in academic performance to the orphans' absenteeism. It was found that most of the orphans who stayed away from school tended to become drug and substance abusers. This revelation is in line with what was observed by Owen (2001) who indicated that absenteeism and truancy often led pupils into drug addiction. The result of absenteeism from school was poor performance in academic work. The reasons for absenteeism on the part of the orphans were various; some orphans attributed absenteeism challenges arising from sourcing money to complement their guardians. The orphans had to attach themselves somewhere to earn money for some requirements that their guardians seemed to be failing to meet. This enthusiasm in the orphans to engage in income generating activities to meet their physiological needs is in line with Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow (1943) stated that the deficiency of basic needs delays

people from progressing to the next higher level. The involvement of the orphaned pupils in income generating activities often leads to frequent absenteeism from school. Frequent absenteeism as argued by Ajibola (2011) in the study he conducted in Nigeria on Examination Malpractice leads to poor performance among pupils as they miss out on a lot of things taught.

### **5.6 Extent to which death of parents affect pupil performance**

To further establish the effects of loss of parents on academic performance of the orphans, data on two years termly (term one and term two) test results were analysed. The findings showed that the performance of the orphans before and after the death of their parents varied. More and more pupils performed badly after the death of their parents. For instance, the mean scores for term one test attest to this fact. Performance in English (before 55.8025, after 43.0933), Mathematics (before 53.2800, after 40.3889), Science (before 51.9200, after 42.2466), Biology (before 56.4933, after 43.5662) and Religious Education/Art (before 61.9620, after 47.0385). The differences in the mean score are a clear testimony that the death of parents had a negative effective on orphaned pupils' performance. The study has also shown that before the death of one or both parents, the pupils' performance was above 40% which is considered as a pass mark in secondary schools in Zambia. Poor academic performance is perpetuated when there is no concern shown by parents or guardians in the academic pursuits of the children. The findings showed that very few guardians were involved in the academic affairs of their wards. This came out clearly in the question that required the orphans to state who was helping them out with their homework. Forty-one orphans indicated that they depended on themselves whenever they were given Homework while twenty stated that they received some help from their friends. When the two groups of orphans are put together, it will be noted that about sixty-one orphans were not receiving attention to do with their school work.

In the interview with the School managers the lack of concern by the guardians in the academic wellbeing of their wards also came out strongly. The School managers raised concern on the fact that most guardians did not in most cases bother to attend Open Days, PTA or AGMs meetings organised by schools where the academic issues of the pupils were discussed. Njovu (2005) in his research findings stated that when parents or those acting in the place of parents agreed to attend

Open Days and AGMs they were informed of their children's performance and this later helped them to be involved in the education of their children.

### **5.7 Summary**

The chapter discussed the research findings and compared the findings in relation with other authorities on the subject matter. It was found out that orphans manifested varying psychological reactions following the demise of their parents. The study noted that some of the misconduct recorded against pupils in schools especially among the orphans were as a result of these psychological reactions. The study also observed that orphans needed a lot of guidance and counseling to enable them overcome their stressing moments. The study also revealed that orphans in certain cases orphans had to shift from their original homes to live with other relatives or other relatives joining them in their parents' homes to assume the role of guardians. More often than not orphans found themselves striving to fit into the new environments. The study has shown that changes in the living conditions forced some orphans to be involved in income generating activities in most cases made them miss lessons resulting in poor academic performance. The chapter ends by revealing that there was some significant difference in academic performance of the pupils before and after becoming orphans.

The next chapter concludes and makes recommendations on the study including a proposal for future research in this area.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Conclusion

From the analysis done on the relationship between the loss of parents and academic performance among secondary school pupils in Mufulira, there is evidence that orphaned pupils are more likely to get entangled in poverty for the rest of their lives. The loss of parents often results in the loss of major earners of income, a situation giving rise to the development of varying levels of poverty in the lives of the orphans. Sharma (2006) presented that the change in the household wealth is bound to have a greater bearing on both the social and personal development of the orphans and as such may limit their lifelong earning potential as well.

Orphaned children are at a higher risk of having the rest of their lives encroached upon by poverty. However, to prevent this from happening there needs to exist effective mitigation policies in education which should be strictly implemented, monitored and evaluated from time to time. It is a known fact that education not only has an indispensable bearing on the formation of social capital but also on the future earnings of an individual. As a custodians of its citizens' human rights, the government must ensure that the education of orphans is by no means compromised than that of the non-orphaned because orphanhood is not by choice.

#### 6.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. School managers should ensure that there is strict adherence to the annual updating of records on the parental status of the pupils in all government secondary schools in order for the relevant authorities to have the correct record of what is happening on the ground
2. Government should provide more funding to the social welfare departments so that as many orphans as possible be sponsored at secondary schools.
3. The MESVTEE should ensure that;
  - i) The criteria of selection for sponsorship by the social welfare department be as transparent as possible to avoid suspicion of corruption and nepotism

- ii) Super grade one secondary schools have at least three teachers for guidance and counseling allocated to them so that pupils at the schools can have greater opportunities of accessing them for counseling on how to survive the loss of parents and other academic issues.
  - iii) Schools undertake deliberate ventures where double orphans can work and earn money which should be debited directly into the school account for BUF. This will help reduce the stress that the orphans go through as they look for quick private jobs (in the case of those who do not manage to find regular sponsors. This will also help to reduce on the exploitation of the desperate orphans.
4. As many companies as possible be encouraged to establish orphanages for secondary school pupils as part of their co-operate responsibility .This will help in replacing the extended family which in most cases appears to have gone into oblivion.

### **6.3. Suggestion for future research**

The study focused on the relationship between the loss of parents and academic performance in selected government secondary schools in Mufulira. The study ought to be seen as a preliminary effort in this study area. There is therefore, need for further research which may focus on issues such as:

- i) The differences in the academic performance of orphans in orphanages and those living outside orphanages.
- ii) The effects of derogatory remarks on the academic attainment of orphans in Zambian primary and secondary schools.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PERMISSION LETTER



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Telephone: 291381  
Telegram: UNZA, LUSAKA  
Telex: UNZALU ZA 44370

PO Box 32379  
Lusaka, Zambia  
Fax: +260-1-292702

=====  
Date.....

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: FIELD WORK FOR MASTERS/ PhD STUDENTS

The bearer of this letter Mr./Ms. MUMA PAXYLDAH..... Computer number 513801970..... is a duly registered student at the University of Zambia, School of Education.

He/She is taking a Masters/PhD programme in Education. The programme has a fieldwork component which he/she has to complete.

We shall greatly appreciate if the necessary assistance is rendered to him/her/.

Yours faithfully



*Per* Daniel Ndhlovu (Dr)  
ASSISTANT DEAN POSTGRADUATE STUDIES- SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Cc: Dean-Education  
Director-DRGS

**APPENDIX B**  
**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

Dear Respondent,

This serves to give you an understanding of the purpose of this research and procedures that will be followed. Further implications for your ward's participation are explained below. Towards the end of this form, you will be requested to sign as an indication that you have agreed to allow your ward to participate in this exercise.

**1. Description**

This exercise is an educational research; the researcher is a student at the University of Zambia pursuing a Masters of Education in Educational Psychology. This research is a major requirement for the researcher to complete her program. Therefore, this exercise is purely academic.

**2. Purpose**

The researcher wishes to establish whether or not there is a relationship between the loss of parents and academic performance among pupils in secondary schools in Mufulira District. The study further seeks to gain insight into the lived experiences of the identified orphans.

**3. Consent**

Participation in this exercise is voluntary. You are free to decline to participate in this exercise.

**4. Confidentiality**

All the information that will be collected from this research will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Participants are assured that they will remain anonymous and untraceable in this research.

**5. Rights of Respondents**

All effort will be taken to ensure that the rights of participants are protected and respected.

Participants are assured that they shall suffer no harm as a result of participating in this exercise. Participants are free to ask for clarification at any point of the exercise and to inform the researcher if they feel uncomfortable about any procedure in the research.

**6. Declaration of Consent**

I have read and fully understood the information about this research. I therefore agree to participate in this exercise.

Signature: .....

Date: .....

## APPENDIX C

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR THE GUARDIANS OF THE ORPHANS

Dear Guardian,

This serves to give you an understanding of the purpose of this research and procedures that will be followed. Further implications for your ward's participation are explained below. Towards the end of this form, you will be requested to sign as an indication that you have agreed to allow your ward to participate in this exercise.

#### **1. Description**

This exercise is an educational research; the researcher is a student at the University of Zambia pursuing a Masters of Education in Educational Psychology. This research is a major requirement for the researcher to complete her program. Therefore, this exercise is purely academic.

#### **2. Purpose**

The researcher wishes to establish whether or not there is a relationship between the loss of parents and academic performance among pupils in secondary schools in Mufulira District. The study further seeks to gain insight into the lived experiences of the identified orphans.

#### **3. Consent**

Participation in this exercise is voluntary and refusal to take part will not involve any penalty or loss of services to your ward. As such, if you allow your ward to take part, you are still free to withdraw him or her any time. Your ward also has the freedom to choose not to answer particular questions and to leave out anything that he or she would prefer not to discuss.

**4. Confidentiality**

All the information that will be collected from this research will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Participants are assured that they will remain anonymous and untraceable in this research.

**5. Rights of Respondents**

All effort will be taken to ensure that the rights of participants are protected and respected. You are assured that your ward shall suffer no harm as a result of participating in this exercise. Your ward is free to ask for clarification at any point of the exercise and to inform the researcher if he or she feels uncomfortable about any procedure in the research.

**6. Declaration of Consent**

I have read (or have had explained to me) the information about this research as contained above. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and the questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I now consent voluntarily to allow my ward to participate in the study.

Signature of guardian: .....

Date: .....

Signature of Researcher: .....

Date: .....

**APPENDIX D**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE PUPILS**

Serial No:

Date of interview:

**INTRODUCTION**

I am Muma Paxyldah, a postgraduate student at the University of Zambia in the School of Education doing a Master of Education in Educational Psychology carrying out a research on the relationship between the loss of parents and academic performance in secondary schools in Mufulira District.

The information that will be obtained from you will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes only.

You are kindly requested to make sure you are as honest as possible in answering all the questions.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

**Do not write your name on any part of this document. Tick or write in the space provided.**

**Section A: Personal details**

1. Sex (a) Male  (b) Female
2. How old are you now? .....
3. What grade are you in? .....
4. How many are you in your family? .....
5. What position are you in your family? .....

6. When did your parents die? (a). Mother..... (b). Father.....

7. Who do you currently live with?

(a). Grandparents

(b). Uncle

(c). Aunt

(d). Sister

(e). Brother

(f). Friends

(g). Church member

(h). Other specify \_\_\_\_\_

8. What is the economic status of your guardian?

(a). Very rich

(b). Rich

(c). Farmer

(d). Does not work

9. Where does your guardian work?

(a). government

(b). self-trader

(c). Average

(d). Poor

**Section B**

10. Who is paying your school fees?

.....

11. Who buys your uniforms, books and other school requirements? .....

12. How many meals do you have in a day?.....

13. Do you carry any packed meal to eat during break or lunch at school? (a) Yes (b) No

(b) No

If the answer is **No** to Question 13, kindly explain why in the space below.

.....

14. Was any property grabbed from your family after the death of your parents?

(a) Yes  (b) No

15. Are you involved in any income generating activity to help either yourself or any other member of your family?

(a) Yes  (b) No

16. If your answer to Question 15 is **Yes**, then what time do you do the work?

- (a). Before school
- (b). After school
- (c). On weekends
- (d). On holidays

17. Which of the following options best describes your school attendance?

- (a). five days a week
- (b). four days a week
- (c). three times a week
- (d). two days a week

18. If your answer in question 18 is **c** or **d**, give reason(s).....

.....

19. Has your academic performance at school changed in any way after the loss of your parents?

(a) Yes  (b) No

20. If your answer to Question 19 is **Yes**, explain why. ....

.....

21. Who helps you with your homework? .....

22. Do family members of your late parents visit you to encourage you about school?

(a) Yes  (b) No

**Section C**

23. What was your psychological reaction after the death of your

i) Father .....

ii) Mother .....

24. What / who has been your source of comfort after the loss of your parents?

25. Have you had any challenges after the death of your parents which you think are affecting your performance either negatively or positively at school?

(a) Yes  (b) No

26. If your answer to Question 25 is **Yes**, Explain below.

27. Has there ever been a time when you have been discriminated against either at school or in your community for being an orphan?

(a) Yes  (b) No

28. If the answer to question 27 is **Yes**, give a brief explanation below.

29. Have you had to move from your original home to another following the death of your parents?

(a) Yes (b)

30. If your answer to question 29 is **Yes**, explain below how it affected you.

***THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION***

**APPENDIX E**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE TEACHERS**

Serial No:.....

Date of interview:.....

**INTRODUCTION**

I am Muma Paxyldah, a postgraduate student at the University of Zambia in the School of Education doing a Master of Education in Educational Psychology carrying out a research on the relationship between the loss of parents and academic performance in secondary schools in Mufulira District.

The information that will be obtained from you will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes only.

You are kindly requested to make sure you are as honest as possible in answering all the questions.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

**Do not write your name on any part of this document. Tick or write in the space provided.**

**Section A: Personal details**

1. Sex (a) Male  (b) Female
2. Age:.....
3. Your highest level of education
  - (a). Secondary teachers diploma
  - (b). Masters Degree
4. What subject(s) do you teach? .....
5. How many years have you been teaching?
6. How is the general academic performance of pupils in your subject area(s)?  
.....  
.....
7. How many double orphans do you have in your class?.....

8. How are double orphaned pupils fairing in your subject(s) compared to non- orphaned pupils?

.....  
.....

9. Did the change (if any) in the academic performance of the double orphans take place before the loss or after the loss of their parents? Please explain.

.....  
.....

10 Which of the following best describes the school attendance of the double orphans in your class?

- (a). Very good
- (b). Good
- (c). Very poor
- (d). Poor

11. If your answer in question 10 is c or d give an explanation.

.....  
.....

12. Have you ever received any report of victimisation either from class members or schoolmates of the double orphans in your class?

- (a) Yes  (b) No

13 What would you say are some of the social challenges faced by double orphans in your class?

.....  
.....

14. Are there any psychological reactions that you have noticed in any of the double orphans in your class?

.....  
.....

15. Have you ever been approached by any double orphan in your class for odd jobs to raise money for upkeep or fees?

(a) Yes

(b) No

16. If the answer to Question 15 is **Yes**, on which week day was the job done?

.....

17. Do you have in place a deliberate strategy to help the double orphans whose academic performance has done down.

.....

18. How would you describe the response of guardians to Open Days and collection of school progress reports for the wards in your class?

(a). Very good

(b). Good

(c). Very poor

(d). Poor

***THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.***

**APPENDIX F**  
**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL MANAGERS**

Your school has been picked to participate in the Research to help find out the relationship between the loss of parents and academic performance .The information you will provide is purely for academic use and will be treated with the highest degree of confidentiality. You are therefore required to be as objective as you possibly can in your responses.

**SECTION A: BIO DATA**

1. Gender (a) Male  (b) Female

1. What is your highest professional qualification?

- (a). Primary teacher's certificate
- (b). Primary teacher's diploma
- (c). Secondary teacher's diploma
- (d). University degree

2. Number of years in service.....

**Section B:**

4. Does the school have an updated written record of orphaned pupils by gender, age and category?

(a) Yes  (b) No

5. If your answer to Question 4 is **No**, give an explanation.

.....  
.....

6. How is the general academic performance of double orphaned pupils in your school compared to non-orphaned pupils?

.....  
.....

7. Are there any government departments or non-governmental organisations that sponsor any double orphans in this school?

.....  
.....

8. How does the school deal with orphaned pupils who fail to settle their Board User Fees?

.....  
.....

9. Has the school set up any deliberate policy to assist double orphans to raise money for school fees or other school requirements? Please explain.

.....  
.....

10. Have you ever had any report of double orphans being stigmatised or discriminated against within the school? Please explain.

.....  
.....

11. How would you describe the attendance of guardians for orphans to PTA meetings?

.....  
.....

12. What challenges would you say are faced by most of the double orphans in your school?

.....  
.....

***THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.***

**APPENDIX G**  
**GUIDE FOR THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION FOR ORPHANS**

1. Have there been any changes in your lives after the death of your parents?
2. What have been your experiences after the death of your parents?
  - At school
  - At home
  - In your community/neighbourhood?
3. Have there been any changes in your school performance?
4. What do you think has contributed to the changes (if any) in your academic performance after the demise of your parents /parent?
5. Have you had to move from your original home to another following the death of your parents and have you in any way been affected by the movement?
6. How is the school helping you to continue with your education?
7. What do you think the school should do in order to ensure orphans have equal education opportunities/maintain or improve on their academic performance?

***THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.***