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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF ORPHANED LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES
WITH REGARD TO PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT PROVISIONING IN ENDOLA
CIRCUIT- NAMIBIA

A thesis submitted in the fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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By

SIMON TAUKENI

Promoter

PROF. SYMPHOROSA REMBE

DECLARATION

I hereby solemnly declare that the A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF ORPHANED LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES WITH REGARD TO PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT PROVISIONING IN ENDOLA CIRCUIT- NAMIBIA is my own work. All sources I used have been acknowledged by means of complete references. This study has not been submitted before for any degree at any University.

SIMON TAUKENI

2011

Signature _____ Date _____

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to investigate the orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support provided at school and home in the Endola circuit-Namibia. The sample consisted of six orphaned learners aged between 12 to 16 years, of both genders. This sample was selected using purposive sampling. Tape recorded narrative accounts of all six orphaned learners were obtained through face-to-face in-depth interviews. A Social worker accompanied the researcher during the data collection period to counsel orphaned learners before and after each interview. The data was analyzed using the following five steps: Bracketing and phenomenological reduction, Delineating units of meaning, Clustering of units of meaning to form themes and Summarizing each interview, validating it and where necessary modifying it and Extracting general and unique themes from all the interviews and making a summary.

This study revealed that the types of psychosocial support provided by the primary schools to orphaned learners in meeting their emotional, social, physical and spiritual needs were: informing learners about bereavement, consoling orphaned learners, giving them a week off school during bereavement, registration of orphaned learners, provision of group guidance, peer support, provision of safety and security, provision of educational incentives, school feeding program and provision of textbooks and stationery. Orphaned learners received other types of support from home namely: provision of school uniforms, school fees, social grants, pocket money and support with school work at home. Orphaned learners also received support through prayers and biblical readings at home. A few orphaned learners were concerned about the discontinuation of snacks at school, the lack of food sometimes after school, the inability to pay for school fees and having to share their grants with their siblings.

Based on the findings of this study, the study concludes that even though orphaned learners were provided a week off to mourn their parents and the teachers showed

their sympathy by shaking their hands when they returned to school, these type of support did not help them to adjust to their loss. Psychosocial support provisioning is based on the understanding that children need to be loved, respected and listened to. It would be better if learners were given the time and encouragement to share and sort out their feelings in a productive and meaningful manner through the guidance and counseling process.

The study recommends that schools should have step by step bereavement support to the bereaved learners during bereavement, after bereavement and in the long-term. Further research should focus on costs and benefits of psychosocial training for teachers and school counselors, bereavement support for orphaned learners, peer counseling and school feeding programs.

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Finally, my family: my wife and children for their understanding and support every step of the way in pursuing my education ambition, thank you. Above all, I would like to thank my God for his blessing and kindness in choosing me to be what I am and what I become. Thank you my Lord!

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to a man who made my life an experience to live for, that man is my father George Mandume Taukeni. When I listened to the voices of orphaned learners describing their experiences with regard to psychosocial support in this study, I recalled my experience of growing up as a motherless boy. I came to the conclusion that indeed you were the best father ever and thank you for the psychosocial support you provided to me. Have a forever peaceful rest **DADDY**.

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ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune-deficiency Syndrome
BEAM	Basic Education Assistance Module
CDG	Comprehensive Developmental Guidance
CWG	Child Welfare Grants
ESPOVC	Education Sector Policy for Orphans and Vulnerable Children
ETSIP	Education and Training Sector Improvement Program
GSFP	Ghana School Feeding Program
HIV	Human Immune-deficiency Virus
KAPB	Knowledge Attitude Practice and Behavior
LAC	Legal Assistance Centre
MGECW	Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare
MOE	Ministry of Education
NDPs	National Development Plans
NPA	Namibia Plan of Action
NAMPOL	Namibian Police
NMU	Natural Meaning Units
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PRPs	Poverty Reduction Programs
PSS	Psycho-Social Support
SAIDE	South African Institute for Distance Education
SDF	School Development Fund
SFS	School Feeding Scheme
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNWFP	United Nations World Food Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

"Late children are early orphans." -Proverb quote-

1.1 Introduction

There is a growing concern about the increase in the number of orphaned children worldwide. The U.S. Government and its partners estimated that in 2008, 163 million children (age 0-17 years) across the globe lost one or both parents due to different causes (UNAIDS, 2010). The increase is also aggravated by the spread of the HIV and AIDS epidemic. It is estimated that about 17.5 million of these children lost one or both parents to AIDS (USG, 2009) and 1.8 million of these children reside in sub-Saharan Africa (UNAIDS, 2008).

Even though countries in the sub-Saharan African region have put in place policies, programs and other measures to ensure that orphans access necessary social services and other basic necessities many of them have been adversely affected because they do not get them. Their basic needs including access to education and psychosocial support are not met as planned (Rembe, 2006; UNAIDS, 2008).

USAID, UNICEF and UNAIDS (2002) identify three types of orphans: (i) **maternal orphans** are children under the age of 15 whose mothers have died; (ii) **paternal orphans** are children under the age of 15 whose fathers have died; and (iii) **double orphans** are children under the age of 15 whose mother and father have both died. This chapter discusses the situations of orphans in Namibia, statement of the research problem, research question, and aim of the study, objective of the study, significance of the study, delimitations of the study and the structure of the study.

1.2 Socio-economic and political background of Namibia

Namibia is a Republic which gained independence from apartheid South African rule in 1990. It is situated on the south western coast of Africa (Angula, 2010). Namibia shares borders with Botswana to the east, South Africa to the south and south east, Angola to the north and Zambia to the north east. Namibia is a large country, covering an area of approximately 824268km² (Mendelsohn, Jarvis, & Robert, 2002). According to 2008 estimates, the population is approximately 2 million inhabitants (Ambunda & De Klerk in Angula, 2010).

The population growth rate declined from 3.1% in 1991 to 2.6% in 2001. The spread of HIV and AIDS is one of the major factors contributing to this decline, and has led to other poverty related impacts on most Namibian communities (Angula, 2010). Some noticeable socio-economic challenges facing Namibia include the following: poverty, HIV and AIDS, malaria and other communicable diseases, unequal distribution of income, inadequate economic growth, high level of unemployment, gender inequality and women's empowerment and many others (National Planning Commission (NPC), 2007).

Despite these challenges, the country has been relatively successful in using its economic infrastructure for the betterment of the Namibian society (Kaaapama, Blaauw, Kaakunga & Zaaruka, 2007). The Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) is committed to stimulating and sustaining economic growth to reduce poverty and income inequality and ultimately reach the goal of improving the living standards of its people by 2030 (NPC, 2007). In this endeavor, Namibia has formulated development plans and programs based on systematic analysis of its development

challenges and priorities. They are: Vision 2030, National Development Plans (NDPs), the National Plan of Action (NPA), Poverty Reduction Programs (PRPs) and others (NPC, 2007).

There is growing awareness in Namibia of the critical need for increased economic growth. During the past 10 years, the economy has been growing at an average annual rate of less than 4% (NPC, 2007). The economy needs to grow by an average of at least 7% if the many current socio-economic challenges and inequalities are to be addressed (Kaapama, et al, 2007). Among the socio-economic challenges, is meeting the needs of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC).

Regarding political development, Namibia has achieved relative success in promoting a peaceful democracy and political stability within the framework of constitutionally guaranteed rights and democratic principles (Kaapama et al, 2007). As a result, Namibia has been able to foster widely respected democratic political processes that are characterized by regular multiparty elections, good governance, free media and respect for the constitution and the rule of law (Kaapama et al, 2007). This also ensures that the rights of all groups are observed including those of the OVC (Ministry of Women and Child Welfare, 2004). This study thus sought to gain a better understanding of how existing OVCs policies and programs in Namibia have been implemented to address the plight of orphaned learners in the Endola circuit.

1.3 Situations of orphan children in Namibia

In 2003, the total number of orphans (0-17 years) in Namibia who had lost one or both parents was estimated at 120 000 (UNICEF, 2005). While the death of parents could be due to many other causes, the increase in the number of orphans in the country has been partly attributed to the spread of the HIV and AIDS epidemic. Namibia is one of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa hardest hit by the epidemic (UNESCO, 2006). Since 1996 HIV and AIDS related illnesses have been the leading cause of death in the country. It is estimated that 50 per cent of orphans have lost their parents to AIDS (UNICEF, 2005).

An orphan child is primarily defined by age, with common agreement on the age of 18 years as the limit, as it is the legal age in the majority of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Skinner et al., 2006). The most commonly accepted definition of an orphan is a child who has lost one or both parents and is under the age of 18 years (Ministry of Education, 2008; Philippi Namibia, 2003; Skinner et al, 2006). UNESCO has estimated that by the end of the decade, there will be over 206,000 orphaned children in Namibia (UNESCO, 2006). This means that, at the current rates of infection and death, a child born in Namibia today has more than one in three chances of becoming orphaned before reaching adulthood.

The Namibian government policy on orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) recognizes the need to protect and care for the children by providing them with health care, access to education, economic opportunities, basic needs and psychosocial support (Ministry of Women and Child Welfare, 2004). Namibia has a range of policies and programs for ensuring that all children access education in line

with the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2 which is to *achieve universal primary education* by 2015 (Ministry of Women and Child Welfare, 2004). The policies and programs include among others:

(i) Exemption from the payment of the School Development Fund fees

The current regulations require that orphaned learners be fully exempted from paying contributions to the school development fund if there is proof that there is no provision for the learner's education (Namibian Government Notice, 2002).

(ii) School Feeding Scheme (SFS) for schools in poor and remote areas

The Ministry of Education runs a school feeding program. In 2006, almost 110 000 OVC were receiving nutritional support through the education system (Republic of Namibia, 2007).

(iii) The National Policy on OVC

The main goals of the policy are to strengthen the capacity of children, families, social networks, neighborhoods and communities to protect and care for OVC and to ensure that government protects and provides essential services and creates an enabling environment for affected children and families.

(iv) Child Welfare Grants (CWG)

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare provides child welfare grants to OVC themselves and to families caring for these OVC. The coverage of these grants has increased enormously in recent years, with an increase in applications handled by the Ministry going from some 28 000 children in 2004 to 76 000 in September

2007. The grant is N\$ 200 for the first child and N\$ 100 for subsequent children, up to a maximum of six children per household.

(v) Education and Training Sector Improvement Program (ETSIP).

Namibia has embarked on an ETSIP which is a 15-year strategic plan (2005-2020) for improving Namibia's education system. Within this plan, specific attention is given to the educational needs of OVC with regard to specialized training, equitable access, psychosocial support, feeding programs and steps to prevent stigmatization.

Moreover, Article 20 of the Namibian Constitution states that all persons shall have the right to education (Honcox, 2010). Primary education shall be compulsory and that the state shall provide reasonable facilities to render effective this right for every resident within Namibia, by establishing and maintaining state schools at which primary education will be provided free of charge (Honcox, 2010).

Despite the measures put in place by the government, there have been increasing concerns over the challenges facing a great number of orphaned children in Namibia who are in need of support and care. For instance, in their study on caregivers in Namibia Mnubi-Mchombu and Ocholla (2011) raised concerns about psychosocial support and counseling. Some caregivers were worried that they do not know how to take care of orphans, especially with regard to providing psychosocial support and counseling. They also found that caregivers in Namibia were unable to pay school fees or purchase uniforms or food and could not access health services due to high costs and other related problems (Mnubi-Mchombu & Ocholla, 2011).

Another pertinent concern raised by Ikela (2010) in the media was that Namibia is faced with an inadequate number of social workers to cater for the psychosocial needs of orphaned learners who need support and care. It was also reported in the local media (New Era) that a number of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) do not have birth certificates that would help them benefit from the services targeting them. According to a local daily newspaper (New Era, 2010) there were 250,000 orphans and vulnerable children reported in Namibia statistics with only 95,000 accessing child welfare grants.

Moreover, Mnubi-Mchombu and Ocholla (2011) found that most OVC in rural areas are faced with poverty and cannot afford to pay the school development fund. Unfortunately they are not aware that they can apply for an exemption. The authors stated that a few who know the procedures for applying for exemption are turned down by head teachers or principals (Mnubi-Mchombu & Ocholla, 2011) since the schools want money. Hence, failure to pay the school development fund can exclude a child from a poor household from accessing education (Honcox, 2010).

OVCs are repeatedly discriminated against in Namibian society due to a lack or ignorance of overall awareness of children's rights (Honcox, 2010). As a result of this lack of knowledge, OVCs face discrimination at home, school and in their communities. At school, they are often barred from attending lessons because they cannot afford the school fees or are financially unable to purchase the required school uniforms (Mnubi-Mchombu & Ocholla, 2011).

In the home environment, they face rejection by their family, friends and guardians. Testimonials abound of orphans being denied food, being forced to sleep outside or in the back of the houses, or being sent to work instead of attending school (Mnubi-Mchombu & Ocholla, 2011). Due to these kinds of life experiences that they endure in their early years, orphaned children are left without resources for education, healthcare, love and support required by children, making them increasingly vulnerable to dropping out of school (Subbarao & Coury, 2004). The loss of an attachment figure or parent affects every aspects of a child's life: their emotional wellbeing, physical security, mental and educational development and overall health (Maudeni, 2006).

Di Ciacco (2008) agrees that most orphaned learners in primary schools lack the experience to deal with loss and their undeveloped coping skills cause them to be more vulnerable than adults. Adults have lived multiple experiences and developed coping mechanisms to handle their losses. Heightened separation anxiety and feelings of insecurity, mistrust, abandonment, alienation and annihilation can be the result of a vulnerability created by an early loss in life (Di Ciacco, 2008).

Based on the above explanation, there is need to provide psychosocial support to orphaned learners while they are still growing up so that they can develop their coping skills and become secure in adulthood. Clinical observations have revealed that trauma, neglect, parental loss, and separation increase in the risk of insecurity as an adult (Mauder & Hunter, 2001). Other research studies in Educational Psychology have consistently shown that parental loss in childhood and the absence

of a warm, quality caretaker does effect depression in childhood and eventually in the adulthood (Cozolino, 2002; Meany, 2001).

Guidance and psychosocial support can help orphaned learners relearn who they are, that they are safe again, that they are loved and can love again (Di Ciacco, 2008). Studies have revealed that the orphanhood status is accompanied by increased levels of psychological distress such as anxiety, depression, intense guilt, shame, and anger (Atwine, Cantor-Graae & Bajunirwe, 2005; Kumakech, Cantor-Graae, Maling & Bejunirwe, 2009). These challenges may affect children's academic and social development (Weber & Plotts, 2008).

Ruiz-Casares, Thombs and Rousseau (2009) provided evidence that high rates of psychological distress are present in 1 in 6 orphaned children and adolescents in Namibia. Higher levels of anxiety, for example, are associated with poor academic performance (Weber & Plotts, 2008). If this is not addressed, it may lead to other school-related anxiety disorders such as test anxiety and school phobia (Chitiyo, Changara & Chitiyo, 2010). Moreover, some orphans are labeled, patronized, stigmatized and discriminated against, exploited and rejected. They repeatedly face fear and harassment (Shilubana & Kok, 2004). Some become victims of abuse, living on the streets (Cohen, Epstein & Amon, 2006) and dropping out of school (Evans, 2002; Taukeni, 2004) to survive the social and economic pressures they face. Poverty, lack of parental care, psychosocial and physical abuse and emotional stress-all a possible sequel to orphanhood and the stigma associated with HIV and AIDS may preclude orphans accessing education, health and other social services (UNAIDS, 2002). What some orphaned learners go through can affect their

performance at school, and their social relations with other learners, and they might become unproductive and anti-social adults in the long run (Lwin, 2001). It also leads to a lack of concentration or reduced sociability which teachers might interpret as being 'troublesome' and thereby reinforcing their isolation and helplessness (Pridmore & Yates, 2005).

The rights of orphaned learners to education may be under threat in the light of increasing poverty, over-stretched extended families, and insufficient intervention strategies to ensure quality Education for all (Ministry of Education, 2008). Orphan children are at risk of losing consistent nurture and guidance which makes it difficult for them to reach maturity and to be integrated into society (UNAIDS 2001). In Namibia most orphaned children face a number of problems. Notably, most of them are forced to head households and take care of their siblings. For instance, double orphaned households or households headed by grandparents seem more frequent in contexts where the HIV and AIDS epidemic is severe. In most cases they do not know where to get help when the need arises (Zimmer, 2009).

In her study Ruiz-Casares (2004) conducted in-depth interviews with 33 orphaned children who headed households in three regions of Namibia. She found that 60 percent of the time, children turned to other youths for emotional and material help and advice. In spite of the general satisfaction of children with the kind of help they receive, 42 percent of the child-heads interviewed had suicidal thoughts and very few had ever shared those thoughts before. A growing body of literature proves that orphaned children experience poorer psychological outcomes than non-orphans and they are more likely to have peer relationship problems (Bhargava, 2005; Cluver,

Gardener & Operario, 2008). Other findings in Ruiz-Casares (2004) revealed that children heading households are in some cases as young as 9 years old. The average age of the children heading households interviewed in Namibia was 17 and about 55 percent of the child-heads are girls. Also, one in four children said they were living without adult because they had no one to move in with. Relatives either had too many dependants or lived too far away. The second most common reason was that children did not want to be separated from siblings or did not want to abandon their homes. The third most common reason was that relatives did not want to take them in.

Historically, the extended family played a key role in the care and social integration of orphans and other vulnerable children in sub-Saharan Africa (Nyambedha, 2004). But widespread poverty often makes families unwilling or unable to foster or provide care and support to orphaned children (Townsend & Dawes, 2007). Food insecurity and reduced access to health services are clear indications that the extended family system is under strain (Foster & Williamson, 2000). In Namibia the family institution is under siege because of scarce resources so it cannot accommodate the needs of the orphaned learners (UNICEF, 2003). Violence and abuse especially of girls, is another major concern to which orphaned children are particularly vulnerable (Ministry of Education, 2005). More than 1100 rapes and attempted rapes are reported to the Namibian Police (NAMPOL) each year, and more than one-third of these rape victims are children under the age of 18 (NAMPOL, 2003-2005). Despite these high figures, research suggests that child rape is often unreported, with many children fearing that they will be blamed for the situation if they speak out (NAMPOL, 2003-2005). A study in Namibia by UNICEF (2006) revealed disturbing findings

about children's experiences of forced sex; 25 percent of respondents aged 10-14 and 15 percent of respondents age 10-15 had experienced one or more forms of sexual abuse. Half of the 10-15 year-olds who had already had sex said that they had been forced into it, or had been paid or given a gift in exchange for sex. The sexual partners were often much older. In the 15-24 age group, 24 percent of those who had already had sexual intercourse said that this was because they were forced, paid or offered a gift. Most shocking of all, there was a significant incidence of rape or inappropriate sexual touching of both males and females by their own parents or caregivers (UNICEF, 2006). The combination of HIV and AIDS, poverty and lack of economic empowerment for women and girls increases children's vulnerability to sexual exploitation in Namibia.

The above discussions show that despite the Namibian government's policies and programs to ensure OVC's basic rights are met, there have been some limitations. There is no clarity on whether and how psychosocial support needs are provided to orphaned learners by schools as outlined in the policies and programs. In the Namibian context, the Ministry of Education (2008) insists that heads of educational institutions ensure at least two compassionate teachers per school are comprehensively trained and that they have the time and venue to provide counseling to learners with psychosocial needs. Psychosocial support is defined in this study as an ongoing process of meeting the emotional, social, physical and spiritual needs of orphaned learners all of which are essential elements for meaningful and positive human development (Philippi Namibia, 2003; Richer, Foster & Sherr, 2006). It is provided through interpersonal interactions that occur in caring relationships in everyday life, such as at home, school and in the community. This

includes love and protection that children experience in family environments as well as the interventions that assist children and families with coping and life skills (Richer, Foster & Sherr, 2006). This simply means that children who grow up without love and care from adults devoted to their wellbeing are at higher risk of developing psychological problems (Richter, 2004).

In the event when learners are orphaned and left alone schools should step in and provide support to the affected orphaned learners. With a growing number of orphaned learners in schools, teachers themselves need to understand what is happening, and have plans in place to deal with the psychosocial problems facing orphaned learners, both proactively and reactively. Failure to satisfy the psychological and social needs of the child at certain stages in his/her development may result in a warped personality which can become a potential danger to society and a source of unhappiness (Ferron, 1992).

Providing psychosocial support to orphan and other vulnerable learners has been a concern of the researcher of this study since he started teaching more than nine years ago. It all started in one of the rural schools in Namibia where the majority of learners came from very poor families. Learners in that particular school had unique needs and their plight was beyond the comprehension of many teachers at that particular time. Apart from their inability to meet the school requirements such as paying school fees or buying school uniforms, they were usually late or absent. However, it was very rare to find teachers looking for the reasons behind the absence or tardiness of these learners. Often teachers did not know how to respond to orphan learners. Orphaned learners' psychosocial needs have received little

attention (Dalen, Nakitende & Musisi, 2009; Ntseane & Solo, 2007) in Namibia to provide a better understanding of how these children are dealing with the loss of their parents and what type of support and care is provided to them. This study focused on orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support provisioning at school and at home. It sought the views of orphaned learners on how they experienced psychosocial support provisioning in schools. The study covered six selected primary schools in the Endola circuit which has a fast growing number of orphans most of whom come from poor rural areas. The current number of orphaned learners enrolled in 12 selected primary schools in Endola circuit Namibia is presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Number of orphaned learners

Name of school	Number of orphans
Endola Primary School	115
Engungumano Primary School	63
Epundi Primary School	84
Eudafano Primary School	108
Nasheya Primary School	96
Omungwelume Primary School	120
Ongenga English Primary School	30
Ongenga Primary School	152
Onhenga Primary School	91
Oushakeneno Primary School	137
Pahangwashime Primary School	96
Peumba Primary School	134
Total: 1226	
Source: School principals in Endola circuit (March, 2010)	

Table 1 shows that there were about 1226 orphaned learners enrolled in 12 selected primary schools in Endola circuit. According to the school principals the number of orphaned learners in schools has increased almost every school term.

1.4 Statement of the research problem

The Namibian government has put in place policies and programs to protect and care for OVC by providing them with health care, access to education, economic opportunities, basic needs and psychosocial support (Ministry of Women and Child Welfare, 2004). However, it is not clear whether the general needs of orphaned learners as identified in the policies and programs are adequately addressed (Mnubi-Mchombu & Ocholla, 2011; WHO/UNAIDS, 2008; Shilubana & Kok, 2004; UNICEF, 2003; UNAIDS 2001). Specifically, it is also not clear whether and how psychosocial support needs as outlined in the policies and programs are provided to orphaned learners by schools (Dalen, Nakitende & Musisi, 2009; Ntseane & Solo, 2007; UNICEF, 2006; Shilubana & Kok, 2004; Ruiz-Casares, 2004).

This study focused on orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support provisioning at school and home. The Endola circuit is situated in a rural area where most learners are unable to meet school requirements such as paying school fees, wearing school uniforms, and attending school. This study endeavored to fill this gap by finding out orphaned learners' experiences and thereby enhancing their educational, personal, emotional, and social lives.

1.5 Research questions

The research question in this study evolved from the background, and the statement of the problem stated above. It was as follows:

- 1.5.1 What psychosocial support do orphaned learners in Endola Circuit experience at school and home?
- 1.5.2 What are the implication of these experiences for guidance and counseling?

1.6 Aim of the study

The study sought to understand orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support in six selected primary schools in the Endola circuit. It also looked at what implications of these experiences for guidance and counseling.

1.7 Objectives of the study

The specific objective of this study was to:

- 1.7.1 Understand orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support provided at school and at home
- 1.7.2 Find out implications of these orphaned learners' experiences for guidance and counseling.

1.8 Significance of the study

There are concerns that the support system for orphaned learners is weakening as a result of the scarcity of resources as the number of orphans increases. Orphaned children frequently lack adequate psychosocial support and there is little available research, and increasing concerns regarding their experiences with regard to psychosocial support provision. The information generated in terms of learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support provisioning, and implications of these experiences for guidance and counseling might be used to inform, shape and influence intervention strategies. It might also address gaps in knowledge about current practice regarding the provisioning of psychosocial support at school and at home. Thus, the study might be used by the key stakeholders such as regional

school counselors, Ministry of Education policy makers and planners and educational psychologists to provide the necessary intervention.

The findings of this study might also form the basis upon which a model of psychosocial support to orphaned learners and other vulnerable children is devised. The study has potential to provide a good foundation for researchers and other individuals who may be interested in pursuing further investigation into the provision of psychosocial support and guidance and counseling in Namibian primary schools or any other problem related to the field of Educational Psychology and Inclusive Education in general.

1.9 Delimitations of the study

As discussed in the previous section, the study focused on six selected orphaned learners' experiences with psychosocial support provided at school and at home in six selected primary schools in the Endola circuit only. Orphaned learners who were not enrolled in one of the six selected primary schools in the Endola circuit at the time of the data collection were not included in the investigation.

Additionally, in this study the target population was the school boys and girls whose mothers or fathers or both parents died and they were 6 to 14 and 15 to 18 years of age enrolled in six selected primary schools in the Endola circuit during the data collection period. Moreover, although there are Junior Secondary, Combined and Secondary schools in the Endola circuit, only Primary schools were used in the study.

1.10 Operational definitions of key words of the study

1.10.1 Orphaned learner

An orphaned learner is a school-going “child who has lost one or both parents because of death and is under the age of 18 years” (Ministry of Education, 2008:5).

1.10.2 Experience

An experience is directed toward an object by virtue of its meaning (psychosocial support) from the first-person point of view (orphaned learners). What meanings do orphaned learners provided with psychosocial support give to this experience?

1.10.3 Psychosocial support

Psychosocial support is defined as an ongoing process of meeting emotional, social, physical and spiritual needs of learners, all of which are considered essential elements of meaningful and positive development (Family Health International in Kayombo, Mbwambo & Massila, 2005; Philippi Namibia, 2003).

1.10.4 Guidance and counselling

Guidance and counseling is a professional field which has a broad range of activities, programs and services geared toward assisting individuals to understand themselves, their school environment and their world and also to develop adequate capacity for making wise choices and decisions (Kauchak, 2011; UNESCO, 2000). Thus, guidance and counseling support has been introduced in schools to assist learners overcome the number of challenges they experience at home and school in the areas relating to their academic, social and emotional concerns (Denga, 2001).

1.11 The structure of the study

Chapter 1: Presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, aim, objectives, significance, limitations and delimitations.

Chapter 2: Reviews related literature according to the themes that underpin the study for example: Orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support and implications for guidance and counseling. It also discusses the attachment theory.

Chapter 3: Discusses the interpretive paradigm, the population, the sample and the purposive sampling strategy. It further discusses interviews, data analysis, data presentation, ethical considerations and trustworthiness of the study.

Chapter 4: Presents biographical sketches and descriptions of orphaned learners' experiences.

Chapter 5: Presents themes that emerged from the descriptions of orphaned learners' experiences.

Chapter 6: Discusses themes and the key findings of the study.

Chapter 7: Presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

"The doors we open and close each day decide the lives we live." -Flora Whittemore-

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews related literature based on the main research question of the study which sought to understand orphaned learners' experiences regarding psychosocial support provisioning at school and home. The experience of being orphaned often involves the loss of an important attachment figure and/or a disruption of other relationships (Wilson, Giese, Meintjes, Croke & Chamberlain, 2002). Because of this, concepts from the attachment theory and the literature on orphans, psychosocial support and school guidance and counseling feature strongly in most sections of this chapter.

2.2 Theoretical framework

2.2.1 Orphaned learners and the attachment theory

In this study the researcher uses the attachment theory to discover orphaned learners' experiences regarding psychosocial support. For this reason, Bowlby's (1988) Attachment Theory was used to explain each individual orphaned learner's experiences and behaviors in terms of the disruption of affection bonds and social actions impacting on psychosocial support provisioning.

Howe, Brandon, Hinings and Schofield (1999) defined the Attachment theory as:

A theory of personality development which demands that a great interest be taken in the interaction between the growing child and his or her social environment, between infants and their caregivers, between children and their families, and between individuals and other people. The character of these interactions is believed to have a profound bearing on children's social and emotional competence (Pg. 14).

In order to understand the effects of death, it is necessary to understand the concept of attachment. The Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969) underpins the concept of change and death. It advocates that attachment is formed when affection bonds with others are established and grief is the reaction when such bonds are broken or threatened (Bowlby, 1988). The relevance of the attachment theory to the present study was that it provided an understanding of the supportive relationship (Bennet & Saks, 2006) needed by the orphaned learner, whose bond with the attachment figure was broken when the parent (s) died.

The supporting relationship that bonds a child to the parent and facilitates the fulfillment of the child's needs is explained by the attachment theory, which was developed by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth (Bettmann, 2006; Holmes, 2001). Thus, attachment is a lasting psychological connectedness between human beings (Bowlby, 1988). It has been argued in the previous literature that attachment derives from a human need for security and safety that will extend throughout life.

In this sense, there are three major patterns of attachment: secure, anxious resistant and anxious avoidant. A secure attachment refers to a situation where an individual is sure that the caregiver is always available and is prepared to give help when requested. Anxious resistant attachment promotes the establishment of uncertainty, about whether the parent(s) or the caregiver(s) will be available or responsive when needed. Anxious avoidant attachment results in the individual having no confidence and not expecting the parent(s) or the caregiver(s) to be available when required (Nelson & Rae, 2004).

According to Nelson and Rae (2004) children can be either: secure or anxious resistant or anxious avoidant as a result of the type of attachment they have with their parents or caregivers. They behave as follows:

Secure: Confident child, happy to separate appropriately and plan for future.
Anxious resistant: A child who is distressed at separation and anxious about friendships.
Anxious avoidant: A child, who appears detached, making poor relationships, may be hostile (Pg.8).

Attachment is a bond or tie between an individual and an attachment figure. It is thus a tie based on the need for safety, security and protection. This need is paramount in infancy and childhood, when the developing child is immature and vulnerable (Prior & Glaser, 2006). Good attachment is crucial for subsequent satisfactory relationships and lays the foundation for many other aspects of development. An infant or young child who is securely attached is free to learn; trust in their primary caregiver and can be transferred to other adults. In infancy, close encounters with other adults and other children are a rich source of stimulation (Stevenson, 2007).

Payne cited in Pillay (2009) maintains that patterns of attachment behavior and defensive mechanisms are often maintained across the life cycle and affect relationships with parents, peers, society, partners and children. Hence, it seems the loss of an attachment figure impacts greatly on the sense of security and safety of the orphaned child. Adolescent orphaned learners who do not have the secure base of having their parents to guide and support them may need alternative caregivers to provide the roles which are missing (Pillay, 2009). The behavior of the child that develops when he or she is seeking a secure base is called attachment behavior and it is trigger by separation from the attachment figure (Holmes, 2003).

Once bonding and attachment have been established with the caregiver, separation anxiety also develops. This anxiety relates to the anxiety about losing or becoming separated from a loved one. The major and most common reactions orphaned learners experience are shock, anger, grief, sorrow, withdrawal, numbness, disbelief and ultimately acceptance and the continuation of life (Nelson & Rae, 2004). Parents are normally expected to provide for their children's material and non-material needs, including their emotional and social needs. They are also expected to provide a secure base from which the child can explore the world and to which they can return for comfort if they are stressed or frightened (Marvin, Cooper, Hoffman & Powell, 2002). Most orphaned learners find it difficult to establish reliable and consistent caring relationships at school and their situation negatively affects their academic progress and their social interaction with others.

As Black (2005) noted, the behavior of orphaned children between the ages of 15-17 years involves mood swings. Withdrawal from their friends, poor school performance and high-risk behavior could be an expression of grief. Research has shown that children and adolescents with secure attachments have an advantage in measures of academic, social and emotional functioning (Waters, Weinfield & Hamilton, 2000).

The different attachment patterns (behaviors) presented above are relevant to this study because they have the potential to provide a better explanation for the type of relationships the orphaned learners have with their caregivers, peers and teachers as they relate their experiences. It could be that the orphaned learners are enthusiastic and willing to listen to the advice through the guidance and counseling offered at school and at home. It could also be that they are hostile towards

caregivers and teachers. Some of them might experience rejection from caregivers, peers and teachers. Psychosocial support can play a significant role in their lives.

Overall, Wimpenny (2006) warns that orphaned children do not just move on and end their relationship with the deceased parent(s). They continue to have a relationship with them throughout their lives. Significantly, research around the world during the past 50 years has provided strong support for the idea that caregiver sensitivity and emotional availability are keys in determining the children's attachment security (O'Connor, 2003). This approach allows the professionals dealing with orphaned learners to help them redefine their relationship with their lost loved one and hold onto meaningful memories. Failure by caregivers to recognize and address poor social adjustment and associated mental symptoms will aggravate the child's psychological problems (Marsh et al, 2003).

2.3 Orphaned learners' experiences with psychosocial support

The purpose of this study was to understand orphaned learners' experiences regarding psychosocial support in the Endola circuit and the implications of these experiences for guidance and counseling. Feelings of loss are a life experience common to all of us. Such experiences touch and affect everyone, as we move through the different stages in our lives from early infancy to old age. We witness many changes within ourselves and significant others via the events of life. Just as life is ever changing, so are our life experiences (Nelson & Rae, 2004). According to Bowlby's (1988) Attachment Theory, a loss of a loved person is one of the most intensely painful experiences any human can suffer. And not only is it painful to experience but it is also painful to witness.

2.3.1 Orphaned learners and school

The majority of studies on orphanhood suggest that orphaned learners are at higher risk of dropping out of school (Bicego, Rutstein & Johnson, 2003; Case, Paxson & Ableidinger, 2003; Taukeni, 2004). These studies found that orphaned learners, relative to case et al (2003) from 10 countries in sub-Saharan Africa to examine the impact of orphanhood the non-orphaned are less likely to be attending school. A study by Case, et al (2003) and on school enrolment found that orphaned learners were significantly less likely than non-orphaned learners to be enrolled in school.

In their study, which is based on data from 28 countries, Ainsworth and Filmer (2002) claimed that the relationship between orphanhood and school attendance was inconsistent, and dependent on the overall enrolment rate in the country. Only countries with low or moderate rates of enrolment found under-enrolment of orphaned learners relative to non-orphans. Orphaned learners may feel overwhelmed by the barrage of questions they are asked and they may be taunted because they feel different and some may refuse to go to school (Smith, 1999).

A different study done by Deiniger, Garcia and Subbarao (2001) argues that national educational policies can impact on school attendance rates for orphaned and other vulnerable children. Their study examined education and health outcomes among orphans in Uganda and found that orphans and other vulnerable children were not discriminated against in terms of school enrolment in settings where sectorial policies were adequate but faced discrimination where policies were inadequate.

Other research, for instance, Bicego, Rutstein and Johson (2003) reason that an orphaned learner is less likely to be at his or her proper educational level than a child who has both parents living. The effect is stronger at young ages (ages 6-10) than older ages (11-14). Furthermore, double orphaned learners are less likely to be at their proper level than single orphaned learners. For single orphaned learners, a mother's death causes more deterioration in education at the primary school ages, as compared to a father's death (Bicego et al, 2003). Some orphaned learners had experience a lapse in concentration during school time, which impacts on their school performance. In the study conducted by Jackson (2008) revealed that the orphaned learners interviewed admitted that they felt sad, were forgetful and often lapsed into daydreaming, indicating their pre-occupation with thoughts about the deceased parents.

The importance of schools as emotionally safe places for children's emotional and developmental needs is to ensure that children are supported and strengthened (Laurent cited in Jackson, 2008). The reaction of the teachers and peers determines how orphaned learners deal with grief experiences in the school environment. Conversely, some orphaned learners may find that school is the place where they can express their feelings. They may become withdrawn or aggressive. Some of them become more vulnerable and anything can trigger tears (Pillay, 2009). On the other hand orphaned learners may completely immerse themselves in their schoolwork in order to forget or avoid dealing with their grief. Their achievements in academia may be misinterpreted as reflecting that the orphaned learners are not affected by the death of the parent (Pillay, 2009).

In the researcher's view, the school can offer a valuable and consistent source of support as it plays such a significant part in learners' academic lives. Schools and teachers can help orphaned learners who have experienced psychological and social problems concentrate during class activities. This can make a significant and important difference. It is therefore important that schools provide a secure environment particularly for orphaned children.

Interventions in schools may help them develop a sense of reality which reinforces the fact that life still goes on and that there are many possibilities and a hope for the future. Teachers and schools can provide support by assisting the orphaned learners to adjust to the loss within the school environment. Teachers could lessen the workload and provide emotional support when the child becomes distressed (Pillay, 2009). This is only possible, however, if the teachers are adequately equipped with the skills necessary to intervene in such situations of distress. An inappropriate response may cause further anxiety and confusion in the orphaned child (Pillay, 2009).

There are a range of activities and topics which particularly focus upon developing children's emotional literacy, self-awareness and problem-solving skills. Nelson and Rae (2004) suggest that topics which help to generate discussion and to promote children's understanding of loss, death and bereavement may include the following: feelings, growing and changing, moving house, losing friends, starting or changing schools, new siblings, adoption, step-parents, illness and being in hospital and death and its rites and rituals. The study would like to explore whether, in orphaned learners' experiences, teachers use these methods to support them.

One of the strategies to support orphaned learners is through the support of friends and the school community. At the outset, it is important that the orphaned learner's peer group are made aware of the loss and given an opportunity to discuss their feelings in the absence of the bereaved child (Nelson & Rae, 2004). Schools can also use the Circles of Friends approach which recognizes that a child who displays distress and difficult behavior is likely to suffer from isolation from their peer group both in and out of school (Newton, Taylor & Wilson, 1996). The Circles of Friends technique was subsequently evaluated using a carefully controlled experimental design (Frederickson & Turner, 2003) and was again shown to increase the social inclusion of learners aged between 6 and 12 years who were displaying emotional and behavioral difficulties (Miller, 2003).

Circles of Friends facilitate the active participation of the peer group in supporting the focal pupil in the search for realistic solutions to the inevitable problems faced by any child who is rejected or alienated within school (Miller, 2003). Within the psychosocial support framework the technique may be seen to be working towards the creation of a friendship group for a specified learner as an attempt to turn alienation within the peer culture towards acceptance (Miller, 2003). Another strategy through which schools can support an orphaned child is to encourage a return to school (Nelson & Rae, 2004).

“There will be individual differences in terms of how much time an orphaned learner may require to return to school, but it is important to understand a long period of absence from school can cause difficulties” (Nelson & Rae, 2004: 20). When a pupil returns to school after bereavement, teachers and school staff should be informed

about the learner's situation. The orphaned learner or learners should be informed that the staff is aware of the situation. The school and the learner should together negotiate a contact person who should be available to the bereaved pupil or pupils when they need to talk (Nelson & Rae, 2004). This may be a member of the teaching staff or a member of the support staff who may well have developed a relationship with the child prior to the loss.

This forum might encourage the schools to identify orphaned learners who are in need of psychosocial support and encourage other learners to support them. An increasing range of approaches attempting to utilize the power of the peer group can now be found in educational practice (Cowie & Wallace, 2000). In school specifically, to aid the inclusion of learners who experience difficulties that can lead to their alienation in mainstream contexts, there has been an increasing use of the Circle of Friends technique (Miller, 2003).

The study might also find out whether the schools in Endola had established the Circle of Friends which has the potential to benefit orphaned children in terms of peer support. This approach is the most relevant to the context of the present study because of lack of adequate school counselors to reach out to all orphaned learners (Miller, 2003). The majority of primary schools in the Endola circuit are in rural areas, which it is hoped, will be another contributing factor in providing psychosocial support.

2.3.2 Orphaned learners and vulnerability

Vulnerability is not an absolute condition; there are degrees of vulnerability, depending on the condition and the situation of the orphaned child. However, Skinner et al (2006) reason that the most vulnerable children are those who have no one to play the key caring role in their lives and to protect their rights. As the HIV and AIDS pandemic grips the world in its claws of death, millions of young children are left orphaned and vulnerable. The children may be affected socially, psychologically, behaviorally, spiritually and educationally (Pillay, 2009).

School learners experiencing orphanhood are one of many groups of vulnerable children that need care and support (Wilson, Giese, Meintjes, Croke & Chamberlain, 2002). It is critical that local stakeholders be involved in the process of deciding on the types of support that would be most appropriate to assist orphaned learners. Research demonstrates that, in an area with limited resources and large number of vulnerable children, targeting all vulnerable children may not be feasible and services may instead need to focus on the ultra-vulnerable ones (Williamson, 2000).

The identification of vulnerable children can be facilitated through increased awareness of warning signs of vulnerability, and through creating opportunities for children and caregivers to speak about and share their experiences and problems (Wilson, et al, 2002). Further Wilson, et al (2002) suggest that teachers can draw on a range of creative techniques to provide opportunities for children to communicate their experiences and need for support. For example, learners can be asked to construct their memory boxes with teachers as a means to exploring their life experiences of their past and of their caregivers (Morgan, 2002). It is not yet clear

what teachers in the Endola support orphaned learners to cope with feelings of grief in the school.

The vast majority of children go to school, and teachers are in an excellent position to notice signs of vulnerability in a child, or to notice when a child is frequently absent from school or leaves school altogether. According to the researcher's own observation support can be provided to children through existing programs, such as the school feeding scheme, emergency relief food parcels, fee exemptions, free school uniforms and the clinic based nutrition scheme. Physical support is one of the key elements of psychosocial support since a child that is taken care of physically is likely to be happy, feel valued and be willing to socialize with other children.

Wilson, et al (2002) found that the reality is that many of the schools not only fail to address vulnerability, but actually contribute to vulnerability by punishing children for not concentrating in class, for lateness or poor attendance and for not paying fees. Although there is limited understanding of the full effects of orphanhood on educational outcomes in Namibia, there is evidence to indicate that some orphaned learners are particularly vulnerable to drop out from school, delayed or intermittent enrolment, and poor performance in school (Evans, 2002).

The inability of caregivers to meet basic needs, a breakdown of support systems, stigmatization, lack of parenting, household demands on children's time and financial and psychological stress are some of the challenges these children face (Kinghorn, Coombe, McKay & Johnson, 2002). Child development theorists argue that failure to meet the basic needs of children can have a detrimental impact on long-term

developmental outcomes (Hormath, 2001). Many areas of vulnerability that face orphaned learners include hunger, being unable to pay school fees, and poor access to health care services (Ainsworth & Filmer, 2002). If these needs are not being met, children might endure stress from worry as well as insecurity that can result in their dropping out of school or performing poorly academically. Therefore, psychosocial support provision should be implemented fully in schools in order to keep orphaned learners attending school so that they become successful and live a better life.

In other African countries such as South Africa, it was reported that one of the greatest threats to the fulfillment of the needs and rights of children is the death and illness of adults responsible for their care and support, particularly in the context of severe and widespread poverty (Wilson, et al, 2002). It is of utmost importance that vulnerable orphaned learners be identified for purposes of referrals and be provided with psychosocial support sufficiently and appropriately.

According to Harrison and Harrington (2001), adolescent orphaned learners may not see the need for professional help and would prefer to use relatives and friends to verbalize their vulnerability. Those adolescents with multiple vulnerabilities may have more depressive symptoms which may need the intervention of a professional (Harrison & Harrington, 2001). There can be long-term consequences that manifest themselves later in life. These problems may include ongoing, intense grief reactions, personality disturbances, depression and difficulty with intimate relations or ongoing somatization (Pillay, 2009). What is most needed in this context is school and home based psychosocial support after the death of one or both of the learners' parents.

2.4 Psychosocial support

The present study used the term psychosocial support in the research inquiries that were carried out in the Endola circuit to better understand orphaned learners' experiences. As Shrestha (2007) pointed out, we are social human beings and we live in societies. Our thoughts, emotions and behavior (psychological aspects) towards the social aspects (family, society, culture, norms and values) or society towards us is different. This interrelation between the psychological aspects and the social aspects is called the psychosocial.

If the society accepts the individual's behavior, he or she can adjust in the society and show good daily functioning. But, if the individual cannot balance the two, it impacts on his or her thinking, emotions and behavior, which leads to psychosocial problems (lack of concentration, fear, and guilt) and he or she develops bad daily functioning (Shrestha, 2007). The psychosocial pertains to the influence of social factors on an individual's mind or behavior, and to the interrelation between behavioral and social factors.

It is in this regard that the study used the term psychosocial support as support that addresses the ongoing psychological and social problems that affect orphaned learners. It is generally believed that psychosocial support can alleviate suffering, strengthen social ties and integration, provide emotional support, and promote coping strategies. Psychosocial support is therefore an ongoing process of meeting emotional, social, physical and spiritual needs of a child (Philippi Namibia, 2003). Below is discussion of the essential elements of psychosocial support.

2.4.1 Essential elements of psychosocial support

2.4.1.1 Mental support

Mentally healthy children and adolescents develop the ability to experience a range of emotions (including joy, connectedness, sadness, and anger) in appropriate and constructive ways. They possess positive self-esteem and respect for others; and harbor a deep sense of security and trust in themselves and the world (Hagan, Shaw & Duncan, 2008). They are able to function in developmentally appropriate ways in the context of family, peers, school and community (Hagan, Shaw & Duncan, 2008).

Mental support includes the support that orphaned learners who experience mental health problems receive to help them cope with life experiences after losing their parents. Successful psychosocial support provisioning to orphaned learners in schools and at home results in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people, and the ability to adapt and cope with the loss (McDonald, 2000). It is therefore an integral part of effective primary care for the child.

Mental support incorporates the social, emotional and behavioral aspects of development and therefore expands the potential scope of services from treatment, prevention, health promotion and early intervention (Grantmakers in Health, 2008). This means that orphaned learners identified as at risk or having behavioral and emotional problems, need school-based psychosocial support interventions, mental health consultation and collaboration with child care and other providers, which can often address problems before they become severe. In case of severe cases schools and caregivers need to refer the child to a specialist.

2.4.1.2 Emotional support

Emotional support involves security, encouragement, motivation, care, self-esteem, confidence, love, trust and a sense of belonging, guidance and understanding (Nyawasha, 2009). Orphaned learners need to be heard and need to learn to express their feelings in an appropriate manner. UNAIDS (2001) found that emotional suffering appears in various forms for everyone (e.g. depression, aggression, drug abuse, insomnia, failure to thrive, malnutrition, etc). Orphaned learners may not understand the situation and therefore cannot express their grief effectively and even if they could express their feelings, there is often no one willing to listen. Sengendo and Nambi (1997) confirm that children are punished for showing their negative emotions, thereby adding to their pain. In most cases orphaned children are not given the required support and encouragement to express their emotions nor are they guided to deal with them.

As a result, orphaned learners who are frustrated, fearful and depressed may fail to concentrate in class and, therefore, perform badly. Failure by the school and the home systems to recognize these symptoms and address them aggravate the child's psychological problems (Sengendo & Nambi, 1997). Thus emotional support should be provided to orphaned learners to help them cope better with the loss. In schools, there is an obvious lack of appropriately trained teachers to identify emotional problems and then offer individual or group support. UNAIDS (2001) supports the view that:

Teachers should be aware of what is happening in a child's life. Perhaps a child is truant from school for long periods of time, does not pay attention in class or becomes aggressive playing outside. From a teacher's point of view, this child could be considered a 'problem' child in need of reprimanding. However, it may not be a bad child, but a child who is having trouble coping with a difficult situation (Pg.29).

(i) Grief and trauma

Dyer (2003) advises that grief is a common experience that can be encountered many times during a life time, as it does not discriminate against age, race, sex, education, economic status, religion or culture. Also, Fiorini and Muller (2006) view grief as a normal and natural reaction to loss and not as a pathological condition. Even Bowlby (1980) in his Attachment Theory claims that grief instinctively occurs and is focused on resolution and adaptation. Human beings have a strong need for attachment. Thus, when attachments are terminated there is a need to confront painful emotional issues.

When bereavement occurs, children may find the intensity of these emotions too difficult to deal with in an appropriate manner and the way of expressing these feelings may also be in conflict with each other. Grief responses are general responses to separation and loss. Behavior responses making up the grieving process are pro-survival mechanisms geared towards restoring lost bonds (Bowlby, 1980).

This interruption or separation causes pain and discomfort and impacts on the person's cognitive, emotional and behavioral processes (Fiorini & Mullen, 2006). A change in a child's behavior is often the first sign of a reaction to the bereavement and is indicative of their struggle with these feelings (Smith, 1999). Thus, teachers, caregivers and school counselors working with orphaned children in schools should try to detect signs of reaction to bereavement and provide the necessary psychosocial support.

Orphaned learners experience grief and trauma when a parent dies. These psychosocial problems are rarely addressed in programs, and yet they can have a long-term impact on learners' development (UNICEF, 2001). If grief is repressed, unrecognized and untreated, the response of children may be increased anxiety, multiple physical complaints, and functional impairments, strains in relationships, disrupted sleep and increase substance abuse (Dyer, 2003).

The process of grief has many different dimensions and stages. These include shock, denial, growing awareness and acceptance incorporating readjustment (Nelson & Rae, 2004). Denial is usually experienced at the onset or the early stages of loss. During this stage the individual attempts to come to terms with the loss. The role of denial at this time is to provide a coping mechanism to deal with times when the individual is unable to cope with the loss and grief (Nelson & Rae, 2004).

Some studies highlighted that boys tend to stifle their emotions, repress guilt and internalize their sadness whilst girls tend to express their emotions more openly by crying (Pillay, 2009). Boys tend to be aggressive whereas girls are said to be more nurturing and gentle in their expression of grief (Pillay, 2009). It is however necessary to note that death affects children throughout their adulthood. Therefore children should be given proper attention and provided with adequate grief support (Thompson, 2002) and an opportunity to express their pain.

Orphans might experience additional trauma from lack of nurturance, guidance, and a sense of attachment, which might impede their socialization process through damaged self-confidence, social competencies and motivation (Subbarao & Coury,

2004). Most children especially adolescents are known to have problems communicating their feelings and frustrations at home and school. They often use anger and other unacceptable behaviors such as becoming violent, using drugs, engaging in sexual activities or dropping out of school as a result of unresolved trauma. The study aimed to find out what psychosocial support orphaned learners are provided with in schools and at home to communicate their feelings and frustration as they relate their experiences.

(ii) Stress and anxiety

Even though stress is a relative word and has different meanings, for the purpose of this study of orphaned learners, stress refers to circumstances “when learners experience a range of negative thoughts, feelings and physical sensations” (Palmer & Cooper, 2010:9). The reasons for stress are wide and varied, but the most common relate to pressures to excel academically, athletically, and socially.

van Landeghem and Hess (2005) note that if untreated, stress can have a damaging effect on orphaned learners’ development and functioning. Thus early prevention to mitigate risks and enhance protective factors can positively impact health outcomes and school readiness and reduce health costs. Children also experience stress in relation to the uncertainties that they experience in living for example the death of loved ones, the birth of a sibling, community and school violence, illness, harm to self and others and fear regarding uncertainty of the future (Chandler et al, cited in Worzbyt, O’Rourke & Dandeneau, 2003).

There is a concern of not having enough trained teachers, caregivers and school counselors in Namibia to provide psychosocial support to school children who are showing signs of stress or have witnessed stressful events such as the death of their parents. However, there has not been a study done to find out what psychosocial support orphaned learners experience in their schools and at home, particularly in the Endola circuit. In the opinion of Jackson and Owen (1999), children who fail to cope with stress in responsible ways do not attend school well, have trouble concentrating, and receive poor grades. Behaviorally, they seem to have trouble interacting and are hyperactive, withdrawn, hostile, angry, impatient, or irritable.

Research has shown that there is a real physiological difference between pressure and stress. At the right amount of pressure people work at their optimum. They will be effective, creative, decisive, and alert and stimulated (Palmer & Cooper, 2010). However, too much pressure can lead to anxiety and burnout and with too little pressure, people become bored, apathetic, depressed and finally may even reach rust-out (Palmer & Cooper, 2010). The following Table 2.1 shows the symptoms of distress by age group. Children from different age groups react to stressful experiences in different ways (UNESCO, 2006).

Table 2.1 Symptoms of distress

Age group	Possible symptoms
<p>Very young children (0-5 years)</p> <p>Not able to rationalize what is happening around them and not able to understand the concept of death, equating it with separation.</p>	<p>Anxious clinging to caregivers Temper tantrums Regression, e.g. in speech development Fear of going to sleep Nightmares and night terrors Excessive fear of real or imagined things, e.g. thunder, monsters</p>
<p>Young children (6-12 years)</p> <p>Can recall and rationalize events in a more logical way. They will use fantasy to deal with a stressful event, e.g. re-enacting or imagining a different outcome. They are more prone to feelings of guilt that they have not prevented bad things from happening.</p>	<p>Poor concentration, restlessness or bad behavior in school Anxious behavior including hyperactivity, stuttering and eating problems Psychosomatic complaints, e.g. headaches, stomach pains Behavioral change, becoming aggressive or withdrawn and passive Sleeping problems Regression- acting like a young child</p>
<p>Adolescents (13-16 years)</p> <p>Have a good understanding of what has happened and also what the consequences might be. They are dealing with the emotional and physical changes of adolescence as well as coping with events and experiences related to the emergency.</p>	<p>Self-destructiveness and rebelliousness, e.g. drug taking, stealing Withdrawal-cautions of others and fearful of the future Anxiety, nervousness, psychosomatic complaints</p>

Source: Nicolai (2003) adapted from UNESCO (2006)

The information shown in Table 2 could be helpful in the current study by creating a better understanding of the kind of symptoms orphaned learners of different age groups show when they are in distress and what psychosocial support the schools and homes can offer orphaned learners. The feeling of stress is part of developing an understanding of their losses especially the loss of a parent through death, separation or divorce. These types of loss can lead to increased levels of stress and anxiety in children as they feel that their support structures as well as the people that they rely on for security have been taken away (Nelson & Rae, 2004).

A study (Nicolai, 2003) confirms that:

Psychosocial support recognizes the importance of the social context in addressing the psychological impact of stressful events experienced in emergencies. In practice, this means facilitating the reconstruction of local social structures (family, community groups, and schools) which may have been destroyed or weakened by an emergency, so that they can give appropriate and effective support to those suffering severe stress related to their experiences (Pg.117).

(iii) Guilt and anger

Common feelings experienced by orphaned children when they lose their parents include guilt, anger and sadness. Some children feel that they are responsible for the death of their parents and if they are not helped to work through their guilt they can become depressed (Giese, Meintjies & Proudlock, 2001). The orphan may be angry with himself or herself or with others whom he or she perceives to be the cause of the death of the parent. Their anger may be directed against the deceased parents, who they think have abandoned them and left them to suffer alone (Pillay, 2009). Sadly, orphaned learners have reported difficulty concentrating at school, due to worries, sadness or tiredness (Giese et al, 2001).

(iv) Depression

Depression is a deep sadness with long-term, harmful effects on the health and development of the individual. Depressed people show persistent feelings of sadness and despair and a loss of interest in previous sources of pleasure (Molapo & van der Merwe, 2003). The mixed emotions of anger, anxiety and guilt can lead to a reduction in self-esteem and eventually to feelings of depression. Depression can be characterized by extreme loneliness, despair, feelings of emptiness and worthlessness (Nelson & Rae, 2004).

When a parent dies, orphaned learners not only miss their physical presence, but also many positive things they gave them when they were alive, such as love, care and protection. In many cases, orphaned learners have no one to share their grief with, and this can compound their sense of helplessness. The lack of support during the grieving process and inadequate help in adjusting to an environment without their parents may cause orphaned learners to become depressed.

Although it is likely that orphaned learners will vary in circumstances and factors that influence their vulnerability to depression, the factors identified as likely to increase a person's vulnerability to depression include: gender, genetic and family factors, adverse childhood experiences, personality factors and social circumstances (Harris, 2000). For instance, personality traits such as neuroticism increase the risk of depression when faced with stressful life events (Fava & Kendler, 2000). Some notable causes of depression are the family climate which includes conditions at home among orphaned learners, especially where relationships are not satisfactory, such as death, divorce, conflict, and many others (Molapo & van der Merwe, 2003).

Imaginary fears especially in the age group 5-12 years such as witches, burglars, the dark, creepy-crawlies, death and other factors such as loneliness, stress, rejection by peers or teachers, tiredness, illness, guilt, self-pity, no meaning in life and heredity can also be sources of depression (Molapo & van der Merwe, 2003). Even early life experiences such as poor parent-child attachment, marital discord and divorce, neglect, physical abuse and sexual abuse almost certainly increase a person's vulnerability to depression in later life (Fava & Kendler, 2000).

Orphaned learners are often shielded from death, and when they realize their parent(s) are gone forever, they may become depressed and take a long time to recover. This may also result in inhibited grief, that is, grief erupting later in the form of emotional disturbance, various kinds of phobias and eventually depression (Watson, 2005). Anxiety disorders such as phobias and avoidant behavior can be serious impediments to early school success because learners with these disorders tend to miss out on so much instruction (Brown & Barlow, 2005).

Being depressed leads to suicidal feelings (Bostwick & Pankratz, 2000) and sometimes, it may lead to acts of violence against others, and may even include homicide (Ramachardani & Stein, 2003). Marital and family relationships are frequently negatively affected, and parental depression may lead to the neglect of children and significant disturbances in children (Ramachardani & Stein, 2003).

In the context of the study, psychosocial support must be provided holistically in order to increase the orphaned learners' ability to accomplish developmental tasks associated with positive development and the prevention of mental, emotional and behavioral problems before they become severe. Some orphaned learners are likely to become confused and distressed, about family quarrels over disposal of family property and anxiety about restarting life in unfamiliar surroundings, in a new location, often in a new school and about where to go and live. Thus, psychosocial support should be provided to address some of these psychological behaviors and emotions which orphaned learners are likely to exhibit.

(v) Withdrawal and isolation

Reaction to death by children also depends on how the loved one died. Whether it was after a long illness with the children taking part in the caring, or unnatural causes witnessed by the child, children respond to loss in different ways. Some cry miserably, become apathetic, refuse food, are withdrawn and do not participate in play (Nelson & Rae, 2004). Others with grief feel isolated from the people around them. Some grieving children feel that they can no longer relate to people because of what happened (Rogers, 2003). In this way, children express their pain. When willing to express their feelings, they may find it difficult to find a sensitive ear (UNAIDS, 2001). Orphaned learners without emotional support may withdraw, resign and isolate themselves. They will have a strong sense of insecurity and instability, a sense that life is empty and that adults are not to be trusted (Kelly, 2000).

(vi) Low self-esteem

Self-esteem relates to how children feel about themselves and those dimensions of self that they value (family, bodily self, academic self, social self and emotional sense of self). It is an emotional sense of self that children experience when they evaluate their self-concept (Worzbyt, O'Rourke & Dandeneau, 2003). Self-esteem is a necessity of children's productive activity, their relationships with others, and their perceptions of how they believe they are doing (Thompson & Rudolph, 2000).

Orphaned learners have a need to develop a sense of autonomy and independence that evolves through setting goals, learning and applying life skills, and developing meaningful social relationships. When these needs are not fulfilled, children feel powerless and often experience physical and emotional pain (Worzbyt, O'Rourke &

Dandeneau, 2003). Emotionally maltreated children generally have very low self-esteem. They experience difficulty in giving and receiving affection and form poor relationships both within their family and at school. They can be punitive to others and lack empathy (Barker & Hodes, 2004). Children who feel good about themselves (high self-esteem) view themselves as capable and goal-oriented individuals who are generally successful in achieving their wants and needs. They like people and people like them. They feel valued and accepted by family and friends (Akos, 2000).

2.4.1.3 Spiritual support

Orphaned learners need a belief, which enables them to develop hope for their future and to develop trust and security in their survival. This gives them some hope to keep trying and facilitates a sense of connectedness to their deceased parents and ancestors (Nelson & Rae, 2004). Spiritual support involves the degree to which a person experiences a connection to a higher power like God or other transcendent forces (Lukoff, 2005). Many orphaned children that have a relationship with a higher power find this the foundation of their psychological well-being (Lukoff, 2005).

The whole personal spiritual experience with God is helpful in building identity, self-responsibility, hope, a sense of divine support and love, the courage to change and an acceptance of what cannot be changed and a connection with faith communities (Lukoff, 2005). It is not yet established what spiritual support orphaned learners in the Endola circuit in Namibia experience at school and home. Schools and caregivers at home should encourage orphaned learners to engage in religious and spiritual practices consistent with their beliefs such as prayer or singing. Also they should encourage them to seek support and guidance from spiritual leaders.

2.4.1.4 Physical support

Physical support incorporates basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing and basic health care. A child's basic needs (e.g. food, clothing, shelter, health) have to be met in order for the child's psychosocial needs to be addressed (Li et al., 2008). Globally, orphaned learners are often doubly burdened, losing not only the attention, care and love that a parent gives, but also losing access to basic resources. Because of the lack of resources and support for basic needs, concerns about poverty among orphaned learners in developing countries often outweigh concerns about psychosocial support (Foster, 2002).

Other concerns in this category are: poor health and malnutrition, deprivation or neglect and violence. Thus if psychosocial support is not provided it will leave growing numbers of orphaned learners more vulnerable. The Namibian government, through its Ministry of Education and Ministry of Gender and Child Welfare is trying to address the living situation of orphaned and other vulnerable children through school feeding programs, monthly grants and psychosocial support. Allen and Gillespie (2001) suggest that, in developing countries, school feeding programs aim to increase school attendance and enrolment and encourage learners to stay in school longer. These initiatives are part and parcel of psychosocial support which aims to address the following challenges facing some orphaned learners.

(i) Poverty

According to the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development in Uganda (2004), poverty is the inability of an individual, family or community to attain a minimum standard of living. Poverty is another problem faced by adolescent

orphaned learners. After losing their parents many adolescents experience poverty in terms of food shortage, shortage of clothing and the inability to pay for health care and school fees (Tsheko, 2007). Thus, their experiences need to be investigated.

‘Children are often hardest hit by poverty. It causes lifelong damage to their minds and bodies. They are therefore likely to pass poverty on to their children, perpetuating the poverty cycle’ (UNICEF, 2000:1). The children at greatest risk of poverty include orphans, those in lone parent households, in workless households and in large families and where the mother is under 25 (Department for Work & Pension, 2003). This is evidenced by the lack of basic needs and services such as food, clothing, shelter, basic health care, roads, education, information and communication.

Data from 10 African countries confirm that orphaned learners on average live in poorer households than non-orphans (Case, Paxson, & Ableidinger, 2004). It is clear that some orphaned learners might be in dire need of psychosocial support to help them cope in life and stay in school until they finish their education.

The United Nations (2002:5) reports that ‘although enumeration of poverty is extremely difficult, it is estimated that of 1.06 billion 15-24-year olds globally, between 38 and 110 million live in extreme poverty, 238 million on less than \$1 a day and 462 million on less than \$2 a day’. Poverty is not just about lack of income, but also basic needs including health, education, nutrition and shelter, and arguably security and empowerment, which can include political participation (Ansell, 2005).

When children are asked about poverty, Wilkinson (2000) reports that their concerns generally fall into four categories: survival (availability of food, water and shelter); material well-being (access to money and wealth, schools and work); social support (family, friends, neighborhood, and boredom); personhood and sense of self (nationality and status, mental health, hopes and aspirations, participation, feelings of vulnerability and openness to exploitation).

Poverty is a perennial problem affecting many children in most parts of Africa. The majority of orphans have extremely poor living conditions and cannot afford basic items such as food and clothing (Richter, Manegold & Pather, 2004). In many parts of Africa, in contexts of severe poverty, girls have sexual relationships with 'sugar daddies' – older men who are usually married. The young girls exchange sex for material benefits, but are unable to negotiate details of the relationship, including, importantly, the use of condoms (Ansell, 2005).

Young girls do so, however, in the absence of adequate information: most are unaware of the risks they run, particularly of HIV/AIDS, but also of unsafe abortions should they become pregnant. The use of their sexuality for material gain therefore, makes them extremely vulnerable (Silberschmidt & Rasch, 2001).

A study by Gammeltoft (2002) in Vietnam reveals that, while young people increasingly engage in premarital sex, contraceptive use is extremely low. The young people explained their non-use of contraceptives in relation to the fact that sex was unpremeditated and governed by passion, not rational planning. Gammeltoft

suggests that successful health promotion needs to address these larger social and moral systems rather than simply trying to change individual behavior.

The use of peer education that involves the dissemination of health related information and condoms by members of target groups to their peers may help. Campbell and MacPhail (2002) agree that this form of peer education could reinforce young people's lack of power by creating situations in which they are instructed to engage in safe sex (or abstinence) without giving them insight into social factors that make this so difficult (Campbell & MacPhail, 2002). In Namibia for instance, most children lack parental care and support. In most cases, they are at high risk of engaging in unsafe sex because of poverty or peer pressure.

(ii) Poor health and malnutrition

In Uganda in 1999/2000 foster children were found to have significantly less access to health services than children living with their own parents (Deininger, Garcia, & Subbarao, 2003). A similar finding was observed (International HIV/AIDS Alliance, 2003) in Burundi, where 24 percent of female orphans suffered from severe malnutrition compared with 14 percent of male orphans and 12.5 percent of non-orphans. Maltreatment in early life also increases the longer-term risk of drug taking, mental health problems and criminality as coping strategies.

In Namibia there are unconfirmed reports about young school learners engaging in unhealthy habits such as alcohol and drug abuse. It is however likely that some orphaned children are the ones engaging in these unhealthy habits due to the lack of psychosocial support.

(iii) Deprivation or neglect

Neglect is described as the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs. This is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development and unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs (Department of Health, 2002). In the school-age child the effects and main indicators of long-term deprivation or neglect are usually found in poor social and emotional adjustment, behavior problems and low educational attainment (Barker & Hodes, 2004). They further warn that schools may not be able to compensate for the long-term lack of cognitive stimulation at home because neglected children have great trouble attending to learning tasks, often exacerbated by poor attendance.

It is possible that neglected children are disruptive and difficult to manage at school (Barker & Hodes, 2004), which makes it difficult for them to receive psychosocial support. There are a limited number of studies focusing specifically on the impact of physical and psychological neglect on child development (Righthand, Kerr & Drach, 2003). In the context of the present study which is based in a rural area, it is more likely that orphaned learners are neglected and left in need of support.

Available studies however suggest that neglected children are more likely than other children to exhibit delays in language, intellectual development, and academic achievement (Gaudin, 1999). Neglected children may also experience more attachment and peer relationship difficulties, emotional and behavioral problems, coping difficulties, and may have higher levels of psychopathology than children who are not maltreated (Crouch & Milner cited in Righthand, Kerr & Drach, 2003).

In considering the symptoms of serious neglect, there has been a tendency to concentrate on its most tangible features namely a child who appears dirty, ill-clothed and starved (Stevenson, 2007). These, of course, make an impact on those outside the family; schoolteachers, for example, know the reaction of other learners to the smelly one in the class.

A key aspect of parental neglect and inadequate supervision is not only placing children at physical risk or at risk of stigma. It also means that the children are inadequately socialized (Stevenson, 2007). Schools must identify the most vulnerable orphaned school children and try to provide them with psychosocial support so that they will feel loved and valued at school.

2.4.1.5 Social support

Social support is generally defined as the perceptions and experience of support that indicates one is valued and cared for (Taylor, 2007). Social support is generally classified into three types: Information, which consists of the provision of guidance and advice; instrumental, which comprises the provision of tangible assistance including goods, services and money; and emotional, which includes the provision of warmth and empathy (Taylor, 2007). Primary sources of social support are family members, friends, teachers and wider social and community networks (Taylor, 2007) and the support they provide is crucial in times of crisis (Breen & O'Connor, 2011).

The majority of significant losses throughout our lives occur within the context of the family unit. As such, these losses potentially disrupt the existing balance within it (Riches & Dawson, 2000). Losing a parent/s is one of those losses that leave many

orphaned children in need of psychosocial support to cope and move on with their lives. However, it was found that the lack of psychosocial support from within existing social networks is considered particularly hurtful and insensitive, and adds significantly to the distress felt by the orphaned child (Breen & O'Connor, 2011).

In Namibia and in the Endola circuit in particular, orphaned learners did not mention any experience with regard to psychosocial support provided at school and home and what support they have been receiving. Riches and Dawson (2000) suggest that the difficulties in receiving support might arise from the mismatch between the schools' culture and the culture of bereavement. However, the policy on OVC in Namibia only states that a teacher shall find time and a venue to provide psychosocial support to the affected children (Ministry of Education, 2008).

This implies that each school and home should have a culture of caring and providing psychosocial support to the bereaved children, taking into consideration the bereavement practices or culture of the child. Social support is important for the child to be able to integrate into the community without the feeling of being rejected, stigmatized, discriminated against or isolated. Below is a discussion of some of the social problems that require school and home intervention: abuse and exploitation, stigmatization and discrimination, and alcohol and drug abuse and violence.

(i) Abuse and exploitation

The subtypes of abuse reported include: physical abuse, sexual abuse, failure to provide physical needs (physical neglect), lack of supervision (physical neglect), emotional maltreatment and moral, legal and educational maltreatment (Archard,

2004). Physical abuse is 'violence and other non-accidental, prohibited human actions that inflict pain on a child and are capable of causing injury or permanent impairment to development or functioning (Archard, 2004). Research has shown that compared with non-abused children, physically abused children evidence more signs of emotional disturbance, especially internalizing emotional problems such as anxiety and depression (Kolko cited in Righthand, Kerr & Drach, 2003).

The Department of Health (2002) describes sexual abuse as forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape) or non-penetrative acts. Other non-contact activities, such as involving children in watching pornographic material or sexual activities, or persuading children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways (Department of Health, 2002). Many survivors of childhood sexual abuses are troubled by trauma-related symptoms (e.g. flashbacks, nightmares, perceptual disturbances) that may cause the victims to remember their past abuse experiences (Draucker & Martsolf, 2006).

Physical neglect is the term used most often to encompass parents' or caregivers' failure to provide basic physical health care, supervision, nutrition, personal hygiene, emotional nurturing, education or safe housing. It also includes child abandonment and custody-related forms of inattention to the child's needs (Gaudin, 1993).

Swift (1995) describes a neglected child as follows:

*A child who is found begging or receiving alms
A child who is found wandering about without any home or proper
guardianship*

A child who is found associating or dwelling with a thief, drunkard or vagrant, and growing up without salutary parental control
A child who is found in any house of ill-fame or the company of a reputed prostitute
A child who is found destitute, being an orphan or having a surviving parent undergoing punishment for crime (Pg.41).

Normally, children who have been emotionally abused often exhibit high levels of anxiety and many have an insecure attachment to their primary caregiver. Their inability to manage their own feelings can result in provocative aggressive and antisocial behavior, depression and withdrawal (Barker & Hodes, 2004).

According to Barker and Hodes (2004) components of emotional abuse include the following:

Rejecting: refusing to acknowledge the child's worth and the legitimacy of their needs
Isolating: cutting off the child from normal social experiences and contact with peers or adults
Terrorizing: verbally assaulting the child, creating a climate of fear and bullying
Ignoring: depriving the child of essential stimulation and emotional responsiveness
Corrupting: mis-socializing the child, encouraging destructive and antisocial behavior (Pg. 56).

Risks of abuse, neglect and exploitation are often reported and seem to increase with age. Teenage female orphans seem particularly at risk of being put to work at intensive household chores because of cultural practices, with limited educational opportunities available to them (UNICEF, 2000) and of being physically and sexually abused. The lack of parental protection and security may leave the door open for the exploitation and abuse of innocent school learners. Schools and homes should watch for signs of abuse in their learners so as to intervene as appropriately as possible.

Foster and Williamson (2000) provide evidence that orphaned learners living with foster families have a greater workload than the non-orphans living in the same household. Others in the care of relatives face the danger of being abused. There is anecdotal evidence that some relatives take in orphaned children for the sake of getting extra labor to work in their fields or for domestic chores (UNICEF, 2000). The researcher is of the opinion that school teachers should try to find out whether the learners in their classes attend school regularly and try also to find out the reasons for their coming late to school. Some of the learners who do not attend school or come to school late, they should talk to them so that their education does not suffer.

(ii) Stigmatization and discrimination

If an orphaned child is raised by the non-biological parents, they are more likely to experience stigma and differential care as compared to the biological children (Fonseca, O'Gara, Sussman & Williamson, 2008). This is especially a risk for young children who may be seen as a burden for a family. The child may feel isolated, fearful, and victimized by his or her peers. For instance, Jackson (2008) found that other learners victimized orphaned children, thus, depleting the orphan's sense of self-esteem and confidence. However, once children were offered support and understanding by the teachers they were able to relax and concentrate in class.

Archard (2004) reports that many thousands of children worldwide are denied a basic education or within schools, are discriminated against or suffer corporal punishment. Unfortunately, corporal punishment may be judged a violation of a child's rights, those that the child enjoys under the CRC. Article 19 proscribes 'all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse' of the child 'while in the care of

parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child' (Archard, 2004:198).

The death of a family member can create a profound family crisis by severely disrupting family stability. Bigelow and Hoinger cited in Pillay (2009) stress that when normal grief is compounded by stigmatization, expression of grief may be complicated. The mourning of the loss of a parent becomes shameful to orphaned learner for fear of rejection and victimization. In the light of this, psychosocial support should be provided so that orphaned learners may not shy away from school and eventually stop attending school altogether.

UNAIDS (2001) observes that psychosocial support is also an important aspect in the provision of children's rights and it is based on the understanding that children need to be loved, respected and listened to. In most cases however, orphaned children may not understand the situation of the death of their parents and therefore cannot express grief effectively. Even if they want to express their feelings, there is often no one to listen (UNAIDS, 2001) and they will start isolating themselves.

(iii) Alcohol and drug abuse

This category of risky behaviors focuses on the misuse and abuse of alcohol and other drugs. Alcohol is a psychoactive drug that depresses the central nervous system, dulls the mind, impairs thinking and judgment, lessens coordination, and interferes with the ability to respond quickly to different situations (Meeks, Heit, & Page cited in Worzbyt, O'Rourke & Dandeneau, 2003). For instance, when alcohol reaches the brain, it slows down brain functions, starting with reasoning power,

judgment and inhibition (Molapo & van der Merwe, 2003). The school and home should provide care, counseling and support focusing on equipping learners with skills to deal with difficult situations and ability to resist the use of alcohol and drugs (UN, 2004).

Increasing numbers of children are subjected to domestic violence that is associated with the widespread problem of alcohol and substance abuse (Ministry of Education, 2005). In Namibia, about 60 to 70% of children between the ages of 10 and 18 years have been exposed to alcohol abuse and drunken behavior in their homes and more than half have witnessed drunken behavior by their own parents (UNICEF, 2007).

This is confirmed by Werner and Smith (1992) that if children are raised in a family with a history of alcohol or drug addiction, it increases the likelihood that children will also have alcohol and other drug problems. The more available alcohol and drugs are in a community, the higher the risk that young people will abuse them. Perceived availability of alcohol and drugs is also associated with risk. In schools and homes where children find that drugs are more available, a higher rate of alcohol and drugs use occurs (Hawkins, et al., 1992).

In most cases, school learners use alcohol and drugs because of peer pressure. Hawkins, Catalano and Miller (1992) note that school learners who associate with peers who engage in problem behaviors- delinquency, substance abuse, violent activity, sexual activity, or school dropout are more likely to engage in the same problem behavior. This is one of the most consistent predictors that research has identified. Even when young people come from well-managed families and do not

experience other risk factors, just hanging out with friends who engage in the behavior greatly increases the child's risk of that behavior. However, schools can offer great help through peer support programs, counseling support and school linked health centers provide prevention and intervention services to those learners whose lives have been impacted by alcohol and drug abuse, violence, divorce, death, child abuse, stress or depression (Asetline & DeMartion, 2004). This may include support in problem solving, self-esteem, social skills and conflict resolution.

(iv) Violence

In many parts of the world, young boys figure highly as both victims and perpetrators of violence (WHO, 2002). Boys commonly have difficulties seeking help and expressing emotions, which may have consequences for both physical and mental health. This is exacerbated if they spend a lot of time outside home and school settings and are therefore less well connected to informal and formal support networks (WHO, 2002). The status of children in some cultural groups in Namibia is very low, especially that of the girl-child.

Therefore, many girl-children suffer on a daily basis. Violence against children is a serious human rights problem in Namibia. However, the extent of the problem is not known due to under-reporting by survivors of violence and lack of reliable data (Ministry of Education, 2005). Sexual and domestic violence against women and children in Namibia has reached crisis proportions. It is possible that children's basic rights are being violated, as they are not able to attend school, and do not have their basic needs such food and clothing at home fulfilled (UNICEF, 2007).

2.4.2 Best practices in providing psychosocial support

The best practices in providing psychosocial supports to children in Table 2.2 are often reminiscent of effective classroom practices in general (UNESCO, 2006).

Table 2.2: Best practices in providing psychosocial support

Children's needs	Possible psychosocial intervention
A SENSE OF BELONGING	Establish an educational structure where children feel included Promote the restoration of cultural, traditional practices of childcare
RELATIONSHIP WITH PEERS	Provide a dependable, interactive routine, through school or other organized educational activity. Offer group and team activities (i.e. sports, drama, etc.) that require co-operation and dependence on one another
PERSONAL ATTACHMENTS	Enlist teachers who can bond with children Provide opportunities for social integration and unity by teaching and showing respect for all cultural values, regardless of difference
INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION	Enhance child development by providing a variety of experiences
PHYSICAL STIMULATION	Encourage recreational and creative activities, both traditional and new, through games, sports, dance, etc.
TO FEEL VALUED	Create opportunities for expression through group discussions, drawing, writing, drama etc., which promote self confidence Recognize, encourage and praise children

Source: International Rescue Committee adapted from UNESCO (2006)

In the notion of best practices in providing psychosocial support to orphaned learners there should be: quality attachment between the orphan and caregiver, communication between orphan and support provider, the support to be provided, the need for the support must be recognized; the support must be available, sufficient and extended (Rando, 1993) and the support must be perceived as helpful by those receiving it for it to be beneficial (Breen & O'Connor, 2011).

2.4.3 Orphaned learners and psychosocial support provisioning

This section reviews related literature on the provision of psychosocial support to orphaned learners at school and home. Previous sections have discussed some of the critical psychological and social problems that orphaned learners are more likely to face. This section will attempt to go deeper and draw out the points made early on in order to deepen our understanding and gain new insight on the psychosocial support in schools and at home.

A substantial literature exploring the impact of orphanhood on the psychosocial support of children has emerged in the past few years. A wide range of topics have been discussed in the literature, including the living situation, physical health, schooling, the bereavement process, and psychological well-being (Monasch & Boerma, 2004; Nyamukapa & Gregson, 2005; Safman, 2004; Sarker, Neckermann & Muller, 2005).

Provision of psychosocial support in primary school and at home is an accepted practice and a child's right according to the UN Convention (UNAIDS, 2001) during the recovery and reconstruction phases following natural disasters such as death (Prewitt Diaz & Dayal, 2008). Psychosocial support addresses reactions to enormous losses, such as grief, displacement, disorientation, and alienation; which are often ignored in the immediate aftermath or forgotten during the recovery phase (Saraceno, 2006).

Psychosocial support builds on the knowledge and awareness of local needs and protective factors to provide psychological and social support to people involved in

the bereavement process. The aim is to enhance orphaned learners' resilience in achieving psychological competence by empowering them to overcome grief reactions and move forward with their lives (Prewitt Diaz & Dayal, 2008). The death of a parent leaves children in a state of trauma. Indeed, some orphaned learners may become withdrawn and passive or develop sadness, anger, fear and antisocial behaviors and become violent or depressed (Subbarao, & Coury, 2004). Others experience emotional stress, depression, anxiety, stigmatization, isolation, early sexual activity and deteriorating health conditions (Makame, Ani, & Grantham-McGregor, 2002; Maundeni, 2006; Raditedu, 2004).

It was also revealed that psychosocial problems have been consistently observed among orphaned boys and girls (Cluver & Garder, 2006; Pelton & Forehand, 2005). The trauma from the loss of a parent can trigger behavior problems of aggression or emotional withdrawal and negatively affect a child's performance in school and the child's social relations with other children at both school and home (van Dyk, 2003).

Findings from the literature suggest that orphaned learners are generally disadvantaged compared to non-orphans. Historically, the number of orphaned learners on a large scale has been a sporadic and a short-term problem, caused by war, famine and disease. Most of the orphaned learners were frequently cared for by extended family members (Levine, 2001). However, there has been a growing concern that the extended family system is no longer capable of providing adequate care for orphans in Africa given the increase in the number of disadvantaged children and severe economic constraints and impact of HIV and AIDS (Freeman & Nkomo, 2006; Safman, 2004).

Many foster families are poor and have to stretch already inadequate resources to provide for both the orphans and their own children. Especially the elderly are impoverished, ill, tired and emotionally drained from having taken in the orphans (WHO, 2002). Elderly people face multiple challenges that include limited income, poverty and economic devastation that could strain the resources of the extended family system, thus leaving orphaned learners vulnerable (Nyambedha, Wabdibba & Aagaard-Hansen, 2003; UNICEF, 2001).

Some children remain in child-headed households after their parents die (Li, Naar-King, Barnett, Stanton, Fang & Thurston, 2008). Makame, Ani and Grantham-McGregor (2002) point out that orphaned learners living in child-headed households or with grandparents have the most serious psychological problems because of the lack of necessary and adequate social and emotional support in these households. The view of the researcher is that the only chance for the orphaned learners to experience love, parental guidance and support is when they are at school. This would only be possible however if the affected orphaned learners are identified and supported accordingly by either the class teacher, principal or subject teacher.

Chitigo, Changara and Chitigo (2008) conducted a study to ascertain the effectiveness of implementing psychosocial support (PSS) among orphaned learners in improving their schooling outcomes. A total of 20 children ranging in age from 10 to 14 years, attending four different primary schools located in the rural wards of Mberengwa district of Zimbabwe were involved in the study. All the orphans showed signs of emotional need and were lagging behind in their academic work.

Psychosocial support was provided to these children over a period of eight months resulting in improvements in several areas, including schoolwork during and after the intervention period (Chitigo, et al., 2008). In their study, Robson and Kanyanta (2007) found that teachers commented that participation and quality of learning was affected since orphaned learners often came to school poorly dressed, hungry, sleep-deprived after long hours of household labor, and psychologically and emotionally traumatized.

Orphaned learners have lower school attendance, lower school completion rates, and/or are less likely than non-orphans to be at the age-appropriate grade level (Monasch & Boerma, 2004). As for gender issues, evidence based on cross-country data suggests that, for school enrolment, female orphans are not disproportionately affected compared with male orphans (Ainsworth & Filmer, 2002; Case, Paxson, & Ableidinger, 2004). Country-specific studies, in contrast, show that female orphans are at a significant disadvantage.

In Rwanda, for example, a much higher proportion of female orphans than boys are not in school and female orphans are also engaged in paid and unpaid work for much longer hours than boys (Siaens, Subbarao, & Wodon, 2003). For similar reasons, if they do enroll, they may be forced to drop out or be regularly absent. For example, girls who are married early or resort to prostitution either attend irregularly or drop out entirely (Subbarao & Coury, 2004). Because these potential orphaned learners cannot access education, and access resources that would lead them out of the cycle of poverty, lack of skills, low levels of literacy and numeracy.

Little is known what psychosocial support orphaned learners in primary schools in the Endola circuit, experience at school and home. Many agencies are responding with a range of external interventions, but as yet there is no clear model of an international intervention strategy to fully tackle the problem (Levine & Foster, 2000). Effective psychosocial support to orphaned learners means the relationships with caring individuals in whom they trust and safe places to express their emotions. Such support often includes same-age and older friends, church leaders, teachers and sport coaches (Geballe & Gruendel, 1998).

The role of the school is as a social institution where young people look to peers and teachers to help define the reality of their loss, express feelings associated with it, are provided with support and access to information, and integrate the experience into their lives (Rowling, 2003). The school is not only a social institution for young people, but also a workplace for staff, all of whom spend many hours there. It can provide staff with policies, programs and practices that are supportive as well as access to experts or other professionals who can offer support through formal and informal mechanisms (Rowling, 2003) to attend to orphaned learners.

It is true that the school is a social institution for young children to learn and develop and where staff has resources in terms of policies, programs and contacts with other professionals who can better assist the children to live healthy and productively. However, schools do not capitalize on this because teachers are overloaded with responsibilities over and above their instructional duties and lack training and capacity.

2.5 Implications for guidance and counseling

The purpose of this section is to unpack the concepts relating to guidance and counseling, namely the definitions of guidance and counseling, individual and group counseling and methods of counseling. This section is an attempt to provide literature on the second sub-research question namely: What are the implications of orphaned learners' experiences for guidance and counseling?

2.5.1 Related literature on guidance and counselling

According to the UNESCO module on school guidance and counseling (2000), guidance is a program of services to learners based on their needs and the influence of environmental factors. Guidance and counseling is a professional field which has a broad range of activities, programs and services geared toward assisting learners and other individuals to understand themselves, their problems, their school environment and their world and also to develop adequate capacity for making wise choices and decisions (UNESCO, 2000).

There are many theories and definitions of counseling, but in practical sense counseling can be seen as a process where the counselor acts as someone to Listen, Evaluate, Advise and Nurture (LEAN) (Molapo & van der Merwe, 2003). Counseling is an interpersonal process involving one or more learners and a professionally trained and credentialed counselor. Through counseling, learners experience a more heightened and accurate sense of awareness (self, others and the environment). They also develop a new understanding about themselves and the world; and discover more effective, caring and responsible pathways to success in meeting their needs (Worzbyt, O'Rourke & Dandeneau, 2003).

Counseling is viewed as a helping relationship, with the counselor as the helper. It is also a relationship in which the client must assume some responsibility to participate fully, cooperatively, and willingly. Only then can the potential benefits of the counseling relationship and process be realized (Gibson & Mitchell, 2008). Counseling can have as its goal any or all of the following: providing information, assisting the client in problem solving, initiating change, client motivation, providing support, and educating the client (Gibson & Mitchell, 2008). Orphaned learners might not be involved in counseling and therefore miss the opportunity to gain the information necessary to help them to face and solve problems in their lives.

The overall goal is to help each individual become the best that they can become. Counseling support is relevant to the present study of orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support so that orphaned learners can understand themselves. It can also help them to cope better with the death of their parents. Currently, it is not clear how orphaned learners experience the psychosocial support provided to them. The next section discusses related literature on guidance and counseling.

There are three major components of guidance and counseling. These are educational guidance, vocational guidance and social guidance (UNESCO, 2000). Under these three major areas, there are several guidance and counseling services such as appraisal, information, vocational guidance, placement, orientation, evaluation, referral, consultancy, follow-up and research services (Nwachukwu, 2007). Each of these major components of guidance support is to enable each learner in an institution of learning to derive optimal educational benefits.

Some studies (e.g. Bulus, 2001; Denga, 2001; Edet, 2008) have shown that school principals and teachers constitute the greatest obstacle to the success of school guidance and counseling services in schools. Their reports showed a negative attitude to guidance services and to counselors in particular. For example, Denga (2001) notes that the principals who know little about counseling will not in any way appreciate the need for the counselor to be relieved of a heavy teaching load and other co-curricular duties.

Accumulated evidence on the effects of comprehensive school guidance programs on the academic achievement of learners (Lapan, Gysbers & Petroski, 2001) was reported as well as evidence that counseling learners improves school attendance, school behavior, increases learner achievement and increases learners' levels of self-esteem and positive attitudes toward school (Schmidt, 2003).

Lapan, et al (2001) studied the effects of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs on several areas of learners' lives. First, they wanted to determine if learners who attended schools with comprehensive school guidance programs perceived a higher level of safety in school. Secondly, they wanted to determine if learners perceive a higher level of satisfaction with their education.

Also, the authors wanted to determine if the programs in place had an effect on learners' grades and perceptions of their relationships with teachers. Finally, the authors were interested in the perception of learners in these schools with regard to the importance and relevance of their education to their future (Lapan et al, 2001). Their findings revealed that there was a correlation between the implementation of a

comprehensive school guidance program and several of the items examined in the research. There was a direct and positive relationship between program implementation and learner perceptions of school safety and success.

McGannon, Carey and Dimmitt (2005) note the limitations associated with this study, limitations that are documented too frequently in school counseling research. That is, given its correlation nature, the study failed to take into account that schools that implement comprehensive school guidance and counseling programs may also be implementing other educational programs that influence academic achievement.

McGanno, et al, (2005) further found that a significant majority of 92% of teachers and head teachers agreed that teachers should be trained to provide pastoral care to Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC). Teachers reported having comforted children who seemed particularly distressed and sometimes referred the affected children to the school Guidance and Counseling teacher for a follow-up. This would be consistent with the findings that guidance interventions can positively affect learners' success in the classroom (Whiston, 2003) and guidance curriculum activities can have a positive impact on learner development (Brigman & Campbell, 2003).

It can be argued that guidance activities in school cannot be done in isolation without the counseling activities to complement each other and address the psychosocial problems facing orphaned learners. Fifty-five teachers agreed that counseling should be available within the school system for orphans, but there was no systematic approach for identifying children in need and there were limited resources to provide

psychosocial support for all, since not all schools have Guidance and Counseling teachers (Robson & Kanyanta, 2007).

Sink and Stroh (2003) conducted a large-scale (state-wide) project that examined the school counseling interventions in elementary schools with comprehensive developmental guidance programs and found that they fostered higher academic achievement test scores in learners. According to McGannon, et al, (2005), this stands as a solid example of a well conducted, outcome based research into the effectiveness of school counseling programs.

In their study, Sink and Stroh (2003) randomly selected 150 elementary schools from across the state of Washington. The schools and learners within those schools accurately reflected the diversity found throughout the state. Schools were then divided into the treatment group and the comparison group based on the level of implementation of the comprehensive counseling program within each school. Standardized norm-referenced and criterion-referenced test score data from third and fourth grade learners were used to evaluate the academic achievement of the learners participating in the study.

Sink and Stroh (2003) found that early primary school aged learners who attended the same school for three or more years where a comprehensive counseling program was in place performed better academically. McGanno, et al, (2005) further found that learners who remained in the same school for multiple years with a fully implemented comprehensive school counseling program earned higher achievement

test scores than learners who attended schools where no such programs were in place.

Gysbers (2001) proposed that school counselors serve all learners. He believes the primary way to reach all learners is by implementing comprehensive school counseling programs that include classroom guidance activities. Green and Keys (2001), while not directly suggesting that counselors should serve all learners, encouraged counselors to shift from direct services toward more indirect services. In other words, school counselors should engage in more consultation, collaboration, advocacy, and program coordination. They believe that counselors who adopt an indirect services approach could affect more change in learners' lives.

While the study agrees that all learners probably can benefit from counseling programs, today's emphasis on high-stakes testing has resulted in enormous pressure on teachers to spend as much time as possible teaching academic subjects. School counselors are experiencing more and more difficulty gaining access to classrooms to deliver guidance and counseling-oriented information and activities (Sears & Granello, 2002).

In addition, given the pupil ratios that school counselors face, we believe it is no longer possible for them to serve all learners in any meaningful way. There are not enough counselors in schools and there is no evidence that the situation will improve (Sears & Granello, 2002). In Namibia, for example, school counselors are too few per educational region, but it might be possible for them to address and meet every orphaned learner in need of guidance and counseling.

Scholarly discourse on the role of the school counselor as an advocate and agent of social justice has been well documented (Baker & Gerler, 2004; Bemak & Chung, 2005; Kiselica & Robinson, 2001). For instance schools and communities continue to become more demographically diverse (Roberts, 2004). Recognizing and challenging systemic oppression have become key skills for school counselors in support of the advocacy for students and their efforts to remove social barriers that impede achievement (Kiselica & Robinson, 2001).

The related literature on school counselor leadership theory and practice has only recently begun to gain prominence. For example, Amatea and West-Olatunji (2007) explored the role of school counselors as leaders in high-poverty schools. In their article they illuminated the need for school counselors to collaborate with teachers and to assist school-based professionals in creating a climate of cultural acceptance while encouraging the success of all learners. The focus of the article was unique, in that it underscored how school counselor leadership may positively impact access to educational outcomes, and systematic support to impoverished students.

Over the past 30 years, Comprehensive Developmental Guidance (CDG) has emerged as the most widespread approach for school counseling programs and is the foundation for many circuits and state guidance models (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Sink, 2005; Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001). Previous CDG evaluation research reviewed in Lapan (2001) has produced largely positive findings. Initial research has suggested that CDG programs are useful in furthering secondary learners' development in variety of important school-related areas.

Sink and Stroh (2003) found that early primary school-age children who attend the same schools for three or more years, with a CDG program in place, will benefit academically, even if the CDG program is not fully implemented. Secondly, children from all socioeconomic levels who remain in the same school for multiple years with a well implemented CDG program will generate higher achievement test scores than students who attend schools without such whole-school counseling programs.

Despite these encouraging findings, there is minimal empirical evidence that academic achievement is improving in primary school-age learners due to the implementation of CDG. In this study no empirical study confirmed that learners' or orphaned learners' academic performance improves due to CDG programs in primary schools in the Endola circuit.

2.5.2 Individual versus group counseling

Counseling can be done through individual or groups. Individual counseling makes it possible to assist and accompany learners or other individuals in need, whether it be a personal crisis, an academic crisis, a career decision or even the need to share an experience with someone who is there for them (Molapo & van der Merwe, 2003). It is a client-centered process that demands confidentiality (Gibson & Mitchell, 2008).

A significant body of research has defined individual counseling by suggesting that individual counseling is a one-on-one relationship involving a trained counselor and focuses on some aspects of a client's adjustment, developmental, or decision-making needs. This process provides a relationship and communications base from

which the client can develop understanding, explore possibilities, and initiate change (Gibson & Mitchell, 2008).

Evidence from recently published studies suggests that learners who have suffered traumatic loss and are vulnerable may benefit from counseling (Parkes, 2000). Individual counseling may also benefit learners who do not have the support of families and friends (Pillay, 2009). Group counseling makes it possible for one counselor to counsel a few learners at a time. It is more time effective, cost effective and includes peer support which does not occur in individual counseling (Molapo & van der Merwe, 2003). Thus, many learners can get their problems solved at once.

Because school counselors are few in Namibia, group counseling is more appropriate to use when counselors are visiting schools. It appears that there are not enough staff members to attend to the learners individually. There are few school guidance counselors and social workers in Namibian schools. It is also possible that there is no suitable method of counseling to address psychosocial needs of learners.

2.5.3 Methods of counseling

Counseling methods have developed from research and theories about how individuals grow and develop, change their behavior and interact with the environment (Parsons, 2009). One of the most fundamental philosophical and theoretical questions that confront the counselor in the course of his or her professional practice is which method to select in counseling learners. Counseling methods are generally classified into three broad types, namely: directive, nondirective and eclectic (Neukrug, 2011; Parsons, 2009).

Direct counseling seems to be most successful when the counselee is relatively well adjusted, the problem is in an intellectual area, a lack of information constituted the problem, the counselee has little insight into the problem, inner conflict is absent, and the client suffers from anxiety, insecurity or impatience (Coleman, 2009). Another counseling method is nondirective method which is more effective in the treatment of many types of emotional problems.

The aim of nondirective counseling is to help the learner become a better organized person, oriented around healthy goals which he/she has clearly seen and definitely chosen (Roger, 1942). It aims to provide the learner with a united purpose, the courage to meet life problems and obstacles. It is a structured, permissive relationship that allows the learner to gain an understanding of him or herself to a degree that enables him or her to take positive steps in the light of his or her new orientation (Lunenburg, 2010).

Eclectic counseling is the result of selecting concepts from both directive and nondirective methods (Lunenburg, 2010). Thus, the eclectic counselor uses whatever method seems best suited to the situation. Real help given to most learners in schools would be located between the highly directive and the elective views rather than client centered (Coleman, 2009, Parsons, 2009). The effectiveness of the counselor will depend more on the relationship existing between the learner and his counselors than on the method the counselor chooses and how well he/she performs within the methods he/she employs (Lunenburg, 2010).

It might be possible that most orphaned learners with psychosocial problems are finding it difficult to ask for help from their caregivers, teachers or school counselors. Another possibility is that teachers and caregivers might not know how to approach them due to an inability to detect the psychosocial needs orphaned learners experience. Orphaned learners could be involved in activities such as group discussions and role-plays, drawing and clay modeling. And home visits to orphaned learners can be organized where quality time is spent with the children through storytelling and playing with them.

2.6 Summary

In this chapter reviewed related literature on attachment theory, orphaned learners' psychosocial support, essential elements of psychosocial support, school guidance and counseling, group counseling versus individual counseling and methods of counseling. The next chapter presents the methodology adopted by the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

"Do not follow where the path may lead; go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." - Ralph Waldo Emerson-

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology adopted by the study. The term methodology refers to a collection of methods by which a particular piece of research is undertaken (Somekh & Lewin, 2005) that reflect the research question and suit the research purpose (Henning, van Rensburg, & Smit, 2004). In this chapter the following are discussed namely: the research paradigm, approach, the design and methods of the study. The main purpose of this study was to find out what psychosocial support orphaned learners experience at school and home.

3.2 Research paradigm

The term paradigm is defined as a collection of logically related assumptions, concepts or propositions that orient thinking and research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). It is also a basic set of beliefs that guide action or the researcher's worldviews (Denzil & Lincoln, 2000). A paradigm is defined by others as a cluster of beliefs, and ubiquitous entities that dictate how researchers need to make a commitment to how the research should be done and how results should be interpreted (Bryman, 2004).

Moreover, Brink (2006) describes a paradigm as a patterned set of assumptions about reality (Ontology), knowledge of that reality (epistemology) and the particular ways of knowing about that reality (methodology). The term epistemology comes from the Greek word which means knowledge. In simple terms, epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge or how we come to know (Trochim, 2000). Epistemology is

intimately related to ontology and methodology; as ontology involves the philosophy of reality, epistemology addresses how we come to know that reality while methodology identifies the particular practices used to attain knowledge of it (Creswell, 1994; Krauss, 2005).

Epistemology poses the following questions: What is the relationship between the knower and what is known? How do we know what we know? What counts as knowledge (Krauss, 2005)? In the positivist paradigm, the object of study is independent of researchers; knowledge is discovered and verified through direct observation or measurements of phenomena. Facts are established by taking apart phenomena to examine their component parts (Cousin, 2002).

In the interpretive paradigm knowledge is established through the meanings attached to the participants of a study to obtain data. Inquiry changes both researcher and participant and knowledge is context and time dependent (Cousins, 2002). The epistemology question of this research was: What psychosocial support do orphaned learners in Endola Circuit experience at school and home? I sought the reality of psychosocial support through the meanings attached to what orphaned learners describe as their experience through in-depth phenomenological interviews.

Willing (2001) notes that even though there is some flexibility in relation to our choice of methods, a researcher's epistemological and methodological commitments do constrain which methods can be used in the study. This study was situated in the interpretive research paradigm which is discussed below.

3.2.1 Interpretive paradigm

The foundational assumption of the interpretive paradigm is that most of the knowledge is gained, or at least filtered, through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, documents and other artifacts (Henning, van Rensburg, & Smit, 2004). The interpretive paradigm involves broadly stated questions about human experiences and realities. It is studied through sustained contact with people in their natural environment, generating rich, descriptive data that help the researcher to understand their experiences and attitudes (Creswell, 2003; Denzil & Lincoln, 2000; Labuschagne, 2003; Krauss, 2005; Neuman, 2004; Patton, 2001, 2002; Shank, 2006; Trauth, 2001; Willem, 2003). For example, the interpretive researcher tends to rely on the “participants’ views of the situation being studied” (Creswell, 2003:8) and recognizes the impact of the research on their own background and experiences (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). The researcher has the intention of understanding the world of human experience (Cohen & Manion cited in Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006), suggesting that “reality is socially constructed” (Mertens, 2005:12).

This study aimed to describe what orphaned learners experience with regard to psychosocial support provided at school and home. This aim fits with the philosophy, strategies and intentions of the interpretive research paradigm. The interpretive paradigm is based on the epistemology of idealism that knowledge is viewed as a social construction and encompasses a number of research approaches, which have a central goal of seeking to interpret the social world (Higgs, 2001). The interpretive paradigm was viewed as the most suitable for this study because of its potential to generate a new understanding of complex multidimensional human phenomena

(Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). Specifically, practical knowledge was sought, which is embedded in the world of meanings and human interactions. It was therefore appropriate to investigate orphaned learners' experiences within the interpretive paradigm which seeks to provide a deeper understanding of a particular situation in its naturalistic setting. Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2001) ascertain that the interpretive paradigm is well suited to the social sciences giving credence to the understanding of themes. The next section discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the interpretive paradigm.

3.2.1.1 Advantages of interpretive paradigm

The interpretive paradigm provides a naturalistic or constructivist perspective so that the participants can share their personal thoughts, feelings and experiences related to the phenomena being studied (Krauss, 2005). The only way to do this is to go to the source or the individuals who actually experienced the phenomenon (Patton, 2002). The advantage of this paradigm is that it can be used in individual or small groups in naturalistic settings (Janse van Rensburg, 2001).

In this study six orphaned learners were interviewed at their schools where they were provided with psychosocial support. The interpretive paradigm further describes the experiences of people in-depth and generates rich data (Shank, 2006). This study was interested in gaining a better understanding of what orphaned learners experienced with psychosocial support provided at school and home thus the interpretive paradigm was appropriate for generating comprehensive data on orphaned learners.

3.2.1.2 *Disadvantages of interpretive paradigm*

The main disadvantage of the interpretive paradigm is that it is directed towards subjectivity and its failure to generalize its finding beyond the situation studied (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Through the interpretive paradigm the researcher was able to obtain data that was thick, rich and complex and gave a holistic description of the participants' subjective experiences (Creswell, 1998). The overall aim of the study was to investigate what orphaned learners experienced with regard to psychosocial support provided at school and home and not necessarily to generalize the results to the wider population.

Another disadvantage of interpretive paradigm is the lack of bias control (Miller & Brewer, 2003). In this study, the focus was on how orphaned learners experienced the psychosocial support provided by their schools in their own ways. Interviews were used to get their experiences without the researcher actually experiencing the psychosocial support himself. Also, each participant was given an opportunity to refuse to participate or withdraw from the study so as to ensure that those involved in the interviews were those genuinely willing to take part and were prepared to talk about their experiences freely. Pilot testing and member checking were used to ensure the credibility of the findings. Further discussion on bias control and credibility of the study is provided in this chapter.

The interpretive paradigm has been criticized for lacking rigor (Denscombe, 2002). This is said to be associated to the lack of statistical analyses and the use of emergent samples (Denscombe, 2002). Orphaned learners were asked in the interviews to describe what they experienced with regard to psychosocial support

provided at school and home. Data was analyzed thematically using five steps namely: bracketing and phenomenological reduction, delineating units of meaning, clustering of units of meaning to form themes, summarizing each interview, validating it and where necessary modifying it, extracting general and unique themes from all the interviews and making a composite summary. These steps are further discussed in the next sections of this study. Despite all the disadvantages of interpretive paradigm the study gained rich data and applied some measures to address its limitations.

3.3 Research approach

3.3.1 The qualitative research approach

The qualitative approach is a systematic, subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning (Burn & Grove, 2003; Shank, 2002). It involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach. This means that the qualitative research approach studies things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

The qualitative research approach emerges from an interpretive perspective, a paradigm that sees the world as constructed, interpreted, and experienced by people in their interactions with each other and with wider social systems (Ulin, Robinson, & Tolley, 2005). The objective of qualitative research approach is to describe and possibly explain experiences but never to predict. Qualitative researchers study people in their own territory, within naturally occurring settings such as the home, schools, hospitals, and streets (Willing, 2001). The choice of the qualitative approach

was influenced by the nature of the problem which aimed to investigate what orphaned learners experience with regard to psychosocial support provisioning.

In other words, researchers who wish to explore the meaning, or describe and promote understanding of human experiences such as pain, grief, hope or caring or unfamiliar phenomena, would find it extremely difficult to quantify the data (Brink, 2006). Since the study focused on orphaned learners who had experienced the death of their parents and had gone through experiences of pain, grief and bereavement, the qualitative approach was a more appropriate and effective alternative (Brink, 2006).

The word qualitative implies an emphasis on processes that are rigorously examined, but not measured in terms of quantity, amount or frequency (Labuschagne, 2003). It seeks answers to questions that stress what social experience is created and given meaning. In contrast, quantitative studies emphasize the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

This study sought answers to a question about what orphaned learners described their own experiences with regard to psychosocial support provided at school and home. The emphasis was on processes and not in the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables. Thus, the study used the qualitative approach. Below is the discussion of advantages and disadvantages of qualitative approach.

3.3.1.1 Advantages of the qualitative approach

The qualitative approach is a means of understanding human emotions and experiences such as pain, rejection, caring, anger and effort (Brink & Wood, 1998). By using the qualitative approach in this study, participants were given a platform to talk openly about their lived experiences as orphaned learners and what they experienced the psychosocial support provided by their schools and home. The qualitative approach shows how and why things happen, incorporating people's own motivation, experiences, emotions and prejudices (Gary, 2009). By so doing, it seeks to contribute to a better understanding of social realities and to draw attention to processes, meaning patterns and structural features (Flick, von Kardorff & Steinke, 2004). The findings revealed that the participants experienced emotional feelings of anger, anxiety, withdrawal and depression as they endured the loss of their parents.

The data were open ended in order to find out what people's experiences meant to them in their own words and in their natural setting (Patton, 2001; Shank, 2006). It ensures that a small number of cases are studied for better engagement (Babbie & Mouton, 2004). In this study in-depth interviews were conducted with six orphaned learners. Interviews yielded rich data about orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support provisioning. A good qualitative approach discovers patterns, coherent themes, meaningful categories and new ideas and in general uncovers better understanding of a phenomenon (Suter, 2006).

3.3.1.2 Disadvantages of qualitative approach

The qualitative approach is criticized for being impressionistic (based on reactions or opinions, rather than on specific facts or details), biased, insignificant,

ungeneralizable and idiosyncratic, subjective and short sighted (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). The subjective involvement of the researcher makes him or her part of the research and it becomes easier for him or her to share the experiences with his or her research participants.

In this study, interview schedules were used which guided the way orphaned learners described their experiences with regard to psychosocial support. However, the use of direct quotes and narratives in the description of the participants' experiences enhanced the level of credibility of the findings. One of the disadvantages of the qualitative approach is that the literature review plays a less substantial role at the beginning of the study. Although the literature may be reviewed to justify the need to study the research problem, the literature does not provide major direction for the research question (Cresswell, 2008).

The reason for this is that qualitative research relies on the views of participants in the study and less on the direction identified in the literature by the researcher (Cresswell, 2008). Although this study shared the same view there was some literature that provided a good foundation and shaped the study focus before and during the data collection phase. While this is true, some of the literature was sought after data collection which was used to discuss the findings of the study.

3.4 Research design

The research design is the broad plan of action of how one intends to go about answering the research questions (Mouton, 2001; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2002). The qualitative approach usually uses multiple designs (systems of inquiry)

for the study of human phenomena including case study, ethnography, grounded theory, discourse analysis, phenomenology and naturalistic inquiry (Creswell, 2003; Denzil & Lincoln, 2000; Neuman, 2004). These designs differ in their theoretical assumptions, their understanding of object of enquiry and their methodological focus (Flick, von Kardorff & Steinke, 2004).

Even though a number of features are common to all designs, the origins are different. Ethnography for example, originates from anthropology, which is concerned with the study of culture. Phenomenology has its base in philosophy and is concerned with the 'lived experience' as perceived by the participants, while grounded theory has been developed from the discipline of sociology (Creswell, 2003; Newman, 2004). This study employed the phenomenological design.

3.4.1 Phenomenological design

According to Maypole and Davies (2001) phenomenology is concerned with the lived experiences of the people involved or who were involved with the issue that is being investigated. This implies the use of the qualitative design of data collection that allows the researcher entrance to the informants' access to their experiences as lived. Patton (2002) states that the only way the researcher can understand what others experience is to go to those who actually experienced the phenomenon and become immersed in their shared information surrounding the experience. The goal of the phenomenological design is to examine the particular experiences of unique individuals in given situations thus exploring not what is (reality) but what it is perceived to be (Burn & Grove, 2003).

In this study the researcher employed the phenomenological design for the collection of data that gave useful information about the experiences of orphaned learners with regard psychosocial support in the Endola circuit. It is incumbent upon researchers to seek the research design that fits with the paradigm and approach of their research questions and to choose a design congruent with the research topic and objectives (Byrne, 2001). In the light of the above reason, this study on the orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support, a qualitative design in the form of phenomenology was deemed appropriate.

The researcher strives to get at the essence or variant structure (Moustakas, 1994) of the experience. The focus was on “descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience” (Patton, 2002:107). If the researcher gathers information from multiple individuals, then there can be shared essence or common meanings of the experience from them (deMarrais, 2004). The phenomenological design emphasizes the dynamic, holistic and individual aspects of the human experience, and attempts to capture those experiences in their entirety, within the context of those experiencing them (Polit & Beck, 2004).

We do not know how orphaned learners live in their world and what they experience with psychosocial support provisioning. We only have a limited understanding of them by using our common sense or our natural attitude (deMarrais, 2004). Phenomenology aims to gain a deeper understanding and describe a person's lived experiences (phenomena) in an attempt to enrich lived experiences by drawing out their meaning (Holloway, 2005).

In the light of the above, the researcher considered the phenomenological design to best fit this study. The purpose of utilizing the phenomenological design was to describe the meaning of an experience from the perspective of those involved in the experience. Unstructured interviews were used to collect data, which allowed flexibility and made it possible for the researcher to obtain experiences of the participants. The advantages and disadvantages of this design are discussed below.

3.4.1.1 Advantages of the phenomenological design

The phenomenological design is a rigorous, systematic investigation of phenomena (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). In this study, phenomenological interviews were used to explore orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support. The phenomenological interview is the most powerful technique for attaining a rigorous and thick description of another person's being in the world and is often viewed as the form of a dialogue. Chapter 4 of this study presents this thick description of the participants. The phenomenological design attempts to understand people's experiences, perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular situation (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2002). The main focus of this study was therefore on the essence of the meaning participants gave to their lives.

The phenomenological design aims at understanding and interpreting the essence of the meaning that people give to their lives (De Vos, et al., 2002). It promotes an understanding of human beings in whatever environment they happen to be. In this study for example, the participants described what they experienced with regard to psychosocial support provided at school and home in the Endola circuit thus the experiences of those participants in that particular environment.

The phenomenological design shows us what worlds people live in, what ranges of human experiences are possible and how these experiences may be described (van Manen in Connell, 2003). Therefore, the value of the phenomenological design is in the ability to uncover life experiences from those experiencing the phenomena. In this study, in-depth and descriptive information was obtained that would promote greater understanding of what participants experienced as psychosocial support.

3.4.1.2 Disadvantages of phenomenological design

The phenomenological design usually uses smaller samples that are often locally based. Data collection methods are time consuming and consequently data is collected from smaller numbers of people. Data analysis is also time consuming and consequently expensive (Hancock, 1998). In this study six orphaned learners were interviewed at their schools. Interviews were held with them where a large amount of time was spent.

The sample does not represent the population and generalizability of the result is limited (Brink, van der Walt & van Rensburg, 2006). However, the focus of this study was on the essence of the meaning the participants gave to their lives. The phenomenological design aims at understanding and interpreting the essence of the meaning that people give to their lives (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2002). Despite these disadvantages the study employed the phenomenological design which would raise awareness and provide better insight into psychosocial support provisioning.

3.4.1.3 *Strategies in the phenomenological design*

In this study, the researcher used the following four strategies of the phenomenological design, namely: intuiting, bracketing, analyzing and describing. They are discussed below.

(i) Intuiting

Intuiting is a process of thinking through the data so that a true comprehensive or accurate interpretation of what is meant in a particular description is achieved (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). Intuiting brings about a common understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). The core of the phenomenological design is then to fully enter into the experience of another. It requires being intuitively present and aware of the inner meaning of the other (Hancock, 1998). In this study, the researcher used open-ended questions and gained the participants' responses which were tape-recorded and transcribed. The researcher read and reread the transcribed data in order to achieve an accurate interpretation of what was described by the participants.

(ii) Bracketing

Bracketing is a process by which the researcher suspends personal belief about what they think they know about the experience and asks the participant: Tell me what the experience is like for you (Thibodeau in Connell, 2003). Bracketing requires the researcher to remain neutral with respect to belief or disbelief in the existence of the phenomenon (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999).

This means that the researcher had to identify any preconceived knowledge about orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support provisioning. He had to prevent these ideas from interfering with what orphaned learners had to say about the psychosocial support provided at school and at home. By so doing, the researcher was likely to get a better understanding based on a true reflection of the participants' experiences.

(iii) Analyzing

Analyzing in the phenomenological design involves identifying the essence of the phenomenon under investigation based on the data obtained and presented (Brink & Wood, 1998). In applying this strategy, the researcher reads, compares and contrasts descriptions of the phenomenon under study and allows for identification of recurring themes and interrelationships (Brink & Wood, 1998). In this study, after the researcher transcribed the data and presented them in natural units of meaning, common themes or essences began to emerge.

(iv) Describing

Describing is the final step and the aim is to describe the themes or essences of the phenomenon thereby communicating to others what the researcher has found (Brink & Wood, 1998). In this phenomenological study describing involved classifying all themes or essences common to the orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support provisioning and describing and discussing these themes or essences in detail.

In the phenomenological design, the aim of the researcher is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts. The phenomenologist is concerned with understanding psychological and social phenomena from the perspective of the people involved (Welman & Kruger, 1999). Thus, an attempt was made to attain descriptions of what the participants experienced and how they experienced it by listening to their stories and narrations.

3.5 Methods and procedures of the study

Phenomenological data methods and procedures are flexible and unstructured, capturing verbatim reports or observable characteristics and yielding data that usually do not take numerical form (Brink & Wood, 1998). This section discusses population, sample, sampling procedures, data gathering instruments, data analysis, synopsis of the research findings, trustworthiness and credibility of the study and ethical considerations.

3.5.1 Population

In the definitions used by various authors, a population is the entire group of persons or objects that is of interest to the researcher and meets the criteria which the researcher is interested in studying (De Vos, 2002; Burns & Grove, 2003). In this study, the target population was all the orphaned learners aged 6 to 14 and 15 to 18 years in six selected primary schools in the Endola circuit. Below is a discussion of the research sample, and how the participants were located.

3.5.2 Sample

A sample is a part or fraction of a whole, or a subset of a larger set, selected by the researcher to participate in a research study. A sample thus consists of a selected group of the elements or units of analysis from a defined population (Brink, 2006) or a "selection of participants from the population" (Robson, 2002:260). In social science research, the element is an individual or many people, but other entities can also form the basis of a sample such as documents, events, groups of people, behaviors, or any other single measurement unit of a study (Burns & Grove, 2003).

The choice of the sample is also closely related to the study design (Brink, 2006). In this study however, one of the basic characteristics of interpretive phenomenology is that researchers select a small number of cases, which they can investigate in great depth and detail (Smith, 2004). The interpretive phenomenology design involves a close investigation of the experiences and meaning-making activities of only one participant. Sometimes they may draw on the accounts of a small number of people, usually not more than 15 (Reid, Flowers & Larkin, 2005).

A researcher applying phenomenology is concerned with the lived experiences of the people involved or who were involved, with the issue that is being researched (Maypole & Davies, 2001). This study involved six (6) orphaned learners from six selected primary schools in the Endola circuit in Namibia. The aim in participant selection in phenomenological research is to select participants who have lived the experience that is the focus of the study, who are willing to talk about their experience, and who are diverse enough from one another to enhance possibilities of rich and unique stories of the particular experience (Polkinghorne, 1983).

The number of participants necessary for studies of this type will vary depending on the nature of the study and the data collected along the way (Laverty, 2003). Researchers may continue, for example, to engage in interviews with participants until they believe they have reached a point of saturation, in which a clearer understanding of the experience will not be found through further discussion with participants (Sandelowski cited in Laverty, 2003). Table 4 shows the participants who participated in the study from six selected Primary schools in the Endola circuit.

Table 4: Data collection register

Name of school	Status	Gender	Age category
Endola PS	Double orphan	Boy	6 -14 years
Eudafano PS	Maternal orphan	Girl	6 -14 years
Omungwelume PS	Paternal orphan	Boy	6 -14 years
Pahangwashime PS	Paternal orphan	Girl	6 -14 years
Oushakeneno PS	Maternal orphan	Girl	15 -18 years
Ongenga PS	Double orphan	Girl	15 -18 years

Table 4 shows the name of the schools, orphanhood status, gender and age category from which the sample of the study was drawn. For example a double/total orphaned schoolboy aged 14 years was sampled at Endola Primary School. Table 4 further shows a 11 year old maternal orphaned school girl at Eudafano Primary School, a 13 year old paternal orphaned boy at Omungwelume Primary school, 14 year old paternal orphaned girl at Pahangwashime Primary School, 16 year old maternal girl at Oushakeneno and 14 year old double/total orphaned girl at Ongenga Primary school. The present study sampled four orphaned girls and two boys. The reason for having more girls was that there were more orphaned girls than boys in the selected schools. OVC Registers Manual for schools and teachers assisted the researcher in selecting the sample.

3.5.3 Sampling procedures

Sampling refers to the method used to select a given number of participants (sample) from a population in order to obtain information regarding a phenomenon in a way that represents the population of interest (Mertens, 2005). The study can use either probability or non-probability sampling (Brink, 2006). However, this study used non-probability sampling. This type of sampling may or may not accurately represent the population. It is usually more convenient and economical, and allows the study of populations when they are not amenable to probability sampling, or when the researcher is unable to locate the entire population (Brink, 2006).

Non-probability sampling requires the researcher to judge and select those subjects who know the most about the phenomenon, and who are able to articulate and explain nuances to him or her (Brink, 2006). The types of non-probability sampling discussed in the literature are: convenience sampling, quota sampling, purposive sampling and snowball sampling (Brink, 2006; Gray, 2009). The study used purposive sampling and it is discussed below.

3.5.3.1 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling procedure was used to select orphaned learners as participants of the study. The principle of selection in purposive sampling is the researcher's judgment as to typicality or interest (Speziale & Carpenter, 2007). Using purposive sampling, researchers select individuals for study participation based on their particular knowledge of a phenomenon for the purpose of sharing that knowledge (Robson, 2002).

This study involved orphaned learners who could offer an authentic account of the research topic and who might be considered to share sufficient common experiences with others (Yin cited in Taukeni, 2009). The advantage of purposive sampling is that it allows the researcher to select people who are suitable for the research (Denscombe, 2002). A disadvantage of purposive sampling is that the researcher may inadvertently omit a vital characteristic or may be sub-consciously biased in selecting the sample (Gray, 2009). The selection of the sample for this study was based on the purpose of the study looking for orphaned learners who have had experiences with regard to psychosocial support.

3.5.4 Instruments of the study

Data gathering is the precise, systematic gathering of information relevant to the research problem/question, using instruments such as: interviews, participant observation, focus group discussion, narratives and case histories (Burns & Grove, 2003:373). The process of data gathering provides an opportunity for the researcher to learn about an experience and to form ideas about its structure (Polkinghorne, 1989). The study made use of interviews. Interviews can generally be classified under four categories namely: structured, semi-structure, unstructured and focus group discussion (Gratton & Jones, 2004). This study employed unstructured interviews, which are discussed below.

3.5.4.1 In-depth /unstructured phenomenological interviews

In-depth or unstructured interviews are “the least structured form of interviews” (Payne & Payne, 2004:132). Unstructured interviews are particularly valuable for investigating people’s attitudes, experiences and beliefs in-depth, and can give

insight into some of the reasons behind their behavior (Willem, 2003). This means that the researcher analyses not only the content of the conversation, but also what the conversation situation is like in terms of emotions, tensions, interruptions and body language (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In this study of orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support provisioning, unstructured interviews were identified as a valuable approach when gathering data on sensitive topics (Fielding & Thomas, 2001) like orphanhood. In phenomenological interviewing, the researcher asks short, descriptive questions that hopefully lead to a long, detailed description of the experiences being studied (Kvale, 1983; Penner & McClement, 2008). Interviews were conducted in *Oshikwanyama*, which is the native language of all participants who took part in the interviews. All interviews were tape-recorded and notes were concurrently taken as well.

Phenomenological design data are commonly gathered through face-to-face interviews to gain insights into the experiences of the participants. Open-ended interviews facilitate the collection of rich data by providing the participants with the opportunity to describe their experiences fully (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006; Penner, & McClement, 2008). When interviewing orphaned learners, the researcher did not force them to describe how they experienced psychosocial support, but allowed them ample time to respond in a way they felt comfortable with.

The purpose of phenomenological interviews is to “attain a first-person description of some specified domain of experience” (deMarrais, 2004:57). The researcher becomes the learner, and the participant is the one who has had the experience and considered the expert. Therefore, the interview becomes a conversation with the

participant leading in the discussion of a particular experience in whatever way he or she chooses (deMarrais, 2004). In this study for example orphaned learners described their own experiences with regard to psychosocial support with the researcher only facilitating the discussion. Participants were generally asked to describe in detail their experiences of psychosocial support provided at school and home. The specific questions asked were generally very open in nature, with follow up discussion being led not so much by the researcher, as by the participant.

The main advantage therefore of unstructured interviews is the flexibility and open-ended conversation between the researcher and interviewee. The researcher can rephrase questions and ask additional ones to clarify responses and secure more valid results (Thomas, Nelson & Silverman, 2005). It has the benefit of generating a high response rate from appropriate participants (Payne & Payne, 2004). In the event that a participant becomes upset or distress during interview, the investigator should stop the interview, provide emotional support to the person and pursue psychological follow up. The participant should be given the option of stopping the interview or rescheduling for another time (Penner & McClement, 2008).

Although orphaned learners expressed various emotions during the course of recounting their experiences, their reactions did not cause any discomfort that required the researcher to stop the interview. The presence of the social worker during the entire interview period made the process easy since she worked with orphaned children and knew how to handle them. It could also be attributed to the fact that the researcher made several visits to build rapport and some level of trust and confidence prior to the actual data gathering period.

3.5.5 Data analysis

Data analysis is a mechanism for reducing and organizing data to produce findings that require interpretation by the researcher (Burns & Grove, 2003). The process of data analysis can proceed in a number of ways in the phenomenological design (Laverty, 2003). In this study data analysis was done using the following five steps:

- i) Bracketing and phenomenological reduction
- ii) Delineating units of meaning
- iii) Clustering of units of meaning to form themes
- iv) Summarizing each interview, validating it and where necessary modifying it
- v) Extracting general and unique themes from all the interviews and making a composite summary.

Below is the discussion of each of the five steps of data analysis.

3.5.5.1 Bracketing and phenomenological reduction

The researcher of the study needed to bracket out the outer world as well as individual biases in order to successfully achieve contact with the essence (Laverty, 2003). To achieve this Moustakas (1994) advises that in the textual description of an experience nothing be omitted. Every dimension or phase is granted equal attention and is included. But, to determine the essence of a phenomenon, it is necessary to develop a structural description which goes further than the textual description by describing how the phenomenon is experienced (Moustakas, 1994).

The researcher of this study applied reduction or bracketing by presenting structural and textual descriptions of orphaned learners' experiences regarding psychosocial support. This was done by first translating interviews from *Oshikwanyama* to English and then, transcribing the tape-recorded interviews. This was followed by reading and rereading the verbatim transcriptions of orphaned learners' experiences.

3.5.5.2 *Delineating units of meaning*

Hycner (1999) recommends that the researcher listen repeatedly to the audio recording of each interview to become familiar with the words of the interviewee/informant in order to develop holistic units of meaning. The list of units of relevant meaning extracted from each interview was carefully scrutinized and the clearly redundant units eliminated (Moustakas, 1994). To do that the researcher considered the literal content, the number (the significance) of times a meaning was mentioned and also how (non-verbal cues) it was stated (Hycner, 1999).

During the data analysis the researcher transformed the Natural Meaning Unit (NMU)-the spontaneous description of orphaned learners' experiences expressed in the interviews into the technical language relevant to psychosocial support. The transformation goes through the everyday linguistic expressions to the reality they describe, and then re-describe this reflective reality in the language appropriate to phenomenological based psychology (van Heerden, 2000:79) (**see Chapter 4**)

3.5.5.3 *Clustering of units of meaning to form themes*

Clusters of themes are typically formed by grouping units of meaning together (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994) and the researcher identifies significant topics, also called units of significance (Sadala & Adorno, 2001). As a researcher I considered every statement relevant to psychosocial support as having equal value. I listed the meaning units of each orphaned learner and clustered them into common themes. I used my judgment by interrogating the meaning of the various clusters to determine themes which showed the essence of these clusters (Hycner, 1999).

I further developed a textual description of these learners' experiences. From this an integration of textures and structures into the meanings and essences of the phenomenon were constructed (Moustakas, 1994). With the list of non-redundant units of meaning in hand I again bracketed my presuppositions in order to remain true to the phenomenon. I examined the list of units of meaning to elicit the essence and organized them into fitting themes (**see Chapter 5**).

3.5.5.4 Summarizing each interview, validating it and modifying it

After all the themes elicited from the data were summarized, I conducted a 'validity check' by returning to orphaned learners to determine if the essence of the interview had been correctly captured (Hycner, 1999). Any modification necessary was done as result of this 'validity check'. Colaizzi (1978:62) suggested validating the information by asking the subject, "What aspects of your experience have I omitted?" It helped the researcher to ask for additional information and do follow-ups so that he could get better understanding of psychosocial support (**see Chapter 5**).

3.5.5.5 Extracting general and unique themes from all the interviews and making a composite summary

Once the process outlined in points 3.5.5.1 to 3.5.5.4 has been done for all the interviews, the researcher looks "for the themes common to most or all of the interviews as well as the individual variations" (Hycner, 1999:154). A process of validation again occurred, noting discrepancies and integrating new information throughout the process. Once an exhaustive a description as possible was rendered, it could be returned once again to each research participant for final validation

(Laverty, 2003) until a synthesis of all meaning units regarding the participants' experiences, known as the structure of the experience is clear (**see Chapter 5-6**).

3.5.6 Synopsis of the research findings

Dahlberg (2006) reveals that in order for the phenomenological data to be valid in empirical research, it has to be interpreted. Thus, the findings of this study were interpreted through detailed narratives and representative quotes in the form of a verbatim exploration of themes and patterns which emerged from the data analysis. These themes and patterns are then placed within the research question of the study. The research question was: What psychosocial support do orphaned learners in Endola Circuit experience at school and home?

Then, on this ground, a wide spectrum of perspectives emerged regarding orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support provision. They include: support before and after bereavement, peer support, provision of educational incentives, provision of safety and security, provision of textbooks and stationery, school feeding program, provision of sport activities, school attendance and academic performance and other support.

3.5.7 Trustworthiness and credibility of the study

Trustworthiness refers to the ability of researchers to convince themselves and participants that the findings of the inquiry are trustworthy (Babbie & Mouton, 2004). It is established when findings reflect as closely as possible the meaning as described by the participants (Creswell, 2003). Meanwhile, credibility deals with the degree of believability of the research findings. In credible research, the data is

consistent and cohesive rather than scattered and contradictory (Lincoln & Guba cited in Shank, 2006). This study employed pilot testing and member checking to ensure trustworthiness and credibility.

3.5.7.1 *Pilot testing*

Pilot testing is necessary to determine whether the ways in which participants understand questions are relatively similar across the group and whether the information is easily accessible to participants (Collins, 2003). It was necessary to ensure that the questions are such that responses correlate to the aim of the study. The interview questions of this study on orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psycho-social support were peer reviewed by one of the social workers working for the Ministry of Gender, Equality and Child Welfare in Namibia and a colleague who has experience in phenomenology.

The reason for involving one of the social workers was her vast experience and expertise in handling issues surrounding orphaned children. Another reason was for her to evaluate each interview question and to help in translating the interview questions into the *Oshikwanyama* language which was used during interviews. The pilot testing was done at one of the selected primary schools in the Endola circuit with two orphaned learners; a double orphan boy aged 13 and a maternal orphan girl aged 10 years. However, these orphaned learners who took part in the pilot testing were not participants in the main study. The purpose was to test the content of the questions in terms of clarity and meaning, the spoken language and how the orphaned learners would respond to the interview questions.

The pilot testing was done in the presence of a social worker where the opportunities for pre and post counseling were provided to participating orphaned learners. The result of the pilot testing showed the need to spend time more wisely especially the introduction information about the researcher and aim of the study. The question about stress and anxiety was not clear to the participants during the pilot testing and the necessary adjustments were made accordingly.

3.5.7.2 Member checking

Member checking is the process of going back to the participants to see if the analysis/interpretation makes sense to them and reflects their experiences (Creswell, 2003). The other reason is to allow participants to review findings from the data in order to confirm or challenge the accuracy of the work (Taukeni, 2009).

When the researcher went back to all the orphaned learners who were interviewed after the transcription of the data, minor corrections were noted: name of schools, villages and the year the parents died. The researcher used the opportunity to ask the orphaned learners to describe their childhood best and worst experiences, a question that was omitted in the initial interviews. A follow-up was also done on the abuses experienced by learners and whether they had something else to add.

3.5.8 Ethical considerations

The study sought approval from the University of Fort Hare via the office of the supervisor of this study, the Permanent secretary of the Ministry of Education in Namibia, the Ohangwena Educational regional Director, the Endola circuit Inspector, school Principals and class teachers of the orphaned learners. Permission letters in

writing were provided by the above authorities and attached to the final report of this study (**see appendix 1 to 4**). Each orphaned learner who took part in the interview was asked to sign a consent form. Consent involves the procedure by which an individual may choose whether or not to be a participant in a study (Drew, Hardman & Hosp, 2008).

When it is determined that the person does not have the capacity to make the decision or is dependent on others for his or her welfare in the case of children under the age of 18 or people with cognitive or emotional disabilities, substitute consent may be obtained (Roberts, Geppert, Coverdale, Louie & Edenharder, 2005). Substitute consent or third-party consent is given by someone other than the person to be involved in the study (Drew, Hardman & Hosp, 2008). In this study, the substitute consent of orphaned learners was sought from their class teachers. The researcher's task was to ensure that participants had a complete understanding of the purpose of the study, benefits and the risks involved (Best & Kahn, 2006; Jones & Kottler, 2006). The informed consent agreement form was explained to participants at the beginning of each interview. All who ended up being participants were in agreement with its content and had signed it.

There were no foreseeable risks or discomforts involved in participating in this study. It was made clear by the researcher that there were no direct benefits to the orphaned learners or any other individual involved in the study. The anticipated benefits are a better understanding of orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support provisioning in the Endola circuit. The participants also understood that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time (Drew,

Hardman & Hosp, 2008). The process is embedded within the principle of respect for autonomy and includes providing participants with information about the benefits and risks of the research (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002).

A further ethical consideration relates to the researcher's responsibility to give assurances of confidentiality and anonymity (McHaffie, 2000). Measures to ensure confidentiality of personal information included the secure storage of the data and the use of a system of coding to protect the individual's identity during the process of data analysis and in the publication of the research results (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). In the study the confidentiality and anonymity was granted through a coding system where the names of orphaned learners would not appear in the final report.

The presence of the social worker made the researcher confident when interviewing orphaned learners and asking sensitive questions. The researcher made several visits to schools. The purpose was to build a rapport and trust among orphaned learners. In the last interviews, the orphaned learners were asked to validate their experiences in the transcript. There were no major changes to the interviews conducted.

3.6 Summary

This chapter discussed and justified the philosophical orientation, approach, design, strategies of inquiry and methods of data gathering and analysis used in the study. Ethical issues were also discussed in this chapter. The next chapter presents structural descriptions of the participants.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

"The child must know that he is a miracle, that since the beginning of the world there hasn't been, and until the end of the world there will not be, another child like him." - Pablo Casals-

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data from the study as stated in the previous chapter. The purpose of the study was to investigate the orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support provisioning in six selected primary schools and at home in the Endola circuit. The data were gathered through unstructured phenomenological interviews in which six orphaned learners narrated their psychosocial support experiences. Narrative is undoubtedly a primary and powerful way of understanding experience (van Heerden, 2000).

The data were tape recorded and transcribed. They were analyzed using a thematic analysis involving five steps, namely: bracketing and reduction, delineating units of meaning, clustering of units of meaning to form themes, summarizing each interview, validating it, modifying it and extracting general and unique themes from all the interviews and making a composite summary. These steps were discussed in detail in the previous chapter. The participants are identified as: **P1=orphan1; P2=orphan2; P3=orphan3; P4=orphan4; P5=orphan5; P6=orphan6**. The transcribed data were used to develop natural meanings units (**see appendix 8**) which were the direct narratives of the participants. The source of the number in front of the participants represents the narration as listed in the natural meanings units attached to this study. Thus, they will be referred to as for example: **P1:2** which mean participant 1 and his or her narration number 2.

4.2 Brief biographical sketch of P1

P1 was a 14 year old school boy in Grade 7. He has one step sister and three step brothers. **P1** lost both parents. He could not remember the years when his parents died and how old he was when they died because it happened in his early childhood. He heard however that he first lost his father and then the mother. **P1** was told by his maternal grandmother that his mother was bewitched and was found dead in her room during the day. When his mother died he could walk but he was still a small boy. **P1**'s best childhood experience was when he went for school holidays to his maternal grandmother's house. He said it was good to be with his siblings because they played soccer together. On the other hand, his worse childhood experience was when he was told that his parents were dead.

4.2.1 Description of P1's experience

P1 described his experiences regarding psychosocial support provisioning and how he managed his life at home and school. After his mother died, he stated "I was taken to live with my paternal great grandfather" (**P1:18**) while "my siblings lived with my maternal grandmother" (**P1:19**). During his stay with his great grandfather **P1**'s needs were not sufficiently met. Most of the time he went to school on an empty stomach and he never ate after school. He said "my great grandfather was an old man and we were the only two at home" (**P1:20**) at that time. It seemed the only support **P1** could get in terms of food was the snacks the school provided to learners.

Unfortunately his great grandfather "died in 2009" (**P1:21**). This clearly demonstrates that some children in particular, suffer after losing their parents even though their

grandparents do their best to support them. This is because grandparents are not in a position to meet some of their needs such as getting up early in the morning and preparing breakfast for them. When his great grandfather died he went to live with his paternal aunt. At the time of the interview he had been with her since 2010. His aunt is a self-employed single woman. **P1** stated “my aunt only sells sweets” (**P1:24**) at the school, except at the beginning of the first school term when “she sells book covers” (**P1:25**) to supplement her income. They are seven children at home.

Despite his aunt being the only one who provided for his home and school needs **P1** expressed his gratitude for all the things his aunt did for him and for her ability to provide for the entire family. **P1** stated “I am happy to live with my aunt” (**P1:121**). He shared this positive reaction, “my life changed for the better since I moved to live with her” (**P1:122**). **P1** demonstrated how his life changed since he moved to live with his aunt in the interview when he revealed “I am even learning very well because I eat before I go to school” (**P1:36**). On average, he ate three meals a day. He stated, “We can wake up to cook rice or we eat bread” (**P1:38**). After school “sometimes we find porridge or rice” (**P1:39**) and his dinner “is porridge and soup” (**P1:41**). He said the food eaten for lunch and dinner is often the same and included food items such as millet (locally known as ‘*omahangu*’) porridge or rice and soup.

As far as **P1**’s experience with regard to the support provided by the school to cope with the loss of his mother goes, he claims not to be aware how the school supports orphaned learners during and after bereavement. He was only aware that “when the orphaned learner returns to school he or she is told not to feel sad” (**P1:90**). It is done by either the class teacher or the school principal” (**P1:92**). In his case he was

not in school when his parents died that was why he does not remember how the school supports orphaned learners during and after bereavement. **P1** stated “I remember that sometimes the class teacher tells us that there is someone who lost his or her parents. Even the principal says it at the school assembly” (**P1:88**). However, he was told by his maternal grandmother that he cried when his father died. He was consoled by his mother during the bereavement (**P1:93, 94**).

The emotional feelings explored in the interview with **P1** showed anger and sadness. He stated, “I am angry because I did not know my father” (**P1:118**). He expressed “my father could have been the one supporting me” (**P1:105**). **P1** felt bad when thinking of his parents. He stated, “It makes me feel sad when I remember my parents, especially when I want something but there is no one to help me” (**P1:112**).

P1 also gets angry “when I see others with their mothers. I don’t have one so I feel like crying” (**P1:114, 115**). He said, “Sometimes if I think of it I don’t even like being touched by anybody” (**P1:116**). **P1** admitted, “I get depressed when I am provoked” (**P1:101**). Also he experienced feelings of depression. “I get depressed when I think of my parents” (**P1:102**). However he did not know how the school supported the grieving learners and others who felt depressed and angry as in his case, “the school does not do anything about my anger” (**P1:119**).

Since **P1** lost both parents in early childhood he expressed his inability to understand what his grandmother said when she was talking to him after the loss of his mother. He noted, “My grandmother talked to me when I lost my mother. She told me many things but that time I could not speak” (**P1:108, 109**). When questioned about

whether he forgave people responsible for his mother's death, **P1** stated aggressively, "I cannot forgive the people who are responsible for the death of my mother" (**P1:117**). It appeared as if **P1** was finding it difficult to deal with feelings of trauma and unresolved grief. **P1** was going through emotions of not remembering the years his parents died and how to forgive the people who killed his mother.

P1 appeared to be in need of emotional support to cope better in life so that his vision of becoming a policeman could be realized. Even though he expressed gratitude for the physical support provided by his aunt for instance he admitted that his aunt bought him school uniform, she paid his school fees and provided him with books, pens and book covers (**P1:59, 69**). He further said, "I am fine. I am even learning very well because I eat before I go to school and after school not like before when I used to go to school on empty stomach and I would not eat anything after school" (**P1:36, 37**).

He spoke passionately about his future plans upon completion of his schooling. He said he wanted to become a policeman to combat crime in the country. "Policemen are too far away to arrest criminals. I want to become a policeman to arrest the criminals" (**P1:74**). He believed that there was a lot of crime in the country and he could make a difference. He stated, "Policemen are too far away to apprehend criminals" (**P1:75**) in their village. **P1** described how he was inspired by his teachers at school. He said, "The teachers at our school motivate us to study hard to have good future" (**P1:77**). "I get motivation from my teachers. They are my role models" (**P1:79**). It seemed there was something else which motivated **P1** to work hard in school. "I get motivation because if I don't learn enough I will end up in the air,

walking around and stealing people's things" (P1:80, 81). He said, "I don't want that life. I want to work hard" (P1:82). His motivation could be attributed to the fact that they were taught Life skills as a subject at school. He stated, "We are taught how our future lives would be. We talk about what we want to become in life" (P1:71, 72).

P1's school was doing enough to motivate its learners specially the Grade 7 learners. "Like our last year's Grade 7 went to Ruacana waterfall, our Grade 7s will go to the Etosha National Park if we pass very well" (P1:84, 85). He felt happy about that because "I want to see Etosha, I have never been there before" (P1:88). He seemed to be aware of how fortunate he was to be in Grade 7 and he would like to use the opportunity to explore his country.

P1 appeared to be accepted by others and did not experience any stigma or discrimination. He felt safe at school. He stated, "If I am mistreated I go to the teachers and tell them there is a learner who is mistreating me" (P1:96, 97). He said even at home he felt safe and there was no problem. On the question of spiritual support, P1 revealed that he is a Christian and he likes going to church every Sunday. He even said, "I was baptized and I am waiting to start confirmation classes at our church" (P1:150).

However, P1 was concerned about the provision of food at school. He observed, "The school does not provide anything in terms of food anymore" (P1:32). He said, "I don't know why the school stopped giving us snacks" (P1:35). He felt, "it was really helpful to us to eat biscuits and cookies" (P1:33). "We could listen better in class" (P1:34). Nevertheless he seemed to be satisfied with the provision of water at

school. He shared the view that his school provided clean water to the learners. “We have a tap here” (P1:43). Regarding whether the school provided shelter for orphaned learners P1 noted that the school did not provide any shelter. He only heard “the school would provide a place to stay” (P1:48) in case the learner did not have a place to live. However, he admitted, “the school principal advised me to stay with my aunt” (P1:45). His school principal said he should stay with his aunt but he could go to visit his grandmother and his siblings during the school holidays.

P1 related his experiences with regard to the provision of basic health care in school. He was vague about any support of basic health care. He said, “We only receive mosquito nets at home from the clinic” (P1:50). He further expressed the view, “the whole school gathers and teachers give information about HIV and AIDS” (P1:51). He noted, “It is usually done on AIDS day” (P1:52). About his personal health, he said, “my health is somehow better; I get headaches sometimes” (P1:54). “My aunt gives me money for transport to and from the hospital” (P1:53).

P1 shared his positive experience regarding the provision of school uniform. He said, “I have a school uniform that my aunt bought me” (P1:58). His aunt always made sure he had a school uniform. The school did not provide learners with school uniforms. He stated, “It only sends us to tell our parents to buy us the school uniforms” (P1:55). The school does not send those that cannot afford it to buy uniforms (P1:56). P1 was well provided for in terms of textbooks and other stationery. He said, “I have books, pens and book covers” (P1:59). He cheerfully stated, “My aunt gives me book covers and the school gives us the textbooks” (P1:61, 60). P1 related his experiences on the grant money that the government

provides to orphans and other vulnerable children. He shared his experiences with mixed emotions. He did not receive any grant money. He said, “I was not registered because my birth certificate could not be found. It was with my maternal grandmother” (P1:63, 64). His aunt showed interest in helping him register but he noted that his maternal grandmother “did not want to give the papers to let me be registered by my paternal aunt” (P1:67). She promised to get me registered (P1:66).

At the time of interview P1 did not know whether his maternal grandmother managed to register him for grants or not. His parents died when he was very young but up to the time of the interview he was not registered for financial support like many other orphans in his situation. He only got his pocket money from his aunt “to buy fat cakes at school” (P1:68). “My aunt even pays school fees for me” (P1:69). It appeared that P1 was supported by his aunt financially while other members of extended family were unwilling to help him.

P1 shared the feeling that he drew his support from his friends at school. He said he has friends at school with whom he plays. They usually go to the swings and play. “I am not alone at school. I have friends that I play with” (P1:123). He revealed the number of friends he has saying, “Since we are just two friends at school, when one of us has N\$ 1:00 we buy cakes and eat together” (P1:126). He gave the impression that his friends were his only source of socialization since he said “I don’t take part in dramas, drawing and sport at school” (P1:128). “I only do sports in PE during lessons” (P1:129). Even at home, P1 said, “this season is for herding the animals at home, we don’t play soccer anymore” (P1:144). Talking about school attendance, P1 said, “It is good. I come to school every week unless I am sick” (P1:131) or

something bad happens” (P1:132). Because he attended school almost every day, he did very well in his school work such as homework, class tests and examinations. For example, he stated “when I am given homework I always find time to do it...” (P1:135).

Although he needed help to do the most challenging tasks, he disclosed, nobody helps me do my school work at home, I do my work all by myself” (P1:140, 141). He said “I mostly need help to complete the difficult tasks” (P1:142) but he ends up doing it himself. P1 reflected back on his performance in 2010 by saying, “I passed very well every term. I also passed the end of the year examinations” (P1:137, 139). What seemed to emerge was the fact that P1 was serious with his school work despite not having anyone to help him with school work at home.

P1 related his experiences with regard to domestic chores. He said that they did not prevent him from doing his school work and going to school. However, he admitted that he faced some challenges with herding the animals. P1 said “the only hindrance to doing well in school is herding the animals” (P1:145). His main concern was during the school terms 1 and 2, he said “last term was much better we didn’t herd them and there was no field work” (P1:147). Nevertheless, he said that he never missed school to herd the animals. There was always somebody herding them at home. “I always found somebody herding the animals and I would take over from him after school” (P1:148, 149).

4.3 Brief biographical sketch of P2

P2 was in Grade 5, a school girl of 11 years. She has one sister and two brothers. She is a last born. **P2** lost her mother after a long illness. Her mother died in the hospital where she was admitted in 2006. She has been living with her maternal grandmother since early childhood. There were five of them in the family. **P2**'s sister was staying with her maternal aunt and her brothers were staying with their fathers in Windhoek. Her father was working in Windhoek. She described herself as a peace-loving person just like her grandmother.

4.3.1 Description of P2's experience

P2 described her experience with regard to how her school provided psychosocial support to orphaned learners and how she coped with life in general. When relating her experience with support during and after bereavement, **P2** revealed that the school usually gives a period of a week off to bereaved learners. **P2** said, "The school tells us to take two to three days at home with your family" (**P2:62**). After bereavement she stated "when you return to school other learners are warned at the school assembly" (**P2:63**), "not to provoke you" (**P2:64**).

Regarding how **P2**'s friends treated her after bereavement she said "my friends made me feel good when I returned to school. When I told my friends what had happened they said it was okay" (**P2:65, 79**). She further stated, "I have two close friends at school. They helped me to accept what happened" (**P2:81, 80**). It emerged that her friends treated her very well upon her return to school "my friends gave me a summary to copy" (**P2:78**) from the notes that they took while **P2** was away. This kind of peer support and sympathetic help makes it possible for bereaved learners to

cope with their situation better. Having supportive friends in times of bereavement is an important psychological support mechanism.

P2 experienced a variety of emotions following the death of her mother. She described her experience with tearful emotions. “I cried when my mother died” (**P2:67**). She remembered having been consoled when she stated “a close relative consoled me” (**P2:68**). When asked to reveal what the relative said to her, she replied emotionally, “she said I should not be too overwhelmed by my mother’s departure” (**P2:69**). The mention of a close relative could be attributed to the fact that psychosocial support was not provided in Namibian primary schools at the time. Or learners might prefer families to be their main source of psychological support in times of bereavement.

P2 talked about how much she liked her grandmother. She explained that “I like my grandmother because she taught me to greet people. She also said we should not insult people and ...when people send us we should not refuse to go” (**P2:46, 47, 48**). **P2** believed that her grandmother taught her indispensable life skills including how to pray. “We are taught how to pray” (**P2:49**), “we pray when we go to bed, before and after we eat” (**P2:50**). She described her grandmother as a religious person. **P2** believed that her maternal grandmother taught her the most basic life skills that she could not learn anywhere else, not even at school. She said “we have a Life skills subject but we don’t know the teacher” (**P2:51**).

However, she stated, “we are told to behave well and take care of ourselves” (**P2:52**) by the school teachers and principal. In terms of motivation to study hard the school

promised that “whoever places 1st to 3rd will get a pen and a file at the assembly” **(P2:54)**. **P2** boasted “I was also given a writing pad when I placed 3rd in Grade 3” **(P2:55)**. She also reported to be safe at school “I feel safe at school. If I am beaten, I go to the office and tell the school principal” **(P2:56, 57)**.

Since **P2** felt safe enough she would someday like to get involved in drama and cultural groups at school **(P2:59)**. Given that she was brought up in a religious family “if there is ever a Sunday school here, I would like to join” **(P2:58)**. She took part in sports “I run the 400m” **(P2:82)**. It was worth noting **P2**’s interest in school extra-mural activities. It is generally accepted that children need to maintain age appropriate interest and activities for the normal development to take place. Emotionally **P2** did not encounter any problem from her peers at school and family members at home treating her differently since she became an orphan.

P2 appeared satisfied with the provision of food in form of the soft porridge her school provided to the learners. She stated, “The school prepares soft porridge for the learners” **(P2:17)**. She observed, “it is served to every child at school. Whoever wants it can get it” **(P2:18, 19)**. **P2** admitted to having three meals a day at home. For instance, she ate in the morning before she went to school. She said, “We make even tea” **(P2:20)** or “we eat soft porridge” **(P2:21)**. After school she ate millet porridge complemented with soup. Then, her supper usually consisted of food items such as millet porridge “or rice with soup” **(P2:24)**. She seemed to be well provided for in terms of food at school and home.

Regarding the provision of clean water at school, **P2** was quick to respond, “There is a tap at school. We have a tap at home too” (**P2:25, 26**). The school did not provide shelter to orphaned learners. She basically said “no” (**P2:27**). In terms of basic health care **P2** stated, “there are immunizations occasionally for the learners at the school” (**P2:28**). She also said “the school provides soft porridge” (**P2:29**) to ensure basic health for the learners.

P2 talked about the support she received from her grandmother and father in terms of school uniform with gratefulness. She said “my grandmother bought me my school uniform” (**P2:30**). She stated, “My shirt was bought in 2009 and my skirt was bought in 2008” (**P2:31**). About her school bag she said “my father bought me a school bag but it is old now” (**P2:32**). During the time of the interviews **P2** wore flip-flops and not school shoes, she said “I had school shoes but they do not fit me anymore” (**P2:33**).

P2 had not paid her school fees. She said, “I was told that my father would send me money when he got paid” (**P2:37**). When probed further in an effort to understand her experience better it came out that she “did not have a problem with the payment last year” (**P2:38**). It appeared that this year was an exception in terms of paying her school fees on time.

On a positive note, **P2** said that she received the orphans and other vulnerable children’s grant from the Namibian government on a monthly basis. She said “I receive the grant and one of my siblings receives it too” (**P2:42**). “My grandmother receives my grant on my behalf” (**P2:43**). **P2** said “I am happy because she uses the money to buy my school uniform and pay my school fees” (**P2:44, 45**).

P2 revealed that she was well provided for with regard to textbooks and other stationery. “My grandmother and father provide me with pens” (**P2:39**) while “the school provides us with textbooks” (**P2:40**). “Sometimes if you pass very well it (school) gives pens, files and writing pads” (**P2:41**). She mentioned that she receives emotional and social support from her family. “We love each other as a family” (**P2:76**). She continued talking of her family love. “We don’t shout at each other. Even my grandmother does not shout at us” (**P2:70, 72**). That was because “we never get angry at one another at home” (**P2:71**). In view of the fact that “my grandmother is very peaceful and loving” (**P2:73**).

It is generally believed that living in a peaceful and loving family atmosphere does not only lead to good socialization and emotional development, but love, good attachment and the feeling of belonging. Thus, **P2** interacted well with other learners at school. She said, “I always play very well with my friends at school” (**P2:77**). When a learner feels stressed the school sends him or her home (**P2:74**). “Learners who feel depressed are taken to the hospital by the school” (**P2:75**).

When question about her school attendance, **P2** was energized and she responded, “I come at 7:00 ...every day to school” (**P2:83, 84**). Regarding her experience with school attendance in the 2010 academic year, she said “I was absent only one day last year” (**P2:85**). **P2** demonstrated she was a hard working girl and was determined to “become a teacher” (**P2:66**).

In describing her academic performance she claimed to be doing very well. She gave an example of a class test out of 20 marks “I can even get 18” (**P2:89**). When

the interviewer investigated further into her 2010 academic performance she was eager to articulate that “I was 5th at the end of term 1 examination last year. Term 2 I was 4th in the class” (P2:90, 91). That was an exceptional performance from an 11 year old girl. P2 maintained her position in the end of the year examination “I was 4th” (P2:92).

Regarding support with school work at home, P2 stated, “my aunt helps me with school work at home, she asks me if I was given homework” (P2:93, 94). The aunt P2 was talking about was her mother’s younger sister staying in the same household. The only domestic chore mentioned by P2 was pounding millet, “we don’t plough only the adults plough the field” (P2:95). It emerged that P2 had family support by her side. Her general impression of psychosocial support provisioning in school was “I feel good about the support” (P2:97). With her family and peer support P2 appeared to be doing very well academically, emotionally and socially.

Her school uniform was old and worn out and she had not paid her school fees but she still maintained the love and support of her family, which was commendable. Another theme that emerged from the experience of P2 was the guidance of her grandmother. She mentioned that her grandmother talked with them, gave them psychological support and advice about religious issues and other life skills. It seemed her grandmother provided positive spiritual support to her children. Overall, her experience had a profound spiritual dimension.

4.4 Brief biographical sketch of P3

P3 was in Grade 7. He is a school boy of 13 years. **P3** is from a family of seven. He has one brother and five sisters. He is the sixth born. **P3** lost his father who was sick for a long time. **P3's** father died in June 2010. He lived in the foster care of his maternal grandmother. It appeared that **P3** was from a family with a strong educational background. His elder siblings completed Grade 12 and some were in tertiary institutions to further their education. His brother was working; he revealed "my brother is a school teacher at Elakalapwa primary school" (**P3:13, 14**).

P3 further said "one of my sisters is doing her teaching practice at Ongandjera she is studying at the University of Namibia" (**P3:8, 9**). Another sister "is studying at Ongwediva College of Education" (**P3:10**). He mentioned that one of his sisters "just completed her Grade 12" (**P3:15**) and was in search of employment. **P3** has another sister who he said "is in Ohangwena with her paternal grandfather, "I don't know what she is doing" (**P3:11, 12**). Regarding his last born sister, he affirmed "our last born sister is schooling here with me" (**P3:16**). It is more than likely that if **P3** gets the inspiration from his siblings he would definitely go far and become somebody important in life.

P3's best childhood experience was when he first shot and killed a bird. He borrowed a catapult from another boy and shot the bird dead with a small stone. He felt proud and happy. The fun part of it all was when he was lied to that the type of bird he killed was not supposed to be eaten by small children so he had to give it to his maternal grandmother. He could not remember his worst childhood experience.

4.4.1 Description of P3's experience

P3 was provided for as far as his home and school needs were concerned by his grandmother and mother. His mother “stays in Oshakati” (**P3:21**). She was not formally employed but his grandmother received pension on a monthly basis to support the family. The researcher asked **P3** about his experience with regard to support during and after bereavement. He responded that the school would give a bereaved learner some days to stay at home during bereavement, in his case when his father died he said “I was given the whole week” (**P3:78**).

But it seemed **P3** needed other kinds of support from school, “I needed someone to write my summary while I was away or I could copy from his or her book when I returned to school” (**P3:90, 91**). “The school allowed someone from home to write my notes. He was our neighbor” (**P3:92, 93**). It showed that the school made it easy for **P3** to cope better upon his return to school because someone had already written his notes while he was away.

Overall, he did not miss very much in terms of academic work or what other learners did in his absence. In particular he did not miss out on tests and homework. “When you (bereaved learner) return to school you have to rewrite the homework and tests others (learners) did” (**P3:94**). Regarding how he was treated by his friends when he returned to school, **P3** said that his friends and teachers did not say anything to him. He said the following in that regard: “my friends did not say anything when I went back to school” (**P3:95**). “They already heard about it when I first went to tell my class teacher” (**P3:96**).

But it appeared that **P3** no problems with maintaining his friends. “I keep playing with my friends. I play soccer with my friends at school” (**P3:97, 102**). He indicated that “some teachers shook my hand” (**P3:98**). “They did not say anything” (**P3:79**). Additionally, class teachers wrote down the names of orphan learners in their classes so that “when orphans are given something, you will also get it” (**P3:100**). Emotionally **P3** did not experience any problem from his peers, teachers, family members and the people in the community treating him differently since he became an orphan. However, he revealed in the interview that he cried a little when his grandmother told him the news of his father’s passing. He explained “I cried a little. I felt bad” (**P3:84, 85**).

To the follow up question about feelings of anger and other psychological problems, he replied, “I tell my class teacher when I am angry” (**P3:80, 81**). **P3** related how the school motivated the learners to learn in order to have a better future. He said that, if the behavior of a learner was good, he/she could get a diploma. **P3** had not got a diploma for good behavior thus far, he believed that “I feel good when teachers are saying I have good behavior and manners” (**P3:88, 89**).

It seemed that not only the good behavior was rewarded with a diploma but even when a learner excelled in certain subjects. He said, “If you (learner) pass much better than others in a subject you get a diploma” (**P3:71**). He gave the example of the 2010 academic year where “many learners were given (diplomas) in subjects” (**P3:70**). **P3** said that the school did enough to motivate learners to learn. He emphasized, “You (learner) can even get a calculator if you pass well” (**P3:62**).

Regarding feelings of being safe and secure in school **P3** expressed “I feel safe and secure at school because there is a Learner Representative Council (LRC). They check if learners tuck in their school uniform shirts” (**P3:72, 73**). Importantly, the LRC monitors “learners who are beating others and they will take you to the principal’s office” (**P3:74**). Therefore **P3** felt secure at school with the existence of the LRC to monitor and keep order around the school premises.

P3 said that he goes to church on Sundays and he was baptized in a church in Oshakati. They also prayed when they were about to go home after school. He said that everyone prayed in their class “we use a class list” (**P3:137**). In **P3**’s experience with regard to food provisioning in school, he stated, “our school provides soft porridge to the learners” (**P3:28**). **P3** seemed well supported by their school “we are also given a 10kg bag of maize meal to cook at home” (**P3:29**).

To the follow up question about the situation with regard to food provision at home, **P3** responded, “I only eat sometimes after school” (**P3:30**). **This** means, “sometimes I can find food but sometimes I cannot find any” (**P3:31**). It appeared the food eaten at home was provided by the school “we eat maize meal from school” (**P3:32**). Also, “my mother sends food home” (**P3:34**). He was satisfied because he said that “I eat at night before I sleep” (**P3:33**) even if he could not find food after school at least he did not sleep on an empty stomach.

P3’s experience with regard to the provision of water at school and home was also investigated in the interview. He said, “There is a tap at school” (**P3:35**). That was an indication that the Namibian government has done its part in providing children in

school with clean water. The situation was not the same at home. He said, “We fetch water from a well nearby the house” (P3:36). He said his family used water from the well at home but he stated “the tap is far” (P3:37) that was why he opted to fetch water from the well which was nearer the house and not from the tap.

When questioned about his favorite drink, he said he preferred ‘*oshikundu*’ (homemade drink) and water” (P3:38, 39). It seemed P3’s family had the same choice of drink. “my sisters also like the same drink as me. My grandmother drinks only water or a cool drink” (P3:40, 41). He shared his experience when he drank beer at a family wedding. “I was intoxicated” (P3:86) and P3 looked as if that experience changed his mind about alcohol “I don’t drink alcohol or smoke” (P3:87). Like the old saying “once bitten, twice shy”. It appeared he preferred to stick to water as his drink of choice.

P3 described his experience with regard to shelter provisioning in school by reporting, “the school does not provide any shelter” (P3:42). He was happy though for the fact that his grandmother provided him a place to live. He proudly stated “I have my own hut” (P3:44). P3 revealed the contents of his hut. “I have a bed and mattress. The mattress was bought by my grandmother” (P3:110, 111). Of other needs such as blankets and bed sheets, he said, “my maternal uncle gave me blankets and bed sheets (P3:109). As the only boy at home he had a hut to himself, he however reiterated “but the bed is not mine” (P3:112) he was just using it.

What P3 experienced as the basic health care provisioning at school was, “the school bought a first aid kit” (P3:47) and there is “a teacher who gives first aid to

injured learners at school” (P3:46). In addition to that “the school gives you permission to go to the clinic if you (learner) are sick” (P3:45). On his personal health, he said he was okay but he visited the hospital the previous year. He said “I had stomach pain” (P3:50).

With regard to a school uniform being one of the physical needs at school, P3 experienced some challenges. “There is inadequate provision of school uniforms and clothes” (P3:51). He asked for a new school bag as well. In his words, “Maybe it is the school bag for my books. It was bought by my mother when I was in Grade 5. Yes, it is old” (P3:52, 53). P3 revealed, however, that his grandmother bought him a school uniform and shoes. He was also aware of his grandmother’s support in terms of “soap, washing powder and body lotion” (P3:107). He was also grateful for all the support his mother provided, “such as clothes and shoes to wear” (P3:106).

When asked how he managed in terms of paying school fees, P3 replied with some reservation. He said about school fees: “it (fees) is not going very well. I can stay even a year without paying school fees” (P3:54, 55). He said, “When school starts is when I pay” (P3:56). Regarding how the school handled learners who did not pay school fees he said “our names are called in the class to remind us to pay” (P3:59). But he felt bad about his name being called to pay in class “I used to feel bad. They (other learners) might say I am in the class but I did not pay” (P3:60, 61).

P3 acknowledged, “my maternal grandmother pays for one term only and my mother pays for the remaining school terms whenever she gets some money” (P3:57, 58). He did not mention the support of his brother, who is working as a school teacher, in

paying the school fees but he stated, “My brother supports me somehow with pocket money” (P3:66). Somehow did not sound good enough. He further admitted “but only when I run into him (his brother) even at this school. I can even stay the whole year without him giving me money” (P3:67, 68).

Taking into account the fact that P3 just lost his father in 2010, his problem might be addressed when his application gets approved by the government to receive monthly grant money. He was optimistic and said, “not yet, it is still coming (money) because I recently applied for a grant. My mother helped me to apply” (P3:58, 59). When his application gets approved it would enable him to pay his school fees on time, buy a new school bag and as he said, “I need pocket money to buy my pens” (P3:57).

It appeared that his relationship with his late father’s family was not good. When questioned about whether P3 had visited his paternal family since his father died he said, “No, since my father died I have never gone back there” (P3:103). For that reason, he promised, “I hope to go there one day” (P3:104). Generally, the relationship “with my friends and family is okay” (P3:101) he said. P3 described his school attendance as “okay” (P3:113), “I was only absent when I went for the funeral of my father” (P3:114).

Regarding his academic progress in terms of doing homework, tests, the end of term examination and the end of the year examination, P3 said, “I am doing well” (P3:115) in school as far as school work is concerned. He said, “If the task is out of 20 marks, I could get 15 over 20 marks” (P3:116). He reported doing very well in class tests as well “I could also score 15 over 20 in the test” (P3:118).

Regarding his performance at the end of term 1 and 2 examinations in 2010, he stated positively, “Yes, I passed the end of term 1 and 2 examinations” (P3:119). He passed the final examination too “I scored two A symbols in the end of the year examination” (P3:121). P3 attributed his good performance to the support provided by the family. He stated “my family, my sisters and cousin help me with my work” (P3:122) at home.

P3’s experience with regard to domestic chores, being the only boy at home and how he manages, he related thus: “I am the only one who cuts down trees and herds animals” (P3:123). P3 gave the impression of coping just fine with school work and taking care of the animals “my sisters help me with animals, we only have goats” (P3:127, 124). He further said, “All children in the house must fetch water” (P3:131).

We carry buckets and containers of water on our heads” (P3:128). Luckily, they did not fetch water “every day, only some days” (P3:130). P3 concluded “we help each other with domestic chores” (P3:132). What seems to emerge from P3’s experience is the soft porridge that the school provided to the learners. He indicated the support he received during and after bereavement such as his teacher shaking his hand, his friends who stick by him and his maternal grandmother and his mother’s support.

4.5 Brief biographical sketch of P4

P4 was in Grade 7. She is a girl of 14 years. She is from a family of five. P4 has three sisters and one brother and she is the last born. She lost her father in the same year she started Grade 1 sometime in 2005. She was born in Walvis Bay. P4’s best childhood experience was when she was a small girl with her parents in Walvis Bay

at the sea side. Her father gave her a crab for the first time in her life and they knew that it would scare her. She did throw it back in the sea and her father teased her about it. She enjoyed that moment very much. Her worst childhood experience was also in Walvis Bay. **P4** was once informed that her mother had eleven other children. After she was born, five of them died before she could know them.

4.5.1 Description of P4's experience

It appeared that **P4** did not have adjustment problems at home, as she was born and raised in the household before her father died. **P4** has been living with her maternal grandmother, her mother, brother and a cousin since her birth (**P4:17**). She was the only girl at home. Among her siblings **P4** lived with only her brother who was doing Grade 8 at a different school. Her two sisters were in Oshakati. They had both finished Grade 12. The oldest sister was working and the other one had just completed her Grade 12. One of her older sisters had moved to Angola.

When **P4** related her experience about support the school provided to her in order to cope with the loss of her father she said that she could not remember any support. Although **P4** did not elaborate much in describing her experience, she shared some important life experiences. She revealed that the school offered the learners the Life skills subject but since they started, nothing was being taught. The texts on the subject had been given to them, however. **P4** could recall that Life skills as a subject was all about how to keep oneself and others safe (**P4:93**). She only recalled what she learnt in Grade 6 "I read that don't drink too much" (**P4:94**). **P4** also revealed that there was nobody at school to talk to her about life issues. Her comment was "They only write our names in the class" (**P4:173**).

P4 was asked what she would like to become after school she reacted: “I want to become an English teacher at Pahangwa” (**P4:95**). It seemed **P4** listened to the advice from the school. “Our school motivates us to learn hard to become teachers and nurses (**P4:96**) so that we would fill the vacancies left by old teachers” (**P4:97**). The school also motivated the learners by committing itself to give pens and files to the learners who excelled academically. Regarding what motivates him in life, **P4** said, “What motivates me in life is that, I have to learn because if others pass and I fail, they will find me at shebeens doing nothing and they will laugh at me” (**P4:101, 102**). In terms of feeling safe and secure at school, **P4** said that she was safe. She affirmed, “When other learners happen to mistreat me I report them to the teacher” (**P4:104**) and at home “I report to my mother and whoever mistreat me will be warned not to do it again” (**P4:105**).

With regard to support during and after bereavement, **P4** was reluctant to express how she was feeling. Rather, she used broad terms to describe her experience, “I was given maize meal to cook after the death of my father” (**P4:106**). **P4** could not remember how the school supported her after bereavement. This could be attributed to the fact that her father died the first day she started Grade 1 she could not even describe the experience of how she was treated by her friends when she returned to school. Regarding the feelings of anger she said “I used to feel sad and angry” (**P4:110**) sometimes. She also commented, “I cry or sometimes but I just keep it to myself when I am angry” (**P4:109**). She was worried however about what would happen to her if something happened to her grandmother. **P4** became tearful and her voice was stressed when she spoke of this possibility. She had this to say: “I am scared if my grandmother happens to die. She is the only care giver in our family”

(P4:107). P4 was worried about her maternal grandmother who was aging and had complained about pain in her back sometimes. When the researcher asked about her grandmother's health and care, she said "my grandmother slept alone before, now I share a bed with her" **(P4:46)**. She reasoned "if she is not feeling very well at least she is with me" **(P4:47)**.

Her mother was also not always at home. She revealed, "it was like when my mother goes out she comes back late at night. That was the reason she was stopped by our family from drinking anymore" **(P4:132, 133)**. Given that P4 was frightened by the night and darkness, the researcher asked her whether she had experienced problems with sleeping at night to which she responded, "I just sleep well" **(P4:117)**. P4 confided that she was coping very well. It was only that her maternal grandmother was becoming old and she was afraid to lose her.

When asked to describe the kind of ill treatment she experienced P4 narrated "I once stayed with my maternal cousin, she used to mistreat me. That is why I left her house and went to live with my grandmother" **(P4:120, 121)**. She recounted, "You find yourself beaten for making a simple mistake or some days you go to plough in the field without eating" **(P4:124, 125)**. P4 experienced some form of abuse while she was with a family member. "She is my maternal cousin" **(P4:122)**. P4 stated "I left without finishing Grade 5. I just said I am going to my grandmother" **(P4:123)**.

It seemed she was not the only one mistreated by her cousin. "I was with another girl. If we were shouted at, we would both not eat that day" **(P4:126)**. P4 further related "she (cousin) cooked and ate with her children and we would not eat lunch

and supper” (P4:127). After P4 moved back to her maternal grandmother’s home, she reiterated “when I do something wrong at home my parents reprimand me not to do it again” (P4:118, 119). About the question of spiritual support, she believed that going to church sometimes on Sundays helped her to learn about the bible and to be a good child. “I like going to church and listen to get inspired by God’s words” (P4:174).

P4 described the provision of food in school thus: “the school prepares soft porridge for the learners” (P4:31). It was served only “from Monday to Thursday. It was not served on Friday because the school closes earlier” (P4:34). Learners were reminded by their class teachers to “come with their plates from home” (P4:32) but there were some plates at school that some learners could use (P4:33). P4 reported taking her breakfast before she went to school. “We would eat porridge or rice when there is some” (P4:37). She said “we always find food after school” (P4:36) which was “porridge or rice” (P4:38) and in the evening; porridge, spinach and meat sometimes” (P4:39) were served.

P4 shared her experience with regard to water provisioning in school when she said “there is one (tap) at the school” (P4:40). However, the situation was different at home because “we fetch water from the well we don’t use water from the tap” (P4:41). In her experience with regard to shelter provision at school, P4 confirmed that the school did not provide any learner with shelter. However, she said her maternal grandmother was taking good care of her, her brother and mother by providing them shelter. She also added “we have enough blankets and bed sheets” (P4:45).

When **P4** was asked about her experience with regard to the basic health care provision at school she mentioned, “I saw one learner injured. She was given money by the school to go to the hospital” (**P4:48, 49**). She said, “The school can take you to the hospital but you will pay yourself” (**P4:50**). It was revealed in the interview with **P4** that her mother warned her about sex and the danger of HIV and AIDS. She stated, “I was told not to sleep around. My mother told me that sex spreads HIV and AIDS. I can be infected” (**P4:51, 52, 53**).

Her parents had more to say to her. “My mother and grandmother would usually tell us to wash ourselves very well and to wash our things” (**P4:38, 39**). Further investigation revealed that **P4** used to drink one of the traditional beers which gave her a terrible headache. She described, “I used to drink ‘efawu’ but I got a terrible headache. I stopped drinking it” (**P4:56, 57**). She decided to live healthily “I never take any alcohol” (**P4:60**) and “I don’t smoke” (**P4:61**). **P4** described her experience of school uniform provisioning as “the school provides school uniforms to those that cannot afford it” (**P4:62**) however, “if the learner can afford it (the school) tells you (the learner) to tell the parents to buy you a school uniform” (**P4:64**). She was happy to respond to the question of whether she had a school uniform. She commented, “My school uniform is okay. They (her mother and grandmother) bought it this year when school started” (**P4:65, 66**).

When describing her experience with regard to school fees, **P4** shared it with mixed feelings, “I did not pay” (**P4:68**) my school fees yet. She said “I am the only one to receive the grant money from government at home. I share it with my brother” (**P4:69, 70**). **P4** talked about the sharing of her monthly grant money with her brother

tearfully. She disclosed, “I feel bad if I am the only one getting support and my brother doesn’t get anything. Like now, my mother bought us new school uniforms” **(P4:71, 72)**. P4’s tearful emotions could be as a result of the fact that “there is nothing left for school fees” **(P4:73)**. It is possible that she felt that if it was not for her brother she could have paid her school fees. What seemed to emerge was that although P4 received grant money to meet her basic needs on a monthly basis, she felt sharing with her brother made it difficult to meet all her school needs.

When P4 was asked to describe her experience with regard to textbooks and other stationery provisioning, she stated that the school provided learners with textbooks, “I have five books. The one for *Oshikwanyama* is shared in groups, we don’t take it home” **(P4:76, 77, 78)**. About stationery she said “I get all that at school, I am okay” **(P4:81)**. Her mother was given some money by one of her older sisters working in Oshakati to buy “book covers and pens” **(P4:80)** for her brother and her.

During further investigation of P4’s experience with grant and pocket money, she said, “I have been receiving the monthly grant money for many years. I cannot figure out precisely the year I started” **(P4:82, 83)**. P4 felt, “my parents use it (money) to buy me school uniforms and pay school fees” **(P4:84)**. To the question about whether her parents used her money on something else other than on her basic needs she maintained, “I don’t think there is anything else my mom uses the money for” **(P4:88)**.

To the follow up question of what P4 would do if she were put in her mother’s position in using the money she responded: “I would use it the same way she (her

mother) is using it" (P4:89). P4 was given pocket money from home, she claimed "every day you have to be given some money. If you come to school without money you cannot eat anything" (P4:86, 87). P4 only wanted to say that even though they were provided with soft porridge by the school, she would always want to buy sweets or fat cakes and so on at school.

P4 has a good relationship with her peers at school, her family and neighbors. She first expressed, "my relationship with my friends, I feel good" (P4:135), "we play games to make each other happy at school" (P4:134). Also, P4 said "when you are in the class but there is something you don't understand, you have your friends who will correct you and make it clear" (P4:136, 137). About the relationship with her family, P4 revealed, "I know some of my mother's family. The relationship is good since I am used to them" (P4:141, 142). P4 was aware "even if something happens at home they (maternal family) used to come and help us" (P4:149).

On the other hand P4's relationship with her paternal family seems not good enough. She knew some of them when she related, "I know one policeman who was working at Omungwelume a relative of my father" (P4:145). P4 said with regret, "Before my father passed on I did not see him" (P4:144) so that he could introduce her to his clan. Some of her paternal family wanted to see her for example she said "my paternal grandfather wanted to come and see me. Even my mother knows where he is (P4:138, 139) but she reasoned "it is only that there is not much time for me to go and visit him" (P4:146).

It is generally acceptable for orphan children to find time to reunite with their extended families through regular visits and other means of contact. **P4** demonstrated the good relationship with her neighbors this way: “during school small boys from the nearby house look after the goats while my brother is at school” (**P4:128, 129**). She stated “the school is far and my brother comes tired and needs to rest” (**P4:130**). She stated “my brother only herds on weekends and during holidays” (**P4:131**). **P4** described taking part in sport at school “I do sport but not to play in competitions I just do it for fun” (**P4:146**), “I play netball. Maybe this year I’ll join the school team” (**P4:147**).

Regarding domestic chores, in Namibia, girls are commonly tasked with: pounding, cooking, fetching water, cleaning in and around the house, working in fields (ploughing). **P4**’s domestic chores included: cooking, pounding millet, fetching water and firewood. She was the only girl at home, she related, “it is good I collect firewood and fetch water with my brother” (**P4:165**). She further clarified “we fetch water in the evening. Sometimes we use containers or buckets” (**P4:170, 171**). She also said, “Ploughing the field, that one is okay” (**P4:166**).

P4 appeared to be coping very well with her domestic chores “I pound millet with my brother” (**P4:169**). It was interesting to note that some boys knew how to pound millet which is believed to be a girl’s chore. Regarding other chores like cooking she said “even cooking is also okay. My mother cooks sometimes” (**P4:167, 168**). What emerged was that **P4** seemed to work hand in hand with her brother with regard to domestic chores except for cooking which she shared with her mother sometimes. Overall she affirmed that her domestic chores did not affect her school attendance.

She described her school attendance thus: “it is okay. I was only absent for two days when I was sick the whole of last year” (P4:148, 150).

P4’s academic performance was not being affected by her domestic chores. P4 reported fulfilling her homework very well. “When I go home I eat lunch and sit under the tree to do my homework. I only do my homework during the day, after school” (P4:152, 153). P4 did not do her homework at night; she said “I do not do my homework at night. That is when I read my books” (P4:154). Given that some learners need a little break after a long day at school to do their homework it seemed P4 found the best time for her was after school and she used the night for reading.

When she was asked to reflect on her 2010 academic performance P4 responded that she used to pass. “I did very well in Natural science, Social science and *Oshikwanyama*” (P4:156). Subjects like “Mathematics was just better. I got marks that I did not expect” (P4:157). She did not pass the end of term 1 examination, as she got a D symbol in Mathematics. “If you get D, you fail” (P4:160).

While grade F was regarded as the failing grade in some educational systems, it showed that in P4’s school system a D was a failing grade. At the end of term 2 and end of the year examinations she passed all the subjects. The only problem was, “last year it was not mentioned who placed 1st or 2nd in the class” (P4:163). Her family supported her with school work at home “my mother and brother help me at home” (P4:164).

4.6 Brief biographical sketch of P5

P5 was a 16 year old girl doing grade 7. She came from a family of ten, five children and five adults. She has two brothers and one sister. **P5** lost her mother. She said her mother was apparently *bewitched* in the squatter camp where she used to stay, in Tsumeb town. **P5** could not recall precisely the year her mother died but it is either in 2008 or 2009. **P5**'s best childhood experience was when she went to Tsumeb to her mother and father during the school holidays. It was the highlight of her life because it was her first time to be in Tsumeb a town she did not know before. Everything was new and beautiful. She could not remember her worst childhood experience.

4.6.1 Description of P5's experience

P5 was living with her maternal uncle and aunt. Her uncle and aunt were ones providing for her home and school needs. She described her experience in terms of mental, emotional, spiritual, physical and social support, the key essential elements of psychosocial support. **P5** also spoke about her experience with regard to school attendance, academic performance, and support with school work at home and domestic chores.

Of her experience with school support after her bereavement she said, "The school principal gave me a school bag when I returned to school" (**P5:53**). **P5** made it clear that "the school bags were given to many orphaned learners" (**P5:54**) she was not the only one who was given. Regarding how **P5** felt when her mother died she said, "I felt depressed when my mother died" (**P5:57**). "We were consoled by the elders who came for the bereavement. They told us to take it in good faith" (**P5:58, 55, 56**).

However, **P5** appeared to be coping better and moving on with her life. She commented, “I don’t worry about what happened to my mother anymore” (**P5:52**).

When **P5** was asked to describe her experience with regard to support in the class to cope with the loss of her mother, she stated, “we have Life skills but I can’t remember if we were taught” (**P5:47**) anything. However the school made an effort to tell the learners “to be well disciplined and respect our parents” (**P5:48**). She described herself thus: “I am a disciplined person” (**P5:45**) because “when I am told to do something by an older person I have to do it” (**P5:46**).

Religion had a major influence on **P5**’s lived experience. She frequently spoke about going to church every Sunday. She stated, “I was baptized in the Ongenga Elcin church. I am a born again Christian. In our church we do not attend confirmation classes” (**P5:103-4**). It is also possible that she learned religious issues at school. For example she commented, “We are taught religious and moral education at the school. We learn about the bible” (**P5:49, 50**). Consequently, she disclosed, “I want to become maybe a school teacher or pastor” (**P5:51**).

Regarding feelings of abuse, **P5** described that she once lived with an old woman who was related to her father. **P5** said that the woman treated her badly and she decided to leave her house (**P5:65**). She related, “I was suffering. I had to plough the field before I go to school” (**P5:67, 69**). She said “I used to go late to school” (**P5:68**) her mother then took her to live with her own family “my mother was not happy about me doing the field work and going to school late” (**P5:70, 71**). **P5** said “my mother was the one who took me from there” (**P5:66**).

P5 described her experience with food provisioning at school with so much hope and gratitude. She said “we are given soft porridge” **(P5:18)** by the school and “it is given fairly to all of us” **(P5:19)**. She also shared her experience with water provision. “We have a tap at school” **(P5:20)**. **P5** revealed that “we have a tap in the house” **(P5:21)** which made it possible for her not to fetch water from a far distance like most children were doing in the Endola circuit.

Regarding shelter **P5** claimed that the school did not provide any shelter to orphaned learners. She said “the school doesn’t do anything” **(P5:22)**. Regarding basic health care provisioning at school **P5** said, “We were taught some health issues at school. The school taught about the danger of HIV and AIDS things” **(P5:24, 25)**. She claims to have been immunized at school. “There is immunization here at the school” **(P5:26)**. **P5** was immunized only when there were outbreaks. She said, “I am only immunized when there are outbreaks like polio and others” **(P5:27)**. She also said, “last year I was not immunized because I was 15 years old” **(P5:28)**.

When **P5** talked about her experience with regard to basic health care at home she showed gratitude for all the support her aunt provided “my aunt helps me when I have my periods” **(P5:23)**. It was evident that her aunt talked to **P5** about sex, a topic that many parents generally find it difficult to address. She recalled, “My aunt told me that I should not engage in sex. I should stay away from it **(P5:29, 30)**.”

P5 described her experience with regard to school uniform provision at school in a positive way. She stated, “The school principal gave some orphaned learners school uniforms” **(P5:32)** school items such as “socks and school shoes” **(P5:33)** were

given too. **P5** was also not left out “I was given a school bag” (**P5:34**). Although the school provided school uniforms to orphaned learners, parents were also encouraged to buy school uniforms for their children. In her case “it is still my aunt and uncle who buy me school uniform” (**P5:35**).

In terms of school fees **P5** described her experience of having the support of her family to pay her school fees. It was evident that her aunt, uncle and father supported her with school fees. However she had not yet paid her fees. She said, “I have not paid it. It is still early for paying the fees” (**P5:37**) but some learners have paid. “There are some that have paid already but many of us have not paid as yet” (**P5:38**).

The school provided textbooks to learners but she had to “buy ... stationery” (**P5:40**) on her own. **P5** described her experience with regard to the monthly grant and pocket money with unhappy feelings. She did not receive a monthly grant yet due to some wrong information on her birth certificate. She explained, “I was about to register but there was some wrong information in the birth certificate” (**P5:42, 43**). She reported that her birth certificate was taken “to be corrected as some names were wrongly spelt” (**P5:44**).

It was revealed that **P5 had** lost her interest in developing a good relationship with her paternal family after her bad experience. She admitted, “I don’t visit my father’s family. I used to visit them before” (**P5:62, 63**). “I know them but I don’t just visit them at all” (**P5:72**). In spite of these challenges, she characterized her lived experience as a blessing because of the support of her aunt, uncle and father who visited her

frequently. She appeared to be socializing and interacting well with other learners at school “I play at school with my friends” (P5:59). She did sport too “I do athletics at school” (P5:60).

P5 described her school attendance as okay.” I go to school every day” (P5:73). She stated “I go every day of the week to school” (P5:74) with the exception of “...when I am sick” (P5:76). P5 did not experience any problem in attending school in the 2010 academic year. Moreover, in her academic performance in terms of doing her homework she claimed to be trying her best “I am trying my best to do better in my school work” (P5:77). P5 did her homework in the evening or afternoon after school. In the evening “I use a lamp or candle to do my homework” (P5:79).

P5 did somehow better in her class tests. She particularly did exceptionally well in Natural science, Social science and Agricultural subjects (P5:81, 83). Of other subjects she said, “I performed poorly in Mathematics tests last year” (P5:82). When asked about her 2010 academic performance it appeared she did not pass the end of term 1 examination. She stated “I did not pass the end of term 1 examination last year (P5:84, 85) “because I had D symbol in English” (P5:86).

Even though P5 passed examinations at the end of term 2, she failed the year-end examination because she failed Agriculture science. She reasoned, “I was not supposed to fail a single subject” (P5:91). It was her first time to fail Grade 6. She was promoted to Grade 7. P5 was helped by her aunt with school work at home. She said “I tell her to do my work and she does it. She does the work for me” (P5:94, 95). She further said “I also do it sometimes” (P5:96). P5 also commented “I also give my

aunt to check if work is correct. If I am wrong she corrects it" (P5:97). P5's domestic chores included pounding millet, cooking, cleaning, washing and ploughing the millet field. It emerged that she was not overburdened with the domestic chores. She articulated, "We do pound but not often. We take millet to the milling machine (P5:98, 99). She did not even cook everyday "We share the cooking at home" (P5:101).

What appears to emerge from P5's experiences with regard to how the school provided psychosocial support is the fact that she seemed to accept what happened to her mother. She believed that her father and maternal aunt are doing enough to support her in terms of school fees, school uniform and pocket money and the soft porridge given by the school. However, she was concerned about her grant from the government which she could not get because some of her names were wrongly spelt. P5 liked going to church every Sunday. Even though she did not do very well academically she showed an interest in becoming a teacher or pastor.

4.7 Brief biographical sketch of P6

P6 was a school girl doing grade 8. She was 14 years old living in a family of eight. Among them were six children and two older sisters. P6 lost both parents. She lost her father in 2004 and her mother in 2005. Her father was sick for a long time. P6's mother was sick for only two months. Her parents were not living together before they passed on. They both used to visit the hospital prior to their death. Her best childhood experience was when her parents bought her dolls to play with and her worst childhood experience was when she was beaten by her married brother at his house when she was playing in his car.

4.7.1 Description of P6's experience

P6 had been living with her mother long before both parents died. She was with her two elder sisters at home. **P6** revealed that when her mother died, they were left alone in the house for about a week. She spent some days with their first born sister who went to Oshakati to collect her belongings. The first born sister has been the head of the house since 2005 after their mother died. She was 30± years old and a mother of three children. Her first child was 16 years old.

None of her sisters was formally employed and there was no one at home with formal employment. **P6** described her experience under the care of her eldest sister who has been taking care of them very well. She said, "She is like my mother, because when I ask her for something she would just give it to me" (**P6:115, 116**). Only her first born sister provided for her home and school needs.

In terms of the support to cope with her grief, **P6** said that her elder sister talked to her about life issues as the danger of HIV and AIDS and not to have sex. She said that her sister talks to her in a friendly manner and she does not shout or blame her. She was not aware of any support the school provided to her to cope with the loss of her parents.

Regarding how **P6** felt when her parents died, she described her experience after the death of her mother. "My life was very bad, I felt very sad" (**P6:94**). She continued by saying "I cried when my father died" (**P6:95**). **P6** had a paternal grandmother who gave her support during the bereavement she said "my grandmother called me and told me that we had lost our father" (**P6:96**).

P6 was hopeful about the future. She expressed great delight in always having a good relationship with her sister. With her sister's support she had a dream of becoming a teacher. "I want to become a Natural science teacher" (**P6:84**). She was also motivated by her school to learn hard in order to achieve her dreams. **P6** revealed that her school held a party for the learners who passed in the end of the year end examination. She noted "I learned hard because I wanted to go to the party" (**P6:82**) since "if you failed you would not go to the party" (**P6:81**).

P6 mentioned "I am safe too at home. My sisters are there to make sure that I am okay" (**P6:85**) she felt "scared when was dark" (**P6:86**). She described experiencing some frightening dreams and nightmares. She stated "I dream about being chased by a mad person" (**P6:88**) and "sometimes I am bitten by a snake. I seem to be running and I would wake up immediately breathing fast" (**P6:89, 90**). After a short while "I fall fast asleep again" (**P6:91**). However, she disclosed, "I am a Christian. I go to church at Ongenga sometimes" (**P6:155**). She meant "I believe God is keeping me safe too" (**P6:156**).

When **P6** was asked to mention the kind of abuse she experienced from her peers or anybody at school, she disclosed, "I go to the office of the school principal when I am mistreated by anyone at school" (**P6:92**). **P6** further stated "anyone who mistreats others gets punishment to dig out a tree with its roots" (**P6:93**). However, **P6** admitted, "I feel stressed sometimes when I am mistreated" (**P6:98**). For instance when she was physically and emotionally hurt by her brother "I have been hurt in life. I was beaten by my brother with a Mopani branch" (**P6:100, 103**). "It was at his house when I played in his car, I just went in it" (**P6:157**).

When **P6** was asked to describe her experience with regard to food provisioning at school she singled out the soft porridge her school provided to the learners. “We (learners) are given soft porridge” (**P6:29**). **P6** believed that the soft porridge was distributed to all the learners in equal portion without any discrimination. She said, “it is fairly given to all of us” (**P6:30**).

On the situation at home in terms of food provisioning, **P6** commented, “we eat millet porridge and beans” (**P6:32**). **P6** and her family also made “sorghum at home to brew ‘*oshikundu*’ (a homemade drink) (**P6:33**) and “on a few occasions my sister buys some rice and meat (**P6:34**). Her family seemed to cope better in terms of food provision. She revealed, “If we take one full bucket of millet flour and mix it with 20Litre of maize meal it may last a month” (**P6:35**).

Regarding **P6**’s experience with water provision at school she was satisfied and boasted that learners used water from “the school’s tap” (**P6:36**). **P6** uses water from the well at home. She said that the well was near the house, she uses buckets and containers to fetch water (**P6:40, 41**). Regarding her experience with shelter provisioning at school she was quick to respond that the school “does (did) not do anything as far as I remember” (**P6:42**). **P6** mentioned that three of them slept in one hut. She stated, “We sleep three of us on the floor, “I sleep with my sister who is in Grade 8 and my niece who is in primary school” (**P6:53**). She continued “we use a mattress” (**P6:44**).

The condition of the mattress **P6** shared “is okay but somehow old. It was bought last year” (**P6:45, 46**). Her older sister bought it for them. It seemed she did not have

enough blankets and bed sheets. “We have few blankets” (P6:48). She elaborated further: “they are not enough (P6:49). They had only “one bed sheet” (P6:50) to share with her sister and niece in the hut.

P6’s experience with regard to basic health care provisioning at school was that at least the school could take a learner who might be sick to the hospital by car provided he or she would pay the hospital bills. P6 said that the school used to divide them into boys’ and girls’ groups in order to give them information on hygiene. They were talked to under the trees at school. “We are told to always wash ourselves and our clothes” (P6:61). She stood by the order. “I wash myself in the morning and evening” (P6:62).

The school informed the learners that the school uniform should be washed every Wednesday and Friday and “if on Thursday your shirt is not clean it is washed at the school tap” (P6:57). P6 did not drink alcohol for fear of her sister. “If I drink ‘otombo’ (traditional beer) my sister will beat me. I only drink water and ‘oshikundu’ (traditional homemade drink) (P6:106, 107).

Regarding her experience with school uniform P6 commented “the school did not provide me with any school uniform” (P6:67) but “my sister bought me a school uniform” (P6:68). About how orphaned learners pay school fees, she responded: “we pay the same amount” (P6:69) which her sister paid for her. Further investigation on books and other stationery revealed that P6’s school provided her with the textbooks she needed but her sister provided her with money to buy pens, rulers and other stationery.

P6 appeared to be well supported by her sister who took over the role of head of household after the death of their mother. She stated that her sister received her grant money on monthly basis. “She uses it to buy us shoes, school uniforms and pay school fees” **(P6:75)**. Sometimes she also “gives me money to buy sweets or bread at school” **(P6:76)**. **P6** seemed not quite happy about the amount of money she got from her sister. She commented, “I just get N\$ 1.00 a month” **(P6:77)**. “Sometimes my sister would say, plough there, I will give you N\$ 2.00” **(P6:78)**.

P6 expressed great delight in always having a good relationship with her family especially with her sisters and paternal grandmother. She said, “My relationship with family from both my mother and father is not that good” **(P6:109)**. She said “we are relating somehow better” **(P6:110)**. It emerged that **P6** lost her maternal grandmother too but she said, “My paternal grandmother is still alive and the relationship is fine” **(P6:118, 119)**. She explained that there is a good communication in the family. If there is bereavement they usually support one another **(P6:123)**.

P6 characterized her relationship with her friends as good, “we play together at school, we tell each other funny stories and eat our cakes together” **(P6:105)**. “We keep each other company and we have fun together” **(P6:106)**. **P6** took part in sport at school she said, “I run 100m at school. I was the second one in the circuit based competition last year” **(P6:112)** an indication that she was socially active and played well with her peers.

P6 attended school all days of the week “I am only absent if there is a serious reason for me to do so” **(P6:121)**. In 2010 “I was only absent on three days” **(P6:122)**.

Regarding **P6**'s academic performance in terms of doing her homework and class tests she reported doing better. She was doing well in Mathematics and Geography (**P6:125**). She described how she was impressed by the manner she worked hard in the 2010 academic year to find her sister in Grade 8. "My sister left me behind but now we are in the same Grade". **P6** stated "I worked hard to catch up with her, now we are in the same class (**P6:134, 135**) because "she failed" (**P6:136**). She spoke passionately about her school performance "I am learning very well" (**P6:133**).

P6 did not have to worry about support with school work at home she had her sisters by her side. "My sister who just finished Grade 10 helps me" (**P6:137**). She said "She is very helpful. Whatever you ask her she would assist" (**P6:138**). When asked about her domestic chores **P6** reported that she did not have to cook at home. Her two older sisters did all the cooking for them. She said "we do not cook, not we children" (**P6:139**) rather, "our two elder sisters share the cooking. One cooks in the day and the other one in the evening" (**P6:141**). **P6** also commented, "Our sisters would send us to study while they cooked" (**P6:148**). The only time she cooked was when her sisters "had not cooked" (**P6:152**) when she came back from school.

Also, **P6** did not even pound millet like most girls of her age "I don't pound millet we take it to milling machine (**P6:147**). Another common chore in her community was to herd animals. She said, "My mother had animals but they all died from scabies" (**P6:154**). The domestic chore she and her other younger sister did was to "collect firewood" (**P6:144**) which was "dry shrubs and palm leaves" (**P6:146**). They had enough firewood to use at home. Another domestic chore she did was to fetch water she said, "We first do our homework and then fetch water in the evening" (**P6:149**).

It was evident from the interview with **P6** that her first born sister took the role of head of household responsibilities, supported by young siblings who did lighter duties such as fetching water and firewood. Although **P6** and her sister received grant money to meet their basic needs on a monthly basis, it appeared that the money was not sufficient to meet all the household needs and school necessities. The first needs that she mentioned and which seemed the most pressing to her were lack of blankets, school jersey and pocket money.

4.8 Summary

This chapter presented biographical sketches and descriptions of orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support provisioning. The next chapter presents the general descriptions of orphaned learners' experiences under different themes that emerged from these experiences.

CHAPTER 5

DATA PRESENTATIONS

"Whatever they grow up to be, they are still our children, and the one most important of all the things we can give to them is unconditional love. Not a love that depends on anything at all except that they are our children". -Rosaleen Dickson-

5.1 Methodological perspective

The main research question the study sought to understand was, "What psychosocial support do orphaned learners in Endola Circuit experience at school and home?" The question asked was not about the researcher, but about orphaned learners themselves, what they experienced the psychosocial support provisioning.

To understand these experiences, an interpretive phenomenological design was chosen in order to better explore the lived experiences of these orphaned learners. The goal of phenomenological research is to engender a description of the essential structure of the experience being investigated. The findings in phenomenological research are called a general structural description (Polkinghorne, 1989). This chapter aims to present a general structure description of orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support provisioning.

In analyzing the data, I did not only look at the words the participants spoke, but at the meaning they created as they shared their experiences. I was not looking at how they used words to create meaning but was rather looking at the meaning of their words, namely; what psychosocial support provisioning meant to them.

5.2 The emergent themes

The following themes were evident from biographical sketches and descriptions of the participants presented in the previous chapter namely: support during and after bereavement, peer support, provision of safety and security, provision of educational incentives, provision of life skills, provision of textbooks and stationery, the school feeding program, sport activities, school attendance and academic performance and other support, namely: school fees, school uniform, grants and pocket money.

5.2.1 Support during and after bereavement

This section presents evidence of what participants experienced from their schools and at home during and after their bereavement. They related how they were informed about the bereavement of their parents, how they were consoled by their families and schools, the number of days given by schools to mourn their parents, the registration of orphaned learners and group guidance.

5.2.1.1 Informing learners about bereavement at school

In the researcher's own experience as a teacher, when there was bereavement, it was announced usually at the school assembly so that everyone in the school community was made aware of it and offered their support where necessary. Participants recalled how their schools inform learners about bereavement. Information was communicated in individual classes by class teachers. The whole school was also informed about bereavement by the principal during assembly.

Findings showed that the schools protected bereaved learners by asking school mates not to provoke them when they returned to school. Other learners are shown

that the loss of a parent is a sad event in life and should be taken seriously and the bereaved person should be treated kindly. **P1** stated, “I remember that sometimes the class teacher would tell us that there was a learner who had lost his or her parents. It is also announced to the whole school by the principal in school assembly” (**P1:88**).

P2 stated, “When you return to school other learners are warned at the school assembly, “not provoke you” (**P2:63, 64**). Even though it was not clear how the schools announced the bereavement, it is important when the news is announced to find the right words to talk about death. Also, the information needs to be verified first and family members consulted to determine what they would like to have disclosed to the school community.

5.2.1.2 Informing orphaned learners about bereavement at home

Participants related their experiences of what they were informed about the deaths of their parents. Some said that they were told by their grandmothers that their parents had died. They experienced feelings of shock and cried a little. Few participants did not remember what happened because they were too young at that time to remember everything.

P3 said, “My grandmother received a call from a relative of my father’s. She only said that my father had passed away” (**P3: 82-3**). He also stated “I cried a little” (**P3:84**). It was then he went to tell his class teacher at school (**P3:96**) and asked for permission to stay away from school to mourn his father. Given the fact that participants were grieving it would have been appropriate if one family member other

than the bereaved child who would have gone to inform the school because grief, in many ways, is distressing and can affect the child. That is why providing immediate and long-term bereavement support to grieving learners as early as possible is very essential. **P6** said “My grandmother called me and told me that we had lost my father” (**P6:96**). **P4** was still very young at the time of her bereavement. She said, “I lost my father. It happened the year I started my Grade 1 at Pahangwashime” (**P4:19-20**).

It is important that all those close to a bereaved child be able to discuss how the death happened and what it means to the family. Children need to have the facts about the death of their parents. Since there was no other supporting data to show how the remaining families informed the children, it is apparent that the children need more information regarding how their parents died and to be given the opportunity to express their feelings.

Being called and told that one has lost a parent seems contrary to the bereavement support. They also need to know it is okay to talk about their dead parent. This can be helped by the remaining parent or the guardian taking a lead in this direction. Bereaved children need to be reassured that it is okay to be upset and to cry. They should be encouraged to use healthy ways to release emotions through sporting or cultural activities. It seemed that some of the participants were not encouraged to express their emotions and be supported to come to terms with the death of their parents.

5.2.1.3 *Consoling orphaned learners*

Participants related their experiences regarding how they were consoled as they mourned the deaths of their parents. It emerged that the majority of the participants were consoled by members of their family who visited them during the mourning period. Most of them were told not be emotional about the death of their parents. Their comments were as follows: **P2** recalled, “My maternal aunt told me to stay calm and not be too overwhelmed by my mother’s departure” (**P2:69**). **P5** said, “We were consoled by the elders who came for the bereavement, they encourages us to take it in good faith” (**P5:55-6**).

Participants related their experiences regarding the way they were consoled when they went back to school after their parents were laid to rest. They stated that school principals asked them not to feel sad. Some of the teachers shook their hands to show their sympathy. Another consoling support participants related was when teachers shook their hands after the burial of their parents. **P1** noted “When the orphaned learner returns to school he or she is told not to feel sad” (**P1:90**). It is done by either the class teacher or the school principal” (**P1:92**). **P3** said “Some teachers shook my hand” (**P3:98**). “They did not say anything” (**P3:79**). This practice might imply that teachers were sensitive by approaching **P3** with great caution so as not to arouse her emotions but it is also a cultural practice not to say anything when shaking somebody’s hand during or after bereavement.

It is a common practice in some Namibian communities such as among the Ovawambo for people to shake hands as a way of showing their sorrow and sympathy. Usually, this is the first thing one does to mourners. After the handshakes,

greetings are exchanged and mourners are given the opportunity to express their emotions as they narrate how their beloved died and what exactly happened whether he was sick or not. What seemed lacking in the context of the study was the opportunity to let the children sit with their teachers and tell their stories of how their parents died and to express their feelings when they went back to school after bereavement.

5.2.1.4 Provision of a week off during bereavement

Participants acknowledged that their schools gave them a week off during bereavement. This practice was evidently intended to enable participants to mourn their parents. However, participants did not say how the week off to mourn their parents benefitted them and whether the time for bereavement was adequate or not. **P2** said “The school said, stay two to three days at home with your family” (**P2:62**). In his case **P3** confirmed, “I was given the whole week off” (**P3:78**). In the researcher’s view a week off for bereavement seems to be acceptable so that the child is not left behind in school work and find it difficult to catch up with the rest later.

5.2.1.5 Registration of orphaned learners

Another important psychosocial support experienced by the participants was the registration of orphaned learners whereby their class teachers keep records of orphaned learners for planning and monitoring purposes. Registering and keeping up-to-date information on the number of orphaned learners at school can also be helpful when giving support such as school uniforms, grants and provision of psychosocial support. **P3** said, “Class teachers write down the names of orphaned learners in their classes so that when orphans are given something you will also get

it” (P3:100). Regarding P4’s comment, she asserted, “They only write our names in the class” (P4:173). The registers also assisted the researcher to get access to participants easily. When he was referred to the teachers who were responsible for OVCs at the schools, they went into their records and made the names of OVC available to him. Hence it was evident that class teachers wanted to keep the record of all the children who became orphaned so that they are up to date with their database at the school level. The other available information was that whenever orphaned learners were supposed to get something that was meant for them such as uniforms, they were all given it only if they were registered.

5.2.1.6 Provision of group guidance

Group guidance refers to group activities that focus on providing information or experiences through a planned and organized group activity (Gibson & Mitchell, 2008). Thus, group guidance is organized to prevent the development of problems, with the goal of providing a group of learners with accurate information that would help them make more appropriate plans and life decisions.

Group guidance is a form of support because it is organized to address a specific problem among learners at school. It helps learners resolve emotional, behavioral or social problems and helps them develop a clearer focus or sense of direction. For example, a school can organize a group guidance activity focusing on teenage pregnancy, curbing substance abuse, and guidance in other life issues. In this study however, group guidance was organized focusing on the danger of HIV and AIDS and hygiene. HIV and AIDS awareness is necessary in the context of the study because Namibia is one of the sub-Saharan countries widely affected by the

epidemic. Children whose parents died due to HIV and AIDS confront stigmatization, rejection and a lack of love and care. They often suffer from emotional distress, lack of health care and poor or no access to education. AIDS orphans are also at high risk for labor exploitation, sex trafficking, homelessness and HIV infection and the burden of caring for family members (UNAIDS, 2004). Thus, group guidance could address these risks and strive to relieve the excessive burden placed on the orphaned learners' situations. However, it seemed the schools only provided group guidance on HIV and AIDS once a year which might not be adequate to address the problems relating to the epidemic.

P1 said, "The whole school gathers and teachers give information about HIV and AIDS" (**P1:51**). He noted, "It is usually done on AIDS day" (**P1:52**). **P5** recalled "We were taught some health issues at school. The school taught us about the danger of HIV and AIDS things" (**P5:24, 25**). **P6** said that the school divided them into boys' and girls' groups in order to give them information on hygiene under certain trees at school. We are told to always wash our bodies and our clothes" (**P6:61**).

In summary, a school is not just a place for learning and teaching. It is a home away from home, a place for learners to share their life experiences with others. When a learner is grieving, he or she needs to share his or her feelings and receive reassurance and encouragement from the school to go on with life. Actually, what grieving children need most is for someone to listen to them. In this way, they would feel understood and valued. The meaning drawn from the findings in this section was that, even though children were provided with emotional support, it seemed they were not given opportunity to relate how they felt when they lost their parents.

5.2.2 Peer support

In the context of the study, peer support refers to situations in which learners provide knowledge, experience, emotional, social or practical help to other learners to help them cope with the loss and manage grief and bereavement in a positive way. Below is the discussion on two peer support methods that emerged when participants were relating their experiences with regard to psychosocial support, namely: talking to peers and playing with peers.

5.2.2.1 Talking to peers

It was evident that participants relied on the social support of their friends at school. They related that they played very well together and walked in and around the school premises. They bought and shared their fat cakes at school. Regarding emotional support, participants felt that their friends made them feel better by reassuring them that they could always count on their support. They related that it was mainly because of their friends that they could understand better the loss of their parents.

This meant that the reassurance from their friends made it possible for them to accept the death of their parents knowing that even if their parents were gone they were still left with friends that could love them. Participants also revealed that they told each other funny stories which helped them have fun. Telling funny stories means that, instead of constant feelings of anger, they got an opportunity to experience funny moments and feelings of being loved and valued by their friends which was the emotional support that could help them in healing process.

P1 said, “I don’t stay alone at school. I have friends with whom I play” (**P1:123**). He also added, “Since we are just two friends at school, when one of us has N\$ 1:00 we go to buy cakes and eat together” (**P1:126**). **P2** explained, “My friends made me feel good when I returned to school after bereavement. When I told my friends what happened, they said it was okay” (**P2:65, 79**). This is a sign of assurance from peers regarding support during grief to assist in the healing process and also not to stigmatize or discriminate against each other.

P2 further stated, “I have two close friends at school. They helped me to accept what happened” (**P2:81, 80**). **P2** said, “My friends gave me a summary to copy” (**P2:78**) from their notes that they took while was away. **P4** said “when you are in the class but there is something you don’t understand, you have your friends who will correct you and make things clearer” (**P4:136, 137**). **P6** also stated, “We tell each other funny stories and eat our cakes together” (**P6:105**). What this means to bereavement support is that the bereaved children can express feelings of joy that would alleviate their pain and anger they experience during the loss of their parents.

5.2.2.2 Playing with peers

Another way of peer support was through playing with friends at school. The majority of the participants related that they spent most of their time at school playing with their friends. They took time out to play different games in order to make each other happy. **P2** said “I always play very well with my friends at school” (**P2:77**). **P4** disclosed, “My relationship with my friends, is good” (**P4:135**), “we play games to make each other happy at school” (**P4:134**). **P6** stated, “We play together at school and we keep each other company and we have fun together” (**P6:110**).

This kind of peer support and sympathetic help makes it possible for bereaved learners to cope better with their situation. Having supportive friends in times of bereavement is an important psychological support mechanism. This simply means that peer support allows the child who experiences a loss to feel more accepted by his or her friends through the reassurance that they are not alone and that what happened will not affect their friendship. Peer support groups provide an opportunity to communicate and encourage the bereaved child to express his or her emotions by relating to others what really happened.

5.2.3 Provision of safety and security

In order for the school to increase the safety and security of orphaned learners, it should involve the entire community, including the parents, school principal, teachers, learners, law enforcement agencies and faith organizations, among others. Below is the discussion of how orphaned learners experienced safety and security as a part of psychosocial support provided by their schools.

5.2.3.1 Reporting abuse and maltreatment

The majority of the participants said they felt safe and secure in and around their schools and they revealed that they would report anyone who mistreated them to their class teachers or the school principals. The school is the one social institution outside the family with which nearly all children have consistent and ongoing contact. Protecting children against abuse and maltreatment is the shared responsibility of families, schools and communities at large. Orphaned learners like all children have a right to an education, affection and a sense of belonging, as well as to services for the care of children. They have a right to be heard and to be protected from abuse,

neglect, maltreatment and exploitation. Orphaned learners have the usual needs of children, including economic, social, educational, medical and psychosocial needs. It is thus imperative that these needs are catered for.

P1 stated “I feel safe. If I am mistreated, I go to the teachers and tell them there is a learner who is mistreating me” (**P1:96, 97**). **P2** also reported being safe at school. “I feel safe at school. If I am beaten I go to the office and tell the school principal” (**P2:56, 57**). **P3** revealed, “I feel safe and secure at school because there is Learner Representative Council (LRC) (**P3:72**). “Learners who beat others are taken to the principal’s office” (**P3:74**). Also, **P4** disclosed, “when other learners happen to mistreat me I report them to the teacher” (**P4:104**). Participants related that they were safe and secure because of the LRC, their teachers and school principals. Even at home, they reported that they were safe and secure from abuse and maltreatment.

P2 said, “We love each other as a family” (**P2:76**). “We don’t shout at each other. Even my grandmother does not shout at us” (**P2:70, 72**). She also reported “we never get angry at one another at home” (**P2:71**). **P4** affirmed “I report them to my mother and anyone who mistreats me will be warned not to do it again” (**P4:105**). **P6** stated “I am safe at home. My sisters are there to make sure that I am okay” (**P6:85**). What these statements mean is that most of the participants have someone to turn to in the event of abuse and mistreatment at both school and home when they related their experiences with regard to psychosocial support provided by their schools.

This means that the participants who had an adult who gave them love, warmth and attentive care coped better than those who did not (Richter, 2004b). Every child has the right to grow up safe from abuse and maltreatment. Violence in the home shatters a child's basic right to feel safe and secure in the world. James (1994) found that primary school-age children may have more trouble with school work and show poor concentration and focus. They tend not to do as well in school.

Also, Baldry (2003) noted that children from violent homes exhibit signs of more aggressive behavior, such as bullying and are up to three times more likely to be involved in fighting. Finally, personality and behavioral problems among children exposed to violence in the home can take the form of psychosomatic illness, depression, suicidal tendencies and bed-wetting (Kernic, et al, 2003).

5.2.3.2 Provision of transport for medical attention

Another psychosocial support experienced by the participants was when learners who felt depressed and stressed taken to the hospital for medical attention. The participants reported that schools provided the transport to the learners who were depressed but they paid for their own medical treatments. Here are some of their comments: **P2** said ““Learners who feel depressed are taken to the hospital by the school” (**P2:75**). In another situation, **P4** commented “the school can take you to the hospital but you will pay yourself” (**P4:50**).

Some primary schools in the Endola circuit were located in rural areas far from medical facilities, providing transport to the learners for medical attention is a basic necessity to the majority of orphaned learners and other vulnerable children.

However, providing transport to learners who were depressed and stressed is an indication that teachers lacked skills and know how to counsel the learners.

It was evident that some participants' parental death experiences were influential in contributing to their emotional feelings of anger, depression and anxiety. The fact that the parents are no longer living has left a big gap which cannot be filled. Hence it is evident that the participants harbor some grief and anger which as a researcher I feel they have to be assisted to overcome them so that they would be able to live healthy and meaningfully.

P1 he said: "It makes me feel sad when I remember my parents especially when I want something but there is no one to help me" (**P1:112**), and when I see others with their mothers, I don't have one so I feel like crying" (**P1:115**). **P4** showed some signs of anxiety when she stated, "I am scared if my grandmother happens to die. She is the only care giver in our family" (**P4:107, 108**).

P5 said "I felt depressed when my mother died" (**P5:57**). "My life was very bad, I felt very sad" (**P6:94**). Given the emotional feelings displayed by participants it is evident that such emotions are not feelings that are transient but deep seated phenomena which need to be addressed through proper and carefully planned counseling and support.

5.2.4 Provision of educational incentives

Educational incentives include privileges and receiving praise and rewards from the school. This is all about schools planning activities to allow learners to achieve their goals in a positive and competitive environment. The use of incentives is based on the principle that learning occurs more effectively when learners experience feelings of satisfaction (Anderson, 2009). The schools determine an incentive that is likely to motivate school children at a particular time. Evidently schools motivate the participants by saying good things to them especially regarding careers and also teaching them and modeling the proper behavior. Schools also initiate incentives such as awards and educational trips. Participants admitted that if it were not for incentives that their schools offered to them, they would not work so hard to pass.

P1 said “I want to become a policeman to arrest criminals” (**P1:74**). He believed that there was a lot of crime in the country and he could make a difference. **P1** also said “I get motivation that if I don’t learn enough I will end up on the streets, walking around and stealing people’s things” (**P1:80,81**). He said “I don’t want that life. I want to work hard” (**P1:82**). **P1** stated, “Like our last year’s Grade 7 went to Ruacana waterfall, our Grade 7 will go to Etosha National Park if we pass very well” (**P1:84, 85**). He felt happy. “I want to see Etosha, I have never been there before” (**P1:88**). The meaning I attach to this participant’s statement is that he tried to do well in school with the goal of visiting a place that he had never visited before. This trip motivated him to work in order to pass so that he would go to the Etosha.

According to **P2** “The school promises that anyone who comes in 1st to 3rd position would get a pen and a file at the assembly” (**P2:54**). “I was also given a writing pad

when I was 3rd in Grade 3” (P2:55). P3 commented, “If you (learner) pass very well than others in a subject you get a diploma” (P3:71). “You can even get a calculator if you pass well” (P3:62). This simply means that children seem to feel more motivated to do well in school when their effort is acknowledged and rewarded.

P4 commented “If you do well, the school gives you pens and files (P4:89). P6 described “I learned hard because I wanted to go to the party” (P6:82) since “if you failed you would not go to the party” (P6:81). P6 worked hard to pass in order to go to the party with others who passed the examination. Generally, the participants showed that the awards and trips offered by their schools contributed significantly to their academic performance in school.

5.2.5 Provision of Life skills

According to WHO (1997) the most direct interventions for the promotion of psychosocial support are those enhance the person’s coping resources, personal and social competencies. In school-based programs for children and adolescents, this can be done by the teaching of life skills in a supportive learning environment. There is a general agreement that the ultimate aim of life skills training is to promote self-sufficiency and to assist people in developing the skills they need to sustain independent tenancy to settle into their community (Scottish Homes, 2001).

A few of the participants related that they were taught Life skills subjects at school. They learned how their future lives would be and what they could become in life. P1 said “we are taught how our future lives would be. We talk about what we want to become in life (P1:71-2). The majority of participants felt that the Life skills subject

appeared in the timetable but it was not taught so that they could learn some life skills to cope better in life.

P4 commented that since they started school there had not been taught Life skills but had been given books on the subject. She believed that Life skills were about keeping people safe and healthy. Her comment was: “Life skills as a subject is all about how to keep oneself and others safe” (**P4:93**). She only recalled what she learnt in Grade 6 “I read that I should not drink too much” (**P4:94**). **P4** also revealed that there was nobody at school to talk to her about life issues.

P5 stated that they had the Life skills subject at school but she did not remember if they were taught anything. Her comment was: “we have Life skills but I can’t remember if we were taught” (**P5:47**). Not being able to remember if they were taught seemed to suggest that the subject was neglected and learners did not see how it contributed to their lives. Yet Life skills education is very important for the children’s life future and help them acquire practical skills that can help them to cope and manage their emotions.

The meanings that were drawn from the participants’ experiences about life skills was that at least they were well aware of the benefits of life skills but they felt that they could have benefited better if the Life skills subject was taught. Even though some of the participants were given books, without the teachers’ guidance and support they could not learn any of the life skills they had hoped could help them lead independent lives. It could be possible that some of them did not have an adult person guiding them at home.

5.2.6 Provision of textbooks and stationery

Textbooks and stationery are important tools for all teachers and learners to use as reference and teaching material. Participants related that they were provided with textbooks by their schools while their family and caregivers also gave them money to buy stationery. However, some of the participants said that some schools provided stationery only when they passed very well. **P1** confirmed “I have books, pens and book covers” (**P1:59**). He cheerfully stated, “My aunt gives me book covers and the school gives us the textbooks” (**P1:61, 60**). **P2**’s comment was: “The school provides us with textbooks” (**P2:40**). “Sometimes, if you pass very well, the school gives pens, files and writing pads” (**P2:41**). **P6** said that the school provided her with textbooks she needed but her sister gave her money to buy pens, rulers and other stationery.

One of the participants said that they shared textbooks in groups. Sharing a book can affect the progress of the learners. It is true that many books are expensive and sometimes, schools lose books because learners do not return them at the end of the year. However, sharing a book can be problematic. Learners could sit next to each other and read from the same book.

P4 noted “I have five books. The one for *Oshikwanyama* (their first language) is shared in groups, we don’t take it home” (**P4:76-8**). Regarding stationery **P4** was well provided for as far as stationery was concerned “I get all that at school, I am okay” (**P4:81**). In many instances orphaned learners have failed to perform well because of the lack of textbooks and stationery. Others have had to drop out of school because they lack the basic necessities such as textbooks and stationery. In this study however this was not the case.

5.2.7 The School feeding program

Nearly all of the participants were provided with soft porridge by their schools as part of a Namibian government initiative to run feeding programs in schools, and targeting orphans and other vulnerable children to fight poverty, malnutrition and keep them in schools. It was evident that some schools prepared soft porridge for all the learners. Every learner at school was provided for in terms of soft porridge.

P2 admitted, “The school prepares soft porridge for the learners” (**P2:17**). She observed, “It is served to every child at school. Whoever wants it can get it” (**P2:18, 19**). **P3** confirmed, “Our school provides soft porridge to the learners” (**P3:28**). He further said, “We are also given a 10kg bag of maize meal to cook at home” (**P3:29**). **Orphan4** also said, “The school prepares the soft porridge for the learners” (**P4:31**). It was served only Monday to Thursday. It was not served on Friday because the school closed earlier” (**P4:34**). **P6** found, “It is given fairly to all of us” (**P6:30**). What this mean is that the school feeding program was adopted in schools in line with its main objective of fighting poverty, malnutrition and keeping learners in school. A good example was those learners who were given maize meal to cook at home.

Only one school in the study had stopped providing snacks to its learners. Provision of snacks to the learners has the potential to help learners who come from poor families and are not given any food before they come to school. It is therefore important that all learners have something to eat at school. **P1** asserted, “The school does not provide anything in terms of food anymore” (**P1:32**). “I don’t know why the school stopped giving us snacks” (**P1:35**). **P1** felt, “It was really helpful to us after we eat biscuits and cookies, we listened better in class” (**P1:33-4**).

5.2.8 Provision of sport activities

Most of the participants believed that sport activities were one of the psychosocial support provided by their schools. It is generally agreed that children need to maintain age appropriate interest and activities normal development to take place. Sport activities are important for child development be it physically, mentally, socially and morally (Boyden & Mann, 2005). When children are doing sport activities they get the opportunity to socialize with others, make friends, have fun with other kids, learn to cooperate and learn to express as well as control their emotions (Henley, Schweizer, de Gara & Vetter, 2007. **P2** took part in sport. "I run 400m" (**P2:82**). In her case, **P4** described taking part in sport at school "I do sport but not in competitions. I just do it for fun" (**P4:146**), "I play netball. Maybe this year I will be in the school team" (**P4:147**). **P6** took part in sport at school she said, "I run 100m at school. I was second in the circuit based competition last year" (**P6:112**).

In this study few of the participants did not do any sport activities. Learners who do not do sport activities are at high risk of losing out on the benefits that sport contributes to human development. Some of the main benefits of sport activities can be health, fitness, muscle growth, social skills and development of intellectual abilities (Boyden & Mann, 2005). **P1** stressed, "I don't take part in drama, drawing and sport at school" (**P1:128**). He also stated, "Only during lessons; I play sport in PE" (**P1:129**). **P1** did not even play soccer at home. He said, "at home this season, because of herding the animals, we don't play soccer anymore" (**P1:144**). The meaning I drew from **P1** was that the task of looking after animals used up most of his playtime.

5.2.9 School attendance and academic performance

Participants related their experience of school attendance and how they performed academically. Nearly every participant in the study showed a good attendance record. School attendance is very important for the academic performance of the learners. It is generally expected that learners who attend school regularly will excel academically. It is also true that staying away from school or going to school late can affect the learners overall school progress (Nelson & Rae, 2004).

P1 related that his school attendance is good. "I come to school every week unless I am sick" (**P1:131**) or something bad happens" (**P1:132**). **P2** stated "I come to school at 7:00am every day" (**P2:83, 84**). "I was absent for only one day last year" (**P2:85**). Even participant4 said that her attendance was good. She was only absent for two days. **P4** claimed, "It is okay. I was only absent for two days the whole of last year when I was sick" (**P4:148, 150**). **P6** said that she was only absent from school for three days. **P6** said "I am only absent if there is a serious reason for me be" (**P6:121**). In 2010 "I was only absent for three days" (**P6:122**). What this means is that even though the participants lost their parents they showed commitment to attending school regularly in order to be educated and become independent.

They also reported performing very well academically. Most of them passed in all their school terms. There were those who took 4th positions in the end of the year examination. Some of the participants related that they got the best two A grades in the examination. A few of the participants reported working hard and ending up in the same class as their older sisters who had left them behind. Only one of the six

participants failed the end of the year examination because she got a D symbol in Agricultural science.

P1 revealed “I passed all terms very well. I also passed the end of the year examinations” (**P1:137, 139**). **P2** was eager to articulate, “I was the 5th at the end of term 1 examination last year. In Term 2, I was 4th in the class” and in the end of the year examination “I was 4th” (**P2:92**). **P3** commented, “I scored two A symbols in the end of the year examination” (**P3:121**). This simply means that most of the participants worked hard in school. It is possible that they felt the best way was to work hard in order to live a better life because their parents, who were supposed to support them, were dead.

P6 spoke passionately about her school performance. “I am learning very well” (**P6:133**). “My sister left me behind but now we are in the same Grade” (**P6:134**). “I worked hard to catch her, now we are in the same class” (**P6: 135**). Overall, the participants in the study had shown good attendance and they produced good grades as well. The only exception was with **P5** who did not pass at the end of the year examination. However, she attended school every day of the week. She did not pass because of a D symbol in English.

Her comment was: **P5** “I go to school every day of the week” (**P5:74**). Moreover, **P5** asserted, “I am trying my best to do better in my school work” (**P5:77**). “I did not pass the end of term 1 examination last year (**P5:84, 85**) “because I had a D symbol in English” (**P5:86**). Even though **P5** passed the examinations at the end of term 2 she failed in the year-end examination because she failed Agriculture science.

5.2.10 Other support

The focus of this study was primarily on orphaned learners' experiences regarding the psychosocial support provided by their schools. However, in this section I present other support orphaned learners received from their families and government that made it possible for them to cope and to manage their lives better. The other support included: Provision of school uniforms, fees, grants, pocket money and praying and attending Sunday church service. The provision of these items reduced the participants' worries and stress regarding accessing education.

5.2.10.1 Provision of school uniforms

Participants related their experiences regarding support with the provision of school uniforms. The majority of the participants were given school uniforms. Their family and caregivers bought the uniforms for them. Some were bought by their aunts, grandmothers, sisters and fathers. Few of the participants did not have complete and full school uniforms. They needed new school bags, shoes, skirts and some shirts. Some of them carried their books in plastic bags and wore flip-flops to school. Other learners could make fun of them and they would end up losing confidence to attend school and complete their education. It was also evident that schools provided school uniforms to the learners who could not afford them.

P1 said, "I have a school uniform; my aunt bought it for me" (**P1:58**). **P2**'s comments were: "my grandmother bought me my school uniform" (**P2:30**). "My shirt was bought in 2009 and my skirt was bought in 2008" (**P2:31**). About her school bag she said, "My father bought me a school bag but it is old now" (**P2:32**). **P4** had a school uniform; she said it was okay. **P4** stated, "My school uniform is okay. **P6** commented,

“The school did not provide me with any school uniform” (P6:67) but “my sister bought me one” (P6:68). P1 disclosed, “The school did not provide learners with school uniforms, it only sent us to tell our parents to buy us uniforms” (P1:55). The findings seemed to imply that most of the participants were provided with school uniform by their caregivers even though some of the participants seemed to suggest that their school should provide them with school uniforms.

P5 agreed, “The school principal gave me a school bag when I returned to school after bereavement” (P5:53). “The school bags were given to many orphaned learners” (P5:54). P4 clarified, “The school provides school uniforms to those that cannot afford them” (P4:62). “If an orphaned learner can afford it, the school tells the learner to ask the parents to buy the school uniform” (P4:64). This finding implied that there were some orphaned learners that were given some support in the form of school bags and school uniforms by the schools.

There were some participants who complained about the inadequate support with school uniforms. For the period of the interviews P2 wore the same flip-flops and not the school shoes. She said, “I had school shoes but they do not fit anymore” (P2:33). P3 complained, “There is not adequate provision of school uniform and clothes” (P3:51). He needed, “maybe new school bag for my books. It was bought by my mother when I was in Grade 5. It is old” (P3:52, 53). What this finding implies is that some of the participants were not provided with full school uniforms by their families and relatives but they tried to protect them by saying all was well, even when they did not get the needed support. A case in point was P2 who did not have a new school uniform.

5.2.10.2 *Provision of school fees*

Participants recalled the support they received regarding the payment of school fees. The discussions revealed that the majority of participants experienced problems with paying their school fees. One of the participants said that the payment of school fees did not go very well. He stayed the full year without paying his fees and he was angry because he was afraid of what his classmates would think of his being in the class without paying the fees. Another was promised that her father would send the money for fees when he got paid.

P2 did not pay her school fees. She said, “It was said that my father would send me money when he got paid” (**P2:37**). **P3** stated, “Fees are not going very well. I can stay even a year without paying school fees” (**P3:54, 55**). He said, “When the school starts is when I pay” (**P3:56**). **P3** raised a concern: “I feel bad about my name being called to pay in class (**P3:60**). “I used to feel bad. Other learners might say I am in the class but I did not pay” (**P3:61**). What this finding implied was that some of the participants were stigmatized by their classmates due to unsettled school fees.

P4 asserted “I have not paid my school fees yet” (**P4:68**). She said, “I am the only one to receive the grant money from government at home. My brother and I share the grant” (**P4:69, 70**). **P5** said, “I haven’t paid it yet. It is still early for paying fees” (**P5:37**). “There are some that have paid already, but many of us have not paid as yet” (**P5:38**). Even **P6** said “we pay the same amount” (**P6:69**). What this implied was that even though most of the participants received grants monthly, they were still finding it difficult to pay for their school fees, and thus they might need to apply for exemption of fees.

5.2.10.3 Provision of grants

The Namibian government, through the Ministry of Gender and Child Welfare, was responsible for registering and processing grants for orphans and vulnerable children on a monthly basis to address their plight. Household income prior to the grant must be less than N\$ 1000 per month. The applicant must also provide each child's birth certificate (or confirmation of birth or baptism card) and school reports if the child is attending school. The grant is N\$ 200 for the first child and N\$ 100 for subsequent children, up to a maximum of six children per household (Ashby, Yates, Hubbard, & Mkusa, 2006).

Half of the participants in this study received grants from the government. Their caregivers and relatives received the grants on their behalf. The grants were used by their caregivers to buy them school uniforms, shoes, clothes and to pay school fees. A few of the participants shared their grants with their brothers and other family members and the money was not enough to cater for all of their needs, especially, to pay school fees.

P2 said that he received the grant and her grandmother received the money on her behalf. Her comment was "I received the grant and one of my siblings received it too" (**P2:42**). "My grandmother receives my grant on my behalf" (**P2:43**). **P4** admitted, "I am the only one who received the grant money from government at home. I share it with my brother" (**P4:69, 70**). In her case **P6** asserted "my sister uses it to buy us shoes, school uniform and pay school fees" (**P6:75**).

The other half of the participants in the study did not receive the grant because of incomplete documentation, incorrect personal details and some whose applications were still being processed. It was evident that one of the participants' grandmothers did not want to give the documents to another person to register her grandchild. Another participant had her name wrongly spelt, so she could not get through the process to be registered in order to receive the grant.

P1 commented "I was not registered because my birth certificate could not be found. It was with my maternal grandmother" (**P1:63, 64**). **P1** further commented "my grandmother did not want to give the papers to let me be registered by my paternal aunt" (**P1:67**). "She promised to get me registered herself" (**P1:66**). At the time of the interview **P1** was not sure whether he was registered. Regarding **P3** who had just lost his father in 2010 his application was still being processed. He said, "it is still coming I just applied for the grant. My mother helped me to apply" (**P3:58, 59**).

P5 said "I was about to register but there was some wrong information on the birth certificate" (**P5:42, 43**). She reported that her birth certificate had been taken "to be corrected as some names were wrongly spelt" (**P5:44**). It appeared as if the government was committed to addressing the plight of orphans and vulnerable children in Namibia. However, in some isolated situations family members were not willing to provide the necessary documents or give correct details so that the children could get the grant that rightly belonged to them.

5.2.10.4 *Provision of pocket money*

Even though most of the participants were given soft porridge by their schools, some of them were still given pocket money by their families to buy sweets and fat cakes at school. Some of the participants got their pocket money from their brothers on irregular occasions when they happened to meet them. Other participants shared the view that it was not good to go to school without money to buy sweets and cakes. They felt it was good to have pocket money to buy something at school.

P1 said he used the money to buy fat cakes at school (**P1:68**). He also said “My aunt gives me money for transport to and from the hospital” (**P1:53**). **P3** stated “My brother supports me somehow with pocket money” (**P3:66**). **P3** “But only when I meet him at this school. I can even go a whole year without him giving me money” (**P3:67, 68**). **P4** was given pocket money from home, she claimed “Every day you have to be given some money. If you come to school without money you cannot eat anything” (**P4:86, 87**). Still, some of the participants showed the need for pocket money to buy their pens, sweets and bread at school.

A few of the participants complained that the pocket money was not enough for a month. **P3** said “I need pocket money to buy my pens” (**P3:57**). **P6** revealed that her older sister “sometimes gives me money to buy sweets or bread at school” (**P6:76**). She claimed, “I just get N\$ 1.00 a month” (**P6:77**). “Sometimes my sister would say “plough there, I will give you N\$ 2.00” (**P6:78**). Since her older sister was not employed and she just took over the role as a head of household after their mother died it is possible that they were finding it difficult to survive and pocket money was not one of the family’s top priorities.

5.2.10.5 *Support with school work at home*

Participants described the support they received from home in doing their school work. In my view some of the caregivers tried to provide assistance with school work at home which was evident in their academic performance. Most of the participants got assistance from their aunts, their older sisters and cousins. However one of the participants did not have anyone to assist him with school work at home, he did all his work by himself. He showed an interest in being assisted with the most difficult tasks and activities.

P2 stated, “My aunt helps me with school work at home, she asks me if I was given homework” (**P2:93, 94**). **P3** said, “My sisters and cousin help me with my work” (**P3:122**). **P4** also reported, “My mother and brother help me at home” (**P4:164**). **P6** also had her sisters to assist her with her work. “My sister, who just finished Grade 10, helps me” (**P6:137**). She said, “She is very helpful. Whatever you ask her she will assist with” (**P6:138**). However, **P1** said “There is nobody to help me do my school work at home. I do my work all by myself” (**P1:140, 141**). He further said “I mostly need help to complete the difficult tasks” (**P1:142**) but he ends up doing it himself.

Regarding **P5**, her comment was “I tell my aunt to do my work and she does it. She does the work for me” (**P5:94, 95**). She further said “I also do it somehow” (**P5:96**). **P5** also commented, “I also give my aunt my work to check if it is correct. When I am wrong she corrects it” (**P5:97**). This finding implied that some of the participants were not responsible for their own learning. Instead their caregivers did their homework for them. Support with school work at home does not mean learners should not do their own work but their families can provide assistance to help them do their tasks.

5.2.10.6 Provision of prayers and attending Sunday church service

Although the researcher did not have the intention to impose religious or spiritual values on the participants, he wanted to understand the role that spirituality plays in their lives and how it influences their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. The majority of participants were Christian and they believed in going to church on Sunday. They shared the view that attending Sunday church service helped them to connect with God who provided safety for them. Some of them also related that they got inspired by God's word. Their schools also provided them opportunity to conduct prayers after the lessons before they went home.

P1 revealed "I was baptized and I am waiting to start confirmation classes at our church" (**P1:150**). **P2** believed that her grandmother taught her indispensable life skills including how to pray. "We are taught how to pray" (**P2:49**), "we pray when we go to bed and before and after we eat" (**P2:50**). She described her grandmother as a religious person. **P3** said, "Everyone prays in our class; we use a class list" (**P3:137**). **P4** said "I like going to church and I listen, to get inspired by God's words" (**P4:174**). Also, **P6** professed, "I am a Christian. I go to church sometimes" (**P6:155**). "I believe God is keeping me safe too" (**P6:156**).

Participants were taught prayers, spiritual readings and hymns when they attended Sunday church services, which helped them to deal with the spiritual issues in their lives. This means that the participants' perceived and personal relationship with God is defined as spiritual support in this study because they believed that God's words inspire them and that God keeps them safe.

5.3 Living conditions of orphaned learners

5.3.1 Caring for orphaned learners

It was evident that the majority of the participants were taken care of by their maternal grandmothers and a few by their older sisters who headed the household. **P1** stated “I am happy to live with my paternal aunt” (**P1:121**). His aunt was a self-employed single woman. **P1** also said “My aunt only sells sweets” (**P1:24**) at school. This means that **P1**’s aunt was trying to generate some income to feed her family by selling sweets at the school. Whether she was making enough money to provide for her family’s needs was not investigated in this study.

P2 has been living with her maternal grandmother since her early childhood. There were five of them in the family. **P3** said, “I live with my maternal grandmother” (**P3:20**). **P4** said her maternal grandmother was taking good care of her mother, brother and a cousin by providing them with shelter (**P4:17**). **P6** was living in a family of eight; among them were six children and two older sisters.

P6 confirms “I have live with my first born sister since 2005. She has been the head of the household since my mother died” (**P6:19, 20**). None of her sisters was formally employed and there was no one at home with formal employment. It seemed that most of the participants were taken care of by caregivers who were not formally employed and lacked a source of income. It was likely that most of the participants’ basic needs were not fully provided for due to the lack of financial resources that their caregivers faced.

5.3.2 Provision of food at home

Regarding the provision of food at home the majority of the participants ate three meals daily that include food items such as porridge, rice and soup. Participants related that they ate rice or bread in the morning before they went to school; their lunch usually included food items such as millet locally known as '*omahangu*' porridge with soup or meat sometimes. Most of the participants revealed that the food they eat for lunch and dinner is often the same and included '*omahangu*' porridge or rice and soup. There were a few participants who were concerned about the lack of adequate food supplies at home. They ate sometimes after school and sometimes they did not find any food after school instead they waited for supper.

P1 confirmed "I am even learning very well because I eat before I go to school" (**P1:36**). He said, "We can wake up and cook some rice or we eat bread" (**P1:38**). "After school sometimes we find porridge or rice" (**P1:39**) and his dinner "is porridge and soup" (**P1:41**). **P4** reported taking her breakfast before she went to school. "We can eat porridge or rice when there is some" (**P4:37**). She said, "We always find food after school" (**P4:36**) which was "porridge or rice" (**P4:38**) and in the evening; porridge, spinach and meat sometimes" (**P4:39**) were served.

P6 described "We eat millet porridge and beans" (**P6:32**). **P6** and her family were also making "sorghum at home to brew '*oshikundu*' (a homemade drink) (**P6:33**) and "on few occasions my sister buys some rice and meat (**P6:34**). Her family seemed to cope better in terms of food provision. She revealed, "If we take one full bucket of millet flour and mix it with 20Litre of maize meal it may take a month" (**P6:35**).

A few of the participants reported having eaten after school only some of the time. **P3** responded “I eat after school only some of the time” (**P3:30**). “Sometimes I can find food but at other times, I cannot find any” (**P3:31**). The school provided him with maize meal to cook at home. He said “We eat maize meal from school” (**P3:32**). Also he revealed, “My mother sends food home” (**P3:34**). He only ate sometimes after school despite all the food given by the school and his mother. The only good news was that he never slept on empty stomach, he said “I eat at night before I sleep” (**P3:33**). What this finding implied was that some of the participants did not have a balance diet. It could be either because there was not enough food at home or the fact that, because children ate soft porridge at school, the family decided not to leave food for the children after school.

5.3.3 Sleeping conditions and bedding

Some of the participants were satisfied with their sleeping conditions and bedding at home. They boasted about having their own huts with beds, enough bed sheet and blankets. Their relatives provided them with shelter and bedding. A few others reported sleeping on the floor without enough bedding and on an old mattress. Some of those who needed a new mattress, bed, or adequate bedding lived in child headed households with no income earner.

P3 proudly stated, “I have my own hut” (**P3:44**). He also revealed, “I have a bed and mattress. The mattress was bought by my grandmother” (**P3:110, 111**). Concerning other needs such as blankets and bed sheets he said, “My maternal uncle gave me blankets and bed sheets (**P3:109**). **P4** said her maternal grandmother

took good care of her, her brother and her mother by providing them with shelter. She added, “We have enough blankets and bed sheets” (P4:45).

P6 slept with two other people in one hut. She stated, “We sleep three of us on the floor. “I sleep with my sister who is in Grade 8 and my niece who is in primary school” (P6:53). She continued, “We use a mattress” (P6:44). P6 said of the condition of the mattress, “it is okay but somehow old. It was bought last year” (P6:45, 46). They did not have enough blankets and bed sheets “we only have a few blankets” (P6:48), “they are not enough (P6:49). They had only “One bed sheet” (P6:50). It was evident that P6 requires some intervention in terms of enough bedding and a bed to avoid sleeping on the floor. This is a sign of extreme poverty and vulnerability considering that nobody in her home had employment.

5.3.4 Domestic chores

Regarding their domestic chores participants related that they were not prevented from going to school and doing their school work. As a boy in the house, P1 said that he was never absent from school to look after the animals. There was another boy at home who took care of them while he went to school. “I always find somebody herding the animals and I take over from him after school” (P1:148, 149). However, P1 admitted that he faced some challenges with herding the animals during terms 1 and 2. He did not look after animals in the last term (3) and he did not work in the field (P1:147).

In her case, being a young girl, P2 could only pound millet and clean the house. Of other chores she said, “We don’t plough. Only the adults plough the field” (P2:95).

P3 boasted, “I am only one who cuts down the trees and herds the animals” **(P3:123)**. **P3** gave the impression of coping just fine with school work and taking care of the animals. “My sisters help me with the animals as we only have goats” **(P3:127, 124)**. He further said “All children in the house must fetch water” **(P3:131)**. “We carry buckets and containers of water on our heads” **(P3:128)**. **P3** also said that they help each other. “We help each other with the domestic chores” **(P3:132)**.

Being an adolescent girl, **P4**'s domestic chores included cooking, pounding millet, fetching water and firewood. She related, “It is good we collect firewood and fetch water with my brother **(P4:165)**. She further clarified, “We fetch water in the evening. Sometimes we use containers or buckets” **(P4:170)**. **P4** gave the information that her brother assisted her in doing domestic chores “I pound millet with my brother” **(P4:169)**.

Similarly, **P5**'s domestic chores included pounding millet, cooking, cleaning, washing and ploughing the millet field. She however stated, “We do pound millet but not often. We the millet to the milling machine **(P5:98, 99)**. She did not cook everyday either “We share the cooking at home” **(P5:101)**. **P6** reported that she did not have to cook at home, as her two older sisters did all the cooking for them. She said “We do not cook, not we children” **(P6:139)** “our two elder sisters share the cooking. One cooks in the day and the other one in the evening” **(P6:141)**.

This simply meant that older sisters were in a better position to use the limited available resources instead of allowing young children to cook and waste the resources. Since nobody cooked in the morning it appears **P6** went to school without

eating breakfast. Another scenario could be that, at times, children did not eat anything at home if their older sisters decided not to cook on a particular day.

P6 also commented, “Our sister used to say we should go and study while they were cooking” (**P6:148**). **P6** did not even pound millet like most girls of her age “I don’t pound millet; we take it to a milling machine (**P6:147**). The domestic chore she and her other younger sister did was to “collect firewood” (**P6:144**) which was “dry shrubs and palm leaves” (**P6:146**). **P6** also stated, “We first do our homework and fetch water in the evening” (**P6:149**). It seemed that gender roles were slowly fading away; young girls did not even pound millet as was the case in previous times.

5.4 Summary

In the phenomenological design the researcher is interested in describing what appears and the manner in which it appears (Ilharco, 2002). The picture that emerged from the general description is complex; it shows the participants’ experiences with regard to psychosocial support in a multi-dimensional way that encompasses their emotional, social, physical and spiritual support. The new picture include: **Emotional support**: Informing learners about bereavement, consoling orphaned learners, provision of week off during bereavement, provision of group guidance, provision of safety and security. **Social support**: Talking with peers, playing with peers, registration of orphaned learners, provision of educational incentives, provision of life skills, and support with school work at home. **Physical support**: School feeding program, provision of textbooks and stationery, provision of school uniform, provision of school fees, provision of grants, provision of pocket money. **Spiritual support**: Prayers and attending Sunday church service.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." - Maya Angelou-

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the main descriptions of orphaned learners' experiences regarding psychosocial support provisioning in six selected primary schools in the Endola circuit, Namibia. Provision of psychosocial support in primary school is a practice and a child's right according to the UN Convention (UNAIDS, 2001) following natural disasters such as death (Prewitt Diaz & Dayal, 2008).

5.1.1 Theoretical and methodological perspective

The review of the related literature presented in chapter 2 of this phenomenological study was not about finding out which theory best accounts for orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support. It was to gain a new panorama that would help in explaining what orphaned learners experienced with psychosocial support provided at school and at home. The phenomenological design used requires that the researcher suspends or brackets a priori theoretical notions or pre-conceptions so that that what orphaned learners experienced, rather than what the researcher expects in terms of theory, can emerge (van Heerden, 2000).

The research question was: What psychosocial support do orphaned learners in Endola Circuit experience at school and home? In order to understand orphaned learners experiences the researcher focused on the individual orphaned learner's experience and the phenomenon of psychosocial support.

DESCRIPTION OF FINDINGS

The description of findings will be discussed according to the main elements of psychosocial support, namely emotional, social, physical and spiritual as was shown under the new picture in the previous chapter (**see section 5.4**).

5.2 Emotional support

The experiences of the participants revealed the following as emotional support during and after bereavement: informing learners about bereavement, consoling of orphaned learners, allowing a week off during bereavement, provision of group guidance and provision of safety and security. These support are discussed below.

5.2.1 Informing learners about bereavement

In most schools, one is highly likely to encounter a grieving learner almost every day, even if one does not see any visible signs of grief. Participants related that school principals and class teachers informed learners and the school community about the bereavement at the schools' assemblies. They were informed that a particular child has lost a parent. Nelson and Rae (2004) confirm that at the outset, it is important that members of the orphaned learner's peer group are made aware of the loss and given an opportunity to discuss their feelings in the absence of the bereaved child.

Schools can be the best setting for providing support to learners and staff after a loss that affects the school community. Well informed peers and school staff can be a source of great support for learners. However this may unintentionally be a source of stress, if not handled well (Schonfeld, 2001). For example, not understanding reactions may lead to misinterpretation of behavioral reactions to loss as

misbehavior and disrespect for others. In his Attachment theory Bowlby (1980) confirms that, when bereavement occurs, children may find the intensity of emotions is too difficult to deal with in an appropriate manner. Expression of these emotional feelings may also be in conflict with each other.

Some of the participants in the study felt depressed and angry, an indication that schools had not been able to deal with and assist those learners in a proper way. What was done at schools was either not adequate or nothing was done at all in addressing the psychosocial needs of the participants. It was also not clear whether schools provided information about the availability of psychosocial support such as guidance and counseling and how learners could access them.

When a pupil returns to school after bereavement, teachers and school staff should be informed about the learner's situation. The orphaned learner or learners should be informed that the staff is aware of their situation. The school and the learner should together negotiate a contact person who should be available to the bereaved pupil or pupils when they need to talk (Nelson & Rae, 2004).

This may be a member of the teaching staff or a member of the support staff who may well have developed a relationship with the child prior to the loss. The findings of the study showed that when a bereaved learner returned to school other learners were made aware of his or her return and they were warned by the principals not to provoke the bereaved child. Instead, they were to support him or her.

5.2.2 Consoling of orphaned learners

It was evident that the participants were consoled by their family members during bereavement. Some of them were told to take it in good faith and not be overwhelmed by their parents' departure. The implication of this finding is that death occurred within the family structure and usually family members and relatives who already had an attachment with the child played the consoling role. After bereavement when the participants returned to school some school principals and class teachers talked to them about not feeling sad.

Sengendo and Nambi (1997) found that in most cases orphaned children are not given the required support and encouragement to express their emotions nor are they guided to deal with them. It is however necessary to note that death affects children even throughout adulthood. Therefore children should be given proper attention and provided with adequate grief support (Thompson, 2002) and an opportunity to express their pain, which was found lacking in this study.

Talking to children about death must be at their developmental level, with respect for their cultural norms and sensitivity to their capacity to understand the situation (National Association of School Psychologists, 2003). Children should be made to feel that one really wants to understand what they are feeling or what they need. Sometimes children are upset but they cannot tell you what will be helpful. For this reason orphaned learners need psychosocial support, especially in cultures where adults do not talk to children about death and where children are discouraged from self-expression (Boler & Carroll, 2003).

Giving them the time and encouragement to share their feelings may enable them to sort out those feelings (NASP, 2003). Teachers and schools can provide support by assisting the orphaned learners to adjust to the loss within the school environment. Teachers could lessen the workload and provide the emotional support when the child becomes distressed (Pillay, 2009). This is only possible however if the teachers are adequately equipped with the skills necessary to intervene in such a distressful situation. An inappropriate response may cause further anxiety and confusion in the orphaned child (Pillay, 2009).

A few of the participants reported that their teachers shook their hands when they returned to school. They did not say anything to them but simply shook their hands. This finding might imply that the teachers were being sensitive by approaching the bereaved with great caution so as not to arouse their emotions or it may be a cultural practice not to say anything when shaking somebody's hand during or after bereavement. Shayo (2011) revealed that the emotional dimension in counseling includes empathy, sensitivity and the ability to interpret non-verbal clues of the child in order to understand unresolved complexes or pent-up feelings.

Riches and Dawson (2002) suggest that the difficulties in providing psychosocial support might arise from the mismatch between the schools' culture and the culture of bereavement. This implies that each school should have a culture of caring and providing psychosocial support to the bereaved children in their midst by considering the bereavement practices or culture of the child. Psychosocial support is important for orphaned learners to be able to integrate into the school community without feeling rejected, stigmatized, discriminated against or isolated.

In the researcher's view, it would be better for schools to sit with the bereaved child and give him or her opportunity to express their pain and find out how the child wants the school to help. By doing this, the school can offer immediate and specific help to the bereaved child in order to cope meaningfully (Conley & Woosley, 2000). The school and the child should together identify a contact person who should be available to the bereaved child or children when they need to talk. This may be a member of the teaching staff or a member of the support staff who may well have developed a relationship with the child prior to the loss (Nelson & Rae, 2004).

Richter, Manegold and Pather (2004) advice that communicating with children and gaining their trust is an important source of support for children and counseling assistance of this kind can be provided by trained non-professional as well as by the children's peers. Play is also important compensatory experiences for children and can assist children to recover from trauma and distress.

Psychosocial support is an important aspect in the provision of children's rights and it is based on the understanding that children need to be loved, respected and listened to. Orphaned learners experience grief and trauma when a parent dies. These psychosocial problems are rarely addressed in programs, and yet they can have a long-term impact on learners' development (UNAIDS, 2001). The death of a parent is an emotional shock that can produce long-lasting, harmful effects. It causes pain and discomfort and impacts on the person's cognitive, emotional and behavior processes (Fiorini & Mullen, 2006). Psychosocial support should be provided to help orphaned learners cope with emotional trauma and stress.

Marsh, McFarland, Allen, McElhaney and Land (2003) concurred that orphaned learners need support to redefine their relationship with their lost loved one and hold onto meaningful memories. Failure by schools and caregivers to recognize and address poor social adjustment and associated mental symptoms will aggravate the child's psychological problems. A change in a child's behavior is often the first signs of reaction to bereavement and is indicative that they are struggling with these feelings (Smith, 1999).

Most orphaned learners are often shielded from death, and when they realize their parent(s) have gone forever they may become depressed and take a long time to recover. This may also result in inhibited grief; that is, grief erupting later in the form of emotional disturbance, various kinds of phobias and eventually depression (Watson, 2005). Anxiety disorders such as phobias and avoidant behavior can be serious impediments to early school success because learners with these disorders tend to miss out on so much instruction (Brown & Barlow, 2005).

Orphaned learners need to be heard and need to learn to express their feelings in an appropriate manner. UNAIDS (2001) found that emotional suffering appears in various forms for everyone (e.g. depression, aggression, drug abuse, insomnia, failure to thrive, malnutrition, etc). Orphaned learners may not understand the situation and therefore cannot express their grief effectively. Even if they want to express their emotional feelings, there is often no one willing to listen. Common feelings experienced by orphaned children when they lose their parents include guilt, anger and sadness. Some children feel that they are responsible for the death of their parents and if they are not helped to work through their guilt they can become

depressed (Giese, Meintjies & Proudlock, 2001). The orphan may be angry with himself or herself or with others who he or she perceives to be the cause of the death of the parent. Their anger may be directed against the deceased parents, who they think have abandoned them and left them to suffer alone (Pillay, 2009). As a result, orphaned learners who are frustrated, fearful and depressed may fail to concentrate in class and therefore perform badly (Giese, et al, 2001). Failure by the school and the home systems to recognize these symptoms and address them will aggravate the child's psychological problems (Sengendo & Nambi, 1997). The mixed emotions of anger, anxiety and guilt can lead to a reduction in self-esteem and eventually to feelings of depression. Depression can be characterized by extreme loneliness, despair, feelings of emptiness and worthlessness (Nelson & Rae, 2004).

In their study McGannon, Carey and Dimmitt (2005) found that a significant majority of 92% of teachers and head teachers agreed that teachers should be trained to provide psychosocial support to orphans and vulnerable children. Teachers reported having comforted children who seemed particularly distressed and sometimes referred the affected children to the school guidance and counseling teacher for a follow-up. This would be consistent with the findings that guidance interventions can positively affect learners' success in the classroom (Whiston, 2003) and on learners' positive development (Brigman & Campbell, 2003).

Sears and Granello (2002) asserted that today's emphasis is on teachers to spend as much time as possible teaching academic subjects. School counselors are experiencing more and more difficulty gaining access to classrooms to deliver guidance and counseling-oriented information and activities. In addition, given the

ratio that school counselors face, we believe it is no longer possible for them to serve all learners in any meaningful way. There are not enough counselors in schools and there is no evidence that the situation will improve (Sears & Granello, 2002). They are either not utilized in schools or they are engaged in other activities rather than what they are trained for. Some school counselors are also teachers and they are fully occupied with teaching responsibilities (Shayo, 2011).

In Namibia, school counselors are too few per educational region and it might not be possible for them to meet every orphaned learner's psychosocial needs. Green and Keys (2001) are not directly suggesting that counselors should serve all learners, but they rather encourage counselors to shift from direct services toward more indirect services. In other words, school counselors should engage in more consultation, collaboration, advocacy, and program coordination. They believe that counselors who adopt an indirect services approach could affect more change in learners' lives (Green & Keys, 2001).

Teachers and school counselors working with orphaned learners in schools should try to detect signs of reaction to bereavement and provide the necessary psychosocial support. McDonald (2000) confirmed that successful psychosocial support provisioning to orphaned learners in schools, results in productive activities, and fulfilling relationships with other people, and the ability to adapt and cope with the loss. It is therefore an integral part of effective primary care for the child.

5.2.3 Provision of week off during bereavement

It was clearly stated by the majority of the participants in the study that their schools permitted them a week off to mourn their parents. Some were told by their schools to stay two to three days at home with their family. The expression of trauma is not rigidly set, but comprises a continuum based on the type and severity of the trauma, the past experiences of the victim, the prevalence of dissociation, age, gender and many other factors (Scaer, 2000).

It is for the reason stated above that it is difficult to determine how many days a school child should be allowed stay away after bereavement since there is no correct way to express grief. It is determined by the factors listed above. Even though some ways appear to lead to more effective recovery from the distressing aspects of trauma, factors such as age, gender, culture and type of death determine the actual days of bereavement. Wimpenny (2006) asserts that orphaned children do not just move on and end their relationship with the deceased parent (s). They continue to have a relationship with them throughout their lives.

Nelson and Rae (2004) concurred that there will be individual differences in terms of how much time a child may require to return to school, but it is important to understand that a long period of absence from school can cause difficulties. It is assumed that young children would need more time for bereavement than an adult person, because most adults might have experienced death before. Di Ciacco (2008) agrees that most children in primary schools lack the experience to deal with loss and their undeveloped coping skills cause them to be more vulnerable than adults. Adults have lived multiple experiences and developed coping mechanisms to handle

their losses. Grieving is a process, not an event. Parents and schools need to allow adequate time for each child to grieve in a manner that works for that child. Pressing children to resume normal activities without the chance to deal with their emotional pain may prompt additional problems or negative reactions.

The more losses the child suffers, the more difficult it will be to recover. This is especially true if they have lost a parent who was their major source of support (NASP, 2003). It was evident in this study that participants were still grieving and showed the need to express the emotional feelings. NASP (2003) concludes that how long it may take for learners to adjust to the loss will vary, but most children are not over a loss in six months or a year. As such, appropriate support should be planned for immediate aftermath, the months following the loss and for the long-term. Schools should try to develop multiple supports for children who suffer significant losses.

Children need reassurance from caregivers and teachers that they are safe. What seems to be lacking in the present study is the follow up on the cases to check how the bereaved learners are coping. It seems orphaned learners are forgotten after the bereavement except for the warning that other learners should not provoke them when they return to school. No other support was provided after that, thus the children continued to suffer in silence. A wellbeing plan should be developed by the school that would include teachers and other people at school to identify early warning signs of unresolved grief when the child returns back to school so that necessary steps can be taken.

5.2.4 Provision of group guidance

The findings of the study show that nearly all of the six selected primary schools provided group guidance focusing on providing information on the danger of HIV and AIDS to the learners. Gibson and Mitchell (2008) point out that group guidance is organized to prevent the development of problems with the goal of providing a group of learners with accurate information that would help them make more appropriate plans and life decisions.

Group guidance is divided into educational guidance, vocational guidance and social guidance (UNESCO, 2000). Under these three major areas, there are several school guidance and counseling services such as appraisal, information, vocational guidance, placement, orientation, evaluation, referral, consultancy, follow-up and research services (Nwachukwu, 2007). Each of these major components of guidance support is to enable each learner in an institution of learning to derive optimal educational benefits (Denga, 2001). In the context of the study group guidance was organized in schools where information about the danger of HIV and Aids and hygiene was given to the learners.

In this study some of the participating schools gathered the whole school together and teachers presented information about HIV and AIDS. It was evident that group guidance on HIV and AIDS was organized to commemorate the world AIDS day in the schools' calendar. In other schools group guidance was organized according to gender, where boys and girls were taught about the danger of HIV and AIDS and information on hygiene, for example, to always wash their bodies and their clothes. The presentation was held under trees at the schools. This finding implies that

schools took serious steps towards trying to effect a change in learners' feelings as a way of helping them behave appropriately and make healthy decisions. Indeed this was a step in the right direction toward providing emotional support.

The use of group guidance that involved the dissemination of health related information on HIV and AIDS by school teachers might help prevent orphaned learners from getting infected with the virus. Campbell and Mac Phail (2002) agree that this form of guidance could reinforce young people's lack of power by creating situations in which they are instructed on how to engage in safe sex. One participant was also warned at home by her older sister that not learns about sex. However, the participant admitted to having had sex with a boy of her age but not frequently. This finding implied that some orphaned learners were at risk of being infected since they were already sexually active. Also, another participant was advised by her aunt to refrain from sex.

One study confirmed that girls aged 15-19 in sub-Saharan Africa were approximately 8 times more likely to be HIV positive than their male counterparts. Between the ages of 20-24 years, women in sub-Saharan Africa are still three times more likely to be infected than men their age (UNICEF & UNAIDS, 2000). While the need for counseling and support is obvious, few schools have the resources to offer the services that reach out to these children. While these psychosocial needs of children are well documented, they regularly go unmet in the school setting (Kelly, 2000). Orphans are at risk of losing consistent nurture and guidance which makes it difficult for the child to reach maturity and to be integrated into society (UNAIDS, 2001).

Group counseling makes it possible for one counselor to counsel a number of learners at a time. It is more time and cost effective and includes peer support which does not occur in individual counseling (Molapo & van der Merwe, 2003). Thus, many learners can get their problems solved at once. Because school counselors are few in Namibia, group counseling is more appropriate to use when counselors visit schools. Group guidance also offers learners a broad array of additional support such as youth development activities, drug and violence prevention, counseling and character education programs that reinforce and complement the regular academic programs (Kolbe, 2002).

5.2.5 Provision of safety and security

Safety and security includes love and affection, given to the child in stable, continuous, dependable and loving relationships. These relationships should give the child unconditional love and friendship (van Den Berg, 2006). The threats that come in the form of unequal treatment, harassment, bullying and undervaluing orphaned learners harm them in profound and long-lasting ways (UNICEF, 2000b). Thus, psychosocial support should aim to empower orphaned learners to improve their lives and that of their families and communities by safeguarding them from abuse and mistreatment of any kind be, it psychological, social, physical or sexual.

It appeared that the majority of sampled schools provided a safe and secure environment for their orphaned learners. All of the participants revealed that if they were mistreated they would report the person who mistreated them to their class teachers or the school principals. According to the Attachment theory when the experiences of the children are good enough they develop trust and feel safe (Blake,

Bird & Gerlach, 2007) feel securely attached and free to learn (Stevenson, 2007). Prior and Glaser (2006) describe attachment as a bond or tie between an individual and an attachment figure. It is thus a tie based on the need for safety and security.

Additionally, some of the participants reported that they felt safe and secure at school because of the Learner Representative Council (LRC). The LRC checked if learners had tucked in their school uniforms shirts and monitored learners who physically abused other learners and they took them to the principal's office. Makubalo (2007) concurred that even learners at schools have delegated powers for instance to maintain discipline among other learners because the LRCs are mature enough to handle their delegated roles. The LRCs felt appreciated by their fellow learners as they reported to them any kind of abuse.

Findings proved that LRCs contributed to the emotional and social support of their peers in making sure that they were safe and secure from any form of abuse and maltreatment in and around the school premises. Even at home, the majority of the participants reported that they were safe and secure from abuse and maltreatment. They reported the abuse and maltreatment to their mothers and older sisters who were ready to warn people not to mistreat them. It seemed that the participants had good attachments with members of their families.

Findings of the study provide evidence of child neglect where one of the participant's father did not replace her old school bag. The same participant also wore flip-flops because her school shoes could no longer fit her. Still further, the study revealed that the same girl did not pay her school fees because her father did not send the money.

Yet, her maternal grandmother received grant money monthly on her behalf, a clear sign of child neglect. Stevenson (2007) confirms that in considering the symptoms of serious neglect, there has been a tendency to concentrate on its most tangible feature, namely, a dirty, ill-clothed and starved child. This is the case because child neglect is the failure to provide a child with the basic necessities, which seem to be physical in nature.

One of the participants once stayed with her maternal cousin who used to mistreat her so she left her house and went to live with her grandmother. The participant recalled that she was beaten for making simple mistakes or some days went to work in the field without eating. UNICEF (2000b) confirmed that abuse, neglect and exploitation are often reported and seem to increase with age. Teenage female orphans seem particularly at risk of being put to work at intensive household chores because of cultural practices and the limited educational opportunities available to them and of being physically abused.

In their study, Robson and Kanyanta (2007) were informed by teachers that participation and quality of learning was affected since orphaned learners often came to school poorly dressed, hungry, sleep-deprived after long hours of household labor, and psychologically and emotionally traumatized. Another participant in the study reported that she once lived with a relative of her father who treated her badly. She had to work in the field first thing in the morning before she went to school and she was always late to school. Her mother was not happy about her child doing the field work and going to school late so she took her and saved her from the abusive old woman. NASP (2003) concurs that the lack of parental protection and security may

leave the door open to the exploitation and abuse of innocent school learners. Schools need to watch out for signs of abuse in their learners in order to intervene as appropriately as possible. Children need reassurance from caregivers and teachers that they are safe.

In summary, it is generally agreed that the family is where a child is supposed to receive love and care, to build up a basic trust of the world and of other people. However, the findings of the study seemed to suggest that some of the participants have been abused by the people they love and trust the most- their own relatives who make them to work in their fields on an empty stomach and go to school late. This is the ultimate betrayal of trust. Safety and security are critical for successful growth and the emotional development of children (Gwirayi & Shumba, 2007), thus they should be maintained at all cost. Psychosocial support helps learners relearn who they are, and reinforces to them that they are safe again, that they are loved and can love again (Di Ciacco, 2008).

5.3 Social support

Social support is generally defined as the perceptions and experience of support that indicates one is valued and cared for (Taylor, 2007). Social support is generally classified into three types: Information, which consists of the provision of guidance and advice; instrumental, which comprises the provision of tangible assistance including goods, services and money; and emotional, which includes the provision of warmth and empathy (Taylor, 2007).

Primary sources of social support are family members, friends, teachers and the wider social and community networks (Taylor, 2007). The social support that was provided to participants by the schools includes the following: peer support, registration of orphaned learners, provision of educational incentives, life skills, and support with school work at home. Participants described how they experienced social support below:

5.3.1 Peer support

Peer support is an umbrella term for a range of activities where children and young people are involved. It is based on the premise that children and young people have a strong desire to support each other and that they have significant influence amongst their peers (Hartley-Brewer, 2002). McLaughlin and Alexander (2004) assert that schools are a key site for supporting the development of constructive peer relationships and that the existing emphasis on peer support should continue. At the outset, it is important that the other child's peer groups are made aware of the loss and given an opportunity to discuss their feelings in the absence of the bereaved child (Nelson & Rae, 2004).

It was evident that the participants relied on the social support of their friends at school. They related that their friends made them feel good when they returned to school after the bereavement. When they told their friends what happened they said it was okay. They helped them to accept what happened. Blake, Bird and Gerlach (2007) suggest that having supportive friends in times of bereavement is an important psychological support mechanism.

Friendship may be an important source of support for friends and classmates. Even normal social activities such as inviting a friend over to play, going to the park, playing sports, watching a movie, or a trip to the mall may offer a much needed distraction and sense of connection and normalcy (NASP, 2003). Most of the participants in the study believed that playing with their friends was one of the psychosocial supports they received at their schools. McArdle (2001) confirms that play provides opportunities for children to feel comfortable and in control of their feelings by allowing the expression of emotions in acceptable ways. Play provides children with the opportunity to negotiate and resolve conflict.

The concept behind psychosocial support through play is that of teaching values such as teamwork, fair play, ethics and social skills (Boyden & Mann, 2005) and thereby assisting orphaned learners in addressing a myriad of social and psychological challenges simultaneously in gentle and non-intrusive ways (Henley cited in Henley, Schweizer, de Gara & Vetter, 2007). Thus, coaches in psychosocial sport activities must have skills beyond solely teaching sport and game activities. Coaches should facilitate the understanding of emotions and interpersonal communication between children, and help the children develop effective coping skills (Henley, Schweizer, de Gara & Vetter, 2007).

Another peer support the participants received was through playing with friends. Some of the participants indicated that they always played very well with their friends at school. Play is essential to the learners' cognitive, physical, social and emotional well-being (Boyden & Mann, 2005; Wells, 2000). Several studies found that playing in nature has a positive impact on children's social, concentration and motor ability

(Fjortoft & Sageie, 2000). Findings of the study show that some of the participants played games to make each other happy at school with their friends and some of them played together at school to keep each other company. They had a lot of fun together. Ginsburg (2007) found that play is often interrupted when children are orphaned, as more roles may be placed on the children, such as taking care of household chores because of the changes in the family structure brought about by the death of a parent. For example one participating boy did not play with his friends because it was the season to herd the animals at home. They did not even play soccer anymore.

Play has long been understood to provide children with the experiences they need in order to learn social skills and values. Through play, children become sensitive to other children's needs and values, learn to handle exclusion and dominance, manage their emotions, learn self-control as well as share power, space and ideas with others (Henley, Schweizer, de Gara & Vetter, 2007).

The majority of participants in the study actively took part in sport activities. Most of the participants took part in different Athletics events such as the 100m and 400m races. One of the participants who ran 100m came second in the circuit based competition. Play offers children the opportunity to learn new problem-solving skills in managing their own emotions and behaviors, as well as to have healthy peer relationships. Improved problem-solving skills can enhance the successful resolution of life's challenges (Miller, 2003). However, some of the participants in the study did not do competitive sport. They did sport but not in competitions. It was mainly for fun. They showed interest in joining the school netball team. Henley, Schweizer, de Gara

and Vetter (2007) agree that psychosocial support in the context of playing with peers is primarily focused on the process of helping orphaned learners restore their psychological and social functional in a cooperative environment. Circles of Friends facilitate the active participation of the peer group in supporting the focal pupil in the search for realistic and solutions to the inevitable problems faced by any child who is rejected or alienated within school (Miller, 2003). Within the psychosocial support framework the technique may be seen to be working towards the creation of a friendship group for a specified learner as an attempt to turn alienation within the peer culture towards acceptance (Miller, 2003).

The peer support the participants related in this study showed the closeness they shared with each-other which in itself was an emotional support. It emerged that the participants' friends treated them very well when they returned to school. It was clearly demonstrated that their friends gave them summary note books to catch up on school work which they missed when they were mourning their parents. Participants spoke of the encouragement and reassurance they got from friends.

5.3.2 Registration of orphaned learners

Most of the participants reported that their class teachers wrote down their names in a register for orphans and other vulnerable children. They said that their class teachers wrote down the names of the participants so that when orphans were given anything they would all get it. This finding is consistent with Mutandwa and Muganiwa (2008) who note that all identified orphans are recorded in the master register prior to the consideration of the neediest children. The prioritization process commences after the entry of identified orphans in the master register. They further

state that prioritization is an essential process that ensures that the neediest orphans are identified and that their needs are adequately catered for. Given that the number of orphaned children is quite high, prioritization is necessary to ensure that the limited resources are channeled towards the neediest children (Mutandwa & Muganiwa, 2008).

Orphaned learners' registers assisted the researcher of the present study to get access to orphaned learners during the data collection phase. Other information in these registers included the age, status, gender and type of support the orphaned child received. Lorey and Sussman (2001) confirm that at the local level, registers of OVCs are helpful for record keeping and monitoring and usually include information on names, location, ages, health status and needs of OVC and assistance or support given. OVC records can also be used as a means of monitoring and evaluation mechanism through which national plans of action, national development plans and all policies and programs concerning orphans and vulnerable children are framed and enacted (Ministry of Women and Child Welfare, 2004).

Richter, Manegold and Pather (2004) concur that OVC registers are helpful so that vulnerable children can be identified, health services can be provided, school expenses can be paid, food can be distributed and supporting counseling can be provided. However, they expressed concern about the value of orphaned learners registration that program tend to focus on the material needs of orphans because they are easier to address than psychosocial needs (Richter, Manegold & Pather, 2004).

5.3.3 Provision of educational incentives

Clearly participants demonstrated that they were provided with educational incentives by their schools as part of the motivation by their schools to learn and work hard. Motivation refers to the reasons underlying a behavior. The attribute that moves individuals to do or not to do something (Guay, et al, 2010). It focuses on the values individuals hold for participating in various types of activities (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

Most participants spoke passionately about their future plans upon completion of their schooling. There were participants who wanted to become policemen to arrest criminals. They believed that there was a lot of crime in the country and they could make a difference. Some of the participants showed an interest in becoming teachers or nurses. Another participant wanted to become a pastor. McLean (2003) concurs that ideal learners understand the purpose of school, know what they are aiming for and set tasks they can achieve. They will ask for help if needed, work well with others and have a good relationship with the teacher.

The study revealed that some of the participants worked hard in school to avoid ending up on the streets doing nothing or stealing other people's property. Others also worked hard to avoid being at shebeens and being laughed at by their former classmates. Some of the participants were motivated by their teachers who were their role models. McLean (2003) notes that the desire to act is stimulated by a reward that outweighs the individual. Equally the desire may be stimulated by avoidance of undesirable consequences.

Reid (2007) found that ideally motivation should be intrinsic-that is, a learner is self-motivating. In order to achieve this however a learner needs to have a desired goal and some determination to succeed. For instance, the study revealed that some of the participants learned hard because if others passed and they failed they would find them at shebeens doing nothing and they would laugh at them.

It was evident that the majority of participants were motivated to learn in schools because of educational incentives. One of the participants was aspiring to go to Etosha National Park if he passed very well. He was looking forward to it because he had never been there before. The school promised all learners in grade 7 that if they passed very well they would go to Etosha National Park. Another participating school promised that anyone who came 1st to 3rd would get a pen and a file at the assembly.

One of the participants received an award for having come 3rd when she was in Grade 3. Some of the participating schools gave diplomas to the learners who happened to excel in certain subjects. Other schools in the study awarded their learners stationery such as files, calculators, pens and rulers when they performed very well in school subjects. One of the participants revealed that she learned hard because she wanted to go to the end of the year school function which was supposed to be attended by the learners who passed the end of year examination. Learners that failed did not attend such school functions. The participant worked hard to avoid being left out from the fun that went with the occasion.

5.3.4 Provision of Life skills

The term “Life skills” usually describes the knowledge, experience and skills necessary to live independently (Scottish Homes, 2001) and settle into the community. Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal with the demands and challenges of everyday life (WHO, 1997). A life skills lesson may start with a teacher exploring with the learners what their ideas or knowledge are about a particular situation in which a life skill can be used. They may engage in short role play scenarios or take part in activities that allow them to practice the skills in different situations-actual practice of skills is a vital component of life skills education (WHO, 1997).

Analysis of the Life skills field suggests that there is a core set of skills that are at the heart of skills-based initiatives for the health and well-being of children and adolescents, namely: decision making, problem solving, creative thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationship skills, self-awareness, empathy, coping with emotions and coping with stress (WHO, 1997:2). These skills are listed and briefly discussed below.

5.3.4.1 Decision making

This helps individuals to deal constructively with decisions about their lives. This can have consequences for health if school learners actively make decisions about their actions in relation to health by assessing the different options and what effects different decisions may have. In the context of this study, the ability of orphaned learners to deal with their emotions constructively which they experience in their lives could help them cope better and meaningfully.

5.3.4.2 Problem solving

This enables individuals to deal constructively with problems in their lives. Significant problems that are left unresolved can cause mental and emotional stress and give rise to accompanying physical strain. Since many orphaned learners are likely to face different challenges in their lives and live in difficult conditions, problem solving has potential to relook at their situation and take appropriate actions in order to adapt to the new life after the loss of their parents.

5.3.4.3 Creative thinking

Creative thinking is an ability to analyze information and experiences in an objective manner. Critical thinking can contribute to health by helping people to recognize and assess the factors that influence attitudes and behavior such as values, peer pressure and the media. Thus, creative thinking contributes to both decision making and problem solving by enabling individuals to explore the available alternatives and various consequences of their actions or non-action. It can help people to respond adaptively and with flexibility to the situation of their daily lives.

5.3.4.4 Effective communication

This means that we are able to express ourselves, both verbally and non-verbally, in ways that are appropriate to our culture and situations. This means being able to express opinions and desires, but also needs and fears and being able to ask for advice and help in a time of need. Regarding orphaned learners, effective communication is very important because it can help them to ask for support and advice on issues that confront them. Orphaned learners are at risk of being abused,

having ability to communicate effectively would enable them to report the cases of abuse and maltreatment that they may experience.

5.3.4.5 Interpersonal relationship skills

These skills help us to relate in positive ways with people we interact with. This may mean being able to make and keep friendly relationships, which can be of great importance to our emotional and social well-being. It may mean keeping good relations with family members, friends and teachers, which are an important source of social support. It may also mean being able to end relationships constructively.

5.3.4.6 Self-awareness

Self-awareness includes our recognition of ourselves, of our character, of our strengths and weakness, our likes and dislikes. Developing self-awareness can help us to recognize when we are stressed or feel under pressure. It is also often a prerequisite for effective communication and interpersonal relations, as well as for developing empathy for others.

5.3.4.7 Empathy

Empathy is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person, even in a situation that we are not familiar with. Empathy can help us to understand and accept others who may be very different from ourselves, which can improve social interactions. Empathy can also help to encourage nurturing behavior towards people in need of care and support or tolerance, as is the case with AIDS sufferers, orphans, or people with mental disorders who may be stigmatized and ostracized by the very people they depend upon for support.

5.3.4.8 Coping with emotions

This involves recognizing emotions in ourselves and others, being aware of how emotions influence behavior and being able to respond to emotions appropriately. Intense emotions, like anger or sorrow can have negative effects on our health if we do not react appropriately. This is important area in the context of the study because most orphaned learners experienced different emotions as they endure the death of their parents. By acquiring this skill orphaned learners can be able to cope better and learn to understand their situation and react in more appropriate way. It was evident that participants showed the need to be taught how to cope with emotions since most of them were still angry and depressed about their situations.

5.3.4.9 Coping with stress

This is about recognizing the sources of stress in our lives, recognizing how this affects us and acting in ways that help to control our levels of stress. This may mean that we take action to reduce the sources of stress, for example it may mean learning how to relax, so that tensions created by unavoidable stress do not give rise to health problems. In this study participants showed the signs of stress and they seemed not being assisted to cope better thus there was a need for teaching of life skills education.

The life skills described can be taught to school learners where orphaned learners can directly benefit by developing their abilities that they can acquire through learning and practice. However, the study provides evidence that the majority of participants in the six participating schools were not taught the Life skills subject. They revealed that since the school started they had not been taught Life skills even

though the books on the subject were given to them. The participants were aware of the subject's inclusion in the schools' time table but they did not remember being taught any of the life skills.

The teaching of life skills appear in a wide variety of educational programs for example WHO/GPA noted that teaching life skills have been developed for the prevention of HIV and AIDS infection. Olweus cited in WHO (1997) said teaching life skills help in the prevention of bullying. Teaching life skills as generic skills in relation to everyday life could form the foundation of life skills education for the promotion of mental well-being and healthy interaction and behavior. More problem specific skills, such as assertively dealing with peer pressures to use alcohol and drugs, to have unprotected sex or to become involved in vandalism, could be built on this foundation (WHO, 1997).

Few of the participants related that they had been taught the Life skills subjects at the school. They learned how their future lives would be and what they could become in life. Scottish Homes (2001) concurred that research suggests Life skills can cover a range of skills necessary for independent living, for example: managing a home, dealing with bills and correspondence, developing self-confidence and social skills. Life skills enable individuals to translate knowledge, attitudes and values into actual abilities so that they can behave in healthy ways and enjoy quality of life. This seemed to imply that the Life skills subject could play a great role in shaping and directing orphaned learners' lives and potentials so that they could learn some useful life skills. It has the potential to fill the gap left by the parents because most orphaned learners are at high risk of losing out on important life skills.

5.3.5 Support with school work at home

The support with school work at home provided by people like family members and friends was seen to be another helpful factor in becoming successful at school work. School work at home is seen as any assignment or task from the regular classroom teacher that is intended to occur outside of regular school hours, regardless of where the assignment or task is completed (Cosden, Morrison, Albanese & Macias, 2001).

Participants shared the view that they got assistance from their sisters to help them do well in school. UNICEF (2000a) agrees that children with positive learning experiences and supportive involved parents are most likely to succeed in school. Parents with little formal education may be less familiar with the language used in the school, limiting their ability to support learning and participate in school-related activities (UNICEF, 2000a).

It was not clear whether the participant who failed at the end of the year examination did so because of the level of her parents' education and the support given her at home. It was evident that some caregivers did the work on behalf of the participants without involving the participants themselves in their school work. Some of the participant said that they told their aunts to do the work for them and check if they were correct or wrong. Doing the school work for the participants could be a problem if the caregiver or the helper does not have the background in the subject. UNICEF (2000a) finds that it could be true that some parents may not always have the tools and background to support their children's school work. Parents' level of education, for example, has a multifaceted impact on children's ability to learn in school. In one study, children whose parents had primary school education or less were more than

three times as likely to have low test scores or grade repetition than children whose parents had at least some secondary schooling (Willms, 2000).

A few of the participants had no one to help them with school work at home. They expressed the need to have someone to help them with the most challenging and difficult tasks and assignments. This finding seems to imply that either the participant did not know how to seek advice and support from the family members or they were not able to provide the necessary support. However, this kind of support is necessary to help learners in making sure that their work is completed at home and they are not left behind. Support with school work at home would also give the caregivers an opportunity for parental involvement in the education of their children and thus follow up on their academically progress.

5.4 Physical support

Physical support incorporates basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing and basic health care (Li et al., 2008). Child development theorists argue that failure to meet the physical needs of children can have a detrimental impact on long-term developmental outcomes (Hormath, 2001; Li et al, 2008; Richter, Manegold & Pather, 2004; Tsheko, 2007). After losing their parents many orphaned learners experience poverty in terms of food shortage, shortage of clothing and the inability to pay for health care and school fees (Tsheko, 2007; United Nations, 2002). The physical support that emerged from the experiences of the participants were: the school feeding program, provision of textbooks and stationery, provision of school uniforms, provision of school fees, provision of grants and provision of pocket money. These subthemes are discussed below.

5.4.1 School feeding program

Orphaned learners are generally associated with poverty and therefore with lack of means for meeting basic needs such as food. School feeding programs have been introduced in many schools in Namibia targeting OVC to fight poverty, malnutrition and keep them in schools. As of March 31, 2009, more than 1000,000 orphans and other vulnerable children received support through the Ministry of Education's school feeding program (Biemba et al, 2010). Nearly all of the participants were provided with soft porridge by their schools from Mondays to Thursdays. It was not served on Friday because the schools closed earlier. This finding is in line with the Namibian government's National Plan of Action (NPA) to run feeding programs in schools.

The government of Namibia's effort to run school feeding programs in primary schools is in line with Millennium Development Goals 1 and 2: To halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger around the world and to ensure that all children are able to complete a full course of primary school (UN, 2008). It was evident that all of the participants in the study were willing to attend school every day and wished to complete their study to be successful in life. Allen and Gillespie (2001) agreed that in developing countries, school feeding programs aim to increase school attendance and enrolment and encourage learners to stay in school longer.

School feeding in Kenya has traditionally been targeted at districts in the country with the lowest enrollment and attendance rates (Bundy, Burbano, Grosh, Gelli, Jukes & Drake, 2009). The Ghana School Feeding Program (GSFP) is focused on providing children in public preschools and primary schools in the poorest Ghanaian communities with one hot, nutritious meal per day (UN, 2010). Meanwhile, other

studies in some developing countries such Malawi, for instance Mhlanga (2008) found that while the school feeding scheme has reportedly increased access at primary school level, it was noted that learners place priority on food rather than on learning, to the extent where they choose to go back home whenever they are told such food is not available.

Drawing from studies conducted in several schools throughout South Africa, one of the key informants used in the study expressed concern about the primary schools nutrition program which provides food for some children in most schools. This is inadequate both in terms of the numbers of children who are provided with food and the quality of food that these children receive (Janke cited in World Bank & UNICEF, 2002). A study by Brown, Beardslee and Prothrow-Stith (2008) found that youngsters who do not get enough to eat have poorer mental health; they are more likely to be withdrawn and inattentive. They also exhibit more disruptive behaviors and disciplinary disorders, require more counseling and other mental health services, and are more likely to need special educational services.

In this study it was evident that the school feeding program was conducted fairly and in a non-discriminatory manner. The majority of the participants in the five participating schools revealed that they received equal portions of soft porridge. Only one primary school in the study had stopped providing snacks to its learners. Participants did not know the reason why the school stopped giving them snacks which really helped them to listen and concentrate better in class. According to Brown, Beardslee and Prothrow-Stith (2008) when children fail to get sufficient dietary energy, particularly in the mornings, their cognitive capacity is impaired; their

brain do not have sufficient energy for attention, concentration, concentration and learning. UNICEF (2000a) asserts that the provision of school snacks is another example of psychosocial support that contributes to the quality of the school environment. It is a known fact that in an environment where learners are starved of food, the effect on cognition, short term memory, verbal fluency and ability to concentrate is negative Janke cited in World Bank & UNICEF, 2002). Some studies elsewhere, for example a study conducted by the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) in schools in Mpumalanga (South Africa) found that school feeding programs were noted to be associated with a lot of stigma by learners. This constrained the effective running of the program (Mhlanga, 2008).

In a similar study in other provinces in the country, it was also found that most schools lack the capacity to manage the program effectively, resulting in some deserving children failing to get food on some days of the week (Mhlanga, 2008). Generally, school children from homes without sufficient food have a poorer overall health status than do children from similar backgrounds who have enough to eat. Children who experience hunger get sick more often, are more likely to have infections, experience iron deficiency anemia and get hospitalized more frequently (Brown, Beardslee & Prothrow-Stith, 2008). The researcher's own observation, the school feeding program was run satisfactory in the five participating schools. Many community members volunteered to cook soft porridge for children. Thus, schools ensured that they children did not go hungry because hungry children miss more days of school and are far less likely to be able to learn when they do attend classes (Brown, Beardslee & Prothrow-Stith, 2008).

5.4.2 Provision of textbooks and stationery

All of the participants were provided with textbooks by their schools. Occasionally, schools provided stationery such as pens, files and writing pads when learners passed very well. Participants were given stationery by their families and caregivers from home. Some of the participants shared *Oshikwanyama* textbook in groups of four learners. They never took it home. Ngwenya, Baird, Boonstopel and Padera (2008) in Zimbabwe, Zaka District assert that the schools have no money to buy textbooks, stationery and furniture for both pupils and teachers. Eight or more children share a single book instead of one child per textbook.

In some other African countries, it was reported that learners did not have adequate textbooks and other materials. For instance, a study done by UNICEF (2009) in Nairobi schools in Kenya found many schools suffered from lack of books and other materials for pupils to use. Also, even though education is compulsory and free for 8 years according to Angolan law; many school-age children do not attend school because their families cannot afford school-related expenses, including fees for books and supplies (Lambers, 2009).

It was clear that the participants did not experience major challenges as far as textbooks and stationery were concerned except for the sharing of *Oshikwanyama* books in one of the six participating schools. The current knowledge suggests that when parents die, the amount of resources available for educational decreases. As a result, orphaned learners are more likely to drop-out of school than non-orphans as textbooks and other costs become unaffordable (Boler & Carroll, 2003).

5.4.3 Provision of school uniforms

Nearly every participant in the study was provided with the school uniform by their caregivers and families. There were also a few of the participants who were given school uniforms by their schools. Some of them were given school bags by their school principals after the bereavement. The schools provided school uniforms to those learners that could not afford to buy them. Only one of the six participants did not have a full school uniform. Instead, she wore flip-flops, an old shirt and skirt.

The danger of not having the complete uniform is that children are likely not to participate fully in school activities, or they drop out of school as they have feelings of inferiority and other learners tease them as well. The lack of a complete school uniform can also increase the dropout rate among school-going children. Research studies on school uniforms provided evidence on the benefits to have complete school uniforms (Brown cited in Kraft, 2003; Daugherty, 2002; Duflo, Dupas, Kremer and Sinei, 2006; King, Walker & Minor, 2002; Kraft, 2003; Lumsden & Miller, 2002; Stockton, Gullatt & Parke, 2002).

Brown cited in Kraft (2003) found potential benefits attributed to school uniforms, namely: improved discipline, increased respect for teachers, increased attendance at school, a decrease in distractions that keep learners from concentrating on lessons, improved academic performance, an increase in learner self-esteem and confidence, decrease overall clothing costs, promotion of group spirit and improved classroom behavior. Lumsden and Miller (2002) found that school uniforms lessen emphasis on fashion, reduce the financial burden of low-income families and promote peer acceptance, school pride and learning.

A study in some American schools reported that “students base the worth of peers on the kinds of clothes that are worn but distinctions in worth were not noted when the entire school population was dressed in uniforms (King, Walker & Minor, 2002). Some researchers found that school children in elementary and middle schools, have a need to belong and look like their peers; consequently, school hours become the time for group bonding and identity formation (Pate cited in Kart, 2003). Duflo, Dupas, Kremer and Sinei (2006) in Kenya found that an intervention wherein school uniforms were provided to the learners decreased school dropout. Since the majority of the participants in this study were provided with school uniforms by their caregivers and schools, they were more likely to behave well at school, bonded well with the peers, attended school very well and other benefits.

5.4.4 Provision of school fees

The findings show that the majority of the participants did not to pay their school fees. Some of their reasons were that their fathers would send some money when they got paid. Some said that they experienced problems in paying the fees; they could stay even the whole year whole year without paying the fees. Another participant complained that she was the only one who received a grant in her home, so she had to share it with her brother and there was no money left to pay school fees. There was also another participant who said that it was still early for paying the fees. There were some that had paid already but many of them had not yet paid it. The study confirmed that caregivers in Namibia were not able to pay school fees (Mnubi-Mchombu & Ocholla, 2011. In their study Evans and Miguel (2007) found that few primary schools in Western Kenya made special allowance for orphans in terms of school fee reductions. Forty-two of the 48 (88%) headmasters stated that orphans

were subject to exactly the same fees as other children. Of the 38 headmasters admitting they had sent students away temporarily for non-payment of school fees in the previous year, 32 (84%) claimed that orphans had been sent away just as often as non-orphans.

In the Namibian context, orphaned and other vulnerable children could apply for school fee exemptions. However, in their study Mnubi-Mchombu and Ocholla (2011) found that most OVC in rural areas were faced with poverty and could not afford to pay school fees. Unfortunately they were not aware that they could apply for an exemption. A few who knew the procedures for applying for exemptions were refused permission by the head teachers or principals. Of note, a few participants shared the view that they were paying the same amount as non-orphaned learners. This finding seems to suggest that the participants were not aware of the procedure for applying for exemptions. Some of the participants did not have anyone with formal employment to support them at home. Yet, schools seemed to be silent on the exemptions for orphans and other vulnerable children.

They really needed some sort of support to make sure their fees were settled before some got discouraged and dropped out of school. Some of the participants felt bad because their names were called in class to remind them to pay. Mnubi-Mchombu and Ocholla (2011) found learners are often barred from attending school because they cannot afford the school fees. Even though none of the participants had paid their fees none of them reported being barred from attending school. Thus, the inability to pay school fees is a plausible cause for at least part of the drop in school participation after a parent's death, to the extent that the death reduces household

income (Yamano & Jayne, 2004). Equally, this study proposes a special allowance for orphaned learners in terms of school fees reduction in order to avoid sending the children home for non-payment. Education is a fundamental right of the child and losing a parent who was regarded as a breadwinner leaves many orphaned learners vulnerable. Education is vital for children's physical, intellectual, emotional and social development (International HIV/AIDS Alliance, 2010) thus, providing them with education will take them out of poverty.

5.4.5 Provision of grants

More than half of participants in the study received grants from the government of Namibia. They caregivers received their grants on a monthly basis to buy shoes, school uniforms and pay school fees. However, one of the participants shared her grants with her maternal brother and she could not fulfill the school requirements such as to pay school fees and buy a school uniform. The other half of the participants in the study could not receive the grant because of incomplete documentation, incorrect personal details and some whose applications were still to be processed. One of the participants lost his father in 2010 his application was still in the process. He was, however, optimistic about the outcome.

The government appears to be committed to addressing the plight of orphans and vulnerable children in Namibia. However some family members were not willing to provide the necessary documents or give correct details so that the children would get the grant. Biemba et, al (2010) and Yates (2007) confirm that the government of Namibia through its implementation of a Plan of Action for orphans and other

vulnerable children (NPA 2006-2010) in the 2009 financial year, provided more than 50,000 children with social grants to alleviate their plight whilst attending schools.

Guilherme et al cited in Mhlanga (2008) reported that the Ministry of Education in Zimbabwe introduced a need-based financial intervention, the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) to increase access to education by vulnerable children. According to the World Bank and UNICEF (2002) found that this intervention which was initially meant to benefit orphans only, has of late been extended to all vulnerable children aged between 6 to 19 years. The BEAM program which ran alongside policy that prohibited schools from denying any child access to education as a result of failure to buy school uniform and pay school fees. This program has been yielding positive results in terms of enhancing access to education and increased the enrollment in schools (World Bank & UNICEF, 2002).

A similar incentive was implemented in Mexico through the Progresa program. The Progresa program reduced the cost of education by providing needy learners with grant and monetary support for the acquisition of school materials. There was positive discrimination of girl learners in awarding grants as girls were considered more vulnerable than boys. Grants were awarded to mothers every two months during the school year and children between the ages of 7 and 18 were eligible. To receive the grant, parents must have enrolled their children and ensured that they achieved a minimum attendance rate of at least 85%, both monthly and annually. The Progresa program had a positive impact on enrollment and school attendance (World Bank and UNICEF, 2002).

5.4.6 Provision of pocket money

The study showed that the majority of the participants were given pocket money by their families to buy sweets and fat cakes at school. Some of them were given money by their aunts to buy cakes and some money for transport to and from the hospital. Others were given pocket money by their brothers whenever they happened to meet but they could go for a whole year without getting pocket money from their brothers. However, a few of the participants were concerned about the provision of pocket money to buy pens and other stationery at school.

Another participant was worried about the amount her sister used to give her to buy sweets or bread at school. She only got roughly N\$ 1.00 a month. Sometimes her sister would ask her to work in the field and gave her N\$ 2.00. The United Nations (2002) concurs that although keeping a record of poverty is extremely difficult, it is estimated that of 1.06 billion 15-24-year olds globally, between 38 and 110 million live in extreme poverty, 238 million live on less than \$1 a day and 462 million on less than \$2 a day.

It is critical that local stakeholders be involved in this process of deciding on the types of support that would be most appropriate to assist orphaned learners. Research demonstrates that in an area with limited resources and a large number of orphaned children, targeting all of them may not be feasible and services may instead need to focus on the ultra-vulnerable ones (Williamson, 2000). Thus, this study concurs that the most needy children should be given the first priority, especially since the above stated scenario needs urgent attention.

5.5 Spiritual support

The spiritual support experienced by the participants was the opportunity to pray and attend Sunday church service. Spiritual support involves the degree to which a person experiences a connection to a higher power like God or other transcendent forces (Lukoff, 2005). Spirituality is generally defined as a connectedness to others and the universe (Jacobs, 2004), providing meaning, purpose and power (Aldridge, 2000). In terms of spiritual well-being, people who have religious faith appear to handle crisis better (Myers, 2000).

5.5.1 Prayers and attending Sunday church service

Some researchers suggest that spiritual support reduces isolation and facilitates healing. For example, religious practices (such as worship and prayer) appear to protect against severity of psychiatric symptoms, enhance life satisfaction and speed up recovery from a loss (Randal, Simpson & Laidlaw, 2003). All the participants of the study believed in going to church on Sundays. They were all Christians, baptized and some were about to start confirmation classes. Miller (2003) asserts that groups of individuals dedicate their counseling to Christ, follow Biblical principles, and use of the Holy Spirit to determine the best procedures to honor God.

Some participants shared the view that they went to church because they believed that God was keeping them safe. A few of them said they liked going to church to listen and get inspired by God's words. Miller (2003) adds that having a supportive spiritual community can provide children with an oasis that reminds them of their values and encourages them to continue with their lives. It was evident that participants conducted play at their schools after the lessons. Some participants

revealed that their grandmothers taught them some indispensable life skills including how to pray. They were taught how to pray when they went to bed, before and after every meal.

Spidell (2005) asserts that prayer is a very common intervention, whereas performing rituals and providing religious items or reading materials are much less common. One approach to avoiding the imposition of values in the process of counseling is for the counselor to examine how he or she looks at the client's religions or spiritual beliefs (Miller, 2003). A good example was when the researcher asked one of the participants who was a born again Christian when she would start her confirmation classes. It was surprising because the researcher attended confirmation classes in their church and not to be born again as in the case of the participant's religious beliefs.

What emerged as spiritual support and how participants experienced it was that they believed that God's words inspired them and that God was keeping them safe. The study showed that participants had a relationship with a higher power which was the foundation of their psychological well-being (Lukoff, 2005). The whole personal spiritual experience of a relationship with God is helpful in building identity, self-responsibility, hope, a sense of divine support and love, the courage to change and an acceptance of what cannot be changed and connection with faith communities (Lukoff, 2005). Also, Barnett and Fiorentino (2000) note that schools and counselors who have relationships with spiritual leaders may be able to enhance the welfare of their learners by turning to these leaders for support, consultation and referral purposes. Spiritual leaders can play a vital role in these aspects of support.

5.6 Living conditions of orphaned learners

Living conditions are the everyday environment of people, where they live, play and grow. They are products of socio-economic circumstances and the physical environment. Coleman cited in van Wyk and Lemmer (2007) assert that a child who is orphaned falls into the safety net of the extended family or the wider community and its institutions when the extended family does not exist or cannot cope.

These community structures ensure that the orphaned child eats, has shelter and continues to participate in education (Coleman cited in van Wyk and Lemmer, 2007). Failure to meet the basic needs of children can have a detrimental impact on long-term developmental outcomes (Hormath, 2001). The sub-themes discussed below include caring for orphaned learners, provision of food at home, their sleeping conditions and bedding and domestic chores.

5.6.1 Caring for orphaned learners

It was evident that the majority of the participants in the study were cared for by their maternal grandmothers who might not have adequate resources to do the job effectively. Levine (2001) concurred that most orphaned learners were commonly cared for by extended family members. However, Freeman and Nkomo (2006) and Safman (2004) found that there has been a growing concern that the extended family system is no longer capable of providing adequate care for orphans in Africa. Elderly people face multiple challenges that include severe economic constraints, poverty and the impact of HIV and AIDS (Nyambedha, Wabdibba & Aagaard-Hansen, 2003; UNICEF, 2001).

Many foster families are poor and have to stretch already inadequate resources to provide for both the orphans and their own children. The elderly, in particular, are impoverished, ill, tired and emotionally drained from having taken in the orphans (WHO, 2002). Elderly people face multiple challenges that include limited income, poverty and economic devastation that could strain the resources of the extended family system, thus leaving orphaned learners vulnerable (Nyambedha, Wabdibba & Aagaard-Hansen, 2003; UNICEF, 2001).

Only one of the six participants has lived with her oldest sister since 2005. She became the head of household after their mother died. None of her older sisters was formally employed and there was no one in the home with formal employment. Li, Naar-King, Barnett, Stanton, Fang and Thurston (2008) confirmed that some children remain in child-headed households after their parents die. Makame, Ani and Grantham-McGregor (2002) point out that orphaned learners living in child-headed households or with grandparents have the most serious psychological problems because of the lack of necessary and adequate social and emotional support in these households.

Orphaned learners who do not have the secure base of having their parents to guide and support them may need the alternate caregivers to provide the roles which are missing (Pillay, 2009). The majority of the participants stayed with the same caregivers, hence the secure attachment. One of the participants expressed concern about her grandmother dying, a sign of separation anxiety according to the attachment theory. It seems, therefore that the loss of an attachment figure impacts greatly on the sense of security and safety of the orphaned child.

5.6.2 Provision of food at home

Regarding the provision of food at home the majority of the participants ate three meals daily include food items like porridge, rice, soups and sometimes meat. Their breakfast included food such as soft porridge or rice or bread and tea. It was evident that the food eaten for lunch and dinner was often the same which included food like millet (locally known as '*omahangu*') porridge or rice and soup. '*Omahangu*' porridge is the staple food of the participants. Some of the participants ate beans, spinach and brew '*oshikundu*' (a homemade drink) using sorghum.

A few of the participants reported having eaten only sometimes after school. Sometimes they did not find any food left for them to eat. The only good news was they never went to bed on empty stomach. Nyambedha, Wandibba, and Aagaard-Hansen (2003) concur that households containing orphaned learners may lack the resources to provide adequate nutrition to all members. This could be because the head of household is incapable of performing work or because he does not have the income to feed additional mouths.

Others found that possible solutions to inadequate household food include household members either eating less or going without food (Zidron, 2008; The World Bank, 1999). However, Brown, Beards and Prothrow-Stith (2008) warn that letting school children go hungry means that the nation's investments in public education are jeopardized by childhood under-nutrition. Not only hungry children robbed of their natural potential, but their condition leads to lost knowledge, brainpower and overall productivity for the nation.

5.6.3 *Sleeping conditions and bedding*

Some of the participants were satisfied with their sleeping conditions and bedding at home. They had their own bedrooms, beds and mattresses. One of the boys boasted about having his hut all to himself. He had the necessary bedding. The majority of the participants had enough blankets and bed sheets. A few others said that they did not have adequate bedding in their huts. Three of them slept on the floor in one hut. They used an old mattress and few blankets and one bed sheet.

Williams cited in Barnett and Whiteside (2002) confirm that orphaned children from poor family in Buganda, Uganda did not have sufficient bedding to stay warm at night. One of his respondents said: "I sleep on a bark cloth on the ground and I cover myself with my dress. I'd sleep better if I had a blanket" (Williams, 1998:140 cited in Barnett & Whiteside, 2002). It is therefore necessary to find ways to care for orphaned learners within family and households systems that have been increasingly affected by poverty. This has long-term effects on the children's development and healthy situation by growing up with inadequate care and support.

5.6.4 *Domestic chores*

The study showed that the domestic chores done by the majority of the girls included: pounding millet, cooking, cleaning the house, collecting firewood and ploughing millet fields while the boys mainly herded the animals. It was also evident that the boys helped their sisters in fetching water, collecting firewood and ploughing. This finding concurs with Felton and Haihambo-Mwetudhana's (2002) study in Namibia where, girls are commonly tasked with: pounding, cooking, fetching water, cleaning in and around the house and working in the fields (ploughing).

None of the participants was absent from school because of domestic chores. In case of the boys there were always other people to herd the animals until they took over from them after school. However, other studies, for example, Kimane and Mturi (2001) found the plight of the boy child in Lesotho and the tendency to keep boys out of school in order to attend to economic activities such as herding has been expressed. This was not the case in this study.

There was also evidence that girls were not overburden with domestic chores since their family members assisted them with cooking and taking millet to the milling machine. Most of the participants fetched water by carrying buckets and containers on their heads. Also, the participants collected firewood which was dry shrubs and palm leaves. They did their homework first, before they fetched water and collected firewood in the evening. Evidence from the study indicated that both boys and girls helped each other with domestic chores regardless of gender. In their study in the Western Kenya Skovdal, Ogutu, Aoro and Campbell (2009) concurred that it was against *Luo* culture for a boy to cook, but today it has changed, they cook and do domestic duties. If the first born is a boy and the parent is sick or died, it will be the boy that cook and not the young girl.

5.7 Summary

This chapter discussed what psychosocial support provided at school and home. The support discussed include: emotional, social, physical and spiritual support. It also looked at what people have written on the different aspects and compared it with what the orphans said they experienced with regard to psychosocial support. The next chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"I've come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It's my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or de-humanized." - Dr. Haim Ginott-

7.1 Introduction

As a researcher, I believe that every beginning has an ending and every ending has a beginning. The beginning of this study started with the introduction and background information in chapter 1 and the ending is right here in this chapter with the summary, conclusions and recommendations. The research question of the study was: What psychosocial support do orphaned learners in Endola Circuit experience at school and home?

A phenomenological design within an interpretive paradigm was used to seek answers on the stated research question. Face-to-face interviews generated rich-experiences of orphaned learners with regard to psychosocial support provisioning. As such, the phenomenological design fulfilled the objective of the study. The relevance of the attachment theory in this study was to provide an understanding of the support given to orphaned learners whose attachment or biological bond is broken when their parents died. The findings of this study confirm the necessity of having someone as a secure attachment base for the child when the need arises. Caregivers provided participants with basic needs and enabled them to have secure attachment. Psychosocial support was defined in the study as an ongoing process of meeting the emotional, social, physical and spiritual needs of a child, all of which are essential elements for meaningful and positive human development (Philippi Namibia, 2003). The summary of the main findings of the study is presented below.

7.2 Summary of the findings

The main findings of this study can be summarized under the essential elements of psychosocial support, namely: emotional, social, physical and spiritual support. Pringle cited in Loening-Voysey and Wilson (2001) found that all children have emotional, social, physical, intellectual and spiritual needs which must be met if they are to enjoy life, develop their full potential and develop in order to participate and contribute to their community. If any one of these basic needs remains unmet or inadequately met, then development may become stunted or distorted.

7.2.1 Emotional support

The emotional support the participants received at school and at home were as follows: informing learners about the bereavement, consoling orphaned learners, a week off during bereavement and provision of group guidance. With regard to how emotional support was provided, participants related that school principals and class teachers informed learners and the school community about the bereavement at the schools' assembly. It was not clear whether the announcement included information about the availability of mental health and psychosocial support services and how learners may access such support.

It was evident that the participants were consoled by members of their family during bereavement. Some of them were told to take it in good faith and not to be overwhelmed by their parents' departure. After bereavement, when the participants returned to school, some school principals and class teachers encouraged them not to feel sad. Teachers showed their sympathy and sensitivity by shaking the hands of

orphaned learners. It was clearly stated by the majority of the participants in the study that their schools gave them a week off to mourn their parents.

The study showed that group guidance was organized in schools where information about the dangers of HIV and AIDS and hygiene were revealed to the learners. In this study, some of the participating schools gathered the whole school together where teachers presented information about HIV and AIDS. It was evident that group guidance on HIV and AIDS was organized to commemorate the world AIDS day in the schools' calendar. In other schools, group guidance was organized according to gender where boys and girls were taught about the danger of HIV and AIDS and information on the hygiene of always washing their bodies and their clothes. The presentations took place under trees at their schools.

It appeared that the majority of sampled schools provided a safe and secure environment for their orphaned learners. All of the participants revealed that, if they were mistreated they would report the offenders to their class teachers or the school principals. Some of the participants reported that they felt safe and secure at school because of the Learner Representative Councils (LRC). The LRCs checked learners' school uniforms and monitored learners who were bullies and took them to the principal's office.

7.2.2 Social support

The social support that was provided by the schools includes the following: peer support, registration of orphaned learners, provision of educational incentives and provision of life skills. It was evident that the participants relied on the social support

of their friends at school. They related that their friends made them feel good when they returned to school after bereavement by reassuring them that it was alright, which helped them to accept what happened.

The participants enthused that they always played very well with their friends at school to make each other happy and keep each other company. They had a lot of fun together. The majority of the participants actively took part in sport activities. Many participants took part in different Athletics events such as the 100m and the 400m. Some of them played netball to have fun. Participants spoke of the encouragement and reassurance they got from friends by staying together and giving each moral and emotional support.

Most of the participants reported that their class teachers wrote down their names in the register for orphans and other vulnerable children. They said that their class teachers wrote down the names of the participants so that when orphans were given anything, they would all get it. The study also revealed that some of the participants worked hard in school to avoid ending up on the streets doing nothing but stealing other people's things. Others also worked hard to avoid being at sheebens and being laughed at by their former classmates.

It was evident that the majority of participants were motivated to learn in school because of educational incentives such as visiting the Etosha National Park if they happened to pass very well. Others wanted to go to the end of the year school function which was supposed to be attended only by the learners who passed the end of the year examination. Some of the participating schools gave diplomas,

stationery such as files, calculators, pens and rulers to the learners who happened to excel in certain subjects. Even though the Life skills subject covers a range of skills necessary for independent living such as managing a home, developing self-confidence and social skills, the majority of the participants in the six participating school were not taught the Life skills subject but had the books on the subject given to them.

7.2.3 Physical support

The physical support that emerged from the experiences of the participants was: the school feeding program, provision of textbooks and stationery and provision of school uniforms. Nearly all of the participants were provided with soft porridge by their schools from Monday to Thursday. It was not served on Friday because the schools closed earlier. In this study, it was evident that the school feeding program was conducted fairly and in a non-discriminatory manner. Only one primary school in the study had stopped providing snacks to its learners and they experienced difficulty in listening and concentrating better in class without the snacks.

All the participants were provided with textbooks by their schools. Participants were given stationery by their families and caregivers from home. Occasionally, schools provided stationery such as pens, files and writing pads when the learner passed very well. Participants did not experience major challenges as far as textbooks and stationery were concerned except the sharing of *Oshikwanyama* books in one of the six participating schools. Nearly every participant in the study was provided with a school uniform by their caregivers and families. There were also a few of the participants who were given school uniforms by their schools, especially learners

that could not afford to buy them. Only one of the six participants did not have a full school uniform. Instead she wore flip-flops, an old shirt and skirt. She also carried her books in a plastic bag.

7.2.4 Spiritual support

All the participants of the study believed in going to church on Sundays to get spiritual healing and connection through God's word. They were all Christians, baptized and some were about to start confirmation classes. They followed Biblical principles to determine the best procedures to honor God through worshiping and praying. They believed that God kept them safe. Participants were also given opportunity by their teachers to conduct prayers before they went home after lessons.

7.3 Conclusion

The participants experienced the following psychosocial support that was provided by their schools, namely: a week off to mourn their parents, group guidance and peer support. The psychosocial support provided by the caregivers and government was primarily in the form of the provision of school fees, uniforms, grants, the school feeding program and support with school work at home. The lack of all of these types of support has the potential of making orphaned learners vulnerable and affects their progress in their education. The purpose of this area of support is to ensure that orphaned learners remain in school and reap the short term and long term benefits of education. Some of orphaned learners were worried about their names being called out in the class to remind them to pay. They were worried about being stigmatized and bullied by other learners. The study showed that the school feeding

program was provided fairly in the five selected primary schools in the Endola circuit. Some of the learners were given maize meal to cook at home, which was in line with the main purpose of addressing malnutrition and poverty among school going children. The study showed that giving orphaned learners the opportunity to conduct play at school and at home and encouraging them to attend Sunday church services helped them to heal and cope better with grief. Spiritual support helped them to believe that God was taking care of them and keeping them safe.

The study also revealed that some caregivers did not want to provide the necessary documentation so that orphaned learners could be registered to receive grants from the government. They wanted to take advantage by refusing to give the application forms and birth certificates to the people who fostered the children. The grants received by orphaned learners seemed to be the only source of income in some households. Some of them reported sharing their grants with other family members and they were left without sufficient money to pay their school fees. Some, however, were not registered because of missing details on their birth certificates. Despite the efforts that have been made, including the policies and programs on OVC by the government of Namibia to address the specific issues faced by OVC, orphaned learners were still living in difficult conditions.

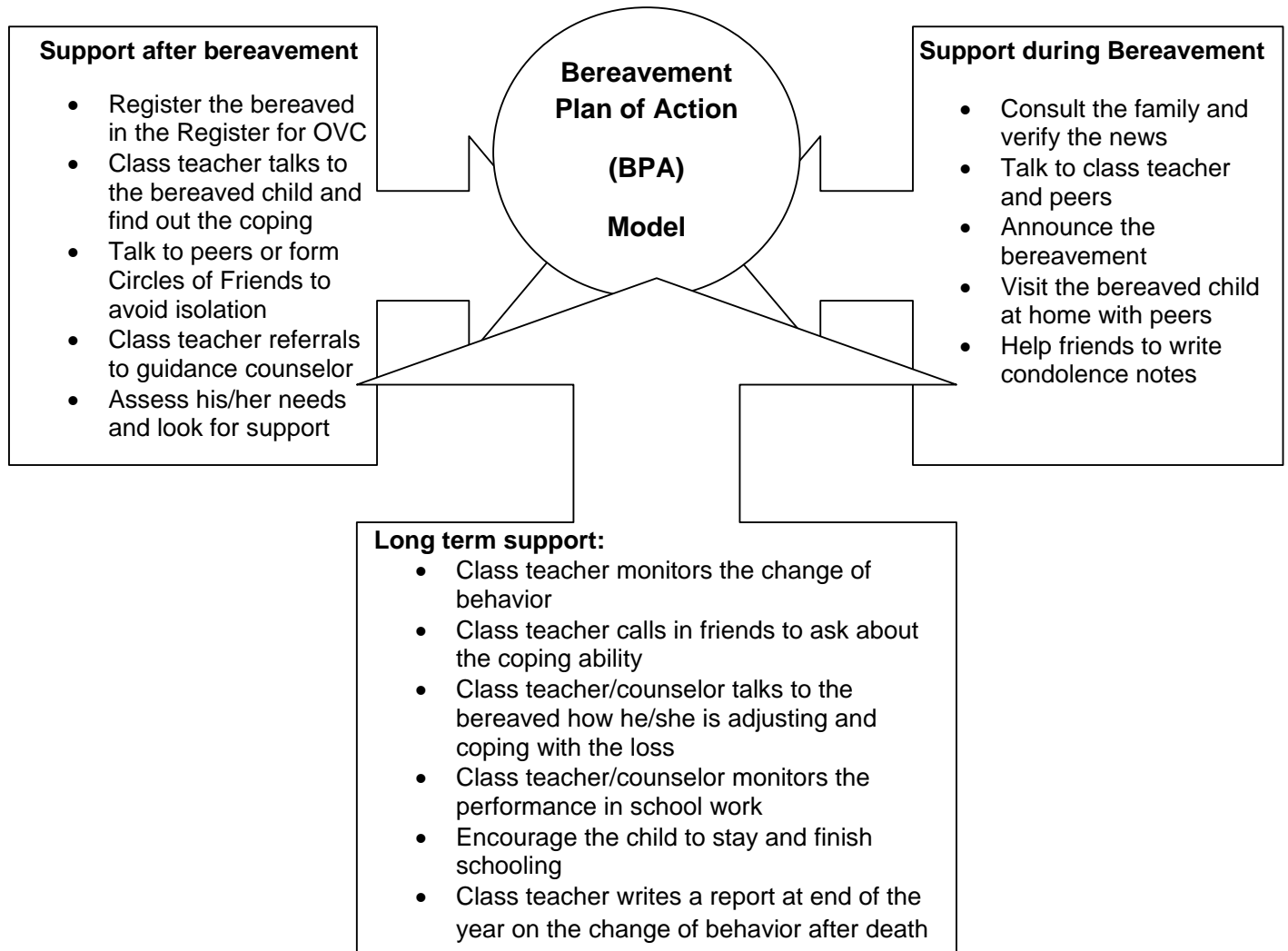
7.4 Recommendations

Despite the many challenges orphanhood poses to the educational system, psychosocial support is a basic need and right of every child, as defined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Thus, this study recommends the following interventions that are based on the conclusions of the study.

7.4.1 Developing a Bereavement plan of action (BPA)

Given the increase in the number of orphaned learners in Namibian schools, each school should have a BPA in place that outlines step by step the types of bereavement support the school should provide to the bereaved learners. The BPA may cover support during bereavement, after bereavement and long-term bereavement support following the death of a parent (s). The class teacher/ school principal can monitor and assess its implementation and progress. BPA should target each child who became orphaned at school. See Fig 7:1

7:1 Bereavement Plan of Action model



Source: Researcher's creativity

7.4.2 Provision of individual counselling after bereavement

All the orphaned learners and young people need access to someone with whom they can discuss issues in private, knowing that the adult they talk to will listen to them and take their situation seriously. School counselors, teaching mentors, class teachers and teaching assistants have a particularly useful role to play in providing this type of one-on-one support. Failing to provide orphaned learners with adequate time and encouragement to share and sort out their feelings through the guidance and counseling process is not in line with what is supposed to be the required psychosocial support provisioning at school and at home. Schools may refer directly or encourage parents to seek referrals to educational psychologists, child and adolescent mental health services and voluntary organizations that provide psychosocial support. The importance of schools and homes as an emotionally safe place for children's psychological and social development is to ensure that children are given the opportunity to express their emotions and be supported to deal with psychosocial problems productively.

7.4.3 Sensitization of teachers to guidance and counseling provisioning

The knowledge and skills needed by primary school teachers to provide psychosocial support to orphaned learners should include pre-service and in-service training to sensitize teachers in considering providing support as part of their educational responsibility. This approach requires qualified professionals to train teachers to be sensitive to the guidance and counseling support for orphans and other vulnerable children. Training can include counseling skills, classroom strategies that minimize stigma, and activities to promote the social integration of grieving, neglected, abused and exploited learners.

7.4.4 Facilitate the Circle of Friends technique to promote acceptance

It appeared that the support given by the peer group to orphaned learners during and after bereavement was very effective. The Circle of Friends technique has the potential to contribute within the psycho-social support framework in terms of creating a friendship group for specific learner as an attempt towards acceptance within the school. The researcher's view is that the class teacher should encourage the bereaved pupil's friends to offer support. A forum such as the 'Circle of Friends' can facilitate the support or refer the pupil to a teaching staff or a member of the support staff who may well have developed a relationship with the child prior to the loss of his or her parent.

7.4.5 The teaching of Life skills in schools

Life skills teachers should lead, guide, enable, unfold and equip the learner towards mature adulthood. School is a place of hope and for helping children to believe in themselves and construct a hopeful representation of their future. It is evident that the majority of learners in this study were not taught Life skills; teachers need to implement the curriculum fully. As a result, orphaned learners were left denied the essential skills to learn, develop life skills, to participate in society and to have faith for their future.

7.4.6 School fees exemptions for orphaned learners

It was evident from the study that none of the orphaned learners paid their school fees, a clear indication that they could not afford to pay them. The inability to pay school fees is a plausible cause for at least part of the drop in school participation after the death of a parent, since the death reduces household income. Equally, this

study proposes that schools should encourage orphaned learners, especially those that cannot afford to pay, to apply for school fees exemptions. The current regulations require that orphaned learners be fully exempted from paying contributions to the school development fund if there is proof that there is no provision for the learner's education (Namibian Government Notice, 2002). Education is a fundamental right of the child and the event of losing a parent who was regarded as a breadwinner leaves many orphaned learners vulnerable. Thus, providing them with education will take them out of poverty.

7.4.7 The use of the monthly grants of orphaned learners

Although some measures have been taken by the Namibian government and some faith organizations to alleviate the plight of orphaned and other vulnerable children in the country through the provision of a monthly grant, it is apparent that the children are still not able to meet their needs. According to the researcher's observation, intervention should include the provision of guidance and counseling activities to caregivers in order to give them skills in making wise choices and informed decisions with regard to the reasonable use of the grant money.

7.4.8 Expansion and consistent running of school feeding program

Potential interventions include the consistent running of the school feeding program, and its expansion to all schools in the Endola circuit. The Endola circuit is located in a strategic position and has the potential to address the plight of OVC living in the rural communities. Interventions should also include general nutritional education about healthy eating with the goal of increasing food security in homes and helping orphans and their families to grow nutritious food.

7.4.9 Implications for school guidance and counseling

Even though the participants were provided with emotional support in the form of a week off for bereavement, talked to not to feel sad, showed sympathy by way of shaking hands, peer support, physical and spiritual support they were still angry and depressed. Guidance and counseling involve giving directions to the lonely, confused, unloved, the suffering, the sick and the lost. Guidance and counseling are supposed to lead the individual psychologically, emotionally, socially and spiritually to newer ways of meaningful living (Shayo, 2011). It appeared the emotional, social, physical and spiritual support provided by the schools and at home did not lead the majority of the participants to the newer ways of meaningful living since they were still angry about why their parents left them without support. Nwoye (2009) notes the need for counseling has become paramount in order to promote the well-being of the child. In most communities, there has been, and there still is, a deeply embedded conviction that, under proper conditions, people can help others with their problems.

What seemed to emerge was that orphaned learners in this study were not given the required support and encouragement to express their emotions and be guided to deal with them. It is, however, necessary to note that death affects children even through adulthood. Therefore, children should be given proper attention and provided with adequate grief support (Thompson, 2002) and an opportunity to express their pain. For this reason, it is recommended that schools have a bereavement plan of action in place that includes support during bereavement, after bereavement and long-term bereavement support following the death of a parent.

7.4.10 Further research

In order to better understand what interventions offer the best results for assisting orphan and other vulnerable learners more data is needed to evaluate the benefits and costs of each intervention. Specifically, more research into costs and benefits of psychosocial training for teachers and school counselors, bereavement support for orphaned learners, peer counseling and school feeding programs is necessary. Without this research, it is difficult to understand whether children's needs are being effectively addressed or if financial resources could be better directed.

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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX: 1

LETTER SEEKING PERMISSION FROM THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The University of Fort Hare

School for Post-Graduate Studies

P.O. Box 1314

Alice, 5700

South Africa

29 November 2010

The Permanent Secretary

Ministry of Education

Private Bag 13186

Windhoek

Namibia

RE: APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE ENDOLA CIRCUIT PRIMARY SCHOOLS FOR THE DOCTORAL STUDIES (EDUCATION).

Dear Sir/Madam

I am Simon Taukeni a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Education student at the University of Fort Hare in Alice, Eastern Cape province-South Africa. I am doing a **phenomenology study of orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support provisioning in selected primary schools in the Endola circuit-Namibia: Implications for school guidance and counselling.**

I write to request your authority and permission to conduct face to face interviews with six (6) orphaned learners in six selected primary schools in the Endola Circuit-Namibia. I wish to inform you in confidence that the results of the study shall be for academic purposes only and all information about the orphaned learners taking part in the interviews will be treated confidentially.

Thank you in anticipation for your assistance

Yours Sincerely

S. Taukeni (Mr)

APPENDIX: 2

LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

FROM: DIRECTORATE - P&A

FAX NO. : 061 2933922

Dec. 13 2010 11:31AM P1



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Tel: 264 61 2933200
Fax: 264 61 2933922
E-mail: mshjnhc@mec.gov.na
Enquiries: MN Shimhopileni

Private Bag 13186
Windhoek
NAMIBIA
3 December 2010

File: 11/5/1

Mr S. Taukeni
University of Fort Hare
P.O. Box 1314
ALICE, 5700
RSA

Dear Mr. S. Taukeni

Re: Request to conduct a Research at six (6) Schools in Ohangwena Region

Your letter on the subject above dated 3 December 2010 has reference.

Kindly be informed that the Ministry does not have any objection to your request to carry out a research project in Ohangwena Education Directorate.

Nevertheless, you are kindly advised to approach the Regional Council Office, Directorate of Education, for permission to go into the schools concerned. It is advisable to have the six schools you intend to visit identified or proposed before you contact the Regional Office. Ensure also that the under-aged participating learners are identified, their consent obtained whether through their guardians, if any, and/or their teachers.

Since the interview is of a sensitive nature, the participating learners should be emotionally and psychologically well prepared before the interview itself.

Kindly take note also that the interview program should not interfere with the normal school programmes.

By copy of this letter the Regional Council Office, Directorate of Education, is made aware of your request.

Yours faithfully

C Kabajani

ACTING PERMANENT SECRETARY

cc: Director: Ohangwena Education Directorate



APPENDIX: 3

LETTER SEEKING PERMISSION FROM THE DIRECTOR

The University of Fort Hare

P.O. Box 1314

South Africa

27 December 2010

The Director of Education

Ohangwena Education Region-Namibia

CC: Special Education Division

RE: APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE ENDOLA CIRCUIT PRIMARY SCHOOLS FOR THE DOCTORAL (EDUCATION) STUDIES.

Dear Sir/Madam

I am Simon Taukeni a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Education student at the University of Fort Hare in Eastern Cape province-South Africa. I am doing a **Phenomenology study of orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support provisioning in selected primary schools in the Endola circuit-Namibia: Implications for school guidance and counselling.**

I write to request your authority and permission to conduct face to face interviews with six (6) orphaned learners aged 6-14 and 15-18 years at the following schools:

Endola primary school; Eudafano primary school, Omungwelume primary school, Ongenga primary school, Oushakeneno primary school, and Pahangwashime primary schools in the Endola Circuit.

I wish to inform you in confidence that the results of the study shall be for academic purposes only and all information about the orphaned learners taking part in the interviews will be treated confidentially. I would also like to inform you that psychological support will be offered by the social worker prior to and after the interviews. Attached are documents such as cover letter of orphaned learner, informed consent letter and interview guide.

Thank you in anticipation for your assistance

Yours Sincerely

S. Taukeni (Mr)

APPENDIX: 4

LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM THE DIRECTOR



OHANGWENA REGIONAL COUNCIL

OHANGWENA EDUCATION DIRECTORATE

Private Bag 2028, Ondangwa, Tel. 264 65 281 900, Fax. 264 65 240190

Enquiries: EN Namundjanga
E-mail: enmbongo@yahoo.com

Ref: 15/2/4

28 December 2010

TO: Mr. S. Taukeni
University of Fort Hare
P.O. Box 1314
ALICE, 5700
RSA

Dear Mr. S. Taukeni

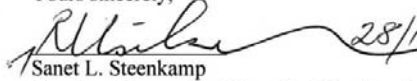
RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SIX SCHOOLS IN OHANGWENA REGION

We refer to your letter dated 3 December 2010 in which you requested for permission to conduct research at six schools in Endola circuit in Ohangwena region. You have indicated in your letter that you plan to conduct interviews with six learners (orphans) from six schools. The schools you selected are as follows: Endola, Eudafano, Omungwelume, Ongenga, Oushakeneno and Pahangwa primary schools.

Our region hereby grants you permission to go to the above mentioned schools and carry out your research. You mentioned that a social worker will be accompanying you to the schools for the interviews, this is a good idea since the interviews are of a sensitive nature, and the participating learners need to be emotionally and psychologically well prepared before the interviews.

We hope your activities will be carried out successfully and please do not hesitate to contact us for any support needed.

Yours sincerely,


Sanet L. Steenkamp
Director: Ohangwena Education Directorate



APPENDIX: 5

COVER LETTER: ORPHANED LEARNER

Dear participant,

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this study.

The purpose of this study is to investigate and understand orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support provisioning in six selected primary schools in the Endola circuit. It further aims to inform and shape implications for school guidance and counselling. You are invited to participate in the face to face interview with the researcher because you are one of the orphaned learners.

The information that you share will be kept in confidentiality, thus, whatever you say will not be used against any persons. Your identity will remain anonymous: there will be no mentioning of your names and you are thus free to select any name other than yours to be used in this study. The draft of the report can be shared with you if so desired. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any time during the interview. As such, you are humbly requested to respond to interview questions as truthfully as you possibly can. The interview will be audio-tapped with your permission and the audio tapes will be securely stored and available upon your request.

My contact details are as follows, if there is need for you to contact me on matters concerning this study: +264 811496473/811496472; 065 232103 (H)/065 230001 (W); e-mail staukeni@gmail.com/sgtaukeni13@yahoo.com.

I attached the **Informed Consent** that your class teacher will sign on your behalf because you are under 18 years of age. I also attached the **Interview Schedule** for your convenience.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,
Simon Taukeni

.....

APPENDIX: 6

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Dear participant,

You are kindly requested to read and sign this letter of consent in the space below if you agree to participate in the research.

I understand that my learner was invited to participate in Mr. Simon Taukeni's PhD research **of the orphaned learners' experiences with regard to psychosocial support provisioning in selected primary schools in the Endola circuit-Namibia: Implications for school guidance and counselling.**

He/she agrees to participate in the research and understands that this will be an individual face to face interview. He/she will be given the opportunity to read the transcript of the interview and be given opportunity to confirm its accuracy and content.

I understand that the confidentiality of the data and the need to anonymous data will be respected during the research itself.

I also understand that his/her participation is completely voluntary and that if he/she or I feel to discontinue with the interview, he/she may do so at any time and the decision will not affect any persons negatively.

Taking into account all that has been said and written above, I give you Mr. Simon Taukeni, permission to interview my learner, trusting that all information shall be kept strictly confidential.

Signature of class teacher.....Date.....

Signature of researcher.....Date.....

#

APPENDIX: 7

INTERVIEW GUIDE/SCHEDULE

English

Oshikwanyama

Section A:

Oshitukulwa A:

Personal information

Ouyelele wopaumwene

1. Grade level at school

1. Ondodo omo uli

2. Gender

2. Oukashikekookanhu

3. Age group: 6-14years or 15-18 years

3. Epupi: 6-14 eedula ile 15-18

4. How many are you in the family?

4. Omu limo vangapi meumbo?

5. Which of your parent has passed away?

5. Omudali woye elipi a mana oweenda waye?

6. When did it happen?

6. Okwa mana oweenda waye naini?

7. How did it happen?

7. Osha endele naana ngahelipi mbela?

8. Describe your experiences after the death of your mother/father/both (as appropriate)

8. Hokolola onghalamwenyo yoye konima yesho la meme/tate woye ile aveshe

9. With whom are you currently living at home and since when?

9. Paife meumbo omu li mo nalye? Okudja naini?

10. Who is providing for your home and school needs now that your parents are not here (food, clothing, pocket money, school fees and stationery)?

10. Olyelye nee he ku file oshisho kombinga yeemhumbwe doye dofikola nodomeumbo (oikulya, oidjalomwa, okamaliwa komondjato, ofuto yofikola noishangifomwa).

11. How are you managing in life issues at home?

11. Oho shi endifa ngahelipi moinima yopanghamwenyo keumbo?

12. How are you managing in life issues at school?

12. Oho shi endifa ngahelipi moinima yopanghalamwenyo kofikola

13. Any other issues you would like to talk about?

13. Oinima vali ilipipo wa hala u tye sha kuyo?

Section B:

Oshitukulwa B:

Describing your experiences with regard to psychosocial support provided by your school according to your gender.

Hokolola onghalamwenyo yoye mekwatafano nomayambidido opanghalafano haa yandjwa kofikola

14. How does the school provide support to orphaned learners with regard to the following?

14. Ofikola ohai yambidida ovanafikola veefiye ngahelipi moinima ei?

Physical support

(clothing, food, shelter, basic health care)

Palutu

(Omudjalo wofikola, oikulya, omambo, ofuto yosikola noyosipangelo, onhele yokukala, ousumaliwa vokulikwafa)

Spiritual support

(Faith and religious beliefs)

Pamhepo

(Eitavelopamepo)

Mental support

(Life skills, motivation, guidance, safety and security)

Pamadiladilo

(Owino wopanghahamwenyo, etomukumo, eputudo, eameno)

Emotional support

(Support during and after bereavement, anxiety, stress, depression, grief, trauma, withdrawal, isolation, guilt, anger)

Pamaliudo

(Ekwafo pefimbo nokomima yoluhondi, ousumbada, okululilwa, oshidimbi, oluhodi, eudonai lapitilila, eliekelelo ile elikufemo, okwiikalela, eudo ngunga, ehandu, okupewa efano lodino, okulya oshipungo, elongifonai loingangamifi nomalondulu)

Social support

(School opportunities, friendship, family ties, values, culture, participation and leadership, exploitation, abuse, violence, deprivation or neglect stigmatization, discrimination, drug and alcohol abuse)

Panghalafano

(Eemito dehongo, oukaume, ekwatafano novakwanedimo, omaliumbato ayuka, omufuululwakalo, ekufo mbinga moinima, ouleli Enyokomo, okuhepekwa ile ehepeko, oukolokoshi, okukelela ile okuekela shi)

15. How do you describe your attendance at school?

15. Oto hokolola ngahelipi ehologo loye kofikola?

Weekly

Koshivike

Term

Koshikako

16. How is your academic performance at school in terms of?

Doing your home work/assignments

Class tests

End of the term examination and

End of the year examination

17. Who helps you with your school work at home?

18. Generally, how do you feel about psycho-social support provided by your school?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

16. Oho shi endifa ngahelipi kofikola moinima ei:

Okulonga oipewalonga yokeumbo

Oukonakono

Ekonakono lopexulilo loshikako

Ekonakono lokexulilo lomudo

17. Olyelye he ku kwafele moilonga yofikola keumbo

18. Ou udite ngahelipi kombinga yomayambidido akwalukeshe oo haa yandwa kofikola?

TANGI UNENE KWAAISHE

APPENDIX: 8

NATURAL MEANING UNITS (NMU)

P1's NMUs

1. I am in Grade 7.
2. I am a male.
3. My age group is 6-14 years.
4. I am 14 years old.
5. We are a family of four.
6. I have three brothers and one sister.
7. We are currently seven at home.
8. I lost both parents.
9. I just heard that my father passed away I didn't know him.
10. He died in my early childhood.
11. My father died while I was crawling.
12. I am the only my father's child.
13. My mother was the last to die.
14. I don't know the year she died.
15. I heard she was witched.
16. Apparently she was found dead in her room during the day.
17. I was walking but still a small boy.
18. After my mother died, I went to live with my paternal great grandfather.
19. My siblings lived with my maternal grandmother.
20. My great grandfather was an old man and we were only two at home.
21. He died in 2009.
22. I live with my paternal aunt since 2010.
23. My aunt is self-employed.
24. My aunt only sells sweets.
25. Only sweets except in the beginning when she sells book covers.
26. My best childhood experience was when I went for school holiday.
27. It was at my grandmother's house.
28. It was good to be with my siblings we were playing soccer.
29. My worst childhood experience was when I was told that my parents were dead.
30. It was a devastating moment of my life.
31. The school used to provide snacks to the learners in the past.
32. It does not provide anything in terms of food anymore.
33. It was really helpful to us after we eat biscuits and cookies.
34. We could listen better in the class.
35. I do not know why the school stopped giving us snacks.
36. I am even learning very well because I eat before I go to school.
37. Not like before when I used to go to school in empty stomach.
38. We can wake up to cook some rice or we eat bread.
39. Sometimes we find porridge or rice.
40. I will have lunch after school.
41. It is the porridge and soup.
42. I eat three meals a day.
43. We have a tap here.
44. The school does not provide shelter to orphaned learners.
45. Yes the school principal advised me to be with my aunt.
46. He said that I should just be here unless it is the school holiday.
47. I can go and come back home.
48. The school can try to look for the place to stay.
49. I do not know about any support of basic health care at our school.
50. We only receive mosquito nets at homes.
51. The whole school gathers and teachers give information about HIV/AIDS.
52. It is usually done in AIDS day.
53. My aunt gives me the money for the transport to and from the hospital.
54. My health is somehow better, I get headaches sometimes.
55. No the school only says that the parent should buy the school uniform.
56. The school does not send learners home.
57. When they don't have school uniforms.
58. I have my school uniform, my aunt bought me one.
59. I have books, pens and book covers.
60. No the school gives us the textbooks.
61. My aunt gives me book covers.
62. And buys some pens for me as well.
63. No, I was not registered my birth certificate could not be found.
64. It was with my grandmother.
65. I don't know why I am not registered.
66. My aunt said she could help me but my grandmother promised to do it.
67. She didn't want to give papers to let me be registered here.
68. My aunt gives me money to buy cakes at school.
69. My aunt pays school fees for me.

70. We have Life skills as a subject at the school.
71. We are taught how our future lives would be.
72. We talk about what we want to become in life.
73. I want to become a policeman when I grow up.
74. In our country there are many criminals.
75. Policemen are very far to arrest the criminals.
76. I want to become a policeman to arrest the criminals.
77. Teachers at our school motivate us to study hard to have good future.
78. We need to study hard so that we will be able to help our parents.
79. I get motivation from my teachers they are my role models.
80. I get motivation that if I don't learn enough I will end up in the air.
81. Walking around and stealing people's things.
82. I don't want that life I want to work very hard.
83. The school also motivates us to learn so that we will go to the tour.
84. Like our last year's Grade 7 went to Ruacana waterfall.
85. Our grade 7 will go to Etosha National park if we pass very well.
86. The whole class will go provided that most of us pass very well.
87. I feel happy for that because I want to see Etosha.
88. I sometimes the class teacher tell us that there is one who lost his or her parents even the principal say it
89. I don't know how the school support orphaned learners during mourning.
90. When the orphan child returns to school he or she is consoled.
91. Not to feel sad.
92. It is done by either the class teacher or the school principal.
93. Apparently I was crying when my father passed away.
94. And I went to be with my mother.
95. I am safe at school.
96. If I am mistreated I go to the teachers.
97. I tell them that there is one who is mistreating me.
98. Even at home I am safe, there is no problem.
99. I only feel worried at the moment I am beaten or disappointed.
100. But not for too long.
101. I get depressed when I am provoked.
102. I get depressed when I think about my parents.
103. Like when I was told that my father was a seaman.
104. I felt very bad at heart because I did not see him.
105. He could have been the one supporting me.
106. I think about my father but not many times.
107. I did not hear of the school supporting grieving orphaned learners.
108. My feelings of trauma were handled when my grandmother consoled me.
109. She was telling me things but that time I could not speak yet.
110. I saw some learners on their own and lonely.
111. But the school did not do anything.
112. It makes me feel sad when I remember my parents.
113. Especially when I want something but there is no one to help me.
114. I am angry when I see others with their mothers.
115. I don't have one so I feel like crying.
116. If I think of it I don't even like being touched by anybody.
117. I cannot forgive people who are responsible for the death of my mother.
118. I am angry because I did not see my father.
119. The school does not do anything about my anger.
120. I am happy to live with my aunt.
121. My life changed for the better since I moved to live with her.
122. I don't stay alone at school.
123. I have friends that I play with.
124. When you learn hard the school will not let you go to another school.
125. We go to the swings.
126. When one of us has n\$ 1:00 we go to buy cakes and eat together.
127. Since we are just two friends at school.
128. I don't take part in dramas, drawing and sport at school.
129. Only during the lessons, I play sport in PE.
130. It is good.
131. I come to school every week unless I am sick
132. Or when something bad happened.
133. I am doing very well in my homework.
134. My teachers are happy for me.
135. When I am given homework I always find time to do it at home.
136. I did very well in my class tests last year.
137. I passed all terms very well.
138. I passed the first term and the second one.
139. Yes, I also passed the end of the year examination
140. There is nobody helping me doing my school work at home.
141. I do my work all by myself.
142. I mostly need help to complete the difficult tasks.
143. Taking the cattle and goats back in the kraal.
144. Home this season for herding the animals we don't play soccer anymore.

145. The only problem to do well in school is to herd animals.
146. Especially term 1 and 2.
147. Last term is much better we don't herd them and there is no field work.
148. I always find somebody herding animals.
149. I take over from him after school.
150. I was baptized and I am waiting to start confirmation school at our church

P2's NMUs

1. I am in Grade 5.
2. I am a female.
3. My age group is 6-14.
4. I am 11 years old.
5. We are five at home.
6. I have one sister and two brothers.
7. I am a last born.
8. My brothers are in Windhoek.
9. My sister is with my maternal aunt.
10. I lost my mother.
11. She was sick for a long time.
12. She died in the hospital.
13. She died in 2006.
14. I have been living with my maternal grandmother.
15. Since my early childhood.
16. I was born in Windhoek.
17. The school cooks thin porridge for the learners.
18. It is served to every child at school.
19. Whoever wants it can get it.
20. We make even tea.
21. We eat thin porridge.
22. We eat after school.
23. Mahangu porridge.
24. Or rice with soup.
25. I drink oshikundu and cool drinks at home.
26. Yes there is a tap at school.
27. We have a tap at home too.
28. No.
29. The school organizes immunization for its learners at the school.
30. The school cooks also thin porridge.
31. My grandmother bought me school uniform.
32. My shirt was bought in 2009 and my skirt was in 2008.
33. My father bought me a school bag but it is old now.
34. I had school shoes but they do not fit anymore.
35. The school can provide poor learners with school uniform.
36. No I did not pay my school fees.
37. It was said that my father will send me money when he gets paid.
38. I did not have a problem to pay on time last year.
39. My grandmother and father provide me with pens.
40. The school provides us textbooks.
41. If you pass very well it gives pens, files and writing pads.
42. I am getting the orphans' financial support with one of my siblings too.
43. My grandmother receives my grant money on my behalf.
44. I am happy because she uses the money to buy my school uniform.
45. pay my school fees.
46. I like my grandmother because she taught me to greet people.
47. She also said we should not insult people.
48. She said when people are sending us we should not decline to go.
49. We are taught how to pray.
50. We pray when we go to bed and before and after we eat.
51. We have a Life skills subject but we don't know the teacher.
52. We are being taught to behave well and take care of ourselves.
53. Our teachers say that during examination we should not play too much.
54. Whoever becomes the 1st or 3rd will get a pen and a file at the assembly.
55. I was also given writing pad when I was the 3rd in grade 3.
56. I feel safe at school.
57. If I am beaten I go to the office and tell the school principal.
58. If there would be a Sunday school here I would like to join.
59. Someday I want to join the drama and cultural groups at school.
60. I am peaceful like my grandmother.
61. You can be given a week not to come to school during mourning.
62. The school says stay two to three days at home with your family.
63. When you return to school other learners are warned at the school assembly.
64. Not to provoke you.

65. My friends made me feel good when I returned to school.
66. I want to become a teacher after school.
67. I was grieving when my mother died.
68. A close relative consoled me.
69. I should not be too overwhelmed by my mother's departure.
70. We don't shout at each other.
71. We never get angry of one another at home.
72. Even my grandmother does not shout at us.
73. Because my grandmother is very peaceful and loving.
74. When a learner feels stressed the school tells you to go home.
75. It will take you to the hospital if you feel depressed.
76. Our social relation is okay, we love each other as a family.
77. We are always playing very well with my friends at school.
78. My friends gave me a summary to copy.
79. When I told my friends what happened they said it is okay.
80. They helped me to accept what happened.
81. I have two close friends at school.
82. I take part in sport, I run 400m.
83. I come at 7:00 Am.
84. I come every week at school.
85. I was absent only one day last year.
86. There is someone helping me at home.
87. It is okay.
88. Yes I am doing very well in my class tests.
89. In a test out of 20 marks I can even get 18.
90. I was the 5th in the end of term 1 examination last year.
91. Term 2 I was the 4th in the class.
92. I was the 4th.
93. My aunt helps me with school work at home.
94. She asks me if I was given homework.
95. We don't plough only the adults plough the field.
96. Yes I pound omahangu.

P3's NMUs

1. I am in Grade 7.
2. I am a male.
3. My age group is 6-14 years.
4. I am 13 years old.
5. We are seven in the family.
6. I have one brother and five sisters.
7. I live only with two of my siblings at home.
8. One of my sisters is doing her teaching practice at Ongandjera.
9. She is studying at the University of Namibia.
10. One is studying at Ongwediva College of Education.
11. Another sister is in Ohangwena with her paternal grandfather.
12. I don't know what she is doing.
13. My brother is working at Elakalapwa.
14. He is a school teacher.
15. One of my sisters just completed her Grade 12.
16. Our last born sister is schooling here with me.
17. I lost my father.
18. It was in June 2010.
19. He was sick for a long time.
20. I live with my maternal grandmother.
21. My mother stays in Oshakati.
22. My best childhood experience is when I first shot and killed a bird.
23. I borrowed a catapult from one boy and shot the bird dead with a small stone.
24. I felt proud and happy.
25. I was lied to that the type of bird I killed was not supposed to be eaten by small children.
26. I had to give it to my grandmother.
27. I could not remember his worst childhood experience.
28. Our school provides thin porridge to the learners.
29. We are also given a 10kg bag of maize meal to cook at home.
30. I only eat sometimes after school.
31. Sometimes I can find food but sometimes I cannot find.
32. We eat maize meal from school.
33. I eat at night before I sleep.
34. My mother sends food at home.
35. There is a tap at school.
36. We fetch water from a well nearby the house.
37. Tap it is far.
38. Oshikundu
39. Water

40. My sisters also drink the same like me.
41. My grandmother drinks only water and cool drink
42. Shelter no the school does not provide any shelter.
43. My grandmother gave me a place to live.
44. I have my own hut.
45. The school gives the permission to go to the clinic if you are sick.
46. We have a teacher gives first aid to the injured learners at our school.
47. The school bought the first aid kit.
48. To help us
49. The last time I visited the hospital was last year.
50. I had stomach pain.
51. The school uniform and clothes are not adequately provided.
52. Maybe it is the school bag for my books.
53. It was bought by my mother when I was in grade 5, yes it is old.
54. It is not going very well.
55. I can stay even a year without paying school fees.
56. When the school starts is when I pay.
57. My grandmother pays for me even one term.
58. My mother pays it whenever she gets some money.
59. Our names are called in the class to remind us to pay.
60. I used to feel bad.
61. They might say I am in the class but I did not pay.
62. You can even get a calculator if you pass well.
63. I need pocket money to buy my pens.
64. Not yet, it is still coming because I recently applied for the grant.
65. My mother helped me to apply.
66. My brother supports me somehow with pocket money.
67. But only when I meet him even at this school.
68. I can even stay the whole year without giving me money.
69. Like if your behavior is good at school you can be given your diploma.
70. Even last year many learners were given in subjects.
71. If you pass very well than others in a subject you get a diploma.
72. I feel secured at school because there is LRC.
73. They look if you did not tack in your school uniform.
74. Learners who are beating each other and they will take you to the principal's office.
75. When we are about to go home we use to pray in our class.
76. We use the class list and everyone pray in the class.
77. The school gives you some days to stay at home during mourning.
78. I was given the whole week.
79. They did not say anything
80. I tell my class teacher when I am angry.
81. She can handle my social and psychological problems.
82. My grandmother received a call from my father's relative.
83. She only said my father passed away.
84. I cried a little.
85. I was feeling bad.
86. I drank beer at a family wedding, I felt like intoxicated.
87. I don't drink alcohol or smoke.
88. I feel good when teachers are saying I have good behavior.
89. And manners.
90. I needed someone to write summary while I was away.
91. Or I will come to copy in his/her book when I return to school.
92. The school allowed someone from home to write my notes.
93. He was our neighbor.
94. When you return to school you have to rewrite the homework and tests others did.
95. My friends did not say anything when I came back to school.
96. They already heard about it when I first came to tell class teacher.
97. I keep playing with my friends.
98. But some teachers shook my hand.
99. Every class teacher writes the names of orphaned learners.
100. So that when orphans are given something you will also get.
101. My relationship with my friends and family is okay.
102. I play soccer with my friends at school.
103. No since my father passed away I never went back there.
104. I think to go there one day.
105. My mother helps me with some of the things
106. Like clothes to wear and shoes.
107. My grandmother gives me soaps, washing powder and body lotion.
108. And shoes I can wear at home.
109. My maternal uncle gave me blankets and bed sheets.
110. I have a bed and mattress.
111. The mattress was bought by my grandmother.
112. Yes but the bed is not mine.
113. It is okay.
114. I was only absent when I went for the bereavement of my father.

115. I am doing well.
116. If the task is out of 20 marks, I could get 15 over 20 marks.
117. They are also very well.
118. I could also score 15 over 20 in the test.
119. Yes I passed at the end of term 1 and 2 examinations.
120. Yes, but the report was not written that I passed.
121. I scored two A symbols in the end of the year examination.
122. My family, my sisters and my cousin help me with my work.
123. Yes I am the only one chopping trees down and herding animals.
124. We only have goats.
125. It is going very well.
126. School work and herding it is just okay.
127. My sisters are helping me with animals.
128. We carry water on our heads
129. We use buckets or containers.
130. Not every day only some days.
131. All children in the house fetch water.
132. We help each other with domestic chores.
133. Like to herd the goats or plough the field.
134. Because I do some work at home
135. We pray when we are about to go home after school.
136. Everyone pray in our class
137. We use a class list

P4's NMUs

1. I am in Grade 7.
2. I am a female.
3. I am under 6-14 years.
4. I am 14 years old.
5. We are five in the family.
6. I have three sisters and one brother.
7. I am a last born.
8. I only live with my brother.
9. He is in Grade 8 at Ongudi Combined School.
10. My two sisters are in Oshakati.
11. One has completed her Grade 12 long time.
12. She is working there.
13. My other sister just completed her Grade 12.
14. One of my older sisters left for Angola.
15. Nobody knew what she was doing there.
16. I am the only girl at home.
17. I live with my maternal grandmother, my mother, brother and a cousin.
18. No I was already with my grandmother and my mother.
19. I lost my father.
20. It happened the year I started my Grade 1 at Pahangwashime.
21. It was somewhere in 2005 if I am not mistaken.
22. I was born in Walvis Bay.
23. No my mother is not working.
24. My best childhood experience was when I was a small girl with my parents in Walvis Bay.
25. My father gave me a crab for the first time it scared her.
26. I threw it back in the sea and her father teased her about it.
27. I enjoyed that moment very much.
28. My worst childhood experience was also in Walvis Bay.
29. I was once informed that my mother had eleven siblings.
30. After I was born, five of them died before I could know them.
31. The school prepares the thin porridge for the learners.
32. Teachers say we must come with our plates from home.
33. But there are also some for the school.
34. It was only on Monday to Thursday because the school closes early on Friday.
35. I was given the maize meal to cook in the holiday.
36. We always find food after school.
37. We can eat porridge or rice in case there is some.
38. After school is porridge or rice.
39. In the evening porridge, spinach and meat sometimes.
40. Yes there is one at the school.
41. We fetch water from the well we do not use tap water at home.
42. No.
43. I sleep with my mother.
44. We share a bed.
45. We have enough blankets and bed sheets.
46. My grandmother slept alone before but now I share a bed with her.
47. If she is not feeling very well at least she is with me.
48. I saw one learner injured.

49. She was given money by the school to go to the hospital.
50. The school can take you to the hospital but you will pay yourself
51. I was told not to sleep with people.
52. My mother told me that sex spreads HIV/AIDS.
53. I can be infected.
54. My mother and grandmother usually tell us to wash ourselves very well.
55. Wash our things.
56. I used to drink "efawu" but I get terrible headache.
57. I stopped drinking it now.
58. I get headaches only sometimes.
59. I don't feel stomachache.
60. I never took any alcohol.
61. I don't smoke
62. The school provides school uniforms to those that cannot afford.
63. If the learner can afford.
64. It tells you to tell the parents to buy school uniform.
65. Yeah school uniform is okay.
66. They bought it this year when the school started.
67. School fees no.
68. I did not pay.
69. I am the only one receiving the grant money from government at home.
70. We are sharing with my brother.
71. I feel bad if I am the only one gets and he doesn't get anything.
72. Like now we all get new school uniforms.
73. There is nothing left for school fees.
74. No I paid last year.
75. The school gives learners textbooks.
76. I have five books.
77. The one for Oshikwanyama is shared in groups.
78. We do not take it home.
79. My mother was given some money by our sister in Oshakati.
80. She bought us book covers and pens.
81. I used to get all that at school, I am okay.
82. I have been receiving the monthly grant for many years.
83. I cannot figure it out precisely the year I started.
84. My parents use it to buy me school uniform and pay school fees.
85. I am given pocket money from home.
86. Every day you have to be given some money.
87. If you come to school without money you will not able to eat anything.
88. I don't think there is something else mom use the money for.
89. I would use it the same way she is using it.
90. My grandmother receives pension
91. We have Life skills at school.
92. But since we started we were not taught we were only given its books.
93. Life skills are about how to keep you safe and others.
94. What we were taught in grade 6 I read that don't drink too much.
95. I want to become an English teacher at Pahangwa.
96. Our school motivates us to learn hard to become teachers and nurses.
97. To come fill vacancies left by old teachers.
98. If you do well in school the school give you pens and files.
99. Even food teachers can give you.
100. What motivates me in life, I have to learn.
101. Because if others pass and I fail they will find me at shebeens.
102. Doing nothing and they will laugh at me.
103. I feel secured at school.
104. When other learners happen to mistreat me I report to the teacher.
105. I report to my parent and anyone who mistreats me will be warned not to do it again.
106. I was given the maize meal to cook in the holiday.
107. I am scared if my grandmother happens to die.
108. She is the only one in our family.
109. I can cry or sometimes I just keep it to myself when I am angry.
110. I used to feel sad and angry.
111. I am scared of the night.
112. Because you might walk at a place where there is a snake.
113. It bites you since you didn't see it.
114. When is dark.
115. For example you are sent in the hut at night where there is a snake.
116. If you hear something moving you start running away.
117. No I don't dream. I just sleep well.
118. When I do something wrong at home my parents shout at me.
119. Not to do it again.
120. I was in that house somewhere there before we used to be mistreated.
121. That is why I left it to go and be with my grandmother.
122. She is my maternal cousin.
123. I just left without finishing Grade 5. I just say I am going to my grandmother.

124. You find yourself beaten by doing a simple mistake.
125. Or some days you go to plough in the field without eating.
126. Yes we were with another girl if we were shouted at we would all not eat that day.
127. She cooked and ate with her children we would not eat lunch and super.
128. During school small boys from the nearby house look after the goats.
129. While my brother is at school.
130. His school is far and he comes tired and needs to rest.
131. He only herds the goats on the weekends and holidays.
132. It was like when my mother goes out she comes back late at night.
133. That was the reason she was stopped by our family not to drink anymore.
134. We use to play activities to make each other happy at school.
135. My relationship with my friends, I feel good.
136. When you are in the class but there is something you don't understand.
137. You have your friend who will correct you and make it clear.
138. My paternal grandfather wanted to come and see me.
139. Even my mother knows where he is.
140. It is only that there is not much time for me to go and visit him.
141. I know some of my mother's family.
142. The relationship is good since I am used to them.
143. Even if something happen at home they use to come and help us.
144. Before my father passed on I did not see him.
145. I know one policeman who was working at Omungwelume
146. I do sport but not to play in competitions I just do it for fun.
147. I play netball maybe this year we are going in the school team.
148. It is okay.
149. I am not absent any day of the week.
150. I was only absent for two days when I was sick the whole of last year.
151. I am fulfilling them.
152. When I go home eat lunch and go under the tree to do my homework.
153. I only do my homework during the day after school.
154. Not at night with oil lamp is when I am reading.
155. Last year I used to pass somehow.
156. I did very well in Natural science, Social science and Oshikwanyama.
157. Mathematics was just better; I got marks that I did not expect.
158. I did not pass end of the term 1 last year.
159. I got D symbol in Mathematics and D was not needed, B was needed.
160. If you get D you failed.
161. In the end of term 2 I passed all the subjects.
162. I passed all the subjects
163. Last year it was not mentioned if you are the 1st or 2nd in the class
164. My mother and brother help me at home.
165. It is good we collect firewood and fetch water.
166. Plough the field is okay.
167. Even cooking is also okay.
168. Yeah my mother cooks sometimes.
169. We pound omahangu with my brother.
170. We fetch water in the evening.
171. Sometimes we use containers or buckets.
172. No it is not taking up my study time.
173. No they only write our names in the class
174. I like going to church and listen to get inspired by God's words

P5's NMUs

1. I am in Grade 7.
2. I am a female.
3. My age group is 15-18 years.
4. I am 16 years old.
5. We are ten in the family.
6. Five children and five adults.
7. I have two brothers and one sister.
8. I lost my mother.
9. I cannot remember well but I think is either 2008 or 2009.
10. I heard she was witched.
11. She died in Tsumeb, she used to stay there.
12. No she was just living in the squatter camp.
13. I am living with my maternal uncle and aunt.
14. My best childhood experience was when I went to Tsumeb to my parents during the holiday.
15. It was the highlight in my life because it was my first time to be in Tsumeb.
16. Everything was new and beautiful.
17. I could not remember my worst childhood experience.
18. We are given thin porridge.
19. It is fairly given to all of us.

20. Yes we have a tap at school.
21. Yes we have a tap in the house.
22. No the school doesn't do anything.
23. My aunt helps me when I am on my periods.
24. We were taught some health issues.
25. About the danger of HIV and AIDS.
26. Yes there is immunization coming here at school.
27. I am only immunized when there are outbreaks like polio and others.
28. Last year I was not immunized because I was 15 years old.
29. My aunt told me that I should not engage myself into sex.
30. I should stay away from it.
31. Not good
32. The school principal gave some orphaned learners school uniforms.
33. Shocks and school shoes.
34. I was given a school bag.
35. It is still my aunt and uncle buy me school uniform.
36. My aunt assisted by my uncle and father pay my school fees.
37. No I didn't pay it is still early for paying the fees.
38. There are some that paid already but many of us did not pay yet.
39. The school provides textbooks in all the subjects.
40. We buy our stationery.
41. No, I don't receive the grant money.
42. I was about to register but there was some wrong information.
43. In the birth certificate.
44. It is now taken to be corrected, some names were wrongly written.
45. I am a disciplined person.
46. When I am told to do something by an elder person I have to do it.
47. We have Life skills but I can't remember if we were taught.
48. The school told us to be well disciplined and respect our parents.
49. We are taught religious and moral education at school.
50. We learn about the Bible.
51. I want to become maybe a school teacher or pastor.
52. I don't worry about what happen to my mother anymore.
53. The school principal gave me a school bag when I returned to school.
54. The school bags were given to many orphaned learners.
55. We were told by seniors who came for bereavement.
56. They said let us take it in good faith.
57. I felt depressed when my mother passed away.
58. But we were consoled by the parents.
59. I play at school with my friends.
60. I do athletics at school.
61. We did not run yet only some learners did it.
62. I don't visit my father's family.
63. I used to visit them before.
64. I was with one old woman who is related to my father.
65. I left long time ago.
66. My mother was the one who took me from there.
67. I was suffering.
68. I used to come late to school.
69. I had to plough the field before I come to school.
70. My mother was not happy about me.
71. Doing the field work and go to school late.
72. I know them but I don't just visit them at all.
73. It is okay.
74. I come every day of the week to school.
75. I did not experience any problem to attend school last year.
76. I am only absent when I am sick.
77. I am trying to do better.
78. I do my homework in the evening or afternoon after I come from school.
79. I use a lamp or candle to do my homework in the evening.
80. They were somehow.
81. I was doing well in Natural science and Social science.
82. I performed poorly in Mathematics tests last year.
83. I was better in Agriculture subject.
84. No I did not pass end of the term 1 examination last year.
85. There was that thing in grade 6 if you have D symbol you failed.
86. I had a D symbol in English.
87. I passed end of the term 2 examination.
88. I don't remember my position.
89. No I was beaten by Agriculture science.
90. I passed Mathematics yes.
91. I was not supposed to fail any single subject.
92. It was my first time to fail grade6.
93. My aunt helps me at home with my school work.
94. I tell her to do my work and she does it.

95. She does the work for me.
96. I also do it somehow.
97. I also give my aunt to check if my work is correct if I am wrong she corrects it.
98. We do pound but not often.
99. We take omahangu to the milling machine.
100. Boys herd the animals.
101. We are sharing cooking at home.
102. I learned cooking from home when I was small.
103. I was baptized in Ongenga Elcin church.
104. I am a born again. In our church we do not attend confirmation classes.

P6's NMUs

1. I am in grade 8.
2. I am a female.
3. I am under 15-18 years.
4. I am 15 years old.
5. We are eight in the family.
6. There are six children and two adults.
7. I lost both parents.
8. My father died in 2004.
9. My mother died in 2005.
10. They were not living together.
11. My father was sick.
12. He was sick for long time.
13. My mother was sick for two months.
14. She has been admitted and died in the hospital.
15. I was living with my mother before they died.
16. After my mother passed away my sister and I were left alone in the house.
17. For about a week and some days.
18. She went to Oshakati where she used to stay in order to collect her belongings.
19. I live with my first born sister since 2005.
20. She has been a head of household after my mother died.
21. She is 30+ years old.
22. Her first child is 16 years old.
23. She has three children
24. None of my sisters is employed.
25. There is no one at home with formal employment.
26. My best childhood experience was when her parents bought me dolls to play with.
27. My worst childhood experience was when I was beaten by my married brother at his house.
28. I was playing in his car.
29. We are given thin porridge.
30. It is fairly given to all of us.
31. We plough omahangu and buy some maize meal.
32. We eat omahangu porridge, beans and pumpkins.
33. We also make sorghum at home to brew oshikundu.
34. On few occasions my sister buys some rice and meat.
35. If we take one full bucket and mix it with 20Litre of maize meal it may take a month.
36. The school's tap.
37. No. we use water from the well at home.
38. It is near the house yes.
39. There is no tap near our home.
40. We use buckets and containers to fetch water.
41. We put them on our heads.
42. It does not do anything as far as I remember.
43. We sleep three of us on the floor.
44. We use the mattress.
45. It is okay but somehow old.
46. It was bought last year.
47. Our first born bought it.
48. Blankets we only have few.
49. Yes, they are not enough.
50. There is only one bed sheet.
51. There are four huts.
52. Boys are sleeping on their huts.
53. I sleep with my sister In Grade 8 and my niece who is in primary school.
54. The school can take you to the hospital by car.
55. You will pay yourself.
56. The school uniform must be washed every Wednesday and Friday.
57. If on Thursday your shirt is not clean it is washed at the school tap.
58. You will be told to take it out yourself and wash it at the tap.
59. We are divided into two groups, boys together and girls group.
60. We come together under a tree at school.
61. We are told to always wash ourselves and our clothes.

62. I wash myself in the morning and evening.
63. My sister said we must not engage into sexual activities.
64. When you get pregnant where will you go and take the pregnancy.
65. I did not do it many times.
66. A small boy of my age.
67. The school did not provide me any school uniform.
68. My sister bought me.
69. No, we are paying the same amount.
70. My sister pays my school fees.
71. The school provides us with textbooks.
72. My elder sister gives me money to buy pens, rules and others.
73. Yes, it is only my 17 years old sister and I receive the grant at home.
74. Our elder sister receives it on our behalf.
75. She uses it to buy us shoes, school uniform and pay school fees.
76. My sister gives me sometimes money to buy sweets or bread at school.
77. I just get N\$ 1.00 a month.
78. Sometimes my sister used to say plough there; I will give you N\$ 2.00.
79. The school motivates us that we must learn hard to pass very well.
80. Like last year the school made a party.
81. But if you failed you would not go in.
82. I learned hard because I wanted to go in the party.
83. Also I feel motivated when I come from the break eaten thin porridge.
84. I want to become a Natural science teacher.
85. I am safe too at home; my sisters are there to make sure that I am okay.
86. I feel scared when is dark.
87. Or when you are sent somewhere but you are scared to walk there.
88. I dream about being chased by a mad person.
89. Sometimes I am bitten by a snake.
90. I seem to be running and used to wake up immediately breathing fast.
91. I become fast asleep again.
92. I go to the office of the school principal when I am mistreated.
93. Who mistreat others gets punishment to dig a tree with its roots.
94. My life was very bad.
95. I was crying when my father died.
96. However my grandmother consoled me.
97. I was not given anything that belonged to my late father.
98. I feel stressed sometimes when I am mistreated.
99. When a learner feels bad he/she goes to the office to talk to the teacher.
100. I was hurt in my life.
101. Like when you are beaten.
102. Last year.
103. I was beaten by my brother last year with a mopani branch.
104. The relationship with my friends is good.
105. We use to play and tell each other funny stories and go to eat our cakes.
106. If I drink otombo my sister will beat me.
107. I only drink water and oshikundu.
108. My relationship with my paternal grandmother is fine.
109. My relationships with family from both mother and father are just like that.
110. We keep each other company and we have fun together.
111. I run 100m at school.
112. I was the second one in circuit based competition last year.
113. I was a class captain in grade 5.
114. My relationship with my older sister it is fine.
115. She is like my mother.
116. Because when I ask her something she would just give it to me.
117. My maternal grandmother died.
118. My paternal grandmother is still alive.
119. The relationship it is fine.
120. I attend school all days of the week.
121. I am only absent if there is a serious reason for me to do so.
122. I was only absent three days last year.
123. We went to the mourning of the extended family in Ombalantu.
124. I am doing somehow better.
125. I am doing well in Mathematics and Geography.
126. I am also doing better in my class tests.
127. First term I failed last year.
128. I had many D symbols in some subjects.
129. I passed at the end of term 2.
130. I passed in the end of the year examination.
131. My position was 18th in the class.
132. I am managing well because I never lost any book.
133. I am learning very well.
134. My sister left me behind but now we are in the same Grade.
135. I worked hard to find her.
136. She failed.

137. My sister who just finished grade 10 helps me.
138. She is very helpful whatever you ask her she would answer.
139. We all do not cook, not us children.
140. Our two elder sisters share the cooking.
141. One cooks during the day and another one in the evening.
142. I know how to cook.
143. We use firewood.
144. My sister and I collect firewood.
145. No. We help each other.
146. We use dry shrubs and palm leaves.
147. I don't pound omahangu we take it to milling machine.
148. Our sisters tell us to go to study while they are cooking.
149. We first do our homework and fetch water in the evening.
150. I know how to cook.
151. We cook sometimes when we come from school.
152. If we find that our sisters did not cook.
153. We don't herd animals.
154. My mother had goats but they all died from scabies.
155. I am a Christian. I go to church at Ongenga sometimes
156. I believe God is keeping me safe too
157. It was at his house when I played in his car, I just went in it