

**REDEFINING THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS IN MANAGING THE NEEDS OF
ORPHANED LEARNERS**

by

TERESA AUMA OGINA

Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

PILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR

in the

Department of Education Management and Policy Studies

Faculty of Education

University of Pretoria

SUPERVISOR:

Dr Jan Nieuwenhuis

CO-SUPERVISOR:

Dr Liesel Ebersohn

August 2007

DECLARATION

I, Teresa Auma Ogina (student number 98048075), declare that this thesis (Redefining the role of educators in managing the needs of the orphaned learners) has not been submitted by me before at any other university. It is my original work and I have acknowledged all the sources consulted and quoted in the bibliography.

TERESA A. OGINA.

AUGUST 2007

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my mother, Veronica Wanjeri Ogolla. Although she never received formal education, she was determined that her daughters go to school, and encouraged us to achieve the highest possible level of education. I also dedicate this work to all the educators working in schools with orphaned learners under challenging and unique conditions. May your commitment continue to inspire other well-wishers. To orphaned learners, may your experiences be a source of motivation to achieve your goals in life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to the following people:

- My supervisor, Dr Jan Nieuwenhuis, and Co-supervisor, Dr Liesel Ebersohn, for their advice, support, guidance and patience. Without their positive comments and encouragement I would have not completed the study.
- Prof Johan Beckmann and Prof Anita Van der Bank for encouragement and motivation.
- Alexa Barnby and Peter Hulley for their prompt and outstanding work in language and technical editing.
- The principals, educators and learners from Mpumalanga Province who participated in this study, sharing their experiences with me.
- My friends, Sharon Mampane, Keshni Mohangi, Ruth Aluko, Ifeoma Eze, Rose Nwanna, Joyce Mohapi and Charlotte Motha for their continuous encouragement and peer support.
- Marthie Barnard and Susan Smith for their endless support and friendship.
- Mrs. Eldorene Lambard and Mrs. Celia Matsoma for their friendly and efficient service in providing study materials.

Special thanks to my husband, Josiah, for inspiring, motivating and supporting me throughout the study, as well as my daughters Cindy, Marsela, Millicent and Vicky for their patience, love and understanding.

Above all, I thank God for everything

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the way in which educators identified and managed the needs of the orphaned learners they encountered in their situation as educators in a school setting. The sample in the study consisted of a total of 12-orphaned learners and 8 educators from one primary and one secondary school in the rural part of Mpumalanga Province in South Africa. Data on how orphaned learners viewed their situation were collected using draw-and-write strategy and observation followed by in-depth interviews and follow-up interview questions. The aim of interviewing the orphans themselves was to explore their own views of the realities of their lived experiences of orphanhood and their expectations of the world around them. Data on how educators identified and responded to the needs of the orphaned learners were collected using in-depth interviews and follow up interview questions.

The experiences of the orphaned learners interviewed indicate a need for social and emotional support besides the obvious material need. Two distinct identities (among the educators themselves) emerged from the interviews with these educators:

- There were educators who responded positively by providing support to the orphaned learners.
- And there were educators who responded by referring the orphaned learners to *the educators who help orphaned learners*.

The findings of the study revealed that internal motivational factors had a strong influence on the choices these educators made in responding to the needs of the orphans; and lack of knowledge and skills in identifying and responding to the orphans' emotional needs could have a negative impact on educator response. The findings also showed that the level of interaction and involvement in a relationship with the orphans determined the way the educators identified and responded to these orphans' needs. The study suggest the need for training educators to be in a position to provide care and build relationships, as a means of helping fulfill the social and emotional needs of these learners.



KEY WORDS:

orphaned learners

needs

pastoral care

educators' role

relationships

grieving process

empathy

role of parents

responsibility

behaviour

Contents

1. Introduction and overview of the study	1
1.1 Background of the study.	1
1.2 Rationale.	2
1.3 Context.	4
1.4 Statement of research problem.	5
1.5 Research purpose and questions	6
1.6 Research assumptions	10
1.7 Theoretic perspective.	11
1.8 Scope and limitation of the study.	14
1.9 Enhancing quality of the study.	15
1.10 Ethical considerations	16
1.11 Structure of the thesis.	18
1.12 Summary.	19
2. Research methodology	21
2.1 Introduction	21
2.2 Paradigmatic assumptions	21
2.3 The research process	25
2.4 Data collection	27
2.4.1 Identification of data collection sites	27
2.4.2 Selection of the participants	29
2.4.2.1 Selection of learners at school A	31
2.4.2.2 Selection of learners at school B	36
2.4.2.3 Selection of educators at school A	39
2.4.2.4 Selection of educators at school B	41
2.4.3 Data collection methods	42
2.4.3.1 Interviews with learners	44
2.4.3.2 Interviews with educators	50
2.4.3.3 Observation	51
2.5 Data analysis	52
2.6 Quality of the study	59
2.6.1 Credibility and trustworthiness	59
2.6.2 Transferability	61
2.6.3 Dependability	62
2.6.4 Confirmability	63
2.7 Summary	63
3. What are the lived experiences of the needs and the expectations of orphaned learners?	64
3.1 Introduction	64
3.2. Theme 1: A world in the absence of parents	68
3.2.1 Sub-theme: Parental longing	68
3.2.2 Sub-theme: Grieving the loss of parents	70

3.3.3	Sub-theme: Being deprived of love and care	72
3.3	Theme 2: Relationship with <i>others</i>	73
3.3.1	Sub-theme: Relationship with relatives	74
3.3.2	Sub-theme: Relationship with educators	77
3.3.3	Sub-theme: Relationship with siblings	78
3.3.4	Sub-theme: Child-headed families	79
3.3.5	Sub-theme: Relationship with peers	80
3.3.6	Sub-theme: Orphaned learners' relationship with other orphans	82
3.4	Theme 3: Conceptions of identity as orphans	82
3.4.1	Sub-theme: Self-image.	82
3.4.2	Sub-theme: Wanting to be/career aspirations and future expectations	84
3.5	Theme 4: Financial and material needs	85
3.5.1	Sub-theme: Nutritional needs	86
3.5.2	Sub-theme: School requirements	87
3.5.3	Sub-theme: Housing needs	88
3.5.4	Sub-theme: Medical care	89
3.6	Summary	89
4.	How educators identify and respond to the needs of orphaned learners: emerging themes	91
4.1	Introduction	91
4.2	Themes	93
	Theme 1: Identifying orphans and their needs	93
	Sub-theme 1.1: Educators' perception of orphaned learners	93
	Category 1.1.1: Orphan appearance and behaviour	93
	Category 1.1.2: Orphans and non orphans	94
	Sub-theme 1.2: Identifying orphaned learners and their needs	96
	Category 1.2.1: Behaviour of the orphaned learners	97
	Category 1.2.2: Appearance and financial state of the orphans	100
	Category 1.2.3: Educator-learner relationship	104
	Category 1.2.4: Routine administrative work	108
	Theme 2: Responding to the needs of orphaned learners	109
	Sub-theme 2.1: Educators' perception of their roles	109
	Category 2.1.1: Responsibility of providing care to the orphaned learners	109
	Category 2.1.2: Educator-educator relationship	112
	Category 2.1.3: Motivation to help orphaned learners	118
	Sub-theme 2.2: Fulfilling the needs of the orphaned learners	120
	Category 2.2.1: Addressing physical needs of orphaned learners	120
	Category 2.2.2: Addressing the emotional, social and learning support	125
	Category 2.2.3: School management involvement in responding to the needs of orphans	129
	Sub-theme 2.3: Sources of external support to the needs of	

orphaned learners	130
Category 2.3.1:Community response to the needs of orphans	130
Category 2.3.2: Government response to the needs of orphans	133
4.3 Summary	136
5. Emerging core category	137
5.1 Introduction	137
5.2 Relationship between sub-themes and core category	139
5.2.1 Educators’ perception of orphaned learners and their needs	139
5.2.2 Educators’ strategies for identifying orphans	144
5.2.3 Educators identifying needs of orphans to provide support	146
5.2.4 How educators perceive their role in responding to the needs of orphaned learners	148
5.2.5 “Personality or policy”	154
5.3 Summary	157
6. Examining the emerging themes in relation to the literature	158
6.1 Introduction	158
6.2 Attachment theory	159
6.3 Choice theory	163
6.4 The role of education	171
6.5 The role of educators	174
6.6 Summary	184
7. Emerging theory, future research and conclusion	186
7.1 Introduction	186
7.2 Findings and Emerging theory	188
7.3 Limitation of the study	191
7.4 Contribution of the study	191
7.5 Future research	193
7.6 Conclusion	193
Bibliography	195
Appendices	216
A Orphaned learner drawing and narration	216
B Example of reflective journal entry after interview session	217
C Ethical clearance letter	218
D Permission letters from the Department of Education	220
E Summary of research activities and dates of field visits	222

F	Example of chosen drawing and memo	223
G	Drawing I used to introduce myself and my study	224
H	School A: Learner drawings and narrations	225
I	School B: Learner drawings and narrations	233
J	Ndebele narrations and translation	238
K	An example of drawing not chosen	240
L	Initial educator interview questions	241
M	Learner's written text	242
N	Learners' interview questions	243
O	Educator follow-up interviews	244
P	Observation notes taken during the interview	247
Q	Properties and dimensions	248
R	Sample of the coding of educator' interview transcript	249
S	Example of member checking after interview session	251
T	From codes to sub-themes	253
U	Sample of learners' transcript coding	256
V	Example of memo notes.	259

FIGURES

2.1	Research process flow chart.	25
2.2	Interplay of data collection and data analysis process.	53
2.3	Summary of the process.	57
5.1	Relationship between categories.	156
6.1	Emerging themes and theory.	183

TABLES

2.1	Background information of orphaned learners (School A).	34
2.2	Background information of orphaned learners (School B).	38
2.3	Background information of educators (School A).	40
2.4	Background information of educators (School B).	41
3.1	Emerging themes and sub themes	67
4.1	Emerging themes, sub-themes and categories.	92
5.1	Category-frequency.	138

ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
FHI	Family Health International
<i>HIV</i>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
SCOPE/OVC	Strengthening the Community Partnership for the Empowerment of Orphans and Vulnerable Children
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SASA	South African Schools Act
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
USAIDS	US Agency for International Development