

Perceived Social Support and Resilience among Orphans: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

The present study is based on a systematic research review. The review of literature is an important component of the research process and should be carried out in an orderly manner. It is also known as the back bone of research study. It involves a systematic identification, location and analysis of documents containing information related to the research problem. The purpose of reviewing literature is to determine what has already done by the scientific community related to the research problem and to gain an impression regarding different aspects of the topic under study. The major objective of the current study is to conduct a systematic review on Perceived social support and resilience among orphans. To go ahead with this goal, it was very important to collect the literature on; (A). Orphans (B). Perceived social support among orphans. (C). Resilience among orphans.

Keywords: *Orphans, Perceived Social Support, Resilience.*

Orphan is a child who has lost one or both parents or whose parents have abandoned him permanently (UNICEF). Orphans have been the most derelict population. Orphans lack the regulation & compassion which is necessary for the emotional development to take place. Death of parent acquaint with a major change in the life of orphans. Death of a parent is always hurtful and harrowing. Research has highlighted the negative impact of early institutionalization on children. Children who are neglected and traumatized during early formative years tend to display higher levels of aggressive behavior in later life (Gunnar, M., & Van Dulmen, M. 2007). Existing literature indicates that orphans in general and those brought up in institutions in particular suffer from many social, psychological and economic problems (Gilborn, 2006; Boris, 2012; Dabla, 2010; Bhargava, 2005). Psychological wellbeing scores are significantly lower among orphans than non-orphans (Delva et al 2009) Majority of orphans have low psychological wellbeing and majority of non-orphans have high psychological wellbeing (Tsegaye, A 2013). On contrary several studies reveal that there is little difference in psychosocial wellbeing between orphans (Cluver, Fincham & Seedat 2009,). Bhat, M.N 2014 conducted a study on emotional stability and depression in secondary school orphans and non-orphans, result revealed significant

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difference in emotional stability and depression levels between the two groups, orphans were found to experience lower side of emotional stability and higher level of depression than non-orphans. Researchers while examining psychological problems in institutional orphans found that orphans particularly female orphans feel it difficult to adjust in the society after leaving institution (Naqashbandi, Sehgal & Fahim- ul- Hassan 2012). Gearing, R.E, et. al 2013 conducted a study to establish prevalence of mental health and behavioral problems among adolescent orphans in institutional care and found that institutionalized orphans suffer from both mental health and behavioral problems. Researchers have indicated that behavioral and emotional disorders are highly prevalent among orphan children and adolescents with residential care (Rehman, W., et. al 2012). Institutional orphans performed better academically than non-institutionalized orphans (Kimani et al 2009). Increased rates of attention problems have been repeatedly observed in children with an institutional care history (Beverly, McGuinness, & Blanton, 2008). Behrendt, A., & Serigne, M. (2008) investigated the psychosocial impact of parental loss and orphan hood on children, Orphaned boys are more likely to present a suicide risk than non-orphan boys. In general, sociality was low for non-orphans and children having lost a father, but high for orphans and girls having lost a mother. Certain mental disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder (28%) and depression (45%) were highly prevalent in the total sample. Research indicates that children reared in deprived environment such as institutions are at increased risk for attention and behavior regulation difficulties (Loman, M., M et al 2013). Peter, B., Eunice, K., & Sarah, N.K. (2004) conducted a study to identify the psychosocial problems of orphans and nonorphans. Findings showed that prevalence and seriousness of psychosocial problems (negative emotion, stigma, depression and behavioral problems) was higher among orphans than non-orphans.

Systematic review of research on perceived social support:

Perceived social support refers to an individual's belief that social support is available, is generally considered positive or negative and provides what is considered needed by that individual (Norris & Kaniasty, 1996; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). Studies have revealed that perceived social support and self-esteem are major predictor factors that correlate significantly with various forms of regressive behavior and adjustment of the adolescents (Geuzauni, Debry & Liesens 2000). Lack of social support and lower perceived adequacy of social support have been linked to poorer mental and physical health (Allgower, Wardle & Steptoe 2001; Decker 2007). Social support generally functions as a buffer to reduce distress and enhance resilience for people in stress full events (Richmond, Ross & Egeland 2007). Children who have lost their parents to other causes and other-orphaned children reported similar levels of social support. In terms of sources of support, all children orphans and vulnerable children were more likely to draw support from friends and significant others rather than from the family (Doku.P.N, Dotse .J.E, and Mensah.K.F 2015). Orphans had significantly stronger perceptions of social support from friends than non-orphans, whereas non-orphans had significantly stronger perceptions of support from families than orphans. However, both the orphans and non-orphans reported high levels of self-efficacy and resilience. (Yendork.J.S & Somhlaba .N.Z, 2015). Stephanie, B

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2015 while exploring children's (orphaned and abandoned children) perception of social support and found that both orphans as well as abandoned children perceived family, friends, and children's home staff as the most important sources of social support and in addition, both groups perceived emotional and esteem support, as well as dependability and protection as important functions of social support. Research reveals that orphan children in foster care placement believe that they face problems related to their care and support be it material or psychological (Nshimiyimana, B. 2008). The experience of loss of family and lack of social support available for orphans could lead to internalized emotion (depression, anxiety, and poor self-esteem) and externalized emotion such as dysfunctional behavior (Makane et al., 2002). Than, J.N.(2013) while examining the influence of social support, self-esteem, and self-efficacy on academic performance, as well as their indirect influences, being mediated by problem focused coping and emotion-focused coping among double orphans the findings of the study revealed that for the double orphans in the study reported level of self-efficacy were found to have a direct influence on their academic performance and no significant indirect influences, being mediated by the variables of problem-focused and emotion-focused coping style, for the three predictor variables of social support, self-esteem, and self-efficacy on the respondents' academic performance. Nabunya, P. (2014) while exploring the role of caregiver support in improving academic achievement of AIDS-orphans revealed that perceived caregiver support in form of warmth and acceptance was significantly associated with improvement in school grades and reduced school absence. Perceived family cohesion was significantly associated with school attendance and household wealth was associated with school grades.

Systematic review of research on resilience:

Resilience is chiefly the personal characteristics of the children that enable them to deal with hardship (Cohler 1987). Resilience is not only related to internal characteristics but also to external support in environment (Donnon, Charles & Hammond 2003). Resilience is both an individual's capacity to navigate to health promoting resources and a condition of individuals family, community and culture to provide resources in meaningful ways (Ungar 2008). Researchers undertook a study to identify Risk, protection factors and resilience among orphan and vulnerable Children (OVC) in Ethiopia and indicated that most orphans and vulnerable children faced family, school and community related risks factors and both orphans as well as vulnerable children were found to be less resilient.(Tefera & Mulatie 2014). Although another comparative study between orphans and non-orphans revealed that orphans and non-orphans do not differ significantly in terms of resilience (Govender K, Reardon C, Quinlan T & George G 2014). Katyal, S. (2015) conducted a study on resilience in orphan and non-orphan children on a sample of 50 orphans and 50 non orphans, the result showed significant difference in resilience of orphan and non-orphan children, orphan children having higher resilience than that of non-orphan children. Another research indicates that orphans are more susceptible suffer from resilience risks that may lead to depression, hopelessness and psychological trauma later in life (Coombe 2003). Kaur, S & Rani, C (2015) while exploring the psychological health of adolescent orphans and intact family adolescent found that both orphan adolescents and intact family

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adolescents differ significantly on stress resiliency. Analyses indicated that older orphans had higher levels of resilience and self-efficacy than younger orphans. However, older orphans had lower perceptions of support from friends, family and significant others than younger orphans (Yendork, j.S & Somhlaba, N.Z2015). Lothe, E.A& Heegan ,k (2003) conducted a study on resilience among eight surviving orphans(18-23yrs) and found that the most important factor in fostering resilience in problems were, Hope, Religion, and Personal history and understanding of their roots.Tulivste (2010) asserts research has consistently demonstrated that institutionalization negatively impacts aspects of child development and functioning, which negatively effects measurements of resilience factors.

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