

Responsiveness of MCK in addressing Orphans' Material and Spiritual needs in Day secondary schools in Imenti North Sub-County

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Abstract

The national plan of action for orphans and vulnerable children (2007 - 2010) is a noble initiative that outlines strategies to provide and protect young children aged 1-14. This plan was assimilated by the Methodist Church of Kenya (MCK), through the gospel of James 1:17 which encourages assistance to orphans and vulnerable people in society. However, MCK has not been responsive enough in its endeavour to operationalize this altruistic initiative. This is due to a lack of awareness about the nature of material and spiritual requirements for orphans. Hence, the current study aimed to assess the responsiveness of Methodist Church in Kenya in addressing material and spiritual needs of orphans in day secondary schools in Imenti North Sub-County, Meru, Kenya. The study was guided by psychosocial development theory and the theory of human motivation – hierarchy of needs. Mixed research methodology was applied. The target population comprised 285 individuals that yielded a sample size of 207 respondents who comprised of; church education committee leaders, superintendent ministers, guiding and counseling teachers, principals, orphan students, and bishop. A stratification method was utilized on orphan students through categorizing them according to their classes as stratum and thereafter a simple random sampling technique applied to obtain the sample size, while the other respondents a purposive sampling technic was applied. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire and interview. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS, where factor analysis, means and frequencies were computed. The study found out that material needs for orphans and vulnerable children included food, shelter, pocket money and clothing, while the spiritual needs comprised the religious beliefs, ethics and morality. The study recommended that these material and spiritual needs be fully provided by MCK as the sponsor of the studied day schools to enhance the sense of belonging among orphans and vulnerable children.

Keywords: *MCK, children, vulnerable, orphans, material and spiritual needs*

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1.0 Introduction

The subject of orphans and vulnerable children has excited researchers across the globe. Many studies have cited natural tragedies, war, felonious crimes, Gender-Based Domestic Violence (GBDV), accidents, and HIV/AIDS as factors responsible for orphans and vulnerable children. Toska et al. (2019) assert that globally, the number of orphans occasioned by death alone stood at 132 million by the year 2017. The State of the World's Children (SWC, 2017) reported that Asia-Pacific has 75 million orphans, while the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2010) indicated that in Sub-Saharan Africa, there are over 70 million orphans as a result of death. Sitienei and Pillay (2019) observe that economic demands have eroded the values and moral support of caregiving to children in African setup. Sharma et al. (2020) argue that religious groups should explore all methods possible to save the many suffering orphans. Ansell and Young (2004) stated that majority of orphans in southern Africa are catered for by extended families, but the ramifications of such families' geographical dispersal are rarely recognized.

"Orphans, like all other human beings, require their material and spiritual needs to be met in order to promote healthy mental and emotional growth"

In Kenya, the National Plan of Action for Orphans and Vulnerable Children 2007-2010 entails strategies to provide and protect children. This plan has been incorporated into the 2010 Constitution as a Bill of Rights that provides for children to receive free basic education, nutrition, shelter and health care. As a result, MCK came on board to provide for orphans and based its mandate in the book of James 1:27, which states that a real religious conviction is that which takes care of orphans, and widows as demonstrated by Jesus Christ by feeding 5000 people in Luke 9:10-17.

Gitonga (2014) notes that through caregivers, MCK has successfully provided basic needs to over 65 orphans in Athiru rujine, Meru County. Mwenisongole (2010) further observes that MCK has initiated support system based on legal and psychosocial framework in their areas of operation. Sadly, Pavolini et al. (2021) note that orphans' plight has been twisted into a merchandisable product by unscrupulous individuals by way of averting resources preordained for orphans to other usages. Yet Galliher, et al. (2004) argues that real worship is that which is

devoid of sumptuous apparel, superb buildings, and fashioned services, but rather a service to mankind. Gitonga (2014) agrees that in present days, carrying out the mandate in James 1:27 is a real challenge since churches are inclined to profitable projects.

MCK's sponsorship is based on fees payment. However, it falls short of provision of material needs, parental care, direction, and security. Leading to orphans suffering from stress, rejection and stigma, hence indulging in delinquent activities and eventually drop out of school. This corroborates with Gitonga (2014) finding that established that MCK sponsored orphans experience depression owing to unmet material needs at one given moment in their developmental stages outlined in Erickson's Psychosocial Development Theory.

Statement of the Problem

James 1:27, by declaring that true religion is that which cares for orphans, and widows, outlines the basic features of Christianity. MCK has obliged itself to practice these principles of real Christianity through sponsorship of learners. However, despite the fact that MCK covers all or part of the tuition fees of the sponsored, orphans continue to lack basic necessities such as food, clean water, parental care, parental supervision and protection. Many of them are often subjected to stigma and rejection, which causes make them anxious, irritable, and desperate. According to UNICEF (2016) assessment, this has exacerbated the situation since the orphan has been subjected to child labour, exploitation, and physical and sexual assault. A study by Gitonga (2014) established that the government's interventions outlined in the national plan of action for OVC (2007–

2010), such as support in the payment of school fees and provision of school uniform, are not consistent, unrelated to prevailing circumstances and untimely leading to high school dropout rate.

Hunting and Conroy (2018) found out that lack of spirituality and material consumption are generally portrayed as aggressive. Failure to address this issue will result in destruction of orphans' adulthood. There was need in this case for this study to find out the effectiveness of the support given to day secondary schools' sponsored orphans. The study seeks to answer the questions: is the MCK, as a sponsor for orphans, aware of the needs of OVC in the first place? What were the factors responsible for MCK failure to meet orphans' needs? What has been MCK's responsiveness in addressing the orphans' needs? What are the solutions going forward? Past studies have focused on orphans' educational performance or psychosocial development of OVC in secondary schools, but none has assessed the responsiveness of MCK in addressing orphans' material and spiritual needs in day secondary schools in Imenti North Sub-County thereby creating a knowledge gap for this study to fill. Therefore, this study sought to establish if the MCK is aware of orphan's material and spiritual needs and its responsiveness to the same.

The Empirical Literature on Responsiveness of MCK in addressing Orphans' Material and Spiritual needs

Orphans, like all other human beings, require their material and spiritual needs to be met in order to promote healthy mental and emotional growth. According to Alfvén et al. (2017), adequate materials such as decent

housing, adequate clothing and well-balanced meals are required for appropriate growth, constructive relationships, successful learning, and self-care. Such people also effectively contribute to their own economic development as adults. Orphaned children have more than material needs; for example, physical, material, intellectual, psychological and safety demands (Sheerán & Webb, 2016; Pavolini et al. 2021). Thus, the immobile, social, psychological, and spiritual needs of these person are addressed through the psychological assistance by the Church. They not only need frequent advice, love, appreciation, and recognition, but also experience a feeling of connection.

According to Palen et al. (2012), stress is one factor that leads orphaned adolescent females to engage in risky acts, that may lead to infection. Myers et al. (2017) points out that death of parents begins the orphan's journey to suffering, as their choice of who to stay with is overlooked. The worst case scenario, according to Ofreneo et al. (2020), is that they are enrolled in day secondary schools and become domestic workers. In case they are lucky, they are taken in by the church. Ayaya et al. (2021) concur with Ofreneo et al. (2020) and add that teachers are sometimes complicit in contracting these orphans in their schools for their own selfish gain, sexually abusing the girls, and forcing them to do domestic chores. Foster homes have been used as an alternative place for orphans to live, but Panda et al. (2015) describe them as pitiful places where orphans suffer acute lack of access to health care, malnutrition, and underdevelopment.

Erickson's theory puts human beings as developing through different stages. Meyer and Viljoen (2008) observe that each phase of improvement should be dealt with to guarantee a person's holistic development. As such, MCK has an obligation to understand their growth needs. According to Meyer and Viljoen (2008), secondary school going kids are expected to be in stage five of Erickson theory and the church need to provide their needs based on this stage. Boeree (2006) points out that in the event that this stage is taken care of appropriately, teenagers create psychological strength through loyalty.

Abraham (1943)'s theory of human motivation – hierarchy of needs emphasizes 4 phases of development, i.e., *physiological, safety, love, self-esteem*, under which needs are fulfilled systematically. The girl, who gives in to sexual demands by security officers or anyone else while looking for love, develops low self-esteem, hence failing to trust herself anymore. Proper mitigation arises from knowing where the child or orphan is coming from, and where they are headed.

2.0 Materials and Methods

The study employed a mixed research design. It refers to an emerging research approach that promotes the systematic integration of quantitative and qualitative data within a single study (Schoonenboom, & Johnson, 2017; Cazeaux, 2017). The target population was 285 respondents that yielded 207 sample size. Data was collected through questionnaire, and interview on; 17 principals, 17 guiding and counselling teachers, 15 superintendents' ministers, 15 church education committee leaders, 142

orphaned students, and 1 Synod bishop giving a total of 207 sample size. The Yamane formula was used to sample the target population of orphaned students. Stratification of the study population was used to obtain the sample size of orphan whose population was higher than other categories.

These respondents were first stratified according to the class they belonged to; Form 1, Form 2, Form 3 and Form 4 as stratum, followed by a simple random sampling of the chosen students. However, Synod Bishop and others were purposively sampled. Content, face, and construct validity were used while Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was applied to determine the reliability of research instruments. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS software, while descriptive

statistics such as factor loading, frequency, mean, and standard deviation were used in analysis of descriptive statistics. Findings were presented in tables, and figures.

3.0 Results and Discussion

Material and spiritual needs of orphans in day secondary schools in Imenti North Sub-County, were analyzed and presented according to the respondents who were; Church Education Committee Leaders, Superintend Ministers, Guiding and Counseling Teachers, Principals, and Orphans Students as indicated below.

Church Education Committee Leaders

The response by church committee leaders was shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Material and Spiritual Needs of Orphans in MCK Perspective

Types of Needs	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Food/shelter/clothing	5	35.7	35.7
Pocket Money	2	14.3	50.0
Religious beliefs/ethics/morality	3	21.4	71.4
Spiritual values/ideas/emotion/challenges	3	21.4	92.9
Other Need - Computers/Books/Pens/Pencils/maps/sets	1	7.1	100.0
Total	14	100.0	

The findings indicated that the respondents valued food, shelter, and clothing at 5(35.7%) while other needs such as computers, books,

pens, pencils, maps, and sets at 1 (7.1%) were least valued. The reliability was also computed and results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Summary Statistics of Reliability test on Awareness of Material and Spiritual Needs

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.841	.835	6

The standard of approval in Cronbach's Alpha test is indicated by the score $0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$ as shown in Table 2 above which shows Cronbach's Alpha score at .841, The questions employed are therefore good and dependable on the subject of interest.

This research based its analysis on factor loading, mean and standard deviation. There are many various techniques, but principal component analysis is the most commonly utilized. Table 3 below illustrates the factor loading based on church education committee leaders.

Factor loading analysis

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Analysis N
1. We provide spiritual nurturing/nourishment the children we sponsor individually	2.43	1.284	14
2. Material needs are not important for children we sponsor since they will make them not to concentrate in school	2.71	1.383	14
3. The social well-being of orphans is a middle point consideration for the church	2.86	1.748	14
4. Orphans who engage in risky behaviour is an abomination and should be condemned	3.29	1.490	14
5. The orphan children's economic status is not an issue since we provide school fees	2.57	1.284	14
6. The children we sponsor do part-time jobs with the church	2.36	1.277	14

The Table 3 has statement no. 4 with the highest mean score of 3.29 and standard deviation of 1.490 while statement no. 6 has the lowest mean score of 2.36 and standard

deviation score of 1.277 indicating how close it is to the mean showing that the mean and standard deviation are closely related. The

adequacy of the instruments was determined and results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.873
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	138.376
	df	15
	Sig.	.000

The above table of KMO and Bartlett's test was measuring if the all items in the correlation matrix above significantly relate at .000. As the table shows the score of Sig.

.000 is significantly related at zero. A factors analysis results were summarized as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Factor analysis results

<i>Total Variance Explained</i>				
	Component	Total	Initial Eigenvalues ^a	
			% of Variance	Cumulative %
Raw	1	11.425	94.303	94.303
	2	.393	3.246	97.549
	3	.126	1.043	98.593
	4	.094	.774	99.367
	5	.050	.416	99.783
	6	.026	.217	100.000
Rescaled	1	11.425	94.303	94.303
	2	.393	3.246	97.549
	3	.126	1.043	98.593
	4	.094	.774	99.367
	5	.050	.416	99.783
	6	.026	.217	100.000

Component 1 in this table has a total value of 11.425 under Initial Eigenvalues the rest of the components of factors understudy are less than 1. The component chosen is "We provide spiritual nurturing/nourishment the children we sponsor individually" this

therefore can be named as Spiritual need provision.

Superintend Ministers' and Factor Analysis

The descriptive statistics was used to determine the mean, and standard deviation as show in Table 6

Table 6
Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Analysis N
1. What are material and spiritual needs of orphans in MCK perspective?	2.93	1.624	15
2. Are you familiar with the rights of children as articulated in the Kenyan constitution?	1.27	.458	15
3. How do you think MCK Sponsorship programmes address the rights of children?	3.00	1.069	15
4. How do the orphaned learners behave in class?	2.93	1.100	15

The Table 6 has statement no. 3 with the highest mean score of 3.00 and standard deviation of 1.069 while statement no.2 has the lowest mean score of 1.27 and standard

deviation score of .458 showing that the mean and standard deviation are closely related.

Table 7
Factor analysis results

<i>Total Variance Explained</i>				
Initial Eigenvalues ^a				
Raw	Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
	1	4.413	84.861	84.861
	2	.628	12.068	96.929
	3	.128	2.459	99.388
	4	.032	.612	100.000
Rescaled	1	4.413	84.861	84.861
	2	.628	12.068	96.929

3	.128	2.459	99.388
4	.032	.612	100.000

The above Table 7 indicates the Total variance explained when dealing with factor loading and extractions. The component chose is “What are material and spiritual needs of orphans in MCK perspective?” this

therefore can be named as awareness of material and spiritual need. The guiding and counselling teachers and factor analysis were also analysed and results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8
Material and spiritual needs of orphans in MCK

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Food/shelter/clothing	3	20.0	20.0	20.0
Pocket Money	2	13.3	13.3	33.3
Religious beliefs/ethics/morality	4	26.7	26.7	60.0
Spiritual values/ideas/emotion	5	33.3	33.3	93.3
Other Need - Computers/Books/Pens/ Pencils/maps/sets	1	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Table 8 illustrated that 33.3 percent of the respondents said spiritual values/ideas/emotion/challenges, was highest preferred. This research discovered

that majority of the respondents chose the same as spiritual needs the orphans needed most. Results on Factor analysis on material and spiritual needs are shown in Table 9.

Table 9
Factor analysis was important as shown in Table 9 below;

<i>Communalities</i>	Raw		Rescaled	
	Initial	Extraction	Initial	Extraction
1. What are material and spiritual needs of orphans in MCK perspective?	1.638	1.605	1.000	.980

2. Are you familiar with the rights of children as articulated in the Kenyan constitution?	.267	.191	1.000	.717
3. How do you think MCK Sponsorship programmes address the rights of children?	.971	.840	1.000	.865
4. How do the orphaned learners behave in class?	1.410	1.368	1.000	.970

The results displayed in the Communalities table is based on the fact that the extraction scores are the square (R^2) of components matrix score of every. This kind of scores R^2

= .980 equivalent to 98%. The results on principals' and factor analysis are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Principals' and Factor analysis

	1. What are material and spiritual needs of orphans in MCK perspective?	2. Are you familiar with the rights of children as articulated in the Kenyan constitution?	3. How do you think MCK Sponsorship programmes address the rights of children?	4. How do the orphaned learners behave in class?
Correlation	1.000	.410	.740	.757
	2. Are you familiar with the rights of children as articulated in the Kenyan constitution?	.410	1.000	.584
	3. How do you think MCK Sponsorship programmes address the rights of children?	.740	.584	1.000
	4. How do the orphaned learners behave in class?	.757	.605	.972
Sig. (1-tailed)	1. What are material and spiritual needs of orphans in MCK perspective?	.065	.001	.001
	2. Are you familiar with the rights of children as articulated in the Kenyan constitution?	.065	.011	.008

3. How do you think MCK Sponsorship programmes address the rights of children?	.001	.011	.000
4. How do the orphaned learners behave in class?	.001	.008	.000

Correlation according to Crowther and Lauesen (2019) is the comparison between two variables in order to establish their association on their ratio level. The above table 10 shows that the strongest correlation is between component No. 3 and No. 4: $r=.972$ and its 1-tailed significance, $p=0.000$. This means there's a 0.000 probability of finding this sample correlation -or a larger one- if the actual population correlation is zero. A further results from Orphans Students are shown in Table 11.

Orphans Students

The results were displayed in Table 5.

Table 11

Materials and Spiritual needs

	Types of Needs	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Food/shelter/clothing	7	35.0	35.0	35.0
	Pocket Money/fees	4	20.0	20.0	55.0
	Religious beliefs/ethics/morality	3	15.0	15.0	70.0
	Spiritual values/ideas/emotion/challenges	2	10.0	10.0	80.0
	Other Need - Computers/Books/Pens/Pencils/maps/sets	4	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

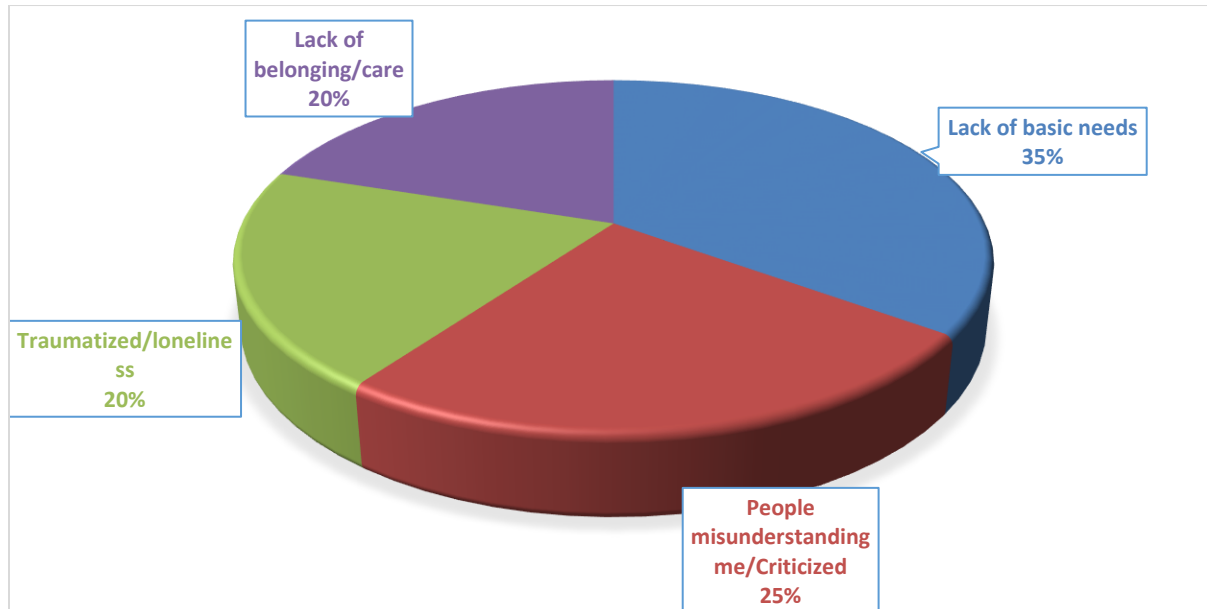
The study found out that score of the needs were as indicated in percentages. Deckers (2018), argues that NOT only are bad food sources shown to impair studentship, but the study shows that a dreadful eating routine also affects the mind-set of a young person. The book of Luke 4:4 says, "*Jesus addressed*

him, saying man will not live by bread alone, but by each expression of God." This scripture is contrary to Maslow's hypothesis of hierarchy of needs since it shows that man lives by bread, where after need is fulfilled then he goes to the next. (Kenrick et al., 2010;

Deckers, 2018). The result is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Problems Encountered



The Figure 1 indicates that 20% of the respondents cited traumatized/ loneliness and lack of belonging as lowest choice. Based on the results of this investigation, majority have described lack of basic needs as a serious problem leading to lack of a sense of belonging resulting to trauma/ loneliness. In

support of this view, Kibachio & Mutie did a study and outlined numerous barriers such as limited education opportunities, level of vulnerability, parental disease, and poor OVC involvement. The factor loadings on problems encountered was done and the total variance explained is displayed in Table 12.

Table 12

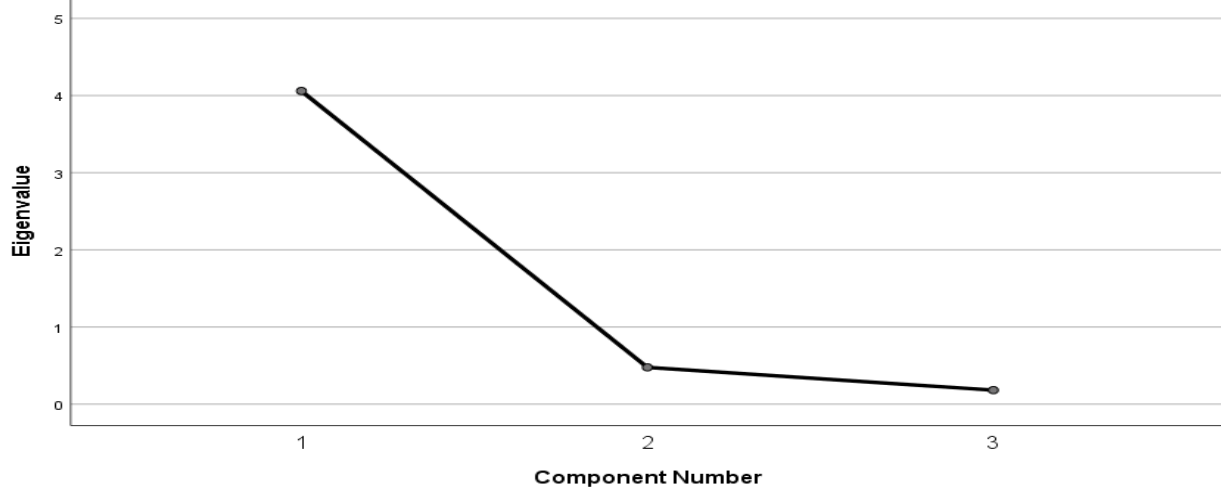
Factor loading analysis for orphans' students

<i>Total Variance Explained</i>				
	Component	Total	Initial Eigenvalues ^a	
			% of Variance	Cumulative %
Raw	1	4.059	86.051	86.051
	2	.477	10.103	96.154
	3	.181	3.846	100.000
Rescaled	1	4.059	86.051	86.051
	2	.477	10.103	96.154

As seen in the Table 12, The Eigenvalue was set at 1 which meant that any value with less than 1 will not be considered. The extracted component which is “Whom do you talk to whenever you have a problem??” with “% of

Variance” at 86% this therefore can be named as healthy conversations. This result corresponds well with Figure 2 below which shows scree plot of the components

Figure 2
Screen plot



The Figure 2 indicates that the first value is at 4.059 which was higher than the Eigenvalue 1 which was earlier set hence gradually landing to .477 value and then .181 as the last value of the components in the Total Variance Explained. The Eigenvalue 1 was the determinant and was used to extract the components with an Eigenvalue higher than 1.

4.0 Conclusion

This study found out that the material and spiritual needs of the respondents were food, shelter, and clothing which the church wasn't aware or responsive enough. The relevancy of MCK's involvement in the provision of these needs cannot be underestimated. It is clear that the role of

MCK as provider of school fees is a welcome idea, but how prompt this is done leaves a lot to be desired. The study established that students waste a lot of time away from school after being sent from school for fees, which reflects on their academic performance. Further, the study concluded that religious beliefs, ethics, and morality comprises the spiritual needs.

The teachers concentrated mostly on teaching, while the appointed counsellor concentrated on irrelevant sermons about prosperity rather than the spiritual guidance the students needed most. The study concluded that there was no one to guide orphans on the importance of not succumbing to peer pressure or coping with the same. The study also found out that the church ministers

don't have enough time to spiritually nurture the students, but concentrated mostly on other church projects like putting up magnificent building.

5.0 Recommendation

This study recommends that material and spiritual needs be fully provided by MCK to the orphans they sponsor and in time. MCK needs to be aware that any delay in payment of fees will affect the school program and interfere with the students' learning process and eventually academic results. The MCK, thus needs to look appropriately at the type of clothes the orphans wear so that they can be provided for. They also need to factor in the age of the orphans when providing these material needs since they are at adolescence stage. Specifically sanitary

towels are key for girls and fashion for both boys and girls. On matters spiritual, the appointed pastor needs to have greater time to demonstrate how God is a parent to the orphans. Time should also be created for delivery of sermons, services, and sacraments to the orphans, as one of the mandates of the MCK church pastors. This study also recommends that there should be a paradigm shift on strategies for tackling the behaviours of students. Maslow's theory of hierarchy of need is another area where pastors and MCK can borrow from by gaining insight into what needs are and how they are fulfilled systematically from one level of need to another namely physiological, safety, belongingness, self-esteem, and self-actualization the resulting a wholistic human.

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