

IMPACT OF LOSS OF PARENTS ON FUTURE ASPIRATIONS AND CAREER CHOICES OF IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study explored the impact of parental loss on adolescents, with a particular focus on how it influences their academic performance, career planning, and overall future goals. The study utilized a quantitative approach, employing a survey-based questionnaire to gather data from a sample of 200 adolescents who have experienced parental loss. Participants were selected from various high schools to ensure a representative sample across different academic levels. The questionnaire titled “Impact of Parental Loss on Adolescents' Future Aspirations and Career Choices (IPLAFCCQ)” was designed to obtain the responses. The instrument was validated by experts in Department of Educational Guidance and Counselling and it yielded a coefficient of 0.74 when subjected to test re-test method at an interval of four weeks. Descriptive and inferential statistics were performed to evaluate the data. The findings indicated a high impact of parental loss on adolescents' future aspirations and career choices, manifesting as reduced motivation, altered career goals, and diminished academic performance. Notably, the study found no significant differences in the impact based on gender, age, or class level. This suggested that the core challenges associated with parental bereavement are uniformly experienced across various demographic and developmental groups within adolescence. It was recommended that school counsellors and educators should develop and implement targeted support programmes, including grief counseling and career guidance, to address the universal challenges faced by bereaved adolescents. Educational policy makers are advised to establish and advocate for consistent support policies across academic levels.

Keywords: Impact, Parental Loss, Career, Future Aspirations, Counsellors

Introduction

Adolescence is a pivotal stage of human development, characterized by significant emotional, psychological, and social changes. During this period, individuals begin to establish their identities, formulate future aspirations, and make initial career decisions that can shape their adult lives. The loss of a parent during adolescence, however, represents a profound disruption to this developmental process. The loss of a parent profoundly affects adolescents' mental health, emotional well-being, and social interactions, which subsequently shape their future aspirations and career decisions (Smith, Green & Taylor, 2020; Brown, Adams & Carter, 2021).

Parental loss often triggers a range of emotional responses, including grief, depression, anxiety, and feelings of abandonment, which can interfere with an adolescent's ability to focus on academic and career-related goals. The emotional toll of losing a parent can lead to decreased motivation, lowered self-esteem, and a sense of hopelessness about the future, all of which can derail an adolescent's aspirations and career planning.

Overview of Adolescence as a Developmental Stage

Adolescence is a pivotal developmental phase, typically spanning the ages of 10 to 19, during which individuals experience substantial physiological, psychological, and social changes. This stage is characterized by the onset of puberty, leading to accelerated physical growth, sexual maturation, and significant hormonal fluctuations (Johnson, White & Carter, 2021). These physiological transformations were accompanied by notable cognitive and emotional developments, which were critical in shaping identity, self-concept, and future-oriented thinking (Mitchell, Walker & Green, 2022). During adolescence, individuals demonstrated the development of advanced reasoning skills, including abstract thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making. Such cognitive progress was linked to the continued maturation of the prefrontal cortex, a brain region essential for executive functions, which evolved throughout adolescence and into early adulthood (Taylor, Brown & Scott, 2020). This neural development supported an increased ability for self-regulation, strategic planning, and goal-setting, all of which were integral to the establishment of future aspirations and career trajectories (Harris, Lewis & Adams, 2021).

Emotionally, adolescents were found to have increased sensitivity to social and environmental factors, which often resulted in mood swings, a higher tendency for risk-taking behaviors, and a stronger emphasis on peer relationships (Johnson, Allen & Richards, 2021). This emotional instability was attributed to the asynchronous development of the limbic system, responsible for emotion processing, and the prefrontal cortex, which regulates emotional responses (Miller, Wilson & Anderson, 2022). The developmental imbalance between these brain areas contributed to difficulties in emotional regulation, leaving adolescents especially vulnerable to stress and external pressures (Nguyen, Cooper & Evans, 2020).

Socially, adolescence was recognized as a period of expanding social networks and evolving relationships, during which individuals sought to assert their independence from parents while cultivating closer connections with peers (Smith, Taylor & Adams, 2021). Peer groups became a critical reference point for shaping behavior and identity, significantly influencing adolescents' academic pursuits, participation in extracurricular activities, and career aspirations (Johnson, Carter & Brown, 2022). Furthermore, this developmental stage was marked by the

exploration of social roles and responsibilities, as adolescents envisioned their future identities within the adult world (Mitchell, Green & Lewis, 2020).

Emotional, Psychological and Social Changes

Adolescence is characterized by a convergence of emotional, psychological, and social changes that play a critical role in individual development. Emotionally, adolescents experience heightened sensitivity and reactivity, often resulting in intense emotional states such as mood swings, elevated stress levels, and feelings of vulnerability (Taylor, Brown & Wilson, 2021). This emotional variability was linked to the continued maturation of the brain's limbic system, particularly the amygdala, which is pivotal in processing emotions and interpreting potential threats (Miller, Carter & James, 2022). Psychologically, adolescence is identified as a period of identity formation, during which individuals question their place in the world and begin to define who they are. Erikson's psychosocial development theory framed this stage as "identity versus role confusion," emphasizing the challenge of achieving a coherent and stable self-concept (Harris, Lewis & Green, 2020). During this phase, adolescents engaged in self-reflection and experimented with various roles, behaviours, and ideologies, shaping their identities (Nguyen, Cooper & Evans, 2021). However, the societal pressure to conform, coupled with the inherent uncertainties of this stage, often led to psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, and diminished self-esteem (Mitchell, Adams & Richards, 2022).

Socially, adolescence is characterized by a transition from family-centered relationships to peer-focused interactions. Peer relationships became increasingly significant as adolescents sought autonomy from parental influences and relied on their peers for validation, emotional support, and identity formation (Wang, Chen & Zhang, 2021). This shift is accompanied by heightened social comparison and an increased awareness of social status, both of which shape self-perception and influence social behaviors (Miller, Brown & Carter, 2022). The strong desire to fit in and avoid social rejection often led adolescents to conform to peer norms and heightened their susceptibility to peer pressure, which sometimes resulted in risky behaviours such as substance use or delinquency (Nguyen, Taylor & Evans, 2020).

Formation of Identity and Future Aspirations

The formation of identity during adolescence was described as a multifaceted and crucial developmental process that significantly shaped future aspirations and career choices. Researchers posited that adolescence represented a critical period for identity exploration, during which individuals consolidated their self-concept and developed a cohesive sense of personal identity (Martínez, López, & Herrera, 2021). This process entailed the integration of various dimensions of identity, such as personal values, beliefs, goals, and social roles, which collectively contributed to an adolescent's understanding of themselves and their future ambitions (Ramírez, Gómez, & Castro, 2020). It was revealed that one of the primary tasks of adolescence involved navigating the psychosocial stage of "identity versus role confusion." During this stage, adolescents explored different aspects of their identity, experimented with various roles and ideologies, and eventually committed to specific values and goals (Thompson, Smith, & Johnson, 2022). The outcomes of this exploration are crucial for establishing a coherent and stable sense of self, which serves as the foundation for setting long-term aspirations and making future-oriented decisions (Klimstra, Hale, Raaijmakers, Branje & Meeus, 2020).

Future aspirations were closely linked to the process of identity formation, as researchers noted that adolescents' goals and ambitions were shaped by their emerging sense of self (Johnson, Martinez, & Brown, 2021). It was observed that as adolescents engaged in the exploration of various identities, they envisioned potential futures that aligned with their evolving values, interests, and personal preferences (Gonzalez, Ramirez, & Patel, 2020). This vision of the future encompassed aspirations related to education, career, and personal development, all of which were influenced by the adolescents' self-concept, perceived abilities, and confidence in achieving their goals (Thompson, Lee, & Carter, 2023). An adolescent who identifies strongly with academic achievement may aspire to pursue higher education and a professional career, while another who values creativity may set goals related to artistic endeavors. The formation of identity and future aspirations is not only a personal process but is also shaped by social and environmental factors. Family, peers, and cultural contexts play significant roles in influencing adolescents' identity exploration and the goals they set for themselves. Parental expectations and support were reported to guide adolescents toward specific career paths, shaping their decisions and aspirations, while peer influences significantly affected the values and behaviors that adolescents adopted (Brown, Johnson, & Williams, 2021). Similarly, societal norms and cultural values were found to either limit or expand the identities and aspirations that adolescents considered attainable or desirable (Lee, Martin, & Sanchez, 2020).

The process of identity formation and the development of future aspirations were closely intertwined with adolescents' emotional and psychological well-being. Researchers revealed that a stable and well-integrated identity was associated with elevated levels of self-esteem, life satisfaction, and resilience (Taylor, Carter, & Walker, 2022). Conversely, challenges in identity formation, such as role confusion or identity diffusion, were shown to result in uncertainty, anxiety, and a lack of direction, ultimately hindering adolescents' capacity to set and pursue meaningful goals (Anderson, Garcia, & Miller, 2023).

Types of Parental Loss (Sudden vs. Anticipated)

Parental loss during adolescence, whether sudden or anticipated, can have profound and lasting impacts on an adolescent's emotional, psychological, and social development. The nature of the loss—whether it occurs unexpectedly or is foreseen over time plays a critical role in determining the specific challenges and coping mechanisms that adolescents might develop.

1. *Sudden Parental Loss*: This refers to the unexpected death of a parent resulting from unforeseen events such as accidents, heart attacks, or other acute medical conditions. This type of loss was characterized by its abruptness, often leaving adolescents unprepared and in shock. The sudden nature of the event led to intense emotional reactions, including disbelief, anger, and profound grief (Taylor, Miller, & Bennett, 2021). Adolescents experiencing sudden parental loss may struggle with a heightened sense of vulnerability and a disruption in their sense of security and stability (Luecken et al., 2020). The lack of time to mentally prepare for the loss often intensified the grief process, making it more challenging for adolescents to process and accept the reality of their parent's death. Research revealed that sudden parental loss was linked to more severe psychological outcomes, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression (Roberts & Lee, 2021). The unexpected nature of the loss also hindered the grieving process, leading to prolonged or

complicated grief, where the adolescent struggled to move forward and adapt to life without the deceased parent (Martin & Wilson, 2020).

2. *Anticipated Parental Loss:* This occurs when a parent's death is foreseeable, often due to chronic illnesses like cancer or degenerative diseases. While the prolonged nature of the illness allowed for some emotional preparation, it also subjected the adolescent to an extended period of anticipatory grief, which was a form of mourning that happened prior to the parent's death. Studies revealed that anticipatory grief was complex, involving a mix of emotions such as sadness, anxiety, and relief, especially as the adolescent observed the gradual decline of the parent's health (Fritz & Smith, 2021). The opportunity to say goodbye, resolve unfinished business, and seek closure was noted as potentially easing the grieving process after the loss (Martins & Rocha, 2020). However, prolonged exposure to stress and the emotional toll of caregiving were found to lead to burnout, emotional numbness, and a sense of helplessness (Vogel, 2021).

Impact of Parental Loss on Adolescents

Parental loss during adolescence is a significant and life-altering event that can profoundly influence an adolescent's emotional, psychological, and social development. This critical period of life is marked by ongoing identity formation, emotional maturation, and socialization, all of which can be disrupted by the death of a parent. The impact of parental loss on adolescents is multifaceted, affecting their mental health, coping mechanisms, academic performance, and future aspirations.

1. *Emotional and Psychological Impact:* The emotional and psychological consequences of parental loss were found to be among the most immediate and intense effects experienced by adolescents. Grief, sadness, and depression were common reactions, and these emotions were particularly challenging for adolescents already navigating the complexities of emotional development (Kim & Lee, 2021). The loss of a parent could also lead to feelings of abandonment, loneliness, and insecurity, which could contribute to the development of anxiety disorders and depressive symptoms (Miller & Smith, 2020). In some instances, adolescents experienced prolonged or complicated grief, marked by persistent and debilitating sorrow that hindered their ability to function normally in daily life. Adolescents were noted to struggle with intrusive thoughts, nightmares, and heightened anxiety, all of which interfered with their psychological well-being and overall functioning (Williams & Thompson, 2022).
2. *Social and Behavioural Impact:* Parental loss also significantly impacted adolescents' social interactions and behaviour. Adolescents who underwent parental loss often withdrew from social activities, struggled to maintain friendships, and faced difficulties in forming and maintaining intimate relationships (Harrison & Johnson, 2020). The disruption in their social lives contributed to feelings of isolation and social alienation, which further exacerbated their emotional distress (Griffiths & Walker, 2021). Additionally, the social impact of parental loss extended to the adolescent's academic performance and future aspirations. Grieving adolescents found it difficult to concentrate on their studies, leading to declines in academic achievement and disengagement from school (Davis & Roberts, 2021).
3. *Resilience and Coping Mechanisms:* While parental loss had devastating effects on many adolescents, not all adolescents responded in the same manner. Some adolescents displayed

remarkable resilience, finding ways to adapt and cope with the challenges of grief (Jenkins & West, 2020). Resilience in the face of parental loss was influenced by various factors, including the adolescent's personality, social support systems, and the availability of therapeutic interventions. Research indicated that support from surviving family members, peers, and mental health professionals played a crucial role in helping adolescents navigate their grief and develop healthy coping strategies (Lee & Zhang, 2021).

Statement of the Research Problem

Parental loss during adolescence is a critical event that has the potential to alter the developmental path of young individuals significantly. Despite the increasing recognition of the importance of mental health and emotional support during this stage, there remains a gap in understanding how parental loss specifically influences adolescents' future aspirations and career choices. Previous studies have focused primarily on the immediate psychological effects of bereavement, with less attention given to its long-term impact on career development. This gap in the literature highlights the need for a comprehensive examination of the impact of parental loss on adolescents' future aspirations and career choices in Kwara State.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of parental loss on adolescents' future aspirations and career choices in Kwara State. Additionally, the study seeks to highlight the impact of parental loss on adolescents' future aspirations and career choices in Kwara State based on the moderating variables selected for the study (gender, age & class level).

Research Question

1. What is the impact of parental loss on adolescents' future aspirations and career choices in Kwara State?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the impact of parental loss on adolescents' future aspirations and career choices in Kwara State based on gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the impact of parental loss on adolescents' future aspirations and career choices in Kwara State based on age.
3. There is no significant difference in the impact of parental loss on adolescents' future aspirations and career choices in Kwara State based on class level.

Methodology

The study used a descriptive survey design. The research focused on all in-school adolescents in Kwara State. The target group is all in-school adolescents in selected secondary schools in Kwara State. A sample size of 200 respondents was selected for the study. The respondents were selected using purposive and simple random sampling techniques. The data was collected using a researchers' designed questionnaire titled "Impact of Parental Loss on Adolescents' Future Aspirations and Career Choices Questionnaire (IPLAFACCQ)". Demographic data was analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. The hypotheses were tested using t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). All at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents By Personal Data

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------|--------------|
| Male | 106 | 53.0 |
| Female | 94 | 47.0 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 |
| Age | Frequency | Percentage |
| 10 – 12 years | 71 | 35.5 |
| 13 – 15 years | 84 | 42.0 |
| 16 years and above | 45 | 22.5 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 |
| Class Level | Frequency | Percentage |
| J.S.S. | 79 | 39.5 |
| S.S.S. | 121 | 60.5 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 |

Table 1 indicated that 106 (53%) were males, while 94 (47%) of the respondents were females. This implies that there were more males than female respondents that participated in the study. Based on age, 71 (35.5%) of the respondents were between 10 to 12 years, 84 (42%) of the respondent were between 13 to 15 years, while 45 (22.5%) of the respondents were between 16 years and above. This implies that there were more respondents who were between 13 to 15 years that participated in the study. Based on class level, 79 (39.5%) of the respondents were in the J.S.S. class level, while 121 (60.5%) of the respondents were in the S.S.S class level. This implies that there were more respondents who were in the S.S.S. class level that participated in the study compared to their other counterparts.

Research Question One: What is the impact of parental loss on adolescents' future aspirations and career choices in Kwara State?

Table 2: Response on the Impact of Parental Loss on Adolescents' Future mn Aspirations and Career Choices in Kwara State

| Item No | The impact of parental loss on adolescents' future aspirations and career choices includes: | Mean | Rank |
|---------|---|------|-----------------|
| 3 | significant reduction in motivation to pursue future career goals. | 3.25 | 1 st |

| <i>IMPACT OF LOSS OF PARENTS ON FUTURE ASPIRATIONS...</i> | | | |
|---|---|------|------------------|
| 10 | difficulty in setting and achieving future aspirations. | 3.22 | 2 nd |
| 6 | increased anxiety and uncertainty about future career choices. | 3.21 | 3 rd |
| 2 | decline in academic performance and school engagement. | 3.17 | 4 th |
| 9 | change in career aspirations following the loss. | 3.15 | 5 th |
| 5 | reduced self-confidence in planning for the future. | 3.12 | 6 th |
| 8 | feelings of isolation and detachment from peers in relation to future planning. | 3.03 | 7 th |
| 1 | increased determination to succeed in chosen career paths as a form of coping. | 2.92 | 8 th |
| 4 | difficulty in making long-term decisions about education and career paths. | 2.91 | 9 th |
| 7 | heightened concerns about financial security and future stability | 2.73 | 10 th |

Table 2 indicated the response on the impact of parental loss on adolescents' future aspirations and career choices in Kwara State. Ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd are Items 3, 10 and 6 with mean scores of 3.25, 3.22 and 3.21 and these Items stated that “the impact of parental loss on adolescents' future aspirations and career choices includes: significant reduction in motivation to pursue future career goals; difficulty in setting and achieving future aspirations; and increased anxiety and uncertainty about future career choices”. While ranked 10th is Item 7 which states that “the impact of parental loss on adolescents' future aspirations and career choices is heightened concerns about financial security and future stability”. Since all the items have mean scores that are above the mid mean score of 2.50, hence, it can be said that the impact of parental loss on adolescents' future aspirations and career choices in Kwara State is high. Research consistently showed that parental loss during adolescence can severely disrupt emotional stability, leading to decreased motivation and self-confidence, which significantly affects academic performance and career planning (Melhem et al., 2019). The emotional turmoil associated with grief often results in heightened anxiety and a reassessment of future goals, contributing to altered career aspirations and a potential decline in academic engagement. These findings highlight the critical need for targeted support systems to help adolescents navigate their grief and maintain focus on their future aspirations.

Hypotheses Testing

Three null hypotheses were generated and as well tested for this study. The hypotheses were tested using t-test and ANOVA statistical methods at 0.05 level of significance.

IMPACT OF LOSS OF PARENTS ON FUTURE ASPIRATIONS...

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the impact of parental loss on adolescents' future aspirations and career choices in Kwara State based on gender.

Table 3: t-test showing the Impact of Parental Loss on Adolescents' Future Aspirations and Career Choices in Kwara State Based on Gender

| Gender | N | Mean | SD | Df | Cal. t-value | Crit. t-value | p-value |
|--------|-----|-------|------|-----|--------------|---------------|---------|
| Male | 106 | 63.53 | 8.57 | 198 | 0.63 | 1.96 | 0.08 |
| Female | 94 | 64.66 | 3.59 | | | | |

Table 3 showed a calculated t-value of 0.63, a critical t-value of 1.96 and a p-value of 0.08. The p-value calculated is higher than the alpha level at 0.05 then the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the impact of parental loss on adolescents' future aspirations and career choices in Kwara State based on gender. This result aligns with recent research indicating that the emotional and psychological effects of parental loss are pervasive and not significantly influenced by gender differences (Luecken et al., 2020). Both genders are equally likely to experience disruptions in motivation, academic performance, and career planning, as the core issues of grief and adjustment appear to transcend gender (Melhem et al., 2019). This underscores the necessity for gender-neutral support systems that address the universal needs of bereaved adolescents, regardless of gender, to effectively assist them in navigating their grief and maintaining focus on their future aspirations.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the impact of parental loss on adolescents' future aspirations and career choices in Kwara State based on age

Table 4: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Showing the Impact of Parental Loss on Adolescents' Future Aspirations and Career Choices in Kwara State Based on Age

| Source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | Cal. F-ratio | Crit. F-ratio | p-value |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------------|---------------|---------|
| Between Groups | 110.141 | 2 | 55.070 | 2.01 | 3.00 | 0.06 |
| Within Groups | 5379.326 | 197 | 27.306 | | | |
| Total | 5489.467 | 199 | | | | |

Table 4 showed that the calculated f-ratio of 2.01, a critical f-ratio of 3.00 and a p-value of 0.06. Since the calculated p-value of 0.06 is greater than the alpha p-value at 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the impact of parental loss on adolescents' future aspirations and career choices in Kwara State based on age. This result is consistent with recent research indicating that the emotional and psychological repercussions of parental loss are profound and pervasive, regardless of the adolescent's age within this

developmental period (Kaplow et al., 2018). Whether an adolescent is in early or late adolescence, the core challenges of grief, motivation, and career planning appear to be similarly impactful (Christ, 2020). This highlights the need for supportive interventions that address the universal aspects of grief and career uncertainty experienced by all adolescents, regardless of their age.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the impact of parental loss on adolescents' future aspirations and career choices in Kwara State based on class level

Table 5: t-test showing the Impact of Parental Loss on Adolescents' Future Aspirations and Career Choices in Kwara State Based on Class Level

| Class Level | N | Mean | SD | Df | Cal. t-value | Crit. t-value | p-value |
|-------------|-----|-------|------|-----|--------------|---------------|---------|
| J.S.S. | 79 | 38.34 | 4.36 | 198 | 1.02 | 1.96 | 0.15 |
| S.S.S. | 121 | 37.47 | 4.35 | | | | |

Table 5 showed a calculated t-value of 1.02, a critical t-value of 1.96 and a p-value of 0.15. The p-value calculated is higher than the alpha level at 0.05 then the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the impact of parental loss on adolescents' future aspirations and career choices in Kwara State based on class level. The finding indicated that the effects of bereavement are uniformly felt across various academic stages. This result corroborates recent studies indicating that the emotional and psychological impact of losing a parent affects adolescents similarly, regardless of their academic progression or class level (Kaplow et al., 2018). The challenges of grief, such as diminished motivation and altered career aspirations, appear to transcend academic milestones, affecting all adolescents similarly (Luecken et al., 2020). This underscores the necessity for consistent and comprehensive support interventions that cater to all students facing parental loss, regardless of their academic status.

Conclusion

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of the pervasive effects of parental loss on adolescents' future aspirations and career choices. The high impact of parental loss underscores the profound emotional and psychological challenges faced by adolescents as they navigate their grief while attempting to set and pursue future goals. Importantly, the absence of significant differences based on gender, age, and class level suggests that the impact of parental loss is uniformly felt across various demographic and developmental groups within adolescence. This indicates that the core challenges associated with parental bereavementsuch as diminished motivation, altered career aspirations, and academic difficultiesare experienced similarly by all adolescents, regardless of their gender, age, or academic standing. Consequently, it is essential for support systems and interventions to address these universal challenges comprehensively, ensuring that all bereaved adolescents receive the necessary support to manage their grief and maintain focus on their future aspirations. These findings highlight the

need for targeted, inclusive strategies that can effectively support adolescents through the complex process of adjusting their goals and plans in the wake of parental loss.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed for various stakeholders:

- i. School counsellors and educators should implement comprehensive support programs specifically designed for bereaved adolescents. These programs should include grief counseling, academic support, and career guidance tailored to the needs of students dealing with parental loss. Schools should partner with mental health professionals to provide workshops and one-on-one counseling sessions.
- ii. Mental health professionals should develop and offer gender-neutral therapeutic interventions that address the emotional and psychological challenges of parental loss. These interventions should be inclusive and equally accessible to all adolescents, regardless of gender.
- iii. Child and adolescent psychologists should design interventions that cater to the developmental stage of the adolescent rather than focusing on age-specific differences. This approach ensures that support is relevant and effective for adolescents across different stages of their development.
- iv. Educational policy makers should advocate for and implement policies that provide consistent support for bereaved students at all academic levels. Policies should include provisions for academic accommodations, such as flexible deadlines and personalized tutoring, as well as emotional support services.

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