

A SOCIOCULTURAL EXPLORATION OF THE CONCEPTS OF DEATH AND DYING AMONG FILIPINO CHILDREN

Abstract: Death is a challenging topic to discuss with children. The present study explored children's understanding of death and dying using a phenomenological inquiry design. A sample of eight Filipino children with previous experiences of a death of a relative in the past six months were interviewed to examine the processes underlying children's understanding of death and dying. Analysis of the interview transcripts resulted in the identification of three major categories representing children's understanding of death and dying, namely, cognitive orientation, cultural orientation, and social orientation. Findings suggest that children attribute death to old age and cessation of body functioning. Moreover, they believe that death is a matter of time and there is a spiritual component in dying. This study shed light on the importance of socio-cultural factors such as spiritual values in understanding death and dying.

Keywords: Cognitive orientation, Conceptualization of death, Cultural orientation, Death, Development of beliefs about death, Dying, Social orientation