

ABSTRACT

The present study was aimed to study the relationship of bereaved Pakistani Muslims with their deceased relatives. The study was particularly conceived to understand the continuing bonds of bereaved with their deceased relative. Hence, the inclusion criteria were: the death of relative must be within 14 months to 5 years; and the bereaved must have one of the following relations to the deceased; i.e., grandparents, parents, and spouse. Ten bereaved of 18 to 60 years were selected through purposive sampling. A semi-structured interview schedule was used by applying grounded theory for analysis. The findings revealed that emotionally attached relatives' sudden death generated entirely different and tough situation for the bereaved. Feelings of loneliness and sense of deprivation were experienced by most of the respondents whereas relatives' cold-heartedness and non-cooperative attitude were also reported by the bereaved. Different strategies of coping were adopted, in which religious coping was the most important and effective. Dreams about the deceased and conversion of deceased's love to other object were also different coping modes. Usually the bereaved memorial behavior was recalling of deceased on special days, collective celebrations and often through the trivial associated things to the deceased. Dialogues with deceased, contact through dreams, following behaviors and teachings of deceased and religious activities were different ways of ongoing attachment. Religion became more important after death as bereaved continued charity, donations, and prayers often and especially on the day of commemoration. The findings also revealed that culture also played its role in order to facilitate the emotional expression of the bereaved through celebrating the death anniversaries of the deceased. Different factors also affected the continuing bond, as age effect was more potent whereas time factor was important in healing the situational loss. This study helps to understand the in-depth phenomenology of the Pakistani bereaved in the light of socio-religious context.