

# An Investigation of Therapeutic Value of the Batsotso Mourning Rituals in Kakamega County, Kenya.

Asatsa Stephen

PhD candidate (Counseling Psychology)  
Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi, Kenya  
asatsas@yahoo.com

Dr. Jonathan Muema Mwanja  
South Eastern Kenya University  
[muemamwanja@yahoo.com](mailto:muemamwanja@yahoo.com)

Prof. James Matee Muola  
Machakos University College  
[Mateemuola2000@yahoo.com](mailto:Mateemuola2000@yahoo.com)

---

**Abstract:** Every community in the world responds to death and loss in unique ways. Funeral customs and ceremonies vary across different cultures worldwide. The study aimed at establishing how these rituals contribute to the psychological well-being of the bereaved. It also sought to establish the strengths and weaknesses of these rituals on the bereaved. The study focused on establishing and understanding the effects of the Batsotso mourning rituals and ascertaining their applicability in grief and bereavement counseling. The research narrowed down to the different rituals performed during the mourning period among the Batsotso people with the aim of generalizing the results to other Kenyan communities. Batsotso is one of the Luhya dialects, a tribe that inhabits Kakamega County in Kenya. The study used descriptive research design. The data was collected by the use of questionnaires, interview and observation. The target population for this study was 400 families from Batsotso who had experienced death in the last three years. The sample size of 80 participants was selected through simple random sampling. The questionnaires were given to adults and children while the interview guide was administered on adults who had attained at least fifty years of age. The researchers conducted a pilot study where 20 respondents who were not part of the main sample were given the research instruments. This was meant to establish the validity and reliability of the instruments. Results from the study were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative techniques and interpretation presented in form of charts and tables. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used in the analysis of quantitative data. The research was guided by three theories. The theories include Bowlby's theory of attachment, Kubler Ross grief theory and Rando's theory on grief process. The study concluded that there is relationship between the Batsotso mourning rituals and the psychological well-being of the mourners. The study recommends that Batsotso people should practice mourning rituals which have therapeutic and psychological purpose as they help them to cope with death. Batsotso people should further shun the mourning practices which do not have psychological importance as they do not help them to cope with death. The study finally recommends the continuation of therapeutic Batsotso mourning rituals as they lead to psychological well-being of the mourners.

**Keywords:** Rituals, grief, Batsotso, Mourning.

---