



EFFECT OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT SUPPORT ON PERFORMANCE OF ORPHAN AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN HOMES IN NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The number of orphan and vulnerable children in the developing world has reached crisis proportions. The number of orphaned children in Sub-Saharan Africa has increased, putting a strain on the ability of many countries to care for them. Therefore, the sought to establish the effect of County government support on implementation orphan and vulnerable children homes in Nakuru County, Kenya. The study adopted the stakeholder theory. The target population of the study was 188 respondents responsible for daily activities in the children homes from the 38 registered and operational children homes in the county. The sample size was 128 respondents obtained using Tora Yamane's formula. The data was collected through the administration of structured closed-ended questionnaires. Content validity in the study questionnaires was achieved through expert judgement of the research supervisors. The Cronbach's Alpha test was used to test the reliability of the instruments with a threshold of greater than 0.7. Descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyze data. The results of the study were presented in tables, figures and frequency tables. The study revealed that the support provided by the county government is enough to enable the children home run without facing challenges. The study concluded that there is a moderate positive correlation relationship between county government support and performance of orphan and vulnerable Children homes in Nakuru County, Kenya ($r = 0.469$; $p=0.000$). The study recommended that county governments should adopt structured policies that guarantee predictable funding for OVC home, focusing on healthcare, education and food security.

Key words: County Government Support, Performance of Orphan and Vulnerable Children

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I INTRODUCTION

County governments play a crucial role in providing support to orphan and vulnerable children homes (Liyong, 2019). Financial support, healthcare, and education programs are some of the sub-variables that are essential in the performance of Orphan and Vulnerable Children homes. Financial support is crucial in the running of these homes as they depend on donations and grants from county governments and other stakeholders. County governments play a significant role in providing financial support to Orphan and Vulnerable Children homes. According to a study by Kanyi et al. (2018), the performance of Orphan and Vulnerable Children homes in Kenya is significantly influenced by the government's financial support. The study found that there is a significant relationship between the level of financial support from county governments and the performance of Orphan and Vulnerable Children homes.

County governments play a critical role in providing education programs to Orphan and Vulnerable Children homes. Education programs provide an opportunity for children in Orphan and Vulnerable Children homes to gain knowledge and skills that will help them later in life. According to a study by Adelman, Kilburn, & Mahoney (2018), education programs are crucial in reducing the vulnerability of Orphan and Vulnerable Children. The study found that children in Orphan and Vulnerable Children homes who have access to education are less vulnerable to exploitation and abuse (MOGCS, 2019).

In Ethiopia, where an estimated 12% of the child population are orphaned or vulnerable, the government has focused on both financial

and social support programs (Githenya & Ngugi, 2014). Initiatives under the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs are geared towards providing basic needs, healthcare, and education to children in orphanages and those living with relatives (Kiambi & Mugambi, 2017). In collaboration with organizations like UNICEF, the Ethiopian government promotes community-based support programs, which seek to empower caregivers within the extended family or community, reducing reliance on institutional care. Moreover, the government works with NGOs to provide nutritional support, as malnutrition and lack of resources remain critical issues in these homes (Shair, 2016).

The Ugandan government has recognized the challenges associated with orphaned and vulnerable children, particularly the need for sustainable and community-driven projects. Unfortunately, many government-funded projects have been subject to vandalism due to a lack of beneficiary involvement, as noted by Liyong (2019). This has highlighted the need for a shift towards participatory approaches, where stakeholders, including the beneficiaries themselves, are more engaged in project planning and implementation. Uganda's government also partners with NGOs to fund educational programs, healthcare, and basic support for OVC homes. Policies have been introduced to protect children's rights and to ensure that OVC homes operate within a framework that promotes child welfare.

Kenya faces significant challenges with over 3 million orphaned and vulnerable children, many of whom are affected by HIV/AIDS and poverty. The government, through the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, offers programs focused on social cash transfers, such as the *Orphans and Vulnerable Children Cash Transfer Program* (OVC-CTP), which provides monthly

stipends to poor households caring for orphans. This initiative helps to alleviate poverty in these households, supporting the children's education and basic needs. Kenya also collaborates with international organizations like UNICEF to address healthcare and education for OVCs, aiming to reduce malnutrition, improve school enrollment, and prevent exploitation. Therefore, the study seeks to determine the effect of stakeholder's support on performance of orphan and vulnerable children homes in Nakuru County.

II LITERATURE REVIEW

Theory

The study was guided by Stakeholder Theory. The Stakeholder Theory of organizational management and business ethics, which addresses morals and values in managing an organization, was first presented by Freeman in 1984. The stakeholder theory, according to Freeman, et al., (1984), examines how an organization influences both its internal and external environments. Stakeholder theory argues that for an organization to achieve long-term success, it needs to create value not just for its shareholders but also for all its stakeholders, including customers, employees, suppliers, the government and the community at large. In the case of orphan and vulnerable children homes in Nakuru County, stakeholders such as donors, the community, the county government, and employees all play a critical role in the performance of these homes. Therefore, the theory guided the study on the effect of County Government on performance of orphan and vulnerable children homes in Nakuru County, Kenya.

Empirical Review

County Government Support and Performance of Orphan and Vulnerable Children Homes

Studies have shown that county government support can significantly influence the implementation and performance of Orphan and Vulnerable Children homes. A study by Kinyanjui et, al (2017) in Kenya found that county government support in terms of funding, policy formulation, and monitoring and evaluation contributed significantly to the performance of Orphan and Vulnerable Children homes. The study found that county government support improved the quality of care provided to children, increased access to basic needs such as food and healthcare, and enhanced educational opportunities. Similarly, a study by Ndlovu *et, al* (2020) in Zimbabwe found that county government support contributed to the performance of Orphan and Vulnerable Children homes. The study found that county government support through funding, policy formulation, and provision of basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter improved the physical and mental well-being of Orphan and Vulnerable Children and enhanced their educational opportunities.

County governments play a crucial role in providing support to orphan and vulnerable children homes. Financial support, healthcare, and education programs are some of the sub-variables that are essential in the performance of Orphan and Vulnerable Children homes. Financial support is crucial in the running of these homes as they depend on donations and grants from county governments and other stakeholders. County governments play a significant role in providing financial support to Orphan and Vulnerable Children homes. According to a study by Kanyi et al. (2018), the performance of Orphan and Vulnerable Children homes in Kenya is significantly influenced by the government's financial support. The study found that there is a significant relationship

between the level of financial support from county governments and the performance of Orphan and Vulnerable Children homes.

Education programs are also essential in the performance of Orphan and Vulnerable Children homes. Education is a fundamental right, and every child deserves access to quality education. County governments play a critical role in providing education programs to Orphan and Vulnerable Children homes. Education programs provide an opportunity for children in Orphan and Vulnerable Children homes to gain knowledge and skills that will help them later in life. According to a study by Adelman, Kilburn, & Mahoney (2018), education programs are crucial in reducing the vulnerability of Orphan and Vulnerable Children. The study found that children in Orphan and Vulnerable Children homes who have access to education are less vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

A study conducted by Ayuku et al. (2021) on the "Cash Transfer to Orphan and Vulnerable Children" (CT-OVC) program in Kenya aimed to compare the socioeconomic status, school enrollment, nutritional status, and future outlook of children receiving the cash transfer versus those not receiving it. The study utilized baseline data from a cohort of children under 19 years old in 300 randomly selected households in Uasin Gishu County. Multivariable logistic and Poisson regression analyses were performed to compare the outcomes between the two groups. Findings indicated that children in households receiving the CT were less likely to miss school (AOR: 0.62, 95% CI: 0.42-0.94) and less likely to experience height stunting (AOR: 0.65, 95% CI: 0.47-0.89). Additionally, those aged 10 years and above in CT households had a more positive future outlook (AOR: 1.72, 95% CI: 1.12-2.65). Despite some material deprivation, the study concluded that the CT-OVC program positively impacted nutritional status, school attendance, and future

optimism. Recommendations include considering the expansion of the CT-OVC program to further alleviate poverty and improve the well-being of orphan and vulnerable children in Kenya.

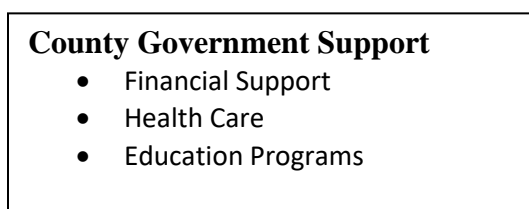
A study conducted by Bryant, Beard, Sabin, Brooks, and colleagues (2021) evaluated the effectiveness of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) interventions for orphan and vulnerable children in East Africa and southern Africa. The study aimed to assess the impact of PEPFAR's support, focusing on school enrollment rates and psychosocial well-being. Five studies were conducted, highlighting beneficial changes in these areas. However, empirical demonstration of the impact of most PEPFAR initiatives was challenging due to a lack of baseline data and clear outcome indicators. The study also noted that many programs were thinly spread across a vulnerable population, raising concerns about resource sufficiency. Recommendations included better measurement of program effects through baseline data collection and rigorous evaluations. This underscores the importance of improving the effectiveness of interventions for orphan and vulnerable children in resource-limited settings.

Maingi (2019) conducted a study on the influence of educational support on the academic performance of orphan and vulnerable children (OVC) in public primary schools in Kalama Sub County, Machakos County, Kenya. Despite government efforts to provide essential services like education, healthcare, and psychosocial support to OVC, challenges persist in meeting their needs in the study area. The research aimed to examine the impact of class teacher's individualized support, school provision of OVC feeding programs, and teacher/caregiver cooperation on OVC academic performance. The study, grounded in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs motivational

theory, employed a descriptive survey design. Data from 36 teachers and 11 head teachers were collected through questionnaires and interviews. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including multiple regression analysis, were used for data analysis. Results showed that school provision of OVC feeding programs had the most significant influence on academic

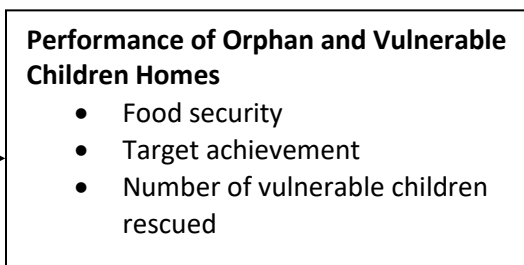
Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables



performance, followed by teachers' individualized support and teacher/caregiver cooperation. The study recommended proactive measures by School Management Committees to support homegrown school food programs and collaboration with community welfare groups to extend support to OVC families.

Dependent Variable



III METHODOLOGY

The study used quantitative survey research design to collect data which was based on the measurement of quantity or amount. Quantitative methods were adopted in this study since the data on employee performance can be clearly communicated through statistics and numbers. The location of this study was in Nakuru County. The target population of the study was 188 operational managers and supervisors who are responsible for daily activities at the homes cutting across from the general management, logistics and general welfare of the 38 registered and operational children homes in the county. The study adopted Tora Yamane's formula to obtain a sample size of 128. To ensure that the sample accurately reflects the diverse population of operational managers and supervisors across the various children homes, proportional sampling was utilized (Taherdoost, 2017). The

study made use of primary data which was collected using closed ended questionnaires. A structured questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument. The questionnaires were written in a form of Likert scale. A pilot study was conducted using 10% (6) of the total questionnaires in Kericho County. Content and criterion validity was used in this study (Bryman & Cramer 2007). The reliability of the questionnaires was determined through the Cronbach alpha method (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The data gathered was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation. Research findings was analyzed using correlation, descriptive and regression analysis. The statistical tool for the analysis was the Social Sciences Statistical Package (SPSS) version 25 to generate regression model results. The findings were presented in tables and frequency tables that showed the means, standard deviation and frequencies.

IV RESULTS

The study sample size of 128 respondents out of which 100 filled and returned the questionnaires giving a response rate of 78%.

Descriptives for County Government Support

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on the effect of County

Government Support on performance of orphan and vulnerable Children homes in Nakuru County, Kenya. The findings were as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive for County Government Support

| Statements | S A % | A % | U % | D % | SD % | Mean | STD |
|---|-------|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|--------|
| The support provided by the county government is enough to enable the children home run without facing challenges. | 60 | 16 | 12 | 6 | 3 | 4.32 | 0.472 |
| The financial support from the county government has enabled the homes to provide quality care to the children. | 51 | 44 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 4.42 | 0.745 |
| The provision of health care services by the county government has improved the health status of the children in the homes. | 58 | 24 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 4.18 | 0.912 |
| The implementation of education programs by the county government has contributed to the education of orphan and vulnerable children. | 40 | 48 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 3.98 | 1.032 |
| The county government's support has led to improved infrastructure and facilities for the children in the homes. | 49 | 31 | 14 | 6 | 0 | 4.62 | 0.323 |
| Average | | | | | | 4.304 | 0.6964 |

According to the findings majority of the respondents (76%) agreed that the support provided by the county government is enough to enable the children home run without facing challenges with a mean of 4.32 and a standard deviation of 0.472. Majority of the respondents (95%) also agreed that the financial support from the county government has enabled the homes to provide quality care to the children with a mean of 4.42 and a standard deviation of 0.745. The study findings are in line with those of Jansen, Blake, & Kalala (2019) who found that the financial support provided by the county government has been instrumental in ensuring that the orphanage homes can deliver quality care to the children under their care. This support enables the homes to allocate

resources towards essential needs such as food, clothing, education, and healthcare, ensuring that the children receive the care and attention they deserve.

Majority of the respondents also (82%) agreed that the provision of health care services by the county government has improved the health status of the children in the homes with a mean of 4.18 and a standard deviation of 0.912. In addition, majority of the respondents (88%) agreed that the implementation of education programs by the county government has contributed to the education of orphan and vulnerable children with a mean of 3.98 and a standard deviation of 1.032. In addition, majority of the respondents (80%) agreed that county government's support has led to

improved infrastructure and facilities for the children in the homes with a mean of 4.62 and a standard deviation of 0.323. The study findings are also in line with the findings of Adelman, Kilburn, & Mahoney (2018) who revealed that the county government's support has directly contributed to the improvement of infrastructure and facilities within the orphanage homes. With adequate funding, the

homes have been able to undertake renovation projects, upgrade existing facilities, and invest in essential amenities that enhance the living conditions for the children. This includes initiatives such as constructing new dormitories, refurbishing recreational areas, and improving sanitation facilities to ensure a safe and conducive environment for the children's growth and development.

Performance of Orphan and Vulnerable Children Homes

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on performance of orphan and vulnerable Children homes in Nakuru County, Kenya. The findings were as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Performance of Orphan and Vulnerable Children Homes

| Statements | S A % | A % | U % | D % | SD % | Mean | STD |
|---|----------|--------|--------|--------|---------|------|--------|
| We have enough food at the children home | 56 | 34 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4.45 | 0.876 |
| The provision of quality education to vulnerable children has led to improved cognitive and social development. | 47 | 43 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 4.22 | 0.453 |
| We are always able to achieve our targets in the children's home | 56 | 34 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 4.46 | 0.321 |
| Number of vulnerable children rescued in this home is very high as compared to the home capacity. | 47 | 34 | 13 | 4 | 3 | 4.20 | 0.432 |
| High staff retention rates have led to more stable and consistent care for the children in the homes. | 59 | 31 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 4.02 | 0.521 |
| Average | | | | | | 4.27 | 0.5206 |

Further, the findings revealed that majority of the respondents agreed (90%) that they have enough food at the children home with a mean of 4.45 and a standard deviation of 0.876. The findings further indicated that majority of the respondents (90%) agreed that the provision of quality education to vulnerable children has led to improved cognitive and social development with a mean of 4.22 and a standard deviation of 0.453. Also, the findings indicated that majority of the respondents (90%) agreed that they are always able to achieve our targets in the children's home with a mean of 4.46 and a standard deviation of 0.321. According to

Kinyanjui et al. (2017) the consistent achievement of targets in the children's home is a testament to the dedication, efficiency, and effectiveness of the staff members. High staff retention rates play a pivotal role in this success, as they contribute to a more stable and consistent caregiving environment for the children. When staff members remain with the home for extended periods, they develop strong relationships with the children, understand their individual needs and preferences, and can provide personalized and consistent care and support.

Further majority of the respondents (80%) agreed that number of vulnerable children rescued in this home is very high as compared to the home capacity with a mean of 4.20 and a standard deviation of 0.432. Majority of the respondents (90%) also indicated that high staff retention rates have led to more stable and consistent care for the children in the homes

with a mean of 4.02 and a standard deviation of 0.521. According to Kamau (2018) stable staffing enhances organizational cohesion, communication, and teamwork, enabling the home to effectively plan, implement, and evaluate programs and initiatives aimed at achieving targets and meeting the needs of the children.

Inferential Statistics

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

| | | Performance of Orphan and Vulnerable Children Homes |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---|
| County Government Support | Pearson Correlation | .469* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 100 |

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The study as shown in Table 3 established that there was a moderate positive correlation existed between county government support and performance of orphan and vulnerable Children homes in Nakuru County, (r = 0.469; p=0.000< 0.05). The results of the correlation analysis indicated that better county government support enhances performance of orphan and vulnerable Children homes in Nakuru County, Kenya County Government Support on performance of orphan and

vulnerable Children homes in Nakuru County, Kenya. The study findings conquer with the findings of Kanyi et al. (2018), who revealed that performance of Orphan and Vulnerable Children homes in Kenya is significantly influenced by the government's financial support. The study found that there is a significant relationship between the level of financial support from county governments and the performance of Orphan and Vulnerable Children homes.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| | B | A standard deviation. Error | | | |
| (Constant) | 2.445 | .309 | | 7.913 | .000 |
| 1 County Government Support | .247 | .107 | .304 | 2.310 | .023 |

From the regression coefficients the came up with the following regression equation

$$Y= 2.445 +0.247X_3 + \varepsilon$$

In addition the findings indicated holding all other variable constant, a unit increase in county government support (X_3) would lead to a 0.247 improvement in performance of orphan and vulnerable Children homes in Nakuru County, Kenya. Finally the study sought to test the hypothesis that there is no statistically significant relationship between County Government Support and the performance of orphan and vulnerable Children homes in Nakuru County, Kenya. With a p-value was 0.023 which was less the 0.05 significant level the null hypothesis is rejected indicating a significant relationship between County Government Support and performance of orphan and vulnerable Children homes in Nakuru County, Kenya. This result is supported by Kanyi et al. (2018), who found that government financial support significantly influences the performance of these homes

V DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was revealed that County government support has a mean score of 4.46 (SD=0.321), indicating a generally positive perceived support. Correlation analysis shows a moderately strong positive relationship ($r=0.469$, $p=0.000$) between county government support and home performance. Regression analysis confirms the significant impact of county government support

on explaining the variance in home performance. These findings support the hypothesis that increased county government support improves home performance.

VI CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding the findings of the study on County Government support and performance of orphan and vulnerable children homes, the study concluded that the support provided by the county government is enough to enable the children home run without facing challenges. The study also concluded that the provision of health care services by the county government has improved the health status of the children in the homes. In addition, the study concluded that the county government's support has led to improved infrastructure and facilities for the children in the homes. Finally, the study concluded that there was a moderate positive correlation existed between county government support and performance of orphan and vulnerable Children homes in Nakuru County, ($r = 0.469$; $p=0.000 < 0.05$).

The study recommended that county governments should adopt structured policies that guarantee predictable funding for OVC home, focusing on healthcare, education and food security. County governments should formalize collaborative agreements with OVC homes to streamline service delivery, providing clear roles and responsibilities for both parties to optimize support.

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