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Relationship between Socio-economic Characteristics and Livelihood Outcomes of Households Receiving Cash Transfer Programme for Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Tignia West, Meru County

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Cash Transfer Programmes have been seen to positively contribute to livelihoods of vulnerable populations in most African countries. Although several studies have been conducted on the effects of cash transfer Programme for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), few have been done to investigate the effects of the programme on the beneficiary households. This study sought to assess the relationship between socio-economic characteristics of households receiving cash transfer Department programme for orphans and vulnerable children and livelihood outcomes. The study employed mixed methods research design and had a sample size of 281 research participants who comprised household heads. Quantitative data was coded and entered in computer for analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 28. Descriptive data was analysed through descriptive statistics and presented in tables, frequencies, and percentages. The relationship between the study variables was measured through correlation analysis while the effect of socio-economic characteristics of households receiving cash transfer programme on livelihood outcomes was done through multiple linear regression analysis. The results indicated that there was a positive relationship between socio-economic characteristics and livelihood outcomes of Orphans and Vulnerable Children. In addition, the socio-economic characteristics accounted for 16.3 percent of livelihood outcomes. The study recommends that the Ministry for Public Service, Gender, Senior Citizen Affairs and Special Programmes should review the existing policies on the cash transfer programmes to incorporate the assessment of the socio-economic characteristics of beneficiary households before enrolment into the programme. Additionally, the Ministry for planning should entrench livelihood outcomes in their performance indicators to ensure value for the money allocated to cash transfer programmes by the national Treasury.

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INTRODUCTION

The world population currently stands at 7.9 billion people (United Nations, 2017). This population is increasing in proportion with the levels of poverty and vulnerability especially in developing countries (World Bank, 2014). The phenomenon has adversely affected livelihood outcomes of vulnerable populations. This scenario requires urgent measures to address the plausible adverse effects of this constant increase of population since the development of any country depends on her populace (Department for International Development, 2017).

Cash transfers are policies and programmes that aim to reduce poverty and make poor people less vulnerable to unemployment, social exclusion, sickness, disability, and old age by helping them to manage these risks and shocks (Samson, 2013). The cash transfer beneficiary households are mostly poor, with unemployed members, socially excluded, and has sick, disabled and aged individuals. Cash Transfer programs could increase the likelihood of beneficiary households' graduation from poverty (Daidone et al., 2015).

Cash transfer programme for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) was started in Kenya in

the year 2004 based on the rationale that the family and communal systems were breaking down in the face of the HIV/AIDS scourge (Orinda, 2014). At the pre-piloting stage, the programme was supported by UNICEF and involved three pilot districts of Garissa, Kwale, and Nairobi. By the end of 2004, 500 households in three locations in the three pilot districts were being assisted with Kshs. 500 (USD 5) per child every month. With assistance from Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA, Department for International Development (DFID) and the World Bank, the programme was scaled up to 10 districts in the year 2005. By the year 2008, the programme had reached 17 districts with around 50,000 beneficiaries.

The programme was further scaled up to 34 districts with 100,000 beneficiaries and had reached 300,000 beneficiaries in 74 districts in the year 2015. The programme is implemented by giving regular money to household heads who have the actual custody of OVC. An amount of Kshs 4,000 (USD 40) is paid to households every two months through two banks in Kenya (Equity Bank and Kenya Commercial bank) to; (i) support retaining and maintenance of OVC inside their families and networks, (ii) enable OVC who are of school going

age (4-17 years) enrol in school and receive quality education and (iii) to provide a regular and a predictable income to enable the beneficiary households to improve the quality of their lives (Hope Worldwide Kenya, 2017).

In Meru County, cash transfer Programmes for OVC has 8,000 beneficiary households who spend the money they receive according to their needs (Meru County Children's Office, 2019). The money is meant to address household shocks caused by poverty and HIV/AIDS. By the year 2014, Meru County had 20,200 adults and 3,082 children living with HIV (M.O.H, 2014). The County has 27,080 orphans and 13,269 poor households (M.O.H, 2014). This study therefore sought to establish whether cash transfer programme for OVC plays a significant role on livelihood outcomes among the household beneficiaries in Meru County.

Tigania West Sub County has a primary to secondary school graduation rate of 38% for boys and 30% for girls (Mwangi, 2017). Although the Sub County has arable land and receives a disbursement of Ksh. 20,400,000 from the Kenya government to the cash transfer beneficiaries annually, the Sub County has persistently been faced with perennial food shortages (Tigania West Sub County Children's Office, 2017). The Area Advisory Council for Children's Services has been sourcing for a variety of food stuff to be distributed to most food and nutrition insecure cash transfer beneficiary households.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cash transfers could be conditional or unconditional depending on their envisaged results (Zanker & Himmelstine, 2014). The conditions impose investments in children's human capital to militate against intergenerational spread of poverty. The most prevalent conditions include school attendance or making visits to health care providers (Yeboah et al., 2016). In the unconditional cash transfers, the beneficiaries choose how to spend the money. Both categories of cash transfer programmes are aimed at alleviating poverty, promote equity, build human capital, reduce economic vulnerability, and improve the standard of living of the beneficiaries (Arnold et al., 2011)

A study that was conducted to determine whether graduation from social safety nets was possible in sub-Saharan Africa by Daidone *et al* (2015) examined whether family attributes could improve the probability of money move programs encouraging graduation from neediness. The study adopted mixed methods and the data was analysed using econometric approach. It focused on government run programmes in four countries: Kenya, Lesotho, Zambia, and Ghana. Results showed that the families with accessible work were in a better situation to exploit money for gainful exercises in short or long runs. The examination reasoned that money moves impact the occupation of recipient family unit just as networks in which they lived.

A study in Ethiopia showed that cash transfer programme reduced the negative effects of crop damage as the programme gave alternative means of livelihood (Asfaw & David, 2018). Besides, the programme could promote socio-economic development. The study recommended complementary measures to enhance the spill over effects of incomes from the programme. Since majority of cash transfer beneficiary households had irregular incomes before the inception of the programme, they now have an assurance of a regular and a reliable source of livelihood (Devereux, 2016).

A study on livelihood status of the urban poor in Korogocho, focused on an urban setting as opposed to the rural setting, which this study sought to focus on (Nyokabi, 2013). Nevertheless, 80% of the research participants acknowledged that the gender of the recipient of cash transfer benefits had strong influence on the utilization of cash. In addition, 74% of the research participants strongly agreed that the size of a household had a significance effect on the utilization of cash transfer benefits. On the contrary, education level had no effect on household utilization of money. The study established that cash transfer programme has greatly improved the household wellbeing.

A similar study on the effectiveness of cash transfer programme on the welfare of OVC in Garrisa Sub County showed that since the inception of the programme in 2004, the programme greatly addressed the welfare of OVC in relation to

education, health, civil registration matters, and food (Mohamed, 2012). It revealed that the underprivileged children who lacked food and dietary diversity, clothing, shelter, and school fees were enabled to meet education requirements from the money given by the programme and the primary level of instruction was the most elevated recipient of the program. The study did not focus on the livelihood outcomes in respect to household heads.

In her study on factors influencing the implementation of social transfer programmes in Nginda location, Embu west district, Muyanga (2014) found out that majority of the caregivers were female and aged grandparents. Though the female caregivers were best suited to take care of OVC, the absence of the father figure could have adverse effects on their emotional needs. There was therefore a need to implement mentorship programmes alongside cash transfer programmes to pass on life skills to female caregivers (Nwankwo, 2017).

Meeme and Gakuu (2017) on their study on the factors influencing utilization of Inua Jamii Programmes, Person with severe disabilities cash transfer allocation by beneficiary households in Manyatta Constituency Embu County further expounded on socio-economic attributes of beneficiary households. The objective of their study was to assess how household characteristics influenced utilization of cash transfer. The study used a descriptive research design and targeted 99 research participants using simple random technique. Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results showed that social economic status of household had 90.6% effects on their livelihoods outcomes. The study concluded that household characteristics do influence the utilization of cash transfer.

In view of the literature reviewed, there were gaps on methodology, selection of study locations and variables of measurement in the previous studies conducted on cash transfer programme for OVC. This is because most studies on cash transfer employed various research methodologies such as descriptive, exploratory, experimental design as well as document analysis. Most of the studies did not employ mixed methods to strengthen the validity of their findings. Most studies have also

focused on an urban setting and did not examine the effects of cash transfer programme on livelihood outcomes of beneficiary households in a rural area. There was evidence that cash transfers were yet to improve the quality of life of the beneficiary households. Most households also had a low resilience to poverty and vulnerability. The previous studies focused on socio-economic characteristics of beneficiary households but failed to focus on the relationship with their livelihood outcomes. Although studies have been done on access to basic goods and services by vulnerable people, they failed to determine the quality of services rendered to the beneficiary households.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

The study used mixed methods research design. The design involved the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. The design enabled the researcher to adequately describe the study population by studying a sample. It also converged different research methodologies specifically survey, interview, and focus group discussions to collect and corroborate quantitative data with qualitative data to obtain comprehensive results (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Additionally, the design also helped the researcher to determine the socio-economic characteristics of beneficiary households, their awareness levels on the targeting of beneficiary households, mode of payment, and expenditure priorities on their livelihood outcomes in Meru County. The target population in this study was 1,320 research participants which comprised of a total of 1,021 beneficiary households located in Tigania West (Meru County Children's Office, 2019), 2 education officers, 2 children's officers, 10 Beneficiary Welfare Committee (BWC) members and 5 members of the Constituency Social Assistance Committee (CSAC).

Using Fisher *et al.*, (1995) formula for sample size calculation, a sample size of 281 research participants were selected for the study. The sampling formula helped the researcher to reduce the margin of error in this study. Questionnaires were administered to 275 research participants; Focus Group Discussions were held with both the Beneficiary Welfare Committee (BWC) and the non-beneficiary households and Key Informant

Interviews were held with children's officers and education officers.

The quantitative data was coded by use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28 for windows and then analysed, interpreted, and presented using descriptive and inferential statistics while thematic analysis was carried out on qualitative data. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse data on household size, income and expenditure, number of dependents, level of education and asset ownership. The relationship between the cash transfer and livelihood outcomes was measured using correlation analysis and linear regression. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics specifically regression and correlation analysis and presented using tables, frequencies, and percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographics

Background information of the research participants was analysed using socio-demographic characteristics (gender, marital status, level of education) and economic activities (source of income and monthly income). Research participants were asked to state their gender, age, marital status, level of education, economic activity, main source of income, and monthly income and their responses are presented in *Table 1* below.

The findings in *Table 1* indicate that 38.7 percent of the research participants were male while 61.3 percent were female in Tigania West Sub County. This shows that majority of households in cash transfer programme were headed by female caregivers. With regards to age, the study results indicate that 38.7 percent of the research participants were aged between 31-40 years, followed by 22.6 percent who were aged 71 years and above. Those aged between 18-30 years and 62-70 years made up 9.7 percent of the sample. The research participants aged between 41-50 years

accounted for 19.4 percent of the total participants. The study also sought to establish the marital status of the research participants. The results showed that 38.7 percent of the participants were married, followed by 32.3 percent of the study participants who were widowed while those who were single, divorced and separated each were represented by 9.7 percent and accounted for the lowest number of participants.

To understand the level of education, the researcher requested participants to state their highest level of education. The study results in *Table 1* showed that 67.7 percent of the research participants had attained up to primary level of education. The findings also indicate that 22.6 percent of the research participants had never attended school. The rate of literacy levels was thus very low. Results established that 9.7 percent of the research participants had attained up to secondary school education. The researcher sought to determine the main source of income of the research participants. The results show that the highest proportion (58.1 %) of the research participants were earning their income from farming while 32.3 percent of the research participants were casual labourers.

A total of 25 research participants (9.7 %) reported getting their income from doing business. The study sought to establish whether the participants had any other monthly income other than the cash transfer amounts that they were receiving. The results established that among the research participants, 32.3 percent were earning their monthly income from sources that were not suggested by this study such as table banking and inherited wealth while 29 percent were getting a monthly income of below Ksh. 1000. This was followed by 19.4 percent who were getting monthly income of between 1000 and 2000 shillings while those getting between 2001 and 3000, 4001 and 5000 both had 9.7 percent of the total research participants. This implies that most of the research participants earned incomes other the income brackets specified in this study.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Demographic Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	103	38.7
	Female	161	61.3
Age	18-30 years	25	9.7
	31-40 years	103	38.6
	41-50 years	53	19.4
	61-70 years	25	9.7
	71 years and above	58	22.6
Marital Status	Single	25	9.7
	Married	103	38.6
	Divorced	25	9.7
	Widowed	86	32.3
	Separated	25	9.7
Level of Education	Never been to school	58	22.6
	Primary	181	67.6
	Secondary	25	9.7
Economic Activities	Casual labourer	86	32.3
	Business	25	9.7
	Farming	153	58.1
Monthly Income	Below Ksh. 1000	75	29.0
	Between Ksh. 1001 and 2000	53	19.3
	Between Ksh. 2001 and 3000	25	9.7
	Between Ksh. 4001 and 5000	25	9.7
	Others	86	32.3

Correlation Analysis of Socio-economic Characteristics

The association amongst socio-economic characteristics measures was established using Pearson's product moment correlation. The examination of the relationship using average scores of socio-economic characteristics measures and results are presented in *Table 2* below.

The results in *Table 2* indicate that the socio-economic characteristics statements which had the highest correlation were "the type of shelter in our household is related to our socio-economic aspects" and "our household has access to socio-economic information" ($r = .873, p < .01$). This was followed by "the relationship between the occupation of the household members has been influenced by the socio-economic aspects" and "the income our household get from the cash transfer programme has influenced its economic affairs" ($r = .788, p < .01$).

The correlation among the statements that the health status of the household members is influenced by

the socio-economic factors and "the social relation in our household is influenced by the socio-economic factors" which was also negative and not statistically significant ($-.004$). The social relation in our household is influenced by the socio-economic factors and the occupation of the household members has been influenced by the socio-economic aspects had positive but insignificant correlation among themselves ($r = .322$).

The findings of the correlation analysis indicated that all the socio-economic characteristics measures had positive correlation amongst themselves, which means they were moving in the same direction. This has the implication that when one variable increased, the other one increased and vice versa. It means that the statements measuring socio-economic characteristics of household beneficiaries were related to a great extent. Besides, this implies these statements were reliable tools to measure and predict the relation between cash transfer programme on the livelihood outcomes of the beneficiary households as guided by the objectives and the hypotheses of this study.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis of Socio-economic Characteristics

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Our household has access to socio-economic information	1											
2. The ownership of assets in our household has been influenced by cash transfer programme	.633**	1										
3. The income our household get from the cash transfer programme has influenced its economic affairs	.333	.626**	1									
4. The consistency in the cash transfer has given our household an income security	.742**	.614**	.547**	1								
5. Type of household headship in our household is influenced by socio-economic factors	-.012	.261	.475**	.183	1							
6. The social relation in our household is influenced by the socio-economic factors	.191	.189	.501**	.233	.618**	1						
7. Relationship among households is influenced by the socio-economic factors	.653**	.576**	.641**	.776**	.173	.537**	1					
8. Gender Relations is a function of socio-economic factors	.766**	.596**	.437*	.629**	.047	.188	.618**	1				
9. The type of shelter in our household is related to our socio-economic factors	.873**	.766**	.373*	.607**	.039	.131	.537**	.691**	1			
10. The occupation of the household members has been influenced by the socio-economic factors	.426*	.751**	.788**	.709**	.402*	.322	.688**	.594**	.521**	1		
11. Our household social class system is based on the socio-economic factors	.472**	.330	.003	.465**	-.232	.040	.447*	.333	.419*	.204	1	
12. The health status of the household members is influenced by the socio-economic factors	.341	.365*	.205	.308	-.192	-.004	.307	.290	.454*	.326	.759**	1

****.** *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Regression Results for Socio-economic Characteristics and Livelihood Outcomes

The study sought to assess the relationship between socio-economic characteristics of households benefiting from cash transfer programme for orphans and vulnerable children and their livelihood

outcomes. The study hypothesised that “there is no significant relationship between cash transfer programme and socio-economic characteristics of beneficiary households”. Regression analysis was conducted to determine the effect of socio-economic characteristic on livelihood outcomes regression analysis. The results are shown in *Table 3* below.

Table 3: Regression Results for Socio-economic Characteristics and Livelihood Outcomes

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.404 ^a	.163	.135	.838528		
<i>a. Predictors: (Constant), Socio-economic Characteristics</i>						
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.982	1	3.982	9.436	.024 ^b
	Residual	111.074	263	.422		
	Total	115.056	264			
<i>a. Dependent Variable: Livelihood Outcomes of Households</i>						
<i>b. Predictors: (Constant), Socio-economic Characteristics</i>						
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.300	.542		4.240	.000
	Socio-economic Characteristics	.374	.157	.404	2.380	.024
<i>a. Dependent Variable: Livelihood Outcomes</i>						

The results in (Table 3) indicated that there was a positive relationship between socio-economic characteristics and livelihood outcomes in Tigania West, Meru County with $R = .404$. On the other hand, the results showed that socio-economic characteristics accounted for 16.3 percent of livelihood outcomes in Tigania West, Meru County ($R^2 = .163$). ANOVA results showed that F-ratio was more than 1 ($F = 9.436$). Grounded on the F – ratio results, there was a prediction capability of the model on the contribution of socio-economic characteristics to livelihood outcomes in Tigania West, Meru County. At individual level, ANOVA findings displayed that the overall effect of socio-economic characteristics on livelihood outcomes in Tigania West, Meru County was significant because the p-value was less than .05 ($p - \text{value} = .024$).

The study formulated a null hypothesis and which was tested at 95 percent confidence level ($\alpha = .05$).

The researcher had formulated null hypothesis as “there is no significant relationship between socio-economic characteristics and livelihood outcomes in Tigania West, Meru County”. The hypothesis testing criteria was that null hypothesis should be rejected if p-value was less than 0.05 and $\beta = 0$. The results showed that there was a significant relationship between socio-economic characteristics and Livelihood outcomes ($\beta = .119$ and $p - \text{value} = .008$). The researcher rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternative, that there was significant and positive relationship between socio-economic characteristics and livelihood outcomes in Tigania West, Meru County’.

The regression results concur with a study by Daidone *et al.* (2015) which examined whether household characteristics could increase the likelihood of cash transfer programmes facilitating graduation from poverty and vulnerability. The

study adopted mixed methods and the data was analysed using econometric approach. It focused on government run cash transfer programmes in four countries: Kenya Lesotho, Zambia, and Ghana. Results showed that the adoption of different targeting criteria had strong implication for the demographic characteristics of beneficiary households across programmes. Households with available labour were in a better position to take advantage of cash transfer for productive activities in short or long runs. The study concluded that cash transfers have significant impacts on the livelihood of beneficiary household as well as communities in which they lived.

A study conducted on livelihood status of the urban poor in Korogocho, Nairobi County established the size of the household influences the effectiveness of cash transfer in enhancing livelihoods of recipients. The study disagreed that the gender of cash transfer recipients influenced the utilization of money (Nyokabi, 2013). Conversely, education level had no effect on household utilization of money. The study found out that, not all indicators of household socio-economic characteristics had positive relationship with livelihood outcomes. Thus, socio-economic characteristics are not monolithic and singular assessment of each indicator necessary for reliable and varied results (Méjean, *et al*, 2016).

CONCLUSION

The results indicated that there was a positive relationship between socio-economic characteristics and livelihood outcomes in Tigania West, Meru County with $R = .404$. On the other hand, the results showed that socio-economic characteristics accounted for 16.3 percent of livelihood outcomes with $\beta = .119$, $p\text{-value} = .008$. The study therefore concludes that there is a positive and significant relationship between socio-economic characteristics and livelihood outcomes in Tigania West, Meru County. Based on the study results, majority of the beneficiary household heads were female as opposed to male caregivers. This shows that the cash transfer benefits reached the OVC and should therefore be increased and should be disbursed depending on the size of the household and level of vulnerability. Since the literacy levels among the beneficiary households were very low with 67.7 percent having gone up to primary level

of education and 22.6 percent never attended school, the Ministry Public Service, Gender, Social Protection, Senior Citizen Affairs and Special Programmes should develop Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials on cash transfer in local languages to enhance effectiveness and sustainability of the programme.

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