

INFLUENCE OF ORPHANED AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN'S  
MALADAPTIVE BEHAVIOUR ON CAREGIVERS' MENTAL  
HEALTH IN UASIN GISHU COUNTY



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## ABSTRACT

The growth rate of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Kenya has continued to be of national and international concern. The Government estimates that there are a total of 2.4 million OVC in Kenya out of which 1.15 million are as a result of HIV/AIDS. The Government of Kenya through its Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development advanced a National Plan of Action (2007-2013) on OVC, which helps to strengthen the capacity of families to protect and care for OVC. The recognition of the importance of the child's relationship with a primary caregiver has been limited. Caregivers' feelings of anxiety and experiencing mental health problems can be at risk. This study therefore investigated the influence of orphaned and vulnerable children's maladaptive behavior on caregiver's mental health in Uasin Gishu County. The study was based on the Gestalt theory advanced by Frederick S. Perls (1970). It adopted a causal comparative research design. Target population comprised of all the caregivers working in 40 charitable children institutions (CCIs) and 1,180 OVC cash transfer households. Representatives from related stakeholders were also included in the study. The total target population was 2640 respondent including; 40 CCIs, 240 household caregivers and 40 private households. Stratified and simple random sampling was used to a select sample size of 296 respondents. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data. Data was analyzed both descriptively and inferentially. Descriptive statistics used were frequencies, percentages and means while inferential statistics used t-test and ANOVA. The research is useful to orphaned and vulnerable children, caregivers and other stakeholders involved in OVC care provision. The findings of this study indicated that caregivers' mental health is influenced by care recipients' maladaptive behaviours regardless of their working experience. The findings were utilized to make practical recommendations for intervention programmes to the mental healthcare providers.