

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLEDGE

Factors Contributing to the Effectiveness of Presidential Secondary School Bursary as a Social Assistance Programme: A Case of Borabu Constituency Nyamira County, Kenya

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to establish the factors contributing to the effectiveness of the PSSB as a social assistance programme in Borabu Constituency. The bursary normally targets OVCs in public boarding schools. The overall objective of the study was to examine the factors contributing to the effectiveness of the PSSB as a social assistance programme in Borabu Constituency, while the specific objectives of this study was; to examine the influence of distribution logistics on the effectiveness of the PSSB; to assess the influence of the legal frame work on the effectiveness of the PSSB; to evaluate the influence of household socio-economic status on the effectiveness of the PSSB. The study was guided by John Rawls' theory of social justice and the human capital theory. The study used descriptive research design. The target population for the study was the PSSB beneficiaries for the 2019/2020 FY and the bursary committee members. The sample size was 74 comprising of 70 PSSB beneficiaries and 4 sub-committee members. Data collection was done using interview guide for key informant interview and questionnaires that had both closed and open ended questions that were administered by the researcher with the help of research assistants through a face to face interview. The test-retest technique was used to assess the reliability of the research instruments while validity of the same was assured through the guidance of the supervisor. The researcher undertook a pilot test in Masaba North Sub-county. To analyze the data collected, the statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS) was used; whereby frequencies, percentages, were generated from the various data categories, computed and shown in different graphs, tables and figures. Qualitative data was analyzed using key themes which were noted as the most repeated responses. The study found out that PSSB publicity was high within Borabu Constituency and it reached out to the target population of OVC. The timely release of funds from the national treasury had a great bearing in enhancing effectiveness of PSSB in terms of reducing absenteeism. The study also found out that the amount allocated for PSSB was not adequate to cater for all the school fees and beneficiaries still had outstanding fee balances even after getting the PSSB award. The study concluded that PSSB has greatly relieved the burden of school fees on parents/guardians taking care of OVC and has facilitated their attainment of the right to education. The study recommended that the amount allocated for PSSB per beneficiary be increased to cater for all the school fees requirements. Further the study recommends that the national treasury should prioritize timely release of funds to facilitate timely distribution to beneficiaries to avoid being sent home. Finally, the study recommended that the government should consider coming up with a dignity kitty as part of the benefit package for the PSSB beneficiaries to cater for other educational needs.

Keywords: Adequacy, bursary, effectiveness, public secondary school, secondary school, orphan, OVC

1. Introduction

Obtaining a quality education is the corner stone to creating sustainable development. Education is universally recognized as a form of investment in human capital and yields economic benefits and contributes to a country's future wealth by increasing the productive capacity of its people (Woodhall, 2004). Kofi Annan asserted that 'education is a human right with immense power to transform. On its foundation lay the cornerstone of freedom, democracy and sustainable human development' (UNICEF, 1999).

Education fosters economic growth and leads to reduction in poverty by enhancing human capital and improving labour productivity while reinforcing the innovative capacity of the economy (Hanushek et al, 2010). The higher the levels of educational achievement the greater the gender equality and levels of social participation. When access to knowledge is improved, education becomes a key to better health and nutrition thus leading to greater financial capability within households. Education has the power to pluck societies out of poverty. Developing skilled citizens is not only beneficial for individual wellbeing, but influences other dimensions of development, including increased civic engagement, and economic growth and livelihood generation (Common Wealth Education Hub, 2016).

The Kenyan Constitution (2010) articles 43(1)(f), 53(1)(b) and 55(a) guarantees education as a right to every Kenyan and the Kenya Vision 2030 emphasizes education as very vital in ensuring relevant human and social capital for sustainable development. In particular, the Constitution gives assurance of free and compulsory basic education to every child. As an integral human right provided for by the Constitution of Kenya 2010, education is important for the fiscal and social welfare of the populace and the long-term development of the country.

The Jomtien conference was a key turning point in the world's collective approach to education, giving a wider perspective on the concept of quality basic education as well an understanding of its delivery. Jomtien is hailed for marking the materialization of a worldwide accord that education is one of the very crucial elements in fighting poverty, empowering women, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment and preventing population growth. That accord led the donor communities in 1996 to commit themselves to help developing countries ensure universal primary education by 2015 as per the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) number two.

The expiry of the MDGs in 2015 ushered in the post 2015 development agenda giving rise to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which will carry the momentum generated by the MDGs and fit into the global development framework beyond 2015. The SGD goal 4 aims to guarantee comprehensive and unbiased quality education that helps in promoting learning opportunities for all. For this quality education to be availed to the children from poor families, investment is needed in educational scholarships. Indeed the SGD agenda 4 categorically prioritized education financing as a specific target in SDG 4b and it states 'By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, Small Island developing States and African countries' (International Council for Science (ICSU), 2015). This is because education is a key pillar for realization of sustainable development. The SGD 4 is also very specific to that end and in that specific target 4.7 it states, 'by 2030 make sure all students acquire knowledge and skills required to bring about sustainable development, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development' (International Council for Science (ICSU), 2015).

World over governments are duty-bound to sure make they provide basic education to its country's population and to make all adjustments in law policy as well as practice towards this crucial end. The UNICEF annual report of 2017 documents various initiatives by different governments to finance education. Among the highlighted initiatives is the Cash Transfers (CTs). CTs forms part of the social safety nets. The shifting focus towards social safety nets points to a progressive evolution in the understanding of the potential of social safety nets in alleviating poverty and vulnerability. Evidence demonstrates that these programs can contribute extensively and powerfully to reducing poverty, building resilience, and boosting opportunities among the poorest (Kathleen et al, 2018).

Cash transfers were first initiated in Brazil and Mexico in the mid-1990s and have been replicated across the world. Millions of poor households are beneficiaries of these programmes which have been attributed with helping to scale down poverty rates in Latin America and in other parts of the world. Mexico's Progressa (Progress) programme is documented as the first cash transfer experience. Launched in 1997, it had two key goals; to improve child education and healthcare and to transfer resources to the country's poor. Progressa produced tremendous increase in school enrolment more so in middle school, posted reduction in child malnutrition and illness and also it led to decline in poverty. Brazil's Bolsa Familia (Family Allowance) is the biggest Conditional Cash Transfer programme serving 11 million people. It gives money upon fulfillment of given programme objectives and its main goal is resource transfer to the poor. Argentina's Programa Familias (Families Programme) puts prominence on poverty eradication and income redistribution by giving cash stipend to families with children below 18 years whose household head is unemployed and is not a recipient of unemployment benefits.

The bulk of social safety nets in Africa mostly target children since they support households with minors. Of all the CT programs, 29 % directly target children through nutrition interventions, remuneration aimed at orphans and other vulnerable children, school feeding programs, the provision of school supplies, and education benefits or fee waivers (Katheleen et.al, 2018).

The cash transfers are many times credited for enabling households to keep children in school. CTs recipients in Gaza are granted fee waivers at the university, which encourage enrolment of their children (although other costs such as transport still act as barriers to access) .Teachers willingly keep benefiting students in school as they know there is potential to clear the bills. (UKAIDS, 2018). In Madagascar, CTs enabled 21,000 out-of-school girls to attend catch-up classes, including 5,000 in lower-secondary education. Similarly, in Yemen, the Social Welfare Fund helps some families keep their children in school (UNICEF, 2017).

In the Kenyan context, the realization of the place of human capital development in a nation's overall development has led the government to come up with tailor made initiatives targeting the Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC). The OVCs are recognized as one of the vulnerable population in Kenya by the Kenya vision 2030 which is a key development blue print for the country. In the vision 2030 CT-OVC is enumerated as one of the flagship projects targeting the OVC. In response to the HIV/AIDs epidemic the government launched the CT-OVC in 2004 with an aim of supporting households living with and taking care of orphans. The overall objective of the programme as documented by the operations manual for Consolidated Cash transfer programmes 2017 is to promote fostering and retention of OVCs within their families and communities and to enhance their human capital development. It continues further by expounding that the focus for human capital development is to increase the enrolment and attendance of OVCs in basic school. It is against the backdrop of this that the Presidential Secondary School Bursary (PSSB) was initiated in 2013/2014 financial year as a complementary of the Cash Transfer for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CT-OVC) program.

PSSB is however not the only bursary that the government operates. The National Government Constituency Fund runs a bursary scheme as well as the Secondary Education Bursary Fund (SEBF). As much as orphan-hood is one of the aspects considered for allocation of those funds, the bursaries are not specifically meant for them and this is the gap that PSSB was meant to fill considering the challenges faced by orphans and the risk they face of being excluded from the education system due to the prohibitive costs. Further various studies conducted around those bursaries have highlighted their ineffectiveness in reaching out the OVC. For instance Boit (2015) observed that the 'bursary allocation mechanism was ineffective in targeting the vulnerable children and in disbursing bursary funds to those most in need. Additionally, the guidelines issued for bursary disbursement from the Ministry of Education appear to have been flouted. Thus, the fund has had little impact on lives of the majority of the poor and vulnerable students' (Boit, 2015). Mwai, et.al 2007 as quoted by Obiero, (2014) observed that the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) bursary has experienced many challenges which include failure by CDF committee to formulate disbursement guidelines and to create awareness of disbursement guidelines, mismanagement of funds, they are given to students who do not deserve and frequently the CDF committee members grant bursary to relatives (Obiero, 2014).

Further, these bursaries are normally a one off award whereas currently secondary school education within the 8-4-4 system takes four years. Seroney (2015), in his study of the factors influencing effectiveness of constituency bursary fund in enhancing access and retention of needy students in public boarding secondary schools in Eldoret East Constituency, Uasin Gishu County Kenya, established that the amount of bursary fund awarded to needy students was not enough to cater for all the educational needs of the beneficiaries and that the bursary application process was long cumbersome and that the needy students were not rightly identified by the bursary committees. Therefore the effect of Constituency Bursary Fund (CBF) on access and retention of needy students was very minimal (Seroney, 2015). Obiero (2014) observed the same in his study carried out in Rachuonyo North on effectiveness of the Constituency Development Fund Bursary scheme on participation rates in public secondary school where he established that majority of students who apply for the bursary fail to get it which impacts on participation rates in public secondary schools, with majority of the respondents having received the bursary only once which is not good enough and this means that the impact of the bursary to participation rate is very low (Obiero, 2014).

Additionally after ten years of implementing the CT-OVC there was a realization that children from the poor background were unable to access secondary education even after they got their other basic needs including food, shelter, clothing and medical care from the CT-OVC (Ministry of Labour & Social Protection, 2018). Consequently, the inadequacy of the CT-OVC cash stipend is made worse by the fact that the CT-OVC stipend does not consider the family size. Indeed, all households receive the same amount irrespective of their size that is four thousand shillings paid bi-monthly as documented by the operation manual for consolidated cash transfer programmes 2017. Thus, the initiation of PSSB to complement the CT-OVC. The target of the PSSB is OVC's in public boarding secondary schools and its aim is to increase the number of OVC's enrolled, retained and transiting from secondary school (Ministry of Labour & Social Protection, 2018). Most of the studies as exemplified above have dwelt mostly on the other bursaries been offered by the government and none of the studies have focused on PSSB within Borabu Constituency. Additionally the guideline for the operation of the PSSB sets out clearly the target group which is the OVC's and this is a distinct diversion from the rest of the bursaries.

The PSSB is implemented by the Department of Children Services (DCS) (Ministry of Labour & Social Protection, 2018). DCS draws its mandate from the Children Act 2001 that provides for the leadership in the coordination and the supervision in provision of services towards promoting the rights and welfare of all children in Kenya. The fact that PSSB is being implemented by the department tasked with the responsibility of safeguarding the rights and welfare of children in Kenya prompted the researcher to carry out this research in order to examine the factors contributing to the effectiveness of the PSSB as a social assistance program having established from the literature reviewed that the other bursaries particularly CDF and SEBF have not been as effective as anticipated by the policy developers in reaching out to the OVCs. Additionally, of the studies carried out none has focused on Borabu Constituency.

Guided by Human capital theory and John Rawl's theory of social justice the study set out to answer the following three questions;

- What is the influence of distribution logistics on the effectiveness of the Presidential Secondary School Bursary in Borabu Constituency?
- What is the influence of the legal frame work on the effectiveness of the Presidential Secondary School Bursary in Borabu Constituency?
- What is the influence of household socio-economic status on the effectiveness of Presidential Secondary School Bursary in Borabu Constituency?

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

A descriptive research design was used for the research as 'it determines and reports the way things are and offer phenomena of interest from a specific perspective' (Kothari 2008). The study focused on both quantitative and qualitative data. The data majored on primary data since the data was collected directly. Secondary data was also gathered from academic journals, policy papers, government publications and books.

2.2. Study Site

This study was conducted in Borabu constituency which is a constituency within Nyamira County. In total Nyamira County has four Constituencies namely West Mugirango, North Mugirango, Kitutu Masaba and Borabu. Borabu Constituency is the largest with an area of 298 km² yet it has the lowest population density of 494 due to its large parcels of land used mainly for commercial farming making it unique from the rest of the constituencies and thus a favourable choice for the researcher. Being a settlement scheme, it attracts migrants from the other Kisii and Nyamira County areas most of whom offer casual labour in the farms. This labour force constitutes of child labour being incorporated to boost the family income and has implications in education. The Nyamira County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) documents that there is a downward trend in secondary enrolment in the county. The transition rate from primary school to secondary school is 87.5 percent (County Government of Nyamira, 2018).

2.3. Target Population

The target population was the OVCs and in particular the OVCs who are beneficiaries of the PSSB for the current financial year that is the 2019/2020 financial year. The current total number of the PSSB beneficiaries is 70. These beneficiaries are spread across all the locations within Borabu Constituency. The other target was four members of the bursary sub-committee of the Constituency Social assistance Committee (CSAC).

2.4. Sample and Sampling Procedures

The study used the census approach to collect data from the respondents. The list of the PSSB beneficiaries was accessed from the children office Borabu.

No	Name of Location	No of PSSB Beneficiaries
1	Mekenene	6
2	Kiageni	7
3	Kiabonyoru	12
4	Nyansiongo	14
5	Mecheo	6
6	Ensakia	4
7	Bosaragei	2
8	Ekerubo	4
9	Esise	15
Bursary Sub-committee of CSAC		
1	Bursary Sub-committee members	4
Total Respondents		74

Table 1: List of the Respondents Clustered Per Location

2.5. Data Collection Tools

The study focused on primary data which the researcher collected using questionnaires. The research questionnaire contained both open ended and closed ended questions that helped in answering the research questions developed in chapter one. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher in a face to face interview as the responses got recorded with the help of research assistants who were trained on how to administer the questionnaires and sensitized on ethical consideration. Key informant interviews (KII) were also used. KII are qualitative in-depth interviews with those who have information on the occurrences in the community (Burns and Grove, 2005). The KII in this case were drawn from bursary sub-committee of the Constituency Social assistance Committee (CSAC).

2.6. Reliability and Validity

In order to ensure reliability of instruments, questions in the questionnaire were constructed and first pre-tested to ensure consistency in measurement. The test-retest technique of assessing reliability of a research was involved in administering the same instruments twice to the same group of subjects. This was after a lapse of two weeks. The questionnaires were thus administered to the PSSB beneficiaries in Masaba North sub-county. Validity was achieved through expert judgement by requesting the supervisor to review the items on the instrument to determine whether the set of items accurately represented the variables under study. Further the questionnaire was presented in form of sections with each section focusing on the various variables of the study.

2.7. Data Analysis

The researcher perused the completed questionnaires and checked for completeness and consistency. Data coding into various categories after carefully numbering the respondents views was done. These were then processed through data entry into the computer followed by data cleaning. Quantitative data collected by using a questionnaire was analysed by the use of descriptive statistics using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and was presented through percentage, means, standard deviation and frequencies. The information was displayed by use of bar charts, graphs and pie charts. Qualitative data on the other hand was analysed using key themes which were noted as the most repeated responses by the respondents or the patterns in responses. This entailed tallying up responses and was presented in prose-form.

2.8. Ethical Considerations

The researcher sought consent from the children through their parents and/guardians who provided written consent before engaging them in the interview. She then clearly communicated about the research that was purely academic, she also assured them of the confidentiality of the information that they shared and ensured that this was actualized through anonymity in the forms by not requiring them to indicate their names in the questionnaire. Further the researcher sought for permit from NACOSTI and permission to engage the respondents from the department of children services, Borabu office.

3. Results

3.1. Demographic Background

3.1.1. Gender of the Students

	GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
	Male	33	51.6
	Female	31	48.4
	Total	64	100.0

*Table 2: Analysis of the Student's Gender
Source; Author 2020*

51.56 % of the respondents were males while 48.44% of the respondents were female. This points to the fact that a higher number of boys than girls' transit to secondary schools and are beneficiaries of the PSSB. This is backed by assertions made by Kakwani et.al (2005) that indicate that there is a higher opportunity cost for girls attending school with most families opting to educate boys. Further commenting on the dropout rate for the beneficiaries the Sub-county Children Officer (SCCO) Borabu indicated that, 'in the current financial year only one beneficiary has dropped out, a female and even in the previous year's only girls had dropped out and no boy so far'

These findings go hand in hand with information documented by UNICEF (2007) indicating that more girls record higher dropout rates as they advance to higher levels of education.

3.1.2. Age of the Students

Age	Frequency	Percentage
14	1	1.6
15	6	9.4
16	16	25.0
17	25	39.1
18	12	18.8
19	2	3.1
20	1	1.6
21	1	1.6
Total	64	100.0

*Table 3: Analysis of the Students Age
Source; Author, 2020*

The age of the respondents ranged between 14 and 21 with the highest number of respondents being of the age of 17years at 39.1%. While the least number of respondents were 14 years of age at 1.6%. The extended age would be a pointer to the challenges that orphans face in the journey to education ranging from learning interruptions due to inconsistent school attendance and delayed class to class progression and grade transition. PSSB comes in handy to ensure that they get their right to education. This is well guided by the Social protection policy, (2011) that gives direction that the implementation of any social assistance programme should be guided by the potential of the programme to help the beneficiaries realize their rights.

3.1.3. Form of the Students

Class	Frequency	Percent
Form 1	0	0.00
Form 2	22	34.4
Form 3	25	39.1
Form 4	17	26.6
Total	64	100.0

Table 4: Analysis of the Students Current Class
Source; Author, 2020

From the analysis 39.06% of the beneficiaries are in Form three, 34.38% in Form two and 26.56% in Form four. None of the beneficiaries was indicated to be in Form one. Explaining about the same the SCCO Borabu indicated that applications for the current financial year had not been done in order to capture the 2020 Form one students since the office was yet to receive the second half allocation from the National treasury. This information was confirmed by the other three sub-committee members interviewed. This is an indication of delays occasioned by late release of funds and how it can translate to ineffectiveness of the PSSB in terms of timely reaching out to the target group. These findings are in line with the findings of Kirigo (2008) which established that unpredictability of funds made bursaries to have no significant impact on the retention of pupils in Mombasa District. Similar findings were also documented by Seroney (2015) who identified untimely disbursement as one of the logistical factors influencing the effectiveness of the CBF and rated its influence as the highest (80%).

3.2. Distribution Logistics

3.2.1. PSSB Awareness/Publicity

It is evident from the study that majority (98.44%) of the students have heard about the Presidential Secondary School Bursary against 1.56% who indicated that they did not know about this fund. The four key informants also indicated that the PSSB is widely known. This hopefully translates to increased effectiveness of the PSSB since those who are in need are aware that there is assistance that can bridge their education needs.

3.2.2. Publicity Source

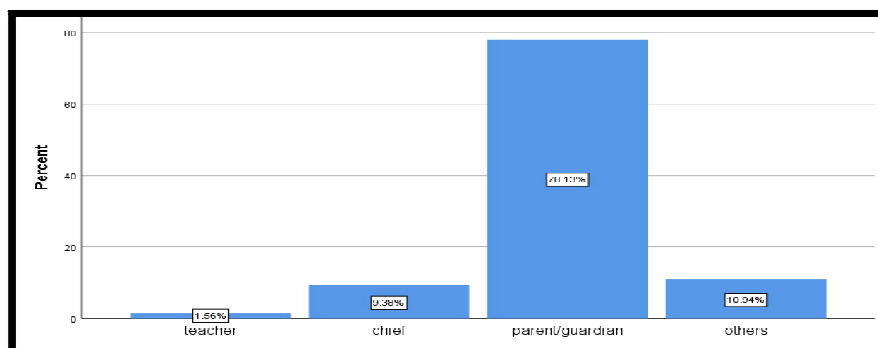


Figure 1: Analysis of the Publicity Source
Source: Author, 2020

The finding indicates that the highest number of students (78.13%) heard about PSSB from a parent or a guardian. Those who heard about it from a teacher were 1.56%, from the chief (9.38%) while (10.94%) heard it from other sources apart from the one indicated in the questionnaire. The two main such sources were Member of County Assembly (MCA) and the officers from the Children's office. These findings indicate that the parents/guardians are a key pillar in the success of PSSB being heavily relied on by the students to not only inform them about the PSSB but of much importance complement the PSSB by ensuring that the beneficiaries remain in school even when PSSB funds have not been released as in the scenario of this years' form ones explained above by the SCCO Borabu.

3.2.3. Eligibility

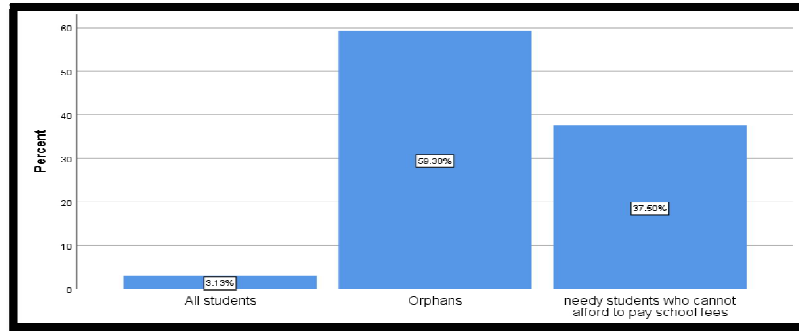


Figure 2: Analysis of Eligibility
Source: Author, 2020

The analysis indicate that 59.38% pointed out that orphans are the ones eligible for the PSSB while 37.50% indicated that needy students who cannot afford to pay school fees are the ones who are eligible for the PSSB and 3.13% felt that all students should as well be considered for the PSSB. The PSSB implementation guidelines however clearly spell out that the orphans are the ones eligible for the PSSB.

3.2.4. Application Procedures

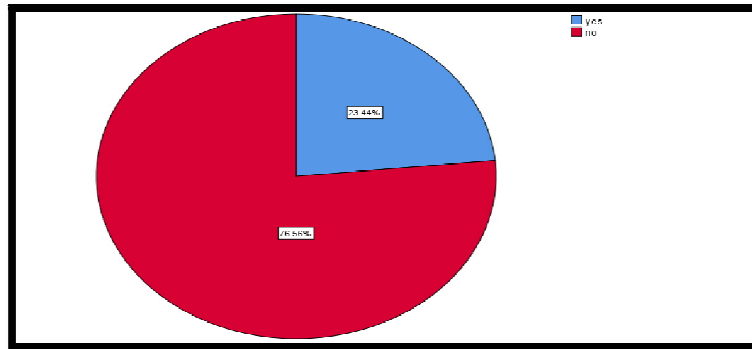


Figure 3: Analysis of the Application Procedures
Source: Author 2020

Only 23.44% of the respondents indicated that they were well acquainted with the application procedures while 76.56% expressed reservation of the knowledge of the same. However when the 23.44% were tasked to briefly describe the application procedure, they could hardly give the correct procedure as laid down by the PSSB implementation guidelines. All the four sub-committee members however indicated that there is an elaborate application procedure that involves application forms with elaborate bio data of the applicants as well as their photo. The application forms also have various levels of checks and balances with the applicants required to have various recommendations as stipulated in the form. Further the committee members indicated as pointed out by the chair, 'we also have a score sheet that makes it very easy for the committee to score the beneficiaries on the various areas, vet them and rank them from the neediest to the least needy'

The score sheet is a great tool in ensuring that the neediest get assistance and thus enhance the effectiveness of the PSSB in reduction of absenteeism due to school fees and thus curb possible eventual drop out. This diverts from what has often been witnessed in a majority of government bursaries which have been accused of non-clear awarding criteria as pointed out by Mwaura (2006) in his study on CBF in Thika District.

3.2.5. Timeliness

All the respondents indicated that they received their PSSB in the course of first term. The SCCO Borabu indicated that they had received the first quarter allocation totalling to Kshs 688,206 and had made partial payments for continuing students as they await the other allocations to pay the full allocated amount per student. The partial allocation means that the students may still be sent home for non-clearance of outstanding school fees balances thus impacting on the effectiveness of the PSSB in reducing absenteeism. The strength of the PSSB however as alluded to by the SCCO Borabu is that the beneficiaries are subjected to the application procedures explained above only once and they get assistance up to form four.

3.2.6. Suggested Appropriate Time

All the respondents indicated that first term was the most appropriate time to receive the bursary. This was the case this financial year as indicated by the respondents as above though this is normally varied and highly depends on the

National treasury each financial year as the SCCO explained. However, almost all learning institutions are reported to be very aggressive to send learners home for school fees with the bulk of the institution requiring more than 50% of the total fees to be cleared during the first term thus making first term the most suitable time to receive the bursary.

3.3. Legal Framework

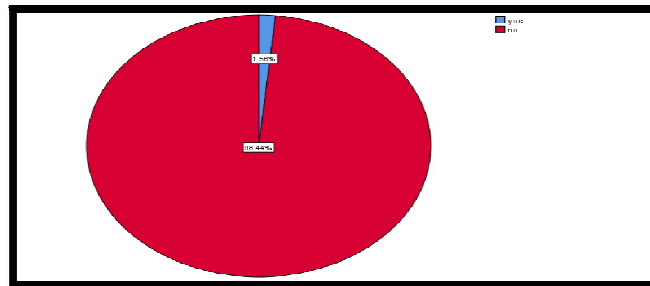


Figure 4: Analysis of Knowledge of Law and Policy Guiding the Implementation of PSSB
Source: Author 2020

Almost all the beneficiaries at 98.44% indicated that they have no knowledge of any law or policy governing the implementation of the PSSB. However they were well aware that the children department is the one tasked with the implementation of the PSSB but none of them could tell the committee that deals with the vetting and the award of the PSSB. The sub-committee members however had a firm grip of the laws and policy guiding the implementation of the PSSB, with the SCCO indicating, that 'The bible of the PSSB is the PSSB implementation guidelines'

This is a diversion from other government bursaries which have been reported to float the implementation guidelines like SEBF which Boit (2015) in his study established that guidelines issued for the disbursement of SEBF by MOE appeared to be floated assertions confirmed by Njeru Enos and Orodho (2003).

3.4. Analysis of Household Socio-Economic Status

3.4.1. Orphan Hood

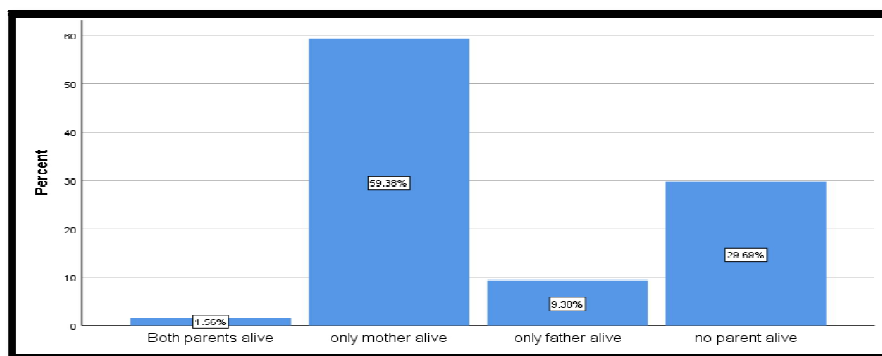


Figure 5: Analysis on Orphan Hood Status

From the study, the bulk of the beneficiaries had only a mother alive at 59.38%, followed by total orphans with no parent alive at 29.69%, then those with only father alive at 9.38% while 1.56% had both parents alive. This means that the program was to a large extent reaching out to the eligible target group that is the OVC since the only respondent who indicated that both parents were alive were actually suffering from disability which to a great extent compromised their ability to provide basic needs including education to their children. Being a complementary programme for CT-OVC, this then illuminates the extent of the PSSB effectiveness in fulfilling its main aim of increasing the number of OVC transiting from secondary school through provision of school fees reflected in the reduction of dropout rates. Further, these findings depict the extent to which the PSSB program implementers have complied with the PSSB implementation guidelines on adherence to the eligibility criteria which is also backed by the earlier findings that indicated that 59.38 % of the respondents indicated that orphans are the ones eligible for PSSB.

3.4.2. Literacy Levels

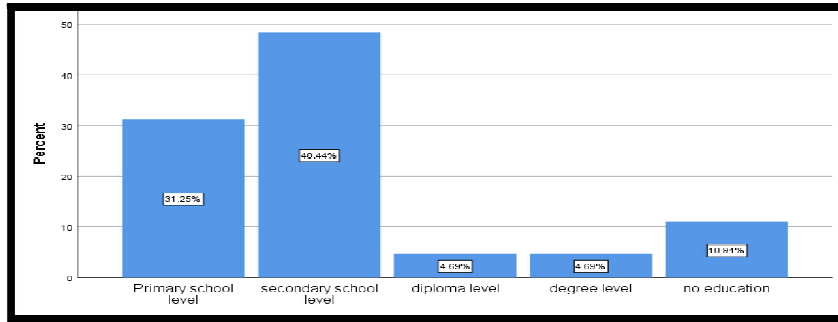


Figure 6: Analysis of the Literacy Levels
Source: Author, 2020

The study findings indicate that close to half of the parents/guardians at 48.44% had acquired secondary education while 31.25% had primary education. However only a small percentage had acquired post-secondary education with 4.69% with diplomas equal to 4.69%with degrees. A significant number of 10.94% had no education. This depicts that majority of the parents/guardians had average basic education to enable them undertake application of the PSSB as well as comprehend the factors that can lead to the effectiveness of the PSSB.

3.4.3. Occupation of the Parents/Guardians

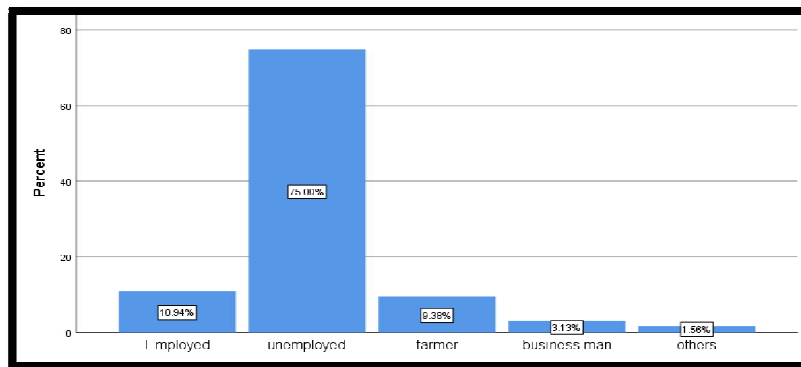


Figure 7: Analysis of the Parents/Guardians Occupation

The findings indicate that 75.00% of the parents/guardians were unemployed with only 10.94% employed. This depicts the limited income levels within these households meaning they require external assistance to be able to meet the ever rising cost of education. This is well documented by Psacharopolous & Woodhall (1985) that many students are unable to finance education from their family resources and is supported by various studies on bursaries in Kenya for instance studies by Seroney (2015) and Obiero (2014).

3.5. Effectiveness of PSSB

3.5.1. Reduction in Absenteeism

3.5.1.1. Absence Due to School Fees

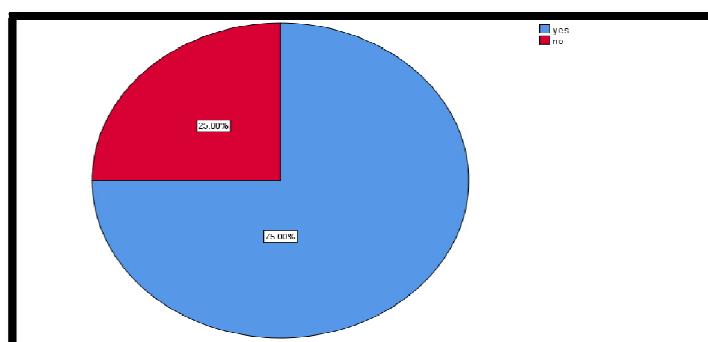


Figure 8: Analysis of Absenteeism Due to School Fees
Source: Author 2020

75.00% of the beneficiaries had been sent home for school fees compared to 30.00% who had not been sent home. This indicates that absenteeism due to school fees was still high despite students benefiting from the PSSB. This is a red flag since absenteeism could easily translate to drop out of beneficiaries from school as established by Seroney (2015) who indicated that a majority of students(53%) spent a significant amount of time away from school due to school fees and eventually dropped out as being away from school reduced their interest in school.

3.5.1.2. Frequency of Absenteeism

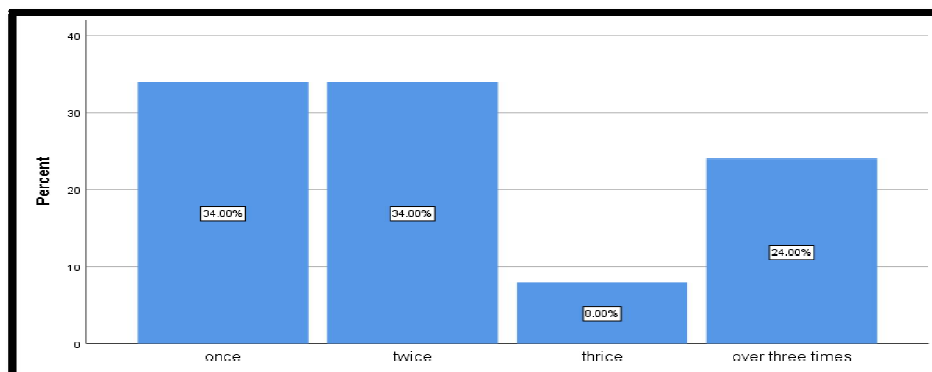


Figure 9: Analysis of Frequency of Absenteeism
Source: Author 2020

34.00% of the respondents had been sent home only once equal to those who had been sent home twice at 34.00%. 24% of the respondents had been sent home over three times and those who had been sent home thrice stood at 8.00%. This depicts that despite being beneficiaries of PSSB the respondents still experienced frequent absenteeism mostly due to the inability of their parents/guardians to clear the remaining balances after they were awarded the PSSB.

3.5.1.3. Time Taken to Resume School after Absenteeism

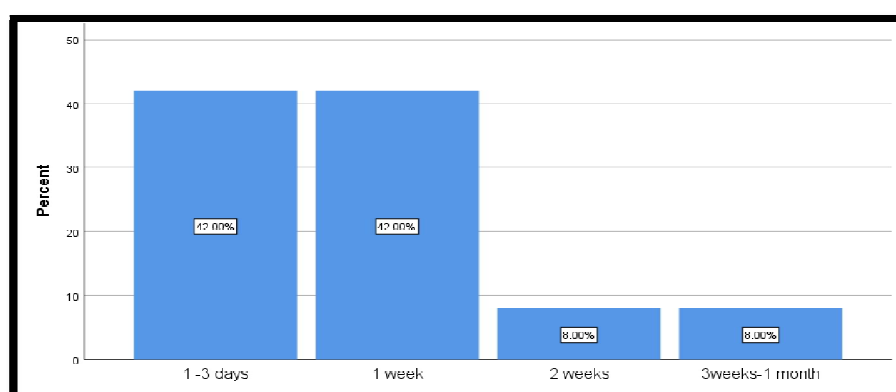


Figure 10: Analysis of Time Taken to Resume School after Absenteeism
Source: Author 2020

The study findings indicate that 42.00% of the beneficiaries took up to 1 week before resuming school after being sent home with another 8.00% taking a maximum of 3 weeks to one month and still another 8.00% took 2 weeks to resume. This is a pointer to the constrains within the household to keep their children in school as established by others like Kakwani et al (2005) who indicated that economic constrains within households results to low education demands a position confirmed by Long (2014) especially for orphans. Putting in mind that some of the PSSB beneficiaries are sent home even more than three times as indicated above at 24%, coupled by the unpredictable release of funds from the treasury that can be untimely sometimes, the effectiveness of the PSSB in reducing absenteeism is highly compromised.

3.5.2. Adequacy of PSSB

3.5.2.1. Amount Awarded

Amount awarded	Frequency	Percentage
10000	49	76.6
20000	8	12.5
Don't know	7	10.9
Total	64	100.0

Table 5: Analysis of the Amount of Bursary Awarded

Majority of the respondents at 76.6% had received 10,000 as bursary award while 12.5% had received 20,000. The SCCO Borabu explaining on the discrepancies indicated that those who had received 20,000 were mostly four forms and those schooling far away from the constituency. However, those beneficiaries who received 10,000 would get an additional 10,000 when the national treasury makes available the second half allocation. The other key informants as indicated by the Chair pointed out that, 'we are aware of the PSSB guidelines that stipulate the maximum allocation at 30,00 but the CSAC committee due to the limitation of funding and the overwhelming numbers of the orphans agreed to have the maximum amount per student as 20,000'.

The piecemeal release of funds from the national treasury coupled by the ever increasing number of orphans exposed the beneficiaries to absenteeism further impacting on the effectiveness of the PSSB.

3.5.2.2. Adequacy of the Amount Awarded

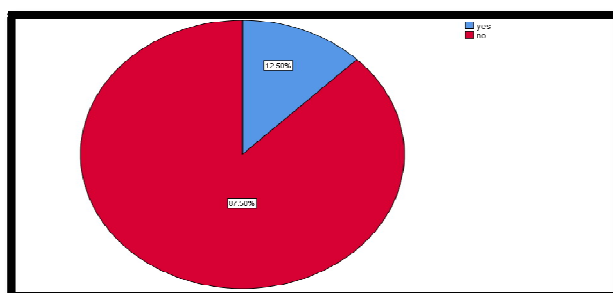


Figure 11: Analysis of the Adequacy of the Amount Awarded
Source: Author 2020

Majority of the beneficiaries at 87.50% indicated that the amount awarded was not adequate to cater for their school fees requirements. A perusal of reports from the children office Borabu compiling the amount of school fees as per the school fees structure versus the amount allocated per beneficiary indicates a discrepancy as alluded to by the respondents with the school fees requirements being higher than the amount allocated thus the PSSB is inadequate. This is typical of other government bursaries as confirmed by Mwaura (2006) and Mwawughanga (2008) who focused on CBF and drew the conclusion that the bursary allocated to learners was inadequate. Further, Seroney (2015) commenting on the adequacy of CBF in his study indicated that the money allocated was inadequate to cater for all the learners education cost and could therefore not guarantee their retention in school.

3.5.2.3. Outstanding School Fees Balances after the Bursary Award

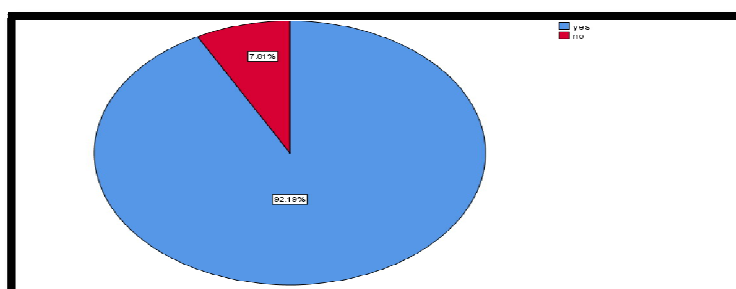


Figure 12: Analysis of Beneficiaries with Outstanding School Fees Balances after Bursary Award
Source: Author 2020

Only a limited 7.81% did not have school fees balances while a majority at 92.19% had balances after receiving the bursary award. This depicts the extent of inadequacy of the PSSB to cover the school fees requirements of the beneficiaries fully.

3.5.2.4. Means of Clearing Outstanding Fee Balances

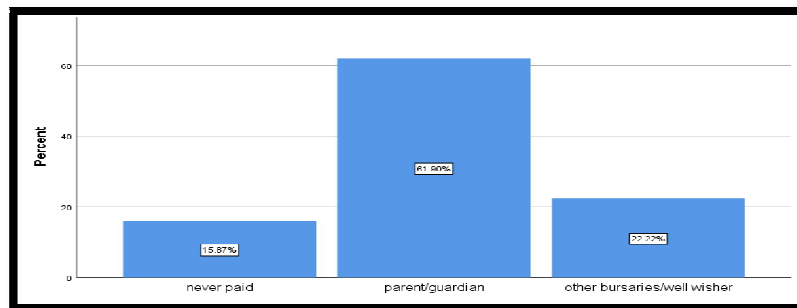


Figure 13: Analysis of Means of Clearing Outstanding Fee Balances
Source: Author 2020

61.90% of parents /guardians carried the burden of clearing outstanding school fees while 22.22% of the students relied on other bursaries/well-wishers while 15.87% had no means of clearing the outstanding balances. This means that the 15.87% wholly relied on the PSSB despite the fact that it could barely cover all the school fees requirements.

3.6. Other school requirements

3.6.1. Ability of the Parents/Guardians to Provide Other School Requirements

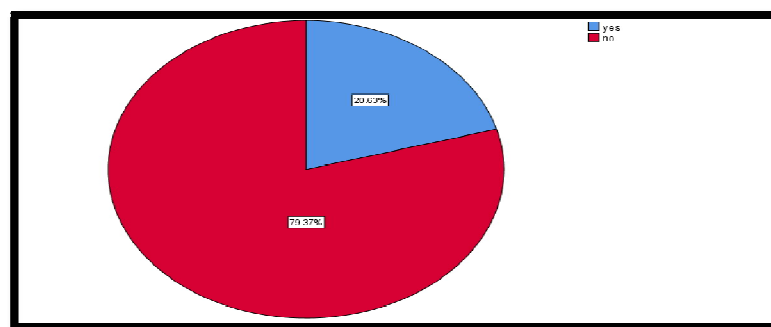


Figure 14: Analysis of the Ability of Parents to Provide Other School Requirements
Source: Author 2020

79.37% of the respondents reported that their parents could not provide other school requirements apart from school fees compared to 20.63% who were able to do so. Among the school requirements enumerated by the respondents included remedial, rim papers, school uniforms, school trips money, shopping and pocket money.

3.6.2. Extent to Which Lack of Other School Requirements Affects Learning

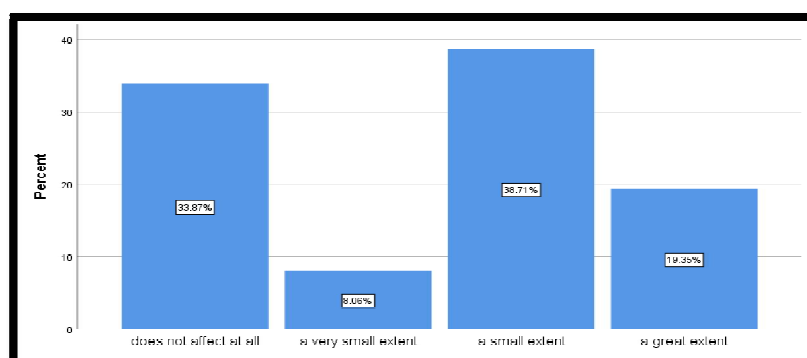


Figure 15: Analysis of the Extent to Which Lack of Other School Requirements Affects Learning
Source: Author 2020

The study findings reveal that 19.35% of learning of the respondents was greatly affected by the lack of the school requirements indicated while 38.71% were only affected to a small extent. For 33.87% respondents', learning was not affected at all and 8.06% were affected only to a very small extent. These school requirements that were enumerated by the students especially the remedial were not captured in the school fees structures and so were not part of what the PSSB can cater for however the school bursars enumerated those costs as part of the school fees and so non-payment of the same meant being sent home for school fees thus occasioning absenteeism further compromising the effectiveness of the PSSB.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusion

The timely distribution of the PSSB funds is a key determinant of the effectiveness of the PSSB in reduction of absenteeism. Late release of the funds from the national treasury means that the funds reach the beneficiaries late in the term when most of the beneficiaries will have been sent home for school fees occasioning absenteeism. The publicity of the PSSB is high within Borabu constituency and as anticipated by the policy makers the PSSB is reaching out to the OVC and there is a recorded minimal dropout rate though gender disparity is still evident with more boys than girls benefiting from the PSSB.

Orphan hood remains a great challenge and a hindrance to the retention of students within secondary school for those who are lucky enough to transit to secondary school. The PSSB is a great initiative since it focuses entirely on those orphans who have enrolled in public secondary school. Other Socio-economic factors like lack of a stable source of income continue to be a big challenge for parents and guardians to meet the ever rising cost of education. The amount provided by the PSSB is way below what most of the public boarding secondary schools require. As much as schools prescribe amounts that purport to comply with the guidelines provided by the ministry more often than not there are other cost that learners have to meet. Most of those costs are prohibitive and others are essentials that the learners cannot do without in school and thus their learning gets hampered when they are unable to get those essentials. However despite the fact that the PSSB has been inadequate it has greatly relieved the burden of raising school fees to parents and guardians taking care of OVC and it has actualized the attainment of their right to education.

4.2. Recommendations

- The study recommends that the government should consider increasing the PSSB amount offered to the students to at least adequately cater for the school fees requirements. This is more so for students who find slots in National schools, extra-county and County schools whose fees requirements is way above what the PSSB is providing to the beneficiaries.
- Further, the study recommends that respective schools where the PSSB beneficiaries are schooling especially those who are total orphans, the school administration should consider giving school fee waivers for the amounts that remain uncovered after these beneficiaries receive the PSSB.
- The study also recommends that the national treasury should prioritize timely release of the PSSB funds to the county treasuries for timely distribution to the beneficiaries at the beginning of particularly first term to avert beneficiaries being sent home for school fees.
- Finally the study recommends that the government considers coming up with a dignity kitty as part of the benefit package for the PSSB to cater for other education needs of the beneficiaries. This will make the PSSB a comprehensive package, help smoothen the learning process for the PSSB beneficiaries and enable them compete equally with other learners for better outcomes.

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