ASSESSING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN ENHANCING COUNTER-TERRORISM OPERATIONS IN LAMU COUNTY, KENYA

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DECLARATION

I declare that this proposal is my independent work and has not been submitted for any other academic award in any University

Signature: **Date: 28/11/2025**

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Supervisor's Declaration

This proposal has been submitted for evaluation with my authorization as a University Supervisor.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

PLAT	-	Plan Against Radicalization
P/CVE	-	Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
CT	-	Counter-Terrorism
CJTF	-	Civilian Joint Task Force
VDP	-	Volunteers for the Defense of the Homeland
KDF	-	Kenya Defense Forces
CBPA	-	Community-Based Participatory Approach
RAN	-	Radicalization Awareness Network

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Citizen Engagement – The active participation of local communities in counter-terrorism efforts through collaboration with security agencies, reporting threats and the involvement in awareness programs.

Counter-Terrorism (CT) – Strategies and operations aimed at preventing, detecting and responding to terrorist threats, involving both security agencies and civilians.

Security Agencies – State and non-state actors responsible for maintaining security, including KDF, National Police Service and the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit.

Terrorism – The deployment of aggression and coercion, frequently targeting civilians, to fulfill political, ideological, or religious goals.

Intelligence Gathering – The process of collecting and analyzing security-related information to prevent terrorist activities, involving both security agencies and local communities.

Community Policing – A strategy where law enforcement collaborates with the public to identify and address security threats, fostering trust and cooperation.

Public Trust in Security Agencies – The confidence citizens have in security personnel to act fairly and effectively, which influences their willingness to engage in counter-terrorism efforts.

Community Policing Participation – involvement of citizens in neighborhood watch programs and security barazas.

Information Sharing – timely reporting of suspicious activities or individuals to authorities.

Trust and Cooperation with Security Agencies – willingness to collaborate and share intelligence with police and other forces.

ABSTRACT

Kenyans have been living in perpetual fear of where and when the next terror attack might strike. But citizen engagement has been lauded as an approach that ensures success of programmes and counter-terrorism operations can be one of them. Therefore, the study undertook to assess citizen engagement in enhancing the counter-terrorism operations in Lamu county, Kenya. The objectives utilised were: to examine the role of local leaders and community groups in fostering citizen collaboration in counter-terrorism efforts, to assess community awareness levels regarding counter-terrorism policies and initiatives, to evaluate the communication channels used between citizens and security agencies for counter-terrorism information sharing. The Social Contract and Community Policing Theories, were used. The study utilized a mixed-methods research design, conducted in Lamu County with a target population of adult residents. A multistage sampling approach was employed, starting by clustering the study area into regions. Purposive sampling was then used to select the specific constituencies and wards, after which the population was divided into three homogeneous clusters: village elders and nyumba kumi elders were purposively sampled, the general public of the local community members were systematically random sampled. Using questionnaires and interview guides, the researcher collected data for this study. Thematic analysis was applied to the qualitative data and the descriptive statistics, including means and averages, were used for the quantitative data, which was also visualized in pie charts, tables and graphs. The findings of the study were: local leaders are crucial for counter-terrorism, providing intelligence and building partnerships, the nyumba kumi initiative, a grassroots neighbourhood watch, is the top counter-terrorism program, bridging the intelligence gap, security barazas are key forums that build trust and cooperation between citizens and police, a lack of training for local leaders compromises security and highlights the need for capacity-building and that multiple communication channels like the chiefs, elders, informal networks and religious leaders form a trust-based security network. The study concluded that, the community-based strategies, led by local leaders, are indispensable for counter-terrorism, building security through trust and collaboration, despite the success of Nyumba Kumi and Security Barazas, a lack of training for community leaders limits their full potential and that Lamu's counter-terrorism success depends on a diverse, trust-based network of communication channels where the community co-produces safety. The study recommended that, to sustain security, formally recognize and strengthen the roles of local leaders and community groups, a structured training program for Village Elders and Nyumba Kumi Leaders is recommended to improve intelligence handling skills and that security agencies should integrate diverse communication channels into a "network of networks" to ensure intelligence flow and reinforce the community's partnership.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the foundational information for the study, the statement of the problem, research objectives and questions. It also contains the significance and justification of the study, scope and limitations.

1.1 Background to the Study

Terrorism, as a complex and evolving threat, often involves ideologically motivated violence aimed at instilling fear, disrupting societies and to achieving political, religious, or ideological goals. The global nature of modern terrorism requires an adaptive and coordinated response, where the counter-terrorism operations must not only address immediate threats but also focus on long-term prevention, such as tackling the root causes of radicalization and fostering international cooperation. According to Mansour-Ille, (2021) the counter-terrorism operations are coordinated actions carried out by governments and the security agencies to prevent, deter and to respond to terrorist activities. These operations encompass a range of activities, including intelligence collection and the law enforcement operations, military interventions and the policy measures focused on disrupting terrorist networks and safeguarding national security. The scope of the counter-terrorism operations can vary from domestic initiatives focusing on local threats to international collaborations addressing global terrorism.

The effectiveness of the counter-terrorism operations is influenced by various factors, including the legal structure with the application of technology and the level of interagency cooperation (El Khoury, 2023). While these operations are crucial for national security, they must be balanced with the protection of human rights and civil liberties. Overly stringent measures can lead to public dissent and may inadvertently fuel extremist sentiments. Therefore, a comprehensive approach that integrates security measures with community engagement and reverence for human rights is essential for the success of counter-terrorism efforts. In this regard, citizen engagement is crucial for strengthening counter-terrorism operations, as active participation from the public fosters trust, improves intelligence-sharing and also strengthens community resilience against extremist ideologies, ultimately making security efforts more effective and sustainable.

According to World Health Organization (2022) citizen engagement refers to the active participation of individuals in the decision-making processes and activities that affect their communities and societies. This involvement can take various forms, including volunteering, participating in public consultations and to collaborating with authorities on community initiatives. Involved citizens are vital for making public institutions more transparent, answerable and efficient, and for contributing innovative answers to developmental problems (Escobar & Henderson, 2024). However, the effective citizen engagement in counter-terrorism operations requires overcoming trust

deficits, fear of retaliation and the limited awareness to foster meaningful collaboration with security agencies.

In the context of counter-terrorism, the citizen engagement is vital for building trust between communities and authorities, enhancing the effectiveness of security measures, and fostering resilience against extremist ideologies. Engaged citizens are more likely to notice and report unusual activities, providing law enforcement with critical information. Moreover, such engagement helps build trust between communities and authorities, which is essential for the successful implementation of counter-terrorism strategies. Some studies have shown that communities with higher levels of engagement are more prepared to prevent radicalization and react to potential threats (Otieno, 2019). Therefore, recognizing the benefits of citizen engagement, it is crucial to establish inclusive, trust-based frameworks that empower communities to contribute meaningfully to counter-terrorism efforts.

In the United Kingdom, the citizen engagement is integral to counter-terrorism operations, exemplified by initiatives like Project Servator. Launched in 2014, Project Servator is a collaborative strategy that involves police working closely with local communities to encourage vigilance and reporting of suspicious activities (Marchment & Gill, 2025). This strategy intends to build trust, increase public knowledge, and create a more resilient society against potential terrorist threats. Marchment and Gill (2025) argue that, the initiative employs a combination of visible and covert policing methods, including the deployment of specially trained officers, to deter and detect

criminal activity. By fostering a partnership between law enforcement and the public, Project Servator seeks to make communities safer and more secure. While initiatives like Project Servator highlight the effective citizen engagement in counter-terrorism, little research exists on its applicability in Lamu County, Kenya. Given Lamu's unique security challenges, most studies focused on the military responses rather than the structured citizen participation.

Similarly, France has implemented the citizen engagement strategies within its counter-terrorism framework. The French government emphasizes the importance of public participation in enhancing national security and combating terrorism. Through various programs and policies like plan against radicalization (PLAT) where the different stakeholders involved in the fight against radicalization recognized that a comprehensive Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) and counter-terrorism (CT) approach should address the factors deemed conducive to radicalization and violent extremism (Alber, Cabalion & Cohen (2020). This collaborative approach aims to strengthen the social fabric and resilience of communities against extremist ideologies. By involving citizens directly in security measures, France seeks to create a more comprehensive and effective response to the evolving threat of terrorism. While France integrated citizen engagement in counter-terrorism, little research has explored its application in Lamu County, Kenya. Existing studies focus on military efforts, highlighting the need for research on the citizen-based strategies.

In Nigeria, the citizen engagement in counter-terrorism is exemplified by the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), established in 2013 in Borno State to combat Boko Haram insurgents. Comprising local volunteers familiar with the terrain, the CJTF collaborates with the Nigerian military, providing intelligence and participating in operations (Ashindorbe, Afatakpa, & Owonikoko, 2021). While their involvement has been pivotal in reclaiming territories, challenges persist, including allegations of human rights abuses and the need for proper oversight to prevent exploitation and ensure accountability. While Nigeria's CJTF demonstrates the role of citizen engagement in counter-terrorism, little research explored its applicability in a context like Lamu County, Kenya. Existing studies have emphasized the state security interventions, underscoring the need to examine organized the citizen and community involvement in the counter-terrorism efforts.

In Somalia, the Macawisley militias, mostly composed of the local farmers, have played a vital role in countering al-Shabaab insurgents (International Crisis Group, 2023). Emerging around 2014 and regrouping in 2022, these civilian forces supported the Somali National Army by leveraging their intimate knowledge of local terrains. However, Cannon (2023) however, the lack of sufficient government support has led to concerns about the militias' operations, including potential human rights abuses and actions driven by personal vendettas rather than strategic counter-terrorism objectives. This underscores the critical need for a structured and accountable approach to integrating civilian militias into national security frameworks, to ensure that their

contributions to counter-terrorism efforts align with broader state security objectives. While Somalia's Macawisley militias highlighted the role of the local communities in counter-terrorism, little research has examined how the citizen engagement can be structured in Lamu County, Kenya.

In Burkina Faso, Demuynck (2021) argued that, the civilian militias formalized under the Volunteers for the Defense of the Homeland (VDP) in early 2020 have been mobilized to protect communities from extremist groups like Ansarul Islam and Islamic State affiliates. While these militias have been effective in providing immediate security, their rapid expansion to nearly 100,000 members without consistent monitoring has resulted in inadequate training, corruption, and human rights violations (Demuynck, 2021). The Burkinabe government's challenge remains in balancing the immediate security benefits of these militias with the long-term risks posed by their lack of regulation and potential to undermine state authority. While Burkina Faso's VDP militias highlighted the role of the civilian engagement in counter-terrorism, little research has examined how similar models could be applied in Lamu County, Kenya.

Like many other African nations, Kenya has experienced the impacts of terrorism. In response, the government has implemented a range of measures, including enacting legislation, constructing a border barrier between Kenya and Somalia, proposing the repeal of the 2006 Refugee Act and the closure of refugee camps, initiating programs to prevent and counter violent extremism, and promoting community-based policing

(Kamau, 2021). Nevertheless, despite these interventions, terrorism and violent extremism continues to undermine the security of Kenya. Kamau (2021) thus asserts that terrorism will persist as a challenge for Kenya unless its counter-terrorism strategy is effectively refined and adjusted. While Kenya has implemented various counter-terrorism strategies, limited research has examined the role of the structured citizen engagement in these efforts, particularly in Lamu County. Existing studies have focused on the state-led interventions, highlighting the need to explore the community-driven approaches to enhancing security against terrorism.

A study by Kariuki (2019) examining the challenges of combating homegrown terrorism in Kenya from a youth radicalization perspective found that, the recruitment of young Kenyan males into extremist groups has persisted since the Kenya Defence Forces' intervention in Somalia in 2011. Findings revealed that financial incentives and unresolved social issues make young men vulnerable to al-Shabaab recruitment, while participants expressed the need for stronger government protection. While Kariuki (2019) examined the challenges of combating homegrown terrorism in Kenya from a youth radicalization perspective, the study primarily focused on the motivations behind radicalization and the effectiveness of government policies in addressing the issue. However, it did not explore the part of the citizen engagement in counter-terrorism efforts, particularly in Lamu County, where community involvement is crucial in addressing persistent security threats. This presented a gap in understanding how the local communities contribute to the counter-terrorism

operations and the effectiveness of the existing engagement strategies in mitigating radicalization and terrorist activities in the region.

A study by Breidlid (2021) examining Kenya's counter-terrorism strategies highlighted the government's adoption of Western-style surveillance models, delegating security functions to both state agencies and select civil society actors. The study found that Kenya has reinforced the institutionalization of radicalization as a concept closely linked to Islam through official policies, reports, and public statements. Analyzing policy documents and interviews, Breidlid illustrated how these definitions shape counter-terrorism discourse and practice. However, the study also revealed that, the Kenya's hardline security measures, particularly those targeting Muslim communities, have paradoxically fueled further radicalization. This underscored the need to reassess the counter-terrorism approaches like the citizen engagement to avoid exacerbating the very issues they seek to resolve.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Numerous reports have highlighted several incidents of terrorism and related activities in Kenya. As noted by Njeri and Nyarangi (2023), between 2022 and 2023, four counties experienced significant impacts: Mandera recorded 25 attacks, Lamu had 21, Garissa reported 23 and Wajir experienced 3. In 2023, 178 individuals lost their lives to the terror-related incidents, an increase from 116 deaths in 2022. Among the fatalities were, 75 security personnel, 68 Al-Shabaab operatives, 30 civilians and 2

government officials. Additionally, 151 individuals sustained injuries, with 93 security officers, 45 civilians and 10 Al-Shabaab members. Three people were also abducted during this period: 2 in Lamu and 1 in Garissa. Therefore, despite Kenya's various counter-terrorism strategies, terrorism continues being a substantial threat due to the inadequate integration of the community-driven approaches.

The recent studies conducted in Kenya have focused on the contribution of the state security agencies. For instance, Kamau, (2021) was questioning whether counter-terrorism was counterproductive and he concluded that, terrorism will continue to pose a challenge for Kenya as long as its counter-terrorism strategy is not effectively aligned or optimized. A study by Kariuki (2019) on the challenges of combating homegrown terrorism in Kenya, found that the youth radicalization in Kenya persists due to the economic hardship and the social vulnerabilities, making the young men susceptible to al-Shabaab recruitment. Similarly, a study by Breidlid, (2021) was on preventing or facilitating radicalization and violent extremism in Kenya and highlighted Kenya’s reliance on Western-style surveillance models, thereby underscored the need for alternative strategies that incorporate community involvement.

These studies focused on the government interventions and radicalization drivers, but they overlook how the local communities contribute to the counter-terrorism efforts. This study, therefore, sought to scrutinize the effectiveness of the citizen engagement in the counter-terrorism operations in Lamu County.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to understand how citizen engagement influences counter-terrorism operations in Lamu county, Kenya.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The researcher sought to meet the following specific objectives:

i. To examine the roles of the local leaders and the community groups in fostering the citizen collaboration in counter-terrorism efforts in Lamu county, Kenya.

ii. To assess community awareness levels regarding counter-terrorism policies and initiatives in Lamu county, Kenya.

iii. To evaluate the communication channels used between citizens and security agencies for counter-terrorism information sharing in Lamu county, Kenya.

1.5 Research Questions

i. What are the roles of the local leaders and the community groups in fostering the citizen collaboration in counter-terrorism efforts in Lamu county, Kenya?

ii. What are the levels of the community awareness regarding counter-terrorism policies and initiatives in Lamu county, Kenya?

iii. How effective are the communication channels used between the citizens and the security agencies for sharing counter-terrorism information in Lamu county, Kenya?

1.6 Significance and Justification of the Study

Citizen engagement is crucial in enhancing counter-terrorism efforts as it fosters collaboration between communities and security agencies. In Lamu County, terrorism and violent extremism have significantly been impacting the local communities, leading to the loss of lives, displacement, economic decline and insecurity. While the government has been implementing various counter-terrorism strategies, including military operations and intelligence-driven interventions, limited attention has been given to the structured citizen participation in these efforts. Despite the potential for the community engagement to strengthen the counter-terrorism initiatives, its role still has remained underexplored in Lamu County. Therefore, it was essential to examine citizen engagement in counter-terrorism operations to understand its effectiveness and identify strategies for improvement.

The findings of this study on citizen engagement in counter-terrorism operations will be valuable to the policymakers, security agencies and the community leaders by offering understanding into the function of the local communities in enhancing security. It will inform strategies for fostering better cooperation between the security actors and the citizens, thus contributing to more sustainable counter-terrorism approaches. Additionally, this research will provide recommendations for improving trust amongst the government and the local residents, ultimately leading to more effective counter-terrorism measures.

This study might also support the expanding field of security studies, particularly within the Kenyan and East African context, by expanding knowledge on community-centered approaches to counter-terrorism. Furthermore, counter-terrorism efforts cannot be solely the responsibility of the state, hence, this research will highlight the importance of collaborative approaches involving the multiple stakeholders. Through this study, effective frameworks for the citizen engagement and partnership management in counter-terrorism have been be identified, thereby providing a foundation for future research and policy development.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focused on the citizen engagement in counter-terrorism operations in Lamu County, Kenya. The study specifically examined: the roles of the local leaders and the community groups in fostering the citizen collaboration in counter-terrorism efforts, assessed community awareness levels regarding counter-terrorism policies and initiatives and evaluated the communication channels used between citizens and security agencies for counter-terrorism information sharing. The research was restricted to Lamu County due to its unique security challenges, including the frequent terrorist attacks and the presence of radicalization hotspots.

The study anticipated several limitations. One potential challenge was the reluctance of the respondents to share information due to security concerns and the fear of reprisal. Some of the respondents were not convinced by the researcher's assurance

that their feedback would be applied solely for the scholarly pursuits which will ensure confidentiality would be maintained.

Another anticipated limitation was the reliance on the local community members respondents, which excluded other key stakeholders such as the state security agencies and the national government administrative officials. This exclusion limited the study's ability to capture a comprehensive perspective on the citizen engagement in counter-terrorism operations, particularly from the viewpoint of the security personnel and the policymakers.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The chapter will review literature on the relation between citizen engagement and counter-terrorism operations in Lamu county, Kenya, guided by the objectives of the research and the overview of the research gaps described. Furthermore, the chapter will discuss the theoretical approach to the study, which will be Social Contract Theory and Community Policing Theory chosen to guide the research. Ultimately, the chapter will highlight the conceptual tool that will be utilized in this study.

2.2. The Roles of The Local Leaders and The Community Groups in Fostering the Citizen Collaboration in Counter-Terrorism Efforts

This section provides an overview of the roles played by the local leaders and the community groups within the communities, drawing on a range of literature to illustrate their significance in the community development and social cohesion. The local leaders often act as advocates, resource mobilizers and also as trusted intermediaries, while the community groups foster social connections, provide support and get to drive collective action for positive change. Despite extensive research on these contributions, there remains a notable gap in the literature regarding how these actors specifically foster citizen collaboration in counter-terrorism efforts. This review highlighted existing knowledge and underscored the need for greater scholarly

attention to the mechanisms and challenges involved in engaging the local leaders and the community groups in counter-terrorism collaboration.

Odama et al. (2021) explored the roles of the local leaders in sustaining community development efforts in rural Nigeria. Their study emphasized that effective local leadership is central to the success and continuity of grassroots development initiatives, such as health, agriculture, infrastructure and most socioeconomic programs. The authors underscored the need for the leaders to be transparent, accountable and inclusive in decision-making, encouraging community participation for the greater ownership and sustainability of the development outcomes. The study further highlighted the challenges faced by the local leaders, including corruption and lack of capacity, which hinder their ability to effectively coordinate and mobilize communities. Importantly, the study called for development-oriented leadership that ensures fair distribution of resources and incorporates gender-friendly practices in the community engagement. However, while the study provided valuable insights into the local leadership in the context of development, it did not focus on the specific role of the local leaders and the community groups in fostering citizen collaboration in counter-terrorism. This created a gap in understanding how such actors support trust-building, information sharing and joint security efforts in regions like Lamu County, Kenya, where the community-based responses are critical in addressing violent extremism.

Ketter and Handa (2022) conducted a qualitative study on the role of the Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) in internal security operations against terrorism in Kenya from 2000 to 2021, relying on secondary data sources for content analysis. The study found that effective counter-terrorism efforts require enhanced multi-agency collaboration between the KDF and the National Police Service, while challenges such as poor working conditions, low remuneration, and corruption hinder security operations. It concluded that strengthening intelligence capabilities, improving inter-agency coordination, and addressing systemic challenges are crucial for combating terrorism. While the study addressed high-level institutional coordination, it did not explore the roles of the local leaders and the community groups in fostering citizen collaboration at the grassroots level. This presented a gap in understanding how the local actors contribute to building trust, enhancing information flow and supporting joint counter-terrorism efforts, particularly in the vulnerable areas like Lamu County, Kenya, where community engagement is vital for sustainable security responses.

Seale et al. (2022) examined the role of the community and religious leaders, as well as other natural leaders from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, as key information intermediaries during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their study, was based on interviews with the stakeholders in Australia, thereby highlighting how these leaders effectively bridged communication gaps between the government agencies and the communities, ensuring critical messages reached individuals. However, the research also identified challenges such as limited recognition and support from the

authorities, risks of message distortion due to intermediaries' personal beliefs and various potential burnout, underscoring the need for adequate resources to sustain their involvement. Despite these valuable insights, there remained a significant gap in understanding how the local leaders and the community groups, would perform similar roles in fostering citizen collaboration for counter-terrorism efforts. Specifically, little is known about their capacity, reach and challenges within Lamu's unique socio-cultural and security context, including how they facilitate cooperation with the security agencies, mitigate risks of message distortion and receive support to prevent burnout. Addressing these gaps was crucial for developing tailored strategies that leverage the local leadership to enhance trust, information sharing and active citizen participation in counter-terrorism initiatives in Lamu County.

Mbaraka (2023) examined the vital roles the local communities play in maintaining peace and security in Tanzania's Monduli district, highlighting the effectiveness of participatory security initiatives that engage the diverse stakeholders such as NGOs, police, community members and the government leaders. Using qualitative methods, the study found that, while the community involvement significantly contributed to peacebuilding, challenges like inadequate government support, limited financial incentives, insufficient training, restricted decision-making participation and poor communication hindered the local security groups' performance. The research recommended for stronger government supervision, motivation and regulatory frameworks to empower the communities and improve collaboration with the law

enforcement. However, there was a notable gap in understanding how the local leaders and the community groups would foster the citizen collaboration specifically in the counter-terrorism efforts. Given Lamu's unique security and the socio-cultural context, further research was needed to explore the nature of the local actors' engagement with the security agencies, the barriers they face and the effectiveness of participatory security approaches in enhancing trust, information sharing and the active citizen participation in counter-terrorism initiatives.

And lastly, Ngurukwem, Adida, and Nwosa (2023) examined insecurity and community leadership in Imo State, highlighting the critical role the local leaders play amid rising security threats such as kidnappings, killings and banditry. They found that, the community leaders have been largely ineffective in addressing these challenges due to insufficient leadership competencies and inadequate preparation to navigate complex security environments. The study emphasized the need for ongoing capacity-building initiatives, including regular leadership training for both the current leaders and the community members, to develop a pool of competent leaders capable of responding effectively to insecurity. However, there was a significant gap in understanding how the local leaders and the community groups, specifically foster the citizen collaboration in counter-terrorism efforts. Given Lamu's unique socio-political and security context, further research was needed to explore the preparedness, roles and the challenges of the local leaders in engaging the citizens and security agencies, as well as the effectiveness of leadership capacity-building initiatives tailored to

counter-terrorism collaboration. Addressing these gaps was essential for designing targeted interventions that empower the local leaders and the community groups to enhance trust, coordination and active citizen participation in Lamu's counter-terrorism strategies.

2.3. The Community Awareness Levels Regarding Counter-Terrorism Policies and Initiatives

This section reviewed literature on the community awareness levels regarding counter-terrorism policies and initiatives. It examined how well the communities understand the objectives, strategies and the available programs designed to prevent radicalization and the violent extremism. However, the studies reveal variations in awareness across the different communities, often influenced by factors such as communication approaches, cultural relevance and the inclusiveness of the engagement strategies. These reviews have identified gaps in the literature concerning the depth of the community understanding of specific counter-terrorism policies and the impact of this awareness on the citizen collaboration, underscoring the need for more targeted research in this area.

Otieno (2019) examined the role of Kenya's intelligence community in counterterrorism, highlighting the crucial support provided by the local communities in gathering intelligence to prevent attacks and reduce casualties. The study found that, inter-agency cooperation and intelligence sharing were effective and emphasized the need to enhance the community intelligence through greater integration of the

local knowledge. It also recommended on some joint training and workshops to build trust among the agencies and to improve operational coordination. However, the study did not deeply investigate the level of community awareness regarding counter-terrorism policies and initiatives, particularly in high-risk areas like Lamu County. This revealed a gap in understanding how informed community members were about these policies, their knowledge of reporting mechanisms and the factors influencing their engagement with the security agencies, underscoring the need for further research in this area to improve the citizen collaboration and policy effectiveness.

Thomas et al. (2020) examined community reporting on violent extremism by "intimates," highlighting that, the individuals are motivated by care for loved ones and community safety, with a strong preference for face-to-face, locally based reporting through their trusted community figures rather than the national hotlines nor any digital platforms. Their study emphasized the importance of trust, accountability and some clear feedback in encouraging reporting, as well as the role of the community brokers in facilitating information sharing. These findings suggested that, any effective counter-terrorism efforts must consider the social and relational dynamics within the communities to foster more greater collaboration. However, while these insights offered valuable understanding of reporting dynamics, they did not address the specific socio-cultural context of Lamu County, Kenya, leaving a gap in knowledge about how community awareness of counter-terrorism policies and initiatives would operate locally and influence citizen engagement.

Arfsten (2020) analysed terror awareness as a security practice that encourages the civilians to remain vigilant before, during and also after terror events. Through critical discourse analysis of the U.S.A homeland security materials, including the "If You See Something, Say Something" campaign, the study found that, while terror awareness builds on longstanding civil defence traditions, it also frames all the citizens and spaces as some potential threats, increasing ambiguity and suspicion in everyday life. Although the government efforts have raised some public vigilance, the actual impact on the citizens' behaviour remains unclear, with significant social consequences such as heightened suspicion and racial profiling. However, Arfsten's insights primarily focused on the U.S. context, revealing a gap in understanding how such individualized awareness translates into the community knowledge and engagement with counter-terrorism policies in places like Lamu County, Kenya. There was therefore limited research on how cultural and some social factors in Lamu would shape vigilance, reporting behaviours and trust in the security agencies, thereby highlighting the need for empirical studies to assess community awareness and its effects on counter-terrorism efforts in this unique context.

Mesok (2022) explored Kenya's Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) agenda as a form of civil counterinsurgency that compels the community participation in security efforts, often placing the community organizations especially those supporting returnees under significant social and operational strain due to stigma and limited rehabilitation frameworks. While initiatives in counties like Lamu have

improved awareness of radicalization and early warning signs, challenges such as trust deficits, cultural barriers and the fears of securitization hinder more effective community engagement. Despite these insights, there was a significant void in practical research. measuring the overall degree of the community knowledge and perceptions of counter-terrorism policies in Lamu County, highlighting the need for such a study that can assess how the socio-cultural factors influence the citizen awareness and the collaboration with the security agencies.

Mwinyi and Mutonyi (2024) examined security awareness programs in Lamu County, identifying four key initiatives: the Nyumba Kumi Initiative, School Outreach, Physical Security and Cyber Security Awareness Programs. Using a mixed-methods approach with surveys and interviews, the study found that, those programs were crucial in educating the public and promoting collaboration with the security agencies, emphasizing the state as the central security provider. The authors also underscored the importance of improved training and capacity building among the security personnel to effectively engage various diverse community environments. However, the research did not assess the actual levels of community understanding of counter-terrorism policies or evaluate how these programs influence the public behaviour and trust. Therefore, a gap existed in understanding the depth of the community awareness regarding counter-terrorism initiatives in Lamu County, necessitating more further research to determine how well the local populations comprehend and engage with these security measures.

2.4. The Communication Channels Used Between Citizens and Security Agencies for Counter-Terrorism Information Sharing

This section reviewed literature on the communication channels between the citizens and the security agencies for counter-terrorism information sharing. It highlights the various formal and informal mechanisms, such as hotlines, community forums and the digital platforms, that facilitate reporting and information exchange. The studies highlighted, showed that the effectiveness of these channels depends on various factors like trust, accessibility and the cultural context. However, the gaps remain in understanding how well these channels foster the collaboration and trust, indicating a need for further research to improve communication and the citizen engagement in counter-terrorism efforts.

Ajisafe and Odunayo (2020) examined the communication challenges in Nigerian policing, finding that poor internal communication hampered decision-making and the overall effectiveness. Using surveys and statistical analysis, they emphasized that effective policing required a two-way communication and unobstructed information flow and then recommending for a greater investment in ICT and communication skills training. While their study highlighted the importance of robust communication systems for policing, there was a gap in understanding how the communication channels functions between the citizens and the security agencies for counter-terrorism information sharing in Lamu County, Kenya. Specifically, little is still known about the types of platforms used, their accessibility and trustworthiness, and how the local

socio-cultural factors affect the information flow. Addressing this gap was crucial for developing effective, context-specific communication strategies that can foster cooperation and trust in Lamu's county counter-terrorism efforts.

As for Ajisafe and Odunayo (2020) they examined communication challenges in Nigerian policing and found that, some poor internal communication hampered decision-making and overall effectiveness. Using surveys and statistical analysis, they emphasized that effective policing required two-way communication and most unobstructed information flow, thereby recommending a greater investment in ICT and communication skills training. While their study highlighted the importance of robust communication systems for policing, there was a gap in understanding how communication channels functioned between the citizens and the security agencies for counter-terrorism information sharing, and the same that would could be applied in the Lamu County, Kenya context. Specifically, little was known about the types of platforms used, their accessibility and also their trustworthiness and how the local socio-cultural factors affected information flow. Addressing this gap was crucial for developing effective, context-specific communication strategies that can foster cooperation and trust in Lamu's counter-terrorism efforts.

Giami et al. (2023) studied the impact of strategic communication on counter-terrorism efforts in Northeast Nigeria, highlighting the critical role of communication channels like radio and television in delivering counter-narratives that counteract the terrorist propaganda and thereby reducing radicalization. Their survey of experts

emphasized the influence of the community leaders and the public figures in spreading these messages. The study recommended forming various strategic communication teams within the counter-violent extremism programs and expanding most communication infrastructure to reach the vulnerable populations. However, there was a gap in understanding the specific communication channels used between the citizens and the security agencies for counter-terrorism information sharing, that could be applied in the context of Lamu County, Kenya. Given Lamu's unique socio-cultural and infrastructural context, more research was needed to explore how the local communication platforms and influencers affect the information flow and trust, which is vital for effective counter-terrorism collaboration.

And Benlahcene, Ramdani and Safi (2024) in their study, examined government-citizen communication in Algeria's southern states, finding that face-to-face interaction was the dominant mode while the use of ICT and the social media was limited. Their study revealed infrequent communication that did not promote active citizen engagement or participation in decision-making, posing challenges for development in marginalized communities. However, there was a gap in understanding how those communication channels operate between the citizens and the security agencies for counter-terrorism information sharing. The balance between traditional and ICT-based communication, as well as the effect of the local socio-cultural and infrastructural factors on trust and effectiveness, remained unexplored. Addressing this gap would be essential to improve timely information exchange and

collaboration as in the context in Lamu's counter-terrorism efforts, particularly given the county's unique security challenges and the diverse community dynamics.

Oxholm and Glaser (2023) conducted a qualitative study exploring police officers' communication with the community members, identifying five core themes: communication as central, advocacy, cover, withholding and connection. These themes reflected how the officers' beliefs, power dynamics and the social context shape communication strategies. The study found that, the approaches like "cover" and "withholding" undermine the trust and reduce the community engagement, whereas "connection" and "advocacy" foster relationship-building and effective information sharing, which are essential for a sustained cooperation and counter-terrorism efforts. However, the research did not investigate the specific communication channels used between the citizens and the security agencies for counter-terrorism information sharing as would have been applied in our setting of Lamu County, Kenya. There was a significant gap in understanding which formal and informal channels could be most trusted and effective in this local context, how the cultural and the historical factors influence most communication preferences and how these communication strategies would apply within Lamu's unique security environment. Addressing these gaps was vital for developing most tailored communication systems that can enhance trust, collaboration and timely information exchange between the citizens and the security agencies in Lamu's counter-terrorism initiatives.

2.5. Theoretical Framework

The two suitable theories to guide a study on Citizen Engagement in Counter-Terrorism Operations in Lamu County, Kenya are: Social Contract Theory (Thomas Hobbes – 1651, John Locke – 1689, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau – 1762) and Community Policing Theory (Herman Goldstein, 1979).

2.5.1 Social Contract Theory (Thomas Hobbes – 1651, John Locke – 1689, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau – 1762)

The Social Contract Theory provided a foundational perspective for the understanding the role of the citizen engagement in the counter-terrorism operations. The theory posits that, the individuals surrender certain freedoms to the government in exchange for security and protection. In this context, the government has a duty to safeguard the citizens from terrorism while ensuring their rights and freedoms are not infringed. Examining the citizen engagement through this lens, highlighted the balance between the state security measures and the community involvement in counter-terrorism efforts.

Furthermore, the theory helped to analyse the confidence and the collaboration between the law enforcement bodies and the local populations in Lamu County. Locke emphasized that, a legitimate government must secure the consent of the governed, implying that counter-terrorism strategies should incorporate the community's input rather than rely solely on the state-led interventions. If the citizens perceive the government efforts as unjust or repressive, they may withhold cooperation, leading to

ineffective counter-terrorism measures. This theory underscored the necessity of transparent, participatory security initiatives to build trust and also enhance collaboration.

Additionally, Rousseau's perspective on collective will suggested that the effective counter-terrorism policies should reflect the interests and needs of the community. If the government neglects the citizen's participation, it risks alienating the public and fostering resentment, which could inadvertently support radicalization. By aligning the counter-terrorism efforts with the principles of the social contract, the study explored strategies for strengthening citizen engagement, ensuring that security measures are both effective and socially accepted in Lamu County.

A key weakness of the Social Contract Theory in this study was its broad focus on the general relationship between the state and the citizens, without detailing specific mechanisms for the citizen's participation in security efforts. To address this gap, the Community Policing Theory (Goldstein, 1979) was included to provide a practical framework for how the security agencies and the public can collaborate in counter-terrorism operations through trust-building, shared responsibility and proactive engagement.

2.5.2 Community Policing Theory (Herman Goldstein, 1979)

Community Policing Theory (Goldstein, 1979) emphasized a proactive, collaborative approach to security, where the law enforcement agencies work closely with the communities to identify and address safety concerns. Within the framework of

counter-terrorism initiatives in Lamu County, this theory guided the study by emphasizing the significance of involving the local communities in security measures. By cultivating trust and collaboration between the residents and the law enforcement agencies, the community-based policing can enhance intelligence gathering, early detection of threats and various swift response to potential attacks.

Additionally, this theory underscored the need for shared responsibility in maintaining security. It suggested that the citizens should not only be passive recipients of the state protection but active participants in counter-terrorism efforts through reporting suspicious activities, participating in security forums and collaborating with the law enforcement. In Lamu County, where terrorism threats persist, community policing can provide a structured approach to integrating the local knowledge and experiences into the security strategies, making interventions more effective and locally acceptable.

Finally, Community Policing Theory offered practical strategies for overcoming distrust between the citizens and the security forces, a common challenge in counter-terrorism operations. By advocating for a decentralized policing, transparency and engagement, the theory provided a framework for improving relations between the security agencies and the local communities in Lamu. This approach ensured that counter-terrorism measures were not only security-driven but also socially inclusive, addressing underlying grievances that may contribute to radicalization.

2.6. Conceptual Framework

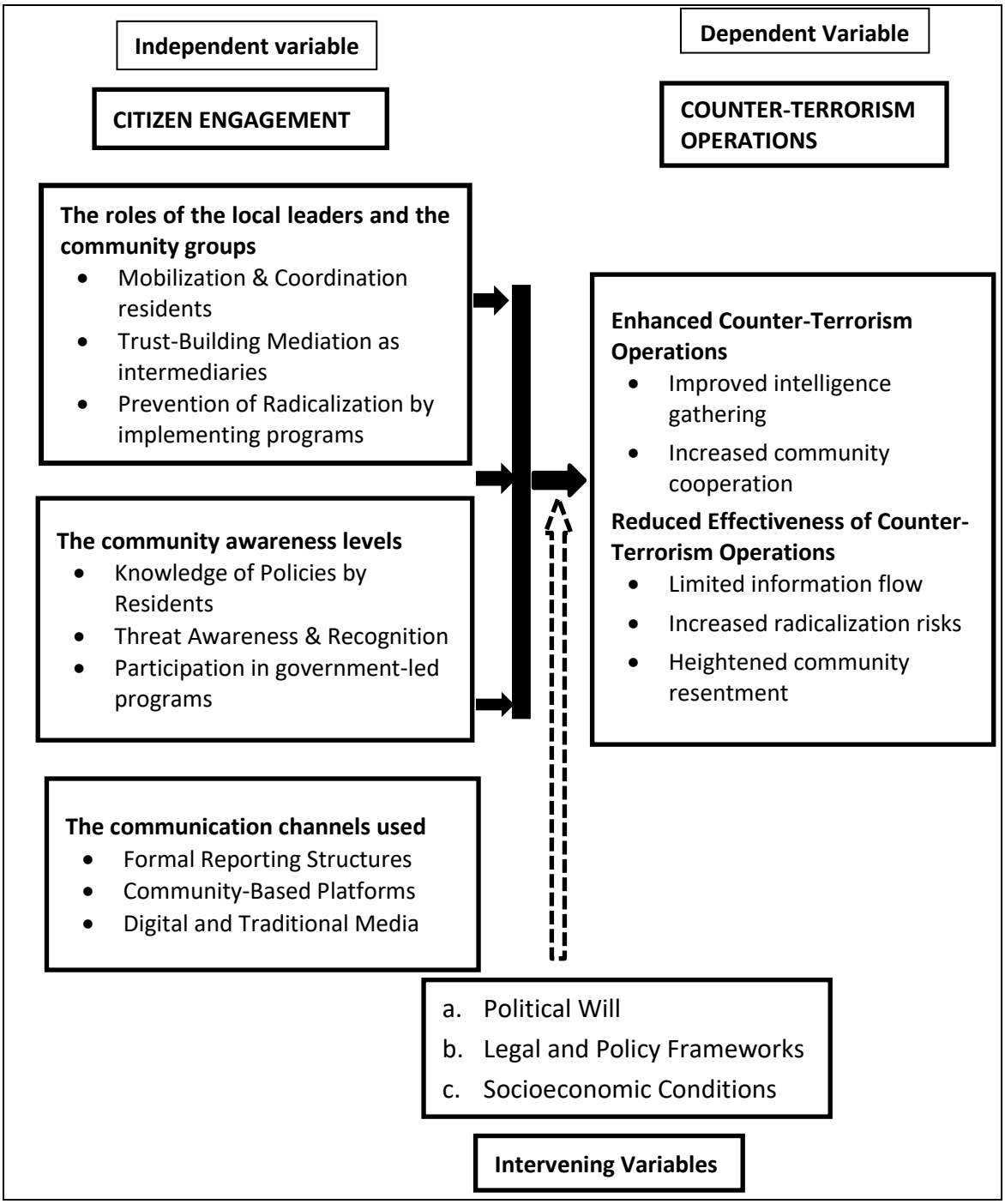

Figure 1: Citizen Engagement and Counter-Terrorism Operations

The independent variables in the study were: the roles of the local leaders and the community groups in fostering the citizen collaboration in counter-terrorism efforts in Lamu county, Kenya, community awareness levels regarding counter-terrorism policies and initiatives in Lamu county, Kenya, the communication channels used between citizens and security agencies for counter-terrorism information sharing in Lamu county, Kenya. The dependent variables in the study were: Enhanced Counter-Terrorism Operations and Reduced Effectiveness of Counter-Terrorism Operations. The connection between the independent variables and the dependent variable were examined in the context of the intervening variables: Political Will, Legal and Policy Frameworks, and the Socioeconomic conditions.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology the study utilized. It captures the study area, research design, target population, sampling technique and the sample size, data collection method, reliability and validity, pilot test, data management and the analysis and finally the logistical and the ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

A Mixed-Methods Research Design was the best approach for studying the Citizen Engagement and Counter-Terrorism Operations in Lamu County, as it combined both quantitative and qualitative methods, allowing for a comprehensive and well-rounded understanding of the research problem. According to Creswell (2015) the Mixed-methods research (MMR) is usually the best research methodology as it incorporates multiple methods to address the research questions in an appropriate and principled manner. It involved collecting, analyzing, interpreting and then reporting both the numerical trends (quantitative data) and the in-depth explanations (qualitative data).

For the quantitative methods, the structured questionnaires provided statistical evidence on the extent of the citizen engagement, perceptions and the key influencing factors. For the qualitative methods, the interviews, offered a rich, descriptive insights into the personal experiences, challenges and motivations behind the citizen

participation or reluctance. Therefore, a Mixed-Methods Research Design was ideal as it integrated the statistical evidence and the personal narratives, ensuring a balanced, evidence-based approach to understanding and improving the citizen engagement in counter-terrorism operations in Lamu County.

3.3 Study Area

The study was conducted in Lamu County. It covers an area of six thousand, two hundred and fifteen square kilometers and is one of the forty-seven counties of Kenya, which were established in two thousand and thirteen after Kenya's eight provinces were subdivided into forty-seven counties. Lamu County is notable for its diverse experiences with the security operations and is home to both the local and the foreign military installations, making it an exemplary location for studying the counter-terrorism operations.

Lamu County is made up of ten county wards: Mkomani, Shella, Faza, Kiunga, Basuba, Hindi, Hongwe, Bahari, Mkunumbi and Witu. However, the results from this study should be cautiously considered as a representation of other parts of Kenya.

3.4 Target Population

The target population for this study were the local community members of Lamu who were aged nineteen years and above and who understood the concept of counter-terrorism operations. The approximate number of the people aged nineteen years and above in the county was sixty-nine thousand, three hundred and seventy, which

represents forty-eight point two percent of the population, according to City Population, twenty nineteen. (City Population, 2019).

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study adopted a multistage sampling technique to determine the sample size and identify the respondents. A multistage sampling was a practical approach for dealing with such a large population as it breaks down the population into stages, progressively narrowing the sample until the final selection was made. This method often combines simple random sampling with other approaches like stratified or cluster sampling to improve efficiency and representation (Theresa & McBurney, 2012).

In this particular study, two constituencies were purposively selected. This selection accounted for 100% of the total county wards, ensuring a complete coverage for the purposes of the research. While Gay and Diehl (1992) recommended sampling 20% of a population (n) compared to the overall total (N), the researcher opted to sample the entire target area. This decision was supported by Martin and Bateson (1986), who argued that increasing the sample size enhances the statistical power of a study.

Second, 2 county wards were purposively sampled, that is 20% of the total constituencies. Gay & Diehl, (1992) recommended 20% for a small number of *n* compared to the general *N*. They were Mkunumbi with land area of 1366.1 (km2) and Basuba with land area of 1708.7 (km2). They were selected because they were the

ones having the largest area sizes and hence offering the best site for diversity. They were also in high population density areas, which mostly experience counter-terrorism operations. This made them the appropriate samples as they were rich in the information needed to address the objectives.

Third, clustering was used to group the target population into three homogenous groups: the village and nyumba kumi elders and the general public. Kriegel, Kröger, and Zimek (2012) stated that, clustering involved arranging a set of objects in such a way that the objects in the same group (called a cluster) were more similar to each other than to those in other groups (clusters).

1. Ten village elders were purposively sampled as our respondent. Gay and Diehl (1992) recommended using 20% of the sample size (n) relative to the total population size (N) for the comparison.
2. Ten nyumba kumi elders were purposively sampled as our respondent. Gay and Diehl (1992) recommended using 20% of the sample size (n) relative to the total population size (N) for the comparison.
3. The general public of the local community members for every 6^{th} member of the general public were systematic random sampled as our respondent. A total of 384 were needed (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Systematic random sampling was a type of sampling method in which sample members from a study population get to be selected according to a random starting point N^{th} number (Crossman, 2017).

Krejcie & Morgan (1970) (appendix IV) produced an easy reference table for determining the sample size. No calculations were required to use the table. The target population of 69,370 fell under N 75,000. Therefore, the sample size was 382 or more. The distribution of the sample size was as shown in table 1 below**.**

Table 1: Sampling and Sample Size

Population Strata	**Target Population**	**Sample Size**
Village elders	57	10
Nyumba Kumi elders	42	10
Local community members	<100,000	382
Total	<100,000	402

3.6 Research Instruments

The mixed methods approach was used in this study, with questionnaires collecting quantitative data, whereas one-on-one interviews gathered qualitative data.

3.4.1. **Questionnaires** (Appendix I)**:** Questionnaires were administered utilizing both the 'closed-ended' questions (questions that mainly had rating scales) and the 'open-ended' questions (where respondents were given an opportunity to write their opinions or feelings about the response). Research questions guided the construction of the questionnaire so that all areas could be addressed. The questionnaires were administered with the help of the research assistants. The

respondents were more truthful while responding to the questionnaires regarding such controversial issues due to the anonymity of the responses. The participants were allowed to complete the questionnaires by themselves.

3.4.2. **Interviews** (Appendix II): One-on-one interviews were conducted with the: village elders and the nyumba kumi elders. Interviews were an effective data gathering tool because they minimized the problem of unanswered questions and gave room for further probing.

3.7 Validity

To ensure the quality and credibility of the research instrument, the study assessed both construct validity and content validity. According to Peter (1981) construct validity refers to the extent to which a research instrument accurately measures the theoretical construct it is intended to assess. This involved making sure that the questions reflected the concept being studied rather than unrelated variables. Ensuring construct validity required that the key variables in the study were clearly and accurately operationalized so that the respondents understood them without ambiguity.

Content validity, on the other hand, focused on how well the items in the instrument comprehensively represented all aspects of the concept under investigation. DeVon et al. (2007) explained that, the content validity evaluates whether the instrument covers all the relevant domains of the concept. In this study, for instance, the key objective was to understand the factors influencing the citizen participation in the counter-

terrorism initiatives, the questions therefore reflected those key factors accurately and completely.

To achieve this, a content validity instrument was developed in consultation with subject matter experts. These experts reviewed the questions and confirmed that they adequately covered the intended domains. Additionally, the findings from multiple research instruments were triangulated. This process of triangulation helped to provide a more thorough and balanced interpretation of the data by comparing insights from different sources.

3.8 Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which a research instrument produces consistent and stable results over time (Wong et al., 2012). In this study, the researcher used the test-retest correlation method to assess the dependability, stability and the predictability of the measurement tools. This approach involved administering the same test twice to a group of individuals who shared a similar characteristic with the target population. The two test sessions were conducted under the same conditions, with a two-week interval in between. After both sets of data were collected, the researcher computed the correlation between the scores from the first and second tests. For the purposes of this study, a reliability coefficient of 0.7 or higher was deemed acceptable.

Table 2: Reliability Coefficients for Survey Constructs

Construct/Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Interpretation
Role of Local Leaders and Community Groups	5	0.74	Acceptable Reliability
Community Awareness Levels	6	0.81	Good Reliability
Communication Channels Used Between Citizens	4	0.77	Acceptable Reliability
Overall Instrument Reliability	15	**0.79**	**Good Reliability**

It can be explained as follows:

- The role of the local leaders and the community groups showed acceptable internal consistency with $\alpha = 0.74$.
- The community awareness levels had good reliability ($\alpha = 0.81$), indicating the items under this section were highly consistent.
- The communication channels also demonstrated acceptable reliability ($\alpha = 0.77$), making the tool suitable for measuring the communication practices in the community.
- The overall reliability coefficient of 0.79 confirmed that the survey instrument was reliable for the intended study.

3.9 Pilot Study

A pilot test was conducted involving a random sample of 30 respondents, including the 5 village elders, 5 Nyumba Kumi elders and 10 local community members in Kilifi County. Although these participants were not part of the main study population, they shared similar characteristics with the targeted respondents. The purpose of the pilot study was to help the researcher to refine and to adjust the research tools. Specifically, the results were used to identify and to correct issues such as ambiguous wording, potential misinterpretation and any language that could have been unclear or off-putting to the respondents.

3.10 Data Collection procedures

The study relied on the data gathered from the primary sources and specifically, the local community members who were expected to have firsthand knowledge and the understanding of the citizen engagement practices within the region.

The questionnaires were the principal data collection tool for the local community members. These questionnaires were administered with the assistance of trained research assistants. The assistants were present during the exercise, providing clarification and guidance as the respondents filled in their answers, ensuring accuracy and consistency.

One-on-one interviews were also conducted with the selected respondents, specifically the village elders and the Nyumba Kumi elders. These interviews were designed to

collect in-depth qualitative insights and were audio-recorded to preserve the integrity of the responses and allow for thorough analysis.

3.11 Data Analysis

The study employed both the qualitative and the quantitative data analysis techniques. For the qualitative data, a thematic analysis approach used. This involved the identification, examination and the recording of patterns and themes within the data. The findings were then organized and presented under the key themes and categories. To enhance authenticity and provide context, direct quotations from respondents were incorporated where appropriate.

For the quantitative data, the analysis focused on the descriptive statistics. Tools like percentages, averages and the means were used to summarize and interpret the data. Additionally, visual aids, particularly the pie charts were utilized to clearly present the trends and the distributions.

To ensure a thorough analysis of the findings, both the qualitative and the quantitative data were triangulated. This integration helped to explore the relationships between the citizen engagement and the counter-terrorism operations, adding depth and reliability to the conclusions drawn.

3.12 Data Management and Ethical Considerations

Before the research began, the researcher sought the formal authorization to conduct the study. A permission was first requested from the University. Additionally, a

clearance will be obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), which issued a Research license.

To uphold ethical standards, the researcher notified all participants about the study through a covering letter (Appendix 1). The letter explained the purpose of the study and assured the participants that their involvement was entirely voluntary. It also emphasized that the information provided would be treated with strict confidentiality. Informed consent was also obtained from each of the respondent before the data collection began.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter concentrated on presenting, analyzing and discussing the data gathered for this research. The discussions were aligned with the questionnaires and the interview guides. The study aimed to examine the relationship between the citizen engagement and enhancing counter-terrorism operations in Lamu county, Kenya. The chapter was structured into three sections based on the research objectives guiding the study. The first and second sections detail the response rate and the demographic profiles of the participants, while the third section was based on the study objectives, which focused on the following:

a) To examine the roles of the local leaders and the community groups in fostering the citizen collaboration in counter-terrorism efforts in Lamu county, Kenya.

b) To evaluate the communication channels used between citizens and security agencies for counter-terrorism information sharing in Lamu county, Kenya.

c) To assess community awareness levels regarding counter-terrorism policies and initiatives in Lamu county, Kenya.

4.2 Response Rates

The researcher dispersed 382 questionnaires for the Local community members and had 20 interview guides for the Village elders and Nyumba Kumi elders. A total of 359 questionnaires were completed and returned, while 23 were discarded due to incomplete information, resulting in a 94% response rate of the total questionnaires distributed. Additionally, 16 interview guides were completed and returned, reflecting a 80% response rate of the targeted sample for that instrument. In total, 375 responses were obtained out of 402 sampled participants, equating to a 93.2% response rate. This exceeds the recommended adequacy range of 33% to 66%, as suggested by Hagaman and Wutich (2017). Furthermore, Baguley (2004) noted that, by the increase of the sample size it enhances the statistical power of the results and findings. The response rate of the various clusters of respondents on the relationship between the citizen engagement and enhancing counter-terrorism operations in Lamu county is as illustrated below (figure 2).

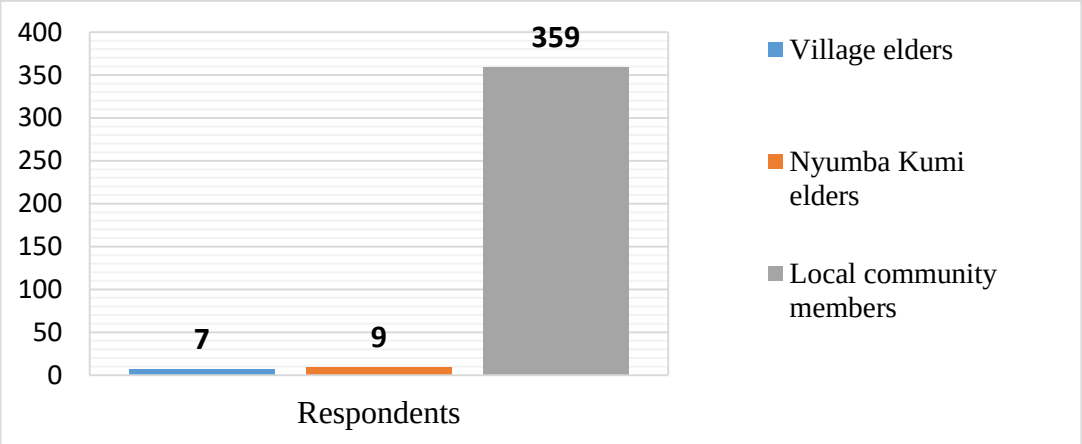

Figure 2: Respondents' Response Rates

The Village elders had a total of 7 responses, which formed 70% of that cluster entire sample population. The Nyumba Kumi elders had a total of 9 responses, which formed 90% of that cluster entire sample population. The local community members had a total of 32 response, which constituted 88.9% of that cluster total sample population. Therefore, 375 respondents out of 402 respondents participated in this study, which was 93.2%. This meets Gay & Diehl, (1992) requirement that recommends for 20% of a sample size (n) relative to the overall population (N).

4.3 Demographic Datas

The research also sought to determine the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. Comprehending these traits was crucial, as they are known to influence the respondents' views and attitudes (Robertson & Watts, 2016). Accordingly, the socio-demographic variables assessed included gender, age and the educational attainment.

4.3.1 Respondents' Gender

Respondents were instructed to specify their gender by inserting a mark close to the applicable choice given (male or female). The answers are as shown below (figure 3).

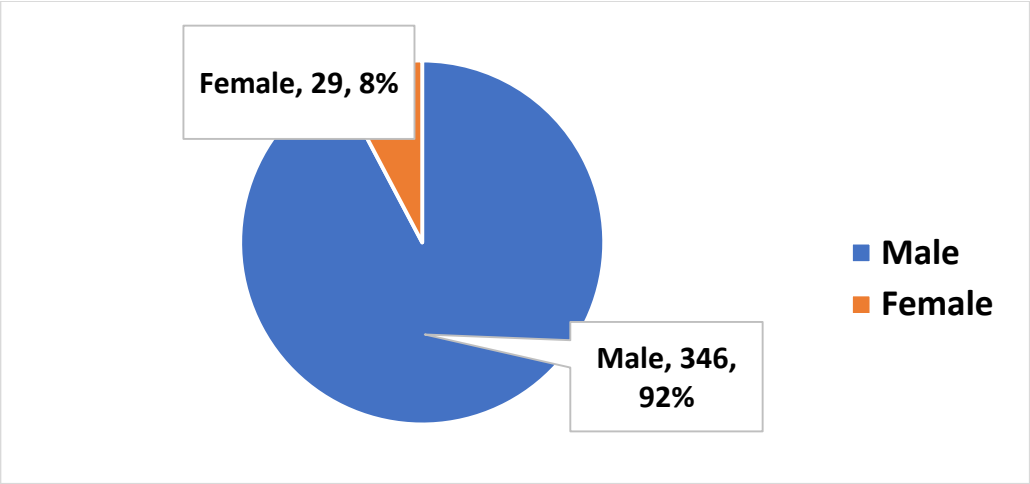

Figure 3: Respondents' gender in each Cluster

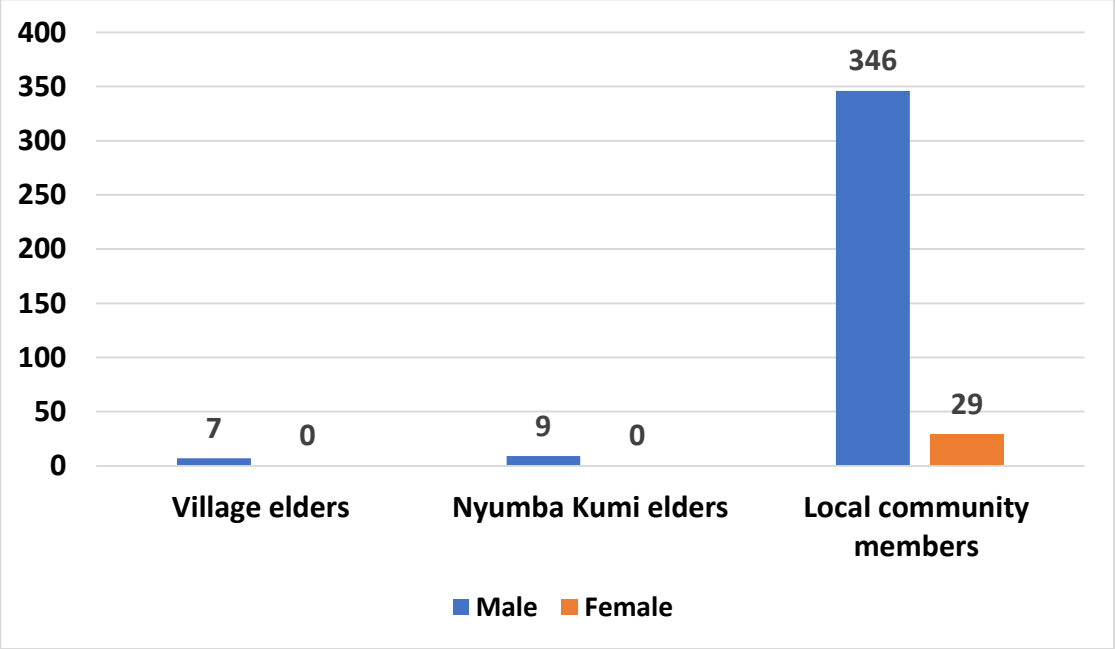

Figure 4: Respondents' gender in each Cluster

Figure 3 shows the gender distribution of the respondents, with 29 (8%) females and 346 (92%) males. Figure 4 indicates that, the majority of the participants were

available for the study were male. The distribution among the clusters showed that all the Village elders and the Nyumba Kumi elders were all men, then the rest were divided amongst the local community members. This can be because, in many Kenyan communities, the traditional socio-cultural norms and the gender roles limit women's participation in public life and also in leadership positions. As Mutungi, and Mavole (2024) stated, entrenched patriarchal norms, restrictive family structures and the cultural practices are acknowledged as barriers that continue to limit women's advancement into the decision-making positions in Kenya. Therefore, the leadership roles such as village elders and the Nyumba Kumi elders are often culturally reserved for men, which restricts women's involvement in the community decision-making and security initiatives. Also, the women frequently face structural barriers, including limited mobility and the greater domestic responsibilities. And as Sangita and Rakhade (2024) argued, the role of the women has been confined in a very narrow sense by the society at large and the patriarchal mindset in particular. These factors reduce their opportunities to participate in the community forums, civic activities, and leadership structures that are central to studies on security and counter-terrorism.

4.3.2 Respondents' Age

The participants were asked to indicate their ages by selecting the appropriate option provided. The data was recorded as shown in the Figure 5 below.

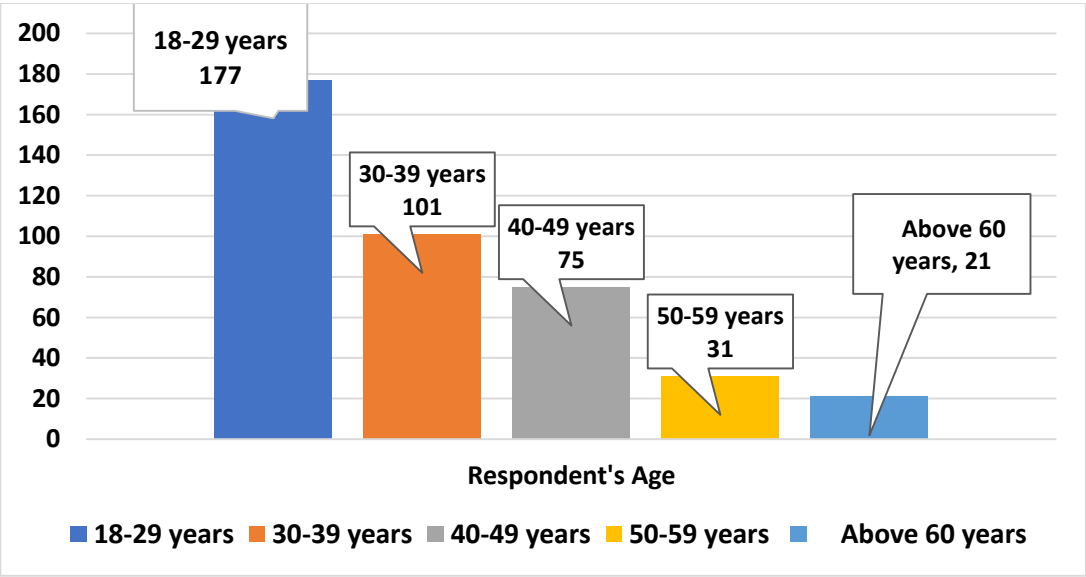

Figure 5: Age for the Respondents

According to the findings, the 18-29 years age group was the largest, comprising 197 respondents (50.9%). The second largest group was the 30-39 years category, with 93 respondents (24%). The 40-49 years group accounted for 59 respondents (15.2%). The second last smallest group were the 50-59years at 26 respondents (6.7%). The smallest segment of the sample was the above 60 age group, with 12 respondents (3.1%). The predominance of the respondents aged 18-29 reflects a broader demographic trend in Kenya and similar contexts, where the youth constitute a significant proportion of the population.

The youthful population pyramid result in a larger pool of the young adults available and willing to participate in a community-based research and various activities (Higley, 2019). Also, the younger adults (18-39) are generally more active in the community initiatives and are often targeted for engagement in security and other development

projects. They tend to have fewer family and health-related constraints compared to the older adults, making them more accessible for participation in field studies and community mobilization efforts. As Zhou, Zhang, Wang, Liu and Zhang (2024) had indicated, there are barriers and facilitators that need comprehending which makes the older adults scarce in participating in surveys when undertaken.

4.3.3 Respondents' Levels of Education

The respondents were instructed to specify their level of education by inserting a mark where the applicable selection was given. The data is captured in below (figure 6).

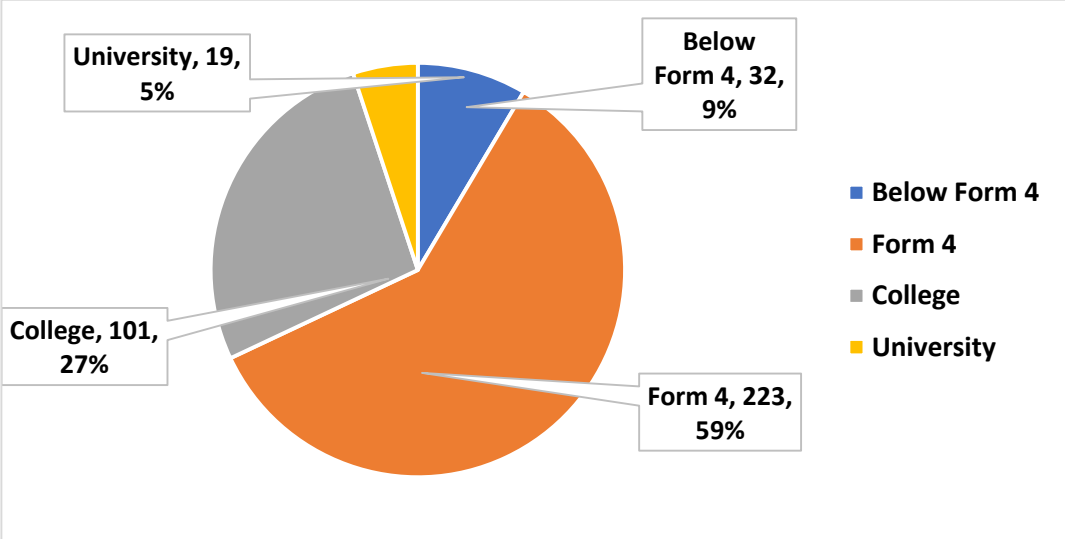

Figure 6: Education Demographic Data of the Respondents

With regard to the educational attainment, 32 participants (9%) had not reached the form 4 level, while 223 (59%) had completed form 4 as their highest level of

education. A further 101 individuals (27%) had advanced to college after their form 4, and 19 respondents (5%) had attended university.

This distribution suggests that the majority of the respondents were well-equipped to comprehend the questions being presented, owing to their educational exposure. The findings reflect Balkar (2022) who noted that, there was a stable connection between the rise in secondary education enrollment and employment rates. As such, secondary education is generally regarded as the minimum qualification for attaining some employment that can in the long run guarantee a reasonable standard of living. In many countries, a secondary school certificate gets to serve as the foundational educational requirement. It was therefore unsurprising that most of the respondents had attained at least a secondary education.

4.4 Objectives for the Study

After presenting and examining the demographic characteristics of the participants, this section concentrated on the presentation and analysis of the primary research objectives. It is worth recalling that the study had three objectives.

4.4.1. The Roles of The Local Leaders and The Community Groups in Fostering the Citizen Collaboration in Counter-Terrorism Efforts in Lamu County

This section provides the analyzed and interpreted data concerning the first objective. It focused on the perspectives of the respondents regarding the involvement of the local leaders and the community groups in promoting citizen collaboration in counter-

terrorism efforts within Lamu County. The presentation of findings is based on the data collected from the field and highlights the general trends, perceptions and the experiences shared by the participants in relation to this subject.

4.4.1.1. The Various Roles of Local Leaders and Community Groups in Fostering Citizen Collaboration in Counter-Terrorism Efforts in Lamu County, Kenya.

The participants were asked to mention the various roles of the local leaders and the community groups in fostering citizen collaboration in the counter-terrorism efforts in Lamu county, Kenya. The findings are displayed below (Table 3):

Table 3: Roles of The Local Leaders and The Community Groups in Fostering the Citizen Collaboration in Counter-Terrorism Efforts in Lamu County

Role of The Local Leaders and The Community Groups	Rating by Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Providing local intelligence	349	93.07%
Building partnership for sustainable security	283	75.47%
Facilitating information sharing	197	52.53%
Engaging in community policing initiatives	126	33.60%

As indicated in the findings above in table 3, most of the participants rated that providing local intelligence was the most important role of the local leaders and the

community groups in fostering citizen collaboration in counter-terrorism efforts in Lamu County, represented by 349 (93.07%). This was followed in the second position by building of partnership for sustainable security, which was cited as crucial for sustainable collaboration, represented by 283 (75.47%).

In the third position, the participants highlighted the importance of facilitating information sharing among stakeholders, represented by 197 (52.53%). Lastly, it was engaging in community policing initiatives, which help strengthen the local security networks, represented by 126 (33.60%).

4.4.1.2. The Roles of the Local Leaders and the Community Groups in Fostering Citizen Collaboration in counter-terrorism Efforts in Lamu County.

The participants were asked to make comments on the mentioned various roles of the local leaders and the community groups foster citizen collaboration in the counter-terrorism efforts in Lamu county, Kenya. The subsection below discusses the various comments from the participants.

a. The Provision of Local Intelligence to the state security on Terrorism Activities

This section presents information related to the important role of the local leaders and the community groups in providing local intelligence to the state security agencies on terrorism activities in Lamu County, Kenya. The provision of local intelligence is a key component in supporting the state's efforts to identify and respond to any potential terrorist threats. The local actors, due to their close connection with the community,

serve as very valuable sources of information that can enhance the effectiveness of security operations. Their contributions help to strengthen early warning systems and in facilitating timely interventions, thereby making local intelligence an essential element in the overall counter-terrorism framework within the county. A Nyumba Kumi elder interviewed explained...

> *"As the Nyumba Kumi elders, we are the eyes and the ears of the community. We get to see and hear and happenings, also we receive information from the residents about any suspicious movements and activities that could threaten our security. We then get to pass this intelligence to the police and other security agencies promptly. Our close relationship with the people allows us to detect early signs of radicalization and extremist behavior, which have helped the security agencies to respond quickly to prevent attacks. This collaboration between the community and the security forces is vital in keeping Lamu safe from terrorism"*

A Village elder respondent had this to say…

> *"A shopkeeper once overheard conversations about transporting suspicious packages through the local matatu stage. He discreetly informed his community policing group, who escalated the tip-off to the police who then set up checkpoints and intercepted a bus carrying explosives intended for use in a terrorist plot. The collaboration between the citizens and the security agencies averted a potential tragedy.* (RESP2/02/2025)

The local intelligence provision is a fundamental role played by the local leaders and the community groups in enhancing counter-terrorism efforts in Lamu County. As articulated by the Nyumba Kumi elder, these leaders act as the "eyes and ears" of their communities, gathering critical information on suspicious activities and promptly relaying it to the state security agencies. Their unique position within the community enables them to detect early warning signs of terrorist threats that might otherwise go unnoticed by the formal security structures. For instance, during one the interviews a discussion came up of how a local fisherman noticed unfamiliar boats docking at odd hours along a remote shoreline. He shared this information with his Nyumba Kumi elder, who relayed it to the local police. Security agencies acted swiftly, intercepting the group and discovering several weapons and radicalization materials. The timely sharing of the local intelligence prevented a planned attack on a nearby market. A similar instance involved a herder who, during his daily routine, observed an unfamiliar group setting up a makeshift camp deep within a KWS forested area known for its banditry. Sensing that something was amiss, he discreetly alerted his village elders who, in turn, informed the Chief. This led to a targeted security operation that successfully disrupted a planned attack to a nearby town. Such grassroots intelligence has been crucial in enabling timely interventions and preventing potential attacks, thereby strengthening the overall security framework in the region.

The Nyumba Kumi initiative, has empowered the local elders to be able to coordinate security at the neighborhood level, thereby exemplifying how the community

involvement can complement the existing official counter-terrorism measures. According to Mutahi, Höglund and Elfversson (2024) by fostering trust and open communication channels between the residents and the security forces, the local leaders are in a position to facilitate the flow of information necessary for effective threat management. Their intimate knowledge of the community dynamics and social networks, has allowed them to identify individuals who would otherwise be vulnerable to radicalization or be involved in extremist activities. For example, during one of the interviews, it was mentioned on how a Nyumba Kumi elder noticed a sudden change in behavior in a certain young man who had been unemployed for a long time. The young man started receiving expensive gifts and also showed signs of adopting to extremist ideologies. The elder quietly engaged with the family, which led to a discussion with the local chief about the youth's vulnerability to radicalization. This proactive approach allowed the authorities to intervene, provide the youth with counseling and offer a vocational training opportunity, thereby disrupting the recruitment attempt.

In one of the discussions, it was mentioned on how some community youth leaders once observed a sudden increase in gatherings led by an outsider who was offering financial incentives to the unemployed youths. Sensing that something amiss, they reported their concerns to the local chief, who in turn shared with the security committee. Investigations that followed revealed an attempt to recruit some young people into extremist groups. The authorities intervened, conducted awareness

sessions and provided support to the at-risk youths, in so doing effectively disrupting the recruitment network. A similar scenario involved local women's groups who noticed an unfamiliar woman visiting homes and disseminating some extremist materials under the guise of a religious outreach. The women's groups reported this to their local leader, which allowed the security agencies to swiftly investigate and neutralized the recruitment attempt without causing any widespread alarm in the community. Such a proactive approach to intelligence gathering enhances the state's capacity to disrupt any terrorist operations before they escalate.

Moreover, the collaboration between the local leaders and the security agencies has underscored the importance of the citizen participation in national security. The Nyumba Kumi elder's statement highlighted how the community members are not passive recipients of security measures but very active contributors to the safety of their environment. This partnership fosters a sense of shared responsibility and collective vigilance, which is essential in areas like Lamu County that face complex security challenges. Hossain et al., (2025) had recommended that, the involvement of the local actors in intelligence provision also helps to bridge gaps in resource constraints faced by the formal security agencies, ensuring a more comprehensive surveillance network. For example, in one remote area, the local police force had a limited number of patrol vehicles and officers to cover the wide expanse of land. The community, led by the local chief, organized a volunteer watch program where the residents used their personal knowledge of the terrain and their communication

networks to monitor movements and report any suspicious activities. This collaborative effort effectively expanded the surveillance capabilities of the security forces, ensuring that no area was left unmonitored and thereby enhanced the overall security coverage of the region.

The effectiveness of the local intelligence provision has depended largely on the trust and cooperation established between the local communities and the security agencies. The local leaders, such as the Nyumba Kumi elders, are playing a critical role in building this trust by acting as intermediaries as they are the ones who understand both the community's concerns and the operational needs of the security forces. Their ability to communicate intelligence in such a culturally sensitive and timely manner enhances the responsiveness of counter-terrorism efforts. As in one instance, a resident allegedly noticed new faces frequenting an abandoned house but did not report it, believing it was not his concern. Weeks later, the house was found to have been used as a hideout for planning attacks. This scenario not only can it help to improve the accuracy of threat detection but it can also encourage greater community engagement in security initiatives.

In conclusion, the provision of local intelligence by the community leaders and groups has been a cornerstone of counter-terrorism collaboration in Lamu County. The Nyumba Kumi elder's perspective illustrated how the local actors have contributed indispensable knowledge and vigilance that has supported state security operations. By fostering citizen collaboration through intelligence sharing, the local

leaders have helped to create a resilient security environment capable of addressing the evolving threats posed by terrorism. This role has underscored the critical intersection of the community involvement and the formal security mechanisms in safeguarding peace and stability in this delicate region.

b. Building Diverse Partnerships to Strengthen Sustainable Security Networks

This section presents information in relation to the second most mentioned role of the local leaders and the community groups in fostering the citizen collaboration in counter-terrorism efforts in Lamu county, Kenya. The local leaders and the community groups play a pivotal role in fostering citizens' collaboration in counter-terrorism efforts by promoting the development of diverse and inclusive partnerships. Through building broad-based alliances that engage different sectors of the society, they can help to create a robust and sustainable security network. These partnerships can enable communities to pool resources, share crucial information and also get to coordinate collective actions, thereby enhancing the capacity to identify and address potential security threats. These collaborative approaches can be fundamental to building resilience and maintain long-term peace and stability in a region. In the words of a Nyumba Kumi Elder respondent…

> *"Our role is to unite the different groups within the community, both the youth, women, traders and the security personnel and encourage them to collaborate closely. By bringing these diverse voices together, we get to*

create stronger, more effective security networks that are able to respond quickly to threats. These partnerships are key to sustaining peace and ensuring that everyone feels responsible for our community's safety."

Local Community Member mentioned the following to say…

"When all members of the community, including the leaders and the security officers, come together and openly share information, it builds trust and creates a strong foundation for cooperation. This collective effort makes it easier to identify and prevent potential threats before they can happen and it helps us to feel safer in our day-to-day lives knowing that everyone is watching out for each other."

The findings indicate that, building diverse partnerships has played a significant role in fostering security networks in Lamu County. The Nyumba Kumi elder explained that, their role involved uniting various segments of the community like the youth, women, traders and the security personnel to work collaboratively towards common security objectives. On the ground, this was evident through the mentioned regular community meetings where the elders coordinated with the youth representatives and business owners to discuss various security threats, such as the increasing movement of unknown individuals and suspicious activities near their trading centers. For instance, a local market traders' members, using their communication networks, successfully identified a new individual who was attempting to sell counterfeit goods in the market and was also cunningly promoting extremist propaganda. The association's leadership reported the individual to the security agencies, who were

able to intervene and disrupt the radicalization attempt before it gained traction. This inclusive approach has ensured that, various multiple perspectives are considered, enabling early identification of potential threats and empowering the community to act collectively. As Saaida (2023) demonstrated, such collaboration can strengthen a community's ability to respond to several immediate dangers and foster a shared sense of responsibility for maintaining peace and safety for everyone.

The involvement of different community groups was found to enhance the effectiveness of security networks by leveraging a wide range of knowledge and resources. For example, in some rural villages near Lamu, women's groups noticed shifts in the social behavior or families affected by extremist ideology, prompting them to report these observations to the Nyumba Kumi elders who then liaised with the local police. These collective reports led to coordinated patrols and awareness campaigns. The Nyumba Kumi elders' role was critical in synthesizing information from the diverse groups and mobilizing unified responses promptly. And Yegon (2020) had demonstrated how the grassroots partnerships can help to bridge gaps that the formal security agencies alone struggle to fill. And therefore, it has created a more adaptable and resilient system to counter evolving security threats.

The data from the local community members emphasized the importance of open communication and mutual trust in fostering security cooperation. In typical neighborhood markets across Lamu County, several community members have reported that, they shared their concerns about unfamiliar visitors and unusual

gatherings with the trusted local leaders and security officials through several informal channels. Such interactions have promoted transparency and reassured the residents that their safety concerns were being taken seriously. One participant had noted that this ongoing dialogue has greatly improved the community's confidence in the security agencies and encouraged the residents to report several suspicious activities without fear. A discussion by Li and Liu (2021) emphasized a culture of openness that reinforces the entire security network and strengthens cooperation between the citizens and the authorities.

Further analysis of the data also revealed that, the shared responsibility cultivated through these partnerships encouraged proactive security measures rather than reactive responses. Active community participation has increased the likelihood of early signs of radicalization and any criminal activities being detected and addressed promptly. For instance, in a remote area where there is a limited police presence, the community, under the guidance of the elders and the leaders, established a rotating patrol system where small groups of male volunteers monitored different parts of the village on a nightly basis. This was a direct result of their partnership with the security agencies, which had provided them with the basic training on what to look for and how to report sightings safely. This proactive measure helped to deter most criminal activities and provided a constant, vigilant presence that supplemented the formal security forces. The strong foundation of cooperation mentioned by the community members has ensured that the security networks operated efficiently, with all the stakeholders both

the formal and the informal being aligned in their objectives and actions. This unity was identified as being critical to sustaining long-term peace in areas experiencing complex security challenges such as Lamu County.

In conclusion, the perspectives from the Nyumba Kumi elder and the local community member illustrated the vital role that diverse partnership plays in establishing sustainable security networks in the area. By bringing together the various community groups and fostering transparent communication, it has created a collaborative environment where the security challenges have been more effectively managed. These partnerships have improved the capacity for the early detection and the rapid response and thereby promoted a collective mindset toward safeguarding that coastal community. Overall, this integrated approach has been essential in strengthening resilience and maintaining stability in the coastal county of Lamu.

c. Facilitating Timely and Transparent Information Sharing Among the Security Stakeholders

This section presents information in relation to the third most mentioned role of the local leaders and the community groups in fostering the citizen collaboration in counter-terrorism efforts in Lamu county, Kenya. The local leaders and the community groups can be instrumental in fostering citizen collaboration within the counter-terrorism efforts in Lamu County by encouraging communication and trust amongst the security stakeholders. This can be due to their active engagement and deep-rooted presence in the community. Their involvement can ensure that all parties

ranging from the community members to the formal security agencies feel connected, supported and also represented in the broader security initiatives. This collaborative dynamic can be essential in ensuring that the counter-terrorism strategies reflect the unique needs and perspectives of the local population in a region. A verbatim from a Village Elder interviewed was that…

> *"As the elders, we act as a bridge between the people and the authorities. When we speak, the community listens. We encourage open dialogue and that is what makes the people more willing to share information without fear"*

A Nyumba Kumi Elder interviewed respondent had this view…

> *"In our Nyumba Kumi meetings, we emphasize that security starts with trust. If the people can get to trust their neighbors and the police, then they will be able to talk freely. That trust does not come from nowhere but it is built through the daily engagements and showing the people that we are all on the same side"*

The verbatim accounts from the key community figures in the county, highlighted the practical ways in which the local leadership have been strengthening the facilitation of timely and transparent information sharing. For example, the village elder's statement, underscored the centrality of trust and communication. Such leaders occupy a respected position, enabling them to encourage the exchange of information that might otherwise be withheld due to fear or mistrust of the authorities. This proactive information sharing, facilitated by the trusted local leaders, aligns with the Social

Contract's theory aim of fostering a stable society where the citizens, in exchange for their collective security, willingly contribute to the public safety, rather than merely submitting to the authority. Furthermore, this approach embodies the core tenets of Community Policing theory, as it leverages the local relationships and builds trust to empower the residents as the active participants in intelligence gathering, moving beyond the traditional enforcement to a collaborative model of crime prevention. Their endorsement of open dialogue has reduced several barriers and thereby cultivated a culture where the community members are feeling comfortable reporting any suspicious activities and sharing intelligence to the relevant to security stakeholders.

Similarly, the Nyumba Kumi elder emphasized, the intentional and ongoing efforts required to foster trust, particularly in such a region and the communities that have previously experienced strained relations with the law enforcement. Through consistent interpersonal engagement and reinforcing the message that security is a shared responsibility, the Nyumba Kumi elders have been nurturing the conditions necessary for a sustainable citizen participation in the security matters. A common scenario discussed in the study was how these leaders has organized the inter-community soccer tournaments and the local trade fairs. During these events, they had actively engaged with the young people and the traders, ingeniously integrating security awareness messages into their conversations. This consistent, low-pressure interaction has helped build some personal rapport and trust, making it easier for the

citizens to approach them later with sensitive information about any new individuals or suspicious activities.

Therefore, the effectiveness of these local leaders and the community groups in building trust has been rooted not only in their social standing but also in their continual presence and participation in the community life. Their long-term investment in the well-being of the community has fostered a sense of belonging and accountability, which the formal security agencies often lack. This ongoing involvement has enabled them to detect emerging threats early and mobilize the citizens to collaborate proactively with varying security efforts. For example, in one village, a local chief had a strong relationship with the youth, often mentoring them on different career paths and organizing on community clean-up drives. When a few young men began showing signs of radicalization after interacting with an outsider, other youth felt comfortable sharing their concerns with the chief. The chief was then able to involve the families and the religious leaders in an intervention before the situation escalated, thereby preventing a formal security incident. Without this established rapport, mistrust and detachment could hinder some vital communication channels and thereby reducing the overall effectiveness of counter-terrorism initiatives.

These observations reveal that, the community-based counter-terrorism strategies are most effective when grounded in strong, mutually reinforcing relationships between the citizens and the authorities. As Pul (2024), the local leaders and the community groups serve not only as facilitators of communication but also as the guarantors of the

social cohesion. Their ability to represent the community's interests and articulate their local grievances to the security agencies in the long run contributes to a more responsive and contextually appropriate interventions. Furthermore, by enhancing the legitimacy of the security initiatives, these actors are helping to reduce the likelihood of alienation and therefore promoting more voluntary information-sharing, both of which are the key components in an effective counter-terrorism context.

In conclusion, the involvement of the local leaders and the community groups in Lamu County's counter-terrorism efforts has been pivotal in promoting the citizens' collaboration through trust-building and open communication. Their embeddedness within the community has granted them very unique influence and credibility, enabling them to mediate between the formal security structures and the population. These collaborative partnerships not only have they strengthened intelligence gathering but, they have also ensured that the security strategies are reflecting the lived realities of those most affected. As validated by the verbatims, fostering a culture of trust and active engagement has been essential for the community's centered security initiatives.

d. Engaging their Communities through Policing Initiatives to Enhance Security Collaboration

This section presents information in relation to the last-mentioned role of the local leaders and the community groups in fostering the citizen collaboration in counter-terrorism efforts in Lamu county, Kenya. The local leaders and the community groups

play a crucial role in fostering citizen collaboration in counter-terrorism efforts by engaging their communities through the policing initiatives. Their actions can encourage participation and cooperation among the community members and to contribute to strengthening relationships with the security agencies, or maybe not. A Nyumba Kumi Elder interviewed had this to say…

> *"In Nyumba Kumi, we know everyone in our clusters and we watch out for anything that's unusual. We are able to quickly share any concerns with the local leaders or police. We also hold community meetings to encourage everyone to take part in our security efforts. This close cooperation at the grassroots has strengthened our fight against several threats and has helped to keep our neighborhoods safe."*

A Village Elder interviewee said the following…

> *"As a Village Elder, I help our community understand the importance of working with security agencies. When we explain why sharing information protects our families, people feel safer reporting suspicious activities. By bridging the gap between the police and the community, we have built trust that is encouraging collaboration and has helped to keep us safe."*

The role of the local leaders and the community groups in engaging their communities through policing initiatives has been pivotal in enhancing security collaboration, particularly in the vulnerable areas to threats of Lamu County. The verbatims from the Village Elder and the Nyumba Kumi Elder underscored the foundational importance of trust and the active participation in community policing. Both elders highlighted how their leadership has fostered openness and timely sharing of security information,

which has been crucial for early warning and collective action against threats such as terrorism, and other crimes like burglaries. Their testimonies have demonstrated how the community engagement goes beyond just mere compliance, to active collaboration that has strengthened the public safety.

What has also come out clearly is that, community policing initiatives in Lamu have increasingly relied on the involvement of the respected local figures who have built bridges between the security agencies and the residents. As the Village Elder mentioned, the emphasis on explaining the reasons for cooperation has helped to dismantle fear and the mistrust, thereby enabling the community members to feel safe when reporting any suspicious activities. For example, in one village, a resident observed a stranger taking photographs of a local school and the main road. The resident, having attended several meetings where the elders had explained the importance of reporting suspicious activity, overcame his initial fear of being a "snitch" and discreetly reported the matter to an elder. This timely report allowed the security agencies to investigate the individual and avert a potential security threat without causing panic. This reflects findings from Clubb, Davies and Kobayashi (2024) who stressed that trust-building and transparent communication are indispensable for any effective counterterrorism efforts. The local leaders, therefore, not only have advocated for collaboration but also created an environment where the community's voice is valued and acted upon.

Similarly, the Nyumba Kumi Elder's account highlighted the grassroots nature of the community policing, where the neighbors actively monitor their localities and promptly share any intelligence with the authorities. This neighborhood-level vigilance has represented a practical model of the community policing that has supported national security objectives by decentralizing responsibility and enhancing more proactive reporting. For instance, a Nyumba Kumi elder in a village bordering the ocean noticed a new, unfamiliar boat captain repeatedly engaging with a few local youths who had been previously identified as being vulnerable to radicalisation. The elder, in coordination with the other nine household leaders in the cluster, monitored the situation and quickly reported their collective observations to the police. This immediate intelligence led to an investigation that disrupted a recruitment attempt by a terror group.

The Nyumba Kumi model has encouraged the community members to take ownership of their security through some small, organized units, reinforcing the idea that security is a shared responsibility, not just a state function. This collective commitment to the local security, has been exemplified by the Nyumba Kumi model, echoing the Social Contract's premise that the citizens willingly cede certain individuals' liberties in exchange for the collective protection and order that an engaged community provides. Furthermore, by empowering the residents to be active participants in intelligence gathering, this initiative perfectly encapsulates the Community Policing's emphasis on

co-production of safety, moving beyond the reactive enforcement to proactive, trust-based prevention.

The synthesis of these verbal accounts with documented initiatives in Lamu have revealed that, the collaboration between the local leaders, community groups and the security agencies is multifaceted. It has involved the regular dialogues, community meetings and the joint activities such as sports tournaments, which have built some social cohesion and helped in the reduction of barriers between the citizens and the law enforcement. Such measures have complemented the formal policing by creating trusted platforms where information has been flowing freely, thereby improving prevention and rapid response to most security threats. Moreover, the local leaders have played a critical role in mobilizing the community participation to sustain these efforts.

In conclusion, the practical experiences of the Village and Nyumba Kumi elders have illustrated that a successful community policing initiative depends on the inclusive engagement, trust and clear communication facilitated by the local leadership. Their roles in sensitizing their communities and liaising with the security agencies exemplify how policing initiatives can be locally legitimized and more effective. Enhancing these partnerships further through by the supply of resources, capacity building and having institutional support can solidify most security collaboration and get to contribute to lasting peace and stability as in our context in Lamu. The effectiveness observed in these community-led initiatives, where the local leaders are mediating

collaboration, demonstrates a practical application of the Social Contract principles, as the citizens actively engage in maintaining societal order for everyone's mutual benefit rather than by merely being subjects of a distant authority. Moreover, this approach has profoundly embodied Community Policing by centering the law enforcement efforts around the specific needs and the active participation of the community, thereby fostering shared responsibility for the public safety.

4.4.2. Community Awareness Levels Regarding Counter-Terrorism Policies and Initiatives in Lamu County

This section provides analyzed and interpreted data concerning the second objective. It examined the views of respondents on the extent to which the community members were aware of the counter-terrorism policies and the initiatives in Lamu County. The findings were drawn from the responses collected and therefore offered a general overview of the community awareness in relation to the ongoing efforts against terrorism.

4.4.2.1. Awareness of Any Government or The Local Counter-Terrorism Policies and The Initiatives in Lamu County

First, the respondents were asked whether they aware of any government or the local counter-terrorism policies or the initiatives in Lamu County. The findings are showed in table 4 below.

Table 4: Awareness of Any Government or The Local Counter-Terrorism Policies and The Initiatives in Lamu County

Awareness of Local Counter-Terrorism Policies and The Initiatives in Lamu County	**Percentage**	**Frequency**
Aware of government/local counter-terrorism policies or initiatives	38%	143
Unaware of government/local counter-terrorism policies or initiatives	62%	232

The data in the table shows that, 38% of respondents were aware and 62% were unaware of the government or the local counter-terrorism policies or initiatives in the County. This significant gap in awareness highlighted the important implications regarding the dissemination and accessibility of counter-terrorism information within the communities. The same can be discussed from a multiple of perspectives within the counter-terrorism and the public awareness lenses.

From a scholarly perspective, one important justification can relate to the information and education gaps that affect the public knowledge and engagement. Adebayo (2021) emphasized that education about terrorism can reduce perceived threat levels and improve public understanding, which is crucial for effective collaboration in counter-terrorism efforts. The high percentage of the unaware individuals suggested that, the counter-terrorism education and outreach in Lamu may be insufficient or unevenly distributed. For example, in one village, a local resident observed a group of unfamiliar men frequently visiting a remote, abandoned building. Because the resident was unaware of any specific counter-terrorism policies or reporting hotlines and did

not understand the importance of their role as an active contributor to security, she simply dismissed the activity as private business. This lack of knowledge ultimately prevented a timely report, allowing the group to use the location as a temporary hideout and planning base without being detected. Without adequate information, the citizens may not fully comprehend the policies or initiatives designed to protect them, thus it is limiting their participation in security collaborations and timely reporting of some suspicious activities. This gap underscores the critical need for more tailored education programs and the awareness campaigns that can reach all segments of the population, especially in the vulnerable and marginalized areas where the counter-terrorism efforts are vital.

Another scholarly justification could center on the need to enhance policy and practice through improved communication and community engagement. Effective counter-terrorism depends not only on policy formulation but also on the successful transmission and local legitimization of such policies (Adebayo, 2019). The 62% unawareness rate indicated that, the current communication methods and community engagement strategies may not be sufficiently inclusive or compelling. It would be a good practice by integrating the local leaders and the community groups in awareness campaigns to strengthen trust and to promote sustained citizen collaboration. This approach aligns with the notion that, security is a shared responsibility requiring active participation from the public, which can only be achieved if individuals are aware of their roles and the resources available. Therefore, enhanced community engagement

would be helping to bridge the divide between the security agencies and the citizens, thereby promoting transparency and mitigating fear and any mistrusts that would often hamper the effectiveness of most counter-terrorism policies.

In summary, the findings revealed that, while a significant minority in Lamu County were aware of the counter-terrorism policies and initiatives, the majority remained uninformed, which limits the overall effectiveness of these initiatives. Scholarly literature stresses the importance of both the comprehensive educational outreach and the inclusive community engagement as pivotal steps to improving awareness, fostering collaboration and ultimately strengthening most security outcomes. Addressing these gaps through strategic communication and localized participation mechanisms would be essential in ensuring that counter-terrorism policies translate into practical, community-supported actions capable of mitigating threats effectively.

The respondents were also asked to name or describe any government or the local counter-terrorism policies or the initiatives that they knew. Figure 7 below illustrates the finding.

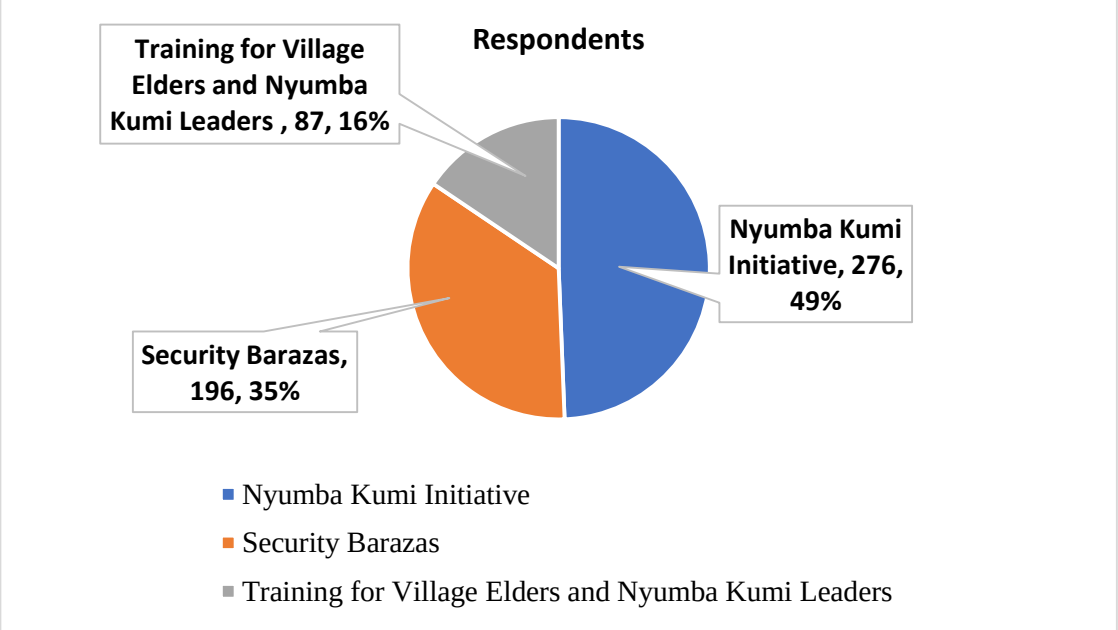

Figure 7: Counter-Terrorism Policies and The Initiatives in Lamu County

The study identified three major counter-terrorism initiatives that were most mentioned by the respondents in Lamu County: the Nyumba Kumi Initiative, Security Barazas (Community Meetings) and the Training for the Village Elders and the Nyumba Kumi Leaders. Their reported frequencies were 73.6%, 52.3% and 23.2% respectively, reflected varying degrees of the public awareness and engagement, which aligned with scholarly findings on the effectiveness and challenges of these programs.

a. The Nyumba Kumi Initiatives

First, the Nyumba Kumi Initiative emerged as the most recognized program among respondents. This grassroots community policing model has been organizing

neighborhoods into clusters of ten of households, thereby enhancing local vigilance and direct communication with the security agencies. As noted by a Nyumba Kumi elder…

> *"Nyumba Kumi has many times proved indispensable in bridging the intelligence gap between the formal security apparatuses and the communities that they are in, especially in some specific areas that we know are prone to radicalization."*

The elder was acknowledging that Nyumba Kumi's impact as a critical innovation in Kenya's security architecture, particularly in some specific areas of the county that are vulnerable to terrorism. The Nyumba Kumi elder's statement underscores the core strength of the initiative that is, its ability to foster direct, informal intelligence flow from the grassroots. This bridging of the gap has been crucial in environments where the formal intelligence networks had been struggling due to terrain, limited resources, and the community mistrust. By empowering the local leaders and the households, Nyumba Kumi has effectively turned every participating citizen into a potential source of valuable information, ranging from suspicious movements to the early signs of radicalization, which have mostly been relayed to the security agencies for timely intervention. For instance, in a remote village near the Boni Forest, a Nyumba Kumi cluster leader and his neighbors noticed a new family had moved into an abandoned house. The family kept to themselves and would receive visitors at odd hours from unknown motorcycles. The leader, following the Nyumba Kumi protocol, discreetly reported these suspicious movements to the chief. The information led to a swift and

quiet security operation that discovered a small cache of weapons and some radicalization materials, thereby preventing a potential attack on a nearby school. This successful interception demonstrated how the initiative transforms passive communities into able proactive security partners.

According to Ma, Qirui and Lv (2023) such initiatives have proved to improved surveillance, intelligence gathering and early warning systems by tapping into the local knowledge and social cohesion. However, the initiative's effectiveness has been viewed as moderate due to the challenge related to the resource allocation, inclusivity, and the continuous community sensitization. Nonetheless, in contexts such as Lamu where police-to-citizen ratios are low, Nyumba Kumi has effectively extended the formal security presence through the empowered community networks, enhancing timely information sharing that are critical to counter-terrorism.

b. Security Barazas

Second, Security Barazas were mentioned by over half the respondents as important forums for the engagement between the security agencies and the citizens. These barazas have been serving as platforms for dialogue, trust-building and transparency, where the community members have voiced their concerns and received feedback on security matters. As a Local community member observed,

> *"The barazas have allowed us to speak directly with the police, which was not always possible before. It makes us feel heard and more secure."*

The sentiment expressed by the local community member highlights the significant shift in the relationship between the citizens and the security forces that barazas facilitate. The ability to "speak directly" has fostered a sense of accessibility and accountability that was previously lacking, thereby building enough crucial trust. Feeling that they are being heard is paramount in the counter-terrorism efforts, as it encourages even greater cooperation, information sharing and a collective sense of ownership over the community safety. This direct engagement has been instrumental in breaking down barriers of fear or suspicion, which had previously been exploited by the extremist groups.

Forsberg (2025) supported the role of such participatory forums in fostering cooperation and overcoming mistrust, which often have characterized the relations between the security institutions and the local populations in such a fragile context. In Lamu, these regular barazas have helped to disseminate counter-terrorism awareness, encouraging reporting of suspicious activities and been able to validate community contributions to security efforts. For example, in one baraza, the sub-county security committee presented information on a recent tactic used by the armed criminals who were disguising themselves as fishermen to transport weapons. After the presentation, a local elder stood up and reported that he had recently seen an unfamiliar boat docked at a remote mangrove creek. The security officials immediately acknowledged the tip, thanked the elder publicly and assured the community that they would investigate. This direct interaction and validation reinforced the importance of the citizen's role

and encouraged others to share their own observations. They have facilitated a two-way flow of information, reinforcing not only the operational effectiveness but also the legitimacy of counter-terrorism strategies at the grassroots levels.

c. The Training for the Village Elders and the Nyumba Kumi Leaders

The lower awareness of the Training for the Village Elders and the Nyumba Kumi Leaders at a 23.2%, was pointing to a notable gap in capacity-building and the leadership empowerment. Training programs can be essential to equip the local leaders with the skills needed to identify most security threats, mediate conflicts and coordinate intelligence sharing. However, Dushkova and Ivlieva (2024) indicated that, these programs often suffer from inadequate coverage and limited resources, which mostly constrain their capacity to expand and its impact. For example, in one remote community, a Nyumba Kumi leader received a report about a strange car and some unfamiliar people in their area. Because of lacking some formal training on how to handle such a report discreetly, the leader announced the information loudly at a community meeting, causing widespread panic and alerting the suspicious individuals, who then fled the area before the security agencies could be mobilized. This incident highlighted how the lack of proper training on the communication protocols and the intelligence handling can compromise an operation and erode public trust. Hence, effective training is critical because the elders and the cluster leaders get to function as intermediaries between the communities and the security agencies. Strengthening their roles would improve information accuracy, encouraging community participation and

promoting a richer in details approach to counter-terrorism that respects the local dynamics.

In summary, the findings have reflected a consensus that Kenya's counter-terrorism efforts in Lamu rely heavily on the community-based strategies like Nyumba Kumi and the participatory forums such as security barazas. While these initiatives have demonstrated promising results in enhancing communication, intelligence gathering and collaboration, sustained impact requires increased investment in training, community sensitization and the institutional support, more particularly to address gaps identified through the relatively lower awareness of capacity-building efforts. Addressing these challenges will be crucial to deepening the community involvement and foster resilience against terrorism in Lamu County.

4.4.2.2. Knowledge of How and Where to Report Suspicious Activities Related to Terrorism

The respondents were also asked to indicate by yes or no, if they knew how and where to report any suspicious activities related to terrorism. Table 5 below illustrates the finding.

Table 5: Knowledge of How and Where to Report Suspicious Activities Related to Terrorism

Knowledge of How and Where to Report Suspicious Activities Related to Terrorism	Percentage	Frequency

Knowledge of How and Where to Report Suspicious Activities Related to Terrorism	Percentage	Frequency
Yes	93%	349
No	7%	26

The study found that a significant majority of respondents at 93% (349 out of 375) indicated that, they knew how and where to report any suspicious activities related to terrorism in Lamu County. This high level of awareness reflects positively on the existing communication and the outreach efforts by the security agencies and the local leadership. It suggested that, most of the community members are informed about the formal and informal channels through which they can share critical information that may help prevent and respond to the security threats. For instance, a local fisherman, upon noticing an unfamiliar boat repeatedly docking at a secluded part of the shoreline at night, immediately reported the activity through the established community security WhatsApp group. The Nyumba Kumi elder in the group quickly verified the information and relayed it to the nearby police post, leading to a swift and successful interdiction of a group attempting to smuggle contraband and weapons ashore. Such knowledge is crucial because timely and accurate reporting from the citizens can enhance the effectiveness of the counter-terrorism initiatives by enabling swift interventions and fostering a collaborative security environment.

On the other hand, 7% of respondents reported not knowing how or where to report suspicious activities. According to the Social Contract Theory, the mutual trust between the citizens and the state underpins effective security cooperation, therefore, addressing distrust and ensuring that the state is fulfills its obligation to protect and inform its citizens thereby fostering its relationship in Lamu County. While this proportion is relatively small, it nonetheless highlights an important gap that could hinder the overall intelligence-sharing environment. This lack of awareness could be due to factors such as inadequate dissemination of information, distrust in security agencies or even limited access to communication infrastructure in certain parts of Lamu County. Addressing this gap can be essential, as even a small segment of uninformed community members can impact the timely flow of intelligence critical for counter-terrorism efforts. On the other hand, Community Policing Theory emphasizes that, security is a shared responsibility that requires active partnerships between the law enforcement and the community members thus, enhancing awareness campaigns and accessible reporting channels can help to deepen the community engagement and the collective ownership of the counter-terrorism efforts. Therefore, further efforts are needed to reinforce these awareness campaigns, improve accessibility of reporting mechanisms and to build trust to ensure no pockets of the community remain disconnected from the vital security networks.

The respondents were also asked to specify best reporting channels suitable for the context of Lamu County. Figure 8 below illustrates the finding.

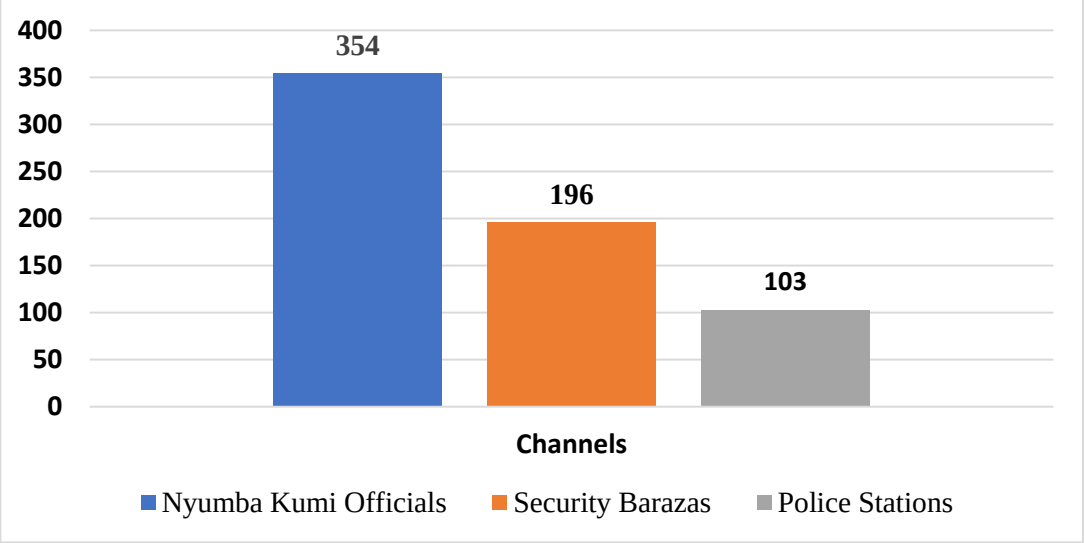

Figure 8: Reporting Channels for Suspicious Activities in Lamu County

The bar chart data revealed that, Nyumba Kumi officials are the most preferred reporting channel, with 354 reported cases, suggesting a strong reliance on the local grassroots structures for security information sharing. This was followed by the Security Barazas, which serve as the community meetings and forums, accounting for 196 reports, indicating that a collective community engagement is playing a significant role in the surveillance and reporting process. The Police stations represent the least utilized channel, with only 103 reports, which may reflect the challenges such as limited accessibility, perceived institutional mistrust or a preference for reporting within the more familiar community-based frameworks.

a. The Local Community Leaders and the Nyumba Kumi Officials

The Local community leaders, especially the village elders and the Nyumba Kumi officials, continue to serve as the predominant and most trusted channel through which

residents are reporting suspicious activities related to terrorism in Lamu County. Their deep social ties and localized knowledge empower them for rapid recognition of potential threats. A respondent highlighted this community trust by stating,

> *"When we notice something unusual or dangerous, we prefer telling our Nyumba Kumi leader because they understand our way of life and know how to quickly communicate with the police."*

This testimony illustrated how these leaders function as an effective grassroots early warning system embedded in the social networks. Beyond simply relaying information, the Nyumba Kumi structures have fostered collective responsibility among the community members, which is vital in countering the sense of isolation that extremists seek to exploit. However, despite their central role, Nyumba Kumi efforts have been facing persistent obstacles, including uneven training for example, with some wards like Basuba, Witu and Shela, benefiting from organized coordination and community-police collaboration training, while others have lacked structured training programs, limited resources and the inconsistent governmental support, which have been compromising sustainability and operational efficiency. For instance, in a ward without structured training, a Nyumba Kumi leader received a report about a new family that had moved in. Due to a lack of official guidance on how to vet the new residents, the leader and some community members began a public campaign of suspicion against the family, resulting in their social exclusion without any evidence of wrongdoing. This misstep not only caused unnecessary community friction but also

risked alienating the potentially innocent family, highlighting how a lack of proper training can lead to misuses like profiling and exclusion. Addressing these constraints would be essential in maintaining trust and preventing any potential misuses, such as profiling and exclusion, which could further undermine community cohesion.

Furthermore, Nyumba Kumi leaders have often been acting as mediators who not only convey security concerns to the formal agencies but also in helping to resolve local conflicts that might otherwise would have escalated into violence or radicalization. This intermediary role has been assisting in strengthening social cohesion and aligning with the international counterterrorism frameworks that emphasize community engagement (Allan & Labib, 2024). To optimize their effectiveness, there is a need for the ongoing capacity building, clear accountability measures and the institutional backing to ensure that these local mechanisms can be both trusted and adequately supported.

b. The Security Barazas

Slightly over half of the respondents (52.3%) recognized the security barazas as important channels for reporting suspicious activities. The community security meetings known as barazas have emerged in the area as an increasingly important alternative and a complement to the formal channels. The interactive nature of the barazas have fostered openness and direct dialogue between the citizens and the

security officials, effectively bridging the social and the institutional gaps that could have hinder truthful communication. While barazas may not be as entirely acknowledged as are the Nyumba Kumi officials, their role in facilitating the two-way communication and the trust-building is crucial to the counterterrorism framework in Lamu County. As one participant explained,

> *"During the baraza congregations, we get to openly discuss our worries with the officers and such has been making it easier for us to report suspicious behavior without fear. This openness has built a sense of confidence in the process, encouraging more of the community members to come forward and share information that might otherwise have remained concealed."*

The provided verbatim serves as empirical evidence supporting several key arguments. Firstly, it underscored the importance of direct, open communication channels between the community members and the security officers. The phrase "openly discuss our worries with the officers" signified a departure from the traditional, often intimidating, reporting mechanisms. This direct engagement, facilitated by the barazas, has been dismantling the barriers of fear and apprehension that have commonly hindered information sharing in the communities susceptible to insecurity. In the context of counter-terrorism efforts, the openness emphasized in the participant's reflection illustrated how the Security Barazas have empowered the community members to actively engage in surveillance and reporting.

Secondly, the verbatim pointed to the cultivation of trust and confidence within the community regarding the reporting process. The statement "This openness has built a sense of confidence in the process, encouraging more of the community members to come forward and share information" is particularly relevant. In contexts like Lamu County, where the historical grievances and fear of reprisal might lead to underreporting, the barazas have acted as platforms for reassuring the populace about the efficacy and safety of reporting. According to Alquist and Baumeister (2023) this confidence is paramount for overcoming the "silent majority" phenomenon, where some individuals possessing some vital information would remain quiet due to a lack of faith in the system or the fear of negative consequences. For instance, a resident who had previously witnessed some suspicious individuals taking photos of a bridge but had remained silent due to fear of being labeled an informant, attended a baraza where a police commander publicly guaranteed the confidentiality of all reports. Reassured by the commander’s promise and the supportive presence of the village elders, the resident discreetly approached the local Chief after the meeting to share the information, which led to an investigation.

The establishment of this confidence is not merely a secondary outcome but a necessary foundation for building some sustainable collaboration between the community and the security agencies. As trust has been accumulating over successive baraza engagements, more individuals have felt motivated to transition from passive observers to active contributors of timely intelligence, which is crucial for the

prevention and responding to threats. Thus, Security Barazas have been functioning as vital conduits for channeling grassroots information, enhancing the accuracy and timeliness of the intelligence that informs security responses in Lamu County.

Thirdly, the verbatim indirectly addressed the efficiency of localized, informal governance structures in enhancing security outcomes. The baraza, as a traditional and a culturally accepted forum, have provided a familiar and a non-threatening environment for the community members to engage with the authority figures. This indigenous approach contrasts with the more formal, top-down security strategies, that have often proved more effective in producing ground-level intelligence. The willingness of the community members to "report suspicious behavior without fear" directly associates with the perceived accessibility and the responsiveness of the security forces operating within these barazas. In one notable instance, during a baraza, the community members raised concerns about a series of petty crimes and the increased presence of unknown youth. Instead of simply promising to deploy more police patrols, the Sub-County Security Committee, led by the Assistant County Commissioner, collaborated with the elders and the youth representatives to co-create a community-led watch program. The community members identified the vulnerable spots and committed to a rotational night watch, while the police agreed to provide a direct line of communication for emergency reporting. This participatory model not only resolved the issue but also cemented the community's role as a key stakeholder in their own security.

This approach has shifted the traditional security paradigm from one characterized by top-down enforcement to a more participatory model where the citizens perceive themselves as stakeholders in the public safety. This embodies the core tenets of Community Policing Theory, emphasizing a collaborative partnership between law enforcement and the public to enhance safety and address local concerns. The rapport established through the regular dialogues have helped to institutionalize a culture of collective vigilance and shared responsibility. Given the complex socio-political and the security challenges in Lamu County, this dynamic is particularly significant, as it has helped to bridge the social divides and then reinforced the legitimacy and effectiveness of the counter-terrorism strategies grounded in the local ownership and cooperation. Consequently, the Security Barazas are indispensable not only as reporting channels but also as mechanisms for enhancing social cohesion and the trust critical for the long-term security governance.

Finally, the verbatim suggested that the Security Barazas in Lamu County are not merely some passive information-gathering points but very active mechanisms for the community empowerment in the security matters. By encouraging open discussion and fostering confidence, these forums have transformed the citizens from passive recipients of security into active participants in their own protection. Wilding, Fray, Molitorisz and McKewon (2018) had stated that, the sharing of "information that might otherwise remain concealed" has had a direct outcome of this empowerment,

leading to more comprehensive and proactive approach to identifying and mitigating most threats that would not have been shared.

In conclusion, the verbatim strongly illustrated the fundamental principles underpinning the success of the Security Barazas in Lamu County as a reporting channel for suspicious activities. It highlighted how fostering open dialogue, building trust, leveraging traditional structures and empowering communities have become critical ingredients for the enhancement of intelligence gathering and consequently, the overall security in complex and sensitive environments.

c. The Police Stations

The formal police reporting channels, including the police stations and official hotlines, have also continued to play a crucial yet comparatively limited role in the residents' communication of suspicious activities in Lamu County. Only about a quarter of the respondents identified these mechanisms as familiar or accessible options. This relatively lower engagement reflected a persistent community concern such as the mistrust of the law enforcement, apprehensions about confidentiality and the challenges related to the logistical accessibility. Such barriers are well-documented in Kenyan policing literature, which have highlighted inefficiencies and fear of retaliation as factors that discourage public reliance on formal reporting pathways (Irwansyah, Ulfah, Ikbal, Paminto & Darma, 2020). For example, in one remote village, a local resident witnessed a group of unfamiliar armed men passing through the outskirts of their settlement. The resident, having had a previous experience where

a tip they gave at the police station was leaked, resulting in threats from the criminal elements, chose not to go to the police station. Instead, they relayed the information to a trusted village elder, which, while effective, introduced a slight delay in the intelligence flow to the formal security operations.

Turning to the more formal reporting mechanisms, the police stations and the official hotlines have remained foundational elements in the county's security infrastructure. The accessibility of the local police posts and the emergency contact numbers has offered the residents formal avenues to relay suspicions, initiate investigations and to coordinate rapid security responses. Despite their critical role, these channels have faced hurdles related to the public perceptions of inefficiency, delayed responses and the occasional mistrust stemming from the previous abuses within the police service. Such concerns have deterred the community members from fully utilizing these formal pathways, thereby limiting the flow of vital intelligence. In a recent incident, a resident who noticed a suspicious-looking abandoned vehicle near a public space called the official police hotline. However, due to high call volume or an understaffed call center, the call was not answered in a timely manner. By the time the call went through and a patrol car was dispatched, the vehicle had already been moved, leaving the resident feeling that their concern was not taken seriously. This experience discouraged the individual from using the hotline again.

Addressing these challenges requires continued reforms that can emphasize enhancing transparency, responsiveness and the community policing practices. Upgrading hotline

infrastructure to guarantee 24/7 availability and confidentiality would be particularly important for encouraging reports, especially from the individuals fearing retaliation or social stigma. The police hotlines would complement community-based channels by offering legal recourse and swift intervention capabilities. And for sustained impact, security agencies must invest in outreach, consistent feedback and prompt action on reports, thereby rebuilding legitimacy and strengthening partnerships with the local communities in the fight against terrorism.

4.4.2.3. Participation in Any Community Meetings, Workshops or Trainings Related to Counter-Terrorism or Security

The respondents were also asked to indicate by yes or no, if they have ever participated in any community meetings, workshops or trainings related to counter-terrorism or security. Figure 9 below illustrates the finding.

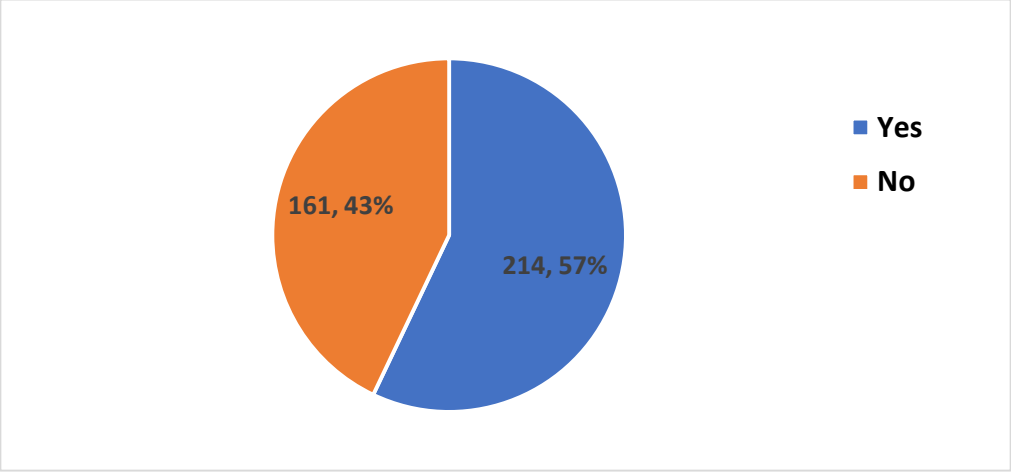

Figure 9: Participation in Any Community Meetings, Workshops or Trainings Related to Counter-Terrorism or Security

A majority of respondents 214 (57.1%) reported participating in the community meetings, workshops or trainings related to the counter-terrorism and security, reflecting a relatively high community engagement in Lamu County. This level of participation indicated active efforts by the local authorities and the community-based organizations to raise the awareness and build capacity around their security concerns. The fact that nearly half of these participants attended regularly suggested a sustained interaction and information exchange, which is essential for improving the public vigilance and enhancing the effectiveness of counter-terrorism initiatives. As one Village Elder explained,

> *"Through these meetings, we teach our people how to identify various threats early enough and in order to work together with the police to keep our villages safe. These regular training have kept the community alert and united against those who want to bring harm to us."*

This statement highlighted not only the educational function of these initiatives but also the crucial role the local leaders play in mobilizing and sustaining the community cohesion. The village elders act as the trusted custodians of the local knowledge and the culture who can effectively translate security messages in a culturally sensitive manner, increasing its acceptance and ownership of the counter-terrorism efforts. As Chang, Sjöberg, Turunen and Rambaree (2022) stated, that the involvement of the residents fosters a collective vigilance mindset, empowering the residents to become active participants in safeguarding their own environment.

Such participatory platforms have been providing opportunities for the residents not only to be informed but also to be able to voice their concerns and to contribute to the local knowledge, which is invaluable for the proactive security management. Most of these regular engagement through such forums have been strengthening the social cohesion and enabling the establishment of trustful relationships between the citizens and the security agencies. Evidence from other studies have also shown that such engagements can reduce a community's alienation and create grassroots ownership of the security strategies, thereby increasing the overall resilience of the communities against extremist influences (Hansen, Lid & Okwany, 2019).

Additionally, the frequent interaction between the community members and the security actors via these meetings have promoted transparency and accountability, which can alleviate fears of arbitrary policing and a strong build mutual respect. By embedding the counter-terrorism education within the familiar social structures like the village gatherings and led by the respected elders, these programs not only disseminate important information but also reinforce the social norms that reject violence and promote peace. Therefore, the community meetings and trainings serve as very critical platforms for both the security awareness and the social unity, contributing substantially to the long-term stability and resilience in Lamu County.

On the other hand, 42.9% (161) of the respondents had not engaged in such activities, revealing an ongoing challenge related to the outreach, accessibility or possibly skepticism towards the security programs. Barriers such as geographic dispersion,

limited information dissemination and social factors including gender and age may contribute to this gap. One local community member shared,

> *"I have never attended any of these meetings because the information does not always reach my village. And sometimes the meetings are too far or at times when I am busy with my farming and family duties. Also, I am not sure if these trainings are for everyone or just for the leaders, so I feel left out and I know that I am missing out on a lot."*

This candid reflection illustrated the tangible and the perceived obstacles that hinder the engagement among some of the community members. For example, a woman from a remote settlement, who worked as a farmer, never heard about an upcoming security training because the announcement was made at the distant Chief's office and was scheduled during her peak working hours. Furthermore, due to traditional gender roles, she perceived the meeting as a space for men only, thus feeling excluded and disempowered from participating in a critical security dialogue. Addressing these barriers is going to require a multi-faceted approach that considers the socio-cultural dynamics influencing the participation, including the traditional gender roles and the trust deficits between some of the community segments and the formal security actors. Innovative outreach methods such as the localized radio programs, mobile training units and the participatory drama display, can reach to the isolated groups. Additionally, engaging the community influencers in advocacy and information

dissemination would help break down some resistance and encourage more broader participation (Chang et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the participation frequency shows that while many engage regularly, a substantial proportion attend the trainings only occasionally. This irregular engagement can limit the knowledge retention and a sustained capacity building, which can be essential for effective counter-terrorism vigilance at the community level. For instance, a Nyumba Kumi elder who attended a training on identifying signs of radicalization in the youth but missed the follow-up session on how the extremists are using new online platforms for the recruitment was less effective in responding to an emerging threat that arose. When a community member later reported the suspicious online activity, the elder was not havinge the updated knowledge to interpret the threat correctly, potentially dismissing it and allowing the threat to go unaddressed. Therefore, a continuous and frequent training opportunities can assist to reinforce earlier lessons and adapt to the evolving security threats, ensuring that the residents remain informed and empowered.

Therefore, it could be better to create some convenient, accessible and culturally appropriate training schedules to be able to promote regular attendance of the residents, particularly for the vulnerable groups such as the women, youth and the elderly. Also, the support of the peer learning and the establishment of the local champions can also increase the motivation and the consistency in the attendance, ultimately contributing to a stronger communal defense mechanism.

4.4.2.4. Confident on the Ability to Contribute to Community Efforts Against Terrorism

The participants were asked how confident they felt about their ability to contribute to community efforts against terrorism. The question was on a Scale: Not confident – Very confident. They were also asked to make an explanation on why they had indicated the particular option. Figure 10 below illustrates the finding, the explanations are discussed below it.

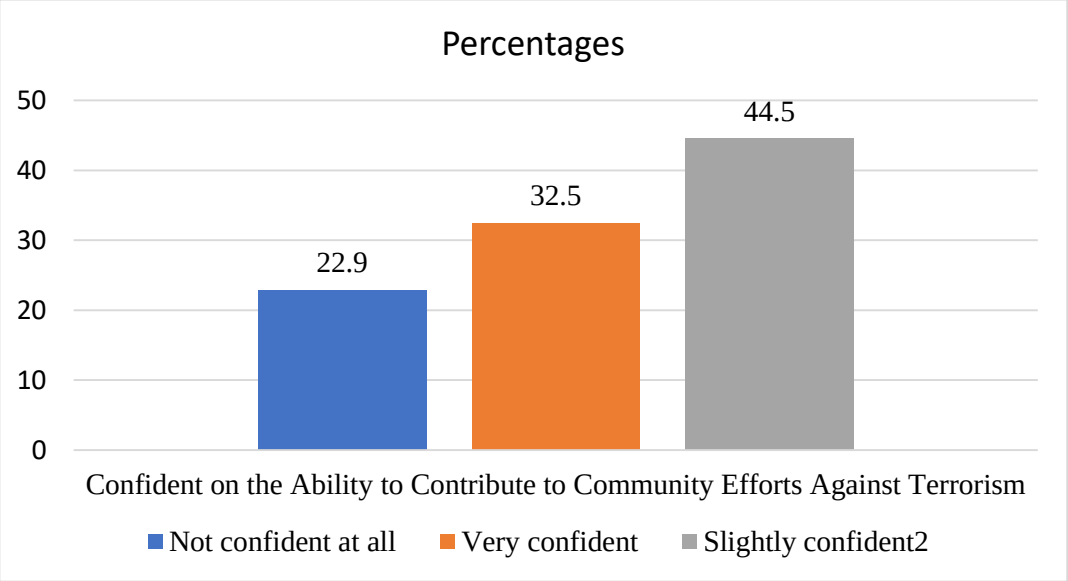

Figure 10: Confident on the Ability to Contribute to Community Efforts Against Terrorism

The questionnaire had two options for either not confident at all and very confident. But after the analysis of the results, it was found that some of the participants had expressed a third option of Slightly confident. And the same was therefore included in the below discussion.

The findings revealed that, the most common feeling among the community members regarding their ability to contribute to the counter-terrorism efforts in Lamu County is being slightly confident (44.5%). This substantial proportion indicated that, many of the community members felt some level of self-assurance, yet they were still requiring further clarity, empowerment and the resources to engage more fully. Inclusive engagement is particularly important to address the social cohesion and the community-wide participation. A local community member expressed this perspective clearly:

> *"I want to help keep my village safe, but sometimes I feel unsure about what I can do or where to report. The meetings are helpful, but they are not always easy to attend because of the work and the distance. Also, some of the people fear being targeted if they speak out, so not everyone feels confident to get involved."*

This candid reflection illustrated how the logistical barriers and fear of the social repercussions lower the confidence and the participation, highlighting the need for more tailored outreach and assurance programs that can address these concerns directly. This group represents a critical target for capacity-building efforts that emphasize collaboration and provide accessible, culturally relevant training. Hossain et al., (2025) highlighted that, the community-based terrorism prevention programs must be developed in close consultation with the community members to ensure the relevance and foster confidence, thereby avoiding the unintended exclusion or stigmatization. Therefore, strengthening trust and providing forums for dialogue can

convert the slight confidence into greater empowerment, which can directly support resilience-building efforts.

By building on these challenges, it can be crucial for the security stakeholders to design flexible and inclusive engagement strategies that can accommodate the daily realities of the community members. For example, by holding meetings and trainings at varied times and in accessible locations, as well as utilizing mobile or digital platforms, can help to overcome the barriers related to work schedules, distance and the mobility. Furthermore, by fostering a culture of confidentiality and the protection for those reporting suspicious activities, can alleviate the fears of retaliation and the social stigma. For instance, a local police unit, in collaboration with the community leaders, organized a series of evening security sensitization forums held in the villages' markets, which were easily accessible to the traders after the business hours. During these sessions, the officers used the local dialects and a question and answers format, openly addressing the fears of retaliation and promising a complete anonymity, which led to an increase in the discreet tips being submitted directly to them. According to Li, Tao, Qian, Mlecnik, and Visscher (2024) when the residents start to feel safe and valued, their willingness to contribute will grow, thereby gradually transforming uncertainty into more active participation. Such community-sensitive approaches will not only enhance the individual confidence but also it is going to strengthen the overall social fabric that would be critical for the sustainable counter-terrorism efforts.

From a Community Policing Theory perspective, the 'slightly confident' group presents an ideal opportunity for the collaborative engagement. This theory advocates for a partnership between the law enforcement and the community, emphasizing their shared responsibility for their safety and order. By actively involving the community members in the design and delivery of the counter-terrorism initiatives, the security agencies can move beyond the traditional enforcement models to foster some mutual trust and legitimacy. This approach can transform the Lamu residents from being those passive recipients of security into the more active co-producers, leveraging their local knowledge and increasing their sense of ownership over the safety outcomes in their locality, which is crucial for turning 'slight confidence' into a robust and more proactive participation.

Beyond overcoming the logistical and safety concerns, an effective communication can play a pivotal role in the fostering of a sense of slight confidence. This could involve the use the local dialects, the traditional communication channels and the trusted community figures to disseminate various information about most counter-terrorism initiatives. By ensuring that information is relevant, easy to understand and that it is regularly updated, can help in clarifying the residents' roles and responsibilities, thereby reducing any uncertainty and building a foundation of knowledge that would complement practical training. For example, a security committee, recognizing that some of the residents were not receiving the official announcements, they partnered with a local radio station to produce a weekly segment

in the local dialect. The program featured respected village elders and a police liaison officer who discussed various security threats in plain language, answered the listeners' questions and provided a clear, confidential reporting procedure. This initiative successfully reached a wider, more diverse audience and helped to transform the passive listeners into informed community members. If the focus is on the consistent, culturally sensitive communication, the authorities can transform any passive slight confidence into an active and informed engagement, in the long run empowering a larger segment of the residents.

Following this, a notable nearly one-third of respondents (32.5%) expressed being very confident. This group likely represented the engaged community members who are well-equipped to participate actively and to serve as agents of change within their villages. The important role of the community leadership in fostering confidence was emphasized by a Village Elder who said that,

> *"Our community depends on our unity and vigilance. We, as elders, guide our people to be watchful and to be able to report anything that is suspicious as early as possible. When we come together in our meetings and trainings, it strengthens our bond and also prepares us to protect our home against most threats. We have seen confidence growing when our people realize that their efforts matter and that the authorities listen and act accordingly."*

This highlighted how the trusted leadership can foster collective vigilance and help in reinforcing the message that the individual contributions are valued and impactful,

which in turn boosts the community-wide confidence. Their confidence suggests that, the familiarity with the security initiatives as well as a trusting the relationship with the law enforcement and the local leaders. The presence of this confident is vital for the community resilience. This group can act as peer educators and also as role models who would be encouraging others and also facilitating various open communication with the security institutions.

Moreover, sustaining this high level of confidence would require some ongoing engagement and support from both the community structures and the formal security agencies. It would then be prudent to be providing continuous education, regular feedback on the reported concerns and the visible responses on the community inputs, would help to maintain trust and motivation among these confident individuals. As per Eisenberg (2023) the active participation of the residents not only enhances early detection and the reporting of threats, but can also help to normalize the collaboration between the civilians and the law enforcement, thereby reducing any suspicion and fears. By empowering this core groups as champions of security awareness, these programs can create several ripple effects that can gradually lift the confidence and the involvement of the wider community hence fostering a stronger and collective front against terrorism.

To maximize the impact of these very confident groups, it would be beneficial to integrate them into some formalized community security networks or any volunteer programs. This would therefore involve creating structured roles for them as

community liaisons, training facilitators or even members of the local security committees. Sarabipour et al., (2022) in their study had indicated that, such integration might not only leverage the existing confidence and trust but would also assist to provide them with some official platforms to share their knowledge and experiences, thereby being an inspiration and guiding the less confident community members. For instance, a respected community elder, known for his high confidence and proactive engagement, was formally appointed as a community liaison for the local police post. This gave him the official mandate and the platform to collect information from his neighbors who might have been hesitant to approach the police directly. He successfully relayed a tip about a new group of outsiders in the area, leading to a swift security response and demonstrating the effectiveness of leveraging the existing community trust within a formalized structure. In the long run, recognizing and publicly appreciating their contributions, can further reinforce their commitment and also get to motivate others to emulate their proactive stance.

Conversely, a significant minority, just under a quarter of the respondents (22.9%), reported feeling not confident at all. This highlighted a substantial gap in the empowerment that could limit a greater proactive community participation. The feelings of inadequacy or fear including the concerns about their personal safety and the uncertain roles, have been inhibiting these individuals from taking part in reporting and the prevention efforts. Such low confidence levels has reflected the need for the targeted interventions to the vulnerably support and also to integrate these community

members into the security frameworks. From the perspective of the Social Contract Theory, this profound lack of confidence indicates a perceived breach or weakening of the implicit agreement between these citizens and the state. In this contract, the individuals cede certain liberties to the government in exchange for protection and the maintenance of order. When concerns about their personal safety, fear of reprisal or ambiguity about their role in the security efforts dominate, it suggests that the state is not fully upholding its side of the protective bargain. For example, a young mother in a remote village, having heard stories of the informants being targeted by the criminal gangs and feeling that the police could not guarantee her safety, chose to remain silent after spotting a suspicious individual entering a neighbor's property. She felt that the risk to her family was too great, thereby signaling her belief that the social contract, in this instance, was fractured. For these individuals to engage proactively, the state must demonstrably re-establish its commitment to their security and well-being, thereby re-legitimizing the social contract and fostering the trust required for the participation in counter-terrorism initiatives at the Busia Border.

Addressing this would require more than just awareness but also it would demand tailored programs that specifically can build skills, clarifying the citizen roles in a safe manner and then reducing fears of retaliation and stigmatization. The strategies can then integrate the psychosocial support and the community dialogue to overcome the mistrust and empower those marginalized or excluded from the conventional initiatives. Building resilience at this level can be essential for the inclusive security

thereby protecting all the residents and diminishing the likelihood that disenfranchisement might lead the vulnerable to lean towards the extremist narratives. Providing these individuals with safe spaces and consistent encouragement could stimulate their gradual progression toward greater participation and confidence.

For the 'not confident' segment, their apprehension fundamentally challenges the implicit terms of the Social Contract Theory. This theory posits that the citizens cede certain rights to the state in exchange for protection and the maintenance of order. When the individuals feel unsafe, unheard or in fear reprisal for cooperation, it indicates a perceived breach of this contract. Restoring confidence in this group necessitates tangible demonstrations by the state that it can guarantee their safety and rights, ensuring that their engagement in counter-terrorism efforts does not expose them to greater risk. To address this, a community in a particularly vulnerable area, in partnership with the local security forces, established a secure, anonymous tip line and a dedicated police liaison officer whose identity was known only to the village elders. A resident who was too afraid to speak publicly used the anonymous line to report a suspicious gathering. The police, acting on the tip without revealing the source, successfully disrupted a planned recruitment drive, thereby demonstrating that the reporting mechanism was both effective and safe. Re-establishing this fundamental trust is crucial, as a fractured social contract can lead to more disengagement and thereby potentially, vulnerability to alternative narratives like terrorism.

For this group, establishing a confidential reporting mechanism that can offer anonymity and protection would be paramount. This would include anonymous tip lines, secure digital platforms or even designated trusted intermediaries who can relay information without compromising the source. But beyond the technical solutions, consistent assurances from the authorities that reports will be taken seriously and that the informants will be protected from any repercussions can gradually chip away at the fear that currently paralyzes this segment of the community. Therefore, building trust with this group is a long-term endeavor that requires patience, empathy and the demonstrable commitment to their safety and well-being.

4.4.3. The Communication Channels Used Between Citizens and Security Agencies for Counter-Terrorism Information Sharing in Lamu County

This section delves into the communication channels utilized for the counter-terrorism information sharing in Lamu County. It examines the views of the respondents on the various methods through which the community members and the security agencies exchange vital intelligence and updates related to the counter-terrorism efforts. The findings are derived from the collected responses, offering a comprehensive overview of the existing communication landscape and its effectiveness in facilitating a collaborative security environment.

4.4.3.1. Various Communication Channels Used Between Citizens and Security Agencies for Counter-Terrorism Information Sharing in Lamu County.

First, the respondents were asked to mention the various communication channels used between the citizens and the security agencies for counter-terrorism information sharing in Lamu county, Kenya. Table 6 below illustrates the finding.

Table 6: Various Communication Channels Used Between Citizens and Security Agencies for Counter-Terrorism Information Sharing in Lamu County.

Various Communication Channels Used Between Citizens and Security Agencies for Counter-Terrorism Information Sharing in Lamu County.	Frequency	Percentage
Nyumba Kumi Initiative	334	89.07%
Chiefs' and Assistant Chiefs' Offices	296	78.93%
Elders and Clan Leaders	221	58.93%
Informal Networks	178	47.47%
Religious Leaders and Institutions	129	34.4%

The Nyumba Kumi Initiative was the most rated communication channel for counter-terrorism information sharing in Lamu County, with 334 of the respondents reporting using it, accounting for 89.07%. This community policing approach focuses on the local-level surveillance and information sharing, fostering trust and operational efficiency. The Chiefs' and the Assistant Chiefs' Offices followed closely, being rated by the 296 respondents (78.93%), serving as key administrative joints that amass and relay security information from the grassroots levels to the higher authorities. The elders and the clan leaders have been acting as important intermediaries for the 221 respondents (58.93%), leveraging their traditional authority to facilitate those communications. The informal networks, including friends and neighbors, were

identified by 178 respondents (47.47%), thereby underscoring the vital role of the social bonds in intelligence gathering. The religious leaders and institutions also play a significant role, as rated by 129 respondents (34.4%), particularly in the communities where religion has remained a strong social adhesive. Collectively, these channels have been enhancing the flow of critical information necessary for the effective counter-terrorism strategies in the region.

4.4.3.2. Analysis of Communication Channels for Counter-Terrorism Information Sharing

The participants were asked to make comments in reference to the communication channels they had mentioned that are being used between the citizens and the security agencies for sharing counter-terrorism information in Lamu county.

a. Nyumba Kumi as a Neighborhood Watch Approach

This section presents information in relation to the most mentioned communication channel used between the citizens and the security agencies for counter-terrorism information sharing in Lamu County, Kenya. The Nyumba Kumi Initiative, often described as a neighborhood watch approach, stands out as a foundational strategy for the grassroots security. This community-led model is meant to organize citizens into clusters of ten households, each with a leader who is to serve as a vital intermediary, facilitating a direct and a trusted flow of information to the security agencies. By decentralizing the security responsibilities and encouraging active citizen participation, Nyumba Kumi not only is it enhancing the collection of critical intelligence but also

has built a sense of collective ownership over the community safety. The success of this model is best captured by a local Chief, who had this to say,

> *"Nyumba Kumi is an effective tool because it is built on trust. Our people are more willing to report anything suspicious to their neighbors and the elders in charge than to us and the police who are the government officials. This initiative has given us thousands of eyes and ears on the ground. When a stranger arrives, or something does not feel right, that information is able to reach us quickly and quietly. It has become an essential bridge between the community and the security apparatus and it is what has allowed us to stay one step ahead of those who wish to harm our people."*

This study revealed that, the Nyumba Kumi Initiative consistently emerged as the most frequently mentioned communication channel for the counter-terrorism information sharing between the citizens and the security agencies in Lamu County. The Chief's verbatim statement underscored a fundamental finding that, the initiative's effectiveness is deeply rooted in trust. The participants indicated that the decentralized structure, which leverages the familiar relationships within the clusters of the ten households, significantly lowers the barrier for reporting any suspicious activities. This direct and trusted flow of information, facilitated by the elected cluster leaders, was perceived as a more accessible and less intimidating than the direct engagement with the uniformed officers, thereby getting to enhance the volume and the quality of the intelligence received by the security agencies.

On the ground, the trust-based nature of Nyumba Kumi has manifested in various scenarios that demonstrate its efficacy in early warning. For instance, there was an instance when a cluster leader observed a new, unfamiliar face frequently loitering near a local gathering point and another scenario when some women in the market noticed some unusual patterns of movement by a certain individual not typically associated with the market area. Instead of feeling compelled to approach a police station directly, which some residents might find daunting due to past experiences and the perceived bureaucratic hurdles, the cluster leader, having established rapport with their residents, discreetly gathered more context. This information was then relayed through the established Nyumba Kumi channels, often reaching the local Chief and the Assistant Chief, who then verified and the escalated the intelligence to the specialized security units.

Furthermore, the initiative's ability to act as "thousands of the eyes and the ears on the ground" has proved invaluable when delicate anomalies have occurred. There was a situation where a resident noticed an individual purchasing an unusually large quantity of fertilizer materials not commonly used in the area. Another was when some residents who had been away for moths were seemingly engaging in secretive meetings at odd hours in the course of the week. While such observations were seemly minor in isolation, the Nyumba Kumi framework oversaw their reporting due to the seemingly insignificant deviations from the norm. This collective vigilance, channeled through the trusted local leaders, ensured that such fragmented pieces of information

were consolidated and brought to the attention of the security agencies quickly and quietly, enabling them to piece together a broader picture of the potential threats before they escalated.

Collectively, the findings affirmed that the Nyumba Kumi Initiative functions as an essential bridge, significantly enhancing the community's proactive role in counter-terrorism efforts. As argued by Hansen, Lid and Okwany (2019) by fostering a sense of collective ownership over the community safety and leveraging the existing social bonds, it gets to built a more robust intelligence gathering network. The continuous flow of real-time, ground-level information through this channel has allowed the security agencies to maintain a crucial advantage, enabling them to anticipate and respond to the threats more effectively, thereby contributing to the overall stability and the security of the area.

b. Chiefs' and Assistant Chiefs' Offices who are The Administrative Link

This section presents information on the second most mentioned communication channel used between the citizens and the security agencies for the counter-terrorism information sharing in Lamu County. The Chiefs' and the Assistant Chiefs' Offices, serving as the administrative link, are a traditional and a highly respected channel for reporting a wide range of issues, including the security threats. As the government's direct representatives at the location level, the Chiefs are deeply embedded within the community, making their offices a natural and trusted point of contact for the citizens. The long-standing authority of these offices ensures that information flows efficiently

from the grassroots to the broader security apparatus, serving as a crucial aggregation point for the intelligence gathered at the local level. This framework is vital for ensuring that citizens' concerns are addressed and that a reliable and a formal pathway for the security information remains operational. A Village Elder had this to comment,

> *"The Chief's office is the foundation of our security. When there is a serious matter in the community something beyond our ability to resolve, like a stranger acting suspiciously or a report of a new threat, it is the first place we go to. We trust our chief as he listens and acts. We, as elders, gather information and try to understand what is happening on the ground, but it is the Chief who makes sure it reaches the police, and all the other security agencies. His office is the formal link that turns our community's knowledge into action. Without it, our voices would not be heard where it matters most."*

This study found that, the Chiefs' and the Assistant Chiefs' Offices consistently ranked as the second most mentioned communication channel for the counter-terrorism information sharing in Lamu County. The Village Elder's verbatim statement, "The Chief's office is the foundation of our security," clearly articulated the deep-seated trust and the traditional reliance placed on these administrative joints. The participants indicated that, these offices served as crucial aggregation points, where intelligence gathered through the informal networks and the initiatives like Nyumba Kumi was formalized and relayed to the higher security authorities. A classic example of this on-the-ground process involved a Chief when he received two separate and seemingly unrelated tips: one from a fisherman about an unfamiliar boat dropping off individuals

at an odd hour and another from a shopkeeper about a new, secretive individual who was buying unusually large quantities of bar soap, flour and sugar. The Chief's office aggregated this fragmented information, connecting the dots that a formal security agency, without local context, might have missed. This consolidated intelligence was then passed on to the police as a concrete threat profile, leading to a successful investigation. This established pathway ensured that, the local concerns and the early warnings were systematically integrated into the broader security apparatus, highlighting the Chiefs' pivotal role as the primary interface between the community and the state.

On the ground, the role of the Chiefs' and Assistant Chiefs' Offices was evident in various scenarios where they acted as the central clearinghouses for the security intelligence. For instance, whenever a Nyumba Kumi elder received information about an unfamiliar individual attempting to radicalize the youth in a specific village, they mostly reported directly to their Assistant Chiefs. The Assistant Chief, possessing intimate knowledge of the local population and having established rapport, would then verify the credibility of the report, perhaps by consulting with the other village elders or the trusted community members. This verification process has always ensured that only the actionable intelligence, filtered through the local understanding, was passed up the chain of command, preventing the barrage of the security agencies with unverified rumors. This approach perfectly embodies the Community Policing Theory, where the Chief's office acts as a crucial partner in co-producing safety. It highlights a

shared responsibility, moving beyond the traditional enforcement to a more collaborative and trust-based model. Furthermore, these offices have played a critical role in coordinating responses to the emerging threats.

There was a scenario where there arose multiple reports about some suspicious movements in a remote forested area, potentially linked to armed groups. The Chiefs and the Assistant Chiefs, after receiving these diverse pieces of information from the various community sources, they consolidate them. They then convened some local security meetings, which involved the police and the other security personnel, to discuss the consolidated intelligence. This facilitated joint planning and decision-making, allowing for a coordinated deployment of resources, such as patrols directly targeting the reported areas. The Chiefs' local knowledge was instrumental in guiding these operational responses.

The findings thus underscored that the Chiefs' and Assistant Chiefs' Offices were not merely administrative points but dynamic hubs for intelligence flow and operational coordination. According to Saaida (2023) by leveraging their traditional authority and their established presence, the local administrators can effectively transform fragmented community observations into actionable intelligence for the security agencies. This critical function has ensured that the "community's knowledge" is being effectively converted "into actions," serving as a vital formal link that significantly is contributing to the overall effectiveness of the counter-terrorism strategies in Lamu County.

c. Elders and Clan Leaders being the Traditional Channels of Influence

This section presents information on the third most mentioned communication channel used between the citizens and the security agencies for the counter-terrorism information sharing in Lamu County. The elders and clan leaders, as the traditional channels of influence, serve as a critical yet informal link within the security framework. These respected community figures hold some significant social and cultural authority, which positions them as trusted intermediaries for the residents. By leveraging their deep knowledge of the local dynamics and their established rapport with the community members, the elders can facilitate the flow of sensitive information that might otherwise not reach the formal security channels. Their role in the intelligence gathering is particularly crucial in bridging the gap between the citizens and the security agencies, ensuring that the ground-level information is captured and transmitted through available respected, non-governmental pathway. A village elder explained that,

> "*Our people trust us because we are not in any way government officials. We have been here for generations and we know everyone. When something makes them afraid, they come to us first and not to the police. We use our deep knowledge of the community to know if a story is true. When we hear something serious, we take that information to the Chief or directly to the security agencies whom we have a good relationship with. Our role is to be the first line of defense by gathering the quiet whispers and turning them into a clear warning before the problem grows*."

The study found that the Elders and the Clan Leaders constituted the third most mentioned communication channel for the counter-terrorism information sharing in Lamu County. The verbatim statement from a Village Elder profoundly illustrated the unique and deeply trusted nature of this channel: "Our people trust us because we are not in any way government officials. We have been here for generations and we know everyone." This finding indicated that the informal authority and the long-standing community ties of these traditional leaders positioned them as a crucial first point of contact for sensitive information, particularly when the citizens felt hesitant to approach the formal security agencies directly. Their role is being perceived as foundational in collecting the elusive "quiet whispers" that often preceded more overt threats.

On the ground, the influence of the elders and the clan leaders was evident in various scenarios where they served as initial conduits for intelligence. For instance, there was a young person from the community who started exhibiting unusual behavior, such as withdrawing from the social activities, expressing extremist views online, then suddenly acquiring unexplained wealth. Their family members and the close acquaintances felt uncomfortable reporting this directly to the police. Similarly, a local fisherman, who upon noticing a young, unemployed man in the community suddenly acquire a new, powerful outboard engine for his boat, quietly shared his suspicions with a respected elder. The elder, leveraging his intimate knowledge of the local youth's economic situation, recognized this as a significant red flag and began discreet

inquiries within his network before formalizing a report to the authorities. Instead, they approached the respected elder, confiding their concerns in a culturally appropriate and private setting. Because the elder had knowledge of the individual's history, they assessed the situation and decided on the most appropriate next step, by some initiating discreet inquiries before formalizing their reports.

Furthermore, the elders and the clan leaders have played a critical role in mediating and verifying information that might otherwise have been dismissed or misinterpreted. There was a situation where rumors circulated about some outsiders attempting to recruit the local youth for illicit activities in a remote village. Instead of causing panic, the community members brought these rumors to their elders. The elders, through their established networks and wisdom, then engaged in some quiet investigations, speaking with the various individuals, observing patterns and also cross-referencing the information. The use of the traditional leaders to mediate and vet information has been found to reduce communities panic and improve the quality of intelligence being passed to the security forces (Momoh, 2021). Once they determined the credibility of the threat, they formalized the intelligence, taking it directly to security agencies with whom they had cultivated relationships, ensuring that validated concerns reached the relevant authorities.

The elders, through their established networks and wisdom, engage in quiet investigations, speaking with the various individuals, observing patterns and also cross-referencing all information. Once they have determined the credibility of the

threat, they would then formalize the intelligence, taking it to either the Chief or directly to the security agencies with whom they have created a rapport, thereby ensuring that the validated concerns reached the relevant authorities. This structured process is a perfect example of the Community Policing Theory in practice. It highlights a shared responsibility for security, where the informal community leaders partner with the formal authorities to co-produce safety. By filtering and validating information locally, they strengthen the partnership and build a more resilient security framework from the ground up.

The findings collectively demonstrated that the Elders and the Clan Leaders were indispensable traditional channels of influence, effectively transforming the community-level observations into actionable intelligence. As Momoh (2019) the unique position of some elders and leaders in a community built on generations of trust and the deep local knowledge, allows them to gather sensitive information that the formal channels might miss. By acting as a critical filter and conduit for "quiet whispers," they have significantly contributed to the early detection and prevention of the potential security threats, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of the counter-terrorism efforts in Lamu County.

d. Informal Networks Built through Personal Trust

This section presents information on the fourth most mentioned communication channel used between the citizens and the security agencies for the counter-terrorism

information sharing in Lamu County. The Informal Networks built through personal trust can play a vital and often are the unacknowledged role in the security framework. These channels are not a formal program or a traditional structure but are defined through trusted relationships cultivated over time between the individual security officers and the community members. The existence of a personal bond, often rooted in mutual respect and familiarity, can provide an invaluable avenue for the exchange of highly sensitive intelligence that the citizens may be hesitant to share through the official channels. This person-to-person trust allows for the discreet and rapid relay of information, serving as a crucial complement to more formal communication structures and underscoring the importance of human relationships in effective counter-terrorism efforts. A local community member reiterated that,

> *"There is an officer whom I have known for many years. We drink tea together sometimes. I do not see him as just another police officer, but as a person I trust. If I see something suspicious in my village, I call him directly on his personal phone and tell him about it. It is never an official report and I know that it is just between us. He listens and I know he will take it seriously and quietly follow it up. This personal trust is the reason why I would tell him something sensitive that I might be too afraid to report at any police station."*

A Nyumba Kumi Elder also had his view,

> *"As a Nyumba Kumi leader, my role is to report things to the Chief, but sometimes there are things that need to be handled more discreetly. I have built a personal relationship with the area subcounty commander.*

> *Because of our friendship and mutual respect, I share any sensitive tips with him directly It might be about a rumor of radicalization or a person we are watching. This informal network has allowed me to pass on information very quickly and quietly, which makes all the difference. It shows that even with a system like Nyumba Kumi, personal trust is what truly makes it to work."*

This study identified informal networks, built through personal trust, as the fourth most mentioned communication channel for the counter-terrorism information sharing in Lamu County. The verbatims from both a local community member and a Nyumba Kumi elder underscored that these networks were not structured programs but rather gradual relationships between the citizens and the individual security officers. For instance, a village elder, who had a long-standing friendship with the local police sergeant, often meets with him for a cup of tea. During one such informal gathering, the elder discreetly mentioned of a new family that had moved into a remote part of the village and was behaving unusually, without needing to make a formal report. This informal, personal bond allowed the sergeant to initiate a quiet, low-profile inquiry based on the tip that might have been lost in the formal bureaucracy. The participants indicated that, the personal bond, rooted in mutual respect and familiarity, has created an invaluable avenue for the exchange of highly sensitive intelligence that might not otherwise have reached the official channels. This reliance on the personal trust highlighted a crucial complementary mechanism to the more formal communication structures, emphasizing the human element in effective intelligence gathering.

On the ground, the community member's perspective illustrated how these informal networks provide a direct, discreet conduit for immediate concerns. For instance, a farmer might notice unfamiliar individuals frequently accessing a remote, less-traveled path near their land, or observe unusual nocturnal activities. While these observations might be too vague or seemingly insignificant for a formal police report, the farmer, having a personal relationship with a specific police officer, could make a quick phone call or send a discrete message. He might say, “So and so, I have seen some new faces near the forest lately and their movements are not normal for this area.” According to Olomu and Michael-Olomu (2024), this direct line, built on an established trust, allows for the rapid relay of initial suspicions without the perceived bureaucracy or fear of the formal exposure, enabling the state security agents to initiate quiet inquiries or surveillance.

Furthermore, these informal channels have addressed the hesitation of some of the community members have been feeling about engaging with the formal security institutions. A familiar scenario among some of the participants involved the residents witnessing subtle signs of radicalization within their social circles, that involved a neighbor expressing extremist ideologies and attempting to recruit the others. The fear of being identified as an informant, or the potential for the social exclusion, often has deterred direct reporting to police stations. However, the personal trust cultivated with a known officer has allowed for these sensitive tips to be shared confidentially. This has ensured that critical, albeit delicate, intelligence is not lost due to fear, but rather

continues to flow through a trusted personal connection, enabling the security agencies to act with greater discretion.

The Nyumba Kumi elder's verbatim further elucidated how personal trust has strategically enhanced the existing formal roles. In a practical scenario, a Nyumba Kumi elder, through their routine community oversight, uncovered a credible threat of an imminent attack by a group of armed bandits to a neighboring village when they were using his area to pass through in bits. While their formal duty was to report this through the Nyumba Kumi hierarchy to the Chief, the elder's established personal relationship with the particular police commander allowed for a more immediate and direct communication. Another scenario was narrated on upon receiving a tip about a planned ambush on a supply convoy, an elder immediately called the commander's personal mobile phone, bypassing the formal reporting structure. This informal bypass of standard procedures, facilitated by mutual trust, ensured that time-sensitive intelligence reached the operational level with maximum speed, thereby potentially averting a crisis by enabling a rapid deployment and response.

Moreover, the strategic use of informal networks by elders and other community leaders often fills the critical gaps in intelligence that the formal systems might overlook (Horak, et al., 2020). For example, an elder might receive information about a low-level criminal enterprise that, while not directly terrorism-related, could be providing logistical support or resources to extremist groups. In one instance, an elder, through casual conversations in the market, learned about a group of poachers who

had started operating in a new, remote location and were using some sophisticated equipment. He was also told that, these poachers were not selling their ivory to the usual buyers known by the community. This new information, which might have seemed irrelevant in a formal report, was shared directly with a security official he trusted. The official, connecting this tip to other intelligence about extremist groups' need for funding and resources, was able to connect seemingly different pieces of the security puzzle, leading to a coordinated investigation that disrupted both the criminal and the terrorist network.

Collectively, the findings underscored that while informal, these networks built on personal trust were indispensable for a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy in Lamu County. They served as very vital conduits for sensitive, time-critical and emerging intelligence that the formal channels would struggle to acquire. The reliance on individual relationships has demonstrated the profound impact of human connection in fostering intelligence flow, ultimately enhancing the sharpness and effectiveness of the security agencies in responding to and preventing threats by leveraging the community's intimate knowledge and willingness to share with the trusted individuals. This dynamic is a powerful manifestation of the Community Policing Theory, where trust-based partnerships, even the informal ones, can be foundational to effective security. By empowering the residents to act as co-producers of safety, these networks create a more agile and resilient security ecosystem.

e. Religious Leaders and Institutions as a Trusted Avenues

This section presents information in relation to the fifth and least most mentioned communication channel used between the citizens and the security agencies for the counter-terrorism information sharing in Lamu County. The religious leaders and institutions, serving as trusted avenues, play a significant and influential role in the security framework. The leaders such as the imams, the sheikhs and the pastors, hold a considerable moral and social authority, positioning them as respected figures within the community. Their institutions, particularly the mosques and the churches, provide a secure and familiar space for the citizens to raise concerns and share information discreetly. This channel is not only instrumental for gathering intelligence but is also a critical platform for countering extremist narratives and promoting messages of peace and coexistence, thereby leveraging the religious and the cultural influence to enhance security and build community's resilience. A Local Community Member had this to say,

> *"Our religious leaders are the people we trust with our hearts and our families. When I am with them, I feel safe to talk. If I see a change in my child or a neighbor who saying something that worries me about extremism, I would go to the Imam first. I would not go to the police right away, because sometimes the problem is just a confusion that needs guidance, not punishment. Our Imam listens, gives advice and if he feels it is a real danger, he knows the quiet way to pass that message to the right people. This channel is effective because it is built on the faith and the respect we have for our leaders."*

The verbatim from a local community member, stating, "Our religious leaders are the people we trust with our hearts and our families," profoundly illustrated the deep-seated trust and the social adhesive role these figure play. The participants indicated that, the mosques and other religious platforms provided a secure and a familiar space for the citizens to raise any concerns discreetly, particularly when the issues involved are sensitive family matters or early signs of radicalization. This channel was perceived as effective because it leveraged faith and respect, thereby offering a calm approach to intelligence gathering that prioritized guidance over those immediate punitive actions. For example, it was narrated that a mother, noticed her teenage son had suddenly become withdrawn and had started watching radical videos online. She felt that she could not go to the police. Instead, she approached her Imam, who had known the family for years. The Imam listened and, in a series of private counseling sessions with the son, was able to re-engage him with the mainstream religious teachings. It was also acknowledged that in a separate, more serious case, the Imam had quietly passed on a critical tip about a recruiter to a trusted police liaison, hence preventing a family tragedy without causing a public alarm.

On the ground, the role of the religious leaders was evident in scenarios involving early behavioral changes in individuals. The Imam, acting as a confidante, would listen, offer counsel and, if the situation warranted, discreetly monitor the individual or, through the established trusted contacts, quietly relay the information to the security agencies, ensuring a sensitive and the community-centric approach. Additionally, if

rumors of extremist propaganda were circulating in the community, the Imam would use his platform during Friday sermons to provide some counter-narratives and subtly encourage vigilance, thereby addressing the community's anxiety and empowering congregants to act. This collaborative effort exemplifies the Community Policing Theory, where non-traditional actors, like the religious leaders, become vital partners in fostering a safe environment. By leveraging their trusted position, they help co-produce security and build a community resilience against extremist ideologies.

Furthermore, religious institutions serve as crucial platforms for addressing community-wide anxieties and countering extremist narratives (Amit, Barua, & Kafy, 2021). In a common scenario, if rumors or propaganda related to extremist ideologies began circulating within a village, community members often turned to their religious leaders for clarification and guidance. The Imam, during sermons or informal gatherings, could then address these concerns, also getting to provide counter-narratives rooted in the mainstream religious teachings and cleverly encourage vigilance and reporting of any truly suspicious activities. Another practical scenario involved the security agencies strategically engaging with the religious leaders to disseminate vital security information and also to solicit for specific intelligence. Rather than the direct public appeals that might be met with skepticism or fear, the security forces have often collaborated with the Imams to convey their messages about emerging threats and the importance of vigilance. This indirect, culturally sensitive

approach has fostered greater a cooperation and intelligence flow, as the community members are more receptive to the guidance from their revered spiritual authorities.

Collectively, the findings underscored those religious leaders and institutions were indispensable as trusted avenues for counter-terrorism information sharing. As Hossain et al., (2025) stated, the unique position of the religious leaders, built on their moral authority and the community respect, has allowed them to gather sensitive intelligence and to facilitate communication that the formal channels might struggle to access. By acting as both the spiritual guides and the informal intelligence conduits, they have significantly contributed to the early detection of threats and the broader strategy of building the community resilience against extremist influences.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this section, a summary of the findings and conclusions for the study, are presented. They are tied to the study objectives. The key intention of this study, was finding out the association amongst citizen engagement in enhancing counter-terrorism operations in Lamu county, Kenya. The research had the guidance of three objectives: to examine the roles of the local leaders and the community groups in fostering the citizen collaboration in counter-terrorism efforts, to assess the community awareness levels regarding counter-terrorism policies and the initiatives and to evaluate the communication channels used between the citizens and the security agencies for counter-terrorism information sharing in Lamu county, Kenya. The chapter also presents the recommendations for the research.

5.2 Summary for Findings

5.2.1. The Roles of The Local Leaders and The Community Groups in Fostering the Citizen Collaboration in Counter-Terrorism Efforts in Lamu County

The research results indicated that, the participants in the study rated four key roles for the local leaders and the community groups in counter-terrorism efforts in Lamu County. The most important role was identified as providing the local intelligence, followed by building partnerships for the sustainable security. The participants next

highlighted the importance of facilitating information sharing among the stakeholders. Lastly, engaging in the community policing initiatives was cited as a key role in strengthening the local security networks.

The study found that, the Local leaders and the community groups are essential to the counter-terrorism efforts in Lamu County by serving as the primary providers of the local intelligence. Due to their deep-rooted connections, these leaders including Nyumba Kumi elders, village elders and the youth and women's groups, act as the "eyes and ears" of the community, gathering critical information that the formal security structures would often miss. They detect early warning signs such as suspicious movements, changes in individual behavior and extremist recruitment attempts. This grassroots intelligence, which comes from the trusted sources like the shopkeepers, the fishermen and the herders, is then promptly relayed to the state security agencies. This proactive collaboration strengthens early warning systems, allows for the timely interventions and fills resource gaps for the security forces, ultimately enabling the authorities to disrupt most terrorist operations and recruitment networks before they can escalate. The effectiveness of this system is fundamentally dependent on the trust and the cooperation established between the local community and the security agencies.

The study found that the Local leaders and the community groups in Lamu County play a pivotal role in building diverse partnerships to create robust and sustainable security networks. By uniting the various community segments, including the youth,

women, traders and the security personnel, they foster a collaborative environment built on open communication and mutual trust. These partnerships enable the community to pool resources, share crucial intelligence and to coordinate collective actions. For instance, the local traders' association, leveraging its network, was able to identify an individual promoting extremist propaganda alongside counterfeit goods, allowing the authorities to intervene. This collaborative approach has encouraged a sense of shared responsibility and led to proactive security measures, such as the establishment of volunteer patrol systems in areas with limited police presence. Ultimately, these inclusive partnerships have enhanced the community's capacity for early detection and for rapid response, strengthening its overall resilience against evolving security threats.

The study found that the Local leaders and the community groups in Lamu County are instrumental in facilitating timely and transparent information sharing by acting as a trusted bridge between the community and the formal authorities. Their respected social standing and consistent engagement allows them to build the trust needed for open dialogue, which encourages the citizens to share sensitive information without fear. This proactive approach, aligned with Community Policing principles, has reduced barriers and ensured security strategies are effective and reflective of the community's needs. This ongoing effort to foster mutual trust has ensured that the security strategies are both effective and reflective of the community's needs, enhancing the flow of critical intelligence for the counter-terrorism efforts.

And last, the study found that the, Local leaders and the community groups in Lamu County play a critical role in enhancing security collaboration by engaging their communities through policing initiatives. The Nyumba Kumi model, for example, has empowered residents to take ownership of their security by actively monitoring their neighborhoods and promptly sharing intelligence with the authorities. This grassroots vigilance, facilitated by the respected elders who have built trust and bridged gaps between the citizens and the police, moves beyond the reactive enforcement to a proactive, preventative approach. This collaborative effort, which complements the formal policing by creating trusted platforms for information flow, has demonstrated how community engagement can strengthen public safety and contribute to the national security objectives.

5.2.2. Community Awareness Levels Regarding Counter-Terrorism Policies and Initiatives in Lamu County

The study identified three major counter-terrorism initiatives in Lamu County based on the respondents' mentions. The Nyumba Kumi Initiative was the most frequently mentioned, followed by the Security Barazas (Community Meetings) and then Training for the Village Elders and the Nyumba Kumi Leaders. These varying levels of mention reflected the different degrees of the public awareness and engagement, which aligns with existing research on the effectiveness and the challenges of such programs.

The study found that, the Nyumba Kumi Initiative was the most recognized counter-terrorism program, praised for bridging the intelligence gap between the formal security agencies and the community. By organizing neighborhoods into clusters, this grassroots policing model has empowered the residents to become proactive security partners. This has allowed for the timely relay of the critical intelligence from suspicious movements to early signs of radicalization that might otherwise be missed. While its effectiveness has been noted as moderate due to some challenges, but it has proven vital in a context where the formal security resources are limited.

The study found that, the Security Barazas were identified as important forums for dialogue and trust-building. These gatherings have allowed the citizens to speak directly with the police, fostering a sense of being heard and encouraging greater cooperation. The direct, two-way flow of information has helped to break down barriers of fear and suspicion, thereby reinforcing the importance of the citizens' roles in the security efforts. This not only has enhanced operational effectiveness but also legitimized the counter-terrorism strategies at the community level.

And last, the study found a significant gap in the training for the Village Elders and the Nyumba Kumi Leaders, which had a low awareness among the respondents. The lack of proper training on the communication protocols and the intelligence handling compromises security operations and leads to panic. This finding underscored the need for increased investment in the capacity-building programs to equip these crucial intermediaries with the skills necessary to handle sensitive information discreetly and

effectively. Strengthening their roles would be essential for improving the information accuracy and fostering richer, more better counter-terrorism approaches.

5.2.3. The Communication Channels Used Between the Citizens and Security Agencies for Counter-Terrorism Information Sharing in Lamu County

The Nyumba Kumi Initiative was the most frequently mentioned communication channel for sharing counter-terrorism information in Lamu County. This community policing approach focuses on the local-level surveillance and information sharing. The offices of the Chiefs and the Assistant Chiefs followed closely, serving as the key administrative hubs that collect and relay security information from the grassroots to the higher authorities. The elders and the clan leaders also acted as important intermediaries, leveraging their traditional authority to facilitate communications. Additionally, the informal networks, such as friends and the neighbors, were identified as vital for the intelligence gathering. The religious leaders and institutions were also noted to play a significant role, particularly in the communities where faith is a strong social bond. Collectively, these various channels enhance the flow of critical information needed for the effective counter-terrorism strategies in the region.

The study found that, the nyumba kumi initiative was the most frequently mentioned channel, operating as a grassroots neighborhood watch approach. It organizes the residents into clusters, with a leader acting as a trusted intermediary. This decentralized, trust-based system has empowered the citizens to serve as "eyes and the ears," thereby facilitating a direct and quiet flow of intelligence to the security

agencies, which has helped to bridge intelligence gaps and allowed for timely interventions. The initiative's effectiveness is rooted in its ability to lower the barriers for reporting any suspicious activities, as the residents are often more comfortable sharing information with a trusted neighbor or an elder than with a uniformed officer.

The study found that the chiefs' and assistant chiefs' offices serve as a crucial administrative link. These traditional and highly respected government representatives act as the central hubs where the intelligence gathered from the informal networks like Nyumba Kumi is aggregated and formalized. This channel has transformed the fragmented community observations into a comprehensive threat profile, ensuring that the ground-level information is systematically integrated into the broader security apparatus for effective operational responses. Their long-standing authority and position as the primary interface between the community and the state makes their offices a foundational and trusted point of contact.

The study found that, the elders and the clan leaders function as a trusted traditional channel of influence. Due to their deep-rooted social and cultural authority, they are often the first point of contact for the citizens with sensitive information who may be hesitant to approach the police directly. These leaders leverage their knowledge and rapport to gather and verify "quiet whispers" from the community, acting as a critical filter before relaying validated intelligence to the authorities. Their informal authority and role in vetting information, has helped to reduce communities' panic and improved the overall quality of intelligence.

The study found that, the informal networks are personal, trust-based relationships between the individual citizens and the specific security officers. These relationships, built on mutual respect and familiarity, have been providing a discreet and rapid avenue for sharing highly sensitive and time-critical intelligence that might otherwise have been lost. This channel has complemented the formal structures by allowing for confidential tips to be acted upon quickly, bypassing bureaucracy and fear of exposure. These networks have highlighted the crucial human element in effective intelligence gathering, where a personal bond can be the primary reason a citizen chooses to report a threat.

Last, the found that, the religious leaders and institutions serve as trusted avenues for information sharing, particularly for the sensitive issues like early signs of radicalization. Leaders such as the imams, the pastors and the sheikhs hold significant moral authority, providing a safe and discreet space for the community members to raise concerns. This channel has been effective because it is built on faith and respect, allowing for a sensitive approach that often prioritizes guidance and discreet intervention, while also being a platform for countering extremist narratives. They have played a critical role in addressing community-wide anxieties and offered counter-narratives rooted in the mainstream religious teachings.

5.3 Conclusion

The findings collectively underscored that the local leaders and the community groups are indispensable to a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy in Lamu County. Through their roles in providing the local intelligence, building diverse partnerships, facilitating information sharing and engaging in the community policing initiatives, these local actors serve as a vital bridge between the population and the formal security agencies. The success of this collaboration is fundamentally rooted in the trust and the deep-seated community connections these leaders possess. By leveraging their unique social standing and encouraging for open dialogue, they foster a culture of shared responsibility that has empowered the residents to actively contribute to their own safety. This integrated, proactive approach has moved beyond the traditional enforcement to create a resilient security framework that is highly effective at detecting and responding to threats from the grassroots level.

Based on the findings, it is clear that the counter-terrorism strategy in Lamu County is heavily reliant on a community-based approach. The Nyumba Kumi Initiative and Security Barazas have proven to be instrumental in bridging the intelligence gap, fostering trust and in enhancing communication between the citizens and the security agencies. These initiatives have empowered the residents to be proactive partners in their own safety, creating a vital grassroots network for intelligence sharing. However, the success of these programs is limited by a significant gap in the training for the Village Elders and the Nyumba Kumi Leaders. The lack of proper training for these

key intermediaries can compromise the security operations and erode the public trust. Therefore, to sustain and improve upon these promising results, future efforts must focus on providing these leaders with the necessary skills and resources to ensure effective and discreet handling of intelligence, solidifying a truly resilient and a collaborative security framework.

The various communication channels for counter-terrorism in Lamu County, including the nyumba kumi initiative, the chiefs' and assistant chiefs' offices, the elders and clan leaders, the informal networks and religious leaders, collectively have demonstrated a security framework that is deeply embedded in the community's social fabric. Each channel plays a distinct yet interconnected role, leveraging either the formal authority, traditional influence, or the personal trust to facilitate the flow of the sensitive information from the grassroots to the security agencies. This multi-layered approach, which bypasses the barriers of fear and bureaucracy, has been crucial for gathering intelligence that the formal systems would miss. The effectiveness of these systems has hinged on the foundation of trust, whether it was built through a neighborhood watch, a long-standing administrative role, a respected traditional position, a personal friendship, or a shared faith. Ultimately, these diverse channels highlighted that a successful counter-terrorism strategy in the region was a collaborative effort where the community, empowered to act as co-producers of safety, is just as vital as the state security apparatus.

5.4 Recommendations

Three recommendations were made from the conclusions of the study:

1. To formally recognize and strengthen the pivotal role of local leaders and community groups in the security framework in the County. This would involve moving beyond the informal partnerships to institutionalizing and providing some official support for their roles in intelligence provision and community policing. To achieve this, the various security agencies and the policymakers would invest in the programs that can build the capacity of these local actors, providing them with the necessary resources and creating more structured, yet flexible, collaborative platforms.

2. It is recommended that a structured and a comprehensive training program be developed and implemented specifically for the village elders and the nyumba kumi leaders. This program would focus on equipping these crucial intermediaries with the essential skills in the intelligence handling, communication protocols and the discreet threat assessment. By providing them with the necessary resources to effectively and confidentially manage sensitive information, this initiative would directly address the identified gaps, prevent operational compromises and then build even greater trust within the community. Ultimately, this investment in capacity-building would solidify the grassroots security framework, ensuring that

the valuable intelligence from the community is translated into more effective and punctual counter-terrorism responses.

3. It is also recommended that, the security agencies to formalize and strategically integrate the diverse communication channels already operating within the County. Rather than relying on a single top-down approach, this strategy should support the existing "network of networks" by providing the institutional backing to all the key actors including the Nyumba Kumi leaders, chiefs, elders and the religious figures. By creating these formal liaison platforms that can facilitate regular collaboration, the authorities can ensure the sustained flow of critical intelligence, enhance the responsiveness of the counter-terrorism efforts and then reinforce the community's role as an indispensable co-producer of their own safety.

5.5 Further Research Recommendations

With regard to the recommendations above, the below were recommended as researches for the future**:**

i. This research had restricted itself to the citizen engagement in enhancing counter-terrorism operations in Lamu county, Kenya. However, a number of similarities in the citizen engagement in enhancing counter-terrorism operations were noticed, mostly through literatures. It would be prudent, to stretch out this research to other regions, to determine the applicability of these findings for the whole of the country Kenya.

ii. There should be a study to evaluate the citizen engagement in enhancing counter-terrorism operations entirely from the perspective of the state security officers in the county. It might be of interest to know what the state security officers perceive of the situation in the county.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Introduction/Consent Letter

Dear Participant,

Subject: Request to Complete a Questionnaire

My name is Humphrey Muerwa, a final-year master's student in Security Science and Management at Kenyatta University. I am currently conducting a research study focused on the citizen engagement and counter-terrorism operations in Lamu County, Kenya.

This study is purely for academic purposes to fulfil part of the requirements for my postgraduate degree. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Please be assured that all the information you provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used strictly for this academic study.

I kindly request that you respond to the questionnaire honestly and accurately. Your input is highly valued and will contribute meaningfully to the success of this research.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Humphrey Muerwa

Appendix II: Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to collect data on the citizen engagement in enhancing counter-terrorism operations in Lamu county, Kenya. The data shall be used for academic purposes only and will be treated with strict confidence. Your participation in facilitating the study is highly appreciated.

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Gender M ☐ F ☐
2. Age

   18 – 25 ☐

   26 – 35 ☐

   36 – 45 ☐

   45 – Above ☐
3. Level of education

   a. Below form 4 ☐

   b. Form 4 ☐

   c. College ☐

   d. University ☐

SECTION B: The Role of Local Leaders and Community Groups in Fostering Citizen Collaboration in Counter-Terrorism Efforts in Lamu County, Kenya.

4. Mention the various roles of local leaders and community groups in fostering citizen collaboration in counter-terrorism efforts in Lamu county, Kenya.

i. _____

_____

ii. _____

_____

iii. _____

_____

iv. _____

_____

v. _____

_____

5. On the scale below, kindly rate the mentioned roles of local leaders and community groups in fostering citizen collaboration in counter-terrorism efforts in Lamu county, Kenya by filling them in the table below.

   Put a mark in the appropriate box

The role of local leaders and community groups in fostering citizen collaboration. (FILL THEM BELOW)	Highly Perceived	Normal Perceived	Less Perceived

6. What comments can you have on the mentioned roles of local leaders and community groups foster the citizen collaboration in counter-terrorism efforts in Lamu county, Kenya?

i. _____

_____

ii. _____

_____

iii. _____

_____

iv. _____

_____

v. _____

_____

SECTION C: COMMUNITY AWARENESS LEVELS REGARDING COUNTER-TERRORISM POLICIES AND INITIATIVES IN LAMU COUNTY, KENYA.

7. Are you aware of any government or the local counter-terrorism policies or the initiatives in Lamu County?

   (Yes/No)

   If yes, please name or describe any you know.

   i. _____

   _____

   ii. _____

   _____

   iii. _____

   _____

8. Do you know how and where to report suspicious activities related to terrorism?

   (Yes/No)

If yes, please specify the best reporting channels suitable your area.

9. Have you participated in any community meetings, workshops, or trainings related to counter-terrorism or security?

   (Yes/No)

   If yes, how often?

10. How confident do you feel about your ability to contribute to community efforts against terrorism?

    (Scale: Not confident – Very confident)

Participant's ability to contribute to community efforts against terrorism		
Not confident		
Very confident		

Kindly make an explanation on why you have indicated the particular option.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

SECTION D: THE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS USED BETWEEN CITIZENS AND SECURITY AGENCIES FOR COUNTER-TERRORISM INFORMATION SHARING IN LAMU COUNTY, KENYA.

11. Mention the various communication channels used between citizens and security agencies for counter-terrorism information sharing in Lamu county, Kenya.

i. _____
   _____

ii. _____
_____

iii. _____
_____

iv. _____
_____

12. On the scale below, kindly rate the mentioned communication channels used between citizens and security agencies for counter-terrorism information sharing in Lamu county, Kenya by filling them in the table below..

    Put a mark in the appropriate box

The communication channels used between citizens and security agencies. (FILL THEM BELOW)	Highly Effective	Normal Effective	Less Effective

13. What comments can you have on the mentioned communication channels used between the citizens and the security agencies for sharing counter-terrorism information in Lamu county, Kenya?

i. _____
_____

ii. _____
_____

iii. _____
_____

iv. _____

_____

Appendix III: Interview Guide

Good morning/afternoon,

I would like to engage your time in collecting data on the citizen engagement in enhancing counter-terrorism operations in Lamu county, Kenya. The interview is expected to last for 20-40 minutes and the information given will be purposively be used for this study. Kindly accept to participate.

Objective 1: Roles of the Local Leaders and the Community Groups in Fostering Citizen Collaboration

1. How do local leaders and community groups mobilize residents to participate in counter-terrorism initiatives such as community policing or the Nyumba Kumi initiative in Lamu County?
2. What strategies do local leaders use to build trust and facilitate information sharing between citizens and security agencies in the fight against terrorism?
3. In what ways do community groups contribute to the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among youth and other vulnerable populations in Lamu County?

Objective 2: Levels of Community Awareness Regarding Counter-Terrorism Policies and Initiatives

4. To what extent are community members in Lamu County aware of existing counter-terrorism policies and government-led initiatives?
5. How well do residents recognize signs of radicalization and understand the procedures for reporting suspicious activities?

6. What is the level of community participation in awareness campaigns, workshops, or training sessions related to counter-terrorism and violent extremism?

Objective 3: Effectiveness of Communication Channels Between Citizens and Security Agencies

7. What are the main communication channels utilized by citizens and security agencies for sharing counter-terrorism information in Lamu County?
8. How effective do citizens and security agencies perceive these communication channels to be in facilitating timely and reliable sharing of counter-terrorism information?
9. What challenges do citizens and security agencies encounter when sharing counter-terrorism information through existing communication channels in Lamu County?

Thanks for your time

Appendix IV: Krejcie and Morgan Sample Size Table

Table 7: Sample Size Determination Table

N - n	N - n	N - n	N - n	N - n
10 - 10	100 - 80	280 - 162	800 - 260	2800 - 338
15 - 14	110 - 86	290 - 165	850 - 265	3000 - 341
20 - 19	120 - 92	300 - 169	900 - 269	3500 - 346
25 - 24	130 - 97	320 - 175	950 - 274	4000 - 351
30 - 28	140 - 103	340 - 181	1000 - 278	4500 - 354
35 - 32	150 - 108	360 - 186	1100 - 285	5000 - 357
40 - 36	160 - 113	380 - 191	1200 - 291	6000 - 361
45 - 40	170 - 118	400 - 196	1300 - 297	7000 - 364
50 - 44	180 - 123	420 - 201	1400 - 302	8000 - 367
55 - 48	190 - 127	440 - 205	1500 - 306	9000 - 368
60 - 52	200 - 132	460 - 210	1600 - 310	10000 - 370
65 - 56	210 - 136	480 - 241	1700 - 313	15000 - 375
70 - 59	220 - 140	500 - 217	1800 - 317	20000 - 377
75 - 63	230 - 144	550 - 226	1900 - 320	30000 - 379
80 - 66	240 - 148	600 - 234	2000 - 322	40000 - 380
85 - 70	250 - 152	650 - 242	2200 - 327	50000 - 381
90 - 73	260 - 155	700 - 248	2400 - 331	75000 - 382
95 - 76	270 - 159	750 - 254	2600 - 335	100000 - 384

Source: *Krejcie, R and Morgan,* Determining Sample Size for Research Activities*, 1970*

Appendix V: Research Budget

Table 8: Research Budget Breakdown

Activity	Quantity	Unit Cost (Kshs.)	Total Cost (Kshs.)
Proposal Finalization and Defense at the School			
Printing (50 pages)	50 pages	10	500
Binding (5 copies)	5 copies	1,000	5,000
Subtotal			**5,500**
Pre-Testing of Questionnaires			
Stationery Cost	Lump sum	500	500
Contingency Cost	Lump sum	2,000	2,000
Subtotal			**2,500**
Data Collection			
Hire Research Assistant	Lump sum	20,000	20,000
Stationery Cost	Lump sum	500	500
Contingency Cost	Lump sum	2,000	2,000
Subtotal			**22,500**
Data Entry, Analysis, and Report Writing			
Stationery	Lump sum	1,000	1,000
Data Entry and Analysis (SPSS)	Lump sum	25,000	25,000
Subtotal			**26,000**
Journals, Thesis Defence, and Submission			
Printing of Project Paper (100 pages)	100 pages	10	900
Binding (5 copies)	5 copies	1,000	5,000
Subtotal			**5,900**
GRAND TOTAL			**62,400**

Appendix VI: Research Work Plan

Table 9: Project Timeline Table

Phase / Activity	Time (Months)	Dates
Concept Paper Writing and Defense	2	Aug – Sept 2024
Development of Proposal, Corrections and Defenses	2	Oct – Nov 2024
Development & Piloting of Instruments	1	Dec 2024
Data Collection	1	Jan 2025
Data Organization, Analysis and Interpretation	2	Jan – Feb 2025
Typing, Editing, Report Writing and Submission	2	March – April 2025
Binding and Submission of Final Project	1	May 2025

Appendix VII: Area of the Study - Map

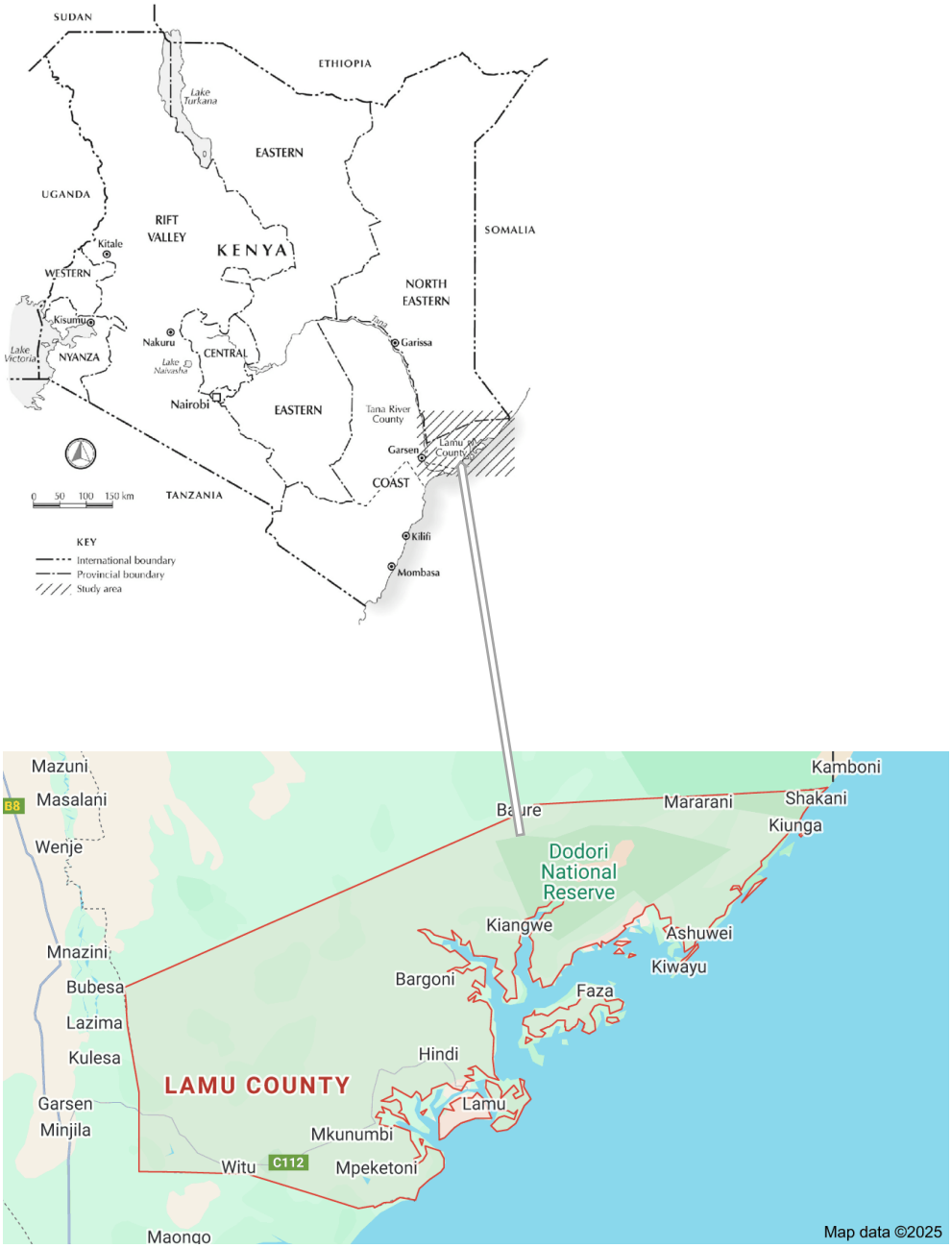
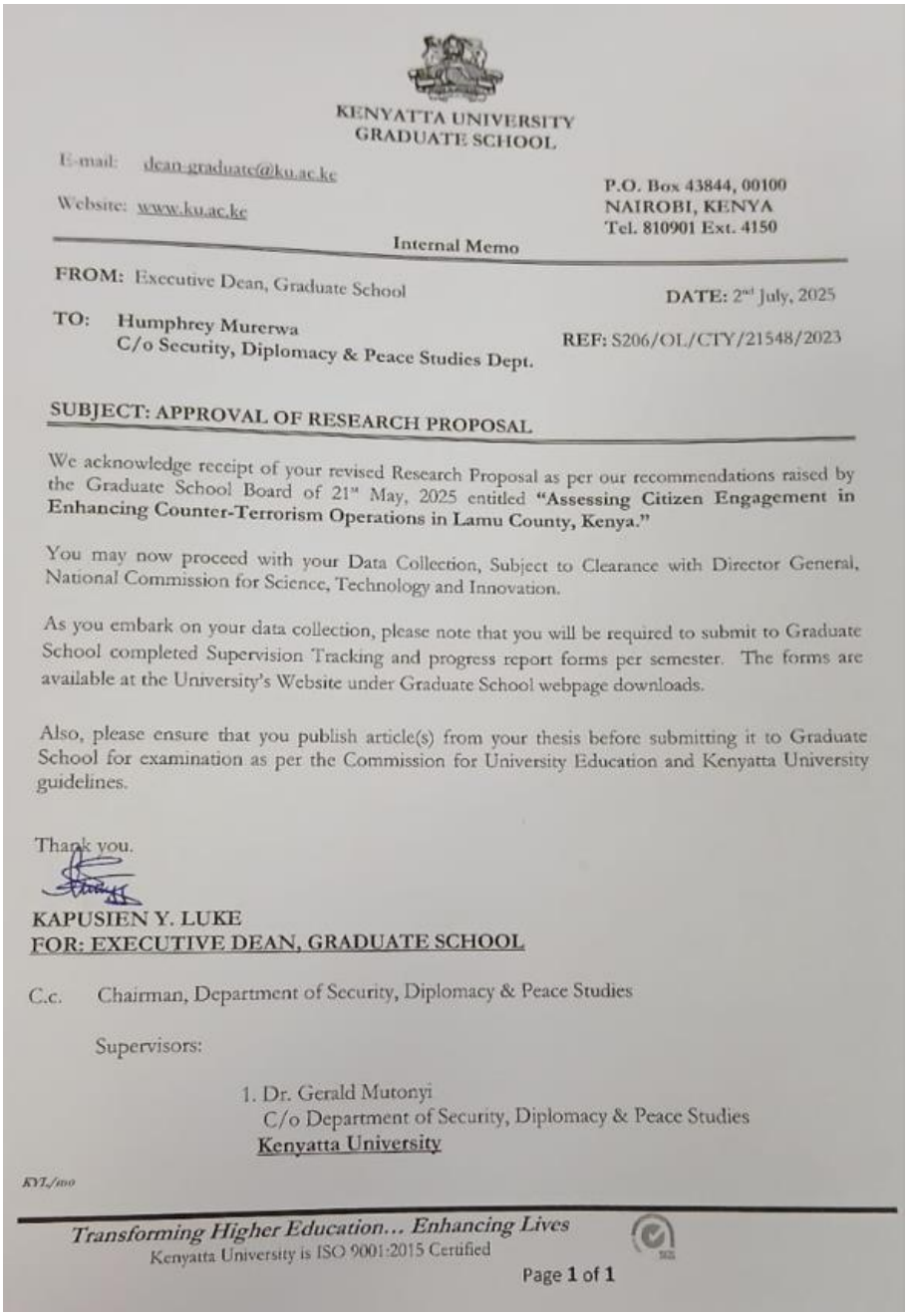


Figure 11: Map of Lamu County

https://g.co/kgs/9A9kr3S

Appendix VIII: Graduate School Research Approval



KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

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P.O. Box 43844, 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA
Tel. 810901 Ext. 4150

Internal Memo

FROM: Executive Dean, Graduate School

DATE: 2nd July, 2025

TO: Humphrey Murerwa
C/o Security, Diplomacy & Peace Studies Dept.

REF: S206/OL/CTY/21548/2023

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL

We acknowledge receipt of your revised Research Proposal as per our recommendations raised by the Graduate School Board of 21st May, 2025 entitled **"Assessing Citizen Engagement in Enhancing Counter-Terrorism Operations in Lamu County, Kenya."**

You may now proceed with your Data Collection, Subject to Clearance with Director General, National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation.

As you embark on your data collection, please note that you will be required to submit to Graduate School completed Supervision Tracking and progress report forms per semester. The forms are available at the University's Website under Graduate School webpage downloads.

Also, please ensure that you publish article(s) from your thesis before submitting it to Graduate School for examination as per the Commission for University Education and Kenyatta University guidelines.

Thank you.

KAPUSIEN Y. LUKE
FOR: EXECUTIVE DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

C.c. Chairman, Department of Security, Diplomacy & Peace Studies

Supervisors:

1. Dr. Gerald Mutonyi
C/o Department of Security, Diplomacy & Peace Studies
Kenyatta University

KYL/mo

Transforming Higher Education... Enhancing Lives
Kenyatta University is ISO 9001:2015 Certified

Page 1 of 1

Figure 12: Graduate School Research Approval

Appendix IX: NACOSTI LICENSE

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **361770**

Date of Issue: **07/July/2025**

RESEARCH LICENSE

This is to Certify that Mr.. Humphrey Thuranira Murerwa of Kenyatta University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Lamu on the topic: ASSESSING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN ENHANCING COUNTER-TERRORISM OPERATIONS IN LAMU COUNTY, KENYA for the period ending : 07/July/2026.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/25/4176340**

361770

Applicant Identification Number

Ag. Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Verification QR Code

NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.

See overleaf for conditions

Figure 13: NACOSTI LICENSE