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THE ROLE OF COMMERCIAL SECURITY IN COUNTER-TERRORISM EFFORTS: A CASE STUDY OF NAIROBI'S COMMERCIAL MALLS

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ABSTRACT
This study addresses the uncertainty surrounding the effectiveness of commercialized security services in preventing and mitigating terrorism in Nairobi County, Kenya, a concern heightened by past attacks on commercial malls. Focusing specifically on the effectiveness of these measures, the study employed a mixed-method, convergent parallel approach, with data collected from private security personnel, mall tenants, and visitors across 19 malls of varying sizes. The research was guided by the Routine Activities Theory and Situational Crime Prevention Theory. Quantitative data from the sample, comprising 12 security personnel, 34 tenants, 2 managers, and 344 visitors, were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. The findings reveal that, despite the implementation of commercialized security measures, their overall effectiveness in preventing terrorist threats reflects a nuanced state with room for improvement. While visitors generally hold positive perceptions of the security presence, indicating a baseline level of confidence, the study highlights notable variability in views among private security personnel regarding their strategies. This suggests that the impact of security measures is not uniformly perceived or experienced across different stakeholders. The results underscore the importance of targeted communication strategies and the need for more tailored, rather than one-size-fits-all, approaches to security management. The study recommends enhanced communication and specialized training for security personnel to foster a safer shopping environment and improve shopper confidence. Ultimately, the effectiveness of commercial security in malls against terrorism is influenced by a complex interplay of resource allocation, personnel training, and clear communication.

KEY WORDS: *Terrorism Prevention, Commercial Security, Shopping Malls, Nairobi County, Security Effectiveness*

1. INTRODUCTION

Commercialization of security has gained increasing global attention in the last decade as governments and private entities seek innovative ways to enhance public safety and counter emerging security threats (Morgan, 2020). Broadly defined, commercialization of security refers to the outsourcing of security functions traditionally performed by the state to private, profit-oriented companies (Shearing & Stenning, 2018). This shift has led to the rise of Private Security Companies (PSCs) and Private Military Companies (PMCs), which provide services ranging from personal protection and surveillance to combat and tactical support (McCormack, 2018).

Helferich and Poole (2017) observe that the private sector increasingly views security as a source of competitive advantage, resulting in heavy investment in advanced surveillance technologies and risk management systems, particularly within commercial spaces such as shopping malls. In the United States, for instance, mall management often contracts private security personnel trained in crisis management and emergency response to complement public law enforcement efforts (Jones & Brown, 2018; Smith & Johnson, 2019). Similarly, Tomaino and Greene (2021) note that the appeal of privatized security lies in its perceived efficiency and cost-effectiveness, attributes that have contributed to its widespread adoption across critical infrastructure sectors.

In Europe, private security plays a pivotal role in urban security partnerships, supporting public authorities in the design and execution of protective measures (García-Albero & del Mar García, 2019). The United Kingdom, for example, has witnessed exponential growth in the private security industry, driven by heightened threats of terrorism, cybercrime, and organized criminal activities (Osman & Bosher, 2019). Likewise, in Germany, private security firms provide essential services such as access control, risk analysis, and cybersecurity, thereby augmenting police capabilities (Konrad, 2019).

In Africa, the commercialization of security has, in equal measure, expanded as governments and private entities respond to rising insecurity. In South Africa, partnerships among private firms, local law enforcement, and community groups have resulted in multi-layered security systems combining human surveillance, technology, and access control in malls (Smith, 2019). Conversely, in Nigeria, weak public law enforcement capacity has led to over-reliance on private firms to protect commercial facilities (Ibem & Amole, 2018).

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In East Africa, countries such as Uganda and Kenya have also embraced commercialized security to address urban safety challenges. Studies in Nairobi have shown that the presence of trained and professional private security personnel reduces the likelihood of security incidents in commercial settings (Kivuva et al., 2017). Kenya's experience with terrorism from the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombing to the 2013 Westgate Mall attack and the 2019 Dusit D2 Hotel complex attack has underscored the urgent need to strengthen both public and private security systems (Davis, 2016; Parreira, 2018; Doe, 2020).

Following the Westgate tragedy, the Government of Kenya promoted policy reforms requiring private security officers to undergo National Youth Service (NYS) training to enhance discipline and professionalism (Capital News, 2023). The enactment of the Private Security Regulation Act (2016) and establishment of the Private Security Regulatory Authority (PSRA) further institutionalized the sector (Mutonyi et al., 2022). Despite these efforts, challenges persist, including regulatory gaps, corruption, inadequate coordination, and uneven quality of services (Nyaberi et al., 2018; Nyamwange, 2020; Njoroge, 2017). These concerns have raised questions about the effectiveness of private security as a partner in counter-terrorism efforts.

Therefore, while the commercialization of security has expanded Kenya's security capacity particularly in commercial malls, its actual contribution to counter-terrorism remains under-researched. The evolving nature of terrorism, characterized by asymmetrical tactics and soft-target attacks, demands critical examination of how commercial security firms complement state agencies in prevention, mitigation, and rapid response.

Consequently, this study seeks to analyze the role of commercial security in counter-terrorism efforts, focusing on the operational effectiveness, regulatory environment, and collaborative mechanisms in Nairobi County's commercial malls. Understanding these dynamics is critical for enhancing Kenya's counter-terrorism architecture and ensuring that commercialization of security serves as a complementary, not competing, force in safeguarding public spaces.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have examined the effectiveness of commercialized security measures in preventing and mitigating terrorism within commercial malls. Ogunnaike et al. (2018) found that the use of surveillance cameras and airport-style security checkpoints reduced the likelihood of terrorist attacks in commercial malls by up to 50%. Similarly, Adida et al. (2020) reported that the deployment of plain-clothed security officers and canine units deters potential terrorists and mitigates the effects of attacks when they occur. These findings align with those of Soomro et al. (2021), who demonstrated that access control measures such as metal detectors and baggage scanners are effective in preventing the entry of individuals carrying weapons or explosives. CCTV surveillance further contributes by facilitating early identification of suspicious behavior and acting as a deterrent to potential attackers. While the above studies focus on the effectiveness of specific security measures, few have examined the impact of integrated and comprehensive security systems that combine multiple approaches. This study aims to fill that gap. Moreover, given the financial constraints faced by most commercial malls, security interventions must remain both effective and economically sustainable. As Bassil and Abboud (2020) argue, it is crucial to assess the cost-effectiveness of different security strategies to ensure optimal resource allocation in terrorism prevention.

Training of security personnel remains a core strategy towards defeating terror threats in commercial spaces. Mushtaq et al. (2020) studies, found that the presence of security personnel, particularly those with prior military or law enforcement backgrounds, reduces the likelihood and impact of attacks. Conversely, Johnston and Sheehan (2018) observe that the effectiveness of human security personnel may be limited, advocating for greater reliance on technological measures such as CCTV and access control. From a similar perspective, Önden and Yildrim (2019) equally emphasize the importance of training security personnel in behavioral detection, emergency response, and the use of technology to enhance threat identification and situational awareness.

The ability to effectively respond to a terror threat is in most occasions faced with gaps in the training and coordination of security personnel deployed in commercial malls. Haji et al. (2015), while analyzing the 2013 Westgate Shopping Mall attack, identified multiple failures by private security firms that hindered their ability to respond effectively to terrorism. The author cites inadequate training, poor communication, and a lack of coordination as critical weaknesses. This underscores the need for an integrated security framework that promotes information sharing, coordination, and communication between mall management, private security firms, and public law enforcement.

Recent advancements in technology, such as facial recognition, drones, and AI-powered analytics, have introduced new dimensions to commercial mall security. Zhang et al. (2021) investigated the impact of these technologies, specifically AI surveillance, facial recognition, and crowd analytics, on threat detection and response capabilities. Their study found that such tools significantly improved detection accuracy, response time, and situational awareness. Similarly, San and Ahmed (2020) demonstrated that the use of drones in mall security enhanced the ability to identify and track suspicious activities in real time. Despite these promising outcomes, the use of advanced technologies raises privacy and ethical concerns. Opiyo (2020) cautions that the adoption of technologies like facial recognition, although not yet widespread in Kenyan malls, presents potential risks related to personal data misuse and invasion of privacy. Therefore, it is vital to determine whether commercial security enterprises in Kenya operate under adequate legal frameworks and policies that address these ethical challenges while maximizing security effectiveness.

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In summary, while existing studies underscore the importance of commercialized security measures in preventing and mitigating terrorism in commercial malls, significant research gaps remain. Much of the current scholarship has been conducted in developed countries, where security contexts differ significantly from those in developing nations. There is limited empirical evidence on the long-term effectiveness of commercial security measures in Kenya's commercial malls. Subsequently, further research is required to evaluate these measures and identify best practices tailored to Kenya's unique security landscape.

This study is anchored on the Routine Activities Theory (RAT) developed by Marcus Felson and Lawrence Cohen (1979) and complemented by the Situational Crime Prevention (SCP) Theory advanced by Ronald V. Clarke (1980). Together, these frameworks provide a theoretical foundation for understanding how environmental design, routine behaviors, and preventive strategies influence the occurrence and mitigation of terrorist incidents in commercial malls. The Routine Activities Theory posits that crime occurs when four elements converge: a motivated offender, a suitable target, the absence of capable guardians, and the presence of routine activities that expose vulnerabilities (Madero & Fisher, 2012). In the context of terrorism targeting commercial malls, these elements are highly relevant. Malls attract large crowds, making them appealing targets for terrorists seeking mass casualties or public attention. They also symbolize economic prosperity and Western consumer culture, which can amplify ideological motivations (Bell, 2017). The physical layout of malls with multiple entry points and high pedestrian flow creates opportunities for offenders and challenges for security enforcement. The absence of capable guardians, in this case, inadequately trained or insufficiently equipped security personnel, further increases vulnerability. Moreover, the routine behavior of shoppers and staff, including predictable patterns of movement and peak hours, provides terrorists with valuable information for planning attacks. Conversely, critics such as Apel (2019) argue that while RAT effectively explains how and when crimes occur, it does not fully account for the ideological motivations behind terrorism. There is a need to bring on board Situational Crime Prevention Theory (SCP) to address this shortcoming.

SCP theory emphasizes reducing opportunities for criminal behavior by modifying the immediate environment in which crimes occur. Unlike offender-based theories, SCP focuses on situational factors that make crimes more or less likely. Although primarily applied to conventional crimes, SCP has been successfully adapted to analyze terrorism prevention (Clarke, 2010). SCP identifies several key strategies relevant to commercialized security measures in malls. Increasing the effort implies making it more difficult or time-consuming for potential offenders to execute attacks. This includes the use of physical barriers, metal detectors, X-ray scanners, and biometric access systems. Increasing the risks on the other hand, involves enhancing the likelihood that offenders will be detected or apprehended. This involves using surveillance technologies such as CCTV, facial recognition, and drone monitoring, as well as communication tools like radios and panic buttons to coordinate responses with law enforcement. The strategy also involves reducing the rewards by decreasing the perceived benefits of committing a crime. Approaches include securing assets through encryption, backups, and insurance, as well as ensuring operational continuity after incidents. Finally, removing excuses encompasses making it harder for offenders to justify their actions. This can be achieved through signage, awareness campaigns, drills, and clearly defined rules that communicate zero tolerance for criminal or terrorist acts. By and large, while SCP can substantially reduce the risk of terrorism, it should not operate in isolation (Phelps 2021). Instead, it should form part of a comprehensive security strategy that combines preventive, technological, and human elements for maximum effectiveness.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methods employed, including research design, study site, population, sampling procedures, instruments, data collection, analysis, and ethical considerations. The study utilized a mixed-methods case study approach to examine the influence of commercialized security on counter-terrorism in commercial malls in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

3.2 Research Design

A case study design employing a convergent parallel mixed-methods approach was adopted. This design enabled simultaneous collection and separate analysis of qualitative and quantitative data before integrating findings for comparison and interpretation (George, 2021). The case study approach (Yin, 2009) was appropriate since it focused on contemporary issues beyond the researcher's control. Qualitative methods provided an in-depth understanding of participants' perceptions and experiences, while quantitative data facilitated statistical validation of observed trends, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of the research problem.

3.3 Site of the Study

The research was conducted in Nairobi City County, the capital of Kenya, covering 269 km² and hosting over 4.3 million residents (KPHC, 2019). Nairobi was chosen due to its concentration of commercial malls, the presence of private security services, and its history of major terrorist incidents (e.g., the Westgate attack, 2013; DusitD2, 2019). The county's urbanized and globalized nature provided a rich context for investigating how commercialized security systems contribute to counter-terrorism efforts. Access to secondary data from government and security institutions further justified the choice.

3.4 Target Population

The study targeted stakeholders directly associated with security operations in Nairobi's commercial malls: private security personnel, mall tenants/retailers, mall managers/owners, and shoppers. These groups were selected because they represent critical actors in understanding how commercialized security influences counter-terrorism.

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Table 1: Target Population

Mall Category	No.	Private Security	Mall Tenants	Mall Managers	Estimated Weekly Visitors
Large Malls	7	390	1,125	50	10,000
Medium Malls	8	263	685	30	7,000
Small Centers	2	27	72	4	2,000
Specialty Malls	2	37	95	5	1,000
Total	**19**	**717**	**1,977**	**89**	**20,000**

Source: KNBS (2023)

3.5 Sampling Frame and Technique

The sampling frame included all commercial malls in Nairobi and their corresponding populations. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure proportional representation across population categories. The Slovin formula ($n = N / [1 + Ne^2]$) determined a total sample of 392 respondents at a 5% margin of error.

Table 2: Sample Distribution

Population Category	Target Population	% Proportion	Sample Size
Private Security	717	3.15%	12
Mall Tenants	1,977	8.68%	34
Mall Managers	89	0.39%	2
Weekly Visitors	20,000	87.78%	344
Total	**22,783**	**100%**	**392**

Source: Field Data (2023)

3.6 Research Instruments

Data were gathered using structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Questionnaires were used with private security personnel and shoppers, while interviews targeted mall managers and tenants. The questionnaires were divided into six sections: general information, influencing factors, effectiveness of services, shopper attitudes, counter-terrorism efforts, and government interventions. Instruments were tailored per respondent category to ensure relevance and depth.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

After securing approval from the National Defence University – Kenya and research authorization from NACOSTI, the researcher obtained permission from mall management. Questionnaires were distributed to security personnel and shoppers, while interviews were conducted with tenants and managers. All participants provided informed consent, and confidentiality was maintained throughout.

3.8 Pilot Testing and Reliability

A pilot test involving 10% of the sample was conducted in Nakuru County, selected for its similar characteristics to Nairobi. Feedback-informed instrument refinement. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, achieving high internal consistency.

Table 3 Reliability

Respondent Group	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Mall Tenants	**0.972**	**31**
Private Security	**0.941**	**30**

Values above 0.7 confirmed excellent reliability.

3.9 Validity

Instrument validity was established through expert review by university supervisors to ensure content, face, and construct validity. The review verified that all items accurately measured the intended concepts related to commercialized security and counter-terrorism.

3.10 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive (means, frequencies, percentages) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation, regression). Qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis, identifying recurring themes and patterns. Results were presented using tables, charts, and narrative summaries to facilitate integration of both data strands.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from NACOSTI and the National Defence University – Kenya. Participants were informed of their rights to anonymity and voluntary participation. No personal identifiers were collected, and data were securely handled and destroyed after analysis, adhering to research ethics principles (Sieber, 1998).

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4. RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the empirical findings derived from questionnaires and interviews conducted among key stakeholder groups in Nairobi's commercial malls, namely mall attendants, private security personnel, mall tenants, managers, and visitors. The analysis focuses on their perceptions of the effectiveness of commercialized security measures in preventing and mitigating terrorism threats, as well as the role of government interventions and public-private collaborations in enhancing mall security.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to capture central tendencies and variability in respondents' views. Each statement was rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree"). This statistical approach enabled the assessment of consensus levels across diverse respondent categories. Additionally, Pearson correlation analysis was employed to determine the relationships between key determinants, such as technological advancement, regulatory frameworks, and public-private partnerships, and the overall fight against terrorism.

4.2 Response rate

Table 4 presents responses from mall attendants regarding the effectiveness of commercialized security measures in preventing and mitigating terrorist threats in commercial malls. The table includes key statements, each measured on a scale from 1 to 5, assessing various aspects of security measures adopted in the mall.

Table 4: Mall Attendants' Perceptions on the Effectiveness of Commercialized Security Measures against Terrorism

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The security measures adopted in the mall are adequate to prevent terrorism.	29	1.00	5.00	3.2759	1.30648
I believe that visible security measures deter potential terrorists.	29	1.00	5.00	2.9310	1.36096
Security personnel are well-trained and capable of handling security threats.	29	1.00	5.00	2.8621	1.35552
The well-being of security employees directly affects mall safety.	29	2.00	5.00	3.7241	1.19213
Technological advancements have improved security in the mall.	29	1.00	5.00	3.5517	1.27016
Valid N (listwise)	0				

The results indicate that mall attendants generally perceive the security measures as adequate (M = 3.28, SD = 1.31), though opinions vary. The belief that visible security measures deter terrorism (M = 2.93, SD = 1.36) and perceptions of security personnel training (M = 2.86, SD = 1.36) reveal moderate confidence levels. Respondents strongly agreed that employee well-being contributes to mall safety (M = 3.72, SD = 1.19) and that technology enhances security (M = 3.55, SD = 1.27). These findings highlight diverse perceptions among attendants, likely reflecting the evolving nature of security threats. Similar observations have been made in Kenyan studies emphasizing the significance of robust, multi-layered security systems to safeguard commercial environments (Institute for Security Studies [ISS], 2021).

Table 5 provides descriptive statistics representing responses from private security personnel regarding the effectiveness of commercialized security measures in preventing and mitigating terrorist threats in commercial malls. The table includes statements related to the effectiveness of security measures, deterrence strategies, training of security personnel, the use of advanced technology, and the well-being of security employees.

Table 5: Private Security Perspectives on the Effectiveness of Commercialized Security Measures

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The security measures adopted in commercial malls effectively prevent and mitigate terrorist threats	12	1.00	5.00	2.6667	1.30268
Deterrence strategies in commercial malls are effective in deterring potential terrorist activities	12	1.00	5.00	2.8333	1.26730
Adequate training of security personnel contributes to the safety of commercial malls	12	1.00	5.00	3.2500	1.28806
The use of advanced technology enhances the overall impact of security in commercial malls	12	1.00	5.00	3.0000	1.47710
Ensuring the well-being of security employees is crucial for the effectiveness of security measures	12	2.00	5.00	3.2500	1.13818
Valid N (listwise)	0				

Private security personnel expressed moderate confidence in existing security measures (M = 2.67, SD = 1.30) and deterrence strategies (M = 2.83, SD = 1.27). Training (M = 3.25, SD = 1.29) and employee well-being (M = 3.25, SD = 1.14) were viewed as crucial to

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security effectiveness. These findings align with Mutonyi et al. (2022), who identified training, welfare, collaboration, and technological enhancement as key best practices in Kenya's commercial security.

Mall managers reported adopting comprehensive security frameworks integrating technology, staff training, and collaboration with law enforcement. One manager stated:

"*Our mall employs surveillance cameras, access control systems, and regular security drills. We collaborate with local law enforcement and invest in intelligence gathering*."

Another emphasized on visible deterrent:

"*We conduct bag checks, vehicle inspections, and use metal detectors at entrances to deter potential threats".*

These findings also echo Mutonyi et al. (2022), who underscored the importance of visible deterrents, technology use, and inter-agency cooperation in enhancing mall security. Mall visitors on the other hand expressed strong confidence in the effectiveness of current security measures, citing visible security presence, advanced technology, and overall safety. Their responses align with Davis (2018), who found that malls globally are better prepared today than before 2001, due to enhanced preparedness, risk assessment, and counterterrorism training.

Table 6 provides descriptive statistics regarding mall tenants' responses on the effectiveness of government intervention strategies in preventing and mitigating terrorist threats in commercial malls. The table encompasses various statements assessing the impact of government actions on mall security, with each statement rated on a scale from 1 to 5.

Table 6: Mall Tenants' Perspectives on the Role of Government Intervention

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Government interventions play a crucial role in enhancing mall security.	29	2.00	5.00	3.2414	1.15434
Government initiatives have positively impacted security in this mall.	29	1.00	5.00	3.2414	1.05746
Government policies are aligned with improving security in commercial malls.	29	1.00	5.00	2.8621	1.21667
Government support is vital to maintaining effective security measures.	29	1.00	5.00	3.0690	1.30742
Government cooperation with mall management enhances overall security.	29	1.00	5.00	3.1379	1.15648
Government initiatives have contributed to a safer shopping environment.	29	1.00	5.00	2.8966	1.26335
Valid N (listwise)	0				

Tenants generally agreed that government interventions and cooperation enhance mall security (M = 3.24, SD = 1.15). However, moderate variability suggests differing perceptions regarding policy alignment. These findings mirror Maluki (2018), who emphasized the critical role of government-private partnerships in sustaining security resilience within commercial spaces.

Table 7 presents an overview of mall tenants' views on the fight against terrorism, providing key insights into their perceptions of various security-related aspects. The table includes responses from 29 participants, detailing their assessments on the efficiency of emergency response times, the impact of security measures on the number of terror incidents, the role of technology in threat prevention, the importance of an adequate number of security personnel for safety, the significance of routine security checks, and the effectiveness of Public-Private Partnerships in countering terrorism. The table encapsulates both quantitative measures, such as mean scores, minimum, maximum, and standard deviation, offering a comprehensive snapshot of mall tenants' perspectives on the efficacy of security measures in the context of counterterrorism efforts.

Table 7: Mall Tenants' Views on the Fight against Terrorism

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The response time to emergencies in this mall is quick and efficient.	29	1.00	5.00	3.1034	1.11307
The number of terror incidences in this mall has decreased due to security measures.	29	1.00	5.00	3.0000	1.30931
The use of technology helps in preventing and mitigating terror threats.	29	1.00	5.00	3.0345	1.01710

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The presence of an adequate number of security personnel enhances safety.	29	1.00	5.00	3.1724	1.19729
Routine security checks are an essential part of preventing terrorism.	29	1.00	5.00	3.2069	1.37267
Public-Private Partnerships in security have been effective in the fight against terrorism.	29	1.00	5.00	2.7241	1.38607
Valid N (listwise)	0				

Tenants generally agreed that government interventions and cooperation enhance mall security (M = 3.24, SD = 1.15). However, moderate variability suggests differing perceptions regarding policy alignment. These findings mirror Maluki (2018), who emphasized the critical role of government-private partnerships in sustaining security resilience within commercial spaces.

In terms of correlation, Table 7 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients between the dependent variable (fight against terrorism) and five independent variables (economic incentives, regulatory framework, public-private partnerships, technological advancements, and stakeholders' threat perception). The table also displays the significance level (p-value) and the sample size (N) for each correlation. A p-value less than 0.05 indicates a statistically significant correlation.

Table 8: Correlation between the Fight against Terrorism and various factors in Commercial Malls in Nairobi County, Kenya

		Fight Against Terrorism
Economic incentives	Pearson Correlation	.683**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	29
Regulatory framework	Pearson Correlation	.684**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	29
Public-Private Partnerships	Pearson Correlation	.651**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	29
Technological advancements	Pearson Correlation	.688**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	29
Stakeholders' threat perception	Pearson Correlation	.589**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	29
Fight Against Terrorism	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	29

Results in Table 8 show strong positive correlations between the fight against terrorism and economic incentives ($r = .683$, $p < .001$), regulatory frameworks ($r = .684$, $p < .001$), PPPs ($r = .651$, $p < .001$), and technological advancements ($r = .688$, $p < .001$). Stakeholders' threat perception also exhibited a moderate positive relationship ($r = .589$, $p < .001$). These correlations suggest that improved regulation, technology adoption, and collaboration between public and private actors significantly enhance counterterrorism outcomes.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The study on the influence of the commercialization of security in the fight against terrorism within Kenyan commercial malls reveals a multidimensional landscape shaped by perceptions of safety, trust, and institutional collaboration. Findings indicate that commercialized security characterized by private sector involvement, advanced technology, and trained personnel has become a critical pillar in enhancing counterterrorism readiness in Nairobi's malls. Mall managers emphasized the strategic role of commercialization, effective communication, and collaboration with government agencies in creating safe and resilient shopping environments. Their views align with mall tenants' generally positive perceptions of commercialized security as an essential component in safeguarding customers and property. Similarly, visitors expressed confidence in current security arrangements, particularly the visible presence of personnel, technological systems, and emergency preparedness measures. Nevertheless, the study identifies moderate levels of confidence among shoppers and private security officers, pointing

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to gaps in communication, awareness, and consistency in implementation. This highlights the need for targeted capacity-building and information-sharing initiatives to strengthen trust and improve security responsiveness. The emphasis on security company reputation and employee welfare underscores the importance of credibility, professionalism, and motivation in sustaining effective security outcomes. Overall, the study concludes that the commercialization of security significantly contributes to the prevention and mitigation of terrorism in Kenya's commercial malls, provided that it is accompanied by strong regulatory oversight, continuous training, and transparent stakeholder collaboration. Building trust through positive customer experiences, effective communication, and visible deterrence remains central to sustaining a secure and welcoming commercial environment. Policymakers and mall management can leverage these insights to design adaptive, evidence-based security strategies that balance public safety with commercial vibrancy in Kenya's rapidly urbanizing retail spaces.

5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that all stakeholders, including mall management, policymakers, and private security providers, should adopt a collaborative, technology-driven, and community-centered approach to strengthening commercialized security systems. Effective strategies must integrate human, technological, regulatory, and behavioral dimensions, recognizing that sustainable security depends not only on deterrence but also on public trust and engagement. Stakeholders should establish multi-agency coordination platforms that bring together private security firms, law enforcement agencies, emergency responders, and mall associations to promote intelligence sharing, joint training, and rapid response mechanisms. Regular inter-agency drills, risk assessments, and simulation exercises can improve preparedness and foster a unified security culture. Additionally, data-driven decision-making should guide security improvements. This includes periodic evaluation of security performance indicators, use of surveillance analytics, and assessment of shopper satisfaction and perception trends to inform continuous improvement. Public awareness campaigns and community policing initiatives within malls can further strengthen public cooperation, enhancing both perceived and actual safety. Ultimately, a unified, transparent, and adaptive security framework supported by trust, accountability, and technological innovation will ensure that commercialized security not only deters terrorism but also fosters resilience, public confidence, and economic stability. Such a framework positions Kenyan malls as models for safe, inclusive, and commercially vibrant urban spaces.

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