

DRIVERS OF QUALITY SERVICE PROVISION BY PRIVATE SECURITY FIRMS IN MITIGATING CRIME IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract

The main aim of the study was to investigate the quality of service provision by Private Security Firms in crime mitigation in Nairobi County. The specific objectives of the study were to explore the effect policy, employee capacity, technology adoption and partnership of state on mitigating crime by private security firms in Nairobi County Kenya. The study was guided by Industrial Organization Theory and SERVQUAL theory. Additionally, the study adopted a descriptive research design which enabled the researcher describe the relationship that exist among the study variables. The study population was 55 security firms which are members of Kenya Security Industry Association within Nairobi County. All the 55 security firms were visited and the top manager were interviewed hence this study was a census. Primary data was collected using semi-structural questionnaire for analysis. A pilot test was conducted to test validity and reliability of the research instruments. The data was analyzed with the help of SPSS version 21 using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (regression models and correlation coefficients). The study concluded that the new crime and violence trends in Kenya; terrorist,

militia and gang activities and the apparent failure of state security agents including private security firms, against criminals is a sign of poor strategic management of crime and violence. The causes of crime are often linked to institutional weaknesses of society. To achieve the goal of adequate and reliable security provision public security firms need to improve on the quality of service they provide to their client. There is need to establish a formal Partnership of State Agencies as both have many common goals, and the private security industry provides a major protective role in Kenyan society.

Keywords: Private Security Firms, Mitigating Crime, policy, employee capacity, technology adoption, partnership of state agencies

INTRODUCTION

Security has been vital to humanity since the ancient times and its importance cannot be over emphasized. Dempsey (2008) notes that, people have had the right to protect themselves against any threat since time immemorial. According to Fischer & Green (2010), governments have limited resources and thus cannot provide one hundred percent security for its people hence a dire need for the Private Security Firms (PSF) to complement efforts of governments in crime mitigation. This argument is further supported by Ekhomu, (2010) who, further notes that there is no single government that has the capacity to provide one hundred percent security to its people. Additionally, Mayah (2011) argues that the need for private security firms may be as a result of citizen's fear of crime, and awareness that the public police cannot effectively control crime by themselves. Therefore, this mandates greater cooperation with the private sector and its resources to jointly forge a partnership for crime prevention and reduction.

The size and the role of the private security industry in crime mitigation have developed drastically all over the globe as of late. Expanded weight upon the law implementation officers have brought about numerous nations around the globe in the privatization of some police capacities, with the private security industry filling the crevices left by the overstretched police. According to Ruteere & Pommerolle (2011), the concept of private security and community policing, largely popularized in the United States and in the United Kingdom from the 1980s onwards, was based on the principle of co-ordination and consultation between the police and the policed.

The Private Security Act, 2002, advocated a mixed economy of policing provision. Peterson further argues that, the support of governments through legislation in England and Wales have significantly contributed to quality service provision by private security firms in

these two countries. Kisiangani (2007) notes that the private security industry, which is broadly divided into private security companies (PSCs) and private military companies (PMCs), operates in both stable and unstable environments in Africa. On one hand, PSCs have the potential of improving the security situation for people where the state fails to do so provided that such a service is delivered in a professional and accountable manner. He further highlights that in the African context a high percentage of the local private security firms lacks professional standards in their activities of security provision hence they may aggravate an existing security scenarios or simply leave the underlying causes of insecurity untouched.

The private security firms in Kenya provide a varied of services from basic guarding to more sophisticated service of Very Important Person (VIP) protection and cash transit. Wairagu (2014) further adds that private security firms offer a range of services including; classical physical protection of private and public properties, close protection of VIP's, cash-in-transit escort, safeguarding 'properties of strategic importance' and security for sports and music events. The private security sector therefore is a vibrant reality here in Kenya with presence of international private security firms such as G4S, Well Fargo among others. According to Wairagu (2014), private security industry fill the gap that the Government of Kenya (GoK) may be unable to bridge using its conventional security architecture which typically includes policing, military, paramilitary, national youth service and intelligence services

Problem Statement

Despite Kenya adopting the Private Security Regulatory Act of 2016, many small security companies continue to operate unregulated hence offering poor quality services. Many of these companies pay little attention to service standards and mostly the small privately-owned security firms which are not registered with Kenya Security Industrial Association and continue to operate illegally. To bridge the gap, Kenya Security Industrial Association was formed by companies in need to comply with the set standards which are drawn from the Laws of Kenya and internationally accepted technical and systems specifications. To establish a set of benchmarks however only less than 30% of the private security firms have registered with Kenya Security Industrial Association. The past decade has seen new crime and violence trends in Kenya; terrorist, militia and gang activities which include mugging, raping and killing of innocent citizens, and the apparent failure of state security agents including private security firms, against criminals is a sign of poor strategic management of crime and violence. The causes of crime are often linked to institutional weaknesses of society. The wake of continuous growth of crime in Nairobi County has brought with it unprecedented challenges for PSFs in the recent past. In as much as resolving the underlying causes of crime not being a domain of

private security companies their existence is in security provision for the contracting clients Private Security Firms plays a pivotal role in crime mitigation. To achieve the goal of adequate and reliable security provision PSFs need to improve on the quality of service they provide to their client.

This study evaluated the drivers of quality service provision particularly those touching on standards and may include and not limited to policy, employee capacity, technology adoption and partnership of state agencies among private security firms in the aim of mitigating crime. The study therefore brought out the key drivers that Private Security Firms can adopt in improving their service delivery hence quality service provision in their endeavor to mitigate crime.

Research Objectives

- i. To explore the effect of policy on mitigating crime by private security firms in Nairobi county Kenya.
- ii. To assess the effect of employee capacity on mitigating crime by private security firms in Nairobi County Kenya.
- iii. To evaluate the effect of technology adoption on mitigating crime by private security firms in Nairobi County Kenya.
- iv. To analyze the effect of partnership of state agencies on mitigating crime by private security firms in Nairobi County Kenya.

THEORETICAL LITERATURE

Industrial Organization Theory

Industrial organization builds on the theory of the firm, a set of economic theories that describe, explain and attempt to predict the nature of a firm in terms of its existence, behavior, structure and its relationship to the market. It is about organizational designs and organizational structures, relationship of organizations with their external environment, and the behavior of managers and technocrats within organizations.

The Industrial Organization theory puts a focus on the market a company operates in, rather than the company itself. It is reflected in the structure conduct performance model, which claims that there is a “causal link between the structure of a market in which a company operates, the organization’s conduct and in turn the organization’s performance in terms of profitability” (Ramsey, 2001). Thus, the industrial organization theory focuses on the whole industry and market conditions of a company and the central analytical aspect can be used to identify strategic choices, which firms have in their respectively industry (Porter, 2008).Private

security firms can be viewed as industrial organization since by the end of the day they are in business. The private security firms therefore need to ensure that their systematic management models are geared toward their external market with an aim of winning a competitive advantage. Adoption of quality oriented strategies can therefore be a key to the competitive advantage of private security firms.

SERVQUAL Theory

Looy et al (2003) assert that quality holds the key to competing in today's global market by assisting in clear development of marketing strategies by building strong brand names. Despite the fact that quality management practices are primarily embraced in the manufacturing sector, quality management in the service industries has been gaining momentum over the past decade through Total Quality Management (TQM). The main theoretical framework by Zeithaml et al. (1988) is a SERVQUAL theory (Figure 1). It is relevant to this research study as private security service requires high consumer involvement in the consumption process; hence, the attainment of quality service relies significantly on the co-contribution of the employees to the service delivery process.

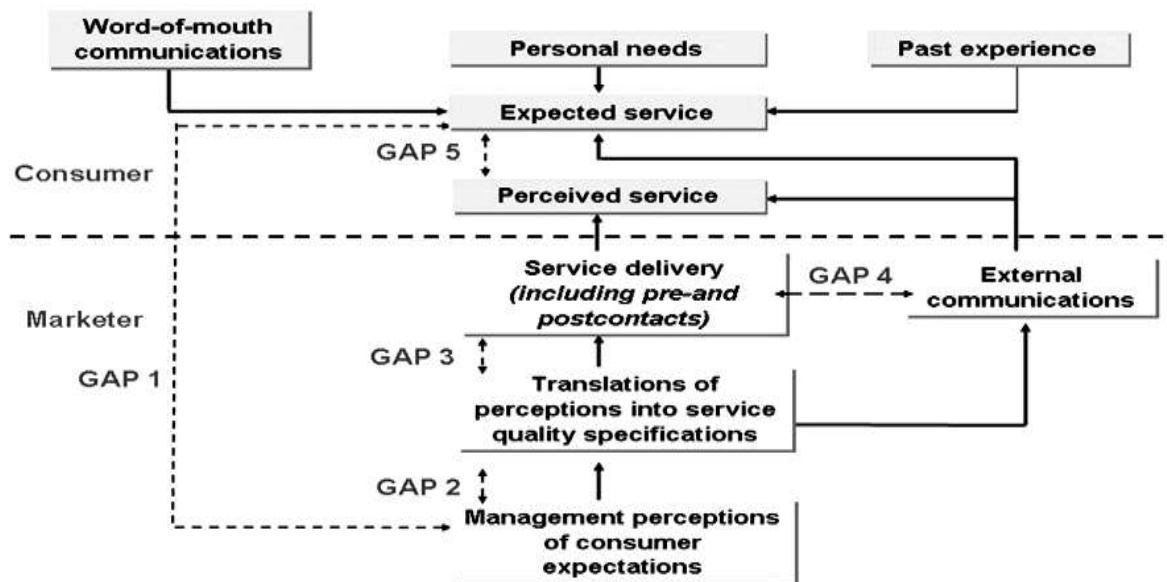


Figure 1. Zeithaml et al (1988) Extended Service Model Employee Capacity

The various drivers of service quality enable service organization address the various service gaps that might exist. Zeithmal, (1988), highlights that service quality is achieved when, all the service quality gaps are addresses as detailed by the model illustrated in Figure 1 above. This model therefore forms a fundamental foundation of this study by affirming the fact that PSFs like

other service organizations need to close any gap that impacts negatively on quality of the service they provide to their clients.

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

Policy and Crime Mitigation

In a report containing findings of a fact-finding team convened by UNI Property Services to investigate labour practices at Secure Force Security in Malawi, Mozambique, and South Africa in April 2007, Ritchie et al (2007) found serious and ongoing violations of labour laws. Many of these concerned overtime and time-off as well as behaviour that have consigned workers to a hand-to-mouth existence. The team concluded that Secure Force Security should ensure its operations across the globe abide by local laws, provide workers with living wages and family sustaining benefits, and allow workers who want to organize unions to do so. Further, it concluded that the best way for Secure Force Security to demonstrate it is worthy of trust is to sign a global agreement with UNI Global Union in which it commits to pay a living wage – adequate to sustain his/her family. It was also to provide social protections, and recognize workers freedom to form unions.

Russell (2010) further notes that every private security firm needs effective crime prevention policy which will remain relevant as new crime emerges. According to Russel working with the police agencies and other key partners in the security sector are some of the policies that should be enhanced by private security firms. The arguments posed by the various scholars in relation to policies in the realm of private security firms and crime mitigation has been appreciated. Authors have a general consensus that good policies are key to quality service provision. However, the Russell (2010) has not clearly demonstrated the impact of policies in quality service provision; this research therefore seeks to fill this gap.

Employee Capacity and Crime Mitigation

Tornow & Wiley (2010) found a positive correlation between the capacity of employees and service quality. They also found that customer satisfaction is directly related to the attitude and perceptions of employees which relates to the organization and its management practices. To improve effectiveness in service quality, organizations must build the capacity to retain, attract and employ an adequate number of high-quality employees' in order to adapt to circumstances that are constantly changing.

According to a study by Schneider; Russell Beasty & Baird (2011), to provide high quality service, employees need to get enough training in the necessary technical skills and knowledge, and interactive skills. Interactive skills help employees to provide courteous, caring,

responsive and empathetic service. Successful Firms invest heavily in training and make sure that the training fits their business goals and strategies. Many security guards are required to go through additional training mandated by the state for the carrying of weapons such as batons, firearms, and pepper spray. Some guards are required to complete police certification for special duties.

Technology Adoption and Crime Mitigation

McQuade, S., (2011) notes that crime as social technology will almost and always involve use of physical technologies, for example tools, although rape, assault, and murder committed without the use of weapons or other instruments such as those used to penetrate body cavities are notable exceptions. Akers, R. L. (2012) further notes that Technologies are combinations of tools and techniques ranging from simple-to-complex in their design, materials, construction and manufacturing processes, adoption, social implementation, technical systems integration and applications. Criminals, police and security professionals employ a full range of technologies that are available to them for similar and countervailing purposes.

Abrahamsen and Williams (2005) note improved security networks among private security firms contributes to coordination hence quality service in crime mitigation. The cited authors have highlighted the importance of technology adoption; however, they have not clearly demonstrated the extent to which technology adoption among private security firms have contributed toward crime mitigation. This study therefore intended to fill this gap by clearly demonstrating the contribution of technology adoption among private security firms to crime mitigation.

Partnership of State Agencies and Crime Mitigation

In a recent survey of 127 police officers and 109 security professionals in a Midwestern state in the USA, revealed interesting findings on the working relationship between public law enforcement and private security agencies. Overall, security professionals' perceptions of their relationship with police departments were positive. However, most intriguingly, security professionals felt that police officers do not view working with private security positively, even though police officers indicate the contrary.

Thuranira N.N. & Munanye, F. L. (2013) note that police and private security in Kenya have been functioning in mutually exclusive manner in respect to the provision of security. Further Abrahamsen, R & M. Williams, (2005), note that although the function of the security provision has traditionally been assumed to be the preserve of the state, this assumption is increasingly considered to be untenable. Russel further notes that in many nations the

importance of cooperation and partnerships between private security firms and other security agencies has led to much enhanced quality service provision and other incentives for both public and private security actors.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework below highlights both the independent and the dependent variables. The frame work indicates how the researcher analyzed the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable (Policy, Employee Capacity, Technology Adoption, and partnership of other state agencies) affect crime mitigation (Dependent variable) among private security firms.

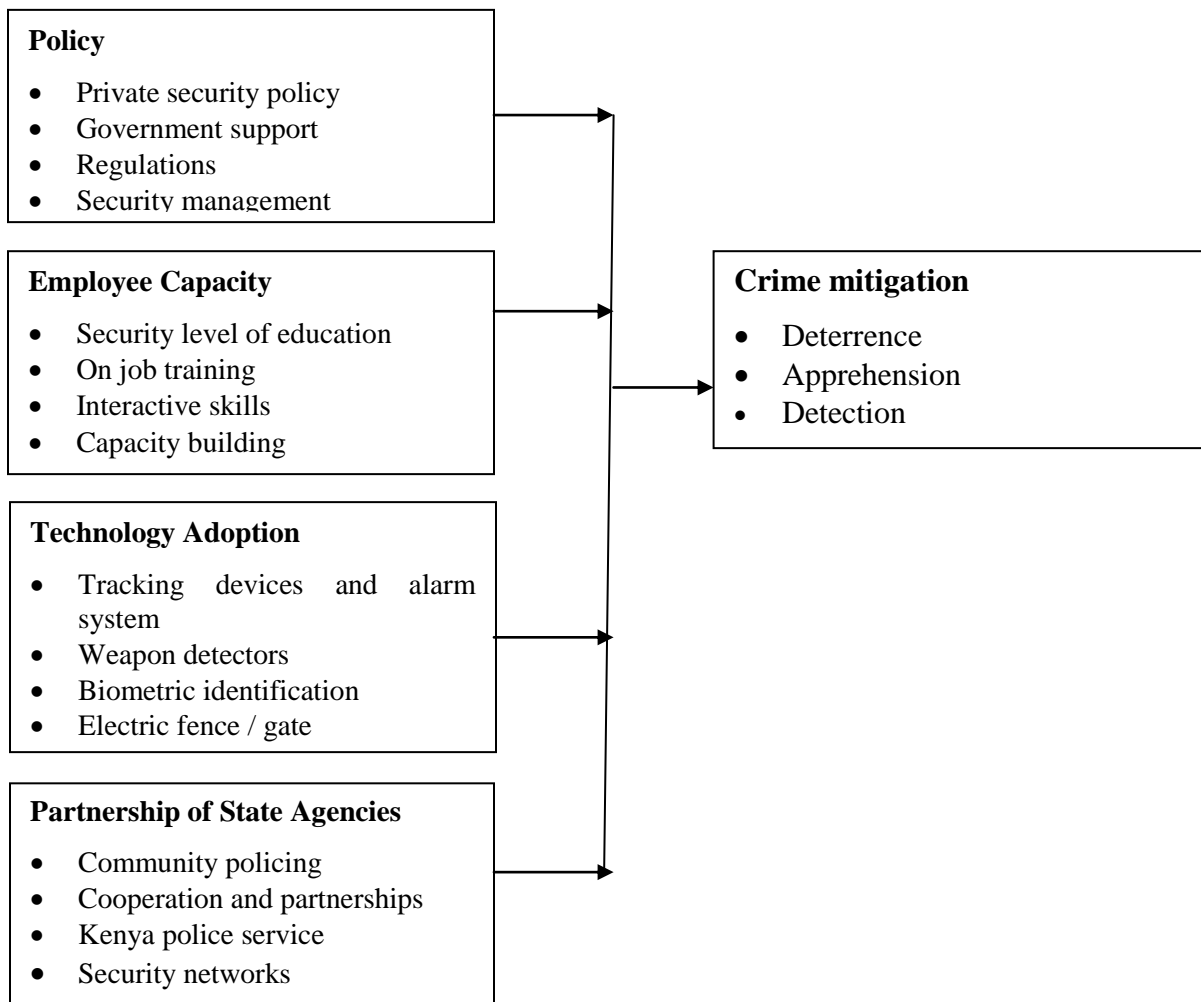


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive survey design with both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The target population for this study comprised of all private security firms in Nairobi who are members of KSIA. A total of 55 Private security firms both local and multinational were found to be registered with KSIA and have their presence in Nairobi KSIA (2017). The study adopted a census approach and all the 55 PSFs formed the sample size for the study. The study used structured questionnaires to collect primary data. To obtain the required data, the study employed both open and closed ended questions in the questionnaire. A self-administered questionnaire was issued using drop and pick method for data collection. The research instruments were distributed to the selected private security firms.

Since the collected data quantitative in nature, they were analyzed using SPSS version 21 to generate frequency tables, percentages and graphs as descriptive statistics. Inferential statistics were computed using a multiple linear regression model to show the relationship between the drivers and market and sales operation. Thus a multiple regression used for interpreting the results of the effect of independent variables on the dependent variables is as indicated below;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + e$$

Where: Y is the Crime mitigation, β_0 is the intercept or constant (predicted value for Y), β_1 and β_2 , are regression coefficients for variables X_1 = policy, X_2 = employee capacity, X_3 =technology adoption, X_4 =partnership of state agencies and e = error term.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

All 55 questionnaires distributed to the top management, assistant managers and the immediate supervisors of security firms registered under KISA were filled and returned. Therefore, the responses rate was 100% which was considered adequate for a descriptive study.

Descriptive Analysis for Policy on Mitigating Crime

The results indicated that The extent to which policy statements are effective is Clearly laid down private security policy enhance crime mitigation presented by 63% where the respondents Strongly agreed followed by 27% who Agreed and 0% who were Neutral in giving their answers. 3% disagreed with the opinion with 5% strongly disagreeing. In respect of the Government support have contributed to quality service provision by private security firms 63% strongly agreed followed by 3% who agreed and then 5% of the respondents who were Neutral in giving their response. 0% of the respondents Disagreed with the opinion followed by 27% who strongly disagreed. Basing on the fact that Government oversight body to regulate the private security

industry may come up with policy to enhance standards in the activities of security provision; the idea was supported by 63% of the respondents who strongly agreed with 27% Agreeing and 0% having a Neutral answer. 3% Disagreed and 5%strongly disagreed. On the other hand, Security management policy that involves public and private agents may lead to provision of quality security service by 3% of the respondents strongly agreeing and 5% agreeing. Then 27% of them were neutral on their answer followed by 63% who strongly disagreed. The remaining 0% disagreed with the idea.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Policy

Statements	Strongly		Neutral	Disagr ee (%)	Strongly		Total
	agree (%)	Agree (%)			Disagree (%)	Total (%)	
Clearly laid down private security policy enhance crime mitigation	63	27	0	3	5	100	
Government support have contributed to quality service provision by private security firms	63	3	5	0	27	100	
Government oversight body to regulate the private security industry may come up with policy to enhance standards in the activities of security provision	63	27	0	3	5	100	
Security management policy that involve public and private agents may lead to provision of quality security service	3	5	27	63	0	100	

Effect of Employee Capacity on Mitigating Crime

According to the illustration below, the extent to which the employee capacity statements, Security level of education leads to effectiveness in security service quality was strongly supported by 73% strongly agreeing then 2% agreeing followed by 5% of the respondents who were neutral on the answers. 18% of the respondents strongly disagreed with finally 2% disagreeing with the statement. On the other hand, on job training to effectiveness in security service quality, 18% strongly agreed followed by 2% who agreed with 73% being neutral. Others disagreed strongly as presented by 2% with those disagreeing recording 5%. In the view of Interactive skills enable security to provide high quality service and Capacity building leads to quality security service provision both shared a common view of respondents with those who

strongly agreed presenting 73% followed by 18% who agreed and then 2% remaining neutral. As well, those who strongly disagreed with the ideas recorded 2% with those disagreeing recording 5%.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Employee Capacity

Statements	Strongly				Strongly	Total (%)
	agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	disagree (%)	
Security level of education leads to effectiveness in security service quality	73	2	5	18	2	100
On job training to effectiveness in security service quality	18	2	73	2	5	100
Interactive skills enable security to provide high quality service	73	18	2	2	5	100
Capacity building leads to quality security service provision	73	18	2	2	5	100

Effect of Technology Adoption

The study sought to determine the extent to which technology adoption influences crime mitigation. The result indicated that Tracking devices and alarm system leads to crime mitigation by recording 73% who strongly agreed followed by 2% who both agreed and were neutral respectively. 18% disagreed strongly with 5% disagreeing with the idea. On the other hand, Weapon detectors enhance crime detection with 18% agreeing strong followed by 73% who agreed and then remaining neutral 2%. 2% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement with 5% just disagreeing. Again Biometric identification hinders access to restricted areas hence mitigate crime was an idea which was strongly agreed by 73% then those who agreed recorded 2% with 2% of the respondents remaining neutral. 18% strongly disagreed with 5% agreeing with the statement. As well, on the view of Electric fence / gate to mitigate crime rate 73% of the respondents strongly agreed with 18% agreeing with the statement. 5% remained neutral with both strongly disagreeing and agreeing recording 2% respectively. Finally, the Use of CCTV has reduced the level of crime as recorded by 73% strongly agreeing with the fact, and 2% agreeing. 2% remained neutral while 18% strongly disagreed with 5% agreeing with the idea.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Technology Adoption

Statements	Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly	TOTAL
	agree				disagree	
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Tracking devices and alarm system leads to crime mitigation	73	2	2	18	5	100
Weapon detectors enhance crime detection	18	73	2	2	5	100
Biometric identification hinders access to restricted areas hence mitigate crime	73	2	2	18	5	100
Electric fence / gate has mitigated crime rate	73	18	5	2	2	100
Use of CCTV has reduced the level of crime	73	2	2	18	5	100

Effect of Partnership of State Agencies on Mitigating Crime

The findings showed that the majority of the respondents indicated that they agree that partnership is effective in mitigating crime, community based agencies prevented crime and reduced crime rate as supported by 63%, those who indicated agree were 27%. Others strongly disagreed as presented by 3% and 5% disagreeing. On the other hand, the co-ordination and consultation between the police and political leaders and administrators has mitigated crime as supported by 63% of the respondents strongly agreeing followed by 27% of them agreeing. 0% of them were neutral as 3% of them strongly disagreed and 5% disagreeing. Again, Working with the police agencies and other key partners in the security sector has assisted to curb crime as strongly agreed by 3% of the respondents. 5% of them agreed while 27% remained neutral. 63% of them strongly disagreed with the statement with 0% of them agreeing with the idea. Finally, Improved security networks among private security firms contributes to coordination hence quality service in crime mitigation as indicated by 27% of the respondents strongly agreeing and 63% of them agreeing. Others remain neutral by 0% as 3% recording strongly disagreeing and 5% disagreeing.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Partnership of State Agencies

Statements	Strongly agree		Neutral	Strongly disagree		Total
	%	%		%	%	
community based agencies to prevent crime has lead to reduced crime rate	63	27	0	3	5	100
The co-ordination and consultation between the police and political leaders and administrators has mitigate crime	63	27	0	3	5	100
Working with the police agencies and other key partners in the security sector has assisted to curb crime	3	5	27	63	0	100
Improved security networks among private security firms contributes to coordination hence quality service in crime mitigation	27	63	0	3	5	100

Effect of Quality of Service in Mitigating Crime

The results of the study in the figure below revealed that the extent to which quality service provision by private security firms mitigates crime in Nairobi County, Kenya has recorded a very great extent in Deterrence by very great extent which score 90% followed by detection by scoring 63% at a very great extent and lastly apprehension at a great extent presented by 63%.

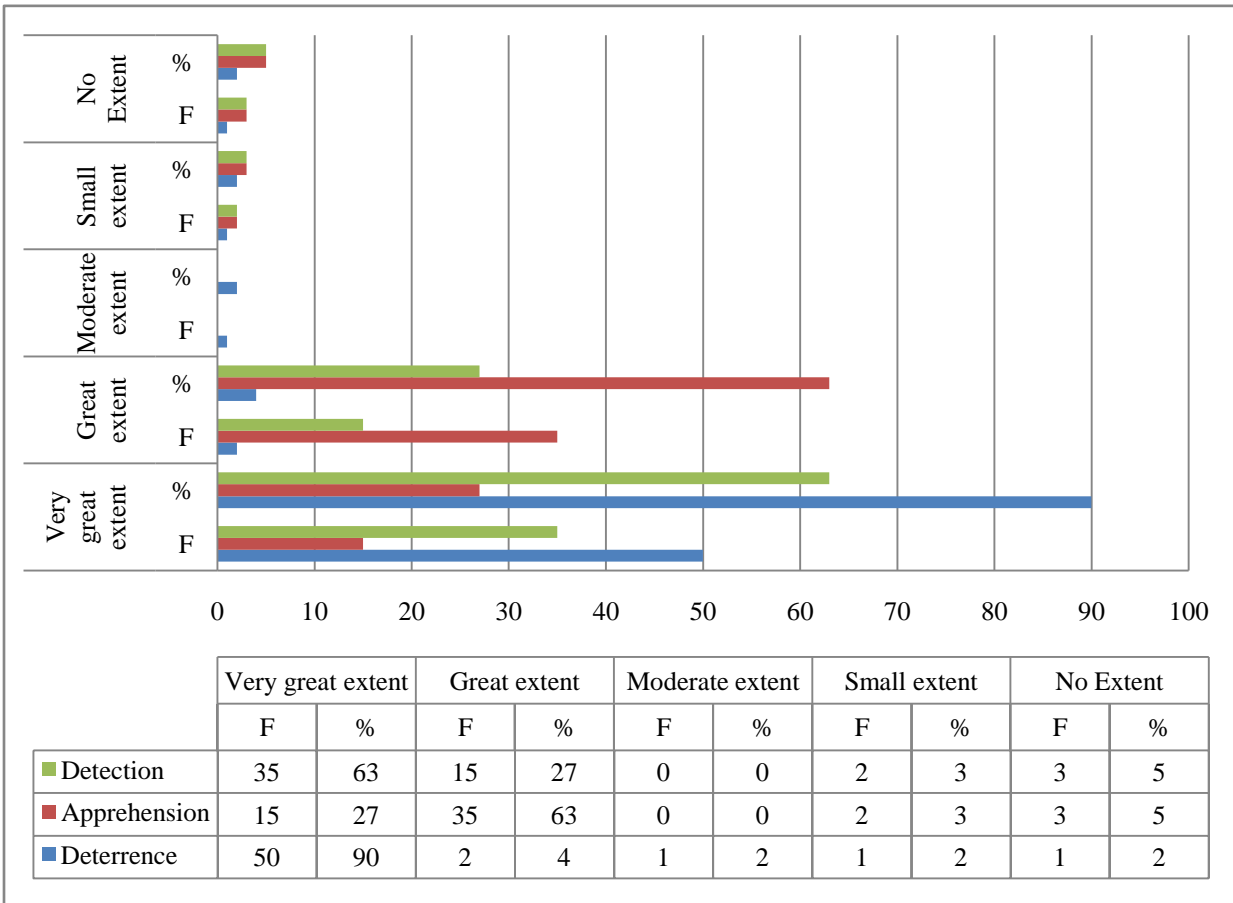


Figure 3. Effect of Quality Service Provision

Bivariate correlation between crime and strategies adopted

The correlation was significant as it had a p value of less than 0.05. The correlation between the crime and strategies adopted by the firm is 0.0596 this indicates that the strategies adopted influence crime mitigation.

Table 6. Bivariate Correlation

Correlation (r)	N	Significance
0.596	55	0.002

Multiple Regression Analysis

A regression was conducted to determine how policy, employee capacity, technology adoption helped in crime mitigation. The statistical package for social science (SPSS) was used to code, enter, and compute the measurements of the multiple regressions for the study.

Table 7. Model Summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.882	0.777	0.754	0.102

The illustration above show a model summary of regression analysis between 4 independent variables: policy, employee capacity, technology and partnership with security agencies and dependent variable that is crime mitigation. The value of R was 0.882, the value of R square was 0.777 and the value of adjusted R square was 0.754. From the findings, 75.4% of changes in the strategy implementation were attributed to the three independent variables in the study. Positivity and significance of all values of R shows that model summary is significant and therefore gives a logical support to the study model.

Table 8. ANOVA Results

Model	Sum of square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	0.882	0.777	0.754	0.102	0.023
Residual	2.56	45	0.053		
Total	3.194	48	0.264		

The probability value of 0.023 indicates that the regression relationship was highly significant in predicting how the four independent variables that are policy, employee capacity, technology adoption and partnership with the security agencies influence crime mitigation. The F critical at 5% level of significance was 1.96. Since F calculated 3.98 is greater than the F critical (value = 1.96) this shows that the overall model was significant.

Table 9. Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(constant)	2.342	0.233		10.05	0.013
Policy	1.456	0.512	1.418	2.84	0.041
Employee capacity	1.563	0.614	2.177	2.545	0.00
Technology adoption	1.456	0.512	1.418	2.84	0.041
Partnership with security agencies	1.421	0.604	1.419	2.353	0.021

The optimal regression model thus is as shown below;

$$Y=2.342 + 1.456X_1 + 1.563 X_2 + 1.456 X_3+1.421 X_4$$

The regression equation above has established that taking all factors into account constant at zero, the crime mitigation will have an autonomous value of 2.342. The findings presented also show that taking all other independent variable at zero, a unit increase in policy would lead to a 1.456 increase in crime mitigation. A unit increase in employee capacity would lead to a 1.563 increase in crime mitigation. A unit increase in technology adoption would lead to a 1.456 increase in crime mitigation. A unit increase in partnership with security agencies would lead to a 1.421 increase in crime mitigation. All the variables were significant as the P- Values were less than 0.05.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that the new crime and violence trends in Kenya; terrorist, militia and gang activities and the apparent failure of state security agents including private security firms, against criminals is a sign of poor strategic management of crime and violence. The causes of crime are often linked to institutional weaknesses of society. To achieve the goal of adequate and reliable security provision public security firms need to improve on the quality of service they provide to their client. As well Drivers of quality service provision particularly those touching on standards and may include and not limited to policy, employee capacity, technology adoption and partnership of state agencies among private security firms in the aim of mitigating crime.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the Governments to develop a national policy on the regulation of the private security sector as well as its rapport with the state security providers. The policy should be designed to ensure the highest possible standards in both spheres and be supplemented with appropriate primary legislation and regulations. The study recommends the security firms to work with police agencies and other key partners in the security sector so as to broaden their service delivery in security sector. The private security sector should also improve effectiveness in service quality, organizations must build the capacity to retain, attract and employ an adequate number of high-quality employees' in order to adapt to circumstances that are constantly changing. There is need for the private security sector employees to get enough training in the necessary technical skills and knowledge, and interactive skills. Coupled with good communication skills, their service provision will be of great result. Interactive skills help employees to provide courteous, caring, responsive and empathetic service

There is need to establish a formal Partnership of State Agencies as both have many common goals, and the private security industry provides a major protective role in Kenyan society. The importance of cooperation and partnerships between private security firms and

other security agencies should be promoted because it leads to much enhanced quality service provision and other incentives for both public and private security actors.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Since this study only focused on private security firms in Nairobi, the study recommends future scholars to focus on other factors that influence the quality of private security firms in other counties in Kenya. Moreover, the study recommends future scholars to investigate more on other drivers that influence quality service provision among private security firms as the study looked only on the effect of policy, employee capacity, technology adoption and partnership with state agencies.

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