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# Influence of Specific Cultural Factors on the Demand for Private Security Services in Garissa Township, Kenya

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## Abstract

Private security services are indispensable for mitigating safety concerns in high-risk settings such as Garissa Township, Kenya, yet the precise drivers of demand among local entrepreneurs have remained under-investigated. This study set out to determine how specific cultural influences shape entrepreneurs' propensity to purchase private security services. Anchored in rational choice theory and institutional theory, the research adopted a mixed-methods embedded design, combining a quantitative survey of 182 entrepreneurs drawn from the Garissa Township Central Business District with qualitative insights from eight private-security firm managers. Stratified random sampling ensured proportional sectoral representation, while key informants were purposively selected. Multiple linear regression analyses conducted using SPSS version 28 revealed that historical experiences of insecurity ( $\beta = 0.195$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ) and greater trust in private security providers over public ones ( $\beta = 0.200$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ) were the dominant cultural drivers, while clan norms alone had no measurable effect ( $\beta = -0.080$ ,  $p = 0.264$ ). Trust deficits in state institutions were reflected in the negative coefficient for trust in public police ( $\beta = -0.191$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ). Qualitative data corroborated these patterns, with firms reporting a 40% spike in CCTV orders within 48 hours of terror alerts from Somalia and widespread scepticism towards police timeliness. The study concludes that experiential memory of past attacks and relative institutional trust jointly determine demand, and it proposes multi-stakeholder governance forums involving clan elders, religious leaders, and police commanders to expand equitable access to protective services while mitigating cultural barriers and addressing institutional trust deficits.

**Keywords:** *Private security services, cultural factors, institutional trust, historical insecurity, Garissa Township, Kenya*

## 1.0 Introduction

Security is perceived as a fundamental concern for individuals, communities, and businesses, with its significance amplified in regions facing unique socio-economic challenges (Campbell III, 2023). Moreover, Opon and Gacheru (2023) claimed that the need for private security services has emerged as a significant player in addressing these

concerns, offering a range of protective services to supplement the efforts of public law enforcement agencies. However, the demand for these services is likely influenced by many socio-economic factors that deserve careful examination. Kostara (2021) notes that several social and economic factors have driven the demand for private security services in the UK. For example, age, gender and wage policy are the key factors influencing private security demand since different population segments may have various demands and tastes. Additionally, shifts in the labour market and economic conditions affected the demand for private security. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many private security officers in the UK became critical workers because they were crucial to performing public services.

McCrie (2020) indicts that the demand for private security services in the United States is occasioned by an increased crime wave, evolving security terrain and greater concern for personal safety. Nemeth (2022) found that Private security services provide customised services, reaction at short notice, reliability and solutions ensuring security that can adapt to the resources and capacities of the public sector more efficiently". Private security companies have demonstrated that they are effective in protecting all types of commercial property, and doing so has helped to make such property more attractive to the upper demographic of tenants (upper demographic tend to have those higher-paying jobs), thus spending and contributing more economically speaking to the community. Naveed *et al.* (2023) highlighted that the contraction of law enforcement can be partially placed at the feet of the private security sector. Read also the impact of socio-economic conditions on the consumption of private security in Pakistan. Citing the World Bank, they said that a third of Pakistan's population still lives below the poverty line, highlighting the reality that almost 50 million poor people live in Pakistan. Women and children, persons with disabilities and possibly the elderly are the most affected among the low-income earners. Low-income people live in rural areas where they are unskilled and work in the informal sector.

Camps-Febrer (2019) examined multiple security layers and the security and power struggle in Morocco. The security apparatus in Morocco is central to the regime of power in the country, and the changing nature and legitimacy of the security forces correspond to shifting balances in the power struggle between rival elite factions as well as in the international political and normative context. The results of security privatisation in Morocco have also been evaluated in reference to the level of professionalism, salaries, and governance. The emergent private security market and global surveillance technology market create an opening for exploring the state and political economy of security in Morocco. There are also socio-economic dimensions such as income distribution, employment, education and social security coverage in Morocco. Hence, it can be assumed that the demand for private security in Morocco is a result of the combination of these socio-economic determinants with the general political and security context in which the country is inscribed. However, it is still premature to generalise with respect to the relationship between socio-economic variables and the demand for PSS in Morocco; a more tailored research or analysis is needed to explore the influence of socio-economic variables on the demand for PSS in Morocco.

There is a rising increase in the need and consumption of private security services in Nigeria, as shown in the 12.36% projected growth in the period of 2024 – 2028 and estimated value of a US\$59.7 million market size by 2029 (Umezulike, 2021). The point was made that increasing demand for private security services is a result of deteriorating

security in Nigeria, be it from Boko Haram and kidnapping-for-ransom to organised criminal looting in the Northwest, secessionist movements, and piracy in the South. Private security has contributed to the growth of private security companies in policing, where it has also assumed essential functions in security and police work. But private security firms operate under disadvantages that hinder their performance, such as a lack of guns, inadequate supervision, and the police's unwillingness to work with them.

However, Ofeh *et al.* (2020) identified some socio-economic factors that account for the need for private security services in Cameroon. For example, poverty and income inequality ratios far outpace their population growth, with 8.1 million people in poverty in 2014. The socio-economic conditions may lead to more demand from the private security industry, with the protection of assets and investments of individuals and companies in demand. They also found that corruption and poor governance put Cameroon 142nd out of 180 countries in Transparency International's 2022 corruption perceptions index. Corruption and weak governance impede the business environment in the country. This climate might stretch the need for private security services, as businesses and individuals try to guard themselves from potential fraud and crime.

Okebilo and Mutonyi (2022) reviewed studies on private security corporations and crime investigation and prevention within Nairobi County in Kenya. The security of any given state is a precondition for achieving social, economic and political objectives. In a world where crucial security needs will continue to include these nontraditional constraints, no nation on Earth will be able to adequately meet its security needs by relying solely on some of those elements, such as the citizenry, Considering the specialised nature of both skills and the type of training provided to personnel of private security companies, cooperation and collaboration between police and private security companies in criminal detection and deterrence is a major component in the national security chain. The study had a broad objective of investigating the private security firms and crime prevention and detection in Nairobi County, Kenya. The specific aim of this study was to determine the convenient roles of the private security companies in crime detection and prevention in Nairobi County, investigate the private security companies' potential in crime detection and prevention, establish the constraints faced by the private security companies in crime detection and prevention and develop good practices that the private security companies should take in crime detection and prevention in Nairobi County.

Private Guard Companies (PGC) contribute to crime prevention and detection, although this could be improved upon if joint operations are carried out with State police forces (Okebilo, 2022). These security firms are private security companies armed with crime prevention facilities (Mutie, 2022). The lessons learned from the best practices of private security companies in crime detection and prevention may also be aggregated together to obtain the best integrated security strategy. The rural economy in the County of Garissa, located in the northeast corner of Kenya, has been influenced by several underlying and interacting socio-economic factors that have impacted the demand for private security services. The area is home to a varied population, both urban and rural settings, and unique issues regarding development, education and community relations. Mutigi (2023) reported that in recent times, Garissa County has experienced increased threat of crime, vandalism and insecurity, leading individuals and businesses to look for extra security precautions.

Ndinda and Masiga (2024) noted that growth in the demand for private security services in Garissa County of northeastern Kenya. It is also attributable to multiple factors, they said, including security threats, economic growth, urbanisation, and the under-capacity of public security forces. On the other hand, Lung'ung'u (2021) alleged that Garissa County has been plagued by a lot of security challenges due to its proximity to Somalia. The nation has been riven by instability and strife for decades. Militant groups such as the Al-Shabaab have been a serious threat in the region (Mueller, 2018). They have carried out multiple attacks against government facilities, schools, and civilians. The issue of terrorism has created fear and insecurity, which is the main reason why people, businesses, and institutions are looking for higher security. The County has also faced interclan fights and cattle rustling in some parts of the County where there is lawlessness (Opon & Gacheru 2023). It's overstretched on public security forces, which are usually already overextended, even under-resourced.

Garissa County lies within the Northeastern Province of Kenya. It is bordered by Somalia to the East, Wajir County to the north and Tana River County to the south. Ethnic Somalis primarily inhabit the County, which is generally arid and semi-desertic. The County's capital is Garissa Town, fairly considered to be the unofficial capital of the Northeastern Region. Garissa County has a pastoralist economy and most of the population keeps livestock. The County is usually hot, dry and the temperatures frequently rise over 32 °C. Rainfall is sparse and unpredictable. The County has been a talking point in national security arenas, regarding the activities of the Kenya Defence Forces and other native security agencies operating in the region. The recent past has seen tremendous changes in the security environment of Kenyan Garissa Township, in Garissa County, due to social, economic, political, and environmental reasons. These trends have affected the demand for private security services, which is currently also growing because of individuals and business organisations who would like to add another layer of protection against rising crime. Recent academic and policy work, on the other hand, has paid insufficient attention to which drivers and factors are fuelling the demand for private security providers in the region.

Among them, the influence of perceived security threats, economic status, and the efficacy of current public policy measures is crucial. In addition, there is scarce evidence on how local dynamics & community demands mould preferences for the use of private security. This lack of understanding is a barrier to security firms, policy makers, and stakeholders effectively responding to and fulfilling the evolving security demands of society. Thus, the present study examined variables that influence demand for Private Security Service (PSS) in Garissa Township. Through pinpointing and breaking down these dimensions, the project aims to generate and disseminate findings that may help frame security solutions and strategies – to fit the needs and the demand of the individual setting. Therefore, this study assessed the influence of specific cultural factors on the demand for private security services in Garissa Township.

## 2.0 Literature Review

According to Janković et al. (2022), research has explored the cultural factors in Serbia oriented towards the development of relations between the police and the private security officer. In recent years, for different reasons, the competition in the private security industry has started to grow in Serbia. The objective of the paper is to provide analyses and to question whether such a level and quality of cooperation with the security sector, including public and private, is established that would guarantee citizens' (personal)

security, as relations of these actors are assumed to be crucial for enabling the development of an environment that is safe enough to live in. The survey was distributed from February to June 2019 through a questionnaire sent out to 190 police officers and 178 security officers. Results revealed satisfactory private security-police relationships, where the relationship is positively experienced by private security respondents and held in positive regard by the private security respondents. The relations are also more negatively assessed by police officers. The findings from the efforts emphasised that planning for the campaigns is perceived as a positive cultural ritual in terms of advancing the relationship between police officers and security officers.

Mavhura (2020) observed that cultural factors influence the level of demand for private security services, particularly in terms of combating Boko Haram in Nigeria. NIGERIA – Boko Haram Influx Despite the significant efforts made by the Nigerian armed forces and other security and law enforcement agencies to contain Boko Haram so far, private security services have largely been a mystery as the group continues to pose a major threat to the country. Consequently, there is a need to critically analyse the contribution of private security services in the fight against Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, focusing on the activities of Specialised Tasks, Training, Equipment, and Protection Limited (STTEPL) as well as stakeholders' perceptions and experiences. Based on a qualitative case study design, the research has contributed to a fundamental lack of knowledge regarding the Private Security sector in Nigeria by providing insight into the possible role and effects of Private security services in the fight against Boko Haram. The study results also highlight the central function that private security contractors can have as part of the counter-Boko Haram campaign in Nigeria. This is particularly the case for corporations with a history of counterinsurgency in Africa, which might win the trust of local people.

Moreover, the research underscores the imperative of cultural empathy, long-term sustainability, adherence to human rights, and collective action to ensure enduring stability and effectiveness in counter-terrorism. The research, as it stands, therefore, emphasises the urgent need for good laws, adequate training of personnel, and tailored strategies for private security operatives in Nigeria. These results will be of interest to policymakers, practitioners, and academics engaged in matters of security, counterinsurgency, and counter-terrorism. More generally, these findings have important implications for the development of "better" policy responses to security threat contexts, within Nigeria or similar security-troubled settings in other countries, and here also the relevance of these findings gains prominence. Lumadede *et al.* (2021) investigated private security firms in Kenya in terms of cultural and technological factors.

This paper focused on the influence of Socio-Cultural Factors and Information and Communication Technology on managing private security firms in Nairobi, Kenya. The study also sought to find out the moderating effect of the Legal and Regulatory Framework for regulating Private Security Firms in Nairobi County. Institutional Theory guided the study. It was a descriptive study, and a structured questionnaire served as the tool of data collection. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the relationship between socio-cultural environment and ICT with the management of private security firms. Results: The results of the study showed that the external environment significantly and positively affects the management of private security companies.

It was also found that the Legal and Regulatory Framework moderated the relationships between the external environmental variables and the management of Private Security Firms. Conclusions Based on the key findings, the study proposes that Private and Security Firms' management in Kenya has to review the evolving socio-cultural changes, such as the attitudes of people towards technology adoption. They would do well to use the research to inform their thinking about the new service delivery forms, considering contemporary patterns of customer behaviour, developments in technology, and patterns of settlement (gated communities). It is also vital for the administrators of the private security companies to constantly keep abreast of the dynamism in the technological world (global market trends) and therefore to realign their strategic approaches towards quality delivery of their services to their clients.

## 2.1 Theoretical framework

Institutionalists argue that the environment might shape the emergence of formal structures in an organisation or entity. Eventually, such reforms become "enshrined" to the point where not to take them up is "neglectful and irrational". This theory recognises that efforts towards security have been subject to normative work on measures across the years. This implies that the orientation is toward something we might call "best practices" -programs, tactics, methods, or strategies that can be used to create the "ideal" product of crime prevention or control (SRIC, 2012). Government's endeavours to construct organisational policy require agencies not to act as though the general principles that guide law enforcement necessarily apply to them; they should not hold on to the illusion of it for so much longer, and they must prudently consider diverse factors related to the community context.

It has been said that his work serves the road and bridging of traditional normative thoughts around security organisations with the new sense of institutionalism, most especially in the war against terror in Kenya (Kibusia,2020). Institutional theory was first used by theorists and academics in the 1960s. The reform did not work among the policing fraternity owing to the suffocating conditions in policing institutions (Ciorciari, 2020). They stated, "A police department participates with other powerful actors called sovereigns in its institutional environments, and it receives legitimacy from these sovereigns. Sovereigns are those actors whose views are significant, that is, they are entities that can affect the fundamental well-being of the organisations". Goals are selected to help maintain legitimacy with influential constituencies, policing movement as one of the radical changes that need to be absorbed within the policing fraternity, to address the issue of terrorism.

The Institutional Theory also posed several limitations. According to Baek *et al.* (2019), the theory was overemphasised on conformity. The theory focused on how organisations conform to external pressures, potentially neglecting instances of resistance, innovation, or change initiated from within the organisation. Further, Bedford *et al.* (2023) noted that the theory tends to downplay the role of individuals' agency and strategic decision-making within organisations, making it seem as though organisations passively adapt to external pressures rather than actively shaping their environment.

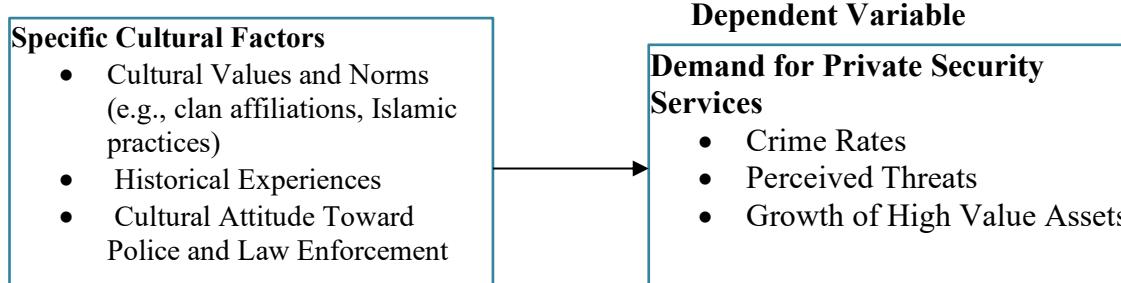
Egbert and Leese (2021) also argued that it had been hoped that, by means of science about law enforcement work, it is presumed that prefabricated modes of dealing with the same problems could be discovered. In the late 1980s, the bankruptcy of the normative vision was increasingly acknowledged internationally.

## 2.2 Conceptual Framework

Based on the conceptual framework, the independent variables, which are specific aspects of culture, and the dependent variable, the demand for private security firms, are depicted. The framework posits that these variables directly affect the demand for private security services in Garissa Township, as indicated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

### Independent Variables



## 3.0 Methodology

The study employed a mixed methods embedded design with a quantitative component as the primary approach and a qualitative component as secondary (Leavy, 2022). The design enabled the measurement of determinants of demand for private security services among entrepreneurs in Garissa Township while providing contextual insights into the unique socio-economic and cultural environment. The quantitative component quantified the effect of household income levels, education levels, and cultural factors on demand for private security services among entrepreneurs in Garissa Township Central Business District. Structured data were collected to measure associations between these variables and demand, relying on descriptive statistics (mean, frequency) and multiple linear regression analysis to test hypotheses. The secondary qualitative component collected data from key informants and open-ended responses to provide contextual insights into Garissa's unique environment, including clan affiliations, Islamic practices, and terrorism concerns. Thematic analysis of qualitative data identified patterns and nuances, complementing quantitative results and facilitating triangulation for enhanced validity.

The unit of analysis was registered entrepreneurs in Garissa Township Central Business District, as primary decision-makers within their households whose choices regarding private security services are influenced by household income, education, and cultural factors. The target population comprised 334 registered entrepreneurs based on Garissa County business registry data (2024), plus 5-10 managers or owners of private security firms operating in Garissa Township to serve as key informants. Stratified random sampling ensured proportional representation across major business sectors (trading, service, manufacturing). Using Coolican's (2014) formula at a 5% significance level, 182 entrepreneurs were sampled from the 334 registered population. Key informants were purposively selected based on their expert knowledge about client preferences, market dynamics, and socio-economic impacts on demand. Stratified random sampling ensured proportional representation across major business sectors (trading, service, manufacturing). Using Coolican's (2014) formula at a 5% significance level, 182 entrepreneurs were sampled from the 334 registered population. Key informants were purposively selected based on their expert knowledge about client preferences, market dynamics, and socio-economic impacts on demand.

Semi-structured questionnaires were administered to 182 entrepreneurs via Google Forms to gather quantitative data on household income levels, education levels, cultural factors, and demand for private security services. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale for closed-ended questions, enabling regression analysis using SPSS version 28, and included open-ended questions for qualitative insights. One trained enumerator assisted with participant engagement, technical support, and ethical compliance. Key informant interviews with 5–10 private security firm managers provided qualitative data on industry trends and client preferences through semi-structured discussions around predetermined themes. Validity was established through expert review by departmental panels and the supervisor to ensure content alignment with study objectives. Reliability was confirmed through a pilot test with 30 registered entrepreneurs in Njoro town, Nakuru County, yielding a McDonald's omega statistic of 1.000 across 17 items, demonstrating perfect internal consistency and exceeding the 0.7 threshold recommended by Hayes and Coutts (2020).

Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 27. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, percentages, standard deviations) summarised variable distributions, presented in tables, bar graphs, and pie charts. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to test hypotheses at an  $\alpha = 0.05$  significance level. The dependent variable (demand for private security services) was operationalised as a composite score derived from mean Likert-scale responses measuring perceived crime rates, threats, and high-value assets. Independent variables were entered in disaggregated form to preserve granularity and identify specific influential factors. For cultural aspects, the regression model was specified as:

Where  $Y$  = Demand for private security;  $\alpha$  = Constant;  $\beta_1 - \beta_4$  = Regression coefficients;  $X_1$  = Cultural Values and Norms;  $X_2$  = Historical Insecurity;  $X_3$  = Trust in Public Security;  $X_4$  = Trust in Private Security;  $\varepsilon$  = Error term.

Qualitative data from key informants and open-ended responses were manually coded and thematically analysed to identify patterns such as clan-based trust issues and terrorism-driven demand. Verbatim quotes illustrated themes and were triangulated with quantitative findings to enhance validity. Ethical approval was obtained from Egerton University Ethics Review Committee (EUREC) and NACOSTI, with additional permissions from Garissa County Department of Education. Informed consent and anonymity were maintained throughout data collection.

## 4.0 Results

The results were presented in sections.

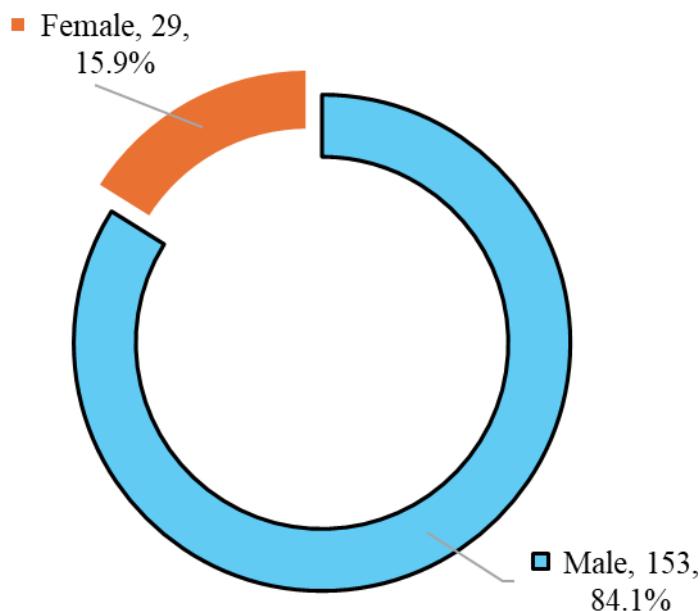
#### 4.1 Questionnaire Return Rate

The study targeted 182 registered entrepreneurs in the Garissa Township Central Business District. All 182 questionnaires were completed and returned, achieving a 100% response rate. This high return was facilitated by a combination of electronic and in-person survey administration, supported by one trained enumerator who provided real-time clarification and conducted digital checks for completeness.

## 4.2 Distribution of Entrepreneurs by Gender

Figure 2 summarises the gender composition of the respondents who participated in the study. The distribution provides a demographic interpretation through which the factors that influence demand in the market of private security among the entrepreneurs in Garissa Township can be construed. It is especially important to consider the gendered structure of the sample, considering such socio-cultural dynamics of the region where gendered aspects of risk and security may overlap.

**Figure 2: Distribution of Respondents by Gender**



It was found out that a significant majority of the entrepreneurs were male, representing 84.1 % of the sample group, whereas female entrepreneurs made up only 15.9 %. Such a strong gender imbalance is also characteristic of the general distribution in entrepreneurial engagement in the conflict zones and other patriarchal parts of Kenya.

## 4.3 Descriptive Statistics of Culture-Related Factors

This section details the descriptive statistics for cultural factors influencing the demand for private security services, including cultural norms (clan affiliations, Islamic practices), historical experiences of insecurity (past attacks, clan conflicts), and relative trust in public versus private security providers.

### 4.3.1 Distribution of Entrepreneurs by the Extent to Which Cultural Values and Norms Influence Your Decision to Hire Private Security Services

The extent to which cultural values and norms shaped the decision to engage private security services was investigated to illuminate the cultural dimension of demand. Entrepreneurs' responses provided a measure of how clan affiliations, religious practices, and communal expectations informed their security choices. Table 1 presents the distribution of entrepreneurs by the extent to which cultural values and norms influence their decision to hire private security services.

**Table 1: Distribution of Entrepreneurs by the Extent to Which Cultural Values and Norms Influence Your Decision to Hire Private Security Services**

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all	11	6.0
Slightly	17	9.3
Moderately	60	33.0
Strongly	79	43.4
Very strongly	15	8.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Results indicated that only 6.0 % felt cultural considerations exerted no influence, while a mere 9.3 % regarded their impact as slight. Collectively, this added up to moderate to very strong influence, with 33.0 % selecting as moderately influenced, 43.4 % stating their considerable influence to be strong and 8.2 % saying they were very strongly influenced.

#### **4.3.2 Distribution of Entrepreneurs by How historical experiences with insecurity affected your decision to hire private security services**

Historical encounters with insecurity were examined to assess how past victimisation or exposure to conflict shaped entrepreneurs' subsequent willingness to pay for private protection. Entrepreneurs' retrospective evaluations provided an experiential lens through which cultural and risk-based determinants of demand could be interpreted. Table 2 presents the distribution of entrepreneurs by how historical experiences with insecurity affected their decision to hire private security services.

**Table 2: Distribution of Entrepreneurs by How Historical Experiences with Insecurity Affected Their Decision to Hire Private Security Services**

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all	40	22.0
Slightly	51	28.0
Moderately	35	19.2
Strongly	40	22.0
Very strongly	16	8.8
Total	182	100.0

Results showed that 22.0 % felt past insecurity had no bearing on their decision, and 28.0 % regarded its influence as slight. A further 19.2 % rated the impact as moderate, while 22.0 % and 8.8 %, respectively, indicated strong or very strong effects. Taken together, exactly half of the respondents (50.0 %) reported only limited or no influence, whereas the remaining half acknowledged some degree of experiential prompting.

#### **4.3.3 Distribution of Entrepreneurs by Trust Public Security Forces More than Private Security Services**

Comparative trust in public versus private security providers was investigated to illuminate how institutional confidence shaped entrepreneurs' willingness to outsource protective functions. The balance of trust offered insight into the cultural and institutional drivers of

demand for private security services. Table 3 presents the distribution of entrepreneurs by their level of trust in public security forces compared to private security services.

**Table 3: Distribution of Entrepreneurs by Trust in Public Security Forces More Than Private Security Services**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	58	31.9
Disagree	65	35.7
Neutral	33	18.1
Agree	19	10.4
Strongly agree	7	3.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Results showed that 67.6 % of entrepreneurs either "strongly disagreed" (31.9 %) or "disagreed" (35.7 %) with the statement that public forces were more trustworthy than private providers. A further 18.1% remained "neutral," while only 14.2% expressed any level of agreement, with 10.4% "agreeing" and 3.8% "strongly agreeing."

#### **4.3.4 Distribution of Entrepreneurs by Trust in Private Security Services More Than Public Security Forces**

The level of trust between the private security services and the public forces was investigated to determine the degree of trust that the entrepreneur who employed non-state forces ensured to secure their venture assets and their families (Table 4). The allocation of trust levels elucidated the culture and attitude in approaching the high and low levels of predisposed likelihood to buy private protection in line with cultural biasing.

**Table 4: Distribution of Entrepreneurs by the Trust they have in Private Security Services More Than Public Security Forces.**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	13	7.1
Disagree	14	7.7
Neutral	40	22.0
Agree	71	39.0
Strongly agree	44	24.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Results demonstrated a clear tilt toward private providers. Nearly two-thirds of the sample either "agreed" (39.0 %) or "strongly agreed" (24.2 %) that private security services were more trustworthy than public forces, while only 14.8 % expressed any level of disagreement and 22.0 % took a neutral stance.

#### **4.4 Specific Cultural Factors on The Demand for Private Security Services in Garissa Township**

A multiple linear regression was fitted to determine whether specific cultural factors, namely cultural norms, historical insecurity experiences and relative trust in public versus private security, accounted for significant variation in the demand for private security services among entrepreneurs in Garissa Township. Table 5 presents the results of the Regression Analysis of Cultural Factors Entered as Predictors of Demand for Private Security Services Among Entrepreneurs in Garissa Township.

**Table 5: Regression Analysis of Cultural Factors on Demand for Private Security Services Among Entrepreneurs in Garissa Township**  
**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.328	0.108	0.087	0.19718

a. Predictors: (Constant), Cultural Influence, Historical Experiences, Trust Public Security, Trust Private Security

**ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	0.830	4	0.207	5.335	0.000
Residual	6.882	177	0.039		
Total	7.711	181			

a. Dependent Variable: Demand for Private Security Services

b. Predictors: (Constant), Cultural Influence, Historical Experiences, Trust Public Security, Trust Private Security

Predictor	Coefficients					
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B
(Constant)	4.863	0.084	—	57.731	0.000	4.697 to 5.029
Cultural Influence (Clan, Norms, Islamic Practices)	-	0.015	-	-1.122	0.264	-0.047 to 0.013
Historical Experiences (Past Attacks, Conflicts)	0.017	0.080	0.080			
Trust Public Security more than Private Security	0.032	0.012	0.195	2.722	0.007	0.009 to 0.054
Trust Private Security more than Public Security	-	0.013	-	-2.682	0.008	-0.062 to -0.009
	0.035	0.191				
	0.036	0.013	0.200	2.803	0.006	0.011 to 0.062

a. Dependent Variable: Demand for Private Security Services

Results demonstrated a modest yet significant overall model, with  $R^2 = 0.108$  (adjusted  $R^2 = 0.087$ ) and  $F(4, 177) = 5.335$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , thereby leading to rejection of the null hypothesis at the 5 percent level. Among the predictors, historical experiences of insecurity ( $\beta = 0.195$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ) and trust in private over public security ( $\beta = 0.200$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ) yielded significant positive coefficients. In contrast, trust in public over private security produced a significant negative coefficient ( $\beta = -0.191$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ). Cultural influence in the form of clan affiliations, Islamic practices and prevailing norms did not reach significance ( $\beta = -0.080$ ,  $p = 0.264$ ). Cultural norms framed, but did not dominate, purchasing decisions. Clan elders initially discouraged "outsider" guards; however, after two grenade attacks on kiosks in 2023, "*the same elders insisted our guards be stationed at markets every Friday*" (KI-04). Historical experience of insecurity emerged as the decisive cultural driver: firms reported a 40 % spike in CCTV orders "*within 48 hours of terror alerts from Somalia*" (KI-06). Trust in public institutions was uniformly low; clients openly stated that "*police arrive late, so we rely on private responders*" (KI-04). These narratives validated the regression outcomes: historical insecurity ( $\beta = 0.195$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ) and trust in private security ( $\beta = 0.200$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ) were significant, whereas abstract cultural influence ( $\beta = -0.080$ ,  $p = 0.264$ ) was not significant.

#### 4.5 Discussion of the Findings

The gender imbalance is also characteristic of the general distribution in entrepreneurial engagement in the conflict zones and other patriarchal parts of Kenya. The study by Mutugi (2023) also reported a history of structural and cultural barriers that were experienced by women in the County of Garissa that inhibited formal business ownership activities; thus, women were being barred out in areas that were considered high-risk and male-dominated businesses. The dominance of male respondents in this study, therefore, not only reflected the gendered nature of entrepreneurship in the area but also shaped the scope of security-related experiences captured.

Given the centrality of household decision-making in the study's conceptual framework, the overrepresentation of male entrepreneurs suggested that the findings were largely filtered through male-dominated perspectives on income allocation, risk prioritisation, and cultural trust. Consequently, the influence of gender-specific security concerns, such as women's heightened vulnerability to certain forms of crime or their differential trust in private versus public security providers, may have been underrepresented (Khan, 2022). This imbalance implied that the socio-economic and cultural realities of male-headed households and businesses in Garissa Township predominantly shaped the observed determinants of private security demand. This high salience of cultural elements resembled the findings of Lumadede *et al.* (2021), as entrepreneurs who were immersed in collectivistic value frameworks were much more likely to seek the approval of clan elders or religious authorities prior to buying security services in Nairobi County. In the context of Garissa township, the prevailing heavy emphasis placed on cultural norms meant that the conditions under which individuals resorted to hiring private protection were mediated by the communal traditions, a chain of trusts, which thus increased the influence of cultural factors, along with the income level and education level shaping the total demand.

This ambivalent pattern parallels the findings of Adinoyi (2024) in north-east Nigeria, where entrepreneurs exposed to sporadic Boko Haram activity displayed a similar split between those who normalised risk and those whose prior losses heightened sensitivity to private security offerings. Within the Garissa Township context, the equal polarisation suggested that historical insecurity operated as a contingent cultural stimulus: its power to intensify demand was mediated by household income, education and prevailing social norms rather than functioning as a uniformly decisive trigger. This strong inclination against the police to gain trust was in line with the results of Lumadede *et al.* (2021) in Nairobi County, as low trust in the police's ability and professionalism was a significant factor determining the heavy use of the services of security firms. In the Garissa Township setting, the ubiquitous distrust of official security agencies pointed to the destruction of trust in state protection through cultural and experiential ways that altered the relevance of these protection alternatives and increased the weight of culture and household income in the demand equation.

Strong preference was in line with the results obtained by Janković *et al.* (2022) in Serbia, with the users having tried responsive, private guarding earning significantly higher scores on trust measures than those users who trusted only the state police. Within the Garissa Township context, the prevailing confidence in private services suggested that cultural scepticism toward public institutions, coupled with perceptions of greater accountability among private firms, had elevated the salience of non-state protection, thereby reinforcing the roles of household income and cultural factors in driving demand. These findings aligned with the conclusions of Janković *et al.* (2022), who reported that prior victimisation and favourable dispositions toward private

providers were stronger predictors of security uptake than general cultural adherence. Within the Garissa Township context, the evidence indicated that experiential memory of past attacks and relative institutional trust were the operative cultural drivers of demand, while abstract normative considerations alone did not exert a measurable effect.

## 5.0 Conclusion

The study concludes that the demand for private security services in Garissa Township is not primarily driven by abstract cultural prescriptions such as clan affiliations or Islamic norms, but rather by concrete lived experiences of insecurity and differential levels of institutional trust. While cultural values shape initial attitudes and perceptions toward private security providers, they do not independently determine purchasing decisions once other factors are considered. Instead, historical encounters with terrorism and clan-related conflict significantly increase the likelihood of hiring private security services ( $\beta = 0.195$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ). The findings further show that trust deficits in state security institutions, manifested through delayed police response and perceived inefficiency, significantly reduce reliance on public police ( $\beta = -0.191$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ). In contrast, higher confidence in private security providers strengthens demand ( $\beta = 0.200$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ), underscoring that experiential memory and comparative institutional credibility outweigh normative cultural hesitation in shaping security choices.

Qualitative evidence reinforces these conclusions by demonstrating how threat immediacy transforms cultural positions into pragmatic action. Private security firms reported a sharp increase in CCTV installations within 48 hours of terror alerts from Somalia, indicating rapid behavioural adjustment following perceived risk escalation. Although clan elders initially discouraged the engagement of "outsider" guards, subsequent grenade attacks in 2023 prompted the same leaders to actively endorse the deployment of private security at public markets. Entrepreneurs consistently cited delayed police response as a reason for preferring private responders. These patterns confirm that experiential insecurity and institutional trust dynamics are the operative cultural drivers of demand, while normative considerations alone lack measurable influence. Consequently, structured policy dialogue involving clan elders, religious leaders, police commanders, and private security actors is essential for reducing cultural resistance and addressing the underlying credibility gap between public and private security provision.

## 6.0 Recommendations

The study recommends that county security committees should institutionalise quarterly forums that bring together clan elders, imams, police commanders and private-security managers to share threat updates and jointly endorse protective measures. This dialogue will reduce suspicion of "outsider" guards and acknowledge that while clan affiliations and Islamic norms shape initial perceptions, community endorsement following concrete security incidents determines actual uptake. Such multi-stakeholder engagement creates legitimacy for private security services within existing cultural frameworks while ensuring that protective measures align with community values and threat assessments.

The national government needs to invest in faster police response times and transparent investigation of corruption complaints, thereby narrowing the credibility gap that currently drives entrepreneurs exclusively toward private providers. Addressing trust deficits in state institutions-manifest in delayed police response and perceived corruption-would create a complementary security ecosystem where public and private providers work collaboratively rather than as competing alternatives. Rebuilding public trust through institutional reforms

represents a critical pathway toward balanced security governance that leverages both state capacity and private sector responsiveness.

Security firms can recruit, and train local youth recommended by clan councils, embedding guards within trusted social networks and aligning service delivery with prevailing cultural expectations. This approach recognises that experiential memory overrides normative hesitancy and that trust in private providers is enhanced when guards are drawn from known community networks rather than perceived as "outsider" agents. Culturally embedded service delivery not only increases acceptance of private security but also creates employment opportunities for local youth while maintaining community oversight of protective functions.

A panel study could be done to track the same cohort of entrepreneurs to observe how contract renewals, upgrades, or cancellations align with fluctuations in cultural trust and shifting threat perceptions. A study can be done in neighbouring counties, such as Mandera or Lamu, to replicate the survey instrument to map how border proximity, ethnic composition, or state presence alters the weight of each cultural determinant. Additionally, an NGO-government partnership could pilot a voucher scheme that covers fifty per cent of the cost of basic guarding for micro-enterprises, with independent evaluators measuring impacts on burglary rates, insurance premiums and monthly turnover, while also tracking how subsidised access influences cultural acceptance of private security services.

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