

# The Effectiveness of Multi-Agency Operation Leadership in Mitigating Insecurity in Lamu County, Kenya

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**Abstract** There has been much discussion among various stakeholders on the benefits of multi-agency operations in response to security threats. This discussion is constrained, though, in that it downplays the complexity of multi-agency operations. Despite this, several nations, like Kenya, have used a multi-agency approach to deal with challenges related to national security; nevertheless, there is insufficient empirical evidence about the usefulness of this method in reducing insecurity issues. This study aimed to ascertain how well multi-agency operations leadership mitigated insecurity in Lamu County, Kenya. The collaborative advantage theory served as the basis for the investigation. This study used an ex post facto survey research design methodology. The study was carried out in Lamu County with a particular interest in the county's security personnel: an interview schedule and a questionnaire with structured and open-ended questions served as the data-gathering tools. The essential characteristics of the quantitative data gathered were displayed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages. Thematic analysis was used to create themes by grouping and open coding. The study discovered that multi-agency collaboration leadership successfully reduced insecurity in Lamu County. The study marked these out to address cases of inter-agency rivalry disputes, agency inferiority and superiority complexes, and the necessity to build a shared working policy on the ranking structure for the concerned agencies. The ongoing multi-agency operation has made Lamu County, in general, safer and more stable. Researchers interested in the leadership efficacy of multi-agency procedures are expected to benefit from the findings of this study, as will policymakers in the security sector.

**Keywords:** Multiagency Operations; Collaboration; Security Formations; PSV Attacks; IED Attacks; Kenya, Lamu County.

## INTRODUCTION

Attacks by alleged Al-Shabaab terrorists from Somalia have increased Lamu County's insecurity level. The first significant attack in Lamu County that required the deployment of multi-agency

forces occurred in Mpeketoni town on June 15, 2014, with the loss of 60 lives. As illustrated in Table 1, the attacks have continued despite ongoing multi-agency operations in Lamu County over the past eight years.

Table 1 – Suspected Al-Shabaab Activities in Lamu County, Kenya

Date	Location	Details	Causalities
8/11/2022	Mswakini Village near Bargoni Military Camp	Suspected Al-Shabaab militants detonated explosives in a local pub destroying the wooden structure and damaging the roof. The militants also distributed leaflets to locals warning of more attacks	No casualties
18/7/2022	Lamu	GSU officers arrested a suspected Al-Shabaab militant and recovered 1 RPG launcher, 1 RPG heat warhead and two booster housings	No casualties

Date	Location	Details	Causalities
11/3/2022	Majengo	Al-Shabaab militants attacked a construction site, burnt two vehicles and damaged a bridge	Six people were killed
9/2/2022	Milhoi area	Suspected Al-Shabaab militants burnt two construction vehicles for H Young the company constructing the Lamu-road Gamba	No casualties
27/1/2022	Lango La Simba	Suspected Al-Shabaab militants attacked a ferrying vehicle court officials from Kipini headed to Garsen to conduct a mobile court	Two court officials were injured
23/1/2022	Lamu	Suspected Al-Shabaab militants burnt down eight trucks belonging to China Communication Construction Company(CCC) building the Lamu Port South Sudan Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) corridor project	No casualties
3/1/2022	Witu	Suspected Al-Shabaab militants attacked Witu village in Lamu and torched three houses	Six people were killed
1/11/2021	Sankuri	Suspected Al-Shabaab militants detonated an IED hitting a water boozier lorry	One person was killed, three injured
27/9/2021	Along Kiunga Ishakani road	Suspected Al-Shabaab militants attacked a KDF convoy with an IED destroying an armoured personnel carrier	Undisclosed Officers reported dead
20/12/2020	Lamu Gamba Road	Suspected Al-Shabaab militants ambushed a police escort vehicle	Three officers injured
15/7/2020	Kiunga Sarira Road	IED explosion while security officers were on patrol	Two security officers injured
21/3/2020	Milhoi area	Suspected Al-Shabaab militants ambushed security officers	No injuries
19/3/2020	Nginda area between Karisa and Bargoni	KDF officers raided an Al-Shabaab camp	12 Al-Shabaab Militants killed
18/1/2020	Pandanguo	50 suspected Al-Shabaab militants attempted to attack Pandanguo village but were repulsed by security officers	No casualties
5/1/2020	Manda Naval Base Lamu	Al-Shabaab attacked Kenya Navy Manda bay airstrip	Nine casualties
2/1/2020	Lamu-Gamba road	Suspected Al-Shabaab militants ambushed a convoy of PSV buses	No casualties

Even though the multi-agency operation has already cost a lot, there are still signs of insecurity in Lamu County, as evidenced by the closure of churches and schools, the collapse of the tourism industry due to kidnappings and murders of tourists, the paralysis of the transportation industry due to attacks on public service vehicles (PSVs), and the placement of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) on critical roads in the county, despite the deployment of multi-agency soldiers made up of National Police Reserve officers (NPR), the KDF, KWS, KFS, and NPS. Lamu County's insecurity level makes it unclear whether the multi-agency leadership strategy is working to reduce it there. However, there isn't enough empirical data available to help determine the efficacy level of Lamu County's multi-agency operations. Studies on extremism, counter-violence, and community policing have all been undertaken in Lamu County, but none have examined the

effectiveness of multi-agency operations in Kenyan County. Therefore, the issue that motivates this study is that although multi-agency operations heavily cover Lamu County, terrorist attacks continue to occur there. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of multi-agency leadership in reducing insecurity in Lamu County, Kenya.

Since its inception in 1990, authors [6] expanded the practice-oriented Collaborative advantage theory. The theory aims to improve practical comprehension of the organizational issues involved in multi-agency working. Two opposing concepts are crucial to understanding the idea of collaboration: collaborative inertia, which relates to the frequently poor productivity in practice, and collaborative advantage, which deals with the potential for synergy from multi-agency working [6]. The theory focuses on the factors that drive collaboration, notably command and

control and addresses leadership in the context of multi-agency working. Effective management and control will guarantee that the collaboration's goal is achieved. But the inverse is also accurate. The collaboration's failure to accomplish its goals is caused by ineffective command and control. The collaborative advantage idea has been used to examine complex workplace tasks focusing on various characteristics [3]. As a result, it is regarded as a solid theoretical framework for analyzing, understanding, and transforming the multi-agency working practices of Kenyan security services. The collaborative advantage theory anchors the study's specific goal, which is to assess the efficiency of multi-agency leadership in the coordination of efforts to reduce insecurity.

The study's goal is to evaluate the efficiency of multi-agency leadership in coordinating efforts to reduce insecurity. The current research on leadership effectiveness in multi-agency operations has certain empirical limitations. The prior research about the Kenyan context needs more rigorous studies. In the context of multi-agency operations in Kenya, some undiscovered multi-agency leadership and coordination topics are crucial and deserving of inquiry. The effectiveness of multi-agency leadership in coordinating actions for minimizing insecurity in the Kenyan setting will be determined by conducting an empirical investigation of these problems.

## METHOD

The study used ex post facto design to collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data. Qualitative and quantitative techniques were predicated on the idea that the mixed method approach amplifies vital aspects and reduces weak points of both qualitative and quantitative methods to conclude the study [1]. The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of multi-agency operation leadership in reducing insecurity in Lamu County, Kenya. This research was conducted in Kenya's County of Lamu. The County of Lamu is located in the nation's North Coast region, bordered to the north by Garissa County, to the northwest by Tana River County, to the south by the Indian Ocean, and to the northeast by the Republic of Somalia. The county's coordinates are latitude 1° 40' and 2° 30' south, longitude 40° 15' and 40° 38' south. The county's 6,273.1 km<sup>2</sup> land area is divided between the mainland and the

more than 65 islands that comprise the Lamu Archipelago. The total length of the coastline is 130 km, whereas the whole land and water area is 308 km.

All of the security officers in Lamu County comprised the survey's target population. To minimize bias and ensure representativeness, stratified random sampling was used as the sampling technique during this investigation. The entire population had to be divided into smaller groups to construct strata by sampling. These strata were created based on the various security formations that study participants, including the KDF, GSU, KWS, KFS, and NPR, are a part of. From the population of 833 officers allocated proportionately depending on the population proportion, a sample of 270 security officers was taken by applying Solvin's formulae. The study subjects' unprocessed responses to a semi-structured questionnaire and interview questions were used to compile the raw data. Analyzing data was organized and included the processing, presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the raw data. The study used both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study aimed to determine how well multi-agency leadership coordinated efforts to reduce insecurity in Lamu County, Kenya. Interviews with key informants were done as part of the data collection process, which used questionnaires and descriptive analysis. Ordinal data and a Likert scale with responses ranging from strongly disagree to undecided to agree and strongly agree were required for the five questions. The operationalization of variable leadership included clear command and control, effective resource management, staff motivation, specific goals and objectives, monitoring and evaluation. The results are displayed in the section that follows. The study's findings are presented in Table 2.

*Clear Command and Control.* The leadership of a multi-agency operation must include clear command and control. The confusion brought on by unclear command and control may prevent the multi-agency process from achieving its goals. When asked if there was clear command and power in the multi-agency operation in Lamu County, the respondents' responses are shown in Table 2 of the study results.

Table 2 – Multi-agency Leadership

Statement	Rating									
	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
There is clear command and control in the multi-agency operation	15	7.4	18	8.9	17	8.4	62	30.5	91	44.8
There is proper utilization of resources in the multi-agency operation	22	10.8	33	16.3	25	12.3	43	21.2	80	39.4
There are motivated staff for all agencies in the multi-agency operation	33	15.5	97	45.5	49	23.0	29	13.6	5	2.3
There are clear aims and objectives for the multi-agency operation	0	0	0	0	4	1.6	88	35.6	154	62.3
There is monitoring and evaluation of the multi-agency operation	14	6.9	221	10.8	4	2.0	62	30.5	101	49.8

Most respondents (44.8%) strongly agree, followed by 30.5% who agree, 8.9% who disagree, 8.4% undecided, and 7.4% who strongly disagree. According to the study's findings, 75.3% of respondents either agree or strongly agree with the assertion that the multi-agency operation in Lamu County has clear command and control. Comparatively, 24.7% hold a different viewpoint. The evaluation of clear command and control yielded a mean score of 3.97, indicating that, on average, most respondents concur that there was clear command and power in the multi-agency operation in Lamu County. A low standard deviation of 1.248 indicates that the data collected was centred around the mean.

The results show a distinct chain of command and control in the multi-agency operation. It is crucial for agencies working together to have a clear line of power and authority to ensure the operation's success echoes these results [10]. Similar findings stated that specific command and control are necessary when numerous agencies participate in a process [9].

The ranking system of NPS and KDF became a topic of attention during the study on command and control. A respondent claims that when KDF and NPS officials collaborate in a multi-agency setting, it is essential to be clear about which level is equivalent. The NPS officer implied that KDF members think they are better than all NPS members, regardless of rank. For example, the rank badges for a senior superintendent in the NPS are comparable to those for a colonel in the KDF. The NPS Commissioner of Police, one level higher than the KDF colonel, believes he is superior to him in leadership. The respondent added that NPS sends police commissioners to the multi-agency operation in Lamu, where they are

supposed to follow orders from the KDF colonel. Senior NPS officers, who think of themselves as having a higher status than KDF officers, become discouraged.

*Proper Utilization of Resources.* Resources are the material and intangible things needed to complete a specific task. Consequently, the efficient use of available resources is critical to the success of a multi-agency operation. The respondents were questioned about whether the multi-agency process in Lamu County is properly utilizing resources. According to the study's findings, which are presented in Table 2, the majority of respondents (39.4%) highly agree, while 21.2% agree, 16.3% disagree, 12.3% are undecided, and 10.8% strongly disagree. Over half of the respondents (60.6%) agreed that resources are appropriately used in the multi-agency operation. However, opinions on this point were mixed.

On the other hand, 39.4% of the survey participants disagreed. The element received an evaluation with a mean score of 3.62, indicating that, on average, most respondents agreed that resources are being used appropriately in the multi-agency operation in Lamu County. The data collected had a standard deviation that was slightly above average at 1.417, indicating that the data was dispersed.

The results show that resources are being used effectively in the multi-agency effort. These conclusions are supported by [8], who shared that effective resource management is crucial in multi-agency operations. A similar observation was made by [5], agreeing that resource management should be adaptable while working across sectors.

*Multi-agency Staff Motivation.* The success of a multi-agency operation depends on the level of energy, commitment, persistence, and inventiveness that employees bring to their work. The driven staff ensures they put in the effort and go above and beyond without being prodded. The responders were questioned about their motivation for performing their tasks throughout the multi-agency operation in Lamu. According to the study's findings, depicted in Table 2, most respondents (40.9%) disagree, followed by 35.5% who are undecided, 13.8% who agree, 5.9% strongly disagree, and 3.9% who strongly agree. In contrast to this study, when it is clear that most of the staff are not driven, they stressed the significance of staff motivation. Additionally, the author [2] mentioned that in any multi-agency operation, employee motivation should come first.

One of the respondents shared that while it is true that security officers swear to defend life and property, this does not mean that they should put their own lives in danger, mainly when the government does not express its appreciation for their effort. Security officers live in tents deep in the scary Boni forest. Therefore the living circumstances are pitiful, and the operation allowances paid are minute. Officers are not much motivated by their income at all.

*Clear Aims and Objectives.* Having specific goals and objectives is critical to assess whether your program is succeeding. They are intended to provide performance evaluation standards, direction and advice and inspire workers. When asked if the multi-agency operation in Lamu County had clear goals and objectives, the respondents' responses are shown in Table 2, with the majority of respondents (37.9%) strongly agreeing, 36.9% agreeing, 9.9% unsure, 7.9% strongly disagreeing, and 7.4% disagreeing. The results demonstrate that most respondents (74.8%) support the assertion that clear aims and objectives exist, while just 25.2% oppose them. The element was scored with a mean of 3.90, indicating that, on average, most respondents concur that the multi-agency operation in Lamu County has clear goals and objectives. The low standard deviation of 1.216 shows that the data was closely clustered around the mean. The World Health Organization's study from 2021 on greater collaboration for equitable and resilient recovery highlights the significance of having appropriate targets and objectives for any endeavour to succeed and shares similar findings.

*Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation.* Monitoring and evaluation are ongoing management processes that determine if the planned goals are being achieved, identify implementation obstacles, and draw attention to unintended consequences. The responders were questioned about whether the multi-agency operation in Lamu had ongoing monitoring and evaluation. This inquiry was designed to investigate whether monitoring and evaluation were being conducted. This is a crucial component of multi-agency leadership to examine whether the operations' aims and objectives are being met. According to the study's findings, which are depicted in Table 2, most respondents (49.8%) strongly agree; 30.5% agree; 10.8% disagree; 6.9% strongly disagree; and 2% are unsure. According to the study's findings, most respondents (80.3%) agree that monitoring and evaluation are ongoing, while 26.6% disagree. Monitoring and evaluation were estimated with a low standard deviation of 1.255, indicating that the data gathered was clustered around the mean, and a mean score of 4.05, indicating that, on average, most respondents agree that there is monitoring and evaluation in the multi-agency operation in Lamu County. The author [7] discovered that continuous monitoring and evaluation are crucial for the success of multi-agency operations and reached a similar conclusion. In their study to strengthen follow-up, monitoring, and evaluation, authors [4] also emphasized the value of monitoring and evaluation.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study results showed that effective command and control were crucial components of the multi-agency leadership used in Lamu County. Resources were used effectively, and each agency understood the mission and goals of the operation. The multi-agency function in Lamu County was continuously monitored and evaluated. But the multi-agency process in Lamu County needs help with staff motivation, according to study findings.

According to the study, strong leadership and coordination have helped Lamu County increase its insecurity. The impact is seen in a decline in crime, a drop in IED and PSV attacks, and a notable improvement in the travel and education industries.

The author suggests creating a policy framework on involvement when several security agencies

are involved in multi-agency operations. This will make the multi-agency process run smoothly regarding command and control. It is also advised

that a policy on the harmonization of operation allowances be put into place.

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