

**EFFECT OF DRUG-RELATED CRIME, GANG VIOLENCE, AND PETTY THEFT
ON COMMUNITY COHESION IN KIBRA SUB-COUNTY, NAIROBI COUNTY,
KENYA: THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF FEAR OF CRIME**

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of the
Degree of Master of Science in Governance, Peace and Security in the Department of
Humanities and Social Sciences of Africa Nazarene University**

JUNE 2026

DECLARATION

I declare that this document and the research that it describes are my original work and it has not been presented in any other university for academic work.



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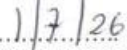
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the residents of Kibra Sub-County, whose daily experiences, struggles, and resilience inspired the purpose of this study. It is my hope that the findings contribute meaningfully to strengthened community cohesion, improved safety, and enhanced well-being within their neighborhoods. May this research serve as a resource for community members, local leaders, policymakers, and all stakeholders working to build safer, more inclusive, and more united urban communities.

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ABSTRACT

Urban crime is a persistent challenge in informal settlements as it undermines social structures and threatens community resilience. This study investigated the effects of drug-related crime, gang violence, petty theft on community cohesion in Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County. The study was guided by the following research objectives; to determine the effects of drug-related crime on community cohesion; to examine the effects of gang violence on community cohesion; to assess the effects of petty theft on community cohesion; and to establish the mediating effect of fear of crime on the relationship between selected urban crimes and community cohesion among residents of Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County. The study was guided by the Collective Efficacy Theory and the Social Disorganization Theory. It adopted a convergent research design with a parallel database variant. A random sample of 396 respondents was drawn from a study population consisting of 185,777 residents of Kibra Sub-County and 18 key respondents were selected purposively. Data was collected through semi-structured questionnaires and semi-structured interview guide. Instrument validity was ensured through content validity and construct validity assessed using factor analysis, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure, and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity, while reliability was tested using Cronbach’s alpha. Qualitative trustworthiness was established through member checking. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 26 to obtain descriptive and inferential statistics. The study hypotheses were tested using multiple and hierarchical regression analysis. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically and presented in the form of narratives and direct quotes. Data was merged at the interpretation stage. Ethical consideration was maintained throughout the research process. From the findings, the overall multiple regression model was statistically significant, $F(3, 334) = 14.643, p < .001$, with $R = .341$ and $R^2 = .116$, indicating that the drug-related crime, gang violence, petty theft jointly explains 11.6% of the variance in community cohesion. At the individual level, drug-related crime ($\beta = .069, p = .432$), gang violence ($\beta = .127, p = .186$), and petty theft ($\beta = .171, p = .077$) did not significantly predict community cohesion. However, hierarchical regression analysis revealed that all three crime variables significantly predicted fear of crime drug-related crime ($\beta = .19, p < .001$), gang violence ($\beta = .19, p < .001$), and petty theft ($\beta = .50, p < .001$), while fear of crime significantly predicted community cohesion ($\beta = .28, p < .001$). The inclusion of fear of crime in the model increased the explained variance in community cohesion from 12% to 14% (R^2 change = .02), confirming a significant mediating effect. The study therefore concluded that urban crimes influence community cohesion indirectly through fear of crime. Based on these findings, the study recommends adopting integrated interventions that address both crime and fear of crime, including community based and intelligence led crime prevention strategies, youth focused employment and rehabilitation programs, and environmental design improvements to reduce everyday insecurity. The study further recommends institutionalizing structured community police engagement forums, strengthening community policing, and implementing public reassurance and awareness initiatives aimed at reducing fear, rebuilding trust, and enhancing community participation. There is need for further studies on comparative analyses across different informal settlements and incorporate perspectives from residents, community leaders, and security actors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Almighty God for His constant presence and guidance throughout this entire process. Without His grace, this achievement would not have been possible. I am profoundly grateful to my supervisors, Dr. Janis Marangu and Prof. Lois Musikali, for their support, expert guidance, and constructive feedback throughout the course of my research. My deepest appreciation also goes to my family for their unconditional love, understanding, and encouragement, which have been my backbone throughout my studies. To my friends and colleagues, thank you for your constant moral support and for making this journey both enjoyable and fulfilling.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Community Cohesion:	The process and quality of building social solidarity and trust within a community. It involves the extent to which individuals within a community can maintain peaceful coexistence, share common values, and cooperate to achieve collective goals.
Drug-Related Crime:	Crimes associated with the possession, sale, or distribution of illegal drugs.
Fear of Crime:	The emotional reaction brought on by the fear of being a victim of crime, such as worry or a sense of insecurity. Residents' sense of safety and the degree to which these anxieties affect their day-to-day actions and involvement in the community are used as metrics in this study.
Gang Violence:	Criminal acts committed by organized groups, often including intimidation, fights, and territorial disputes.
Informal Settlements:	Areas within urban environments characterized by inadequate housing, poor infrastructure, limited access to basic services, and high population density. These settlements, often referred to as slums, are typically found in developing countries and face heightened levels of poverty and social exclusion.
Petty Theft:	The unlawful taking of small amounts of property or cash from individuals or businesses. Commonly includes pickpocketing, shoplifting, and theft of unattended items.

Selected Urban Crime: Includes drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft because they constitute some of the most common and community-impacting criminal activities in Kibra Sub-County and have implications for community cohesion and fear of crime. These selected urban crimes were used as the independent variables for the study.

Social Trust: The confidence that individuals in a community have in each other and in local institutions. High social trust is associated with increased cooperation, willingness to engage in collective action, and better overall community well-being.

ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

CPTED	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Chapter one provides the overall foundation of the study and outlines all key components that guide the research. The section discusses the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions and hypothesis. It also discusses the significance of the study, scope and delimitation, limitation of the study, the assumptions of the study. Finally, the theoretical and conception frameworks are discussed under this section.

1.2 Background of Study

Urban crime is a major public policy concern because it threatens public safety, weakens social cohesion, discourages investment, and increases the economic and social costs globally (UN-Habitat, 2023; Churchill, Hayward, Smyth, & Trinh, 2023). In Kenya, although reported crime declined marginally from 104,842 cases in 2023 to 101,220 cases in 2024, Nairobi accounted for approximately 9.6% of all reported cases in what indicated growing concern related to urban crime (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2025). In the USA, Canada, Australia and the UK, urban crime like petty theft, drug offences, and gang violence undermines community cohesion by eroding trust, lowering civic participation, and increasing fear-driven withdrawal from public life (Quinn et al., 2019; Churchill et al., 2023; Islam et al., 2023). In the U.S., neighborhood social ties have been associated with health and safety outcomes, and interventions that strengthen resident engagement and place-based design (CPTED) have been shown to reduce violent incidents (Rupp, et al, 2025). Canadian municipal reports likewise document that community violence disproportionately affects racialized and

low-income urban populations and that enhanced social cohesion is central to local safety plans (Islam et al., 2023). In the UK and Australia, policy and empirical work emphasize that weakened “social fabric” amplifies both exposure to crime and residents’ fear of crime, thereby perpetuating cycles of insecurity (Merton Council, 2022; Churchill et al., 2023).

At the continental scale, African cities confront a distinct set of drivers like rapid urbanization, entrenched inequality, youth unemployment, and constrained public services that shape crime patterns and strain social bonds. According to Sugiharti et al. (2023), young people in impoverished communities often turn to criminal behavior for survival, identity formation, or self-protection in unsafe neighborhoods. Research from South Africa highlights how historical structural exclusion and concentrated disadvantage complicate the protective effects of social cohesion in informal settlements, dense social networks exist but do not automatically translate to collective efficacy for violence reduction (Barolsky, 2016). Similar findings were obtained by another study done in South Africans that demonstrated that community-based participation is crucial in reducing violent crimes (Govender, 2020). Studies from Nigeria document that police–community relations and deliberate community engagement strategies can reduce crime when trust and collaboration are fostered (Mohammed et al., 2023). Ogunode et al. (2024) identified that community relations strategies positively impact neighborhood crime prevention, suggesting that active community engagement can enhance national security. Evidence from Ghana and other West African settings indicates that stronger neighborhood ties and community participation lower victimization risk and improve outcomes for vulnerable groups (Poix et al., 2022). Regional assessments point to a recurring dynamic: where exclusion, limited livelihood options, and weak state presence persist, crime flourishes and community

cohesion frays, demanding context-sensitive responses that combine social policy, local governance, and community empowerment (Soumahoro, 2020).

Focusing on the East African sub-region, urban growth, migration, and informal economies have intensified pressure on neighbourhood systems that historically regulated behaviour. Recent East African policing and security reviews show rising youth involvement in drug use and gang activity across major towns linked to gaps in employment, education and youth services and highlight the uneven success of community-police partnerships (Goodfellow, 2022). Comparative studies across Nairobi, Kampala and Dar es Salaam reveal that while community-level solidarity can foster informal guardianship, it is frequently undermined by resource scarcity and spatial exclusion; consequently, collective responses to theft, drugs, and violent group activity are weakened (Nubani et al., 2023). Regional evidence also suggests that fear of crime mediates the relationship between objective crime exposure and social interaction: even when communities are not direct victims, pervasive fear reduces participation in communal life, lowers unneighborly trust, and inhibits local initiatives that could rebuild social cohesion (Avery et al., 2020).

At the national level in Kenya, rapid urbanization and expanding informal settlements have produced concentrated pockets of poverty, precarious livelihoods, and overstretched public services that together shape crime dynamics and social cohesion. National Crime Research Centre reports document a rebound and variation in crime incidences, noting particularly dense problem-sets in Nairobi's informal settlements (National Crime Research Centre [NCRC], 2021, 2022). Government and UN-Habitat analyses emphasize that slum residents face chronic deficits in housing, sanitation, employment, and policing; conditions that elevate petty theft, drug distribution and youth gang formation (KNBS, 2021; UN-Habitat,

2019). Fear of crime has been identified as a key social mechanism: it curtails informal surveillance, reduces voluntary community watchfulness, and discourages participation in communal projects that would otherwise strengthen social capital and cohesion (Kenya National Police Service, 2021). Recent national assessments further indicate that urban informal settlements remain among the most crime-affected environments in Kenya. A National Crime Research Centre study found that a majority of homicide incidents are concentrated within urban informal settlements, where youth unemployment, criminal gangs, drug abuse, and economic deprivation combine to increase residents' vulnerability to crime and violence (NCRC, 2025).

Kibra Sub-County was purposively selected for this study because it represents one of Kenya's largest and most densely populated informal settlements and has consistently been identified in government, academic, and development literature as an area experiencing persistent challenges related to poverty, unemployment, drug abuse, youth gangs, and property crime. The settlement's high population density, socio-economic diversity, and documented crime challenges make it an appropriate setting for examining how urban crime influences community cohesion. Moreover, Kibra provides a unique context where strong social networks coexist with elevated crime risks, making it particularly suitable for investigating the mediating role of fear of crime on community cohesion. Findings generated from Kibra are therefore likely to provide valuable insights applicable to other informal settlements facing similar socio-economic and security challenges in Kenya and across Sub-Saharan Africa (Ouma & Wa Teresia, 2024; Kubende, 2018; UN-Habitat, 2023). Kibra's informal settlements host large populations within constrained physical space; UN-Habitat and local mapping projects estimate population figures in the low hundreds of thousands and document intense resource pressures

and service deficits (UN-Habitat, 2023). Recent empirical work focused on Kibra shows rising incidents of drug use, organized youth groups, assault and property crimes factors associated with reduced trust, curtailed social interactions, and diminished willingness to cooperate with police (Sanders & Ocharo, 2024). National crime statistics and targeted studies report elevated rates of drug-related offences and youth involvement in criminal activity in Nairobi's informal areas and outline how perceived police inefficacy and distrust further erode residents' collective efficacy (NCRC, 2021).

Although several studies have examined crime prevalence and determinants within Kibra, most have focused on identifying the causes of crime or profiling offenders rather than examining how specific forms of urban crime affect community cohesion. Furthermore, existing studies rarely distinguish the effects of drug-related offences, gang violence, and petty theft on different dimensions of cohesion or assess the mediating role of fear of crime. Given Kibra's documented exposure to these crime categories and its strategic importance as one of Kenya's most studied informal settlements, it provides an appropriate setting for generating context-specific evidence to inform urban safety interventions. Given evidence from the global north and African contexts that fear can independently reduce social interaction and informal control, understanding its mediating role within Kibra is essential for designing targeted interventions (Gulma, 2018; Avery et al., 2020). This study therefore addresses that gap by assessing the separate impacts of selected urban crimes on residents' cohesion and by testing whether fear of crime explains (partially or fully) how these crimes translate into weakened neighborhood bonds.

1.3 Problem Statement

Crime is a major challenge in Nairobi's informal settlements despite various government and community-led security interventions. It has been determined that in Kibra, Mathare, Mukuru, and Korogocho informal settlements, theft, robbery, drug-related offences, and gang-related activities are some of the most prevalent crimes affecting residents (Wa Teresia, 2022). Similarly, studies focusing on Kibra have reported persistent criminal activities associated with poverty, unemployment, social exclusion, and weak social control mechanisms, particularly among youth populations (Ouma & Wa Teresia, 2024). These findings suggest that crime continues to pose a threat to the social and economic wellbeing of residents in informal settlements. At the same time, recent evidence from Nairobi's informal settlements indicates that social capital, neighbourhood cohesion, trust, and collective support play a critical role in community resilience (Mpanje et al., 2022). Studies have further demonstrated that perceptions of crime and neighbourhood disorder are closely associated with reduced feelings of safety and weakened neighbourhood cohesion among residents of informal settlements in Nairobi (Winter et al., 2021). Although existing studies have examined crime prevalence, causes of criminal behaviour, victimization patterns, and community policing initiatives within Nairobi's informal settlements, limited empirical attention has been given to how specific forms of crime collectively influence community cohesion in Kibra Sub-County. Most studies have focused on the occurrence and drivers of crime rather than examining their effects on trust, reciprocity, social participation, and collective action among residents. Consequently, there remains insufficient empirical evidence on the extent to which selected crimes affect community cohesion within Kibra. Therefore, this study sought to examine the singular and collective

effects of drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft on community cohesion in Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County as mediated by fear of crime.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of urban crime on community cohesion in Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

- i. To determine the effects of drug-related crime on community cohesion among residents of Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County
- ii. To examine the effects of gang violence on community cohesion among residents of Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County.
- iii. To assess the effects of petty theft on community cohesion among residents of Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County
- iv. To establish the mediating effects of fear of crime on the relationship between selected urban crimes and community cohesion among residents of Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County.

1.6 Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: Selected urban crimes (drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft) have no significant effects on community cohesion among residents of Kibra Sub-County.

H_{01a}: Fear of crime has no significant mediating effect on the relationship between selected urban crimes (drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft) and community cohesion in Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County

1.7 Scope of the Study

Geographically, this study was conducted in Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County. This sub-country is characterized by high population density and socioeconomic challenges. The study focuses on the impact of petty theft, gang violence, and drug-related offenses on community cohesion in Kibra. The study deliberately focused on these offences because they are among the most prevalent and frequently reported forms of urban crime within informal settlements in Nairobi. The selection was guided by three criteria that included prevalence within the study area, direct interaction with residents' daily lives, and documented influence on community cohesion. Petty theft was selected because it represents a common property crime that directly undermines trust and perceptions of safety among residents. Gang violence was included because it involves organized criminal activity that threatens security, restricts social interactions, and weakens collective efficacy within communities. Drug-related offences were selected because they are closely associated with youth involvement in crime, social disorder, violence, and the breakdown of social relationships. Unlike many other crimes that occur less frequently or affect a limited segment of the population, these three categories have widespread community-level effects and are therefore more suitable for examining their influence on overall community cohesion. The study aimed to provide a crime prevention framework tailored to the unique challenges of informal settlements.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

This study was exclusively focused on Kibra Sub-County, an informal settlement in Nairobi County, Kenya, where urban crime remains a persistent issue. It specifically examined the effects of drug-related crimes, gang violence, and petty theft on community cohesion, particularly social connectedness, trust, and collective action among residents. The study only

included participants residing within Kibra, excluding individuals from other parts of Nairobi or other informal settlements in Kenya. The sample consisted of community members selected based on their first-hand experience with crime, with attention to demographic diversity such as age, gender, and length of residence. The study limited its analysis to the relationship between urban crime and community cohesion, without addressing broader regional or national crime trends or external socio-political factors. This delimitation allowed for an in-depth understanding of the local dynamics at play within Kibra.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

A study's limitations are the elements or restrictions that limit the validity, generalizability, or scope of the research findings (Simon & Goes, 2013). These are study-related factors that were outside the researcher's control or design and could have impacted on the findings or the capacity to reach firm conclusions (Simon & Goes, 2013). This study was limited by the fact that the researcher was not in position to control the attitudes of the respondents due to their fear of victimization. However, the respondents were assured of their confidentiality and privacy. Secondly, while the researcher wished to capture as many respondents as possible, there was a limitation in factoring and tracing the much-needed first-hand information due to logistical challenges. Some of the limitations included respondents' unavailability during the actual day of study which would cause delays in getting feedback or collecting data. To address this limitation, the study adopted a flexible data collection schedule and used follow-up visits and phone calls to ensure availability and convenience of respondents during the data collection period.

1.10 Assumptions of the Study

The underlying assumptions of a study are the premises or beliefs that researchers take for granted in the absence of concrete proof to carry out the investigation (Nkwake, 2020). The design, methodology, and analysis of the study were predicated on these assumptions. These are elements that are thought to be reliable or certain and essential to the research process, but the study itself did not specifically test or validate them. The premise of this study was that, despite any potential fear of victimization, Kibra residents gave truthful and accurate answers about how they view crime and community cohesion. To gain a thorough grasp of the problems, it was assumed that the participants were open to talking candidly about delicate subjects like local crime and violence. Another presumption was that the crime statistics gathered from community and local authorities appropriately depict Kibra's current state. Finally, there was a clear connection between urban crime and social dynamics within the sub-county since it was believed that the community's experiences with crime directly affect its levels of social trust, collective action, and general community cohesion.

1.11 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is a structure that serves as a guide for research by clearly outlining the theories and concepts that serve as the foundation for the investigation. It provides the framework for comprehending the study issue and aids in elucidating the connections between concepts and variables (Lederman & Lederman, 2015). In essence, a theoretical framework connects the research question to relevant theories, offering a framework to examine, explain, and predict the phenomena under investigation.

1.11.1 Collective Efficacy Theory

The study was guided by collective efficacy theory as the working theory. The proponents of the theory are Robert J. Sampson, Stephen W. Raudenbush, and Felton Earls in 1990s who noted that people work collectively together within the community enabling them to control behaviors of all individuals manage and prevent unseemly actions (Donohoo et al., 2018). The theory posits that collective efficacy that comprises informal social control and neighborhoods' social cohesion mediates the association between concentrated disadvantage and community violence (Brunton-Smith et al., 2018). According to this theory, social cohesion and informal social control are critical components that allow communities to address and manage crime effectively. Collective Efficacy Theory emphasizes the role of social cohesion, informal social control, and mutual trust in preventing crime and violence. The theory suggests that communities with these elements are better equipped to manage crime and maintain social order, making them more resilient to the negative effects of concentrated disadvantage and violence.

Collective efficacy assumes that informal social control, such as neighbours keeping an eye on one another and resolving conflicts, is frequently more successful at preventing crime than formal control measures, like police presence (Donohoo et al., 2018). Also, the theory assumes that a safer atmosphere with a lower likelihood of violence is produced when locals actively interact with one another and take part in neighbourhood events. Participation in the community can strengthen social ties and promote a sense of shared accountability for upholding law and order.

The application of collective efficacy theory in this study was justified by the fact that it helped to understand the mechanism through which crime affects community cohesion, the

dependent variable. In Kibra, where according to Mbogo (2022), there are many cases of crime with residents facing numerous structural and systemic challenges. Therefore, application of collective efficacy theory helped to understand how these factors interact and illustrate whether high crime rate results in breakdown in social fabric such as trust ultimately undermining collective action and weakening community cohesion. The theory supports the idea that because residents are less likely to step in and stop criminal activity, communities with low levels of collective efficacy may have higher rates of violence. Therefore, increasing group effectiveness through community-based initiatives may lower crime and improve public safety. Collective efficacy theory's emphasis on community self-regulation serves as justification for its application to studies of urban violence (Donohoo et al., 2018). A breakdown in social cohesiveness and the deterioration of neighbourly trust frequently result in an inability to effectively manage conflict and disorder in urban areas with high rates of violence. Because there is no group effort to prevent violence in these situations, it can thrive. Researchers can determine how building trust and community ties can reduce urban violence by examining collective efficacy.

The first strength of collective efficacy theory is that it tackles the larger, systemic elements that impact crime, like social cohesiveness and unofficial social control as compared to individual-level theories. Secondly, it enables a more thorough comprehension of how communities can cooperate to lessen violence (Donohoo et al., 2018). The approach to violence prevention is collective efficacy. Third, rather than just responding to violence, it addresses its underlying causes by fostering stronger community ties and giving locals the confidence to act (Sampson, 2017). In this context, the theory is praised for offering a precise intervention framework. Finally, to increase group effectiveness and lower violence, community initiatives

that foster social trust, collaboration, and unofficial behaviour regulation can be put into place when this theory is applied.

A review of literature on key concepts related to collective efficacy theory has revealed various challenges associated with its application. One major concern shared by researchers is difficulties in precisely measuring and defining the concepts of collective efficacy (Whipple et al., 2021). Another major weakness is determination of whether the notions of general cohesion and trust in neighborhoods are really components of collective efficacy or should be viewed as simply determinants. Finally, it is also difficult to determine whether neighborhood crime can have feedback effects on the level of collective efficacy. In general, the inherently and collectively subjective nature of the concepts related to the collective efficacy model possess major challenge for valid and robust measurement.

To address the difficulties in measuring collective efficacy, this study used a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to capture the nuances of social cohesiveness, trust, and informal social control. Factor analysis was used to determine the roles of trust and cohesion and determine whether they are components or determinants of collective efficacy. A thorough grasp of collective efficacy in the context of Kibra was also ensured by the incorporation of objective crime data and community-based participatory methods, which supplemented subjective measures and improved the validity of the findings.

Community violence is frequently more common in neighborhoods with high concentrations of concentrated disadvantages, such as high unemployment and pervasive poverty. According to research by Sampson (2017), collective efficacy acts as a mediator in the relationship between concentrated neighborhood disadvantage and community violence. The

notion that communities with lower levels of collective efficacy typically have higher rates of violence is supported by research done in North America, such as that done by Whipple et al. (2021), which showed a negative correlation between collective efficacy and community violence. In this study, neighborhood disadvantages in urban informal settlements like Kibra were predicted by collective efficacy, which helped to explain why some neighborhoods have higher rates of violence even though their demographics are similar.

Previous studies have shown how collective efficacy shapes crime rates in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities, such as urban informal settlements. For example, a study by Takagi et al. (2016) investigated the relationship between neighborhood social ties and collective efficacy, finding a strong correlation between friendship ties and crime in high-crime communities. This lends credence to the idea that social networks and group effectiveness are essential for comprehending the dynamics of crime. Collective efficacy theory was used to explain how neighborhood disadvantages, such as poverty, high crime rates, and weak social networks, can affect violent crime in Kibra by triggering informal control mechanisms and social ties. It is consistent with the larger understanding of crime dynamics in urban settlements that a decline in collective efficacy, as observed in a study by Chen (2015), is likely to result in an increase in violent crime.

Collective efficacy is relevant to this study because it clarifies the ways in which social ties' activation affects community violence. According to the theory, social networks can successfully lower community violence when combined with a shared desire and ability to control behavior, even though social cohesion is necessary for accomplishing group objectives (Whipple et al., 2021). Understanding the function of collective efficacy in Kibra required an understanding of the significance of social networks in upholding social control, as

demonstrated by studies like Takagi et al. (2016). Collective efficacy was crucial in Kibra to explain how informal social control and social cohesiveness interact. The theory offers a distinctive perspective for creating preventative measures meant to lessen community violence because of its emphasis on the reciprocity between social ties and criminal activity (Hipp & Wo, 2015). It is a relevant theoretical framework for this study because research in other areas, like Whipple et al. (2021), has demonstrated a correlation between low levels of collective efficacy and higher crime rates in underprivileged neighborhoods.

1.11.2 Social Disorganization Theory

The study was also supported by the Social Disorganization Theory put forward by Shaw and McKay. They introduced the concept of natural areas that are distinguished from their surroundings by particular geographical, cultural, and social characteristics and areas that have formed in the course of natural urban growth (Errol et al., 2021). They referred to the work of Canadian sociologist Ernest Burgess who coined a socio-ecological approach within urban sociology using the city of Chicago to develop a concentric zone model that divides cities. This implied that the delinquency of the young people is not evenly distributed across the city but concentrated in individual areas. The areas with particularly high crime rates largely coincided with natural areas (Errol et al., 2021). The theory also follows the idea that high crime rates should be viewed independently of the ethnic makeup of the population. They suggest that the area itself is the source of crime leading to the conclusion that certain factors have been present in these areas for decades and have infected the young people with crime regardless of the culture and values of the people who live there (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2009). The theory also follows the idea that crime areas are located where the neighborhoods are the most run-down and attract mainly poor people due to low rents. In such neighborhoods, under the pressure of

socially disintegrating forces, social ties are dissolved and therefore crime is high with low social control.

The theory assumes the rate of crime is constant in areas with certain environmental conditions such as population fluctuations, high unemployment, or material decay. These conditions tend to prevent social organization and cohesion in the neighborhood leading to informal social control of delinquency (Bellair, 2017). The moment crime is widespread, criminal values and norms that compete with normative ones are culturally passed to new residents. The result is that the crime rate in certain areas is constant regardless of the specific population. Therefore, to tackle social disorganization, measures that promote social integration, improve education, and stabilize economic conditions should be implemented (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2009). Reducing vulnerability to criminal conduct was the goal via bolstering social bonds and control systems (Bellair, 2017). The primary critique of this theory as a means of explaining criminal activity and deviant conduct is that it shifts accountability for individual acts from the person to society. Furthermore, the idea has been critiqued for its methodological flaws because it relies on officially recorded infractions, which suggests that middle-class offenders are underrepresented and low-income and ethnic minority group members are overrepresented.

In this study, this theory was used to provide a conceptual foundation for understanding how the structural and environmental characteristics of Kibra create conditions that weaken social networks, informal social control, and ultimately community cohesion. The theory helps explain why drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft may be more prevalent in such environments and why these crimes persist over time despite changes in population composition. Specifically, the theory informs the study by linking the selected urban crimes

(drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft) to the broader neighborhood ecological conditions that shape residents' social interactions, trust, and willingness to participate in collective action. Social disorganization provides an explanatory pathway showing how structural disadvantages in Kibra undermine community cohesion, setting the context within which fear of crime emerges as a mediating factor. By applying the theory, the study can interpret whether the weakened cohesion observed among residents is a product of persistent disorganization, low social control, and fragile social bonds within the settlement.

1.12 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a written or visual representation of the key variables in a study and the relationships among them. It guides the research by clarifying how the variables interact, and by providing a structure for formulating hypotheses and conducting data analysis (Varpio et al., 2020). In this study, community cohesion was the dependent variable. It was measured in terms of trust among community members, sense of belonging, mutual support, community cooperation, and peaceful social relations. The independent variables included drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft. Drug-related crime was measured using indicators such as prevalence of drug selling, visible drug use, presence of drug activity hotspots, youth involvement in drug activities, and frequency of drug-related incidents. Gang violence was measured using indicators including visible presence of gangs, gang-related confrontations, identification of gang groups or members, occurrence of gang-related violence, and visibility of gang symbols or markings. Petty theft was measured through frequency of petty theft incidents, theft of unattended belongings, occurrence of pickpocketing or snatching, theft of household or compound items, and theft of easily portable personal items. The mediating variable, fear of crime, was measured in terms of perceived personal safety, worry

about victimization, avoidance of unsafe areas, concern for household safety, and personal vigilance.

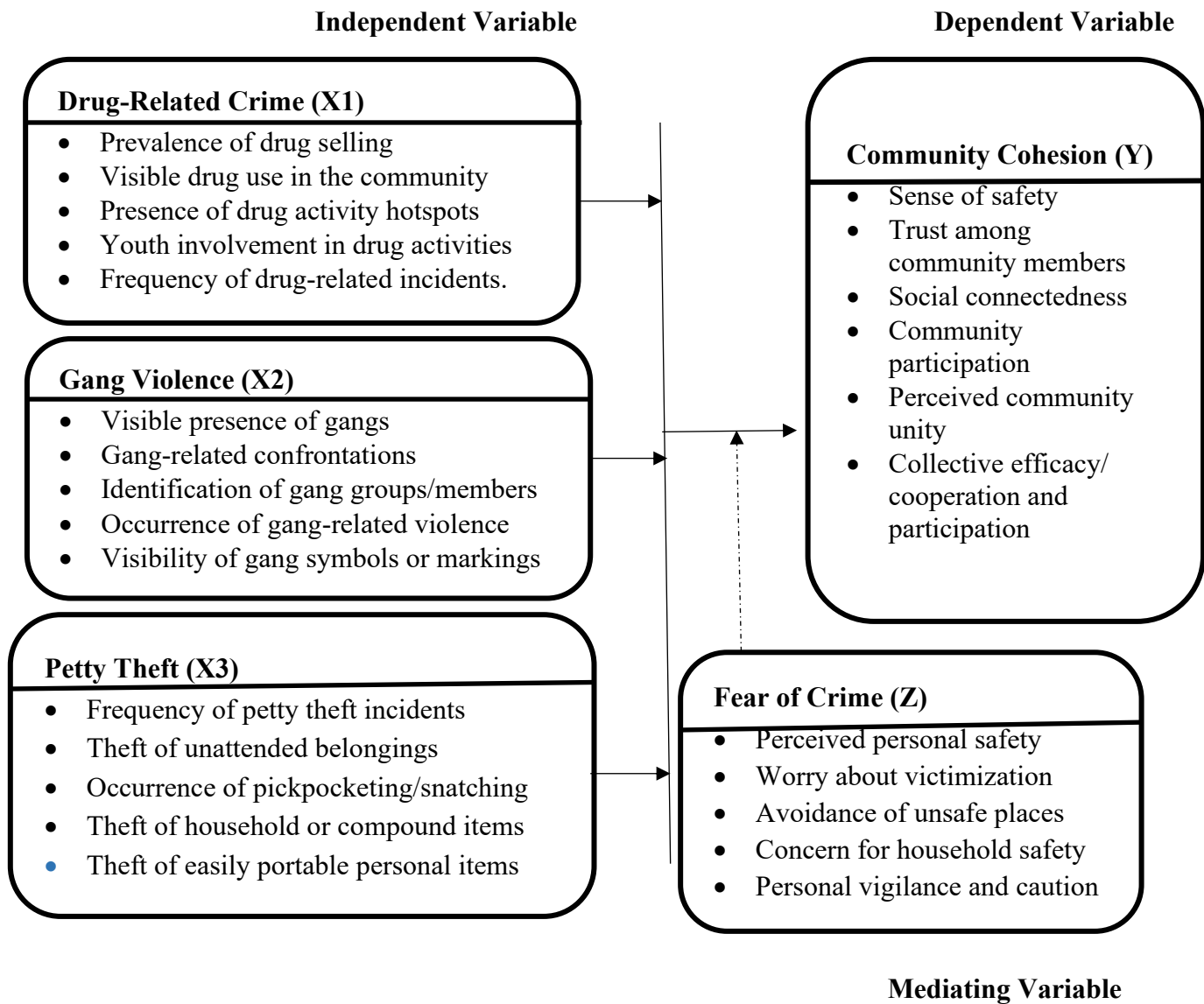


Figure 1 A Conceptual Framework Showing the Relationship Between Variables

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examined relevant literature done by other researchers in different contexts from global, regional and local perspective. The chapter is organized into an empirical review in line with research objectives and a summary of research gaps. The chapter critiques other studies to find research gaps and how they were addressed by the current study. An overall summary of research gaps was identified in the studies reviewed.

2.2 Review of Literature

This section is organized under the following sub-headings: effects of urban crime on community cohesion, the effects of urban crime on community cohesion, the effects of fear of crime on social participation, the relationship between urban crime and social trust. Studies in this field that address the four research objectives conducted by other scholars locally, regionally, and internationally are reviewed in following sections.

2.2.1 Drug-Related Crime and Community Cohesion

Drug-related crime has increasingly been identified as a major threat to community cohesion in urban environments within informal settlements with weak institutional controls, poverty, and social exclusion create favourable conditions for illicit drug markets. Studies conducted in different contexts demonstrate that drug-related crime affects social trust, cooperation, and participation among community members. In the United States, Sampson (2017) found that neighbourhoods characterized by open drug markets experienced lower levels of collective efficacy and weaker social relationships due to residents' fear of victimization and

distrust of neighbours. Similarly, Clark et al. (2018), in a study on urban communities in Scotland, observed that drug trafficking activities reduced residents' willingness to participate in neighbourhood initiatives and weakened informal social control mechanisms. These findings are consistent with those of Oosterbaan and Van Wijk (2015), who established that criminal activities associated with drug abuse in Rio de Janeiro's favelas generated fear and mistrust that undermined community cohesion. While these studies agree that drug-related crime negatively affects social cohesion, they were conducted in developed or Latin American contexts whose socio-economic realities differ considerably from informal settlements such as Kibra. Consequently, their findings require contextual validation within Kenyan urban settlements.

African scholarship similarly demonstrates the disruptive influence of drug-related crime on social relationships, although the magnitude and mechanisms vary across contexts. In Nigeria, Shoyode (2018) found that high levels of drug-related criminal activities increased residents' fear of crime and weakened social capital within communities. Likewise, Frimpong et al. (2018) reported that drug-related offences contributed to declining collective efficacy in urban neighbourhoods in Ghana by reducing trust and willingness to cooperate among residents. However, Khaile et al. (2022), studying rural communities in South Africa, found that social trust remained relatively stable despite concerns over crime, suggesting that strong cultural and kinship ties may cushion communities from some of the cohesion-eroding effects of criminal behaviour. These contrasting findings suggest that the relationship between drug-related crime and community cohesion is not always linear and may be shaped by contextual factors such as social networks and community resilience. Nevertheless, most African studies focus broadly on crime and social capital without isolating drug-related crime as a distinct explanatory factor. The current study addresses this limitation by specifically examining how

drug-related crime influences community cohesion within the unique context of Kibra Sub-County.

Within Kenya, empirical evidence increasingly links drug abuse and associated criminal activities to deteriorating community relations. Okwoyo (2022), examining community policing in Ongata Rongai, found that criminal activities associated with substance abuse weakened cooperation between residents and law enforcement agencies, thereby undermining trust. Similarly, Ndonoo et al. (2019) established that youth involvement in crime and substance abuse limited effective participation in Nyumba Kumi initiatives, reducing opportunities for social integration and collective problem-solving. More recently, Mugo and Moi (2024) reported that communities experiencing high incidences of crime linked to drug abuse exhibited lower levels of participation in crime prevention programmes despite recognizing their importance. While these studies provide valuable insights into crime management and community engagement, they focus primarily on policing interventions rather than directly examining the effects of drug-related crime on broader dimensions of community cohesion. Furthermore, most studies rely heavily on quantitative approaches, limiting deeper understanding of residents' lived experiences. The present study therefore extends existing scholarship by employing a mixed-methods approach to explore how drug-related crime affects trust, participation, and collective action among residents of Kibra.

Recent scholarship continues to reinforce the importance of understanding drug-related crime as a social rather than merely criminal justice issue. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2023), communities affected by illicit drug economies often experience weakened social institutions, declining trust, and reduced citizen engagement. Likewise, Mutahi et al. (2024) found that sustained criminal activity in low-income settlements

strained community-police relations and hindered collaborative efforts to address local challenges. Although these studies acknowledge the social consequences of drug-related crime, they rarely examine community cohesion as a multidimensional construct encompassing social participation, social trust, and collective action simultaneously. Existing literature therefore remains fragmented, often addressing individual dimensions in isolation. Moreover, little empirical evidence exists on how residents of Kibra perceive and respond to drug-related crime and its consequences for everyday social interactions. The current study bridges this gap by integrating multiple dimensions of community cohesion within a single analytical framework.

2.2.2 Gang Violence and Community Cohesion

Gang violence remains one of the most visible manifestations of urban crime and has profound implications for community cohesion. Existing literature consistently shows that gang activities create insecurity, disrupt social networks, and discourage collective engagement among residents. In Brazil, Oosterbaan and Van Wijk (2015) found that gang violence in Rio de Janeiro's favelas fostered fear and territorial divisions that weakened interpersonal relationships and community solidarity. Similarly, Papp et al. (2019), studying urban communities in Detroit, reported that fear of retaliation by gangs discouraged residents from reporting crimes and participating in community safety initiatives. In the United States, Gearhart (2022) observed that communities exposed to persistent gang violence exhibited lower levels of collective efficacy because residents were less willing to intervene in local problems or collaborate with neighbors. Although these studies collectively demonstrate that gang violence undermines cohesion, they differ regarding the mechanisms through which this occurs. Some emphasize fear and victimization, while others highlight reduced participation and weakened informal controls. Such differences suggest the need for context-specific

investigations capable of capturing local manifestations of gang violence and their implications for community life.

Evidence from Africa generally supports the argument that gang violence weakens community cohesion, although the effects vary depending on local social and political conditions. Langer et al. (2017), using data from African countries, found a significant association between violence and reduced social cohesion, particularly in communities characterized by weak trust and fragmented social identities. Likewise, Olutola and Bello (2016) reported that higher levels of violent crime in South African communities corresponded with lower levels of community cohesion and social integration. In Ghana, Frimpong et al. (2018) found that neighborhoods experiencing elevated crime and violence recorded lower levels of collective efficacy and community cooperation. However, Khaile et al. (2022) observed that trust within some South African communities remained relatively resilient despite concerns about crime, indicating that cohesion may persist where strong social bonds already exist. These contrasting findings demonstrate that gang violence does not automatically destroy cohesion but interacts with pre-existing community characteristics. Nevertheless, most African studies examine violence broadly and rarely isolate gang violence as a specific determinant of cohesion. This creates a conceptual gap that the present study seeks to address within the context of Kibra.

Kenyan studies provide growing evidence that gang violence affects community cooperation, trust, and participation. Kang'aria (2019), investigating community policing initiatives in Kitengela, found that persistent violent crime weakened social cohesion and reduced community confidence in collective security efforts. Similarly, Murefu et al. (2019) established that poor police-community partnerships and high crime levels in Korogocho slum,

Nairobi City County undermined community participation in crime prevention programmers. Mburu and Helbich (2017) further observed that residents' perceptions of insecurity influenced their willingness to engage in community policing initiatives, highlighting the relationship between violence and collective action. While these studies contribute significantly to understanding crime and community engagement, they primarily focus on crime management interventions rather than the broader social consequences of gang violence. Additionally, many studies rely on structured questionnaires that may not adequately capture residents' experiences of intimidation, fear, and social fragmentation resulting from gang activities. Consequently, there remains limited understanding of how gang violence affects different dimensions of community cohesion within informal settlements such as Kibra.

Recent research suggests that gang violence should be understood not only as a security challenge but also as a threat to social development and community resilience. Hess et al. (2025) found that neighborhoods characterized by stronger social cohesion reported lower fear of crime and greater resilience to criminal threats, implying that violence and cohesion influence one another in complex ways. Likewise, Mutahi et al. (2024) reported that collaborative community initiatives can mitigate some of the adverse effects of crime on trust and social interaction in low-income settlements. However, existing studies rarely investigate how gang violence specifically influences social participation, social trust, and collective action simultaneously. Most analyses focus on one or two dimensions while neglecting the multidimensional nature of community cohesion. Furthermore, empirical evidence from Nairobi's informal settlements remains limited despite recurring reports of gang-related activities. The current study addresses these gaps by examining gang violence as a distinct urban crime and assessing its effects on multiple dimensions of community cohesion among residents of Kibra Sub-County.

2.2.3 Petty Theft and Community Cohesion

Petty theft remains one of the most common forms of urban crime affecting informal settlements and low-income neighborhoods globally. Although often categorized as a less serious offence compared to violent crimes, repeated incidents of theft can significantly undermine social relationships, trust, and collective engagement among residents. In the Netherlands, Glas et al. (2018), in their study titled “The Street Level and Beyond: The Impact of Ethnic Diversity on Neighborhood Cohesion and Fear of Crime among Dutch Natives and Nonnatives,” found that residents exposed to persistent property-related crimes reported lower levels of neighborhood cohesion and increased fear of victimization. Similarly, Piscitelli and Perrella (2017), through their study “Fear of Crime and Participation in Associational Life,” established that concerns about crime reduced participation in community organizations and weakened social interactions among residents. These findings support those of Takag et al. (2016) in Japan, who noted that although crime occasionally encouraged stronger interpersonal networks as residents sought protection, repeated victimization ultimately eroded confidence in community safety. While these studies demonstrate a relationship between petty crime and weakened social cohesion, they are situated in highly structured urban environments with stronger policing and social welfare systems than those found in informal settlements such as Kibra. Consequently, the transferability of their findings to the Kenyan context remains limited and requires empirical validation.

Evidence from Africa similarly points to the detrimental effects of petty theft on community cohesion, though the nature and extent of these effects vary across contexts. Frimpong et al. (2018), in “Collective Efficacy and Fear of Crime in Urban Neighborhoods in Ghana,” found that frequent property crimes diminished residents’ willingness to engage in

neighborhood activities because they perceived public spaces as unsafe. Likewise, Olutola and Bello (2016), in “Exploring the association between community cohesion and crime in the Republic of South Africa,” reported that areas experiencing persistent criminal activities, including theft, exhibited weaker social integration and lower levels of trust among residents. However, Khaile et al. (2022), examining rural communities in South Africa, observed that existing kinship ties moderated the effects of crime on trust, suggesting that social cohesion may remain resilient under certain circumstances. These studies collectively indicate that crime and cohesion are influenced by broader social structures and local cultural dynamics. Nevertheless, most African studies focus on crime in general rather than isolating petty theft as a specific explanatory variable. Furthermore, the majority rely heavily on quantitative approaches, limiting deeper understanding of how repeated theft shapes residents’ everyday interactions and perceptions of community solidarity. The present study addresses this gap by specifically examining petty theft within an urban informal settlement context.

Kenyan scholarship increasingly highlights the significance of property crimes in shaping community relations and participation in local initiatives. Okwoyo (2022), in “Community policing in crime management in Ongata Rongai, Kenya,” found that recurrent theft incidents weakened trust between residents and security agencies, thereby reducing willingness to collaborate in crime prevention efforts. Similarly, Ndonjo et al. (2019), in “Effectiveness of the Nyumba Kumi Community Policing Initiative in Kenya,” observed that criminal activities, including theft, discouraged active participation in community policing programs due to concerns about retaliation and inadequate protection. Murefu et al. (2019), in “Community policing and crime reduction in informal settlements: A case of Korogocho slum, Nairobi City County, Kenya,” further established that fear arising from frequent theft cases

contributed to low community participation and reduced confidence in collective security arrangements. While these studies provide valuable insights into crime prevention mechanisms, they primarily focus on institutional responses rather than examining the broader social consequences of petty theft on community cohesion. Additionally, the studies were conducted in areas with different socio-economic characteristics from Kibra, limiting their applicability. The current study therefore contributes by exploring how petty theft directly influences social trust, participation, and collective action among residents of Kibra Sub-County.

Recent literature suggests that the cumulative effects of petty theft may be more socially disruptive than previously assumed. According to Mugo and Moi (2024), residents are less likely to engage in collective security initiatives when they perceive criminal activities to be persistent and inadequately addressed. Similarly, Mutahi et al. (2024), in “Policing and citizen trust in Kenya: How community policing shapes local trust-building and collaboration,” found that repeated experiences with neighborhood crime diminished trust not only in formal institutions but also among community members themselves. Winter et al. (2021), studying informal settlements in Nairobi, further demonstrated that perceptions of disorder and insecurity significantly influenced residents’ willingness to engage with others and participate in community activities. Although these studies acknowledge the broader social consequences of crime, they rarely focus specifically on petty theft or examine its effects across multiple dimensions of community cohesion simultaneously. Existing scholarship therefore remains fragmented, with limited evidence on how everyday property crimes shape social participation, trust, and collective action within informal settlements. The present study addresses this knowledge gap by generating empirical evidence from Kibra, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between petty theft and community cohesion.

2.2.4 Mediating Effects of Fear of Crime on the Relationship Between Selected Urban Crimes and Community Cohesion

Fear of crime has emerged as a critical explanatory factor in understanding how urban crime influences community cohesion. While actual victimization can directly affect social relationships, many scholars argue that fear of crime mediates this relationship by shaping perceptions, behaviors, and interactions among residents. In Seattle, Hess et al. (2025), in “Within-day diversity change, neighborhood social cohesion, and fear of crime,” found that fear of crime significantly influenced residents’ perceptions of neighborhood cohesion regardless of actual crime rates. Similarly, Piscitelli and Perrella (2017), in “Fear of Crime and Participation in Associational Life,” reported that individuals with higher levels of fear were less likely to participate in civic associations and community activities. These findings are consistent with Shechory-Bitton and Soen (2016), whose study “Community cohesion, sense of threat, and fear of crime: The refugee problem as perceived by Israeli residents” demonstrated that perceptions of threat often had a stronger influence on community cohesion than objective indicators of crime. Collectively, these studies suggest that fear functions as an intermediary mechanism through which crime affects social relations. However, most were conducted in developed countries characterized by different social, economic, and security conditions from those prevailing in informal settlements such as Kibra, thereby necessitating context-specific investigations.

African studies similarly reveal that fear of crime plays a significant role in shaping community interactions and social cohesion. Frimpong et al. (2018) found that fear of crime reduced collective efficacy by discouraging residents from engaging in community activities and public interactions. Likewise, Shoyode (2018), in “Social Capital and Fear of Crime: A

Test of Organizational Participation Effect in Nigeria,” reported that participation in community organizations did not necessarily reduce fear of crime, suggesting a complex relationship between social capital and perceived insecurity. Langer et al. (2017), in “Conceptualizing and measuring social cohesion in Africa: Towards a perceptions-based index,” further established that environments characterized by violence and insecurity experienced lower levels of trust and social integration. However, these studies differ in their interpretations of causality. While some view fear because of crime, others regard it as an independent factor capable of weakening social cohesion regardless of actual crime levels. This conceptual inconsistency highlights the need for studies that explicitly examine fear of crime as a mediating variable. The current study responds to this gap by testing whether fear of crime mediates the relationship between selected urban crimes and community cohesion among residents of Kibra.

Within Kenya, emerging evidence suggests that fear of crime significantly influences trust, participation, and collaboration among community members. Winter et al. (2021) found that neighborhood cohesion partially mediated the relationship between perceived disorder and fear of crime among women living in Mathare. Similarly, Kang’aria (2019) reported that fear associated with violent crime discouraged residents from actively engaging in community policing programs in Kitengela. Okwoyo (2022) also found that concerns about victimization and retaliation limited residents’ willingness to cooperate with law enforcement agencies in Ongata Rongai. More recently, Mutahi et al. (2024) demonstrated that despite the existence of community policing structures, fear of crime continued to affect trust-building efforts within low-income settlements. Although these studies acknowledge the importance of fear in shaping community relations, none explicitly examined its mediating role between different forms of urban crime and community cohesion. Moreover, most focus on specific dimensions such as

trust or participation rather than treating community cohesion as a multidimensional construct. These limitations justify the need for the present study.

Recent scholarships increasingly recognize fear of crime as a multidimensional phenomenon with implications extending beyond personal safety concerns. According to the United Nations Human Settlements Program (2024), perceptions of insecurity often influence social interactions more profoundly than actual crime statistics because they shape how residents use public spaces, interact with neighbors, and engage in community activities. Mugo and Moi (2024) similarly found that fear associated with criminal activities discouraged participation in local security initiatives even where residents acknowledged their potential benefits. Furthermore, Hess et al. (2025) demonstrated that neighborhoods characterized by stronger social cohesion reported lower levels of fear despite exposure to similar crime risks, suggesting a reciprocal relationship between cohesion and perceived insecurity. Existing studies therefore indicate that fear of crime may serve as a key mechanism linking urban crime and community cohesion. Nevertheless, little empirical evidence exists regarding how fear mediates the effects of drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft simultaneously within informal settlements. The present study fills this gap by developing and testing a mediation model that explains how fear of crime influences the relationship between selected urban crimes and community cohesion among residents of Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County.

2.3 Summary and Research Gap

A critical synthesis of the empirical evidence reveals that existing scholarship tends to converge on certain patterns while simultaneously exposing significant theoretical and empirical limitations that justify the present study. Across diverse contexts, there is consistent evidence that crime negatively influences trust, participation, and collective action.

Nevertheless, the mechanisms through which this relationship operate remain insufficiently theorized and unevenly tested across different crime types and socio-spatial environments. This is particularly evident when comparing findings from structured urban systems in high-income countries with those from informal settlements in low-income settings, where governance deficits, spatial informality, and socio-economic exclusion interact to shape crime dynamics differently.

A key contextual limitation emerges from the dominance of studies conducted in high-income and non-African settings, where institutional capacity, policing systems, and urban infrastructure differ substantially from informal settlements in Sub-Saharan Africa. Studies such as Takag et al. (2016), Glas et al. (2018), and Pabayo et al. (2020) provide robust empirical insights into crime and social cohesion; however, their explanatory frameworks are embedded within formally regulated urban environments. Even studies from the Global South, such as Oosterbaan and Van Wijk (2015) in Brazil and Papp et al. (2019) in Detroit, while closer in socio-economic structure, still do not adequately capture the layered governance challenges and survival-based social organization characteristic of Kenyan informal settlements such as Kibra. Within African scholarship, cross-national analyses such as Langer et al. (2017) offer macro-level associations between violence and cohesion but fail to explain micro-level social processes through which cohesion is eroded or sustained in localized urban neighbourhoods. This creates a clear need for place-based empirical inquiry that situates crime–cohesion relationships within the lived realities of informal settlements.

Conceptually, the literature reveals a tendency to treat urban crime, fear of crime, and community cohesion as parallel rather than interdependent constructs. Many studies are isolating specific dimensions such as social trust (Shechory-Bitton & Soen, 2016), collective

efficacy (Frimpong et al., 2018), or associational participation (Piscitelli & Perrella, 2017) without integrating them into a unified explanatory framework. As a result, there is limited theoretical clarity on how different forms of crime translate into variations in cohesion outcomes. More critically, the mediating role of fear of crime remains under-theorized and inconsistently operationalized. While some studies acknowledge fear as an outcome of crime exposure, fewer empirically test it as a causal mechanism linking specific crime types such as drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft to variations in trust, participation, and collective action. This fragmentation limits the development of a coherent explanatory model and underscores the need for an integrated analytical approach that simultaneously examines crime types, fear of crime, and cohesion outcomes within a single framework.

Methodologically, the reviewed studies reveal a heavy reliance on quantitative survey designs and secondary datasets, which, while useful for establishing statistical associations, often fail to capture the socially embedded and experiential dimensions of crime and cohesion. For instance, Olutola and Bello (2016) and Shoyode (2018) rely on large-scale secondary datasets that restrict variable flexibility and contextual interpretation, while Winter et al. (2021) focus on structured survey instruments that limit depth of respondent narratives. Even where qualitative approaches are used, as in Khaile et al. (2022), small and context-specific samples limit broader analytical generalization. This methodological pattern suggests an overdependence on cross-sectional designs that capture snapshots of social reality rather than dynamic processes of cohesion formation and erosion. Consequently, there remains a need for a mixed-methods approach that not only quantifies relationships but also explains the social meanings and lived experiences underlying those relationships within informal settlements.

Finally, a significant empirical and practical gap exists in relation to how specific urban crime typologies influence collective action and everyday cooperation among residents. While studies on community policing in Kenya (Okwoyo, 2022; Ndonoo et al., 2019; Murefu et al., 2019) provide insights into institutional responses, they largely overlook how lived experiences of crime shape residents' willingness to participate in collective security and communal initiatives. Similarly, international studies on collective efficacy (Gearhart, 2022; Brunton-Smith et al., 2018) emphasize neighborhood-level variation but do not sufficiently unpack how distinct crime forms differentially affect behavioral outcomes such as cooperation, mutual aid, and civic engagement. This leaves an important gap in understanding the behavioral consequences of crime beyond perception-based measures.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the procedures that are going to be used to carry out the study. The key areas captured in this section include research design, research site, target population, study sample, sampling method, data collection procedure, data processing and analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

Research design entails the overall strategy that an investigator plans to utilize in answering research questions by collecting and analyzing data (Timans et al., 2019). The current research utilized a convergent research design which is a mixed method approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This method, according to Timans et al. (2019) blends the advantages of qualitative and quantitative research techniques. This design is preferred because it allows the researcher to collect different but complimentary data on the research problem. The aim of adopting this design was to allow research to compare the results and draw overall conclusions. The design allowed the researcher to directly compare quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings and validate or expand quantitative results with qualitative data.

This study employed a descriptive survey methodology to gather quantitative data. To generalize conclusions about a community, survey research entails gathering numerical data from a sample (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Researchers systematically gather and examine data using descriptive survey designs to characterize traits, patterns, or correlations between variables. Surveys usually use structured questionnaires or interviews to gather information

about respondents' demographics, behaviors, attitudes, and opinions (Hirose & Creswell, 2023). This method allows researchers to efficiently collect data from many respondents, which makes it very helpful in social science research (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Nevertheless, there are drawbacks to using just one approach, including response bias, shallow data interpretation, and the incapacity to fully capture intricate social phenomena. Because of these shortcomings, a qualitative method must be used to enhance and supplement the results. Creswell and Creswell (2023) contend that by offering a more comprehensive view of the study problem, mixed-method research aids in overcoming the drawbacks of a single approach.

The study used a phenomenological research approach for the qualitative component to fully examine the actual experiences of the residents. According to Bliss (2017), phenomenology is a qualitative research methodology that investigates people's experiences with a phenomenon to comprehend their meanings, feelings, and perceptions. The findings are more thorough and reliable when the descriptive survey and phenomenological design are combined. The quantitative element provides statistical insights into the trends and connections by enabling the measurement and analysis of the relationship between community cohesion (the dependent variable) and urban crime (the independent variable). In the meantime, the qualitative component gives people of Kibra sub-County a deep, contextual understanding of their lived experiences, providing them with a voice and aiding in the explanation of the patterns seen in the quantitative data. By using a mixed-methods approach, the study is certain to include both quantifiable trends and the complex social reality of how crime affects community cohesion.

3.3 Research Site

Kibra Sub-County, located in Nairobi County, Kenya, serves as the research site for this study. The area is one of the largest and most densely populated informal settlements in the country and has long been associated with multiple structural and socioeconomic challenges. Kibra covers approximately 12 square kilometers and is characterized by high population density, inadequate infrastructure, limited access to essential services, and widespread poverty. These conditions have contributed to the persistence of various forms of urban crime, including drug trafficking, gang activity, and petty theft. Empirical studies indicate that Kibra experiences disproportionately high levels of insecurity compared to other urban areas in Nairobi. Research conducted in the settlement has documented prevalent criminal activities such as burglary, assault, muggings, drug-related offences, and youth gang operations (Kubende, 2018). The physical environment of Kibra has been shown to facilitate crime and hinder effective policing (Shikuku et al., 2018). These environmental and socioeconomic factors collectively weaken informal social controls and strain community cohesion. Given these characteristics, Kibra provides a relevant and representative context for analyzing how selected urban crimes affect community cohesion. Examining this setting offers insights into how structural disadvantages, crime, and social dynamics interact within informal settlements. Studying Kibra is therefore critical for generating evidence that can inform policy interventions aimed at improving safety, strengthening social ties, and enhancing overall community resilience.

3.4 Target Study Population

A target population refers to the entire group of individuals possessing characteristics relevant to a study and from which a researcher intends to draw conclusions (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). The target population for this study comprised residents of Kibra Sub-County

in Nairobi City County. According to the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census, Kibra Sub-County had a total population of 185,777 persons, consisting of 93,591 males and 92,177 females, with 9 persons classified as intersex (KNBS, 2019). Out of this population, 110,988 were aged 18 years and above. The population distribution provided by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) formed the sampling frame for the study (KNBS, 2019). The study specifically focused on adult residents aged 18 years and above because they were considered capable of providing informed responses. Key informants drawn from local administration, law enforcement agencies, community leadership structures, and county administration were also included due to their knowledge and experience regarding crime and social dynamics within Kibra Sub-County. The unit of analysis was adult residents of Kibra Sub-County, while the unit of observation comprised individual residents and selected key informants who participated in the study.

Table 1

Target Population of Kibra Sub-County

Category	Population
Male	93,591
Female	92,177
Intersex	9
Total Population	185,777

Source: KNBS, (2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census).

3.5 Study Sample

3.5.1 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

Sampling refers to the process of selecting a representative subset of a population for purposes of making inferences about the entire population (Taherdoost, 2016). The study employed both probability and non-probability sampling techniques to select participants for

the quantitative and qualitative components respectively. The study population consisted of adult residents aged 18 years and above in Kibra Sub-County. According to the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census, Kibra Sub-County had an estimated adult population of 110,988 persons. This population constituted the sampling frame for the quantitative component of the study. The unit of analysis was adult residents of Kibra Sub-County, while the unit of observation consisted of individual residents selected to participate in the survey and key informants selected for interviews.

For the quantitative component, simple random sampling was used to select respondents from the adult population. The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = required sample size, N = Population, e = margin of error (e.g., 0.05 for 5%)

$$n = \frac{110988}{1 + 110988(0.05^2)}$$

Therefore, the quantitative sample size was n = 396 participants.

For qualitative sample size, key informants were selected through purposive sampling where leaders from the community were selected using a certain criterion. For interview data in phenomenology, Creswell and Clark (2018) recommend that using 5-25 participants is good for the study. Therefore, the study selected 18 participants, with each sector represented by two participants to ensure balanced and diverse perspectives. The sectors included local administration, law enforcement, community leadership, and other relevant stakeholders engaged in community safety and social cohesion initiatives. The selection criteria focused on

participants' roles, experience, and direct engagement with crime-related issues in the community. This ensured that the data collected from the interviews was rich, relevant, and provided in-depth insights into the study problem.

Table 2

Sampling Framework

Category	Unit of Analysis	Sampling Technique		Sample Size
Adult residents (18 years and above)	Individual resident	Simple Sampling	Random	396
Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs	Key informants	Purposive Sampling		4
Police Officers	Key informants	Purposive Sampling		4
Community Leaders	Key informants	Purposive Sampling		6
County/Sub-County Officials	Key informants	Purposive Sampling		4
Total				414

Source: Researcher (2026)

3.6 Data Collection

3.6.1 Semi-Structured Questionnaire

The semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from residents of Kibra Sub-County. The instrument was designed to capture respondents' perceptions and experiences regarding selected urban crimes, fear of crime, and community cohesion. The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended and open-ended questions to enable the collection of standardized responses while also allowing respondents to provide additional information where necessary. The questionnaire was organized into four sections. Section A collected respondents' demographic information, including age, gender, level of education, duration of residence in Kibra Sub-County, and primary occupation. Section B examined respondents' perceptions and experiences regarding selected urban crimes in Kibra, namely drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft, using structured questions and Likert-scale statements.

Section C measured fear of crime, which served as the mediating variable in the study. Section D assessed community cohesion, the dependent variable, by examining respondents' perceptions of trust, cooperation, social connectedness, and collective participation within Kibra Sub-County. The questionnaire was administered to 396 residents selected through simple random sampling. The instrument enabled the researcher to obtain quantitative data necessary for examining the relationship between selected urban crimes, fear of crime, and community cohesion.

3.6.2 Semi-Structured Interview Guide

A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect qualitative data from key informants who possessed specialized knowledge and experience regarding crime and community dynamics within Kibra Sub-County. The key informants included law enforcement officers, local administrators, chiefs, sub-county officials, and community leaders who regularly interact with residents and play a role in addressing crime-related issues. The interview guide was organized into two sections. Part A collected demographic information about the interview participants, while Part B contained open-ended questions related to the study variables. The semi-structured nature of the guide provided flexibility for probing and follow-up questions, allowing participants to elaborate on their experiences and perspectives. A total of 18 key informants were targeted for interviewing through purposive sampling. The interview sessions were structured to last for a maximum of 45 minutes. The interviews provided in-depth qualitative insights that complemented the quantitative findings and enhanced understanding of how urban crime influences community cohesion in Kibra Sub-County.

3.6.3 Pilot Testing of Research Instrument

A pilot study is a small-scale preliminary investigation used to test the feasibility, design, and potential challenges associated with a comprehensive study before conducting the main research (Schroder et al., 2011). Prior to the actual data collection, a pilot study was conducted to assess the clarity, relevance, and reliability of the research instruments. A total of 39 residents, representing 10% of the study sample, were selected to participate in the pretest. Piloting was essential as it enabled the researcher to identify ambiguities in the questionnaire items and obtain a clearer understanding of the type of data that would be collected (Davidavičienė, 2018). This process ensured that the items in the instrument adequately captured the variables intended for the study. The pilot test was conducted in Mathare informal settlements, which shares similar socio-economic characteristics with the study area but was not included in the final sample to avoid contamination of the actual study respondents.

During the pilot exercise, respondents were asked to fill in the questionnaires and encouraged to share their views on any questions that appear unclear, ambiguous, or difficult to understand. The researcher also assessed the comprehensiveness and appropriateness of the response options provided in the questionnaire. The quantitative data collected during phase were utilized to test the reliability of the research instruments which yielded an alpha coefficient of 0.70. The purpose of piloting was to ensure the questionnaires were appropriate to collect the necessary data for the study. The interview guide was also piloted by key informants. The study selected 4 community leaders for interviews during piloting. After the pilot interview, some questions were revised for better wording, and the interview guide was then finalized. The responses of the participants enabled the researcher to discover vague questions, ambiguous words, and unclear instructions in the questionnaire. The researcher found that the

interview guide had too many questions which made the interview last for more than 45 minutes. Therefore, the researcher reviewed the questions to ensure the interview session comprehensively covered the topics within 45 minutes or less.

3.6.4 Instrument Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which a research instrument produces consistent results when repeated under similar conditions (Heale & Twycross, 2015). In this study, internal consistency of the questionnaire items measuring drug-related crime, gang violence, petty theft, fear of crime, and community cohesion was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Cronbach's Alpha is a statistical measure of internal consistency that determines how closely related a set of items are in measuring the same construct, with values ranging from 0 to 1. A coefficient of 0.70 and above is considered acceptable for social science research. After the pilot study, data were entered into SPSS version 26, and reliability was computed. Items that reduced overall reliability were reviewed and refined before the final data collection. A minimum threshold of $\alpha \geq 0.70$ was adopted to confirm satisfactory internal consistency of the instrument.

A reliability test was conducted using Cronbach's alpha to assess the internal consistency of the study variables. The results in Appendix VI indicated high reliability across all constructs. Drug-related crime recorded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.94, gang violence 0.92, petty theft 0.95, fear of crime 0.93, and community cohesion 0.92. Since all values exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70, the instruments were considered reliable for the study.

3.6.5 Instrument Validity

A study validity details the degree to which a certain test is measured (Davidavičienė, 2018). Content validity was established by appraising the research instrument with help of the

supervisors and adhering to the advice given. Construct validity was evaluated through factor analysis, which determined whether the questionnaire items align as expected, verifying that they measure the intended constructs. Criterion-related validity was also examined by comparing the study's results with established findings from similar research to ensure consistency and alignment. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were conducted to determine whether the data were suitable for factor extraction as shown in Table 1. The validity of the research instruments was established using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Content and face validity were ensured through expert review, where the research instruments were examined by supervisors and subject matter experts to confirm that the items were clear, relevant, and adequately covered the study variables.

Table 3

KMO and Bartlett's Test for Variables

Variables	KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (χ^2)	df	p-value
Drug-Related Crime	.90	1563.81	10	.00
Gang Violence	.89	1230.71	10	.00
Petty Theft	.91	1616.86	10	.00
Fear of Crime	.90	1430.26	10	.00
Community Cohesion	.87	1189.45	10	.00

Source: (Research Data, 2026)

In qualitative data, trustworthiness which pertains to the quality, authenticity and reliability of the findings was done. Trustworthiness involves the techniques employed by the researcher to ensure the quality of the study and validity of its findings (Creswell & Clark, 2018). This study employed credibility and dependability to assess the data. To establish credibility, the researcher used member checking method where the participants were given back the data and confirmed the results. Dependability shows the consistence of results and to

obtain dependability. The researcher ensured that there is a good rapport created with the respondents, using the same questions, prolonged engagement of the respondents during the interview and using the same tools of recording data and procedures of transcriptions and analysis.

3.6.6 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher sought an introduction letter from the Africa Nazarene University to facilitate the acquiring of research permit from National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). Upon obtaining the necessary permission, the researcher applied to conduct research to the Nairobi County Commissioner and Kibra sub-County Commissioner to be cleared to conduct the study in the target location. Once the approvals and permissions have been granted, the researcher proceeded to the study area. To guarantee that ethical standards are upheld, informed consent was a crucial component of the data collection procedure in this study. Clear and succinct information regarding the nature, goal, and scope of the study was given to each participant. Participants were made aware that their participation is completely voluntary and that they can leave at any moment without incurring any fees before any data collection starts. The confidentiality of their responses, the use of the data, and the measures taken to preserve their privacy were all covered in the informed consent document. A consent form was provided for participants and kept in a secure location. The researcher then decided on when to visit the research site. A research assistant was then trained to help the researcher with distributing the questionnaires among the respondents. The researcher proceeded to data processing and analysis after data gathering was completed.

3.7 Data Processing and Analysis

After collecting the data from the participants, the researcher input the responses into an Excel spreadsheet and ensure that only complete responses are captured for analysis. The questionnaires were coded manually, and the values assigned were computed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 to generate descriptive statistics. This analysis included frequencies and percentages. Responses on the Likert scale were weighted accordingly: Strongly agree =5, agree=4, neutral = 3, disagree= 2 and strongly disagree = 1.

Inferential statistics were utilized to test hypotheses with a confidence level of 95%. To determine the relationships between urban crime and community cohesion, multiple regression analysis was employed. Qualitative data underwent through thematic analysis which was used to determine the major themes. The researcher transcribed interview data recorded using speech-to-text software. The audio was converted into word format for analysis. The researcher created verbatim transcriptions of data. To better understand the dataset, the researcher thoroughly reviewed the transcripts multiple times to come up with codes, the researcher then created significant statements and finally came up with emergent themes. According to Creswell and Clark (2018), once the results have been obtained, the researcher may approach the participants a second time to validate the findings. Therefore, the researcher determined dependability through member checking to ascertain trustworthiness of the findings. Credibility of the findings was also ascertained through prolonged engagement during data collection.

3.8 Legal and Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to established ethical standards in social science research by ensuring voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and protection of participants' rights throughout the research process. Ethical considerations are essential in

safeguarding the dignity, privacy, and welfare of research participants and in maintaining the integrity and credibility of the research process (Simon & Goes, 2013). Prior to the commencement of the study, all participants were provided with clear information regarding the purpose of the research, the procedures involved, and any potential risks associated with participation. Participants were then requested to give their informed consent before taking part in the study.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed that they had the right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative consequences. Ensuring voluntary participation helps to prevent coercion and guarantees that respondents participate based on their own free will (Nkwake, 2020).

Confidentiality and privacy of the participants were strictly maintained throughout the study. All personal and sensitive information collected during the research process was securely stored and used strictly for academic purposes. To further protect participant identity, the data were anonymized during analysis and reporting, and no identifiable personal information was included in the published findings. Access to the data was restricted only to the research team to ensure that participant information remained protected. In addition, ethical standards were maintained throughout all stages of the research process, including participant recruitment, data collection, analysis, and reporting of findings. Upholding these ethical principles ensured that the study respected the rights, dignity, and welfare of all participants while maintaining the credibility and integrity of the research process (Simon & Goes, 2013; Nkwake, 2020).

To further enhance confidentiality and anonymity, the study adopted the use of codes, fictitious names, aliases, and pseudonyms as recommended by Creswell and Creswell (2023). Each key informant was assigned a unique code based on their sector of representation. The

codes given were as follows; Local administration officers (LA), Law enforcement officers (LE), Community leaders (CL), Religious leaders (RL), Youth leaders (YL), Women leaders (WL), Non-governmental organizational representatives (NGO), Community-Based organization representatives (CBO) and Community Policing (CP). These codes were consistently used throughout the data analysis and presentation of findings to ensure anonymity while maintaining the contextual relevance of participants' responses. This approach enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the qualitative data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The main objective of this study was to investigate the effects of selected urban crimes on community cohesion among residents of Kibra Sub-County in Nairobi County. This chapter presents the analysis, presentation, and interpretation of the findings in accordance with the study objectives. The presentation is organized into sections covering response rate, demographic characteristics of respondents, descriptive findings, inferential analysis, qualitative analysis, and integrated discussion of results.

4.2 Questionnaire and Interview Guide Response Rate

At the end of the data collection process, 338 questionnaires were fully completed and returned out of the 396 distributed. For interviews, 12 were successfully conducted out of the 18 targeted participants, 2 declined to participate in the interviews, and 4 were unreachable despite several follow-up attempts. This resulted in an overall participation of 350 respondents out of the targeted 414, and this represented an overall response rate of 84.5% as shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Response Rate

Category	Targeted	Achieved	Not Achieved	Response Rate (%)
Questionnaires (Residents)	396	338	58	85.4%
Interviews (Key Informants)	18	12	6	66.7%
Total	414	350	64	84.5%

The questionnaire response rate of 85.4% is considered excellent for survey research, while the interview response rate of 66.7% is considered good. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2019), a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis, 60% is good, and 70% and above is

very good. Therefore, the response rates achieved were sufficient to support reliable statistical analysis and meaningful qualitative interpretation.

4.3 Presentation of Research Analysis and Findings

4.3.1 Demographic Information of the Respondents

This section presents the demographic profile of the 338 residents of Kibra Sub-County who participated in the study. The demographic characteristics examined included age, gender, level of education, period of residence in Kibra, and primary occupation as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Characteristics		Frequency	Percent
Age of Respondents	18-25 Years	182	53.8
	26-35 Years	84	24.9
	36-45 Years	63	18.6
	46-55 Years	9	2.7
	Total	338	100.0
Gender of Respondents	Male	196	58.0
	Female	142	42.0
	Total	338	100.0
Respondents' Highest Level of Education Attained	No formal education	2	.6
	Primary (Class 1-8)	4	1.2
	Secondary (Form 1-4)	55	16.3
	Tertiary	228	67.5
	Other	49	14.5
	Total	338	100.0
Period of Time Lived in Kibra Sub-County	<1 year	87	25.7
	1-5 years	148	43.8
	6-10 years	47	13.9
	10 and above years	56	16.6
	Total	338	100.0
Respondents' Primary Occupation	Employed	106	31.4
	Self-employed	80	23.7
	Unemployed	49	14.5
	Student	103	30.5
	Total	338	100.0

Source: (Field data, 2026)

The findings indicate that most respondents were aged 18–25 years and accounted for 182 (53.8%) of the respondents. This was followed by those aged 26–35 years at 84 (24.9%), 36–45 years at 63 (18.6%), and 46–55 years at 9 (2.7%). The dominance of younger respondents suggests that the study largely captured perspectives from youth and young adults, who are often more exposed to urban crime dynamics such as gang activities, drug-related offences, and petty theft. Young people in informal settlements are also more likely to interact with public spaces and social networks where crime occurs, making their perceptions important in understanding the relationship between urban crime, fear of crime, and community cohesion. Their experiences provide valuable insights into how crime influences participation in community activities and social interactions. Gender was included to explore potential differences in perceptions of safety, fear of crime, and community participation. The results show that 196 (58.0%) of the respondents were male, while 142 (42.0%) were female. Although males formed the majority, the relatively balanced representation enhances the reliability of gender-based insights. Gender is relevant to this study because men and women often experience and perceive crime differently. Female residents may experience higher levels of fear of crime and may limit their participation in community activities due to safety concerns, while male residents may be more directly exposed to gang-related activities, drug markets, or criminal victimization. These differing experiences can influence levels of trust, social interaction, and overall community cohesion.

Education level was examined as influences awareness, interpretation of crime patterns, civic engagement, and trust in institutions. The findings reveal that most respondents had attained tertiary education, accounting for 228 (67.5%), followed by secondary education at 55 (16.3%), other forms of education at 49 (14.5%), primary education at 4 (1.2%), and no formal

education at 2 (0.6%). The high proportion of respondents with tertiary education suggests that the sample was relatively well-informed, which is important for understanding perceptions of crime and community cohesion. Individuals with higher educational attainment are generally more likely to recognize the social consequences of crime, engage in community initiatives, and support crime prevention efforts. Education may therefore influence how residents perceive the effects of drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft, as well as their willingness to participate in activities that strengthen community cohesion.

Length of residence is an important factor in studies guided by Collective Efficacy Theory, as longer-term residents are more likely to develop social ties, trust networks, and shared norms that influence community cohesion. The results indicate that 148 (43.8%) of the respondents had lived in Kibra for 1–5 years, 87 (25.7%) for less than one year, 56 (16.6%) for 10 years and above, and 47 (13.9%) for 6–10 years. Residents who have lived in the area for longer periods are likely to possess deeper knowledge of local crime trends and stronger social connections that facilitate collective responses to crime. Conversely, newer residents may have weaker social networks and may experience higher levels of fear of crime due to unfamiliarity with the neighborhood. Consequently, duration of residence may influence both perceptions of crime and levels of community cohesion.

Occupation was examined because employment status influences daily routines, exposure to crime-prone environments, and participation in community initiatives. The findings reveal that 106 (31.4%) of the respondents were employed, 103 (30.5%) were students, 80 (23.7%) were self-employed, and 49 (14.5%) were unemployed. Employment status may shape exposure to crime and perceptions of insecurity. For example, unemployed youth may be more vulnerable to recruitment into criminal groups or more exposed to environments associated with

drug abuse and gang activities. In contrast, employed and self-employed individuals may have greater opportunities to participate in community development initiatives and crime prevention activities. Occupation therefore has implications for residents' experiences of urban crime, fear of victimization, and their contribution to community cohesion.

4.3.2 Demographic Characteristics of Key Informants

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the key informants who participated in the interview. A total of 12 purposively selected key informants were successfully interviewed, and the data are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Demographic Characteristics of Key Informants

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	7	58.3%
	Female	5	41.7%
Age Bracket	25–34 years	2	16.7%
	35–44 years	4	33.3%
	45–54 years	3	25.0%
	55 years and above	3	25.0%
Sector/Role	Chiefs/Sub-chiefs (Local Administration)	2	16.7%
	Law Enforcement Officers (Police)	2	16.7%
	Community Leaders (Nyumba Kumi/elders)	2	16.7%
	Youth Representatives	2	16.7%
	Religious Leaders	1	8.3%
	Civil Society/NGO Representatives	1	8.3%
	Business Community Representatives	1	8.3%
	Community-Based Organization (CBO) Leaders	1	8.3%
Years of Experience in Kibra	1–5 years	2	16.7%
	6–10 years	3	25.0%
	11–15 years	4	33.3%
	Over 15 years	3	25.0%

Source: (Field Data, 2025)

The results indicate that many key informants were male 7 (58.3%), while females accounted for 5 (41.7%). The inclusion of both male and female key informants enabled the study to capture diverse perspectives on crime, fear of crime, and community cohesion. Gender diversity among key informants was important because men and women often interact differently with security issues and community structures, thereby providing complementary insights into the effects of urban crime on social relations. In terms of age distribution, most key informants were within the 35–44 years age bracket 4 (33.3%), followed by those aged 45–54 years 3 (25.0%) and those aged 55 years and above 3 (25.0%). The younger age group (25–34 years) accounted for 2 (16.7%). The predominance of middle-aged and older participants is significant because individuals within these age groups are more likely to hold leadership positions and possess extensive knowledge of local crime trends and community dynamics. Their experiences provided valuable insights into how drug-related crime, gang violence, petty theft, and fear of crime influence social trust, collective action, and community cohesion.

Regarding sectoral representation, Chiefs/Sub-chiefs (Local Administration), Law Enforcement Officers (Police), Community Leaders (Nyumba Kumi/Elders), and Youth Representatives were each represented by 2 (16.7%). Additional perspectives were obtained from Religious Leaders 1 (8.3%), Civil Society/NGO Representatives 1 (8.3%), Business Community Representatives 1 (8.3%), and Community-Based Organization (CBO) Leaders 1 (8.3%). This broad sectoral representation strengthened the study by incorporating viewpoints from key actors involved in crime prevention, community mobilization, youth engagement, governance, and social support. These stakeholders directly interact with issues relating to drug abuse, gang violence, petty theft, and community safety, making them well positioned to

explain how such crimes affect community cohesion and how fear of crime shapes residents' behavior.

With respect to experience, the majority of key informants had lived or worked in Kibra for extended periods. Those with 11–15 years of experience formed the largest group 4 (33.3%), followed by those with over 15 years 3 (25.0%) and those with 6–10 years 3 (25.0%). A smaller proportion, 2 (16.7%), had between 1–5 years of experience. The extensive experience of most key informants enhanced the credibility of the qualitative findings because it enabled them to provide informed accounts of changes in crime patterns, community responses, and levels of social cohesion over time.

4.3.3 Effects of Drug-Related Crime on Community Cohesion

Drug-related crime was the first independent variable in this study. Data on this variable were collected using 5-point Likert scale [5 - Strongly agree, 4 - Agree, 3- Neutral, 2 – Disagree, 1 – Strongly Disagree]. The study examined respondents' perceptions of the relationship between drug abuse and crime in Kibra Sub-County. The results were presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Types of Crimes Most Commonly Associated with Drug Abuse

Drug Crime Types	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Petty theft (e.g., stealing phones, bags, household items)	269	17.4%	79.6%
Burglary/break-ins	122	7.9%	36.1%
Mugging and street robbery	196	12.6%	58.0%
Assault or violent behavior	149	9.6%	44.1%
Vandalism and property damage	125	8.1%	37.0%
Domestic violence	140	9.0%	41.4%
Drug possession or trafficking	167	10.8%	49.4%
Prostitution/transactional sex	116	7.5%	34.3%
Gang-related activities	152	9.8%	45.0%
Disorderly conduct/public disturbances	109	7.0%	32.2%

None	5	0.3%	1.5%
Total	1550	100.0%	458.6%

Source: (Field Data, 2025)

Specifically, 269 (79.6%) of the respondents identified petty theft (e.g., stealing phones, bags, and household items) as the most common crime linked to drug abuse. Mugging and street robbery were reported by 196 (58.0%) of the respondents, while 167 (49.4%) associated drug abuse with drug possession or trafficking. Similarly, 152 (45.0%) of the respondents linked drug abuse to gang-related activities. Further, 149 (44.1%) of the respondents identified assault or violent behavior as a common outcome of drug abuse, while 140 (41.4%) associated it with domestic violence. In addition, 125 (37.0%) cited vandalism and property damage, and 122 (36.1%) pointed to burglary or break-ins. Prostitution or transactional sex was reported by 116 (34.3%) of the respondents, while 109 (32.2%) associated drug abuse with disorderly conduct or public disturbances. Only 5 (1.5%) of the respondents indicated that none of the listed crimes were associated with drug abuse. Overall, these findings demonstrate that drug abuse is widely perceived as a significant driver of diverse forms of crime in Kibra Sub-County, with petty theft, street robbery, and drug-related offenses emerging as the most prevalent. Based on the findings, the majority of respondents agreed that drug abuse is associated with various forms of crime.

To assess residents' perceptions of the broader impact of drug abuse on crime levels, respondents were asked to indicate how drug abuse influences overall crime rates in the community. The findings are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

How Drug Abuse Influences Overall Crime Rates in the Community

Influence of drug abuse on overall crime rates	Frequency	Percent
It greatly increases crime rates	293	86.7
It moderately increases crime rates	20	5.9
It slightly increases crime rates	10	3.0
It has no effect on crime rates	3	.9
It reduces crime rates (unlikely, but included for neutrality)	7	2.1
Not sure/Don't know	5	1.5
Total	338	100.0

Source: (Field Data, 2025)

Based on the findings, a majority of respondents, 293 (86.7%), indicated that drug abuse greatly increases crime rates, while 20 (5.9%) reported that it moderately increases crime rates. Also, 10 (3.0%) perceived that drug abuse slightly increases crime rates. Only a very small proportion of respondents held contrary views whereby 3 (0.9%) indicated that drug abuse has no effect on crime rates, 7 (2.1%) suggested that it reduces crime rates, and 5 (1.5%) reported that they were not sure. The dominance of the “greatly increases crime rates” response suggests that drug abuse is perceived not merely as an individual behavioral issue but as a structural community-level problem that exacerbates insecurity.

Table 9**Respondents' Perceptions of the Effect of Drug Abuse on Crime in their Neighborhood**

Effect of Drug Abuse on Crime		SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
Drug selling activities are regularly observed in various parts of my neighborhood	F	44	30	55	132	77	3.50	1.29
	%	13.0%	8.9%	16.3%	39.1%	22.8%		
Drug dependency among youths has contributed to criminal behavior in this community.	F	38	16	34	112	138	3.88	1.30
	%	11.2%	4.7%	10.1%	33.1%	40.8%		
Socioeconomic conditions contribute to drug abuse which impact crime levels in these communities within this neighborhood that are widely known as hotspots for drug-related activities	F	34	29	50	129	96	3.66	1.25
	%	10.1%	8.6%	14.8%	38.2%	28.4%		
Use of drug contribute to increased community level violence this community	F	40	22	37	123	116	3.75	1.31
	%	11.8%	6.5%	10.9%	36.4%	34.3%		
Widespread use of drug abuse has affected the neighborhood safety	F	38	28	39	98	135	3.78	1.35
	%	11.2%	8.3%	11.5%	29.0%	39.9%		
Overall Score							3.71	1.30

Source: (Field Data, 2025)

From the findings, on whether drug selling activities are regularly observable in various parts of the neighborhood, 77 (22.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 132 (39.1%) agreed, 55 (16.3%) were neutral, while 30 (8.9%) disagreed and 44 (13.0%) strongly disagreed. This suggests that a majority of respondents perceive drug selling as a visible and widespread activity in the community.

On whether drug dependency among youths has contributed to criminal behavior in the community, 138 (40.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 112 (33.1%) agreed, 34 (10.1%)

were neutral, while 16 (4.7%) disagreed and 38 (11.2%) strongly disagreed. Regarding whether socioeconomic conditions contribute to drug abuse which in turn impacts crime levels in the neighborhood, 96 (28.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 129 (38.2%) agreed, 50 (14.8%) were neutral, while 29 (8.6%) disagreed and 34 (10.1%) strongly disagreed. On whether use of drugs contributes to increased community-level violence, 116 (34.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 123 (36.4%) agreed, 37 (10.9%) were neutral, while 22 (6.5%) disagreed and 40 (11.8%) strongly disagreed. Finally, on whether widespread drug abuse has affected neighborhood safety, 135 (39.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 98 (29.0%) agreed, 39 (11.5%) were neutral, while 28 (8.3%) disagreed and 38 (11.2%) strongly disagreed. Overall, the findings reveal a strong consensus among respondents that drug abuse is prevalent and significantly contributes to crime, violence, and reduced safety in the community.

These descriptive findings were further supported by the qualitative findings. For example, youth involvement in drug networks contributes to broader social disorganization and intergenerational conflict:

“Parents are losing control because some youths are recruited into drug distribution at a very young age. Once a young person joins that network, they start resisting authority at home and in the community. It creates conflict within families, and neighbors also fear confronting such youth. This situation divides the community because discipline and respect decline” (LA2, Interview, January 12, 2026).

In addition, fear of retaliation was consistently identified as a mechanism through which crime suppresses collective action, thereby weakening cohesion:

“People know exactly where drugs are sold. They see the transactions happening. But they fear giving information because once your name is mentioned, you are targeted.

Some have received threats before. So instead of reporting, they choose to remain silent to protect themselves and their families” (CP1, Interview, January 25, 2026).

Drug-related crime emerged as a critical factor undermining trust, which is a core component of community cohesion. As one local administration officer explained:

“When drugs enter a village, the first thing that disappears is trust. People begin to look at each other differently. You may greet your neighbor, but inside you are wondering whether he is protecting the sellers or even involved in the business. Nobody speaks openly because you do not know who is connected to whom. Even in community meetings, people avoid discussing drug issues directly out of fear” (LA1, Interview, December 18, 2025).

Similarly, a community leader highlighted how drug economies create internal divisions:

“The drug business creates silent divisions in the village. Some families depend on it for income, especially where there is unemployment. Others are suffering because their children are addicted. So, you find that instead of standing together, people take sides. That alone breaks unity because the community cannot speak with one voice” (WL1, Interview, December 22, 2025).

From the findings, the overall mean score for the effect of drug abuse on crime was $M = 3.71$, $Std. Dev = 1.30$, indicating a generally high level of agreement among respondents regarding the influence of drug abuse on crime within the neighborhood.

These accounts help explain why the regression model, though statistically significant, explains only a small proportion of variance in community cohesion. Drug-related crime does not operate in isolation but interacts with socio-economic realities such as unemployment and social inequality, thereby producing fragmented rather than unified social outcomes.

4.3.4 Effects of Gang Violence on Community Cohesion

Gang violence was the second independent variable in this study. Data on this variable were collected using both 5-point Likert scale [5 - Strongly agree, 4 - Agree, 3- Neutral, 2 – Disagree, 1 – Strongly Disagree] and multiple-response questions. Respondents were asked to indicate the types of gang activities or behaviors they observe in their neighborhood. The responses are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Respondents’ Perceptions of Prevalent Gang Activities and Behaviors in Kibra Sub-County

Gang Activities and Behaviors Observed	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Drug selling or distribution	200	11.8%	59.2%
Drug use in groups	209	12.4%	61.8%
Intimidation or harassment of residents	149	8.8%	44.1%
Recruitment of youths into gangs	146	8.6%	43.2%
Protection extortion (“security fees”)	74	4.4%	21.9%
Territorial markings (graffiti, symbols, colors)	105	6.2%	31.1%
Group fights or violent confrontations	140	8.3%	41.4%
Illegal weapons possession	103	6.1%	30.5%
Theft, mugging, or robbery linked to gang groups	223	13.2%	66.0%
Vandalism of property	126	7.5%	37.3%
Night-time patrols or control of certain areas	81	4.8%	24.0%
Loitering in large groups in specific hotspots	124	7.3%	36.7%
None observed	8	0.5%	2.4%
Total	1688	100.0%	499.4%

Source: (Field Data, 2025)

From the findings, theft, mugging, or robbery linked to gang groups was the most observed gang-related activity, reported by 223 (66.0%) of the respondents. Closely following were drug use in groups, cited by 209 (61.8%) of the respondents, and drug selling or distribution, reported by 200 (59.2%) of the respondents. A substantial proportion of respondents also observed intimidation or harassment of residents, as indicated by 149 (44.1%)

of the respondents, recruitment of youths into gangs 146 (43.2%), and group fights or violent confrontations by 140 (41.4%). In addition, vandalism of property was reported by 126 (37.3%) of the respondents, while loitering in large groups in specific hotspots was noted by 124 (36.7%). Territorial markings such as graffiti, symbols, or colors were observed by 105 (31.1%) of the respondents, and illegal weapons possession by 103 (30.5%). Less frequently reported activities included night-time patrols or control of certain areas, cited by 81 (24.0%) of the respondents, and protection extortion (“security fees”), reported by 74 (21.9%). Only a small fraction of respondents, 8 (2.4%), indicated that they had not observed any gang-related activities in their neighborhood. Overall, the study reveals that gang activities in Kibra Sub-County manifest in multiple forms of criminal and disruptive behaviors, with theft-related offenses and drug-related activities being the most prevalent.

Respondents were further asked to rate their level of agreement with statements concerning gang activity and violence in their neighborhood. The results are presented in Table 11.

Table 11**Respondents' Perceptions of Gang Activity and Violence in Kibra Sub-County**

Perceptions of Gang Activity and Violence		SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
The presence of identifiable gang members is evident within this neighborhood	F	34	27	66	156	55	3.51	1.16
	%	10.1%	8.0%	19.5%	46.2%	16.3%		
Gang-related confrontations or disputes occur from time to time and are known to residents in this community	F	34	33	55	152	64	3.53	1.20
	%	10.1%	9.8%	16.3%	45.0%	18.9%		
Community members can recognize specific groups or individuals who are associated with gang activity in this area	F	32	23	72	143	68	3.57	1.16
	%	9.5%	6.8%	21.3%	42.3%	20.1%		
Violent incidents involving gangs, such as fights or attacks, are known to occur within this neighborhood	F	31	26	46	150	85	3.69	1.19
	%	9.2%	7.7%	13.6%	44.4%	25.1%		
Gang-related signs, symbols, graffiti, or markings are visibly present in certain locations in this community	F	39	35	58	134	72	3.49	1.26
	%	11.5%	10.4%	17.2%	39.6%	21.3%		
Overall Score							3.56	1.19

Source: (Field Data, 2025)

The findings revealed that the presence of identifiable gang members or gang members is evident within the neighborhood as shown by 55(16.3%) of the respondents who strongly agreed, 156(46.2%) agreed, 66(19.5%) were neutral, while 27(8.0%) disagreed and 34(10.1%) strongly disagreed. Regarding gang-related confrontations or disputes occurring from time to time and being known to residents, 64(18.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 152(45.0%) agreed, 55(16.3%) were neutral, while 33(9.8%) disagreed and 34(10.1%) strongly disagreed. On whether community members can recognize specific groups or individuals associated with

gang activity, 68(20.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 143(42.3%) agreed, 72(21.3%) were neutral, while 23(6.8%) disagreed and 32(9.5%) strongly disagreed.

Concerning violent incidents involving gangs, such as fights or attacks, 85(25.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 150(44.4%) agreed, 46(13.6%) were neutral, while 26(7.7%) disagreed and 31(9.2%) strongly disagreed. Finally, on the presence of gang-related signs, symbols, graffiti, or markings in certain locations within the community, 72(21.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 134(39.6%) agreed, 58(17.2%) were neutral, while 35(10.4%) disagreed and 39(11.5%) strongly disagreed. Overall, the findings demonstrate that a majority of respondents expressed agreement with all the statements, suggesting that gang activity and violence are widely perceived as prevalent and visible within Kibra Sub-County. The consistently higher proportions of agreement and strong agreement across the indicators imply that gang presence is a significant and recognizable feature of the local environment. The overall mean score for respondents' perceptions of gang activity and violence in Kibra Sub-County was $M = 3.56$ ($SD = 1.19$), indicating a general tendency toward agreement with the statements presented.

These findings were further supported by the qualitative insights. Participants also described how gang activity restructures social space and limits interaction, thereby weakening social connectedness as shown by the statements obtained from the interview

“In some sections of Kibra, certain villages are known to be under the control of groups. Residents are very aware of these boundaries even though they are not marked physically. People avoid crossing into those areas unless it is necessary. Even for simple things like visiting a friend, attending a meeting, or going to a shop, they will think

twice. That alone reduces interaction and slowly divides the community” (NGO1, Interview, December 18, 2025).

Similarly, restricted participation in communal activities was emphasized:

“When gangs mark territories, even social gatherings reduce. If a public meeting is called in a different zone, some residents will not attend because they do not feel safe walking through areas associated with rival groups. Over time, this creates separation. People stay within their small circles instead of engaging as one community” (CL1, Interview, December 22, 2025).

These insights demonstrate that gang violence weakens cohesion indirectly by limiting mobility, participation, and shared spaces, which are essential for building trust and cooperation. This indirect effect helps explain why its independent statistical significance is low despite its observable social impact.

Participants also described how fear associated with gang violence disrupts everyday life and weakens informal social control:

“Gang confrontations happen without warning. Sometimes it is over territory, sometimes over revenge. When violence erupts, people immediately retreat indoors. Shops close early, children rush home, and public spaces become deserted. That kind of environment affects normal social life because residents are always anticipating the next incident” (LE1, Interview, January 5, 2026).

“In the past, if a young person misbehaved, any adult in the neighborhood could correct them. Now, if you try to question a young man suspected of being in a gang, you risk being threatened. Some elders have been warned to ‘mind their business.’ Because of that, people keep quiet” (CBO2, Interview, January 18, 2026).

These findings reinforce the interpretation that gang violence erodes collective efficacy, a key dimension of community cohesion.

4.3.5 Effects of Petty Theft on Community Cohesion

Petty theft was the third independent variable in this study. Data on this variable were collected using both 5-point Likert scale [5 - Strongly agree, 4 - Agree, 3- Neutral, 2 – Disagree, 1 – Strongly Disagree] and multiple-response questions. Respondents were asked to indicate the kinds of petty theft incidents commonly experienced or reported in their neighborhoods in Kibra Sub-County. The findings are presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Kinds of Petty Theft Incidents Commonly Experienced in Kibra Sub-County

Kinds of Petty Theft Incidents Commonly Experienced	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Phone snatching	300	16.0%	88.8%
Handbag or wallet theft	226	12.1%	66.9%
Pickpocketing in crowded areas	217	11.6%	64.2%
Theft of household items (e.g., utensils, electronics)	178	9.5%	52.7%
Theft of clothing or personal items from drying lines	170	9.1%	50.3%
Bicycle or motorcycle parts theft	134	7.2%	39.6%
Breaking into unattended houses/rooms (minor break-ins)	142	7.6%	42.0%
Theft of shop items or groceries	151	8.1%	44.7%
Theft of livestock (e.g., chickens, goats)	64	3.4%	18.9%
Theft during public gatherings or events	150	8.0%	44.4%
Vandalism combined with theft (e.g., breaking windows to steal)	129	6.9%	38.2%
No petty theft incidents reported	13	0.7%	3.8%
Total	1874	100.0%	554.4%

Source: (Field Data,2025).

The results indicated that phone snatching was the most experienced form of petty theft, cited by 300 (88.8%) of the respondents. Handbag or wallet theft was the second most

frequently reported incident, identified by 226 (66.9%) of respondents, followed closely by pickpocketing in crowded areas, reported by 217 (64.2%) of respondents. More than half of the respondents reported theft of household items such as utensils and electronics, with 178 (52.7%) indicating such cases, while 170 (50.3%) cited theft of clothing or personal items from drying lines. Other commonly experienced petty theft incidents included theft of shop items or groceries, reported by 151 (44.7%) of respondents, and theft during public gatherings or events, cited by 150 (44.4%). Also, 142 (42.0%) of respondents reported breaking into unattended houses or rooms, 134 (39.6%) indicated bicycle or motorcycle parts theft, and 129 (38.2%) reported vandalism combined with theft. A smaller proportion of respondents, 64 (18.9%), reported theft of livestock such as chickens and goats. Only 13 (3.8%) of the respondents indicated that no petty theft incidents were experienced or reported in their neighborhoods, suggesting that petty theft is widely prevalent across Kibra Sub-County.

Respondents were also asked to rate their level of agreement with statements concerning the frequency and community impact of petty theft in their neighborhood. The results are shown in Table 13.

Table 13**Respondents' Perceptions of the Frequency and Community Impact of Petty Theft in Kibra Sub-County**

Perceptions of the Frequency and Community Impact of Petty Theft		SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev
Incidents of petty theft occur frequently in this neighborhood, involving the loss of small personal or household items	F	31	25	48	134	100	3.73	1.22
	%	9.2%	7.4%	14.2%	39.6%	29.6%		
Residents in this area commonly experience theft of unattended belongings such as bags, phones, or clothing	F	36	12	53	138	99	3.75	1.22
	%	10.7%	3.6%	15.7%	40.8%	29.3%		
Snatching or pickpocketing incidents happen regularly within public spaces in this community	F	27	23	47	146	95	3.77	1.17
	%	8.0%	6.8%	13.9%	43.2%	28.1%		
Theft of items from homes or compounds, such as tools or movable objects, is a recurring issue in this neighborhood	F	32	25	68	142	71	3.58	1.18
	%	9.5%	7.4%	20.1%	42.0%	21.0%		
Cases involving theft of easily portable items, such as electronics or accessories, are commonly reported by residents	F	39	17	48	133	101	3.71	1.27
	%	11.5%	5.0%	14.2%	39.3%	29.9%		
Overall Score							3.71	1.21

Source: (Field Data, 2025).

On the statement that incidents of petty theft occur frequently in the neighborhood, 31 (9.2%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, 25 (7.4%) disagreed, 48 (14.2%) were neutral, while 134 (39.6%) agreed and 100 (29.6%) strongly agreed. This indicates that combined 69.2% of respondents acknowledged that petty theft occurs frequently. Regarding the theft of unattended belongings such as bags, phones, or clothing, 36 (10.7%) strongly disagreed, 12 (3.6%) disagreed, 53 (15.7%) were neutral, while 138 (40.8%) agreed and 99 (29.3%) strongly agreed. This shows that 70.1% of respondents affirmed that such theft is common within the neighborhood. Further, on the issue of snatching or pickpocketing in public spaces, 27 (8.0%)

strongly disagreed, 23 (6.8%) disagreed, 47 (13.9%) were neutral, while 146 (43.2%) agreed and 95 (28.1%) strongly agreed. This reflects a combined agreement level of 71.3%, indicating that such incidents are widely perceived to occur regularly.

In relation to theft of items from homes or compounds, such as tools or movable objects, 32 (9.5%) strongly disagreed, 25 (7.4%) disagreed, 68 (20.1%) were neutral, while 142 (42.0%) agreed and 71 (21.0%) strongly agreed. Overall, 63.0% of respondents agreed that this form of theft is a recurring issue in the community. Finally, concerning theft of easily portable items such as electronics or accessories, 39 (11.5%) strongly disagreed, 17 (5.0%) disagreed, 48 (14.2%) were neutral, while 133 (39.3%) agreed and 101 (29.9%) strongly agreed. This indicates that 69.2% of respondents reported that such cases are commonly experienced within the community. The overall mean score was 3.71 (SD = 1.21), indicating a generally high level of agreement that petty theft is prevalent and impactful in Kibra Sub-County. Overall, the findings reveal a consistent pattern of high perceived prevalence of petty theft across different contexts within Kibra Sub-County.

Findings obtained from interview indicated stressed the role of petty theft in generating suspicion and weakening interpersonal trust:

“When small items disappear like clothes from the line, gas cylinders, or phones you begin to suspect even your neighbor’s children. You may not confront them directly, but inside you start doubting them. That creates silent tension. You greet each other, but the trust is no longer the same” (CL1, Interview, December 18, 2025).

Another respondent explained that “petty theft damages relationships more quietly than violent crime. There is no big confrontation, but people start locking themselves in. They stop borrowing or lending items.” (LE2, Interview, December 22, 2025). Participants also described

social withdrawal following victimization. One explained that “victims sometimes isolate themselves. They feel either embarrassed that they were targeted or angry at the community for not protecting them. As a result, they reduce participation in meetings or communal activities” (LA2, Interview, January 5, 2026). Moreover, the normalization of petty theft reflects declining collective responsibility. As echoed by one of them, “people say, ‘Hii ni kawaida ya mtaa’ (this is normal in the neighborhood). They accept it as part of living here. When something becomes normal, people stop fighting it together” (YL1, Interview, January 15, 2026). These qualitative insights explain why petty theft, despite having the strongest relative influence in the regression model, did not achieve statistical significance. Its effects are gradual, diffuse, and embedded in everyday interactions, making them difficult to capture through isolated quantitative measures.

4.3.6 Mediating Effects of Fear of Crime

Fear of crime was the mediating variable in this study. Data on this variable were collected using 5-point Likert scale [5 - Strongly agree, 4 - Agree, 3- Neutral, 2 – Disagree, 1 – Strongly Disagree]. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements concerning neighborhood conditions that influence their fear of crime in Kibra Sub-County. The results are indicated in Table 14.

Table 14**Neighborhood Conditions Influencing Residents' Fear of Crime in Kibra Sub-County**

Neighborhood Conditions Influencing Residents' Fear of Crime		SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev
I often feel personally unsafe when walking alone within this neighborhood, especially during evening or night hours	F	32	25	44	131	106	3.75	1.24
	%	9.5%	7.4%	13.0%	38.8%	31.4%		
I regularly experience worry or concern that I might become a victim of crime within this area	F	36	34	48	155	65	3.53	1.22
	%	10.7%	10.1%	14.2%	45.9%	19.2%		
I avoid certain locations or routes in this neighborhood because I perceive them as unsafe or risky	F	31	14	36	134	123	3.90	1.21
	%	9.2%	4.1%	10.7%	39.6%	36.4%		
I frequently feel anxious about the safety and security of my household when I am at home or away.	F	29	20	59	139	91	3.72	1.17
	%	8.6%	5.9%	17.5%	41.1%	26.9%		
I am consistently alert and cautious when moving around this community because I am concerned about potential criminal activity.	F	32	15	45	153	93	3.77	1.18
	%	9.5%	4.4%	13.3%	45.3%	27.5%		
Overall Score							3.73	1.20

Source: (Field Data, 2025)

Based on the respondents indicated that they often feel personally unsafe when walking alone within the neighborhood, especially during evening or night hours as shown by 106 (31.4%) of the respondents who strongly agreed, 131 (38.8%) agreed, 44 (13.0%) were neutral, 25 (7.4%) disagreed, while 32 (9.5%) strongly disagreed. Similarly, on the statement that they regularly experience worry or concern that they might become victims of crime within the area, 65 (19.2%) strongly agreed, 155 (45.9%) agreed, 48 (14.2%) were neutral, 34 (10.1%) disagreed, and 36 (10.7%) strongly disagreed. On avoidance behavior, 123 (36.4%) strongly agreed, 134 (39.6%) agreed, 36 (10.7%) were neutral, 14 (4.1%) disagreed, and 31 (9.2%) strongly disagreed that they avoid certain locations or routes because they perceive them as

unsafe or risky. Regarding concern for household safety, 91 (26.9%) strongly agreed, 139 (41.1%) agreed, 59 (17.5%) were neutral, 20 (5.9%) disagreed, while 29 (8.6%) strongly disagreed that they frequently feel anxious about the safety and security of their household when at home or away.

Furthermore, on the statement that they are consistently alert and cautious when moving around the community due to concerns about potential criminal activity, 93 (27.5%) strongly agreed, 153 (45.3%) agreed, 45 (13.3%) were neutral, 15 (4.4%) disagreed, and 32 (9.5%) strongly disagreed. Overall, the findings demonstrate a strong and consistent pattern of fear of crime across all measured dimensions, including perceived personal safety, fear of victimization, avoidance of risky areas, concern for household security, and heightened vigilance. Findings indicate a generally high level of fear of crime, as reflected by an overall mean of $M = 3.73$ ($SD = 1.20$). The high levels of agreement across these indicators suggest that fear of crime is deeply embedded in residents' daily experiences and significantly influences their behavior and interactions within the community.

The qualitative findings revealed how fear transforms crime exposure into social withdrawal and weakened unity. Participants consistently reported that fear of crime leads residents to avoid certain streets, markets, and public spaces, particularly at night. One respondent, YL2, stated that “after 7 p.m., many streets are empty. Even if there is no immediate incident, people prefer staying indoors. Parents call their children inside early because they fear what might happen” (YL2, Interview, December 18, 2025). This avoidance reduces spontaneous interaction and informal surveillance, both of which are essential components of social cohesion.

Fear was also found to discourage attendance at social and civic gatherings. One chief explained that “when crime increases, attendance at barazas drops. People fear walking home late. Even when meetings are important, residents weigh the risk of moving at night” (CL2, Interview, January 5, 2026). Such restricted engagement undermines participatory structures and collective decision-making processes within the community. Respondents also described a constant state of alertness among residents. An officer remarked that “people are always cautious. Even small noises at night create panic. If a dog barks or someone runs past, residents assume something bad is happening” (LE2, Interview, January 13, 2026). This psychological strain limits relaxed neighborly interactions and fosters an environment of suspicion rather than trust.

Importantly, several respondents explicitly connected fear to declining unity, thereby directly validating the mediation results. A community leader summarized that “crime alone does not break unity; fear does. When people are afraid, they stop engaging, they stop attending meetings, and they stop trusting. Fear pushes everyone into their own space” (CL1, Interview, December 29, 2025). This narrative confirms the statistical finding that fear of crime serves as a mediating mechanism through which drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft translate into weakened trust, reduced participation, and diminished collective efficacy. The integration of qualitative and quantitative findings therefore provides strong empirical support for the mediating role of fear in the relationship between urban crime and community cohesion in Kibra Sub-County.

4.3.7 Community Cohesion in Kibra Sub-County

Community cohesion was the dependent variable in this study. Data were collected using both 5-point Likert scale [5 - Strongly agree, 4 - Agree, 3- Neutral, 2 – Disagree, 1 –

Strongly Disagree] and multiple-response questions. To assess the level of community cohesion within Kibra Sub-County, respondents were asked to describe the level of trust and togetherness among residents in their neighborhood, and the results are shown in Table 15.

Table 15

Respondents' Perceptions of Trust and Togetherness Among Residents in Kibra Sub-County

Perceptions of Trust and Togetherness Among Residents	Frequency	Percent
Very strong — residents support and trust each other	45	13.3
Strong — there is general trust and cooperation	36	10.7
Moderate — some trust exists, but not consistent	153	45.3
Weak — limited cooperation and low trust	49	14.5
Very weak — little to no trust among residents	43	12.7
Not sure/Cannot assess	10	3.0
Total	336	99.4
Missing System	2	.6
Total	338	100.0

Source: (Field Data, 2025)

Based on the findings, 153 (45.3%) of the respondents indicated a moderate level of trust and togetherness within the community. In contrast, 49 (14.5%) of the respondents reported low levels of cohesion, describing trust as weak with limited cooperation, while 43 (12.7%) indicated very low levels. On the other hand, a smaller proportion of respondents expressed positive perceptions, with 45 (13.3%) indicating very strong levels of trust and 36 (10.7%) reporting strong levels of trust and cooperation. In addition, 10 (3.0%) of the respondents were not sure or could not assess the level of trust and togetherness within the community. Overall, less than one-quarter of the respondents (24.0%) reported strong or very strong levels of trust and cooperation, while a larger proportion reflected moderate to low cohesion. majority of respondents indicated moderate to low levels of trust and togetherness among residents, while a smaller proportion reported high levels of cohesion.

To assess the level of community cohesion within Kibra Sub-County, respondents were asked to indicate what best represents the nature of relationships and cooperation among community members. The findings are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Respondents' Views on the Nature of Relationships and Cooperation Among Community Members in Kibra Sub-County

Nature of Relationships and Cooperation Among Community Members	Frequency	Percent
Very supportive — residents work closely together, help each other, and maintain strong relationships	52	15.4
Supportively there is general cooperation and positive interaction among residents	66	19.5
Moderately cooperative — residents interact and assist each other occasionally	109	32.2
Limited cooperation — people rarely interact or collaborate unless necessary	63	18.6
Poor relationships — conflicts, mistrust, or disconnection between residents are common	41	12.1
Not sure/Cannot access	7	2.1
Total	338	100.0

Source, (Field Data, 2025)

The largest proportion of respondents, 109 (32.2%), described the community as moderately cooperative, indicating that residents interact and assist each other occasionally. A combined 118 (34.9%) of respondents expressed positive perceptions of cohesion, with 66 (19.5%) describing the community as supportive and 52 (15.4%) indicating that relationships are very supportive, where residents work closely together, help each other, and maintain strong relationships. However, a significant proportion of respondents reported weaker social ties. Specifically, 63 (18.6%) indicated limited cooperation, stating that people rarely interact or collaborate unless necessary, while 41 (12.1%) described relationships as poor, reflecting conflict, mistrust, or disconnection between residents. In addition, 7 (2.1%) of the respondents were not sure or unable to assess the nature of community relationships. Overall, while 227

(67.1%) of the respondents perceived at least moderate cooperation within the community, the presence of 104 (30.7%) reporting limited or poor relationships indicates underlying social fragility. These findings suggest that community cohesion in Kibra Sub-County is neither entirely strong nor entirely fractured but exists along a spectrum ranging from strong support networks to mistrust and social disconnection.

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements measuring trust, unity, and cooperation among residents in their neighborhood. The results are presented in Table 17.

Table 17

Residents' Level of Agreement on Statements Measuring Trust, Unity, and Cooperation in Kibra Sub-County

Statements Measuring Trust, Unity, and Cooperation		SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev
People in this community generally trust one another and feel confident interacting with their neighbors	F %	54 16.0%	85 25.1%	110 32.5%	77 22.8%	12 3.6%	2.73	1.09
Residents in this neighborhood experience a strong sense of belonging and connection to the community	F %	36 10.7%	72 21.3%	107 31.7%	97 28.7%	26 7.7%	3.01	1.11
Members of this community readily offer support and assistance to each other when the need arises	F %	38 11.2%	52 15.4%	82 24.3%	135 39.9%	31 9.2%	3.20	1.15
People living in this area participate in joint community efforts and work together on matters that affect the neighborhood	F %	30 8.9%	50 14.8%	102 30.2%	127 37.6%	29 8.6%	3.22	1.08
Interactions among community members are characterized by mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and positive social relations	F %	38 11.2%	62 18.3%	86 25.4%	116 34.3%	36 10.7%	3.15	1.18
Overall Score							3.06	1.12

Source: (Field Data, 2025)

With respect to interpersonal trust, a substantial proportion of respondents expressed reservations, as 54(16.0%) strongly disagreed and 85(25.1%) disagreed that people in the community trust one another, while the largest share, 110(32.5%), remained neutral. Only 77(22.8%) agreed and 12(3.6%) strongly agreed. Similarly, perceptions of belonging and connection to the community were moderate, with 36(10.7%) of respondents strongly disagreeing and 72(21.3%) disagreeing, 107(31.7%) remaining neutral, 97(28.7%) agreeing, and 26(7.7%) strongly agreeing, indicating a relatively balanced but cautious sense of community attachment.

In contrast, stronger positive perceptions emerged regarding mutual support and cooperation. On the statement that community members readily offer support and assistance, 38(11.2%) strongly disagreed, 52(15.4%) disagreed, 82(24.3%) were neutral, while 135(39.9%) agreed and 31(9.2%) strongly agreed. Likewise, participation in joint community efforts recorded relatively favorable responses, as 30(8.9%) strongly disagreed, 50(14.8%) disagreed, 102(30.2%) were neutral, 127(37.6%) agreed, and 29(8.6%) strongly agreed. Interactions characterized by mutual respect and peaceful coexistence also showed moderately positive trends, with 38(11.2%) strongly disagreeing, 62(18.3%) disagreeing, 86(25.4%) neutral, 116(34.3%) agreeing, and 36(10.7%) strongly agreeing. The findings reveal a mixed but generally moderate level of agreement among residents regarding trust, unity, and cooperation within Kibra Sub-County. Overall, the composite score indicates a moderate level of trust, unity, and cooperation ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 1.12$). Overall, these findings suggest that while elements of cooperation and mutual assistance are present within the community, levels of trust, belonging, and full social cohesion remain fragile and unevenly distributed.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

4.4.1 Multiple Regression Analysis for Urban Crimes and Community Cohesion

To examine whether selected urban crimes (drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft) jointly predict community cohesion among residents of Kibra Sub-County, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. The multiple regression model summary results are presented in Tables 18.

Table 18

Multiple Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.341 ^a	.116	.108	.92024
a. Predictors: (Constant), Petty Theft, Drug Related Crime, Gang Violence				

Source: (Field Data,2025)

Result from Table 18 shows the multiple correlation coefficient (R) was .341, indicating a weak but positive relationship between the observed values of community cohesion and those predicted by the regression model. The R value reflects the overall correlation between the independent variables (drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft) and the dependent variable (community cohesion). The coefficient of determination (R^2) was .116, suggesting that approximately 11.6% of the variation in community cohesion is explained by the combined effects of the three forms of urban crime included in the model. This implies that the remaining 88.4% of the variation in community cohesion is attributable to other factors not examined in this study. The adjusted R^2 value of .108 indicates that, after controlling for model complexity, the explanatory power of the model remains relatively low but stable, confirming that the predictors contribute modestly to explaining community cohesion.

Table 19**Significance of Multiple Regression Model (ANOVA)**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	37.201	3	12.400	14.643	.000 ^b
	Residual	282.844	334	.847		
	Total	320.045	337			

a. Dependent Variable: Community Cohesion**b. Predictors: (Constant), Petty Theft, Drug Related Crime, Gang Violence**

Source: (Field Data, 2025)

Table 19 presents the results of ANOVA, which tested the overall significance of the regression model. The findings show that the model was statistically significant, $F(3, 334) = 14.643, p < .001$. This indicates that the combination of drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft significantly predicts community cohesion. Therefore, the regression model provides a better fit to the data than a model with no predictors, confirming that the independent variables jointly have a statistically significant effect on community cohesion.

Table 20**Multiple Regression Model Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.873	.187		10.026	.000
	Drug Related Crime	.057	.072	.069	.786	.432
	Gang Violence	.118	.089	.127	1.325	.186
	Petty Theft	.151	.085	.171	1.776	.077

a. Dependent Variable: Community Cohesion

Source: (Field Data,2025)

To further assess the individual contribution of each predictor, the regression coefficients presented in Table 20 were examined. The general multiple regression model used in this analysis is expressed as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Where Y represents community cohesion, X_1 represents drug-related crime, X_2 represents gang violence, X_3 represents petty theft, and ε is the error term. By substituting the unstandardized beta coefficients, the estimated regression equation becomes:

$$Y = 1.873 + 0.057X_1 + 0.118X_2 + 0.151X_3$$

The constant term ($\beta_0 = 1.873$) indicates that when all independent variables are held constant at zero, the baseline level of community cohesion would be 1.873. This suggests that other factors not included in the model also contribute to community cohesion.

The unstandardized coefficients show the direction and magnitude of the relationship between predictor and community cohesion. Specifically, holding other variables constant, a one-unit increase in drug-related crime is associated with a .057 increase in community cohesion. Similarly, a one-unit increase in gang violence corresponds to a .118 increase in community cohesion, while a one-unit increase in petty theft is associated with a .151 increase in community cohesion. Although these relationships are positive, their magnitudes are relatively small.

To facilitate comparison across variables, the standardized beta coefficients were considered. The results indicate that petty theft ($\beta = .171$) had the strongest relative contribution to community cohesion, followed by gang violence ($\beta = .127$), and drug-related crime ($\beta = .069$). This suggests that, among the three predictors, petty theft had the greatest influence on variations in community cohesion, although the overall effect remains modest. However, the statistical significance of each predictor reveals that none of the independent variables made a significant unique contribution to the model. Drug-related crime ($\beta = .069$, $t = .786$, $p = .432$), gang violence ($\beta = .127$, $t = 1.325$, $p = .186$), and petty theft ($\beta = .171$, $t = 1.776$, $p = .077$) all had p -values greater than .05. This indicates that, individually, none of the predictors

significantly explains variations in community cohesion when the effects of the other variables are controlled.

Based on these findings, the null hypothesis (H_{01}), which stated that selected urban crimes have no significant effects on community cohesion among residents of Kibra Sub-County, is partially rejected. While the overall regression model was statistically significant, the individual predictors did not show statistically significant effects. This suggests that the influence of urban crime on community cohesion is better understood as a combined or cumulative effect rather than as the result of any single type of crime. This implies that community cohesion in Kibra Sub-County is shaped by a complex interplay of multiple factors.

4.4.2 Hypothesis Testing for Fear of Crime and its Mediating Effect on the Relationship Between Urban Crimes and Community Cohesion

This section presents the results for inferential statistics for fear of crime and its mediating effect on the relationship between selected urban crimes and community cohesion. The independent variables were drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft, while fear of crime was the mediating variable and community cohesion was the dependent variable. Hypothesis testing was conducted using hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis in SPSS Version 26. Following the mediation procedure outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986), the mediating effect of fear of crime on the relationship between selected urban crimes and community cohesion was evaluated using a three-step regression model. Establishing hierarchical models allows comparison between models with and without the mediator to demonstrate changes in explanatory power.

For purposes of analysis, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H_{01a}: Fear of crime has no significant mediating effect on the relationship between selected urban crimes (drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft) and community cohesion in Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County.

The three-step regression models were specified as follows:

Model 1 (Total Effect Model)

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Model 2 (Path a: Independent Variables to Mediator)

$$M = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Model 3 (Direct Effect with Mediator)

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 M + \varepsilon$$

Where:

- Y = Community Cohesion
- M = Fear of Crime
- X_1 = Drug-related Crime
- X_2 = Gang Violence
- X_3 = Petty Theft
- ε = Error term

Model fitting information, ANOVA, R-Square, and parameter estimates were used to test the hypothesis. The hierarchical regression results are presented below

The hierarchical multiple regression results for the mediating effect of fear of crime on the relationship between selected urban crimes (drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft) and community cohesion are presented in Table 21.

Table 21

Model Summary for Mediating Effect of Fear of Crime on the Relationship between Selected Urban Crimes and Community Cohesion

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
Model 1	.34 ^a	.12	.11	.92	.12	14.64	3	334	.00
Model 2	.82 ^b	.68	.67	.61	.68	232.30	3	334	.00
Model 3	.38 ^c	.14	.13	.91	.14	13.75	4	333	.00
a. Predictors: (Constant), Petty Theft, Drug Related Crime, Gang Violence									
b. Predictors: (Constant), Petty Theft, Drug Related Crime, Gang Violence									
c. Predictors: (Constant), Fear of Crime, Drug Related Crime, Gang Violence, Petty Theft									

Source: (Field Data, 2025)

Model 1 examined the total effect of selected urban crimes on community cohesion. The model was statistically significant, $F(3, 334) = 14.64, p < .001$, with $R = .34$ and $R^2 = .12$. This indicates that drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft jointly explained 12% of the variance in community cohesion. Model 2 assessed the effect of selected urban crimes on the mediator, fear of crime. The model was statistically significant, $F(3, 334) = 232.30, p < .001$, with $R = .82$ and $R^2 = .68$. This shows that the selected urban crimes explained 68% of the variance in fear of crime. Model 3 introduced fear of crime into the regression equation predicting community cohesion. The model was statistically significant, $F(4, 333) = 13.75, p < .001$, with $R = .38$ and $R^2 = .14$. The inclusion of fear of crime increased the explained variance in community cohesion from 12% to 14%, reflecting an R^2 change of .02. This suggests that fear of crime contributes additional explanatory power beyond the direct effects of selected

urban crimes. Overall, the three models were statistically significant and confirm that the predictors meaningfully explain variations in both fear of crime and community cohesion.

The ANOVA results presented in Table 22 further confirm the statistical significance of the regression models.

Table 22
ANOVA for Mediating Effect of Fear of Crime

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Model 1	Regression	37.201	3	12.400	14.643	.000 ^a
	Residual	282.844	334	.847		
	Total	320.045	337			
Model 2	Regression	259.775	3	86.592	232.300	.000 ^b
	Residual	124.501	334	.373		
	Total	384.276	337			
Model 3	Regression	45.352	4	11.338	13.745	.000 ^c
	Residual	274.693	333	.825		
	Total	320.045	337			
Dependent Variable: Community Cohesion						
a. Predictors: (Constant), Petty Theft, Drug Related Crime, Gang Violence						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Petty Theft, Drug Related Crime, Gang Violence						
c. Predictors: (Constant), Fear of Crime, Drug Related Crime, Gang Violence, Petty Theft						

Source: (Field Data, 2025)

For Model 1, the regression sum of squares was 37.201 with a corresponding $F(3, 334) = 14.643$, $p < .001$, indicating that selected urban crimes significantly predicted community cohesion. For Model 2, the regression sum of squares was 259.775, yielding $F(3, 334) = 232.300$, $p < .001$. This confirms that drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft significantly predicted fear of crime. For Model 3, the regression sum of squares was 45.352 with $F(4, 333) = 13.745$, $p < .001$. The addition of fear of crime significantly improved the prediction of community cohesion. These findings demonstrate that the regression models were dependable and suitable for testing the mediating role of fear of crime.

The regression coefficients for the three hierarchical models are presented in Table

23.

Table 23

Coefficients for Mediating Effect of Fear of Crime on the Relationship between Selected Urban Crimes and Community Cohesion

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
Model 1: Urban Crimes → Community Cohesion	(Constant)	1.87	.19		10.03	.00
	Drug Related Crime	.06	.07	.07	.79	.43
	Gang Violence	.12	.09	.13	1.33	.19
	Petty Theft	.15	.09	.17	1.78	.08
Model 2: Urban Crimes → Fear of Crime	(Constant)	.61	.12		4.93	.00
	Drug Related Crime	.17	.05	.19	3.566	.00
	Gang Violence	.19	.06	.19	3.27	.00
	Petty Theft	.49	.06	.50	8.61	.00
Model 3: Urban Crimes and Fear of Crime → Community Cohesion	(Constant)	1.72	.19		8.99	.00
	Drug Related Crime	.01	.07	.02	.18	.86
	Gang Violence	.07	.09	.07	.77	.44
	Petty Theft	.03	.09	.03	.29	.77
	Fear of Crime	.26	.08	.28	3.14	.00

Source: (Field Data, 2025)

In Model 1, which examined the direct relationship between selected urban crimes and community cohesion, none of the individual predictors were statistically significant. Drug-related crime was not a significant predictor of community cohesion ($B = 0.06$, $SE = 0.07$, $\beta = .07$, $t = 0.79$, $p = .43$). Similarly, gang violence did not significantly predict community cohesion ($B = 0.12$, $SE = 0.09$, $\beta = .13$, $t = 1.33$, $p = .19$), nor did petty theft ($B = 0.15$, $SE = 0.09$, $\beta = .17$, $t = 1.78$, $p = .08$). Although petty theft approached statistical significance, it did not meet the conventional alpha level of .05. In Model 2, which assessed the relationship between

selected urban crimes and fear of crime, all three predictors were statistically significant. Drug-related crime significantly predicted fear of crime ($B = 0.17, SE = 0.05, \beta = .19, t = 3.57, p < .001$), as did gang violence ($B = 0.19, SE = 0.06, \beta = .19, t = 3.27, p < .001$). Petty theft emerged as the strongest predictor of fear of crime ($B = 0.49, SE = 0.06, \beta = .50, t = 8.61, p < .001$), indicating that increases in petty theft were associated with higher levels of fear of crime among residents. In Model 3, fear of crime was introduced into the regression equation predicting community cohesion. The results showed that fear of crime was a statistically significant predictor of community cohesion ($B = 0.26, SE = 0.08, \beta = .28, t = 3.14, p < .001$).

However, drug-related crime ($B = 0.01, SE = 0.07, \beta = .02, t = 0.18, p = .86$), gang violence ($B = 0.07, SE = 0.09, \beta = .07, t = 0.77, p = .44$), and petty theft ($B = 0.03, SE = 0.09, \beta = .03, t = 0.29, p = .77$) were not statistically significant predictors when the mediator was included. The reduction in the regression coefficients of the crime variables upon inclusion of fear of crime suggests the presence of a mediating effect. These findings indicate that fear of crime mediates the relationship between selected urban crimes and community cohesion. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{01a}) is rejected. The results suggest that urban crimes influence community cohesion indirectly through residents' fear levels.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of findings, summary of the main findings, and key conclusions drawn from the findings. The summary highlights the overall research process, the objectives pursued, and the major findings. Based on these findings, conclusions are made in line with the objectives and theoretical foundations of the study. Finally, recommendations are proposed for policy, practice, and further research.

5.2 Discussions

This section discusses the findings of the study in relation to the research objectives.

5.2.1 Effects of Drug-Related Crime on Community Cohesion

The study examined the effects of drug-related crime on community cohesion among residents of Kibra Sub-County. Drug-related crime was conceptualized in terms of prevalence of drug selling, visible drug use, presence of drug hotspots, youth involvement in drug activities, and frequency of drug-related incidents. Community cohesion was measured through trust among community members, sense of safety, social connectedness, community participation, perceived unity, and collective cooperation. The study integrated insights from Social Disorganization Theory and Collective Efficacy Theory to explain the relationship between drug-related crime and cohesion. Linear regression analyses were conducted to test the hypothesis.

Descriptively, the study found that drug abuse was widely perceived as a significant driver of crime in Kibra, with 86.7% of respondents (n=293) indicating that drug abuse greatly increases crime rates. Petty theft (79.6%), mugging and street robbery (58.0%), and drug

possession or trafficking (49.4%) were identified as the most common crimes linked to drug abuse. Furthermore, respondents demonstrated high levels of agreement that drug dependency among youths has contributed to criminal behavior ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 1.30$) and that widespread drug abuse has affected neighborhood safety ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.35$).

However, the multiple regression results revealed that drug-related crime did not have a statistically significant independent effect on community cohesion ($\beta = .069$, $p = .432$). Although the overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(3, 334) = 14.643$, $p < .001$, drug-related crime did not uniquely explain variations in cohesion when considered in isolation. This is further supported by the hierarchical regression analysis (Model 3), where drug-related crime remained non-significant ($B = 0.01$, $SE = 0.07$, $\beta = .02$, $t = 0.18$, $p = .86$) after controlling for fear of crime. This indicates that drug-related crime does not operate as a standalone determinant of community cohesion but rather as part of a broader constellation of interacting urban crime factors, with its effects largely mediated through fear. The qualitative evidence of residents withdrawing from meetings, avoiding reporting, and stigmatizing youth reflects a breakdown in informal social control mechanisms emphasized by Donohoo et al. (2018).

This finding is strongly supported by interview narratives which revealed that fear and intimidation suppress collective action within the community. One participant noted that although residents are aware of drug activities, they deliberately avoid reporting due to fear of retaliation: “People know exactly where drugs are sold... but they fear giving information because once your name is mentioned, you are targeted... so instead of reporting, they choose to remain silent to protect themselves and their families” (CP1, Interview, January 25, 2026). This fear-driven silence weakens community participation and undermines the shared

responsibility necessary for collective efficacy. Importantly, the results reinforce empirical studies from Brazil and South Africa which show that visible criminal networks in informal settlements generate fear and normalize deviance, thereby fragmenting neighbourhood solidarity (Oosterbaan & Van Wijk, 2015; Barolsky, 2016). The Kibra findings similarly reveal that drug hotspots create uncertainty, silence, and internal divisions, particularly when families depend economically on the drug trade.

Qualitative evidence further illustrates how drug economies deepen social fragmentation by creating competing interests within the community. As one community leader explained, “The drug business creates silent divisions in the village... some families depend on it for income... others are suffering because their children are addicted... instead of standing together, people take sides” (WL1, Interview, December 22, 2025). This division erodes unity and makes it difficult for the community to act collectively, reinforcing the observed weak independent statistical effect. This dynamic illustrates the Social Disorganization argument that criminal norms become culturally transmitted in persistently disadvantaged areas (Bellair, 2017).

Additionally, the interviews revealed that youth involvement in drug networks contributes to intergenerational conflict and declining respect for authority, further weakening social cohesion. One local administrator observed: “Parents are losing control because some youths are recruited into drug distribution at a very young age... they start resisting authority at home and in the community... it creates conflict within families... discipline and respect decline” (LA2, Interview, January 12, 2026). This breakdown in family-level control extends into the broader community, weakening the informal regulatory structures emphasized in Social Disorganization Theory.

National Crime Research Centre (2021) reports similarly document elevated drug-related offences in Nairobi's informal settlements and link them to declining community trust and cooperation. Consistent with this, participants emphasized that drug-related crime directly erodes trust, which is a central pillar of community cohesion. As one local administration officer stated, "When drugs enter a village, the first thing that disappears is trust... people begin to look at each other differently... nobody speaks openly because you do not know who is connected to whom" (LA1, Interview, December 18, 2025). This pervasive suspicion limits open interaction and weaken social bonds among residents. These qualitative insights help explain why, despite widespread descriptive recognition of drug-related crime as a problem (overall mean score of 3.71 for drug abuse's effect on crime), its independent statistical effect in the regression model was non-significant. The influence of drug-related crime on cohesion is indirect, cumulative, and deeply intertwined with fear and socioeconomic conditions. The qualitative narratives in this study mirror Papp et al.'s (2019) findings that fear and distrust discourage civic engagement. Furthermore, Avery et al. (2020) observed that fear of crime independently reduces social interaction and neighborhood participation, reinforcing the study's evidence that drug visibility normalizes deviance and weakens collective efficacy.

Overall, while the null hypothesis regarding the independent effect of drug-related crime is not rejected due to the non-significant unique contribution in the regression model ($p = .432$), the descriptive and qualitative evidence strongly indicates that drug-related crime significantly affects community cohesion in Kibra through indirect pathways. The integration of quantitative and qualitative evidence demonstrates that drug-related activities erode trust, discourage collective action, normalize deviant behaviour, and weaken informal social control.

While drug-related crime explains a modest proportion of cohesion variance, its visible and structural presence plays a critical role in shaping neighbourhood social dynamics.

5.2.2 Effects of Gang Violence Affects Community Cohesion

The study examined the effects of gang violence on community cohesion. Gang violence was conceptualized in terms of visible presence of gangs, gang-related confrontations, identification of gang groups or members, occurrence of gang-related violence, and visibility of gang symbols or markings. The study investigated whether gang violence predicts community cohesion by integrating insights from Collective Efficacy Theory and Social Disorganization Theory. The statistical tests conducted included multiple regression analysis.

Descriptively, the study found that gang activities were highly prevalent in Kibra Sub-County. Theft, mugging, or robbery linked to gang groups was the most observed activity, reported by 66.0% of respondents ($n=223$), followed by drug use in groups (61.8%) and drug selling or distribution (59.2%). Respondents demonstrated consistent agreement that gang presence is evident in the neighbourhood ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.16$) and that violent incidents involving gangs occur within the area ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 1.19$). The overall mean score for perceptions of gang activity and violence was $M = 3.56$ ($SD = 1.19$), indicating widespread recognition of gang-related problems.

The multiple regression results showed that gang violence did not have a statistically significant independent effect on community cohesion ($\beta = .127$, $p = .186$). Although gang violence exhibited a positive relationship with cohesion in the regression model, this relationship was weak and not statistically significant when controlling for other variables. This finding is reinforced by the hierarchical regression analysis (Model 3), where gang violence remained non-significant ($B = 0.07$, $SE = 0.09$, $\beta = .07$, $t = 0.77$, $p = .44$) after introducing fear

of crime as a mediator. This finding suggests that gang violence, like drug-related crime, does not directly determine levels of community cohesion but rather operates indirectly. These findings align with Sampson's (2017) Collective Efficacy Theory, which argues that violence erodes mutual trust and shared willingness to intervene for the common good. When gangs dominate public spaces and intimidate residents, informal social control diminishes because community members fear retaliation. The qualitative narratives illustrate this breakdown: elders reported hesitating to correct deviant youth, and nyumba kumi representatives indicated fear of reporting gang members. For instance, one participant explained, "In the past, if a young person misbehaved, any adult in the neighbourhood could correct them. Now, if you try to question a young man suspected of being in a gang, you risk being threatened... people keep quiet" (CBO2, Interview, January 18, 2026). This illustrates a clear erosion of informal social control driven by fear of reprisal. This reflects Whipple et al.'s (2021) assertion that low collective efficacy correlates with higher levels of violence in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Moreover, the climate of fear described by respondents resonates with Avery et al. (2020), who found that fear of crime mediates the relationship between crime exposure and social withdrawal. Participants vividly described how gang-related confrontations disrupt everyday life and create an atmosphere of uncertainty: "Gang confrontations happen without warning... when violence erupts, people immediately retreat indoors. Shops close early, children are rushed home, and public spaces become deserted" (LE1, Interview, January 5, 2026). This demonstrates how fear translates into reduced social interaction and weakened community life. These findings are consistent with Olutola and Bello (2016), who established that higher levels of violent crime in South Africa were associated with lower levels of

community cohesion. Similarly, Oosterbaan and Van Wijk (2015) found that gang dominance in Brazilian favelas fragmented neighbourhood unity and eroded interpersonal trust.

The results are also consistent with Social Disorganization Theory (Shaw & McKay, 1942), which posits that structural disadvantage and environmental instability weaken informal social control and social bonds. In Kibra, persistent gang visibility and territorial control create ecological conditions that mirror socially disorganized neighbourhoods described by Bellair (2017), where weak regulatory mechanisms allow deviant subcultures to flourish. The qualitative findings support this theoretical interpretation: residents described invisible territorial boundaries, restricted movement, and reluctance to attend social gatherings across villages. As one respondent noted, “Residents are very aware of these boundaries even though they are not marked physically... even for simple things like visiting a friend... they will think twice. That alone reduces interaction and slowly divides the community” (NGO1, Interview, December 18, 2025). Another added, “If a public meeting is called in a different zone, some residents will not attend because they do not feel safe... people stay within their small circles instead of engaging as one community” (CL1, Interview, December 22, 2025). These accounts clearly demonstrate how territorial control by gangs’ fragments social space and limits collective participation. Such territorial fragmentation undermines shared identity and neighbourhood solidarity, reinforcing the theory’s assumption that crime-prone environments weaken cohesion over time.

Furthermore, these qualitative insights help explain the apparent contradiction between statistical insignificance ($\beta = .127$, $p = .186$) and observable social impact. While gang violence may not independently predict cohesion in a multivariate model, its effects are indirect and operate through fear, restricted mobility, and reduced participation in communal activities. This

interpretation is strongly supported by the mediation analysis, which demonstrated that gang violence significantly predicted fear of crime in Model 2 ($B = 0.19$, $SE = 0.06$, $\beta = .19$, $t = 3.27$, $p < .001$). In Kibra, sudden gang confrontations led residents to retreat indoors, close businesses early, and avoid public engagement. Such withdrawal weakens participation and collective action. Furthermore, the study found that overall community cohesion in Kibra was moderate at best ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 1.12$ on key trust and cooperation measures), with only 24.0% of respondents reporting strong or very strong levels of trust and togetherness. This fragile social context makes the community particularly vulnerable to the cohesion-eroding effects of gang violence. Overall, the findings demonstrate that gang violence significantly disrupts trust, restricts interaction, weakens informal social control, and fragments neighbourhood unity in Kibra Sub-County, primarily through its impact on fear of crime.

5.2.3 Effects of Petty Theft on Community Cohesion

The study assessed the effects of petty theft on community cohesion. Petty theft was conceptualized in terms of the frequency of petty theft incidents, theft of unattended belongings, pickpocketing and snatching, theft of household or compound items, and theft of easily portable personal items. Community cohesion was measured using indicators of trust among community members, sense of safety, social connectedness, community participation, perceived unity, and collective cooperation.

Descriptively, petty theft was the most pervasive form of crime in Kibra Sub-County. The findings revealed that phone snatching was the most experienced incident, cited by 300 (88.8%) of respondents, followed by handbag or wallet theft (66.9%) and pickpocketing in crowded areas (64.2%). The overall mean score for perceptions of petty theft frequency and impact was high ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 1.21$), indicating a widespread recognition of its prevalence.

The multiple regression results revealed that petty theft did not have a statistically significant independent effect on community cohesion ($\beta = .171, p = .077$), although it exhibited the strongest relative influence among the crime variables. While petty theft approached statistical significance, it did not meet the conventional threshold ($p < .05$), indicating that its direct effect on cohesion is weak and not statistically robust when other crime variables are controlled. This finding aligns with Avery et al. (2020), who argue that even lower-level crimes can substantially affect social interaction patterns through heightened vigilance and fear. Similarly, Oosterbaan and Van Wijk (2015) found that persistent non-violent crimes in Brazil's informal settlements gradually weakened communal bonds by fostering suspicion and fear. The lack of statistical significance in the regression model ($p = .077$) suggests that while petty theft influences cohesion, its effects are gradual, diffuse, and better understood as cumulative rather than direct.

From a theoretical perspective, these results are well explained by Collective Efficacy Theory (Sampson, 2017; Donohoo et al., 2018). The theory posits that social cohesion and informal social control are essential in regulating behaviour and maintaining order. Frequent petty theft undermines informal social control by generating mistrust and suspicion among neighbours, thereby weakening the shared willingness to intervene for the common good. The qualitative findings support this interpretation, as respondents described petty theft as a “silent divider” that creates hidden tension, reduces borrowing and lending practices, and discourages social interaction. One community leader explained that “when small items disappear... you begin to suspect even your neighbour’s children... That creates silent tension” (CL1, Interview, December 18, 2025). This finding directly supports the theoretical assertion that diminished collective efficacy arises from eroded interpersonal trust. This aligns with Whipple et al. (2021),

who found that neighbourhoods with diminished collective efficacy tend to experience higher levels of crime and weaker social bonds.

The findings are also consistent with Social Disorganization Theory (Bellair, 2017), which attributes persistent crime to structural conditions such as poverty, residential instability, and weakened institutions. In Kibra, environmental pressures such as overcrowding and limited economic opportunities create conditions where petty theft becomes normalized. The quantitative data confirmed that a substantial proportion of respondents experienced theft of household items (52.7%) and theft of clothing from drying lines (50.3%), reflecting the routine nature of these incidents. As qualitative participants indicated, the normalization of minor theft (“Hii ni kawaida ya mtaa”) reflects a form of social disorganization where crime becomes embedded in everyday life. A youth leader noted that “when something becomes normal, people stop fighting it together” (YL1, Interview, January 15, 2026). This normalization reduces collective action, as residents prioritize individual protection strategies such as improved locks over communal problem-solving. Such patterns echo Gulma’s (2018) observation that crime erodes coexistence by fostering silent withdrawal rather than open confrontation.

Qualitative evidence reinforced these statistical outcomes by highlighting three mechanisms: suspicion and mistrust, reduced participation, and normalization of minor criminality. Victims’ withdrawal from communal life and reluctance to report incidents reflect declining collective efficacy. One local administrator explained that “victims sometimes isolate themselves... they reduce participation in meetings or communal activities” (LA2, Interview, January 5, 2026). Consistent with Takagi et al. (2016), while some high-crime contexts may stimulate stronger ties, the present findings suggest that in Kibra, petty theft more commonly

weakens reciprocal trust rather than strengthening solidarity. Overall, the findings demonstrate that petty theft, though less violent than gang activity, significantly undermines community cohesion by eroding trust, weakening informal social control, and normalizing individualistic coping strategies.

5.2.4 Mediating Effects of Fear of Crime on the Relationship Between Urban Crimes and Community Cohesion

The study examined the mediating effects of fear of crime on the relationship between selected urban crimes (drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft) and community cohesion. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis, guided by the mediation procedure proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986), was employed to determine whether fear of crime explains how urban crime translates into changes in community cohesion.

Descriptive findings indicated that fear of crime was deeply embedded in residents' daily experiences, with an overall mean score of $M = 3.73$ ($SD = 1.20$). A substantial proportion of respondents reported feeling personally unsafe walking alone in the neighbourhood, especially during evening hours (70.2% agreed or strongly agreed), and avoided certain locations or routes due to perceived risk (76.0% agreed or strongly agreed). These high levels of perceived insecurity provided a strong basis for testing the mediation hypothesis.

The results revealed that while the combined effect of selected urban crimes significantly explained variations in community cohesion ($R^2 = .12$, $p < .001$), none of the individual crime variables significantly predicted community cohesion when considered independently in the total effect model. However, all three crimes significantly predicted fear of crime in Model 2 ($F(3, 334) = 232.30$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .68$), with petty theft emerging as the strongest predictor ($\beta = .50$, $p < .001$). Drug-related crime ($\beta = .19$, $p < .001$) and gang violence

($\beta = .19, p < .001$) were also significant predictors of fear. When fear of crime was introduced into the final model, it significantly predicted community cohesion ($\beta = .28, p < .001$), and the direct effects of drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft became statistically non-significant as their p-values increased to .86, .44, and .77 respectively. The increase in explained variance (R^2 change = .02) and the reduction in crime coefficients indicate mediation. These findings suggest that urban crimes influence community cohesion indirectly through residents' fear levels rather than through direct structural disruption alone.

These findings are consistent with empirical literature reviewed. Studies by Avery et al. (2020) and Gulma (2018) established that fear of crime independently reduces social interaction, informal control, and civic participation even when residents are not direct victims. Similarly, Piscitelli and Perrella (2017) found that high levels of fear shape patterns of associational participation. The current findings extend this literature by empirically confirming, within the Kibra context, that fear operates as a psychological mechanism translating crime exposure into weakened social cohesion. The regression results demonstrate that the introduction of fear of crime as a mediator rendered the direct effects of all three crime variables non-significant, which is the core criterion for establishing full mediation as outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986). The qualitative findings reinforce this conclusion that residents reported avoidance of public spaces, reduced attendance at community meetings, heightened vigilance, and declining trust patterns that directly correspond to the statistical mediation pathway. One community leader explicitly articulated this mechanism, stating that “crime alone does not break unity; fear does. When people are afraid, they stop engaging, they stop attending meetings, and they stop trusting” (CL1, Interview, December 29, 2025).

The findings also strongly align with Collective Efficacy Theory. According to Donohoo et al. (2018) and Sampson (2017), social cohesion and informal social control are central mechanisms through which communities regulate crime. When fear intensifies, residents withdraw from social engagement, thereby weakening the very trust and reciprocity necessary for collective efficacy. The qualitative data supported this, as respondents described how fear led to the avoidance of certain streets and public spaces, particularly after 7 p.m., with one youth leader stating that “people prefer staying indoors... Parents call their children inside early because they fear what might happen” (YL2, Interview, December 18, 2025). The present results suggest that fear undermines residents’ willingness to intervene, participate, and cooperate, thus disrupting informal social control systems. In this way, fear of crime acts as an intervening variable that erodes collective efficacy, ultimately diminishing community cohesion.

Furthermore, the findings are consistent with Social Disorganization Theory as articulated by Shaw and McKay (1942) and later scholars (Bellair, 2017; Kubrin & Weitzer, 2009). The theory posits that structural disadvantages weaken social networks and informal controls, creating environments where crime persists. The strong predictive relationship between urban crimes and fear of crime ($R^2 = .68$) supports the notion that persistent crime in disorganized environments generates psychological insecurity, which in turn weakens neighbourhood cohesion. Specifically, the finding that petty theft most strongly predicted fear ($\beta = .50$) suggests that even non-violent, high-frequency offenses are sufficient to create a climate of insecurity in resource-poor settings where formal protection is limited. Thus, fear represents a social-psychological expression of disorganization, mediating the relationship between structural crime conditions and weakened community bonds.

Importantly, the findings suggest that addressing crime alone may not be sufficient to restore community cohesion unless interventions also reduce fear. The mediation model confirms that the indirect pathway through fear is the primary mechanism linking crime to cohesion, given that the direct effects of drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft became statistically non-significant after controlling for fear. Even in the absence of statistically significant direct crime effects, fear remains a powerful predictor of cohesion outcomes. This has practical implications: community-based policing, trust-building initiatives, and participatory safety programs must prioritize both objective crime reduction and subjective perceptions of safety. Qualitative evidence of restricted attendance at community barazas due to fear of walking home late (CL2, Interview, January 5, 2026) further underscores this need. In conclusion, the study provides empirical support for the mediating role of fear of crime in Kibra. The findings demonstrate that urban crimes disrupt community cohesion primarily through psychological pathways of fear, thereby validating theoretical propositions from collective efficacy and social disorganization perspectives.

5.3 Summary of the Findings

The first objective of the study was to determine the effect of drug-related crime on community cohesion among residents of Kibra Sub-County. The quantitative findings revealed that drug-related crime did not have a statistically significant independent effect on community cohesion when considered alongside other crime variables. However, the overall regression model was statistically significant, indicating that urban crimes collectively influence community cohesion. Further analysis showed that drug-related crime significantly predicted fear of crime, which in turn significantly influenced community cohesion. This demonstrates that the effect of drug-related crime on cohesion is indirect rather than direct, operating through

fear as a mediating factor. Qualitative findings reinforced this relationship by showing that drug-related activities generate mistrust, silence, and internal divisions within the community. Residents reported fear of association, reluctance to report offenders, and suspicion among neighbors, all of which weaken trust and social interaction. The study therefore established that drug-related crime undermines community cohesion primarily through fear-induced social withdrawal and fragmentation, rather than through a direct statistical effect.

The second objective of the study was to examine how gang violence affects community cohesion. The quantitative results similarly showed that gang violence did not have a statistically significant independent effect on community cohesion despite being part of a significant overall model. However, gang violence was found to significantly predict fear of crime, which subsequently had a significant effect on community cohesion. This confirms that the impact of gang violence on cohesion is indirect and mediated through fear. Qualitative findings supported this pathway by demonstrating that gang activity creates fear of retaliation, restricts movement, and discourages participation in communal activities. Residents reported avoiding certain areas, limiting social engagement, and refraining from confronting deviant behavior. Gang territorial control and unpredictable violence were found to weaken informal social control and reduce collective action. The findings therefore indicate that gang violence undermines community cohesion through fear-driven behavioral changes, including reduced interaction, diminished trust, and weakened community participation.

The third objective of the study was to assess the effects of petty theft on community cohesion. The quantitative findings indicated that petty theft had the strongest relative influence among the crime variables, but it did not achieve statistical significance as an independent predictor of community cohesion. However, petty theft emerged as the strongest predictor of

fear of crime, which significantly influenced community cohesion. This suggests that petty theft affects cohesion indirectly through heightened fear levels. Qualitative findings provided further insight by showing that petty theft generates suspicion, erodes interpersonal trust, and leads to gradual social withdrawal. Residents reported reduced willingness to share resources, increased caution in social interactions, and normalization of theft as part of everyday life. These conditions weaken social bonds and discourage collective responsibility. The study therefore established that petty theft undermines community cohesion through its cumulative and fear-inducing effects on everyday social relations, rather than through a direct measurable impact.

The fourth objective of the study was to establish the mediating effect of fear of crime on the relationship between selected urban crimes and community cohesion. The quantitative findings confirmed that fear of crime has a statistically significant mediating effect. While the direct effects of drug-related crime, gang violence, and petty theft on community cohesion were not statistically significant, all three variables significantly predicted fear of crime, and fear of crime significantly predicted community cohesion. The inclusion of fear of crime in the regression model increased the explanatory power of the model, confirming its mediating role. These findings indicate that urban crimes influence community cohesion indirectly by increasing fear levels, which in turn shape residents' behaviors and social interactions. Qualitative findings strongly supported this conclusion, revealing that fear leads to avoidance of public spaces, reduced participation in community activities, heightened suspicion, and weakened trust among residents. Fear was consistently described as a central factor driving social withdrawal and limiting collective engagement.

Overall, the study demonstrates that the relationship between urban crime and community cohesion is not direct but is largely mediated by fear of crime. Urban crimes operate

cumulatively and through shared social and psychological pathways, particularly fear, mistrust, and reduced participation—to weaken community cohesion. These findings provide strong empirical support for both Social Disorganization Theory and Collective Efficacy Theory, highlighting the critical role of fear as the mechanism through which crime disrupts social order and community unity.

5.4 Conclusions

The findings of this study indicate that drug-related crime does not exert a statistically significant direct effect on community cohesion when assessed alongside other urban crime variables. This outcome aligns with empirical perspectives in criminological literature which suggest that the influence of crime on social cohesion is often not direct but mediated through perceptual and behavioral mechanisms such as fear and perceived disorder. Consistent with social disorganization and collective efficacy theories, the presence of visible drug activity in neighborhoods tends to weaken informal social regulation not necessarily through direct structural disruption, but through its impact on trust and perceived safety. In the context of Kibra Sub-County, drug-selling points and visible substance use were found to heighten fear, reduce interpersonal trust, and discourage participation in collective community life. These findings suggest that the weakening of cohesion is primarily a consequence of altered social perceptions rather than crime itself.

Similarly, gang violence does not demonstrate a statistically significant direct effect on community cohesion. However, empirical literature on urban violence consistently shows that gang presence contributes to spatial fear, territorial avoidance, and reduced community interaction. The current study supports this position by demonstrating that gang violence primarily operates through fear of crime. The resulting fear limits mobility weakens willingness

to participate in communal activities and discourages residents from engaging in informal social control mechanisms. This is consistent with prior studies which argue that violent urban environments erode collective efficacy indirectly by increasing perceived risk and social withdrawal.

Petty theft, although not a direct predictor of community cohesion in statistical terms, emerged as the most influential crime type in shaping fear of crime. This finding is consistent with existing research which shows that low-level but frequent crimes often have a disproportionate psychological impact on residents because of their immediacy and personal proximity. In Kibra, repeated exposure to petty theft was associated with declining interpersonal trust, heightened suspicion among neighbors, and reduced everyday social interaction. Over time, these behavioral adaptations contribute to weakened social ties and reduced community participation, reinforcing the notion that routine crime experiences can erode cohesion indirectly.

Across all crime categories examined, fear of crime emerged as the central mediating mechanism. This finding is strongly supported by empirical studies which demonstrate that fear—rather than crime prevalence alone—is a more consistent predictor of social withdrawal, reduced collective action, and weakened neighborhood trust. In this study, fear of crime significantly explained variations in community cohesion and improved the explanatory power of the overall model. It manifested through avoidance behaviors, reduced participation in communal activities, and diminished trust in both neighbors and local institutions. The evidence therefore supports the conclusion that community cohesion in informal settlements is primarily shaped by perceived insecurity rather than objective crime exposure alone.

5.5 Recommendations

The findings suggest that interventions must move beyond crime reduction alone and incorporate structured fear-reduction and trust-building strategies. These recommendations are organized according to key stakeholders responsible for implementation. Government agencies should adopt integrated urban safety policies that combine crime prevention with social cohesion rebuilding. In the case of drug-related crime, county authorities should strengthen intelligence-led disruption of drug hotspots while simultaneously investing in community stabilization programs such as youth employment schemes, vocational training, and structured rehabilitation services. These interventions should be designed to reduce both exposure to drug networks and the associated fear that undermines trust within communities. Urban planning departments should also integrate environmental design strategies (CPTED principles) such as improved lighting, open public spaces, and accessible communal infrastructure to reduce fear-generating environments across informal settlements.

Security actors should prioritize community-oriented policing models that enhance legitimacy and reduce fear of retaliation. Consistent with literature on policing and fear reduction, visible but non-threatening police presence, timely response to incidents, and structured engagement forums with residents should be institutionalized. For gang violence, intelligence-sharing systems must be strengthened while ensuring protection of informants to avoid reinforcing fear within communities. Security operations should also be paired with reassurance strategies rather than enforcement-only approaches, as fear has been shown to persist even in contexts of active policing if trust is weak.

Local leaders, NGOs, and community-based organizations should focus on rebuilding interpersonal trust and collective efficacy. Establishing community safety forums and neighborhood dialogue platforms can help normalize communication between residents and authorities. Civil society actors should also lead anti-stigma campaigns related to drug use and crime reporting to reduce fear-based social exclusion. Youth-focused NGOs should expand mentorship, sports, and skills development programs that provide structured alternatives to gang involvement, addressing both the social and psychological dimensions of violence exposure.

Community members should be supported to develop structured but inclusive safety mechanisms such as neighborhood watch systems. However, these must be formally linked with police structures to avoid vigilantism. Efforts should prioritize rebuilding everyday trust by encouraging shared responsibility for reporting crime and maintaining safe communal spaces. Given the centrality of fear of crime, mental health and psychosocial support institutions should incorporate community-level fear management programs, including trauma-informed awareness campaigns and structured community reassurance messaging. These interventions should aim to reduce exaggerated risk perception and restore normal patterns of social interaction.

5.6 Areas for Further Research

This study was conducted within a single informal settlement and focused on selected urban crimes, which limits the generalizability of findings across different socio-spatial contexts. In line with this limitation, future research should undertake comparative multi-settlement studies across Nairobi and other urban areas to examine whether the mediating role of fear of crime remains consistent across different environmental and socio-economic

conditions. Given that the study relied on cross-sectional data, future research should employ longitudinal designs to better capture how fear of crime and community cohesion evolve over time in response to changing crime patterns and interventions. This would address the limitation of establishing temporal causality between crime exposure, fear, and cohesion. In addition, since the study identified fear of crime as a key mediating variable, further research should explore psychosocial and demographic moderators such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, and length of residence. These factors may influence how individuals perceive and respond to crime, which was beyond the scope of this study. The study also focused primarily on selected urban crimes, leaving out other potentially influential forms of insecurity such as domestic violence, police legitimacy concerns, and political violence. Future studies should therefore incorporate a broader range of crime and disorder indicators to provide a more comprehensive understanding of urban safety dynamics. Lastly, given the theoretical emphasis on social cohesion and collective efficacy, future research should integrate mixed-method approaches, combining quantitative modelling with qualitative narratives to deepen understanding of how residents interpret fear, trust, and social relations in informal settlements.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Request Letter and Consent

Christopher Odhiambo
Africa Nazarene University
0716***988

Dear Participant,

Subject: Request for Your Participation in a Research Study

I am Christopher Odhiambo, a student at Africa Nazarene University, conducting a research study titled “The Impact of Urban Crime on Community Cohesion: A Case Study of Kibra Sub-County.” This study seeks to understand how urban crime influences social relationships, trust, and collective well-being in the community. You have been selected as a potential participant because your insights and experiences are valuable in helping achieve the study’s objectives. Your participation in this research will involve responding to a questionnaire, which should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time without any consequences. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and used solely for academic purposes. No personally identifiable information will be shared in the research findings. The data collected will be securely stored and analyzed anonymously. By completing and submitting the questionnaire, you acknowledge that: You voluntarily agree to participate in the research and you understand that your responses will remain confidential and used for academic purposes only.

Thank you for your time and participation. Your insights are highly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Christopher Odhiambo



Africa Nazarene University

Appendix II: Research Questionnaire

Effect of Selected Urban Crimes in Community Cohesion among Residents in Kibra Sub County, Nairobi County

Informed Consent

Greetings,

I am Christopher Odhiambo, a student at Africa Nazarene University, conducting a study titled “Drug-Related Crime, Gang Violence, Petty Theft and Community Cohesion in Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya.” This study seeks to understand how urban crime influences social relationships, trust, and collective well-being in the community. You have been selected as a potential participant because your experiences are valuable in helping achieve the objectives of the study. Your participation in this research will involve responding to this questionnaire, which should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time without any consequences. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and used solely for academic purposes. The data collected will be securely stored and analyzed anonymously. By completing and submitting the questionnaire, you acknowledge that: You voluntarily agree to participate in the research, and you understand that your responses will remain confidential and used for academic purposes only. Thank you for your time and participation. Your insights are highly appreciated.

I have understood the objective of this study, and I have agreed to participate in this study * voluntarily.

☐ Yes

☐ No

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What is your age?

☐ 18-25 Years

☐ 26-35 Years

☐ 36-45 Years

☐ 46-55 Years

☐ 56 and above Years

2. What is your gender?

Male ☐ Female ☐ Other ☐

3. What is your highest level of education? * Mark only

☐ No formal education

☐ Primary (Class 1-8)

☐ Secondary (Form 1-4)

☐ Tertiary

☐ Other

4. How long have you lived in Kibra Sub-County?

☐ <1 year

☐ 1-5 years

☐ 6-10 years

☐ 10 and above years

5. What is your primary occupation?

☐ Employed

☐ Self-Employed

☐ Unemployed

☐ Student

☐ Other

SECTION B: SELECTED URBAN CRIMES

All statements below relate to your experiences and perceptions as a resident of Kibra Sub-County. For each section, follow the instructions carefully.

PART I: DRUG-RELATED CRIME

6. What types of crimes are most associated with drug abuse in the area? (Tick all that apply)

☐ Petty theft (e.g., stealing phones, bags, household items)

☐ Burglary/break-ins

☐ Mugging and street robbery

☐ Assault or violent behavior

☐ Vandalism and property damage

- ☐ Domestic violence
- ☐ Drug possession or trafficking
- ☐ Prostitution/transactional sex
- ☐ Gang-related activities
- ☐ Disorderly conduct/public disturbances None

7. How does drug abuse influence overall crime rates in this community? (Select the option that best reflects your perception)

- ☐ It greatly increases crime rates
- ☐ It moderately increases crime rates
- ☐ It slightly increases crime rates
- ☐ It has no effect on crime rates
- ☐ It reduces crime rates (unlikely, but included for neutrality)
- ☐ Not sure/Don't know

8. The following statements are on the effect if drugs on crime in your neighborhood. Please select the option that best reflects your experience or opinion.

Response scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Drug selling activities are regularly observable in various parts of my neighborhood.					
Drug dependency among youths has contributed to criminal behavior in this community.					
Socioeconomic conditions contribute to drug abuse which impact crime levels in these communities within this neighborhood that are widely known as hot spots for drug-related activities.					
Use of drug contribute to increased community level violence this community.					
Widespread use of drug abuse has affected the neighborhood safety					

PART II: GANG VIOLENCE

9. What types of gang activities or behaviors do you observe in your neighborhood? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Drug selling or distribution

- ☐ Drug use in groups
- ☐ Intimidation or harassment of residents
- ☐ Recruitment of youths into gangs
- ☐ Protection extortion (“security fees”)
- ☐ Territorial markings (graffiti, symbols, colours)
- ☐ Group fights or violent confrontations
- ☐ Illegal weapons possession
- ☐ Theft, mugging, or robbery linked to gang groups
- ☐ Vandalism of property
- ☐ Night-time patrols or control of certain areas
- ☐ Loitering in large groups in specific hotspots
- ☐ None observed

10. The statements below relate to gang activity and violence in your neighborhood. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement. Response scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The presence of identifiable gangs or gang members is evident within this neighborhood.					
Gang-related confrontations or disputes occur from time to time and are known to residents in this community.					
Community members can recognize specific groups or individuals who are associated with gang activity in this area.					
Violent incidents involving gangs, such as fights or attacks, are known to occur within this neighborhood.					
Gang-related signs, symbols, graffiti, or markings are visibly present in certain locations in this community.					

PART III: PETTY THEFT

11. What kinds of petty theft incidents are commonly experienced or reported in your neighborhood? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Phone snatching
- ☐ Handbag or wallet theft

- ☐ Pickpocketing in crowded areas
- ☐ Theft of household items (e.g., utensils, electronics)
- ☐ Theft of clothing or personal items from drying lines
- ☐ Bicycle or motorcycle parts theft
- ☐ Breaking into unattended houses/rooms (minor break-ins)
- ☐ Theft of shop items or groceries
- ☐ Theft of livestock (e.g., chickens, goats)
- ☐ Theft during public gatherings or events
- ☐ Vandalism combined with theft (e.g., breaking windows to steal)
- ☐ No petty theft incidents reported

12. How would you describe the frequency or nature of petty theft in your area? Please select the response that best describes how petty theft affects community relations where you live. Response scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Incidents of petty theft occur frequently in this neighborhood, involving the loss of small personal or household items.					
Residents in this area commonly experience theft of unattended belongings such as bags, phones, or clothing.					
Snatching or pickpocketing incidents happen regularly within public spaces in this community.					
Theft of items from homes or compounds, such as tools or movable objects, is a recurring issue in this neighborhood.					
Cases involving theft of easily portable items, such as electronics or accessories, are commonly reported by residents.					

SECTION C: FEAR OF CRIME

13. How would you describe your personal feelings of safety within your neighborhood?
(Select one)

- ☐ Very safe
- ☐ Somewhat safe
- ☐ Neither safe nor unsafe

☐ Somewhat unsafe

☐ Very unsafe

14. What situations or conditions in the neighborhood make you feel fearful of crime? The statements below focus on your feelings, worries, and behaviours related to crime in your neighborhood. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each statement.
- Response scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I often feel personally unsafe when walking alone within this neighborhood, especially during evening or night hours.					
I regularly experience worry or concern that I might become a victim of crime within this area.					
I avoid certain locations or routes in this neighborhood because I perceive them as unsafe or risky.					
I frequently feel anxious about the safety and security of my household when I am at home or away.					
I am consistently alert and cautious when moving around this community because I am concerned about potential criminal activity.					

SECTION D: COMMUNITY COHESION

15. How would you describe the level of trust and togetherness among residents in your neighborhood?

☐ Mark only one oval.

☐ Very strong — residents support and trust each other

☐ Strong — there is general trust and cooperation

☐ Moderate — some trust exists, but not consistent

☐ Weak — limited cooperation and low trust

☐ Very weak — little to no trust among residents

☐ Not sure / Cannot assess

16. In your view, what best represents the nature of relationships and cooperation among community members here? (Select the option that most accurately reflects your opinion)

- ☐ Very supportive — residents work closely together, help each other, and maintain strong relationships
- ☐ Supportive — there is general cooperation and positive interaction among residents
- ☐ Moderately cooperative — residents interact and assist each other occasionally
- ☐ Limited cooperation — people rarely interact or collaborate unless necessary
- ☐ Poor relationships — conflicts, mistrust, or disconnection between residents are common
- ☐ Not sure / Cannot assess

17. The following statements ask about the level of trust, unity, and cooperation among residents in your neighborhood. Please indicate your level of agreement. Response scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
People in this community generally trust one another and feel confident interacting with their neighbors.					
Residents in this neighborhood experience a strong sense of belonging and connection to the community.					
Members of this community readily offer support and assistance to each other when the need arises.					
People living in this area participate in joint community efforts and work together on matters that affect the neighborhood.					
Interactions among community members are characterized by mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and positive social relations.					

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Appendix III: Interview Guide

Section A: Demographic Information

Kindly provide the following background information. This information will be treated with strict confidentiality and used only for academic purposes.

1. Gender:

- ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Age Bracket:

☐ 25–34 years

☐ 35–44 years

☐ 45–54 years

☐ 55 years and above

3. Sector/Role (Please specify):

☐ Local Administration (Chief/Sub-chief)

☐ Law Enforcement Officer

☐ Community Leader (Nyumba Kumi/Elder)

☐ Youth Representative

☐ Religious Leader

☐ Civil Society/NGO Representative

☐ Business Community Representative

☐ Community-Based Organization (CBO) Leader

☐ Other (Specify): _____

4. Years of Experience or Residence in Kibra Sub-County:

☐ 1–5 years

☐ 6–10 years

☐ 11–15 years

☐ Over 15 years

Section B: Key Informant Interview Questions

5. In your own opinion, how does drug-related crime affect community cohesion
6. In your views, what are the effects of gang violence on community cohesion
7. In your own opinion, how does the fear of crime affect community cohesion
8. In your own views, what are the effects of petty theft on community cohesion

Appendix IV: Permission from Africa Nazarene University



P.O.Box: 53067 – 00200
Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel: 020 252 7170/1 – 5
Email: vc@anu.ac.ke
www.anu.ac.ke

19th November, 2025

Dr. David Ngigi
Ag. Director General /CEO
National Commission for Science & Technology
And Innovation (NACOSTI)
Off Waiyaki Way, Upper Kabete
P. O. Box 30623 -00100
Nairobi, KENYA

Dear Sir,

RE: RESEARCH PERMIT: Christopher Odhiambo (Student ID#110062559)

This is to confirm that Christopher Odhiambo (Student ID# 110062559) is a bona fide Master of Arts student at Africa Nazarene University (ANU), School of Humanities & Social Sciences. He is pursuing a Master of Science in Governance, Peace and Security degree, a program that entails both coursework and thesis.

Christopher successfully completed his coursework and defended his thesis proposal entitled:

"Effect of Urban Crime on Community Cohesion in Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County."

We kindly request that he be granted the necessary research permit to facilitate data collection and the successful completion of his thesis. Any assistance provided to him in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Orpha Ongiti'.

Prof. Orpha Ongiti
Dean, Postgraduate Studies & Director, Institute of Research

Appendix V: NACOSTI Permit

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Ref No: 613854	Date of Issue: 07/January/2026
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Mr.. CHRISTOPHER ODHIAMBO of Africa Nazarene University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nairobi on the topic: EFFECT OF SELECTED URBAN CRIMES ON COMMUNITY COHESION AMONG RESIDENTS IN KIBRA SUB-COUNTY, NAIROBI COUNTY for the period ending : 07/January/2027.	
License No: NACOSTI/P/26/4183257	
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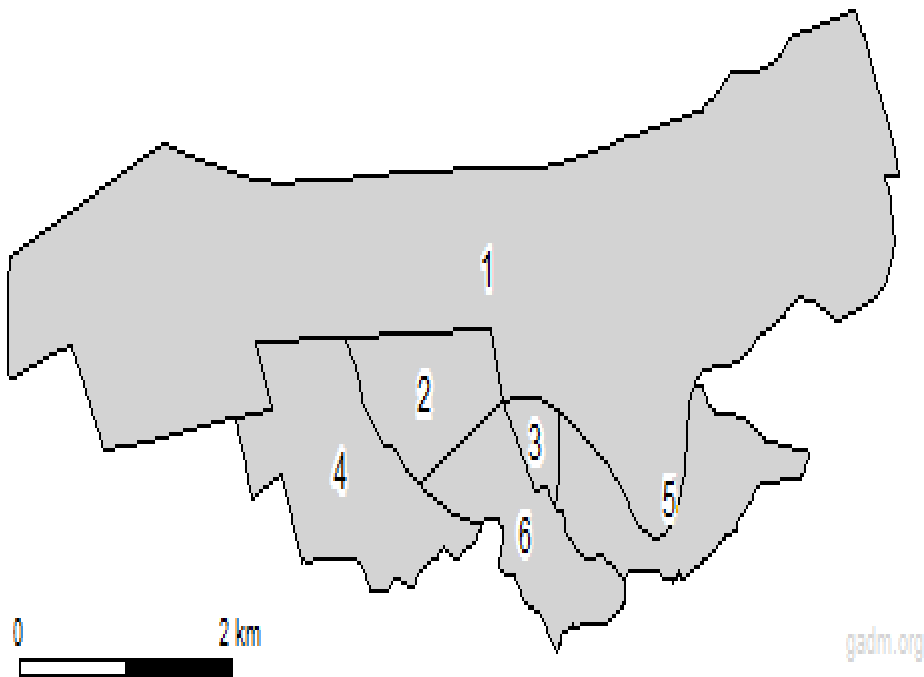
Appendix VI: Reliability Test Results

Summary of Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficients

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Drug-Related Crime	0.94
Gang Violence	0.92
Petty Theft	0.95
Fear of Crime	0.93
Community Cohesion	0.92

Source: Research Data (2026)

Appendix VII: Map of Kibra Sub-County



Map ID ▲	Name ▼
1	Woodley/Kenyatta Golf Course
2	Makina
3	Laini Saba
4	Sarangombe
5	Nyayo Highrise
6	Lindi

Source: GADM