THE ROLE OF SPORTS IN PREVENTION OF RADICALIZATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM AMONG MUSLIM YOUTH OF WAJIR COUNTY, KENYA

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

Sign.   Date………18/11/2021……………………………

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

Radicalization and violent extremism have been a worrying trend in a number of countries in the world, including the African region. Kenya continues to face the problem of radicalization of youth where incidences of violent extremism can be traced to as far back as the 1998 US Embassy bombing in Nairobi. In this incidence several lives were lost and hundreds left seriously injured. It is estimated that between 1998 and today, close to 1,000 terror related deaths have been registered and nearly 6,000 serious injuries recorded in the country. The Garissa University terrorist attack in April 2015 where close to 148 people died and several of them seriously injured, remains in the minds of Kenyans a reminder of the realities of radicalization and violent extremism in the country. Many of the attacks, including the Westgate and Dusit Hotel in Nairobi in September 2013 and January 2019 respectively, have been associated with young men in their twenties and thirties as direct perpetrators. Despite the government's efforts to address the problem, radicalization and violent extremism in the country is far from being completely eliminated. The main objective of this study was to assess the role of sports in prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth of Wajir County. Specifically, the study examined the role of youth in countering radicalization and violent extremism; assessed the role of sports activities in the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth; and evaluated the impact of sports activities on prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth in Wajir East sub-county. The study was guided by Social control theory by Travis Hirschi (1990). The findings revealed that sports activities were very instrumental in the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth. Furthermore, sports programs were being used in prevention of radicalization and violent extremism, which helped to keep the youth busy as they developed talents. Sports also acted as a unifying factor among different ethnic groups hence encouraging young people to embrace friendship as they interacted through football clubs and other sporting activities. However, the youth needed strong support from the county and national governments to effectively use recreation activities as a means for counterterrorism. They also needed strong leadership from religious and community leaders in their endeavours as part of a solution to radicalization and extremism. The study recommended the adoption of a multifaceted long term approach, to assist the youth in the campaign against radicalization and religious extremism. For instance, creation of employment and business opportunities by the government will not only help the young people to comfortably earn a living, but will also ensure that there is no room for them to idle around which could in turn make them turn to radicalized groups for solace. Developing and improvement of sports facilities will also go a long way in helping the young people not only discover their talents, but also encourage them to participate in sports activities as a deterrent measure for radicalization and extremism.

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CBOs	Community-Based Organizations
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICG	International Crisis Group
IEP	Institute for Economics and Peace
KDF	Kenya Defense Forces
KHRC	Kenya Human Rights Commission
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
NIWETU	Ni Wajibu Wetu
OECD	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
USAID	United States Agency for International development

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Violent extremism is a global problem affecting all people regardless of age, sex, class, religious background or any other socio-economic aspect of human existence. The concept of religious extremism is based on radicalization of the mind; a phenomenon that religious scholars trace back to the 18th century 'Enlightenment' period popularly associated with French and American revolutions (Awan et al, 2011). According to Bonelli (2011), radicalization is further linked to the call for social and political reforms where it implies the notion of fundamental shift from the common belief systems to embrace new doctrines by either groups or individuals. Often, an individual or group that professes radical doctrines tends to be far removed from the common beliefs of the society where they come from or their government. Radicals or extremists harbor dissenting voices, keen on challenging the status quo and advocating for a major shift in terms of the way society operates. Although extremists are often viewed as working at cross purposes with the society at large, Bartlett and Miller (2012) postulate that such individuals are basically a product of their society hence reacting to what is common knowledge to them. In many parts of the world, in the recent past many young people have been associated with religious extremism (Hidalgo, 2014).

Although largely attributed to violence, according to Anderson (2013), religious extremism can be violent or non-violent. Globally, young people have been converted into religious extremism where they are taken advantage of by extremist groups due to their financial vulnerability. However, at the center of their conversion is religious indoctrination where the converts are brainwashed that they are rebelling against the system for the sake of Allah (Botha, 2013). Lambert (2011) further posits that despairing semi-illiterate and unemployed youth are usually the easiest target where they have been recruited in their numbers to spread extremist propaganda and generally espouse extremist and terror groups' ideals. In the US and Australia, a number of young people have been recruited into extremist groups, which continue to worry authorities (Hassan, 2012). Depending on the professed ideologies, internationally religious extremism has been characterized by life-threatening violence based on the philosophies of nationalism, self-rule, and

1

rebellion among other extremist ideals. While political analysts trace religious radicalization or extremism to complex historical and social underpinnings, over time this phenomenon has undergone several mutations (Hidalgo, 2014).

Globally, there have been campaigns to discourage the youth from being taken advantage of to engage in extremism. Popular among some of the strategies for dissuading the youth from extremism include creating employment opportunities for them so that by becoming busy, they can stop thinking of evil deeds such as radicalization (Badurdeen, 2012). This is because over time it has been established that unemployment and idleness among ordinarily energetic young people significantly contribute to their engagement in criminal activities including violent extremism. Despite the efforts by the government and other stakeholders in security matters such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the civil society organizations (CSOs), there are commonly reported cases of young people being victims of radicalization and violent extremism which is often linked to warped religious beliefs. This is evident in not only Kenya but the whole of Africa and the world at large.

While it is true that radicalization and violent extremism have been witnessed globally for a long time, recent statistics on deaths resulting from extremist attacks is worrying. According to Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP, 2015), in the recent past, deaths related to extremist activities have increased tremendously, from about 3,500 in 2000 to close to 33,000 in 2014 globally. Statistics by IEP (2016) further shows that Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member countries witnessed a sharp rise in terror related fatalities, from 77 in 2014 to about 600 cases in 2015 where majority of the deaths were associated with the Taliban in Afghanistan. Although about 72% of the recorded deaths were traced to Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Syria the widespread of violent extremism to other countries is evident. Indeed, studies estimate that between 2013 and 2014, about 11 countries globally were experiencing 500 deaths caused by violent extremists, almost a 120% increase from the previous year. Most of the newly hardest hit countries included Ukraine, Somalia, Yemen, Central African Republic, Cameroon and South Sudan (IEP, 2015). Despite the worrying statistics of deaths arising from violent extremism, it is important to note that numerous activities of violent extremism sometimes go unreported.

Widely varied ideologies inspire violent extremism all over the world, ranging from religious fundamentalism, separatism and xenophobia to radical nationalism (Beyer, 2008). Essentially, extremist ideals glorify group hegemony based on religion, race, citizenship, class or conviction hence ending up in opposing the idea of a more inclusive society. According to Odorfer (2015), although radicalization and violent extremism impact all people irrespective of age, gender, creed, religion, education level or any other demographic characteristics, young people are more affected in terms of their numbers. Given the high level of vulnerability due to lack of employment opportunities, countless young people are lured into joining extremist groups such as al-Shabaab and ISIS among others, with the promise of a better living. Religion has often been placed at the forefront as a conduit for luring the youth into joining extremist groups. Unfortunately, the Islamic religion has wrongly been viewed as playing a serious role in luring young people into extremism (Botha and Abdile, 2017). Hence, the rapidly increasing involvement of the youth into extremist activities is gradually becoming a serious worldwide concern. The problem is of dire consequences in Africa; especially given that majority of the unemployed youth reside here. With over 70% of the African population accounting for young people, it is generally feared that the continent is becoming a major fertile ground for religious extremism (IEP, 2016). This situation is worsened by the soaring unemployment levels among the young people in many African countries.

In Kenya, radicalization and violent extremism have become a serious national and global concern. Empirical evidence indicates that since the intervention in Somalia by the Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) in 2011, increased cases of al-Shabaab Islamist insurgency targeting Kenya have been reported (Badurdeen, 2018). According to the International Crisis Group (ICG), the al-Shabaab violent extremist group has continued to capitalize on the desperation of majority of the unemployed young people in Kenya and Somalia, who are lured to join the group with promises of money and other material rewards (ICG, 2014). Badurdeen (2012) adds that the soaring poverty and historical neglect of the North Eastern Kenya by the government, have greatly contributed to the youth in the region joining violent extremist groups as an escapist strategy. Since the deadly Al-Qaeda linked US embassy terrorist attack in Nairobi in 1998 where several people lost their lives and others sustained serious injuries, a number of other violent extremist activities have taken place in the country where they have left devastating impact in the

country. It is reported that between 2011 and 2015, more than 200 violent extremist incidences linked to al-Shabaab have been witnessed in the country, with many others alleged to have been thwarted by security and intelligence players (Badurdeen, 2018).

Wajir County is one of the counties in the northeastern part of Kenya that has often encountered terrorist activities. Terrorist groups such as al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda are thought to be common in the county and the neighbouring counties such as Mandera, Garissa and Marsabit. Some of the notable terror attacks include the one reported in 2013 where important government installations, bars and restaurants were targeted and destroyed. According to USAID (2016), many youths in Wajir are often recruited into al-Shabaab, which takes advantage of the high levels of vulnerability of young people in the northeastern region due to increasing unemployment in the area. A number of strategies have been tried to prevent the youth from being enrolled into the al-Shabaab insurgent group and other similar organizations. Some of these strategies are usually community-driven such as the use of community-based organizations (CBOs). Despite these initiatives in Wajir County by the government in collaboration with the community, a number of cases keep on emerging where young people are alleged to be crossing to Somalia to be recruited into terrorist organizations. The Kenya Ni Wajibu Wetu (NIWETU) launched by USAID in Wajir County in 2016, to improve county and national responsiveness to violent extremism has not yielded much either. The rampant violent extremist incidences in the county therefore call for an empirical study to determine strategies for addressing this problem.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Violent extremism has been a worrying trend that has led to the disruption of peace and development in Africa. The perpetrators of this extremism have been the youth. Recent reports by the government's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (NSCVE) indicate that since the 1998 US Embassy bombing in Nairobi which claimed several lives and left hundreds seriously injured, Kenya has experienced numerous violent extremist attacks which have, equally caused numerous deaths and serious injuries to the victims.

Despite application of various strategies by the government to address radicalization and violent extremism, the problem still continues, with the youth commonly involved. The actors do not

address idleness which is the root of cause for youth joining these groups. This study therefore investigates whether the use of sports activities, may keep the idle youths busy and therefore dissuade them from joining the extremist groups. This in turn will lead to reduced incidences of terrorist attacks by the radicalized youth

1.3 The Goal and Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to assess the role of sports activities in prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth of Wajir County.

1.3.1   Specific Objectives of the Study

This study addressed the following specific objectives:
i. To examine the role of the youth in countering radicalization and violent extremism in Wajir County.
ii. To assess the role of sports activities in the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth in Wajir County.
iii.To evaluate the impact of sports activities on prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth in Wajir County.

1.3.2   Key Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:
i. What is the role of the youth in countering radicalization and violent extremism in Wajir County?
ii. Does participation in sports activities help to prevent radicalization and violent extremism among the youth in Wajir County?
iii.What is the impact of sports activities in the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth in Wajir County?

1.3.3   Research Hypotheses

The study tested the following hypotheses:

1. The youth play no significant role in countering radicalization and violent extremism among the youth in Wajir County.

2. Sports activities could play a significant role in the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth in Wajir County.

1.4 Justifictaion of the Study

The problem of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth is particularly becoming widespread in Kenya. The is especially associated with the entry of Kenya Defense Forces into Somalia in 2011 as part of the international agenda of containing or eradicating al-Shabaab insurgency and restoring peace in Somalia, the Horn of African region, and the rest of the world. Despite the government and its non-governmental development partners trying to address the problem of radicalization and radicalization, it still persists. This study sought to focus on the role of sports activities in prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth of Wajir County as an alternative strategy for the government and other non-governmental stakeholders in security matters. The study is critical in influencing policy formulation on sports and how they can be proactively used to effectively help the youth in tackling religious extremism and terrorism.

The study is also useful to the academia and researchers with interest in prevention of religious extremism among the youth. In this sense, the study serves as reference point for future research on this subject. By providing a new perspective into tackling of religious extremism, the study may stimulate new interests among scholars and researchers to conduct further and broader studies on this theme hence effectively addressing this subject.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study set forth to assess the role of sports activities in the prevention of religious extremism among the youth of Wajir County. Specifically, the study focused on the role of the youth as community leaders in countering religious extremism, the role of sports activities in the prevention of religious extremism among the youth, and the impact of sports activities on prevention of religious extremism among the youth in Wajir County. The study involved the

youth, religious leaders, community leaders, the business community and local government officers such as local chiefs and assistant chiefs.

The study faced some limitations, especially during fieldwork. Given that radicalization and religious extremism in the northern part of Kenya is usually a sensitive issue; some respondents were reluctant to give the correct information regarding the subject of study. This reaction may have been as a result of fear of and suspicion by the respondents regarding the intention of the study. Getting permission from relevant government offices, such as the area chief's office, to conduct data collection exercise also proved a bit challenging due to the sensitivity of the subject of radicalization and religious extremism in Wajir and the surrounding counties in the northern and northeastern Kenya.

In order to address these limitations and conduct a successful study, the researcher did proper introduction to the relevant authorities so that research authorizations could be granted. Furthermore, the respondents were thoroughly briefed on the intention of the study so as to erase any possible suspicion from them. The explanation to the effect that the collected data would be used confidentially served well in convincing the respondents to participate in the study without a lot of hesitation or incidences of declining to be interviewed. Having the NACOSTI permit helped in getting the needed information without too much suspicion.

1.6 Operational Definition of Key Terms

Al-Qaeda   Is a transnational Islamist extremist organization founded in 1988 by the late Osama bin Laden, with its leadership in Afghanistan and Pakistan which purports to overthrow corrupt regimes and end injustices.

Al-Shabaab   It means 'the youth' in Arabic, and is the largest terrorist group based Somalia where it is fighting the government in order to establish Sharia law in the country. The group's activities are fast spreading to other countries, including Kenya

Extremism   Refers to political, religious, or racial ideologies held by individuals or groups of individuals that appear to strongly resist commonly held societal belief systems.

Extremists Refer to individuals who tend to strongly deviate from commonly held social or political positions. These may also be viewed as having strong dissenting voices from what is commonly the norm in their respective communities or societies.

Terrorism This signifies acts of violence motivated by strong social or political ideologies by certain individuals or groups, sometimes based on distorted religious beliefs. Terrorism is usually targeted towards the state or its citizens (civilians) to send signals to the target that dire actions may be taken by the terrorists if certain demands are not met.

Violent Extremism This refers to a state of propagating violent acts by individuals or groups of people who have been religiously or politically radicalized.

Violent extremist intervention strategies These refer to the kind of approaches that can be applied to address violent extremism among the youth, or those that can be used to help the youth fight extremism. This may be viewed in terms of social and political integration, enhanced community involvement, government assistance, and provision of financial/material resources to help the youth effectively engage in social activities such as sports.

Violent extremist This is an individual who promotes or supports violence as a means to achieve ideological, religious, and/or political ends.

Youth this is a group of young people, usually between 18-35 years, who reside in Wajir County..

1.7 Research Methodology

This section addresses the techniques that were employed in carrying out the study and helped to answer the research questions. These include the research design, the target population/site description, sampling design and sample size, data collection instruments and data collection procedure, and data management and analysis methods to be used as well as the ethical considerations.

1.7.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive research design in order to assess the role of the youth in prevention of religious extremism in North Eastern Kenya with specific reference to Wajir County. This research design was suitable for capturing the attitudes and perception of the respondents who were drawn from various categories of people in the county. Furthermore, descriptive research design was appropriate for answering the 'why' and 'how' questions as the study attempted to answer the questions on how the youth go about addressing the problem of religious extremism in the county.

1.7.2 Site Description

This study was conducted in Wajir County in the northeastern part of Kenya. The county borders Mandera County to the north and north east, Garissa to the south and south west, and Isiolo and Marsabit to the west. To the east of the county also lies the Republic of Somalia and to the North West the Republic of Ethiopia. Based on the 2019 national population census, Wajir County has a population of about 781,263 who occupy the county's 56,773 km^2 area. Further, the county is divided into 6 sub-counties which include Wajir east, Wajir west, Wajir north, Wajir south, Eldas, and Tarbaj. The county's population density is approximately 13.76/km^2 (KBS, 2019). Wajir County makes a suitable research site due to many cases of violent extremism especially associated with al-Shabaab terror group believed to have its origin in the neighbouring Somalia.

1.7.3 Target Population

The target population for the study comprised of members of the public and local government officers. These included the youth (250), local chiefs and assistant chiefs (10), imams (15), and community leaders (25). The study was specifically carried out in Wajir East sub-county. Due to its close proximity to Somalia where it is often alleged that notorious insurgent groups such as al-Shabaab operate, the sub-county was most suitable for the study. This provided an opportunity to understand the relationship between the youth and religious extremist activities in the county.

1.7.4 Sampling Design and Sample Size

Simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used to select respondents for the study. Purposive sampling was used to identify imams, local chiefs and assistant chiefs, and community leaders while simple random sampling was used to select the youth. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling methods through which individuals with in-depth information about the subject of study are identified. On the other hand, simple random sampling is a probability sampling method which gives the research elements an equal chance of being selected. Given the likely deeper understanding of the youth's role in prevention of religious extremism by imams, local chiefs and community leaders, purposive sampling technique sufficed. On the other hand, since the youth constitutes a large number and the fact that anyone of them can represent them in the study, simple random sampling was appropriate to sample them.

According to Kothari (2012), a study can use a sample of 10-30% of the target population depending on the size of the population. In this sense, at least 10% can be used where the population is large or 30% where the population is small. Using Kathuri and Pals (1993) sampling theory, the study used 20% of the target population to arrive at the final sample size. Table 1.1 illustrates the sample size for the study.

Table 1.1 Sample Size

Category	Target Population	Sample Size
Youth	250	50
Chiefs	10	2
Imams	15	3
Community Leaders	25	5
Total	**300**	**60**

Despite the sample size of 60 respondents, not all of them managed to participate in the study. Non-participation in the study by some of the respondents was informed by various reasons. The study' response rate is captured in table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Questionnaire Return Rate

Category	Sample Size	Response Rate	
	Frequency (n)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Youth	50	42	84
Chiefs	2	1	50
Imams	3	3	100
Community Leaders	5	3	60
Total	**60**	**49**	**82**

As illustrated in table 1.2, out of the sample size of 60 respondents, 82% (49) of them managed to successfully complete and return the questionnaires. Effective follow-ups were made to ensure that filled questionnaires were returned on time to allow the researcher have sufficient and objective data for effectively answering the research questions. A response rate of 82% was excellent since, according to Kothari (2013), a response rate of 70% and above is exceptionally good for addressing the research problem.

1.7.5   Data Collection Methods

The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods to gather data. A semi-structured questionnaire and a key informant interview guide were used to collect primary data from the 4 categories of respondents, i.e. the youth, chiefs, imams, and the community leaders. The questionnaire was used to collect data from the youth whereas key informant interview guide was used to interview imams, local chiefs and community leaders. Secondary data was used to complement primary data where this was accessed through existing literature from the library and relevant journals. All data was collected through face-to-face administering of the research instruments to the respondents.

1.7.6   Data Management and Analysis

After data collection, both quantitative and qualitative data was organized and coded for data analysis. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive data analysis techniques aided by SPSS

software program and Excel worksheets. Qualitative data on the other hand was organized and analyzed using coding, pattern and content analysis techniques. Content analysis procedure was used to help in making objective and systematic conclusions from collected primary data. Analyzed quantitative data was presented using tables and figures while qualitative data was presented through narrative citations within the main text report.

1.7.7   Ethical Considerations

I sought and obtained clearance from NACOSTI to conduct the research. During data collection, informed consent was sought from the respondents, confidentiality of data was observed, and data was published anonymously in order to protect the privacy and integrity of the respondents. Additionally, there was proper acknowledgement and citation of all data sources to adhere to the best research practice and academic writing.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on the broader question of radicalization and violent extremism in various parts of the world. The chapter also addresses the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study. Radicalization and violent extremism is a global problem today; evils closely associated with religious fanaticism. This becomes even more critical when viewed against the impact it has on young people given that extremist groups such as al-Shabaab and ISIS take

advantage of unemployed and desperate youth to recruit them into their fold. Overtime, various organizations have come out to involve the youth in fighting the problem of radicalization and violent extremism through such activities as sports which helps young people to keep busy. However, there are still challenges which may need to be addressed in order to enable the youth to actively participate in alleviating the widely spreading religious extremism instead of being party to the spread of the same.

2.2 Role of the Youth in Countering of Radicalization and Violent Extremism

The Jihad verse (Quran 2: 216) states that Jihad fighting or the 'Holy War' is Allah's justified cause which has been ordained for Muslims. This view seems to offer justification for the Muslims to engage in radicalization and violent extremism since, through misinterpretation of the Quran, this is approved in the eyes of Allah. Radicalization and violent extremism is widely being experienced in the world today, with majority of the direct perpetrators being young people below the age of 30 years. According to McCauley and Moskalenko (2011), the threat of violent extremism is increasingly linked to religious fanaticism where vulnerable young people are lured into joining ideologically organized groups to champion their warped ideals. Although several strategies have been employed to counter religious extremism especially among the youth, the use of sports activities such as sports has not been viewed as a serious strategy.

Extremist groups such as al-Shabaab and ISIS among others are increasingly recruiting the youth who are enticed with all manner of material goods and money hence creating fear and despondence among parents and relatives of the youth who are potential recruits into these outlawed groups. According to Botha (2013), the modus operandi of radicalized and extremist groups has increasingly become unpredictable, with even lone operators launching attacks unexpectedly. It is however clear that several terror organizations tend to take advantage of the idling young people so that they can be lured into terrorist activities with the promise of financial rewards. Yet, some studies have noted that sports can be used to keep young people busy hence keeping them away from criminal activities including joining terrorist groups (Hegghammer, 2013; McCauley and Moskalenko, 2011).

Community leadership is credited with the ability to reduce the activities of organized criminal groups, including extremist organizations (Botha and Abdile, 2017). Through the philosophy of community policing, local leaders in effective collaboration with members of the public are in a better position to detect any unusual happenings within their jurisdictions and liaise with government security agencies to thwart those activities. Ideally, most community leadership positions go to people of advanced age hence sometimes isolating the young people. In the context of fighting extremist behaviours in society, lack of proper involvement of people of all ages in the fight means that there will be a sense of non-inclusivity in important decision-making (McCauley and Moskalenko, 2011). Such a scenario would further isolate the youth thus giving them the excuse to engage in anti-social behaviours such as violent extremism.

According to Hegghammer (2013), technology is playing an increasingly important role in religious extremism. With the widespread use of the mobile phones, especially among young people who are credited with a high sense of technological acumen, illicit messages can be spread very vast within a large geographical space. Studies have also indicated that radicalization and extremism widely use coded messages to spread their propaganda, with young techno savvy adherents playing a critical role in ensuring that the message is received far and wide (Davis, 2010). Based on the aforementioned, it is not therefore clear how leadership role of the youth can help in preventing radicalization and religious extremism. While some studies have advocated for the youth to be given community leadership roles as a way of integrating them into security matters, others have termed this as unwise as wayward young people will get the opportunity to advance criminality including terrorism activities (Hansen, 2013).

Ordinarily, direct involvement of young people in community leadership role gives them a chance to be heard and their views taken seriously in making decisions that affect them and the community at large. Hansen (2013) postulates that being a leader in society gives one a high sense of responsibility and this can easily dissuade the individual from engaging in what could be seen as going against the common good of the people or community the individual leads. This therefore means that if young people are in the mainstream community or societal leadership, they become more responsive and this is likely to discourage them from engaging in criminal activities. Furthermore, young community leaders stand a better position to understand their fellow young people and their social issues such that they can effectively offer direction where it

is needed. Researchers have also argued that unlike older members of the society or older community leaders who may be socially separated from young people due to age difference and different worldviews, fellow young community leaders can easily read from the same script when it comes to social issues affecting young people (ICG, 2014). Yet, it is not always easy to have community leaders belonging to one age group at any given time.

However, infiltration of the youth's social space by irresponsible young leaders in the community will likely play a key role in helping the young generation to abuse this role by engaging in outlawed activities instead of carefully and meaningfully trying to define their future. According to Kundnani (2012), radicalization of the youth can present in many guises where religious fanatics behave in different ways based on internal and external influences. External drivers of radicalization of the youth may be seen in terms of reading extremist literature, accessing extremist groups' web links and making online contacts with terror network agents (Davis, 2010). Conversely, internal drivers of radicalization may include past converts who live within the community, religious leaders, and community leaders who espouse extremist tenets among others. In this sense, engaging young people in community leadership positions may not necessarily help in dealing with criminality such as terrorist activities. Hence this study will help in understanding the role of young people in community leadership with regard to religious extremism.

Although religious extremism is often associated with Islam, in general, sympathizers of extremist groups can come in all forms of guises regardless of their age, gender, religious, political affiliations or any imagined or real social inclinations (Hansen, 2013) according to the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), a number of young people in Wajir County and other north eastern Kenya counties, have ended up being enlisted in al-Shabaab and other terrorist groups (KHRC, 2016). This move has eventually led to loss of lives among so many young people who get killed either through suicide bombings or through shootings by government security agents. Despite numerous youths in Wajir County and other neighbouring counties losing their lives and putting their careers on the line due to radicalization and violent extremism, the government has not been able to completely deal with this problem. This has largely been blamed on the fact that religious extremists usually operate disguised as unpretentious preachers where radical imams have been extensively linked with religious extremism in northeastern and coastal areas of Kenya (Hansen, 2013). This study will be critical in making it clearer regarding how

different dynamics associated with sports activities can help young people to avoid radicalization and violent extremism not only in Wajir County but in many other parts of the country and globally.

2.3 Sports Activities and Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism

Countering radicalization and religious extremism may require a wide range of strategies, including arresting of extremist and radicalization leaders, rehabilitation of former extremists or radicalized individuals, and security agents being more vigilant to foil any possible attempts of extremist activities. It is also important to use communal and social activities such as sports to bring people together in addition to helping the young people to actively participate in constructive endeavours which could help them to stay away from evil acts. Whereas empirical studies have indicated that sports is a known strategy for addressing criminality among the youth, there are challenges on how effectively this strategy can be enforced (Davis, 2010). Empirical literature also shows that fighting poverty, reducing unemployment among the youth, and increasing investments in neglected areas or isolated communities as well as encouraging inclusivity in societal matters can help in mitigating the spread of extremist ideologies (ICG, 2014). However, it is not easy for the government to create employment opportunities to take care of all the needs of young people. Yet, Davis (2010) and ICG (2014) did not bring out the role of sports activities in dissuading youth from engaging in radicalization and violent extremism.

According to Challgren et al (2016), there are three religious extremism prevention levels based on the public health model which can help in fighting radicalization and extremism in a holistic manner. These include primary, secondary and tertiary prevention approaches. Primary prevention strategy broadly involves the whole society where intervention targets the basis of extremist tendencies among the community members. In this sense, social grievances that could drive people to radicalization and violent extremism are tackled as a way of mitigating further escalation of such tendencies (Kessels and Nemr, 2016). Secondary prevention of extremism entails focusing on individuals and groups who have been identified as potential converts to violent extremism. Sports and other recreational activities have been touted as one of the best strategies through which to engage groups and dissuade them from engaging in other criminal activities (Maszka, 2018). Through sports and other recreational activities, young people are able

to meaningfully engage in activities as they concentrate on building their sporting careers and making themselves busy hence avoiding indulging in criminal activities. However, these need resources and elaborate policies to enforce. With financially strained county governments, this strategy may prove difficult to enforce. However, at the end of this study, this may be clear.

Like in many parts of the world struggling with radicalization and violent extremism, Kenya has adopted the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) as efforts spearheading the prevention and countering radicalization and religious extremism (Maszka, 2018). One of the most pronounced extremist groups which the country has been battling with is al-Shabaab insurgency group which is thought to have lured many young people in northeastern and coastal parts of Kenya. The outlawed group usually capitalizes on the plight of unemployed young people to lure them into joining the group. Essentially, lack of job opportunities renders the youth idle thus making them a good target for extremist groups. Indeed, studies have indicated that young people constitute the biggest percentage of extremist group members (Challgren et al, 2016). In order to provide the youth avenues for nurturing their talents and helping them to be engaged and in the process shun social ills, sporting activities often become the best option. Local football clubs and other forms of sports have been used by different organizations and communities to keep young people out of criminal activities. However, challenges abound in Wajir County especially given that the sporting activities are not actively manifest in the county. Furthermore, playing grounds and other requisite games facilities are not very well developed due to lack of financial resources and absence of support from other well-wishers. Additionally, lack of political goodwill and power games played at the local levels in the county often deny the youth the opportunity to sustainably be supported in sports at local levels (Hegghammer, 2013).

On the other hand, powerful politicians tend to capitalize on the vulnerability of young people to buy their loyalty thus ending up plunging them into criminal activities for the former's benefit. According to Mogire and Agade (2011), while sporting activities such as football may serve as a good strategy for helping young people to keep themselves busy hence avoiding radicalization and violent extremism, political power games sometimes derail this approach. According to Ogada (2017), some politicians ironically hide behind sports to recruit young people into criminal groups to do political biddings. At worst, some organizers of the sporting activities with ulterior motives use such forums to recruit desperate young boys into radicalized and violent extremist

groups (Hegghammer, 2013). Generally however, use of sports may be viewed as part of the broader initiative, Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), by the government. The scope of this initiative ranges from creation of community awareness, civic education, opposing extremist narratives, and community engagement on topical issues. As one of the objectives of this study, sports will be analyzed to understand its role in the fight against religious extremism among the youth in Kenya.

Additionally, through CVE, there is expected to be enhanced community policing, countering of extremist recruitment activities, and detachment and disbandment of potential extremist groups. Through sports as a wider countering violent extremism agenda, rehabilitation of individuals who may engaged with violent extremism is mad possible (Maszka, 2018). It however remains unclear to what extent sports have served as a good strategy for dealing with radicalization religious extremism among the youth in society today. This therefore forms part of the aim of this study – to understand the role of sports in countering radicalization and violent extremism in Kenya today. Furthermore, since some recreational activities and sports may be a very expensive undertaking that require clear policies, financial resources, physical facilities such playing fields and experts to come up with relevant sporting programs, this strategy may have to be carefully thought through (Hansen, 2013).

2.4 Challenges Encountered by the Youth in Counterterrorism Campaigns

Challenges encountered in the fight against radicalization and religious extremism are enormous, not only in Kenya but globally (Prestholdt, 2011). This becomes even a bigger challenge if viewed against the youth in their quest to help in tackling this problem. Although there are efforts by the government to try to institute mechanism for countering radicalization and religious extremism in the country, there is no assurance that this problem will completely be eradicated among the youth. Some of the approaches which have been adopted but which are still ineffective include Countering Violence Extremism (CVE) initiative and other relevant legislations. They remain largely unsuccessful in helping the youth participate fully in the fight against radicalization and religious extremism (Romaniuk, 2012). Romaniuk further posits that over time government security institutions such as the police and prisons are considered to have been infiltrated by radicalization agents. Hence, this makes it difficult for these bodies to effectively

counter the menace. In the recent past, security officers have not been able to decisively deal with terror related attacks. The worst cases of loyalty to terror and radicalized groups by security agencies have been demonstrated through terror attacks by police officers.

Clear policy guidelines for dealing with radicalization and violent extremism are required in order to effective define rules of engagement between the public, non-governmental organizations and the government. According to Kyai and Holland (2013), good policy guidelines for example help to explain the rules revolving around accessing and handling of radicalization and religious extremist literature by the public. Furthermore, clear policies may also help to explain what can be considered as radicalized or/and religious extremist literature and how terror suspects should be treated by the relevant government agencies upon arrest. Under clear policy guidelines, the youth who are part of the larger community will have a clear understanding of prohibited literature or engagement when it comes to the question of radicalization and religious extremism (Prestholdt, 2011). Studies have indicated the existence of multiple programs that help the youth stay away from radicalization and religious extremism or for rehabilitation of those who have been accused or suspected of engaging in these antisocial behaviours. For instance, psychologists have talked about what they refer to as cognitive restructuring as common rehabilitation program, which is based on the reasoning that individuals will always behave differently based on their lines of thought.

The youth are in the forefront to counter terrorism and religious extremism. However, there are those who are being used by terrorist groups such as al-Shabaab and others, especially based on their high level of vulnerability as a result of lack of source of income (McCauley and Moskalenko, 2011). One of the biggest challenges young people and other key stakeholders face in counterterrorism include the fact that violent extremism is ever evolving into new forms. According to Subedi (2017), violent terror groups progressively continue to enhance their capabilities by amassing their resources through seizures of oil fields, illegal trade, and staging of kidnappings where they ask for ransoms from the government and other strategic institutions. The amassing of wealth by extremist entities gives them the ability to spread their networks and continue to cause suffering to the society at large. The youth are at the center of being used in some of the terror-related activities due to idleness and joblessness. Hence, this study examined

the possibility of sports activities giving the youth an opportunity to stay busy, and in turn stay out of crime in general.

2.5 Intervention Strategies for the Youth to Address Violent Extremism

The increasing sophistication of radicalization and violent extremism is placing various challenges on the way for the government and other relevant institutions tasked with addressing this menace. The widespread use of the internet has made it easier for networking and spreading of propaganda for terror groups such as al-Shabaab which tend to claim responsibilities for certain violent extremist attacks almost immediately they happen (Mark, 2014). Randall (2010) further posits that the patterns and trends of radicalization and violent extremism are progressively broadening, which enables violent extremists to easily gain inspiration from a wide range of radical ideologies. Often young people are the most vulnerable to this online propaganda of the terrorists because they are computer literate and prefer the use of social media for communication. Furthermore, most of these youths who are unemployed become an easy target as they are promised monetary rewards. This is challenging as many are easily captured through this and therefore end up being recruited by the terrorist networks. The study here identifies that even though the two writers have highlighted the role of social media in radicalization and terror networks, they fail to offer a viable solution which this study brings through the examination of the role of sports in countering radicalization and terrorism.

The increasing level of unemployment among young people has somehow complicated the fight against radicalization and violent extremism even more hence making the government's efforts unsustainable. However, the government, in collaboration with communities and other institutions, is trying its best to address the problem of radicalization and violent extremism especially with regard to the youth. This study suggests the investigation of the role of sports in countering radicalization and violent extremism.

According to Randall (2010), tackling of corruption and creating avenues for young people to engage with the government and other key institutions in society is one way of giving the young people a voice in societal matters hence discouraging them from engaging in radicalization and religious extremism activities. To some extent this strategy has managed to move some young

20

people from the periphery of important decision-making into the mainstream development agenda of society today. However, there are still inherent challenges as the sophisticated nature of operation of terror and religious groups today makes it easier for them to still take advantage of young people who want to make quick money through their association with these groups (Subedi, 2017).

Huffman (2012) further argues that reducing the level of poverty through creation of employment opportunities for the young people and reducing the widening gap between the rich and the poor is another strategy to help the youth resist temptations to join the otherwise seeming enticing extremist groups. This approach would be seen as offering a holistic solution to the desperation by vulnerable young people who tend to plunge into criminality, including joining extremist groups. However, certain regions of the country such as the coast and northeastern counties still remain marginalized hence giving the young people an opportunity to get attracted to radicalized groups which use money and other material goods as baits. .The anti-terrorism law in the country may not be explicit enough on how to enforce it especially when it comes to addressing online content (Whitaker, 2013). This study examined the role of sports in keeping the youth to stay busy and in turn dissuade them from engaging in radicalization and religious extremism.

De-radicalization of the youth still remains a challenge to the government and its associates due to lack of concrete channels of engagement with the idling youth who have been rendered so due to lack of economic opportunities. According to Zieger and Aly (2015), community policing is a popular approach to root out criminal activities from the community, including helping the youth in addressing the question of radicalization and violent extremism in their midst. This strategy is critical especially in slums and other disadvantaged neighbourhoods often most directly affected by counter-terrorism operations. However, this approach needs a high level of trust between members of the public in general and government security agencies. Huffman (2012) postulates that this anti-terrorism strategy is not easy to implement especially in resource-poor communities where there is very little, if any, public trust in the police. The whole question of community policing thus remains a big challenge to implement amidst inadequate resources by the government and unwillingness of the public to effectively cooperate with authorities. This study examined how sports can be used to discourage the youth from engaging in radicalization and religious extremism.

Another counter-ideological strategy would be to focus on online extremist content and activities and create a forum for sensitization of the youth on the need to desist from engaging in antisocial behaviour such as radicalization and religious extremism. Despite the challenges, there are spirited efforts by national and international security players to help the youth to mitigate radicalization and violent extremism in society today. According to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), upholding of human rights and dignity of individuals and avoiding any form of torture or ill-treatment is the first step towards addressing the question of radicalization and violent extremism (Subedi, 2017). Yet, a number of young people are said to have one time or the other been tortured because they were found idling at the wrong time or places. This study was important in highlighting the role of sports in keeping the youth busy as a possible strategy to keep them out of such unlawful activities as radicalization and religious extremism.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study utilized the Social control theory as posited by Travis Hirschi (1990). The theory postulates that human relationships, obligations, values, ethics, ties and beliefs encourage them not to break the law. It further alludes that if people internalize the ethics and have a stake in the wider community, they will be less inclined to participate in deviant actions. For him, people's ties to the family, school and other parts of the society serve to control one's inclination to crime. Young people's participation in crime therefore occurs when these ties are weakened or even absent. Hirschi argues that these ties are based on attachment to family members, friends, other members of the community such as teachers and commitment to activities that an individual has invested in time and energy. The activities being referred to here can include sports activities such as football and athletics among others. When young people are involved in these activities they further their ties to each other and the other members of the community and as such have limited time to get involved in criminal and deviant behavior. Religion here brings in the belief aspect which acts as a control as it spells out the values and ethics that form the individuals and the society at large.

From a micro sociological viewpoint, Social Control Theory focuses on informal control systems. Travis (2010) builds on Hirsch's definition of social control theory, stating that there are four

societal bonds that encourage individuals' conformity to the rule of law. Travis's definition is most relevant to this study, given the emphasis it places on the societal bonds and their importance in the youth's conformity to the rule of law. His theory allows us to examine the relationship between the youth, their parents and the activities the former are involved in as a result of these relationships. Furthermore, using this theory we are able to interpret the importance of the youth engaging in sports activities which subsequently acts as deterrence to joining radical and extremist groups. A visual view of this theory reveals the following relationship between sports and prevention of radicalization and violent extremism. In the context of this study, this would explain why it is critical for the government to seriously consider initiating sports facilities so as to encourage youth's involvement in sports hence dissuading them from radicalization and violent extremism and other criminalities.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.1 presents a diagrammatical relationship between the independent and the dependent variables of the study.

Independent Variables

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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Youth's role                │
│ • Roles played              │
│ • Community support         │
│ • Peer support              │
└─────────────────────────────┘
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Dependent Variable

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┌──────────────────────────────────┐
│ Level of religious extremism     │
│ • Reduced radicalization and     │
│   violent extremism              │
│ • Peace and security (reduced    │
│   cases of terror attack)        │
│ • Youth's commitment to          │
│   communal activities            │
└──────────────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Role of sports activities   │
│ • Availability of finances  │
│ • Accessibility of facilities│
│ • Local leadership support  │
└─────────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Impact of sports activities │
│ • Increased youth in sports │
│ • Increased sports activities│
│ • Increased sports programs │
└─────────────────────────────┘
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┌──────────────────────────┐
│ • Government             │
│   Policies on            │
│   counterterrorism       │
│ • Community              │
│   policing strategies    │
└──────────────────────────┘
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Intervening Variables

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER THREE

THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH IN COUNTERING RADICALIZATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

3.1 Introdcution

This section addresses the role played by the youth in prevention of radicalization and violent extremism. This chapter presents the analyzed findings of the study. First, the demographics that informed the analysis of the study objectives are outlined in subsequent subsections.

3.2 Demographic Analysis

The study population comprised of the youth, chiefs, imams, and community leaders in Wajir County. Demographic information for the respondents was captured in terms of their gender, age, their role in the community, marital status, highest education level, and the period they had stayed in Wajir County. The information was important in informing on the respondents' varied views regarding the subject of study.

32.1   Distribution of Respondents by Gender

The respondents were asked categorized in terms of gender to determine their various opinions regarding the subject of study. Distribution of their responses is presented in figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Gender Distribution of Respondents

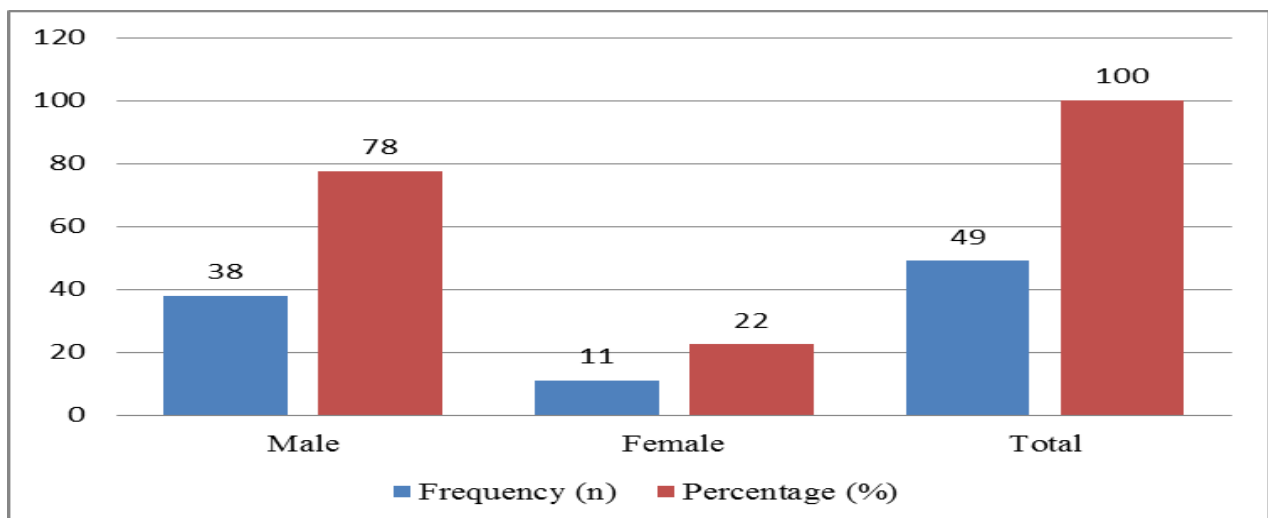Based on gender disaggregation of the respondents, 38 (78%) of them were male whereas 11 (22%) were female. The respondents' gender differentials may be informed by the fact that based on demographic characteristics of Wajir County; men take the lead when it comes to debates surrounding pertinent community issues, such as radicalization and violent extremism among the youth. The skewed gender balance did not however affect the quality of the responses obtained from the respondents for addressing the research questions. Countering of radicalization by the youth through sports is evidently demonstrated through gender differentials due to the fact that majority of the young people actively involved in sports are male. Therefore, as illustrated in figure 3.1 above, more male than female respondents were recorded.

3.2.2   Distribution of Respondents by Age

Figure 3.2 below illustrates the age distribution of the respondents. From the figure it is clear that a majority of the respondents were aged between 16 and 25.

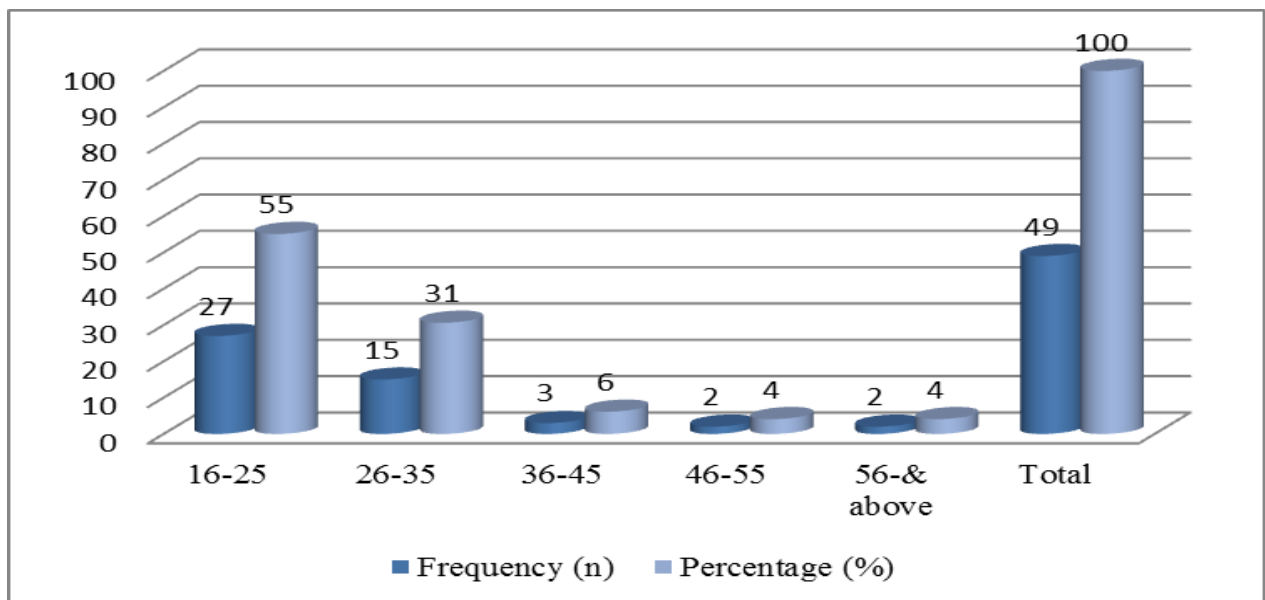**Figure 3.2 Age Distribution of Respondents**

From the analysis in figure 3.2, 27 (55%) of the respondents were aged 16-25 years, 15 (31%) aged 26-35, 3 (6%) aged 36-45, and 2 (4%) were aged 46-55 years, and 56 years and above respectively. Overall, 86% of the respondents fell within the youth age bracket of utmost 35 years. The distribution of the age bracket of the respondents signifies the prime target of this

study, which was the young people, such that they could effectively tell their own story about issues that affect the lives of young people not only in Wajir County, but in Kenya generally.

The fact that majority of the respondents were aged between 16 and 25 years may imply that majority of the individuals involved in radicalization and violent extremism are generally young. Furthermore, related to the role of sports in countering radicalization, it would mean that majority of the people involved are relatively young in age. This study's findings reflect what Ogada (2017) noted that young people are actively involved in sports as a strategy for countering radicalization and violent extremism.

3.2.3 Distribution of Respondents by Roles in Community

The respondents were asked about their respective roles in their community to understand their varied views regarding radicalization and violent extremism among young people in Wajir County and how sports activities would be used to help them avoid terror-related activities. The roles were assigned in terms of youth, local chiefs, imams, and community leaders at the local levels. Distribution of the various roles is illustrated in figure 3.3. From these findings, it would imply that for the youth to actively participate in countering of radicalization and violent extremism, the youth need space where they can openly dialogue about their situation. In this sense, sports arenas and activities provide this platform for them.
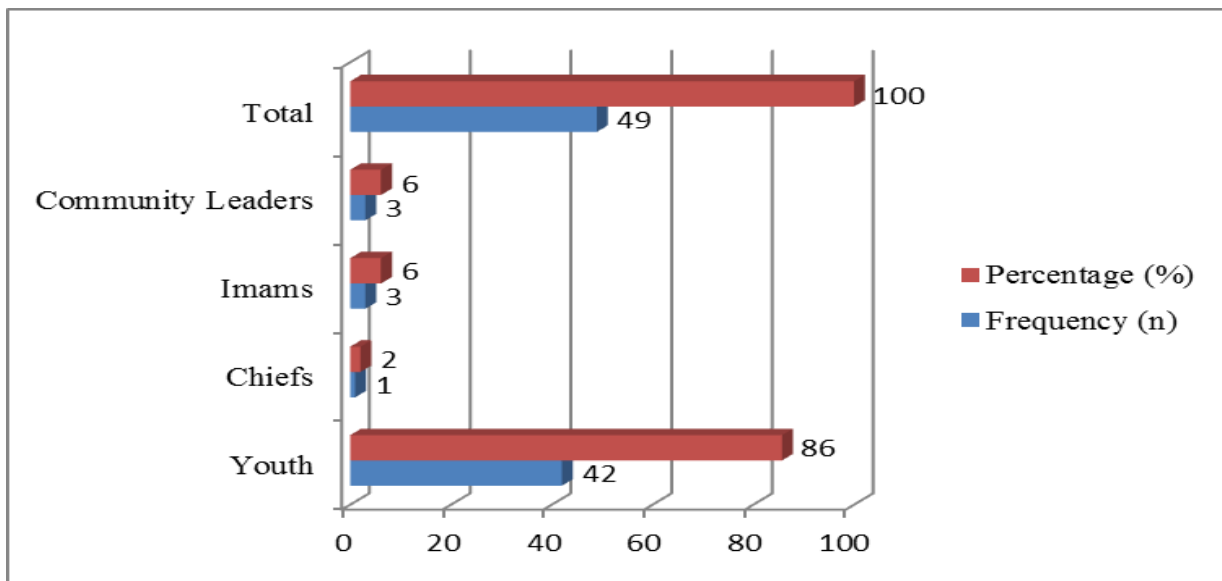

Figure 3.3 Community Roles of Respondents

As presented in figure 3.3, 42 (86%) of the respondents were in the youth category, 3 (6%) were imams, 3 (6%) community leaders, and 1 (2%) was a local chief. Based on the distribution, young people were the greater majority among the respondents, and this was significantly in voicing first-hand the role of sports activities in helping young people to stay away from radicalization and violent extremist activities. Furthermore, respondents from the rest of the categories provided balanced views since they reported from their respective unique roles as people holding various offices of responsibility in their community. Apart from the youth as prime target of the study, the respondents in the rest of the categories acted as key informants where they were expected to provide in-depth information based on their unique roles courtesy of their positions in community leadership.

Based on these findings, it is clear the youth are not being given substantive roles to play in the community and therefore are likely to have a lot of time that is channeled to radicalism and violent extremism. However, there is evident from literature that shows that when the youth are engaged in serious roles in the community, it leads to them being more responsible and therefore not engaged in negative activities in the society (Kenya Human Rights Commission, 2016; Kessels & Nemr, 2016). This therefore means that if the youth were more involved in various roles such as those involving peace and security, then we would have less of them going to join the extremist groups.

3.2.4 Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

The respondents' marital status was important for helping to ascertain their social responsibilities, and which in turn was also likely to determine their level of responsiveness when it comes to their focus in life. Distribution of the respondents' marital status is presented in figure 3.4.
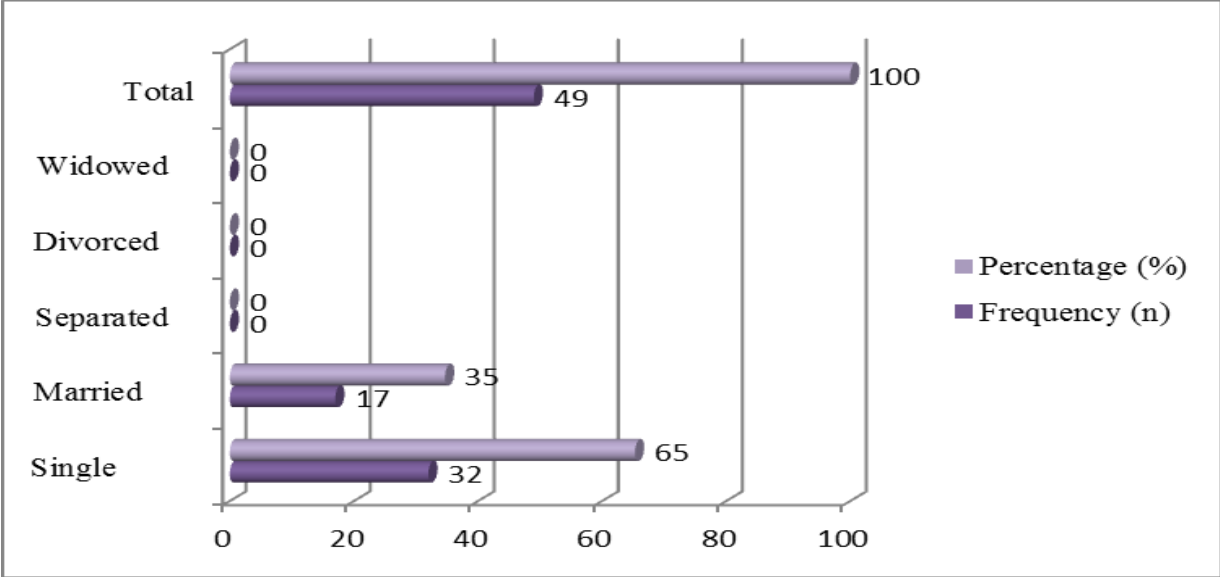
Figure 3.4 Marital Status of Respondents

From the analysis in figure 3.4, 32 (65%) of the respondents were single and 17 (35%) were married. None of the respondents was separated, divorced or widowed. The fact that majority of the respondents were single may be informed by the youthful age of majority of the respondents where 86% of them had indicated that they were aged between 16 and 35 years. However, the skewed statistics on the respondents' marital status did not negatively impact on the responses obtained from them on the subject of the study. The findings further imply that more married young men were likely to involve in extremist activities than those who were still single. Other studies have linked marital status to radicalization and violent extremism due to family pressures, where unemployed married young people are often forced to join known extremist groups such as Al-Shabaab due to enticements of financial rewards to the recruits or their immediate family members.

3.2.5 Distribution of Respondents by Highest Level of Education

The respondents were asked about their highest level of education to ascertain their level of understanding of the subject matter of the study. Their level of education was also important in helping to determine their general outlook to life, including the main discussion of this study which was the role of sports activities in addressing the issue of radicalization and violent

extremism among the youth in Wajir County. Figure 3.5 presents distribution of the respondents based on their highest education level.
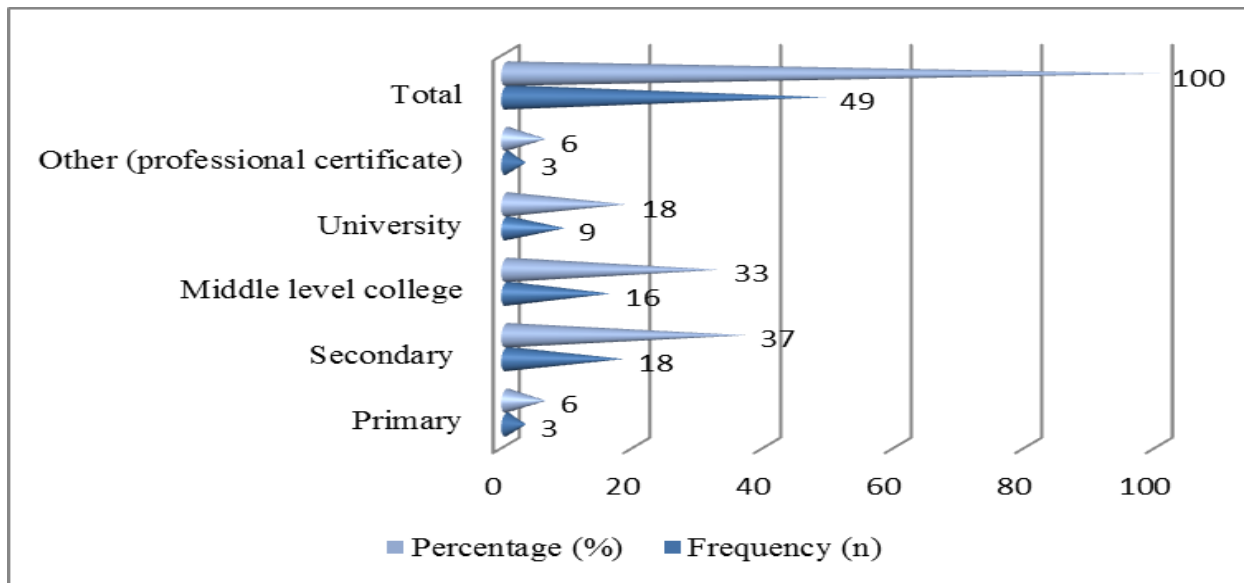
Figure 3.5 Highest Education Level of Respondents

From the distribution in figure 3.5, majority (18) of the respondents had reached secondary school, accounting for 37% of the total. Also, 16 (33%) of them had completed middle level college education, 9 (18%) university, while 3 (6%) in each category had primary and 'other' (professional certificate) qualifications. From this distribution where majority of the respondents had between secondary and middle level college education certificates, it was likely that majority of the youth in Wajir County did not have good employment opportunities, hence a likely target for radicalization and violent extremism on account of being very idle and vulnerable.

From previous studies, the youth who are likely or join extremist groups are lowly educated. According to Subedi (2017), almost all lowly educated youth lack gainful and stable income generating activities hence likely to be idling most of the time. Such as scenario makes them more vulnerable such that they can easily jump into any available promising chance to make a living. Given that radicalized and extremist groups usually entice their potential recruits using money or promises of job opportunities, the lowly educated youth with little hope of getting good employment are likely to be hooked into activities of extremist groups (Badurdeen, 2017).

3.2.6 Distribution of Respondents by the Period of Stay in Wajir County

The respondents were asked about the period they had stayed in Wajir County to gauge their understanding of the goings-on in the county. The information also helped the study to measure the level of the respondents' historical grasp of pertinent social issues in the county, such as radicalization and violent extremism among the youth. Statistics about the length of stay in Wajir County by the respondents are presented in figure 3.6.
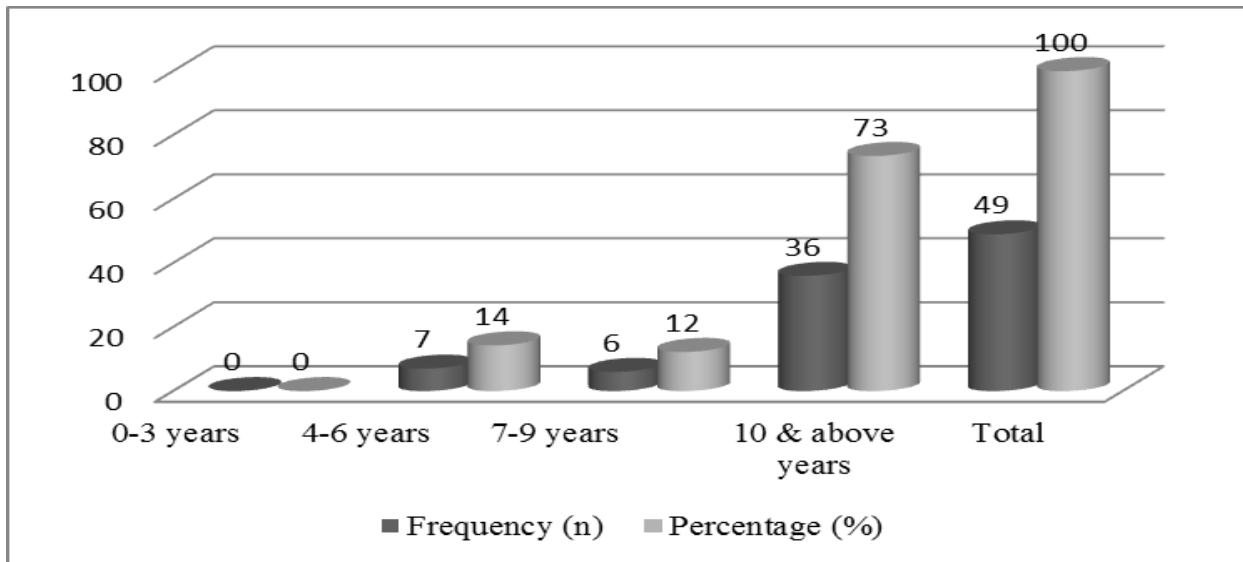
Figure 3.6 Respondents' Period of Stay in Wajir County

From the statistics in table 3.6, a greater majority (36; 73%) of the respondents had stayed in Wajir County for at least 10 years while there was none of them who had lived here for less than 4 years. Overall, this may imply that almost all, if not all, the respondents were residents of Wajir County from childhood. Regardless, given that all of them had stayed in the area for not less than 4 years, they all fully understood the subject matter of the study. This further meant that all the respondents were very credible for providing relevant information for the study. From these findings, majority of the youth likely to engage in extremist activities are likely to have stayed in one place for a longer time such that they are beginning to get frustrated in a monotonous environment where there is little chance of getting gainful livelihood opportunities (Subedi, 2017; Badurdeen, 2017).

3.3 Role of the Youth in Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism

The first objective of the study was to examine the role of the youth in countering radicalization and violent extremism in Wajir County. Regarding whether the youth played any role in countering radicalization and violent extremism in Wajir County, a greater majority (46; 94%) of the respondents answered in the affirmative whereas only 3 (6%) had a differing opinion. These responses are captured in figure 3.7.
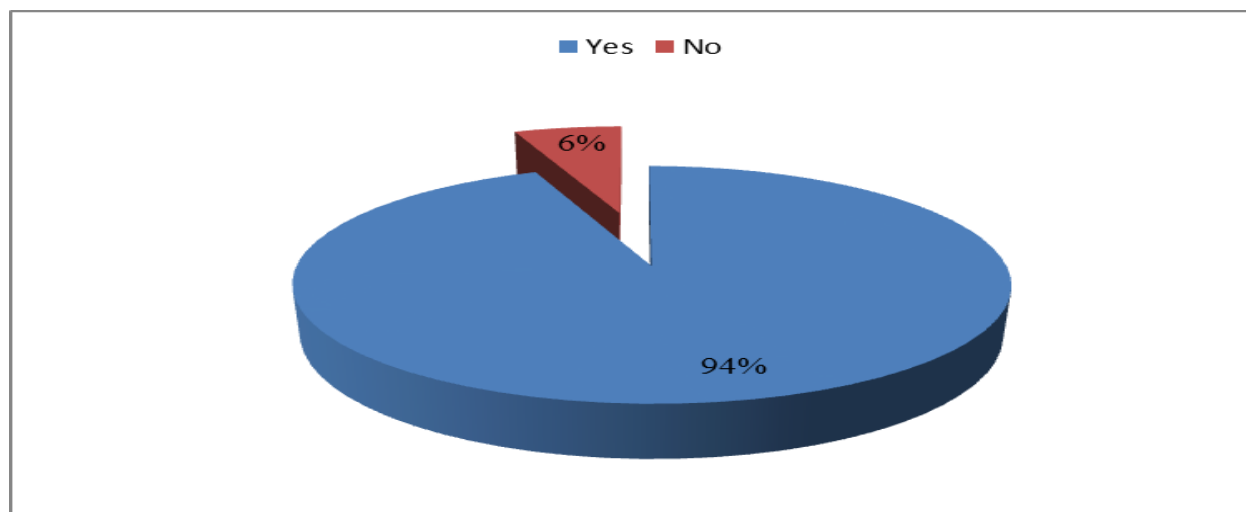
Figure 3.7 Do the Youth Play a Role in Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism?

Furthermore, based on various propositions which were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, the respondents were asked to clarify on specific aspects of the role of the youth in countering radicalization and violent extremism in Wajir County. The responses are captured in table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Youth's Role in Countering Religious Extremism

Statements	1=very small extent	2=small extent	3=moderate extent	4=large extent,	5=very large extent	Total
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)
The youth are not given chance for leadership in this community	0(0)	6(12)	4(8)	13(27)	26(53)	49
There is no community support for the youth in leadership roles	3(6)	6(12)	0(0)	17(35)	23(47)	49
There is no peer support for the youth in leadership roles	3(6)	0(0)	16(33)	7(14)	23(47)	49
Most of the youth are not interested	32(65)	7(14)	6(12)	0(0)	4(8)	49

in leadership roles					
Most of the youth in leadership roles use their positions to propagate religious extremism	40(82)	9(18)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	49
The fight against religious extremism is not taken seriously by the youth	26(53)	9(18)	7(14)	3(6)	4(8)	49

Based on the statistics in table 3.1, regarding whether the youth are not given chance for leadership in the community, 39 (80%) of the respondents agreed with this view, 6 (12%) disagreed while 4 (8%) said they only agreed to a moderate extent. A similar trend was noted regarding whether there was no community support for the youth in leadership roles, where 40 (82%) agreed with this proposition while only 9 (18%) disagreed. Furthermore, the study revealed that there was no strong peer support mechanisms for the youth in leadership roles, with 30 (61%) of the respondents agreeing with these sentiments, 16 (33%) moderately agreeing while only 3 (6%) disagreed.

It was also evident from the analysis that it was not true that most of the youth are not interested in leadership roles, but rather they may not be accorded that opportunity by relevant community social institutions. Out of the 49 respondents involved in the study, 39 (79%) refuted this claim, 6 (12%) said they moderately agreed while only 4 (8%) strongly agreed that most of the youth are not interested in leadership roles. There was also a strong indication that the youth in leadership positions were using that opportunity for the right course, with all the respondents (49; 100%) unanimously refuting that most of the youth in leadership roles use their positions to propagate religious extremism. A similar trend was witnessed regarding whether the fight against religious extremism is not taken seriously by the youth, with 35 (71%) refuting this claim. Overall, the findings indicated that the youth were doing everything possible to address the whole question of radicalization and violent extremism in the community.

To the community leaders, there were several ways that the leadership role for the youth helps them to counter religious extremism in Wajir County. Most of the community leaders noted that the youth were the backbone of the society hence the need to actively engage them in counterterrorism and prevention of further radicalization in the community. Through civic engagements and sensitization, young people stood better chances of positively contributing to

counterterrorism in their community. Furthermore, it was important to actively involve the youth in sports activities to dissuade them from engaging in criminal activities such as terror-related ones. According to the area chief in one of the locations in Wajir County, access to financial resources for the youth to enable them engage in constructive income generating ventures was limited. This posed potential dangers to young people of joining terrorist groups and being radicalized. An opportunity for talent search through sports activities was one of the surest ways of helping the young people to stay focused. According to Imam Mohammed (not his real name),

> *Young people must be empowered through the right preaching where they are told about the dangers of radicalization and religious extremism so that they can avoid such criminal acts Yet, a number of youth in this community may lack in-depth knowledge about religious teachings that discourage them from crimes such as religious extremism and radicalization. Therefore, both the national and county governments must seriously fund sports activities and help the youth form sports teams so that they can actively engage in competitions to avoid being idle hence possible targets for radicalized groups.*

The sentiments by imams about how to engage the youth so that they can stay away from criminal activities were echoed by some community leaders who opined that creation of employment opportunities and enhancing sporting mentality among the youth through financial and moral support could help young people to refocus their priorities. Young people must also be assisted and mentored in leadership roles so that they can freely exercise their abilities for positive social and economic gains. All sorts of sports and recreational activities were important in giving them youth a wider range to choose on what talents they want to develop. Despite the need to engage the youth in various sports activities for self-enhancement, lack of political goodwill and financial resources hinder these efforts. Creation of strong social bonds also gave the youth an opportunity to develop their leadership skills which in turn helped them to be more engaged in constructive endeavours hence dissuading them from engaging in evil undertakings. Sporting and recreational activities also helped to create unity and harmony among young people where they are able to nurture friendship and act their brothers' keepers thereby staying committed to security and progress in their community.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF SPORTS ACTIVITIES IN PREVENTING RADICALIZATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

4.1 Introduction

This section focuses on the role and impact of sports activities in preventing radicalization and violent extremism.

4.2 Role of Sports Activities in Prevention of Radicalization and Violent Extremism

The second objective of the study was to assess the role of sports activities in the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth in Wajir County. Regarding whether sports programs were being used in prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth in Wajir County, 33 (67%) of the respondents answered in the affirmative whereas 16 (33%) said no. These responses are captured in figure 4.1.
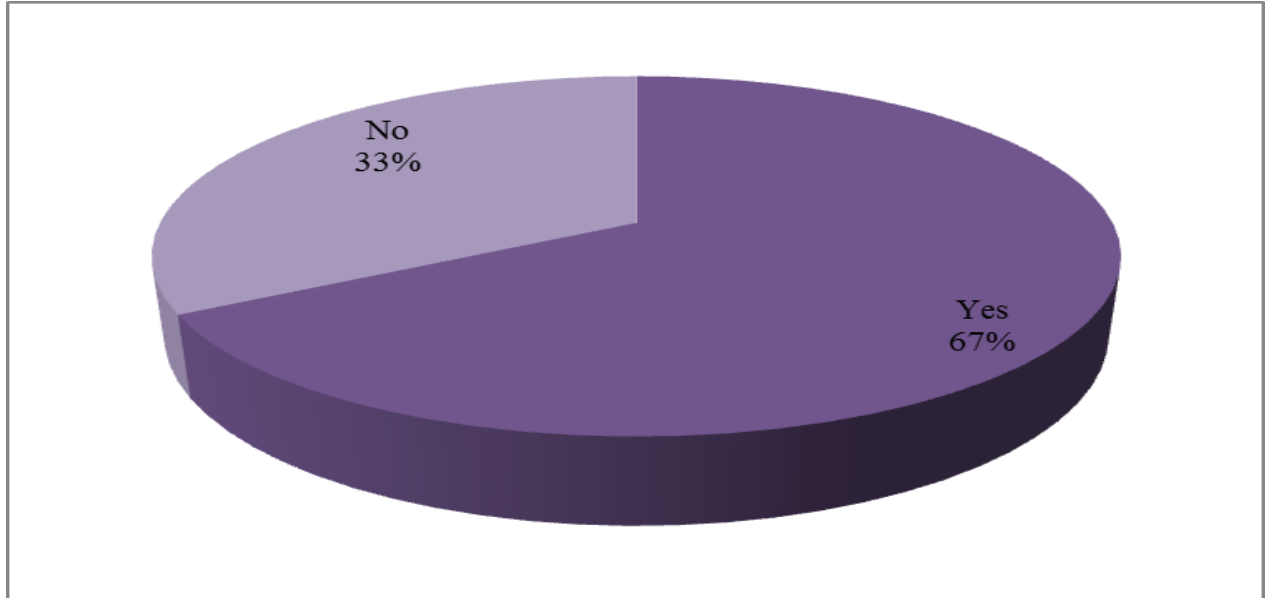
Figure 4.1 Are Sports Programs used for Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism?

Furthermore, based on various propositions which were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, the respondents were asked to clarify on the role sports activities in countering radicalization and

violent extremism in Wajir County. The respondents expressed different opinions on specific aspects of how sports activities could be instrumental in helping the youth in Wajir County to deal with radicalization and religious or violent extremism in their community. The responses are captured in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Role of Sports Activities in Countering Religious Extremism

Statements	*1=very small extent*	*2=small extent*	*3=moderate extent*	*4=large extent,*	*5=very large extent*	*Total*
	n(%)	*n(%)*	*n(%)*	*n(%)*	*n(%)*	*n*
Lack of enough financial resources makes it hard for the youth to actively use sports programs to deal with religious extremism in Wajir County	3(6)	0(0)	0(0)	9(18)	37(76)	49
Absence of sporting facilities makes it hard for the youth to actively use sports programs to deal with religious extremism in Wajir County	0(0)	3(0)	13(27)	6(12)	27(55)	49
Poor local leadership support negates the spirit of the youth's use of sports programs to deal with religious extremism in Wajir County	7(14)	7(14)	6(12)	6(12)	23(47)	49
Most of the youth in Wajir County do not value sports as means for dealing with religious extremism in the area	39(80)	3(6)	0(0)	7(14)	0(0)	49

From the analysis in table 4.1, lack of enough financial resources makes it hard for the youth to actively use sports programs to deal with religious extremism in Wajir County, with an

overwhelming majority (46; 94%) of the respondents expressing this view while only 3 (6%) had opposing views. It also emerged that absence of sporting facilities makes it hard for the youth to actively use sports programs to deal with religious extremism in Wajir County, with a greater majority (33; 67%) of the respondents holding this opinion while only 3 (6%) disagreed and 13 (27%) said they agreed with these views to a moderate extent. There were also indications that poor local leadership support negates the spirit of the youth's use of sports programs to deal with religious extremism in Wajir County where 29 (59%) of the respondents agreed, 14 (28%) disagreed while 6 (12%) moderately agreed with this proposition. However, a greater majority of the respondents refuted that most of the youth in Wajir County do not value sports as means for dealing with religious extremism in the area, where 42 (86%) of the respondents disagreed while only 7 (14%) agreed with this claim. As illustrated in table 2.3, overall, sports activities played a key role in keeping the youth away from radicalization and violent extremism.

Further, there were a number of ways in which sports can be used by the youth to counter religious extremism in Wajir County. By nurturing and mentoring of the youth through sports clubs, new talents would be discovered hence encouraging more young people to aspire for higher achievements in the process stay away from activities related to radicalization and religious extremism. Sports also acted as a unifying factor among different ethnic groups hence encouraging young people to embrace friendship as they interacted through football clubs and other sporting activities. Sports activities would also keep the young people busy thereby keeping them away from intoxicants which often contribute to criminal activities such as radicalization and religious extremism. Idleness was a precursor for criminality, and therefore sporting activities would help the youth to be always busy as they constantly nurture their talents. The study further noted that in order for the youth to maximize their sorting opportunities, there was need for financial resources from both the county and national governments to create sorting facilities within the reach of most young people in the county. it was also evident that talents searching and skills showcasing was important when it came to keeping the young people more engaged and productive, which in turn kept them from criminal indulgences.

4.3 Impact of Sports Activities on Prevention of Radicalization and Violent Extremism

The third objective of the study was to evaluate the impact of sports activities on prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth in Wajir County. Regarding whether sports programs have any impact on prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth in Wajir County, 34 (69%) of the respondents said yes while 15 (31%) said no. These responses are captured in figure 4.2.
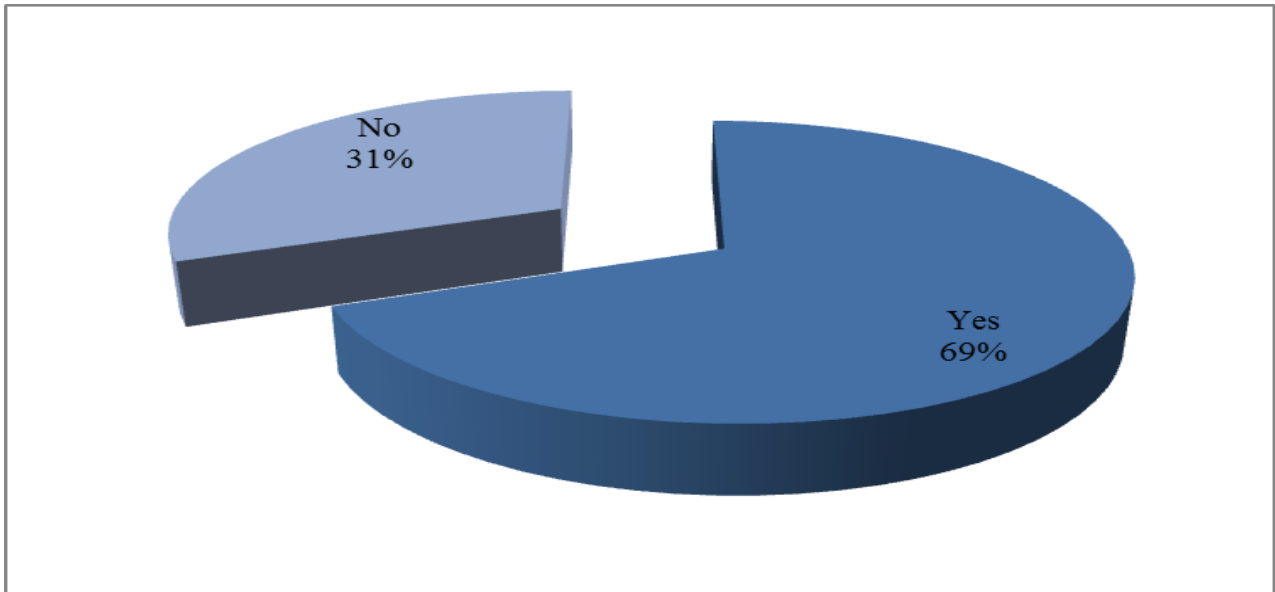
Figure 4.2 Do Sports Programs have any Impact on Counterterrorism?

Based on various propositions which were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, the respondents were further asked to clarify on the impact of sports activities in countering radicalization and religious extremism in Wajir County. The respondents expressed different opinions on specific aspects of the impact of sports activities countering of radicalization and religious or violent extremism in their community and the responses are captured in table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Impact of Sports Activities in Countering Religious Extremism

Statements	1=very small extent	2=small extent	3=moderate extent	4=large extent,	5=very large extent	Total
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n
There is increased participation in sports by the youth to keep them busy and avoid engaging in religious extremism	3(6)	13(27)	3(6)	6(12)	24(49)	49
Increased sports activities by the youth in Wajir County have been witnessed to help them stay away from religious extremism	12(24)	7(14)	16(33)	3(6)	11(22)	49
Increased sports programs have been increased by the government in Wajir County help young people stay away from religious extremism	16(33)	7(14)	3(6)	6(12)	17(35)	49

From the analysis in table 4.2, there was am popular view that there is increased participation in sports by the youth to keep them busy and avoid engaging in religious extremism, with 30 (61%) of the respondents agreeing with this view while 16 (33%) disagreed and 3 (6%) agreed to a moderate extent. However, there were mixed reactions regarding the proposition that increased sports activities by the youth in Wajir County have been witnessed to help them stay away from religious extremism, with 14 (28%) agreeing, 19 (38%) disagreeing, and 16 (33%) agreeing with this view to a moderate extent. Similarly, there were mixed reactions as to whether increased sports programs have been increased by the government in Wajir County help young people stay away from religious extremism, where 23 (47%) of the respondents agreed, 3 (6%) agreed to a moderate extent while 23 (47%) disagreed with this proposition.

On further explaining the impact of sports programs on prevention of religious extremism in Wajir County, the study noted that youth talent exposures helped the young people to participate in various games and this kept them busy and in turn persuaded them to stay away from criminal

activities. Furthermore, sports had helped the youth in dealing with idleness hence diverting their attention from such criminal activities as religious extremism. Interactions among many young people also gave them an opportunity to advice one another on various themes including how to stay out of crime. Those who were able to showcase their talents and skills also felt more empowered and valued hence encouraging them to stay positive and avoid criminal engagements. Despite the general feeling that sports activities were very valuable in helping the young in addressing the problem of radicalization and religious extremism, there were some feelings that the county government of Wajir was not doing enough to uplift sports and recreational games hence it was difficult to say how much sports activities had helped the youth to stay out of crime, including religious extremism.

4.4 Challenges Encountered by the Youth in Counterterrorism Campaigns

The study also examined challenges encountered by the youth in their counterterrorism campaigns in Wajir County. Regarding whether there were challenges facing the youth in countering radicalization and violent extremism in Wajir County, 36 (73%) of the respondents answered to the affirmative while 13 (27%) of them had opposing views. These responses are expressed in figure 4.3
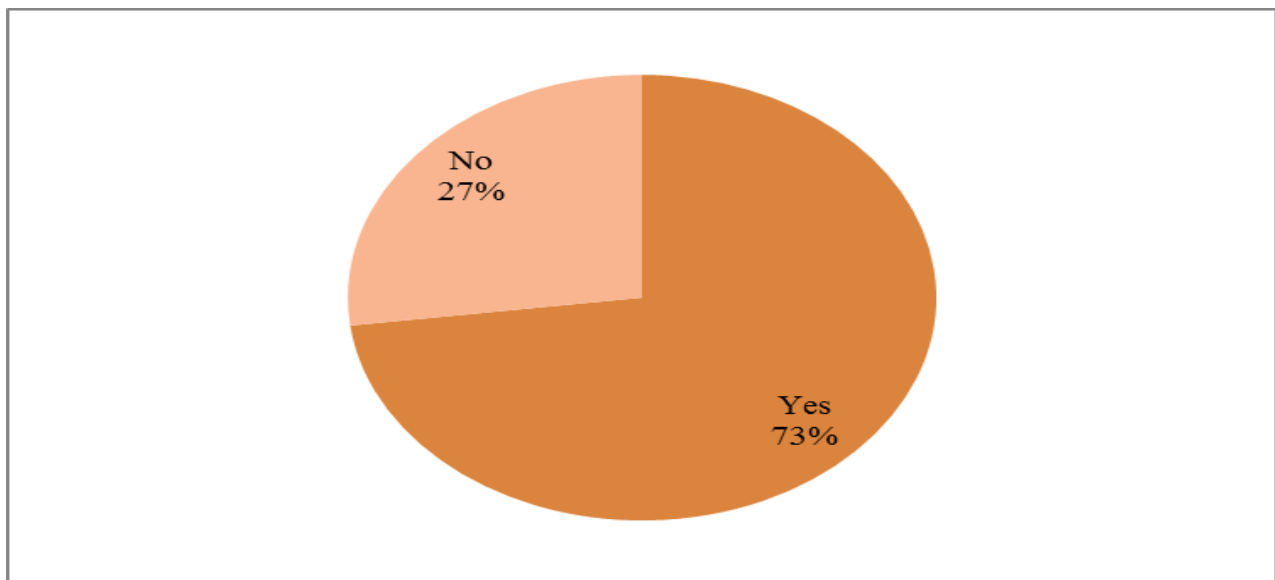

Figure 4.3 Are there Challenges by the Youth in Counterterrorism Campaigns?

Based on various propositions which were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, the respondents were further asked to clarify on the kind or level of challenges faced by the youth in counterterrorism campaigns in Wajir County. The respondents expressed different opinions on specific aspects of the challenges encountered by the youth in counterterrorism efforts in their community and the responses are captured in table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Challenges Faced by the Youth in Countering Religious Extremism

Statements	1=very small extent	2=small extent	3=moderate extent	4=large extent,	5=very large extent	Total
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n
There is lack of political goodwill which hampers the youth's efforts in countering religious extremism in this county	3(6)	7(14)	6(12)	12(24)	21(43)	49
Infiltration by extremists from neighbouring countries such as Somalia makes it hard for the youth to effectively deal with the problem	17(35)	3(6)	12(24)	10(20)	7(14)	49
Competitive politics makes the situation unfavourable for the youth to effectively help in addressing religious extremism in this area	0(0)	6(12)	10(20)	9(18)	24(49)	49
High levels of poverty and unemployment pose a big challenge for the youth addressing religious extremism in Wajir County	0(0)	6(12)	0(0)	3(6)	40(82)	49
Peer pressure makes a number of young people join extremist groups	20(41)	3(6)	9(18)	7(14)	10(20)	49
High illiteracy levels often prove a big challenge for the youth keen on addressing religious extremism in this area	7(14)	6(12)	4(8)	6(12)	26(53)	49

Based on the findings in table 4.3, 33 (67%) of the respondents agreed that there was lack of political goodwill which hampers the youth's efforts in countering religious extremism in this county while 6 (12%) of them agreed to a moderate extent and 10 (20%) disagreed with this view. Further, there were mixed reactions on whether infiltration by extremists from neighbouring countries such as Somalia makes it hard for the youth to effectively deal with the problem, where 17 (34%) of the respondents concurred with this proposition whereas 12 (24%) agreed to a

moderate extent and 20 (40%) disagreed with this view. It however emerged that competitive politics makes the situation unfavourable for the youth to effectively help in addressing religious extremism in this area, where 33 (67%) of the respondents agreed, 10 (20%) agreed to a moderate extent, while 6 (12%) disagreed.

Furthermore, high levels of poverty and unemployment posed a big challenge for the youth addressing religious extremism in Wajir County, with 43 (88%) of the respondents expressing these views, while the rest had opposing views about this proposition. Regarding peer pressure and how this affected counterterrorism campaigns by the youth, 17 (34%) agreed that peer pressure makes a number of young people to join extremist groups, 9 (18%) agreed to a moderate extent, while 23 (47%) disagreed. A greater majority (32; 65%) of the respondents agreed that high illiteracy levels often prove a big challenge for the youth keen on addressing religious extremism in their community, 4 (8%) agreed to a moderate extent, while 13 (26%) disagreed with this proposition.

In explaining any other common challenge for the youth in their community in addressing religious extremism, the respondents expressed lack of youth training sessions, lack of clear leadership, indifference from young people due to lack of employment, peer influence from other youths from different counties, and lack of general government support that left the youth unmonitored. Poor guidance and counselling from relevant individuals such as parents and close relatives and institutions, and neglect by the county government were also to blame for the youth's failure to effectively participate in counterterrorism endeavours. There were also cases of lack of good religious knowledge, inadequate support from the national government in terms of finances for various youth development projects, and insufficient employment and sporting opportunities to help the youth to keep them busy.

4.5 Intervention Strategies for Helping the Youth in Counterterrorism Campaigns

The study also examined strategies for helping the youth in their counterterrorism campaigns in Wajir County. On whether there were intervention strategies in place to help the youth in countering radicalization and violent extremism in Wajir County, 26 (53%) of the respondents said yes while 23 (47%) of them said no. These responses are captured in figure 4.4.
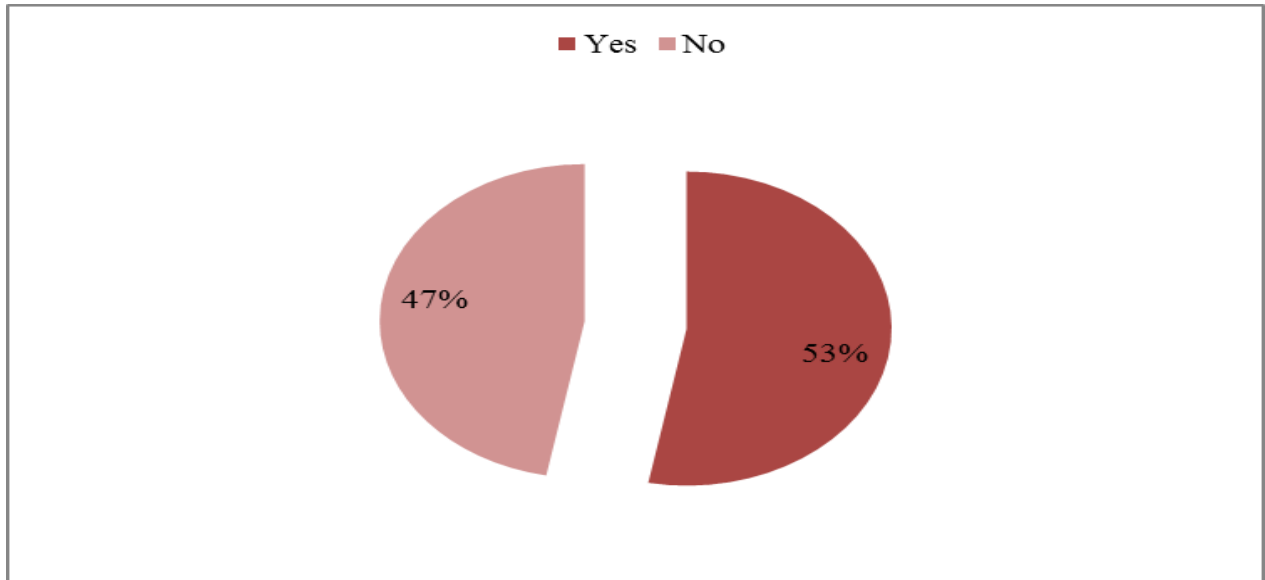
Figure 4.4 Are there Intervention Strategies for Helping the Youth in Counterterrorism?

Based on various propositions which were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, the respondents were further asked to clarify on the kind or level of intervention strategies for helping the youth in counterterrorism campaigns in Wajir County. The respondents expressed different opinions on specific aspects of the strategies and the responses are captured in table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Intervention Strategies for the Youth in Countering Religious Extremism

Statements	1=very small extent	2=small extent	3=moderate extent	4=large extent,	5=very large extent	Total
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n
The government has instituted a strong counterterrorism law to address radicalization and religious extremism	11(22)	12(24)	6(12)	13(27)	7(14)	49
There are community integration programs in Wajir County which have greatly assisted in addressing religious extremism in the area	20(41)	13(27)	0(0)	13(27)	3(6)	49
There are youth sensitization	16(33)	14(29)	9(18)	7(14)	3(6)	49

programs in Wajir County which have greatly assisted in addressing religious extremism in the area						
The commitment by local politicians has significantly led to serious fight against religious extremism in the area	17(35)	7(14)	12(24)	6(12)	7(14)	49
Censorship of information by the government plays a big role in addressing religious extremism in the county	10(20)	25(51)	0(0)	3(6)	11(22)	49

Based on the statistics in table 4.4, 23 (46%) of the respondents disagreed that the government has instituted a strong counterterrorism law to address radicalization and religious extremism, 6 (12%) agreed to a moderate extent, while 20 (42%) agreed with this account. Also, there were mixed reactions regarding whether there are community integration programs in Wajir County which have greatly assisted in addressing religious extremism in the area, with 16 (33%) of the respondents agreeing while 33 (68%) disagreed with this proposition. On the existence of youth sensitization programs in Wajir County which could have greatly assisted in addressing religious extremism in the area, 30 (62%) of the respondents disagreed, 9 (18%) agreed to a moderate extent, while 10 (20%) agreed with this view.

There were also varied reactions on the proposition that the commitment by local politicians has significantly led to serious fight against religious extremism in the area, where 13 (26%) of the respondents agreed, 12 (24%) agreed to a moderate extent, while 24 (49%) disagreed. Furthermore, 14 (28%) of the respondents concurred that censorship of information by the government plays a big role in addressing religious extremism in the county whereas 35 (71%) disagreed with this line of thought. Other religious extremism intervention strategies among the youth in Wajir County included formation of peace youth groups and associations, creation of job opportunities and vocational training centers, and educating the youth on Islamic religious principles which encouraged piety and avoiding of criminal activities by all mankind. Some Muslim clans were also actively preaching against religious extremism where Muslim scholars

were even invited to speak to the youth. There were also other NGOs that had begun sensitization forums for the youth where young people were urged to stay out of criminal activities. Youth groups were also formed by some young people as a platform for encouraging one another against religious extremism.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section gives a summary of the study findings and provides conclusions and recommendations of the study. The summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations are presented based on the specific objectives of the study. The chapter also presents suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The main objective of this study was to assess the role of sports activities in prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth of Wajir County. Specifically, the study examined the role of the youth in countering radicalization and violent extremism among the youth in Wajir County, assessed the role of sports activities in the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth in Wajir County, and evaluated the impact of sports activities on prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth in Wajir County. Various key findings were discovered by the study, and these are summarized in subsequent subsections under specific objectives of the study.

5.2.1   Role of the Youth in Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism

Statistics indicate that 94% of the respondents concurred that the youth played a key role in countering radicalization and violent extremism in Wajir County. In order for the youth to be more productive in counterterrorism efforts, they needed ample chance in leadership in the community, where 80% of the respondents held this view. Furthermore, the young people needed community support for the realization of their leadership roles. The findings also indicated that although there was the case of peer influence in getting inclined towards radicalization and religious extremism by young people, support mechanisms for the youth was required to help realize their potentials in a positive way. The analysis also indicated that the youth were very ready to take up leadership roles if they got good support from relevant individuals and institutions.

There was also a strong indication that the youth in leadership positions were using that opportunity for the right course, with a 100% unanimously agreement from the respondents that most of the youth in leadership roles use their positions to preach and campaign against religious extremism. Overall, the findings indicated that the youth were doing everything possible to address the whole question of radicalization and violent extremism in the community.

Most of the community leaders also noted that the youth were the backbone of the society hence the need to actively engage them in counterterrorism and prevention of further radicalization in the community. Through civic engagements and sensitization, young people stood better chances of positively contributing to counterterrorism in their community. Furthermore, the study noted that most young people were actively involved in sports activities to dissuade them from engaging in criminal activities such as terror-related ones. By engaging in productive activities such as small businesses and sports activities, a number of young people tried to avoid potential dangers posed by idleness in the community. An opportunity for talent search through sports activities was one of the surest ways that young people exploited to stay away from crime.

Imams and other Islamic religious leaders expressed support for the youth in their counterterrorism efforts. The government was also petitioned to create employment opportunities and enhance sporting mentality among the youth through financial and moral support which could help them to refocus on their priorities. There were also some mentorship programs on leadership roles that were meant to help the youth to focus on positive social and economic gains. All sorts of sports and recreational activities were important in giving them youth a wider range of choices when it came to talents search and development. Despite the need to engage the youth in various sports activities for self-enhancement, lack of political goodwill and financial resources hindered these efforts. Creation of strong social bonds also gave the youth an opportunity to develop their leadership skills which in turn helped them to be more engaged in constructive endeavours hence dissuading them from engaging in evil undertakings. Sporting and recreational activities also helped to create unity and harmony among young people where they are able to nurture friendship and act their brothers' keepers thereby staying committed to security and progress in their community.

5.2.2 Sports Activities and Prevention of Radicalization and Violent Extremism

Sports activities were very instrumental in the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth. The study further noted that sports programs were being used in prevention of radicalization and violent extremism, with 67% of the respondents holding this view. However, lack of enough financial resources makes it hard for the youth to actively use sports programs to deal with religious extremism in their community, with 94% of the respondents expressing this view. The study also revealed that lack of sporting facilities makes it hard for the youth to actively use sports programs in their favour when it came to counterterrorism efforts. There were also indications that poor local leadership support negates the spirit of the youth's use of sports programs to deal with religious extremism. However, a greater majority of the respondents refuted that most of the youth in Wajir County do not value sports as means for dealing with religious extremism in the area.

By nurturing and mentoring of the youth through sports clubs, new talents would be discovered hence encouraging more young people to aspire for higher achievements in the process stay away from activities related to radicalization and religious extremism. Sports also acted as a unifying factor among different ethnic groups hence encouraging young people to embrace friendship as they interacted through football clubs and other sporting activities. Sports activities would also keep the young people busy thereby keeping them away from intoxicants which often contribute to criminal activities such as radicalization and religious extremism. Idleness was a precursor for criminality, and therefore sporting activities would help the youth to be always busy as they constantly nurture their talents. The study further noted that in order for the youth to maximize their sorting opportunities, there was need for financial resources from both the county and national governments to create sorting facilities within the reach of most young people in the county.

5.2.3 Impact of Sports Activities on Counterterrorism by the Youth

The study established that sports activities had a significant impact on prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth in community, with 69% of the respondents holding this view. There was a popular view that there is increased participation in sports by the youth to keep

them busy and avoid engaging in religious extremism, with 61%) of the respondents agreeing with this proposition. However, there was a feeling that the government at both county and national level was not doing enough to enhance sports activities for the youth as both a sports activity and deterrent measure to religious extremism. Similarly, there were mixed reactions as to whether increased sports programs have been increased by the government in Wajir County to help young people stay away from religious extremism.

The study further noted that youth talent exposures helped the young people to participate in various games and this kept them busy and in turn persuaded them to stay away from criminal activities. Furthermore, sports had helped the youth in dealing with idleness hence diverting their attention from such criminal activities such as religious extremism. Interactions among many young people also gave them an opportunity to advice one another on various themes including how to stay out of crime. Despite the general feeling that sports activities were very valuable in helping the young in addressing the problem of radicalization and religious extremism, there were some feelings that the county government of Wajir was not doing enough to uplift sports and recreational games to benefit the youth.

5.2.4   Challenges Encountered by the Youth in Counterterrorism

There were a number of challenges that impeded the youth's efforts in counterterrorism, with 73%) of the respondents expressing this view. Some of the challenges included lack of political goodwill, some level of infiltration by extremists from neighbouring countries such as Somalia which made it hard for the youth to effectively deal with the problem. Furthermore, competitive local politics makes the situation unfavourable for the youth to effectively help in addressing religious extremism in their community. High levels of poverty and unemployment also posed a big challenge for the youth in addressing religious extremism. There was also the question of peer pressure which affected counterterrorism campaigns by the youth. A strong feeling also emerged that high illiteracy levels is often a big challenge to the youth keen on addressing religious extremism in their community.

Further challenges included lack of youth training sessions, lack of clear leadership, indifference from young people due to lack of employment, peer influence from other youths from different

counties, and lack of general government support that left the youth unmonitored. Poor guidance and counselling from relevant individuals such as parents and close relatives and institutions, and neglect by the county government were also to blame for the youth's failure to effectively participate in counterterrorism endeavours. There were also cases of lack of good religious knowledge, inadequate support from the national government in terms of finances for various youth development projects, and insufficient employment and sporting opportunities to help the youth to keep them busy.

5.2.5   Intervention Strategies to Help the Youth in Counterterrorism

There were a number of strategies to help in boosting the efforts by the youth in counterterrorism. Some of these strategies included a proactive counterterrorism law by the government, community integration programs where various institutions and groups were involved, as well as county government's efforts to proactively engage the youth on important initiatives. There were also youth sensitization programs in which greatly assisted in addressing religious extremism among the youth in the area.

Furthermore, censoring of information by the government played a big role in addressing religious extremism in the county. Other religious extremism intervention strategies among the youth in Wajir County included formation of peace youth groups and associations, creation of job opportunities and establishment of vocational training centers by both the county and national governments. Educating the youth on Islamic religious principles by Islamic religious leaders also encouraged piety and avoiding of criminal activities by the youth. Some Muslim clans were also actively preaching against religious extremism where Muslim scholars were even invited to speak to the youth.

5.3 Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the findings, the study made the conclusion that the youth played a significant role in countering radicalization and violent extremism in the community. The study also concluded that sports activities are very important in helping the youth to stay away from radicalized groups and involvement in radicalized groups. Furthermore, sports activities helped to keep the youth busy as they do talent search thereby enabling them to be more engaged and in the

process dissuading them from criminal activities. There were challenges that hampered the youth's efforts to fully and effectively engage in counterterrorism activities. For these challenges to be effectively addressed, an integrated approach must be adopted where a number of stakeholders are involved in coming up with a solution to radicalization and religious extremism. Although there may be strategies to help the youth to overcome these challenges, more innovative approaches would help in achieving better results.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study thus recommends:

1. There is need for the county and national governments to actively support the youth in their efforts to help in addressing radicalization and religious extremism.
2. The youth must be supported by the county government in sports activities through construction of sporting facilities and adequate funding so that this can help them in talent development and act as a strategy for keeping them out of criminal activities such as radicalization and religious extremism.
3. A multifaceted long term approach must be adopted for helping the youth in the campaign against radicalization and religious extremism. For instance, creation of employment and business opportunities by the government will not only help the young people to comfortably earn a living, but will also ensure that there is no room for them to idle around which could in turn make them turn to radicalized groups for solace.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

A comparative study should be undertaken focusing on how sports activities are used in prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth across different counties which are vulnerable to terrorist networks in Kenya.

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52

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APPENDIX I: Questionnaire for the Youth

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is meant for collection of information for an academic study on **the role of sports activities in prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth of Wajir County.** You have been identified as one of the resourceful persons in this study and would therefore like to request you to help me in completing this questionnaire. Please give honest responses.

SECTION A: RESPONDENTS' BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Gender of the respondent (male=1, female=2)

   Male   ( )

   Female ( )

2. Age (in years) of the respondent

   18-25 years ( )

   26-35 years ( )

   36-45 years ( )

   46-55 years ( )

   56 & above ( )

3. Respondent's role in community

   Youth   ( )

   Chief   ( )

   Imam   ( )

   Community leader   ( )

4. Marital status of the respondent

   Single   ( )

   Married   ( )

   Separated ( )

   Divorced   ( )

   Widowed   ( )

5. Highest level of education of the respondent

Primary ( )

Secondary school ( )

Middle college ( )

University ( )

Other…specify ( )

6. Length of stay in Wajir County

0-3 years ( )

4-6 years ( )

7-9 years ( )

10 & above years ( )

SECTION B: ROLE OF THE YOUTH IN COUNTERING RADICALIZATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

7. Do you think the youth play any role in countering radicalization and violent extremism in Wajir County? **Yes ( ) No ( )**

8. On a scale of 1-5 where *1=very small extent, 2=small extent, 3=moderate extent, 4=large extent, 5=very large extent,* to what extent do you agree with the following propositions regarding the role of the youth in countering radicalization and violent extremism in the county?

Youth's role & countering religious extremism	1	2	3	4	5
(i) The youth are not given chance for leadership in this community					
(ii) There is no community support for the youth in leadership roles					
(iii) There is no peer support for the youth in leadership roles					
(iv) Most of the youth are not interested in leadership roles					
(v) Most of the youth in leadership roles use their positions to propagate religious extremism					
(vi) The fight against religious extremism is not taken seriously by the youth					
(vii) Please explain how the leadership role for the youth helps them to counter religious extremism in Wajir County (specify……………………………………………………………………					

………………………………………………………………………………)

SECTION C: THE ROLE OF SPORTS ACTIVITIES IN PREVENTION OF RADICALIZATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

9. Are sports programs used in prevention of Radicalization and violent extremism among the youth in Wajir County? **Yes ( ) No ( )**

10. On a scale of 1-5 where *1=very small extent, 2=small extent, 3=moderate extent, 4=large extent, 5=very large extent,* to what extent do you agree with the following propositions regarding the role of sports activities in countering radicalization and violent extremism in the county?

Sports activities and the youth's fight against religious extremism	1	2	3	4	5
(i) Lack of enough financial resources makes it hard for the youth to actively use sports programs to deal with religious extremism in Wajir County					
(ii) Absence of sporting facilities makes it hard for the youth to actively use sports programs to deal with religious extremism in Wajir County.					
(iii) Poor local leadership support negates the spirit of the youth's use of sports programs to deal with religious extremism in Wajir County.					
(iv) Most of the youth in Wajir County do not value sports as means for dealing with religious extremism in the area.					
(v) Please explain how sports can be used by the youth to counter religious extremism in Wajir County (specify……………………….. …………………………………………………………………………)					

SECTION D: IMPACT OF SPORTS ACTIVITIES ON PREVENTION OF RADICALIZATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM AMONG THE YOUTH

11. Do sports programs have any impact on prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth in Wajir County? **Yes ( ) No ( )**

12. On a scale of 1-5 where *1=very small extent, 2=small extent, 3=moderate extent, 4=large extent, 5=very large extent,* to what extent do you agree with the following propositions

regarding the impact of sports activities in countering radicalization and violent extremism in the county?

Impact of Sports programs on prevention of religious extremism	1	2	3	4	5
(i) There is increased participation in sports by the youth to keep them busy and avoid engaging in religious extremism					
(ii) Increased sports activities by the youth in Wajir County have been witnessed to help them stay away from religious extremism.					
(iii) Increased sports programs have been increased by the government in Wajir County help young people stay away from religious extremism.					
(iv) Please explain the impact of sports programs on prevention of religious extremism in Wajir County (specify……………………….. ……………………………………………………………………………)					

SECTION E: CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY THE YOUTH IN COUNTERTERRORISM CAMPAIGNS IN WAJIR COUNTY

13. Would you say there are challenges facing the youth in countering radicalization and violent extremism in Wajir County? **Yes ( ) No ( )**

14. On a scale of 1-5 where *1=very small extent, 2=small extent, 3=moderate extent, 4=large extent, 5=very large extent,* to what extent do you agree with the following propositions regarding the challenges facing the youth in countering religious extremism in Wajir County?

Challenges faced by the youth in counterterrorism & extremism	1	2	3	4	5
(i) There is lack of political goodwill which hampers the youth's efforts in countering religious extremism in this county.					
(ii) Infiltration by extremists from neighbouring countries such as Somalia makes it hard for the youth to effectively deal with the problem.					
(iii) Competitive politics makes the situation unfavourable for the youth to effectively help in addressing religious extremism in this area.					
(iv) High levels of poverty and unemployment pose a big challenge for the youth addressing religious extremism in Wajir County.					
(v) Peer pressure makes a number of young people join extremist groups.					

	1	2	3	4	5
(vi) High illiteracy levels often prove a big challenge for the youth keen on addressing religious extremism in this area.					
(vii) Please explain any other common challenge for the youth in this area in addressing religious extremism……………………………………. ……………………………………………………………………..					

SECTION F: INTERVENTION STRATEGIES FOR HELPING THE YOUTH TO ADDRESS VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN WAJIR COUNTY

15. Are there intervention strategies in place to help the youth in countering radicalization and violent extremism in Wajir County? **Yes ( ) No ( )**

16. On a scale of 1-5 where *1=very small extent, 2=small extent, 3=moderate extent, 4=large extent, 5=very large extent,* to what extent do you agree with the following propositions regarding the intervention strategies to help the youth in countering extremism in Wajir County?

Religious extremism intervention strategies	1	2	3	4	5
(i) The government has instituted a strong counterterrorism law to address radicalization and religious extremism.					
(ii) There are community integration programs in Wajir County which have greatly assisted in addressing religious extremism in the area.					
(iii) There are youth sensitization programs in Wajir County which have greatly assisted in addressing religious extremism in the area.					
(iv) The commitment by local politicians has significantly led to serious fight against religious extremism in the area.					
(v) Censorship of information by the government plays a big role in addressing religious extremism in the county.					
(vi) Please explain any other religious extremism intervention strategies among the youth in Wajir County (Specify…………………………... ……………………………………………………………………)					

APPENDIX II: Key Informant Interview Guide for Imams, Chiefs and Community Leaders

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is meant for collection of information for an academic study on **the role of sports activities in prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth of Wajir County.** You have been identified as one of the resourceful persons in this study and would therefore like to request you to help me in completing this questionnaire. Please give honest responses.

SECTION I: General Information

1. Your role/position in the community……………………………………………………………
2. Period lived in Wajir County (in years)……………………………………………………………

SECTION II: the role of sports activities for the prevention of radicalization & extremism among the youth

3. What is the role of sports activities in the prevention of religious radicalization and violent extremism among the youth of Wajir County? Please explain in specific reference to:

   i. The role of the youth in countering radicalization and violent extremism in Wajir County.

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………….
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………….

   ii. The sports activities in the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth in Wajir County.

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………….
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………….

iii. The impact of sports activities on prevention of radicalization and violent extremism among the youth in Wajir County.

………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………….
………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………….

iv. Challenges encountered by the youth in countering radicalization and violent extremism campaigns in Wajir County.

………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………….
………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………….

v. Intervention strategies for helping the youth to address radicalization and violent extremism in Wajir County.

………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………

Thank you

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