

The Effect of Drug-Related Crime on Community Cohesion in Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study examined the effect of drug-related crime on community cohesion among residents of Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County. The study was guided by Social Disorganization Theory, which explains how structural disadvantages such as poverty, overcrowding, and weak social institutions create environments where crime persists and weakens community social bonds.

Materials and Methods: The study adopted a convergent mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative component used a descriptive survey design, while the qualitative component employed a phenomenological approach to capture residents lived experiences. The target population consisted of 185,777 residents of Kibra, from which a sample size of 396 participants was determined using Yamane's formula. Data were collected using semi-structured questionnaires and interview guides, with 338 residents participating in the survey and 29 key informants interviewed. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 26 through descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and linear regression analysis, while qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis.

Findings: The results revealed that drug-related crime significantly affects community cohesion. Correlation analysis showed a weak but statistically significant relationship between drug-related crime and community cohesion ($r = -.297, p < .001$). Regression analysis further confirmed that drug-related crime significantly predicts community cohesion ($F(1,336) = 32.507, p < .001$), explaining 8.8% of the variation in community cohesion. Qualitative findings indicated that visible drug selling, youth involvement in drug networks, and the presence of drug hotspots contribute to erosion of trust, fear of retaliation, reduced community participation, and weakened social cooperation.

Conclusion: The study concludes that drug-related crime undermines community cohesion in Kibra by weakening trust, reducing social interaction, and disrupting informal social control mechanisms necessary for maintaining neighborhood safety.

Recommendations: The study recommends the implementation of integrated community-based drug prevention and control strategies, including dismantling drug hotspots through coordinated law enforcement and expanding rehabilitation.

Keywords: Drug-related crime; Community cohesion; Informal settlements; Urban crime; Social disorganization; Kibra Sub-County; Crime prevention; Community safety **JEL Codes:** I38, O17, R23, Z13, K42

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Urban crime is a widespread phenomenon affecting cities across the world regardless of their level of economic development. It encompasses various offences occurring within densely populated urban environments, including drug-related crimes, petty theft, gang activity, burglary, and assault, all of which threaten public safety and social stability (Churchill & Asante, 2023). Globally, research demonstrates that crime in urban areas has significant implications for community cohesion, defined as the level of trust, solidarity, and cooperation among residents within a neighborhood. Empirical studies conducted in countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom show that crimes including drug-related offences and gang violence erode trust among residents, reduce civic participation, and increase fear-driven withdrawal from communal activities (Quinn et al., 2019; Churchill & Asante, 2023; Islam et al., 2023). In such contexts, weakened neighbourhood cohesion has been associated with increased victimization, reduced informal social control, and declining collective well-being (Quinn et al., 2019; Bertotti et al., 2012). Scholars further note that crime disrupts peaceful coexistence by fostering mistrust and social conflict among community members (Gulma, 2018; Bello, 2016). As a result, strengthening community cohesion has become an important strategy in crime prevention, with initiatives that enhance resident engagement and neighbourhood interaction showing positive outcomes in reducing violent incidents and improving social safety (Rupp et al., 2025; Islam et al., 2023).

At the continental level, African cities experience unique crime dynamics shaped by rapid urbanization, persistent inequality, youth unemployment, and limited access to social services. These structural challenges contribute to increased vulnerability to various forms of urban crime, including drug-related offences. Studies indicate that young people in economically marginalized communities may engage in criminal activities as a means of survival, identity formation, or protection in unsafe neighborhoods (Sugiharti et al., 2023). In South Africa, research highlights that historical inequalities and concentrated poverty undermine the capacity of social networks within informal settlements to effectively prevent violence despite the presence of dense social ties (Barolsky, 2016). However, community-based participation has been shown to play a critical role in reducing violent crime and strengthening collective action (Govender, 2020). Similarly, studies from Nigeria and Ghana reveal that improved police-community relations and active community engagement can enhance neighbourhood safety and reduce crime by fostering trust and collaboration between residents and law enforcement agencies (Mohammed, 2024; Ogunode et al., 2023; Poix et al., 2022). These findings suggest that where poverty, exclusion, and weak governance structures persist, crime tends to flourish and weaken community cohesion across many African urban settings.

Within the East African region, rapid urban growth, rural-urban migration, and the expansion of informal economies have placed increasing pressure on neighbourhood structures that traditionally regulated behaviour. Research across cities such as Nairobi, Kampala, and Dar es Salaam indicates rising youth involvement in drug use and gang-related activities, often associated with unemployment, limited educational opportunities, and inadequate youth services (Chen, 2024). While strong neighbourhood solidarity can sometimes promote informal guardianship and collective monitoring of criminal behaviour, these mechanisms are often undermined by resource scarcity and spatial marginalization in urban informal settlements (Nubani, 2023). Furthermore, fear of crime plays a critical role in weakening community cohesion in these environments. Even when residents are not direct victims, the perception of insecurity can reduce social interaction, diminish neighbourly trust, and discourage participation in community initiatives aimed at improving neighbourhood conditions (Avery et al., 2020).

In Kenya, rapid urbanization and the expansion of informal settlements have contributed to complex urban crime challenges, particularly in major cities such as Nairobi. National reports indicate that densely populated informal settlements experience higher incidences of crimes such as drug distribution, petty theft, and youth gang activity due to poverty, unemployment, and inadequate public services (National Crime Research Centre, 2021, 2022). These conditions often weaken community cohesion by reducing trust in formal institutions and encouraging the emergence of informal networks that may inadvertently support criminal markets. Additionally, fear of crime discourages residents from participating in neighbourhood watch initiatives and community development projects, thereby limiting collective efforts to maintain safety and social order (Charron, 2009).

At the local level, Kibra Sub-County in Nairobi County represents one of the urban areas where the interaction between poverty, high population density, and crime significantly affects social relations within the community. The area is characterized by large informal settlements with limited infrastructure and intense competition for scarce resources, conditions that create vulnerabilities to crime (UN-Habitat; Map Kibera). Studies focusing on Kibra indicate increasing cases of drug use, youth gang activity, assault, and property crimes, which are linked to declining trust among residents and reduced willingness to cooperate with law enforcement authorities (Sanders & Ocharo, 2024). National crime statistics also highlight the prevalence of drug-related offences and youth involvement in criminal activities within Nairobi's informal settlements, further weakening collective efficacy and community cooperation (National Crime Research Centre, 2021). Consequently, understanding how drug-related crime specifically affects community cohesion in Kibra is critical for informing targeted interventions aimed at strengthening social bonds and improving neighbourhood safety.

Statement of the Problem

Urban crime continues to pose a major challenge within Nairobi County's informal settlements, particularly in Kibra Sub-County, despite various interventions by government agencies, community groups, and non-state actors aimed at improving security. Incidents involving drug-related activities, theft, assault, and gang operations remain frequently reported within the area. The persistence of these crimes raises concerns about the effectiveness of existing strategies designed to reduce urban crime and promote safer communities. More importantly, these crime patterns appear to coincide with declining levels of trust among residents, reduced neighbourly interaction, and weakened participation in collective community initiatives. Such trends suggest that crime may be affecting the social bonds that hold communities together, thereby undermining community cohesion.

In Kibra, crime reporting is often limited due to fear of retaliation, lack of confidence in law enforcement institutions, and perceived inefficiencies within the justice system. Issues such as delayed investigations, lack of evidence, and alleged corruption have contributed to strained relationships between residents and formal security agencies. As a result, many residents resort to informal safety mechanisms such as neighbourhood patrols and community watch groups to address security concerns. However, these initiatives often face legal, operational, and sustainability challenges, raising doubts about their ability to effectively address crime or strengthen neighbourhood relationships.

Although previous studies have examined crime patterns in Nairobi's informal settlements, limited empirical research has specifically explored how drug-related crime influences community cohesion in Kibra. Critical aspects such as trust, reciprocity, social participation, and collective action remain underexplored. This knowledge gap limits understanding of how crime shapes social relationships within densely populated informal settlements. Therefore, this study sought to examine the effect of drug-related crime on community cohesion in Kibra Sub-County.

Research Hypothesis

H_{01a}: Drug-related crime has no statistically significant effect on community cohesion among residents of Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County.

Scope of the Study

This study focused on Kibra Sub-County in Nairobi County, Kenya, an informal settlement characterized by high population density and significant socioeconomic challenges. The study specifically examined the effect of drug-related crime on community cohesion among residents in Kibra. It covered all neighbourhoods within the sub-county and explored how drug-related activities influence trust, social interaction, and collective participation within the community. The findings aimed to generate insights that could inform policies and interventions aimed at strengthening community cohesion and addressing drug-related crime in informal settlements.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Social Disorganization Theory

This study was guided by the Social Disorganization Theory developed by Shaw and McKay, which explains how crime tends to concentrate in neighbourhoods characterized by social and structural disadvantages. The theory argues that environmental conditions such as poverty, overcrowding, unemployment, and residential instability weaken social institutions and reduce the ability of communities to maintain social order (Errol et al., 2021). In such environments, weak social ties and limited informal social control create favourable conditions for criminal activities to emerge and persist (Bellair, 2017). The theory further suggests that crime is often associated with particular geographical areas rather than the characteristics of the individuals living there, meaning that certain neighbourhood conditions may continually reproduce crime across generations (Charis & Ronald, 2017).

The relevance of this theory to the present study lies in its ability to explain how the structural conditions within Kibra Sub-County, an informal settlement characterized by high population density, poverty, and limited access to services, may contribute to the persistence of drug-related crime. According to the theory, such environmental conditions weaken social networks, reduce trust among residents, and limit community members’ capacity to exercise informal social control over criminal behaviour. As drug-related crime becomes more prevalent, it may further disrupt neighbourhood relationships and discourage residents from participating in collective community activities.

Therefore, Social Disorganization Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how the environmental and socioeconomic conditions in Kibra contribute to drug-related crime and how these crimes subsequently affect community cohesion. By applying this perspective, the study examines whether weakened social bonds, reduced trust, and limited collective action among residents are linked to the presence of drug-related criminal activities within the settlement.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework illustrates the key variables in a study and the relationships among them, helping to guide the research process and data analysis (Leshem & Trafford, 2007; Varpio et al., 2020). In this study, drug-related crime was the independent variable, measured through indicators such as the prevalence of drug selling, visible drug use, presence of drug activity hotspots, youth involvement in drug-related activities, and the frequency of drug-related incidents within the community. Community cohesion was the dependent variable and was assessed through indicators including trust among community members, sense of belonging, mutual support, community cooperation, and peaceful social relations. The framework suggests that increased drug-related crime may weaken social relationships, reduce trust among residents, and limit cooperation within the community, ultimately affecting the level of community cohesion in Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County.

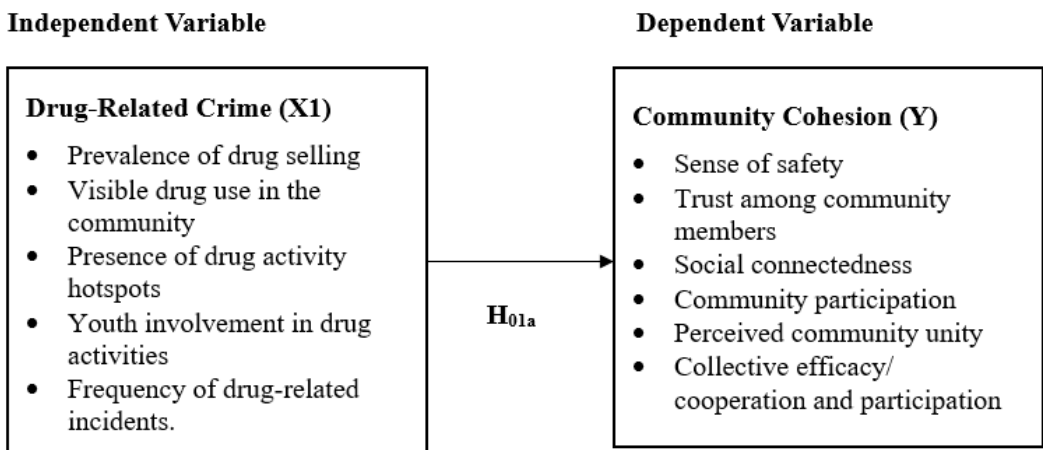


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Several empirical studies have examined the relationship between urban crime and community cohesion in different contexts. Takag (2016) conducted a study in Tokyo, Japan titled “*Impact of Crime on Social Ties and Civic Participation*,” which found that crime can sometimes indirectly strengthen interpersonal relationships by increasing the value individuals place on trust and friendship ties. Using a quantitative survey design with data collected through postal questionnaires from 43 participants, the study reported a positive correlation between higher crime rates and stronger friendship networks. However, the study was conducted in a developed urban setting whose social dynamics differ significantly from informal settlements such as Kibra, limiting the generalizability of its findings. In another study, Jha and Jhingran (2016) examined *urban crime and citizen participation in Indian cities* using a mixed-methods approach involving surveys and interviews. The findings revealed that fear of retaliation, corruption, and favoritism discouraged residents from reporting crimes or participating in community safety initiatives, which weakened trust and reduced collective engagement within communities. Similarly, Rodrigues (2015) investigated the impact of crime on community cohesion in Rio de Janeiro’s favelas and found that gang violence and criminal activities created fear among residents, limiting social interaction and reducing the ability of communities to mobilize collectively to address common challenges. The study utilized questionnaires, interviews, and participant observation to understand social dynamics within slum communities. At the continental level, Langer et al., (2017) analyzed data from 19 African countries and established that higher levels of crime and violence were significantly associated with lower levels of social cohesion, particularly in societies where trust and social unity were weak. However, the study relied on secondary data and did not specifically focus on informal urban settlements. These studies highlight the potential negative relationship between crime and social cohesion, though contextual and methodological gaps remain, particularly regarding the specific effects of drug-related crime within informal settlements such as Kibra.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, specifically a convergent design, which combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the effect of drug-related crime on community cohesion in Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County. The quantitative component utilized a descriptive survey design to collect numerical data from residents in order to identify patterns and relationships between drug-related crime and community cohesion (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The qualitative component employed a phenomenological approach to capture the lived experiences and perceptions of residents regarding how drug-related crime affects trust, social interactions, and cooperation within the community. The study was conducted in Kibra Sub-County, one of the largest informal settlements in Nairobi, characterized by high population density, poverty, limited infrastructure, and persistent urban crime including drug trafficking and youth gang activities.

The target population consisted of 185,777 residents of Kibra, from which a sample size of 396 adult participants was determined using Yamane’s formula. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, focusing on residents, local leaders, and law enforcement officers with knowledge or experience related to crime and community dynamics. Data were collected using semi-structured questionnaires and interview guides, allowing the study to gather both statistical information and in-depth perspectives on the issue. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 26 through descriptive statistics and regression analysis to determine the relationship between drug-related crime and community cohesion, while qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes in participants’ experiences. This approach provided a comprehensive understanding of how drug-related crime influences social relationships and cohesion among residents in Kibra.

Presentation Of Findings, Analysis, And Interpretation

Response Rate

The study targeted a sample of 396 participants as determined using Yamane’s formula. Out of these, 350 residents were invited to complete structured questionnaires, while 46 participants were selected for semi-structured interviews. At the end of the data collection process, 338 questionnaires were successfully completed and returned out of the 350 distributed. In addition, 29 interviews were successfully conducted out of the 46

targeted participants, while 10 declined to participate and 7 were unreachable despite several follow-up attempts. This resulted in a total of 367 participants who took part in the study, representing an overall response rate of 92.7%. The questionnaire response rate of 96.6% was considered excellent, while the interview response rate of 63.0% was considered good. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2019), a response rate above 70% is regarded as very good, indicating that the response achieved in this study was sufficient to support reliable analysis and interpretation of the findings.

Table 4. 1: Response Rate

Category	Targeted	Achieved	Not Achieved	Response Rate (%)
Questionnaires (Residents)	350	338	12	96.6%
Interviews (Key Informants)	46	29	17	63.0%
Total	396	367	29	92.7%

Demographic Information of Respondents

Table 4.2 presents the demographic characteristics of the 338 residents of Kibra Sub-County who participated in the quantitative survey. The findings show that the majority of respondents were young adults aged 18-25 years (53.8%), followed by those aged 26-35 years (24.9%), indicating that most participants were youth who are often more exposed to urban social dynamics. In terms of gender, 58.0% were male and 42.0% were female, providing a fairly balanced representation. Regarding education level, most respondents had tertiary education (67.5%), suggesting that the sample was relatively informed. Concerning length of residence, 43.8% had lived in Kibra for 1-5 years, while others had stayed for shorter or longer periods, indicating a mix of both new and long-term residents. In terms of occupation, 31.4% were employed, 30.5% were students, 23.7% were self-employed, and 14.5% were unemployed, reflecting a largely youthful and economically active population

Table 4.2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

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

Descriptive Statistics

This section presents the descriptive statistics that provide an initial overview of the data collected for the study.

Descriptive Statistics for Drug-Related Crime in Kibra Sub-County

Data on this variable were collected using both 5-point Likert scale items and multiple-response questions. This subsection presents descriptive findings on drug-related crime as perceived by residents of Kibra.

Types of Crimes Commonly Associated with Drug Abuse in Kibra Sub-County

Table 4.3 presents respondents' perceptions of crimes most commonly associated with drug abuse in Kibra Sub-County. The findings show that petty theft was the most frequently cited crime (79.6%), followed by mugging and street robbery (58.0%). Nearly half of the respondents associated drug abuse with drug possession or trafficking (49.4%) and gang-related activities (45.0%). Other crimes mentioned included assault or violent behavior, domestic violence, vandalism, burglary, prostitution, and disorderly conduct. Overall, the results indicate that drug abuse in Kibra is linked to a wide range of criminal activities rather than a single form of crime.

Table 4.3: Types of Crimes Most Commonly Associated with Drug Abuse

Drug Crime Types	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Petty theft (e.g., stealing phones, bags, household items)	269	17.4%	79.6%
Burglary/break-ins	122	7.9%	36.1%
Mugging and street robbery	196	12.6%	58.0%
Assault or violent behavior	149	9.6%	44.1%
Vandalism and property damage	125	8.1%	37.0%
Domestic violence	140	9.0%	41.4%
Drug possession or trafficking	167	10.8%	49.4%
Prostitution/transactional sex	116	7.5%	34.3%
Gang-related activities	152	9.8%	45.0%
Disorderly conduct/public disturbances	109	7.0%	32.2%
None	5	0.3%	1.5%
Total	1550	100.0%	458.6%

Influence of Drug Abuse on Overall Crime Rates in Kibra Sub-County

Table 4.4 presents residents' perceptions of the influence of drug abuse on overall crime rates in Kibra Sub-County. The findings indicate that a large majority of respondents (86.7%) believed that drug abuse greatly increases crime rates, while 5.9% stated that it moderately increases crime. A smaller proportion (3.0%) felt that drug abuse slightly increases crime levels. Only a few respondents held different views, with 0.9% indicating that drug abuse has no effect on crime rates, 2.1% suggesting it reduces crime, and 1.5% unsure. Overall, the results suggest that residents widely perceive drug abuse as a major factor contributing to increased crime in the community.

Table 4.4: How Drug Abuse Influences Overall Crime Rates in the Community

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

Effect of Drugs on Crime in Kibra Neighborhoods

Table 4.5 presents respondents’ level of agreement with statements regarding the effect of drug abuse on crime in Kibra Sub-County. The results indicate a moderately high perception that drug abuse contributes to crime, with an overall mean score of 3.71 (SD = 1.30). The highest agreement was that drug dependency among youths contributes to criminal behavior (M = 3.88). Respondents also agreed that drug abuse affects neighborhood safety (M = 3.78) and contributes to increased community violence (M = 3.75). Overall, the findings suggest that residents perceive drug abuse as a key factor influencing crime and insecurity in the community.

Table 4.5: Respondents’ Perceptions of the Effect of Drug Abuse on Crime in their Neighborhood

Effect of Drug Abuse on Crime	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Drug selling activities are regularly observable in various parts of my neighborhood	338	3.50	1.29
Drug dependency among youths has contributed to criminal behavior in this community.	338	3.88	1.30
Socioeconomic conditions contribute to drug abuse which impact crime levels in these communions within this neighborhood that are widely known as hotspots for drug-related activities	338	3.66	1.25
Use of drug contribute to increased community level violence this community	338	3.75	1.31
Widespread use of drug abuse has affected the neighborhood safety	338	3.78	1.35
Average Score	338	3.71	1.30

Correlation between Drug-Related Crime and Community Cohesion

Table 4.6 presents the Pearson correlation analysis between drug-related crime and community cohesion among residents of Kibra Sub-County. The results show a weak but statistically significant negative relationship between the two variables ($r = -0.297, p < .001$). This indicates that higher levels of perceived drug-related crime are associated with lower levels of community cohesion. Although the relationship is relatively weak, the findings confirm that crime undermines cohesion. Based on these results, the null hypothesis (H01a) stating that drug-related crime has no significant relationship with community cohesion was rejected.

Table 4.6: Correlation between Drug-Related Crime and Community Cohesion

		Drug Related Crime	Community Cohesion
Drug Related Crime	Pearson Correlation	1	-.297**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	338	338
Community Cohesion	Pearson Correlation	-.297**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	338	338

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.7 presents the Pearson correlation analysis between specific indicators of drug-related crime and community cohesion in Kibra Sub-County. The results show that all examined indicators of drug-related crime had a negative and statistically significant relationship with community cohesion. Drug dependency among youths contributing to criminal behavior showed the strongest negative relationship ($r = -0.305, p = .000$), followed by the perception that widespread drug abuse affects neighborhood safety ($r = -0.297, p = .000$) and socioeconomic conditions contributing to drug abuse and crime ($r = -0.288, p = .000$) Overall, the findings indicate that perceptions of drug-related crime are significantly associated with reduced community cohesion among residents.

Table 4.7: Correlation between Drug-Related Crime Metrics and Community Cohesion

Drug-Related Crime Metrics		Community Cohesion
Drug selling activities are regularly observable in various parts of my neighborhood	Pearson Correlation	-.200**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	338
Drug dependency among youths has contributed to criminal behavior in this community.	Pearson Correlation	-.305**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	338
Socioeconomic conditions contribute to drug abuse which impact crime levels in these communions within this neighborhood that are widely known as hotspots for drug-related activities	Pearson Correlation	-.288**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	338
Use of drug contribute to increased community level violence this community	Pearson Correlation	-.247**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	338
Widespread use of drug abuse has affected the neighborhood safety	Pearson Correlation	-.297**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	338

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing for Drug-Related Crime

Table 4.8 presents the results of the simple linear regression analysis conducted to test the hypothesis

H_{01a}: Drug-related crime has no significant effect on community cohesion among residents of Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County.

The regression model used was

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon,$$

where Y represents community cohesion and X₁ represents drug-related crime. The model summary shows (R = -0.297, R²=0.088), indicating that drug-related crime explains 8.8% of the variation in community cohesion. The ANOVA results reveal that the model was statistically significant (F (1,336) = 32.507, p<.001). The regression coefficient further indicates that drug-related crime has a negative and significant effect on community cohesion (B = -0.247, β = -0.297, p<.001). This means that higher levels of drug-related crime are associated with lower levels of community cohesion.

Since p < .05, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming that drug-related crime has a statistically significant negative effect on community cohesion among residents of Kibra Sub-County. However, the low R² value highlights that cohesion is influenced by many other factors beyond crime. These may include informal economic networks, neighborhood tenure, and broader socio-political dynamics.

Table 4.8: Linear Regression Results for Drug-Related Crime

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	-.297 ^a	.088	.085	.93193		
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	28.232	1	28.232	32.507	.000 ^b
	Residual	291.813	336	.868		
	Total	320.045	337			

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.146	.169		12.726	.000
	Drug Related Crime	-.247	.043	-.297	-5.702	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Community Cohesion						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Drug Related Crime						

Qualitative Results for Drug-Related Crime and Community Cohesion

This section presents findings from 29 key informant interviews conducted with law enforcement officers, local administrators, community leaders, nyumba kumi representatives, and sub-county officials in Kibra Sub-County. Informants were purposively selected based on their roles in crime prevention, community leadership, and administrative oversight, allowing the study to capture both institutional and community perspectives on cohesion.

From the institutional side, law enforcement officers and administrators emphasized the erosion of trust among residents. They noted that visible drug selling and consumption created suspicion, fear, and social distancing within neighborhoods, undermining cooperation with authorities and weakening community policing. A police officer explained that prolonged exposure to drug activities normalizes deviant behavior, eroding shared values and informal social control. Sub-county officials further highlighted youth involvement in drug networks as a critical driver of social fragmentation, pointing out that recruitment into drug distribution undermines respect for authority and creates intergenerational conflict. They also stressed that fear of retaliation discourages residents from reporting crimes, thereby weakening collective action against crime.

From the community perspective, leaders and nyumba kumi representatives echoed similar concerns but focused on the lived experiences of residents. They described how drug hotspots create divisions within neighborhoods, with some families benefiting economically while others suffer from addiction-related problems. A community elder explained that these dynamic breaks unity because “the community cannot speak with one voice.” Community respondents also stressed the stigma and exclusion faced by youth involved in drug networks. Leaders noted that once young people are labeled as criminals, they are marginalized rather than rehabilitated, deepening fragmentation. Nyumba kumi representatives further reported that fear of retaliation silences residents, discouraging participation in meetings and weakening cooperation in community policing initiatives.

Taken together, both institutional and community perspectives demonstrate that drug-related crime undermines trust, cooperation, and collective participation, thereby weakening community cohesion in Kibra Sub-County. These accounts reinforce the quantitative findings, showing that higher levels of drug-related crime are associated with reduced community cooperation, lower civic participation, and weakened cohesion.

Discussion of Findings on the Effect of Drug-Related Crime on Community Cohesion

The study examined the effect of drug-related crime on community cohesion among residents of Kibra Sub-County. The findings from correlation and regression analyses indicated that drug-related crime has a statistically significant negative relationship with community cohesion. The correlation analysis showed a weak but significant association ($r = -.297, p < .001$), while the regression results confirmed that drug-related crime significantly predicts community cohesion ($F(1,336) = 32.507, p < .001$) and explains 8.8% of the variation in community cohesion. These findings suggest that drug-related activities such as visible drug selling, youth involvement in drug use, and the presence of drug hotspots erode trust, weaken safety perceptions, and reduce social interactions within the community.

Qualitative findings further revealed that drug-related crime contributes to the erosion of trust, fear of retaliation, reduced participation in community activities, and weakened neighborhood cooperation among residents. The presence of visible drug markets and youth involvement in drug networks was reported to create divisions within the community and discourage collective action against crime. These findings align with Social Disorganization

Theory, which explains that structural disadvantages such as poverty and social instability weaken informal social control and social bonds within communities (Bellair, 2017; Charis & Ronald, 2017). The results also support Collective Efficacy Theory, which argues that persistent crime undermines trust and cooperation among community members, thereby weakening their ability to collectively address crime (Sampson, 2017; Whipple et al., 2021). Similar findings have been reported in studies showing that fear of crime reduces social interaction and civic participation in communities affected by crime (Avery et al., 2020; Jha & Jhingran, 2016). Overall, the study confirms that drug-related crime significantly affects community cohesion in Kibra by weakening trust, discouraging participation, and undermining collective social control. However, the low explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.088$) highlights that community cohesion is influenced by other broader socio-economic and community-level factors beyond crime.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study concludes that drug-related crime significantly undermines community cohesion in Kibra Sub-County. The findings show that the prevalence of drug selling, open drug use, and the presence of drug hotspots contribute to insecurity and social disorder within neighborhoods. These conditions weaken trust among residents, reduce social interaction, and discourage participation in community initiatives aimed at maintaining safety. The study further concludes that drug-related crime disrupts informal social control mechanisms, as residents become reluctant to report crime or cooperate with authorities due to fear of retaliation. Consequently, drug-related crime not only increases insecurity but also weakens social bonds and collective action within the community.

Recommendations

Given the significant negative effect of drug-related crime on community cohesion, the study recommends the adoption of integrated community-based drug prevention and control strategies in Kibra Sub-County. National and county governments, in collaboration with local leaders, should strengthen efforts to combat drug trafficking while also investing in prevention, rehabilitation, and youth empowerment programs. This can be achieved by dismantling drug hotspots through coordinated law enforcement operations, expanding access to rehabilitation and counselling services for individuals affected by substance abuse, and promoting youth employment and skills development initiatives to reduce vulnerability to involvement in drug-related activities.

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