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Impact of psycho-social support and counselling services in mitigating the risk of radicalisation among youths

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of psycho-social support and counselling services in mitigating youth radicalisation in Mombasa County, Kenya. Violent extremism poses significant risks to youth in vulnerable regions, and while psycho-social interventions have been implemented, their impact remains uncertain. This study specifically investigates whether these services enhance mental health, promote behavioural change, and build resilience against radical ideologies. Using a mixed-methods design, data were collected from 384 youth participants through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Findings indicate that sixty-one per cent of participants are aware of the available support services, revealing a need for improved outreach. Notably, sixty-eight per cent reported improvements in mental health and coping skills, and seventy-three per cent observed positive behavioural changes, which reduced their susceptibility to radicalisation. These results highlight the potential of psycho-social support in fostering resilience among at-risk youth, though limitations in awareness and accessibility persist. To enhance these services' impact, recommendations include targeted outreach programs, stigma reduction campaigns, and expansion of services to marginalised areas.

Key words: Behavioural change, counseling services, psycho-social support, radicalisation, youth empowerment.



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INTRODUCTION

Radicalisation among youth has become a critical issue in East Africa, with the region facing increasing threats from violent extremist groups. These groups capitalise on socio-economic disparities, political exclusion, and psychological vulnerabilities to attract and radicalise young people. East African countries, including Kenya, have long struggled with challenges such as high youth unemployment, limited educational and economic opportunities, and marginalisation, which create conditions ripe for exploitation by extremist organisations. Studies have shown that these socio-economic and political factors significantly increase young people's susceptibility to radical ideologies (Smith, 2021). Addressing these vulnerabilities through preventive programs is therefore crucial to countering violent extremism (CVE) and ensuring regional stability.

In recent years, governments and international organisations have recognised the importance of psycho-social support and counselling services in CVE efforts. These programs focus on enhancing mental health, fostering social integration, and building resilience, providing young people with positive coping mechanisms and alternative pathways for self-empowerment (Garcia & Lee, 2023). Such interventions, which address the emotional, psychological, and social needs of at-risk youth, have demonstrated success in reducing the appeal of radical ideologies. Programs that incorporate mental health support and foster emotional resilience help youth process their experiences, build positive relationships, and gain the skills needed to resist extremist narratives (United Nations, 2020). However, while psycho-social support programs are increasingly recognised as essential components of CVE, they are often implemented at a regional level, with limited attention given to the specific circumstances within individual communities.

In Kenya, violent extremism has had a particularly profound impact on young people. Regions such as the Coast and North Eastern parts of the country are especially vulnerable due to historical marginalisation, economic challenges, and proximity to areas with active extremist networks. Mombasa County, situated on the Kenyan coast, stands out as an area where youth radicalisation is

a significant concern. The county experiences high levels of youth unemployment and social exclusion, and radicalised religious institutions in the area have further contributed to the spread of extremist ideologies (UNDP, 2017). The Kenyan government has recognised these risks and has taken steps to integrate psycho-social support and counselling services into CVE initiatives. The 2017 National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism, for instance, highlights the importance of addressing mental health needs as part of a comprehensive CVE approach, with a focus on fostering emotional well-being, behavioural change, and resilience (UNDP, 2019).

Several programs in Kenya have sought to address the root causes of radicalisation through youth empowerment initiatives, community dialogue forums, and school-based counselling services (Kinyua & Njoroge, 2021). These initiatives aim to strengthen the mental health of young people, build positive connections within communities, and provide alternatives to the narratives promoted by extremist groups. For example, youth empowerment programs offer skills training and employment opportunities, reducing the allure of extremism by addressing economic vulnerability (Glassco & Holguin, 2016). Community forums create safe spaces where youth can openly discuss challenges and share experiences, fostering social cohesion and resilience against radical ideologies (Omondi et al., 2020). School-based counselling services, on the other hand, help young people develop healthy coping mechanisms, enabling them to handle stress and anxiety constructively rather than turning to radical solutions (Brown & Johnson, 2019).

Despite these efforts, challenges remain in implementing effective psycho-social support services across Kenya, particularly in Mombasa County. Many young people are unaware of the available services or are reluctant to use them due to cultural stigmas surrounding mental health. Additionally, the limited reach and accessibility of these programs prevent them from fully addressing the needs of at-risk youth (Weine et al., 2021). Access to trained mental health professionals is scarce, particularly in coastal and rural areas, making it difficult to sustain programs that require ongoing psycho-social support and counselling

(Nyaga & Mwangi, 2020). Funding constraints also limit the scope and consistency of psycho-social programs, reducing their impact. As a result, many youth in Mombasa continue to lack adequate support and remain vulnerable to radical influences.

The situation in Mombasa County is further complicated by its complex socio-economic and political dynamics. Mombasa has a long history of economic marginalisation and political tensions, which have contributed to feelings of exclusion and disenfranchisement among local communities. High youth unemployment, social exclusion, and limited educational and career opportunities intensify these feelings, creating an environment in which extremist ideologies can thrive. For many young people in Mombasa, extremist groups appear to offer a sense of purpose, belonging, and economic opportunity that they cannot find in their everyday lives. This perceived alternative provided by extremist groups exacerbates the challenges faced by psycho-social programs, as youth who feel alienated may be less inclined to engage with government-led interventions.

While previous studies have explored psycho-social support's role in reducing radicalisation in broader African and East African contexts, there is a lack of research focusing specifically on Kenya and particularly on Mombasa County. Much of the existing literature has examined the issue of radicalisation on a regional scale, often overlooking the particular socio-economic and political challenges within individual counties like Mombasa. This gap in the literature makes it difficult for policymakers to understand what types of interventions are most effective in Kenya's coastal regions, where radicalisation dynamics may differ significantly from those in other parts of East Africa. Additionally, without localised data on the effectiveness of psycho-social support and counselling services, it is challenging to develop targeted CVE programs that address the specific needs of Mombasa's youth population.

This study seeks to address this gap by systematically assessing the impact of psycho-social support and counselling services on mitigating the risk of youth radicalisation in Mombasa County. Specifically, it examines

whether these services effectively increase awareness of available support, improve mental health and coping skills, and foster behavioural changes that reduce the appeal of extremist ideologies. By focusing on Mombasa, this research aims to provide valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners looking to strengthen CVE initiatives in Kenya's coastal regions. The study also seeks to contribute to the broader understanding of psycho-social support's role in CVE by offering empirical evidence on the successes and challenges of these interventions in a high-risk community.

Ultimately, this research highlights the urgent need for more comprehensive and culturally sensitive psycho-social support programs in Mombasa County. Effective CVE interventions must account for the specific socio-economic and cultural context of the communities they target. By providing evidence on the awareness, accessibility, and impact of psycho-social support and counselling services in Mombasa, this study aims to inform the development of more effective CVE strategies that address the root causes of radicalisation and support the resilience of at-risk youth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Globally, psycho-social support and counselling services have gained recognition as vital components in preventing youth radicalisation and violent extremism. These interventions address the psychological and social factors that make young individuals vulnerable to extremist ideologies. Studies have shown that individuals exposed to trauma, marginalisation, or social exclusion are more susceptible to radicalisation (Smith et al., 2018; Brown & Johnson, 2019). Psycho-social interventions, including counselling, aim to reduce these vulnerabilities by providing mental health support, fostering resilience, and promoting critical thinking. Research in Europe and North America, for instance, has shown that community-based counselling programs can decrease feelings of isolation by up to 40 per cent and increase emotional resilience among at-risk youth (Garcia & Martinez, 2020). These programs often incorporate trauma-informed approaches that help youth process their experiences, lessen their attraction to extremist narratives, and reintegrate

into their communities (Phillips et al., 2014). However, much of this research has been quantitative, lacking a qualitative exploration of youth experiences and personal perspectives on these interventions.

In Africa, the significance of psycho-social support in countering violent extremism has become increasingly evident, particularly in regions affected by conflict and instability. In countries such as Nigeria and Somalia, where extremist groups like Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab are active, psycho-social counselling services have played a role in rehabilitating former extremists and deterring at-risk youth from joining extremist groups (Kamau & Mwangi, 2019; Abdi et al., 2020). For example, peer support and vocational training programs in Nigeria reported a 30 per cent decrease in recruitment rates in affected communities (Mohammed & Ahmed, 2021). These interventions not only address the psychological needs of youth but also the socio-economic drivers of radicalisation, offering alternative pathways to personal development. Research highlights that psycho-social support can reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues, as seen in Somalia, where a 20 per cent increase in youth participation in mental health programs was recorded in communities with active counselling campaigns (Ali & Hussein, 2021). Nonetheless, these programs face challenges, including limited resources, cultural stigmatisation, and a shortage of trained counsellors across the continent (Nyaga & Mwangi, 2020). A critical gap remains in understanding the long-term effectiveness of these interventions, as most studies provide limited follow-up data to assess the sustained impact on youth resilience and behaviour.

In East Africa, countries like Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya have increasingly recognised psycho-social support as critical in countering youth radicalisation, particularly in areas with high levels of poverty, political instability, and ethnic tensions. Counselling programs in these countries have been designed to address the trauma and grievances that drive radicalisation, offering youth alternatives to violent extremism (Otieno et al., 2018; Omondi et al., 2020). For instance, in Somalia, integrating community-based mental health services into counter-terrorism strategies has contributed to a 25

per cent reduction in re-radicalisation rates among former combatants (Abdi & Omar, 2020). These programs emphasise community participation and cultural relevance, ensuring that interventions align with local beliefs and practices. However, despite these efforts, East African initiatives often lack the infrastructure to deliver sustained support, especially in conflict zones. Furthermore, most existing studies in this region focus on immediate outcomes, with little attention to the durability of behavioural changes over time (Hassan & Omar, 2019).

Kenya has made strides in implementing psycho-social support and counselling services to mitigate youth radicalisation, particularly in areas prone to extremist recruitment, such as Nairobi, the coast, and North Eastern regions. Community-based counselling programs have shown promising results in improving mental health outcomes, reducing extremist influence, and promoting social cohesion (Kamau et al., 2019; Nyaga & Mwangi, 2020). For example, in Nairobi, youth empowerment initiatives targeting unemployed and marginalised young people reported a 35 per cent increase in resilience and community engagement among participants (Muthoni & Wanjiku, 2021). However, the impact of these interventions is often limited by inadequate funding, limited access to professional mental health services, and persistent stigma surrounding mental health. Additionally, while quantitative data supports the positive effects of these programs, there is a gap in qualitative research exploring how youth perceive and experience psycho-social support, which could offer richer insights into the effectiveness of these interventions (Otieno et al., 2018).

In Mombasa County, psycho-social support and counselling services are identified as essential in addressing youth radicalisation, especially in communities where poverty, unemployment, and social marginalisation are prevalent. Various initiatives have been implemented to provide mental health support and counselling services to at-risk youth, helping them build resilience against extremist ideologies (UNDP, 2017; Haysom & Opala, 2020). Delivered through community-based organisations, these services address the root causes of radicalisation by offering youth supportive environments to discuss their

challenges, process trauma, and develop coping mechanisms (CAEDES, 2019). However, the effectiveness of these interventions is hampered by limited resources, cultural barriers, and a shortage of trained mental health practitioners in the region (Issifum, 2016). Furthermore, research in Mombasa lacks robust longitudinal studies to track the sustained impact of these programs on youth behaviour and resilience, a gap that is critical for developing more effective, enduring CVE strategies.

Theoretical Framework

This study's theoretical framework for examining the impact of psycho-social support and counselling services on mitigating youth radicalisation is grounded in Social Learning Theory and Radicalization Theory. These theories provide a foundation for understanding how psycho-social interventions can influence youth behaviour and reduce their vulnerability to extremist ideologies. By integrating these perspectives, the study explores how structured psychological support and counselling services disrupt radicalisation processes and offer alternative pathways for at-risk youth.

Social Learning Theory, introduced by Bandura (1977), posits that behaviour is learned through observation, imitation, and modelling in a social context. This theory is crucial for understanding youth radicalisation, as young people may adopt extremist behaviours by observing and internalising the attitudes of influential figures in their environment, such as peers, community leaders, or online influencers (Bandura, 1986). Social Learning Theory also explains how media and social networks can contribute to radicalisation by exposing youth to extremist content that promotes harmful ideologies. By providing positive role models and promoting prosocial behaviours, psycho-social support and counselling can counter these influences, reducing the likelihood of youth adopting extremist ideologies. Structured interventions, for example, teach critical thinking and resilience, equipping youth to resist radical narratives and instead engage in constructive social behaviours (Brown & Johnson, 2019).

The rise of online radicalisation has amplified the need to address these influences in the digital realm. Young people are increasingly exposed to extremist propaganda through social media and online platforms, where extremist groups target vulnerable individuals. Digital interventions, such as online counselling and awareness campaigns, can complement traditional psycho-social support by reaching youth in digital spaces and providing them with positive narratives and support. Studies have shown that combining online interventions with face-to-face counselling can enhance program effectiveness by broadening outreach and reinforcing prosocial behaviours (Garcia & Lee, 2023).

Radicalization Theory offers further insights into how individuals, particularly youth, become drawn to extremist ideologies and behaviours. This theory addresses the psychological and social processes that lead individuals toward radicalisation, often through incremental stages that involve increasing isolation, personal grievances, and a sense of injustice. Moghaddam's (2005) Staircase to Terrorism model is a key framework within Radicalization Theory. The model outlines a series of stages, from perceiving injustice to engaging in violent extremism, showing how social and psychological factors interact to escalate radicalisation. According to this model, personal grievances, social isolation, and perceived injustices propel individuals up a "staircase" toward violent extremism. Psycho-social support and counselling can intervene at multiple points along this trajectory, addressing factors like isolation and grievances before they escalate. For example, providing emotional support and fostering a sense of belonging helps reduce feelings of alienation while addressing underlying grievances can counteract the appeal of extremist ideologies (Moghaddam, 2005).

Psycho-social support programs apply these theories by providing targeted interventions that address both social learning and the stages of radicalisation. For instance, community-based counselling programs in Kenya and Nigeria have successfully utilised Social Learning Theory by offering positive role models and social engagement activities, which help at-risk youth form prosocial connections instead of turning to

extremist networks (Kamau & Mwangi, 2019). Additionally, trauma-informed counselling programs have used principles from Radicalization Theory to reduce grievances and feelings of exclusion. In Somalia, community-based psycho-social interventions have reported a significant decrease in youth radicalisation by providing spaces where young people can process trauma and build healthy social connections, thereby reducing the social isolation that often precedes radicalisation (Abdi & Omar, 2020).

Furthermore, empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of these approaches. Studies indicate that psycho-social support can reduce radicalisation risks by fostering resilience, improving mental well-being, and strengthening community bonds. For example, Garcia and Martinez (2020) found that community-based counselling programs reduced feelings of isolation among at-risk youth by 40 per cent while fostering resilience and emotional stability. By mitigating social and psychological factors that drive radicalisation, these interventions help divert youth from violent extremism and encourage constructive behaviours. In Kenya's coastal regions, psycho-social support initiatives have employed these theoretical insights to build youth resilience and decrease susceptibility to extremist narratives, showing the potential of these interventions to disrupt the radicalisation trajectory (Omondi et al., 2020).

METHODOLOGY

This study used a mixed-methods research design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to completely examine the impact of psycho-social support and counselling services on mitigating the risk of radicalisation among youth in Mombasa County, Kenya. The mixed-methods design was chosen to capture the complexity of the phenomenon, allowing for the collection of both numerical data and in-depth qualitative insights. A descriptive survey was utilised for the quantitative component, while semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data. This approach ensured a thorough investigation of the research objectives, providing a holistic understanding of the effectiveness of psycho-social interventions.

The target population for this research included youth aged 15–35 years who had participated in psycho-social support and counselling programs in Mombasa County. Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula was used to calculate a sample size of 384 respondents formula for sample size determination in a finite population. This sample size was selected to ensure adequate statistical power and account for potential non-response, thus enhancing the representativeness and reliability of the findings. Stratified random sampling was used to choose participants, with strata based on geographic location to ensure proportional representation from different areas within the county, accounting for demographic diversity and enhancing the validity of the results.

Data collection involved the use of structured questionnaires for the quantitative component and semi-structured interview guides for the qualitative component. The structured questionnaire included closed-ended questions measured on a Likert scale, allowing participants to express their perceptions of psycho-social support services in a structured format. This facilitated the quantification of attitudes and opinions regarding the effectiveness of these services in reducing susceptibility to radicalisation. The semi-structured interview guides, on the other hand, contained open-ended questions designed to allow for an in-depth exploration of participants' personal experiences and insights. These interviews were done with key stakeholders, including program implementers and community leaders, to gain richer contextual insights.

Quantitative data were analysed using inferential and descriptive statistics to identify trends and relationships within the data, while qualitative data were analysed thematically to identify recurring patterns and themes. The combination of these analytical techniques provided a robust understanding of the effectiveness of psycho-social support and counselling services in addressing youth radicalisation in Mombasa County.

While this mixed-methods approach offered a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, certain limitations should be acknowledged. Self-reported data from questionnaires may introduce biases, such as social desirability bias, where

participants respond in ways they believe are favourable. Additionally, qualitative interviews, while rich in detail, may not capture all scenarios because of potential interviewer bias or limitations in recall. Despite these limitations, the mixed-methods design allowed for triangulation of data sources, enhancing the credibility and reliability of the study findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Awareness and Utilisation of Psycho-Social Support and Counselling Services among Youth in Mombasa County

This study examined the extent to which psycho-social support and counselling services are utilised by youth in Mombasa County as part of efforts to mitigate radicalisation risks. The types of services included in this study range from individual and group counselling sessions to community outreach programs, youth empowerment workshops, and mental health awareness campaigns. These services were designed to address the emotional, social, and psychological needs of youth, aiming to provide support in managing life challenges, enhancing coping skills, and building resilience against radical ideologies. The results are presented in Figure 1.

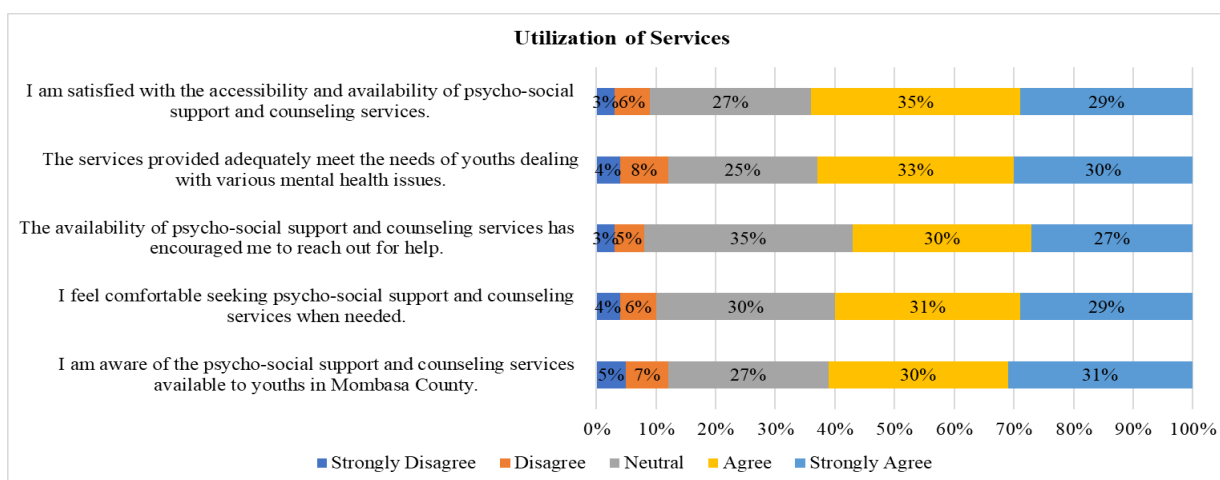


Figure 1: Utilisation of Psycho-Social Support and Counselling Services

As shown in Figure 1, 61 per cent of respondents indicated awareness of the available psycho-social support and counselling services. This relatively low level of awareness suggests that there may be insufficient dissemination of information regarding these services. Contributing factors to this gap could include limited outreach efforts, lack of visibility in rural areas, and cultural or societal stigmas associated with seeking mental health support. These results are consistent with existing literature, which underscores the importance of widespread awareness for effective utilisation of support services (Otieno et al., 2018). Enhanced communication strategies, such as leveraging digital media and community forums, could potentially improve awareness and accessibility.

Additionally, 60 per cent of respondents reported feeling comfortable seeking psycho-social support and counselling services. This moderate comfort

level, as depicted in Figure 1, could be influenced by various factors, including prevailing social stigmas around mental health, limited availability of culturally sensitive services, and fears of judgment within close-knit communities. Creating a stigma-free environment that encourages youth to seek help without fear is essential for improving service utilisation. The findings emphasise the need for continued efforts to normalise mental health support through targeted community engagement and educational campaigns (Omondi et al., 2020). By promoting an inclusive atmosphere, these initiatives can enable more youth to access the assistance they need, particularly those who may feel marginalised or vulnerable to radical influences.

Influence of Psycho-Social Support on Mental Well-Being among Youth in Mombasa County

The study also investigated how psycho-social support and counselling services impact mental

well-being among youth. The results are presented in Figure 2.

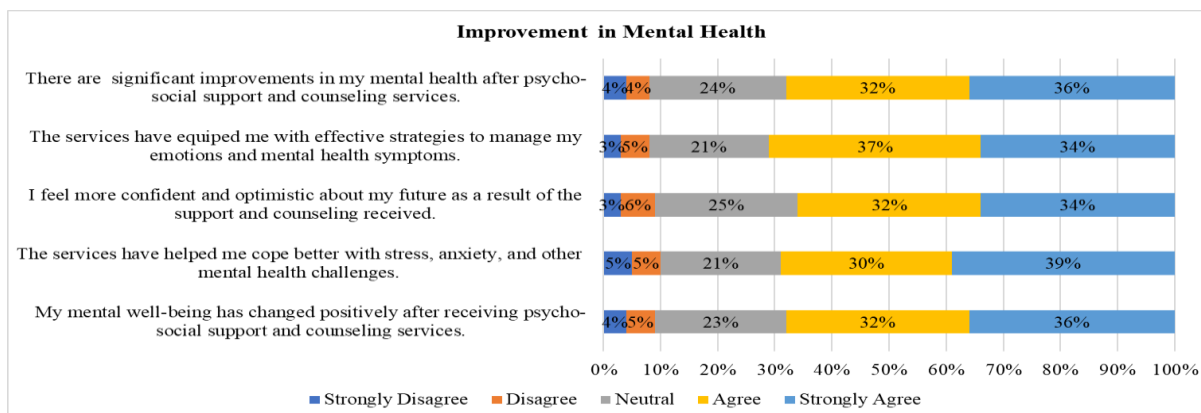


Figure 2:Improvement in Mental Health

The findings indicate that 68 per cent of respondents reported experiencing "positive changes" in mental well-being, which encompass improvements in self-esteem, emotional stability, and stress management. These specific aspects of mental health are crucial, as they collectively foster a sense of purpose and self-worth among youth, decreasing the likelihood of them seeking validation or belonging through extremist groups. This finding aligns with existing research on the benefits of psycho-social interventions in strengthening mental health outcomes, particularly for at-risk youth (Smith et al., 2018).

As illustrated in Figure 2: Improvement in Mental Health, 69 per cent of respondents agreed that these services helped them better cope with stress, anxiety, and other mental health challenges. This improvement in coping skills has broader implications, as it contributes to emotional

resilience, a key factor in resisting radical ideologies. When individuals can effectively manage psychological stressors, they are less likely to turn to extremist narratives as a coping mechanism. This finding underscores the role of psycho-social support in promoting emotional regulation and resilience, which are essential components in reducing vulnerability to radicalisation (Brown & Johnson, 2019). By equipping youth with effective strategies to manage emotional challenges, psycho-social services help foster a stable mindset that discourages the adoption of extremist ideologies.

Influence of Psycho-Social Support on Behavioural Changes among Youth in Mombasa County

The study further examined the influence of psycho-social support on behavioural changes among youth. The results are presented in Figure 3.

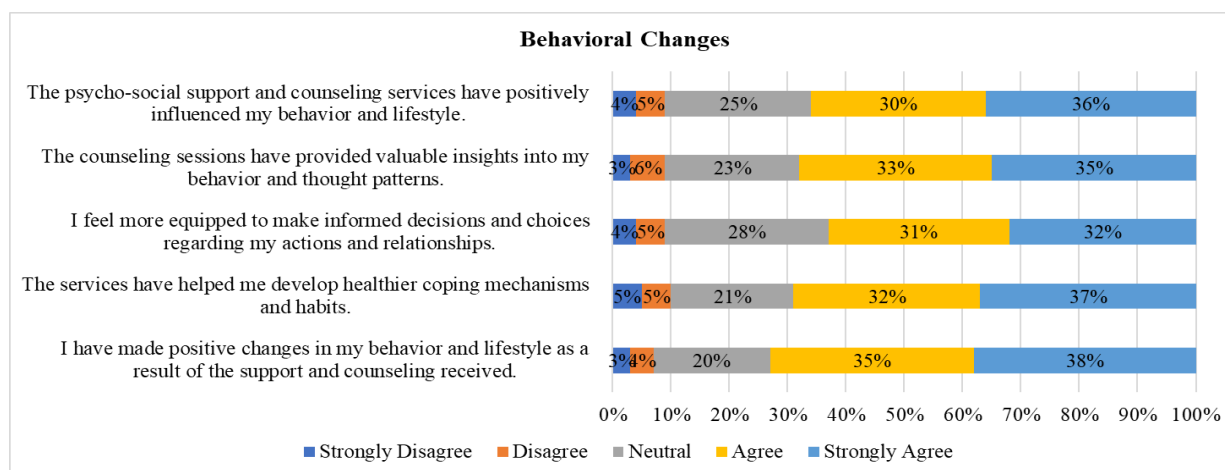


Figure 3: Behavioural Changes

Findings show that 73 per cent of respondents reported making "positive changes" in their behaviour and lifestyle due to the psycho-social support and counselling services they received. Figure 3 illustrates that these behavioural modifications include adopting healthier social habits, engaging in constructive community activities, and making more informed life decisions. Such shifts in behaviour are critical for reducing the risk of radicalisation, as interventions that promote healthy behaviour and decision-making help decrease the likelihood of youth adopting extremist ideologies. These results affirm the role of psycho-social support in fostering behavioural adjustments that contribute to resilience against radical influences (Kamau & Mwangi, 2019).

Additionally, 69 per cent of respondents indicated that the services helped them develop healthier coping mechanisms and habits. This finding aligns with research emphasising the importance of counselling in promoting adaptive coping strategies, which are essential for managing adversity and stress (Ahmed et al., 2020). Healthy coping mechanisms empower individuals to confront challenges constructively rather than resorting to destructive behaviours. Additionally, 63 per cent of respondents felt more equipped to make informed decisions, indicating that counselling services play a vital role in improving decision-making skills and promoting autonomy. Increased self-awareness and critical reflection on one's behaviour, as reported by 68 per cent of respondents, foster a deeper understanding of

personal thought patterns, which can be instrumental in counteracting extremist influences (Muthoni & Wanjiku, 2021). Together, these findings highlight the transformative impact of psycho-social support in shaping behaviour and reinforcing long-term resistance to radicalisation among youth.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions: The study revealed that while 61 per cent of respondents were aware of the psycho-social support and counselling services available in Mombasa County, there remains a significant gap in the dissemination of information. This limited awareness hinders the effective utilisation of these critical services. Additionally, 60 per cent of respondents reported feeling comfortable accessing these services, indicating that while many youths are open to seeking help, efforts to increase awareness and lessen the stigma surrounding mental health services are still necessary. These findings highlight the crucial role of outreach and education in ensuring that all youth, particularly those at risk of radicalisation, can benefit from the available support resources.

The study found that 68 per cent of respondents reported positive changes in their mental well-being after receiving psycho-social support and counselling services. This demonstrates the effectiveness of these interventions in addressing the psychological challenges faced by at-risk youth. Additionally, 69 per cent of respondents indicated that these services helped them cope

better with stress and anxiety, further emphasising their role in fostering emotional resilience. These findings underscore the importance of psycho-social support in improving mental health outcomes and reducing susceptibility to radicalisation among vulnerable youth populations in Mombasa County.

The study results indicate that 73 per cent of respondents reported positive behavioural changes as a result of psycho-social support and counselling services. These changes are vital in reducing the likelihood of youth adopting extremist ideologies by promoting healthy behaviours and decision-making. Furthermore, 69 per cent of respondents indicated that the services helped them develop healthier coping mechanisms, and 63 per cent reported feeling more equipped to make informed decisions. These findings highlight the significant role of psycho-social support in shaping behaviour, promoting resilience, and reducing the risk of radicalisation among youth in Mombasa County.

Recommendations: To enhance the utilisation of psycho-social support and counselling services, targeted outreach programs should be implemented to increase awareness among youth. Examples of effective outreach initiatives could include school-based mental health awareness sessions, collaboration with social media influencers to reach youth online, and mobile counselling units that visit remote and underserved areas. These programs should focus on disseminating information about the availability and benefits of psycho-social support services, particularly in underrepresented areas. Additionally, community-based campaigns should be strengthened to reduce the stigma associated with mental health services. These campaigns could involve partnerships with local leaders, religious institutions, and community organisations to promote a culture of seeking help without fear of judgment. Increasing accessibility and ensuring that information reaches all youth, especially those at high risk of radicalisation, is crucial for maximising the impact of these services.

To further improve mental health outcomes among youth, it is recommended that psycho-social support programs be expanded and integrated into

broader community empowerment initiatives. Continuous training of counsellors and mental health professionals should be prioritised to ensure they are equipped to address the diverse psychological needs of at-risk youth. Specific training initiatives could include workshops on trauma-informed care, resilience-building strategies, and culturally sensitive counselling practices tailored to the local context. Additionally, increasing access to these services, particularly in remote and marginalised areas, will help ensure that more youth benefit from the interventions, thereby reducing their vulnerability to radicalisation. Collaborations with schools, religious institutions, and community organisations can also help embed mental health support into everyday youth activities, creating a network of support that extends beyond formal counselling sessions.

To sustain the positive behavioural changes observed among youth, it is recommended that psycho-social support and counselling services be complemented with follow-up programs that reinforce healthy behaviours. These programs should include peer support groups, mentorship initiatives, and ongoing counselling to ensure that the gains made are long-lasting. Additionally, incorporating life skills training into psycho-social interventions can further empower youth to make informed decisions and cope with challenges constructively. Such training might cover areas like conflict resolution, effective communication, and financial literacy, equipping youth with practical skills that foster resilience. Expanding these services and making them available to all youth, regardless of their location or socio-economic status, is essential for fostering long-term resilience against radicalisation.

Lastly, it is recommended that further research be conducted to explore the long-term impact of psycho-social support and counselling interventions on youth radicalisation. Longitudinal studies that track behavioural and mental health outcomes over time would provide valuable insights into the sustained effectiveness of these programs. Additionally, qualitative research focusing on the personal experiences of participants could deepen understanding of the factors that contribute to successful intervention

outcomes. Such research would inform future program development and ensure that interventions remain relevant and impactful in addressing the evolving needs of at-risk youth.

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