

**UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF SELECTED FAMILY  
AND INTERNET ACCESS FACTORS ON VULNERABILITY TO  
RADICALISATION IN KENYA: IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING**

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**A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for  
the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Counselling Psychology of Egerton University**

**EGERTON UNIVERSITY  
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## DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

### Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my original work and it has not been presented in this or any other university for the award of a degree.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my parents; Mrs. Betty Kositany and the Kositany family, as well as to my family members, Wesley Langat, Caleb Langat, and Gideon Mutai, for their unwavering love, patience, support, and encouragement during my pursuit of education. My late father deserves a special honor. I want to convey my appreciation to you for instilling in me a strong desire to continue my education from a young age and for motivating me to place a high value in education. Throughout the whole of my life, I shall continue to be indebted to you.

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## ABSTRACT

The threat and likelihood of radicalisation and recruitment into violent extremist groups has increased in Kenya and internationally. Those at risk of being radicalised need to be identified and positive alternatives to extremism promoted. In Kenya, the government has promoted security-oriented interventions to fight radicalisation and terrorism over the softer approach called Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). The concern is the provision of long-term prevention-oriented interventions that would involve counselling individuals who are vulnerable. The students in public universities are vulnerable to radicalisation because there is maximum exchange of ideas in the university unlike the rigid ideologies of extremist groups. The family as the first socialization agent of an individual can contribute to vulnerability to radicalisation. Internet access too could make students vulnerable because it is a major platform for information exchange globally. This study focused on investigating university students' perception on the influence of selected family and internet access factors on vulnerability to radicalisation in Kenya and implications for counselling. The mixed method convergent parallel research design was used. The target population comprised all the 443,783 students enrolled in 31 accredited universities, 120 student counsellors and 960 peer counsellors. Purposive sampling technique was used to select two public universities in Kenya. Determination of sample sizes were done using Yamane's formula and proportional sampling employed. The study sample size comprised of 644 respondents as follows: 216 students from University A; 184 students from University B; 26 student counsellors and 218 peer counsellors from the two public universities. Questionnaires, interview schedules and focus group discussions were used to collect data from the university students, student counsellors and peer counsellors, respectively. A Cronbach alpha value of 0.79 was derived from data collected in a pilot evaluation of the student questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 and QSR NVivo 12 for Windows aided in data analysis. The study found that family type had insignificant influence on vulnerability to radicalisation. The parenting styles, religious beliefs, social economic status and internet access factors all had significant association between the variables and vulnerability to radicalisation. The results of this study may be beneficial to university counsellors, students, institutions of higher learning and the government in prevention of radicalisation. The findings also form a frame of reference for further research and formulation of counter radicalisation and violent extremism policies. The study recommended that counselling needs to be used and strengthened to prevent

radicalization.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>ACSS</b>	Africa Centre for Strategic Studies
<b>AST</b>	Acute Stress Disorder
<b>CHE</b>	Commission of Higher Education
<b>CUE</b>	Commission for University Education
<b>CVE</b>	Countering Violent Extremism
<b>FBI</b>	Federal Bureau of Investigations
<b>ICG</b>	International Crisis Group
<b>ICJ</b>	International Commission of Jurists
<b>ICPTS</b>	International Conference on Packaging Technology and Science
<b>IPSTC</b>	International Peace Support Training Centre
<b>IRIN</b>	Integrated Regional Information Network
<b>ISD</b>	Institute of Strategic Dialogue
<b>ISIL</b>	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
<b>ISIS</b>	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
<b>KUPCA</b>	Kenya Universities Professional Counselling Association
<b>KUCCPS</b>	Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service
<b>MDAS</b>	Micro Digital Advertising Solutions
<b>NACOSTI</b>	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
<b>NBS</b>	National Bureau of Statistics
<b>NSCVE</b>	National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism
<b>PTSD</b>	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
<b>RVE</b>	Radicalisation into Violent Extremism
<b>SG</b>	Secretary General
<b>SMT</b>	Social Movement Theories
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>VEO</b>	Violent Extremist Organizations

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background Information

Radicalisation refers to a process of adopting or promoting an extremist ideology or belief that breeds the intention of facilitating political, religious or social violence. Extremist ideology becomes a way of life and one of the frame work for individual action when one is radicalised (Hamed El-Said, 2015). Radicalisation also refers to the often violent or forceful activities resulting from extreme ideologies to justify a cause (Peels, 2024; Youth Counselling against Radicalisation Guidelines for Frontline Workers Organisation, 2015). Radicalisation can be considered as socialisation to extremism, which may lead to terrorism. (Kimari & Wakesho 2017; Onyango, 2021) report that the United States of America and other countries have adopted a ‘softer’ methodology to addressing terrorism and violent extremism, termed as countering violent extremism (CVE). The Danish Government has also recommended that the ‘softer’ approach that emphasizes the need to address the determinants (push and pull variables) that lead young people to be radicalized, addresses the root of the problem more effectively than security-oriented/military approaches. (Kimari & Wakesho; Mali 2021) further point out that within the United Nations (UN) there has also been a push for CVE to combat terrorism and violent extremism. Regionally, the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) developed a CVE strategy and established the IGAD Centre of Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (ICEPCVE) program on enhancing resistance against violent extremism in Africa. For this reason, preventing radicalization is very important when it comes to fighting violent extremism.

The President of Kenya released the National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (NSCVE) in September 2016. This strategy also lays out a clear plan for reducing and getting rid of violent extremism. This is done by getting people and groups at the national and community levels to say no to violent extremist ideas. The purpose of this plan is to lower the number of people that terrorist groups may radicalize and recruit. This vision is in accordance with the worldwide strategy on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), notably the United Nations Security Council's Resolution 2178 (2014). The main goal of this resolution is to stop people from becoming radicalized, joining terrorist groups, and taking part in terrorist activities. It is also based on the United Nations Plan of Action to stop and fight violent extremism, which started in 2016 (Ogada, 2017; Onyango, 2021)

According to Ogada (2017) in Kenya, the NSCVE acknowledges that success in CVE is

dependent on collaboration among the national government and county governments. It therefore mandates county-level leaders, including governors, senators and county assemblies, to undertake CVE Initiatives focused on fostering communal togetherness, peace, and patriotism while denouncing extremism. NSCVE also mandates the National Counterterrorism Centre (NCTC) to deliver capacity development and training to leaders in counties to augment their abilities to execute these tasks. The author asserts that the county intelligence surveillance committees are crucial for the execution of the NSCVE and are anticipated to engage in close cooperation and consultation with county government agencies in CVE. By mid-2019, pursuant to a presidential decree, all 47 counties initiated their County Action Plans to combat violent extremism, grounded in the frameworks and principles established in the NSCVE.

Figueiras and Ipince (2018) observe that governments and institutions seek to detect radicalised individuals within educational institutions through surveillance strategies, fierce sanctions and harsh punishment. This is a short-term intervention whereas a long-term intervention would involve counselling individuals who are vulnerable. Blattman and Ralston (2015), point out that CVE preventive soft-skill approach involves social interventions that seek to equip vulnerable persons with life skills to foster resilience, self-regulation, and behavioral modification through training, education, and psychological support. The promotion of family values can also be effectively done in a counselling environment.

According to Global Terrorism Index (GTI) that analyzes the trends of terrorism worldwide, there was a general decline in the prevalence of terrorism globally; yet, it continues to pose a substantial and serious issue in several nations. In 2019, 63 nations reported at least one fatality due to terrorist attacks, while seventeen countries documented over 100 fatalities from terrorism. The GTI (2022) indicates that while the frequency of incidents has risen, the overall effect of terrorism is diminishing. In 2021, deaths from terrorism declined by 1.2% to 7,142, despite a 17% rise in occurrences, suggesting that terrorism is becoming less lethal. Two-thirds of nations reported no events or deaths attributable to terrorism, representing the most favorable result since 2007, while 86 countries demonstrated an improvement in their Global Terrorism Index score. The mortality rate has been relatively constant over the last four years. The GTI (2022) underscores that terrorism continues to pose a significant concern, with Sub-Saharan Africa contributing to 48% of worldwide terrorist-related fatalities. Four of the ten countries seeing the most significant rises in terrorism-related fatalities were located in sub-Saharan Africa: Niger, Mali, the

Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Burkina Faso.

Cachalia *et al.* (2016) posits that terrorism primarily occurs in a limited number of countries, yet the total number of nations experiencing attacks is also on the rise. The authors further note that radicalisation of the youth is becoming one of the threats to international, national and individual security. An understanding of how and why people get persuaded to become members of extremist groups is therefore critical in putting in place counter terrorism measures. The proponents of the radicalization narrative provide a dynamic framework for comprehending extremism and terrorism. Neumann (2013) posits the existence of two categories of radicalization: one leading to 'cognitive extremism' and the other to 'behavioral extremism.' However, both are often described as events that occur prior to the 'bomb going off'. Radicalisation is associated with exposure to extremist ideology, victimisation, alienation, socialisation, social networks, the internet, deficiencies in familial connections, trauma, relative social and economic deprivation, and cultures of violence (Bjorgo & Horgan, 2009; Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2008; Juergensmeyer, 2003; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008; Silber & Bhatt, 2008; Wiktorowiz, 2005, as cited in Brown & Saeed, 2015). This fundamental approach has led governments to believe that they can prevent future terrorist atrocities by altering daily life (Coolseat, 2011; Sageman, 2007; Volintiru, 2010). Nonetheless, as the list of potential reasons suggests, and as Githens-Mazer (2012, 2010) explicitly states, the mechanisms of radicalization remain unidentified, much alone the appropriate points for intervention. Research on radicalization processes and vulnerable groups is more accurately characterized as 'exploratory' rather than 'explanatory' (Bouhana & Wikstrom, 2011).

According to Sageman (2004) terrorists are not just from marginalised regions and strike western countries but individuals in society who are educated and see few opportunities inside that society are more inclined to join terrorist organizations. There is increasing research attention towards understanding the increase in radicalisation worldwide and why the youth are vulnerable (RAN Research, 2016). The Global Terrorism Index (2017) records that lethal terrorist attacks have taken place in Croatia, Syria and Iraq.

This research suggests that radicalization is a worldwide issue that must be addressed in the early stages to prevent terrorist strikes. The Global Terrorism Database study (1970-2013) from the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism indicates that over 3,400 terrorist acts aimed at educational institutions occurred across 110 nations. During the same era, attacks on educational institutions constituted 2.7 percent of all

terrorist acts worldwide. In 2004, the Beslan school siege in Russia, the most fatal terrorist attack on an educational institution, resulted in 344 fatalities and 700 injuries.

Cachalia *et al.* (2016) observe that terrorism in Africa has significantly impacted lives lost, physical injuries, trauma, and forced displacement of families and communities. Insecurity has also risen, and there are many different obstacles to progress. A large number of young individuals have joined extreme organizations and causes. Globally, these organisations depend on the youth to increase the numbers in support of their initiatives. Consequently, young people are more vulnerable to being exploited than other groups. Furthermore, the authors point out that the demographic rise of the youth in Africa, as well as the numerous socio-economic issues that this brings for countries, further contributes to vulnerability to radicalization. Many of the youths who may be vulnerable are in the universities in Kenya therefore it is important that counselling be used to counter violent extremism.

According to Bizina and Gray (2014) terrorist groups in Nigeria exploit the vulnerabilities of young individuals by providing various incentives, including financial support, familial associations, and employment opportunities. Youths have, in certain situations, been forcefully recruited or misled into participation in terrorist activities. The attack in Metele North East Nigeria where 40 soldiers died in November 2018 is a current example of a fatal terrorist assault against the African territory. The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (2012) indicates that several variables lead to vulnerability of students to radicalisation. These factors range from social, personal, the family upbringing to environment factors. Violent extremists take advantage of the individual vulnerabilities create a divide between individuals and their families and communities. Research is essential for identifying youths who are susceptible to radicalisation.

Myre (2013) indicates that Kenya has been among the most internationally focused African nation, establishing extensive connections with the United States, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. The author further notes that international companies operating in Africa and embassies of western countries are located in Nairobi, Kenya's capital and this makes the country vulnerable to terrorist attacks. The Dusit D2 Complex terror attack in January 2019 in Kenya was an attack in a region where international companies are situated. An attack in April 2015 at Garissa University College resulted in 148 fatalities. These attacks show that there is a need to address the issue of radicalisation in Kenya (CHIRPS Terrorism Observatory Report, 2018).

An empirical study undertaken by Botha (2014) asserts that most of the young people who join violent groups are youths aged between 20 and 25 years. This category is believed to be active on the internet and vulnerable to propaganda and manipulation. According to Jamah (2015), the internet is increasingly being used by terrorists to recruit unsuspecting youths in Kenya and around the globe. The repercussion of recruitment of Kenyan youths into the terror groups is the increasing number of attacks on learning institutions. Terrorist groups continue to attack Kenya as a retaliation of Kenya's military incursion into Somalia (Odhiambo *et al.*, 2016). Violent extremists striking learning institutions is real, the Garissa University College, Kenya attack in 2015 where 148 people were killed is an example (Bar, 2016). The author further notes that terrorists and extremists also manipulate and exploit the grievances of the alienated youth to create despondency. Radicalisation has caused death, psychological and socioeconomic effects on the lives of individuals, families and the entire country. Counselling is important in addressing these effects of radicalisation to counter and prevent violent extremism.

CHRIPS Terrorism Observatory Report (2020) indicated that in Kenya 69 attacks, 122 terrorism related fatalities and 49 persons were injured in the year 2020. In 2018, 23 attacks 56 fatalities and 49 persons were injured as a result of terrorism. The report further posits that the number of attacks per target type included attacks on civilians, civilian vehicles, telecommunication masts and schools. The CHRIPS Terrorism Observatory Report (2022) indicated that seventy-seven terror-related attacks occurred in 2022. This represents a 36% increase relative to the 51 attacks documented in 2021. Of the 77 reported attacks during the specified period, nearly 50% were directed at security officials. Civilians often became targets of terror-related attacks carried out by suspected violent extremist groups. On 25 October 2022, in Mandera, a standard seven student sustained injuries when suspected Al Shabaab attackers launched explosives into a primary school in Fino, aiming at teachers and students. Suspected Al Shabaab militants conducted a raid on two mosques in Mandera, armed with AK47 rifles. The data reveals that terrorism and extremism are continually growing in Kenya and vulnerable groups include students in institutions of learning thus the need to have preventive measures to counter violent extremism.

Tahiri (2013) asserts that members of the nuclear family tend to be the first to notice indicators of radicalization in their relatives that are a cause for concern. But they do not always know how to handle it. Families may play a significant part in preventing individuals from becoming radicalized by being crucial agents of change and giving a lot of support to

the people who have become radicalized. This is why they are so important. Tahiri (2013) also states that it is important to remember that family members may also make it harder for young people to de-radicalize, reintegrate, and protect themselves from extremist ideas. Bhui *et al.* (2014) assert that significant resources, both temporal and financial, are allocated to combating terrorism, but not as much on researching on preventing measures. Therefore, we need to know how the family affects the likelihood that someone gets radicalized.

A correlation exists between family structure and radicalism. The parents are architects of a family since they shape the environment, values and the future direction of their children's lives. Family dynamics like high levels of conflict, neglect, or dysfunctionality can contribute to feelings of alienation in an individual. This sense of isolation or emotional distress might push students to seek belonging elsewhere, including in extremist or radical groups that provide a sense of purpose (Horgan, 2005; McCauley & Moskaleiko, 2017). Socioeconomic stress and financial strain can contribute to family conflict and feelings of alienation, which can, in turn, increase the risk of radicalization (Bhui *et al.*, 2014; Sedgwick, 2010). The youth are particularly vulnerable to adopting extremist and radical views as a means to find meaning in life or a sense of belonging to a group (Ghosh *et al.*, 2017; USAID, 2011). Students from families that provide little emotional support or have dysfunctional relationships may experience feelings of neglect, isolation, or lack of direction. This emotional vulnerability can make them more vulnerable to seeking out groups or ideologies that offer a sense of belonging, purpose, or validation (Moghaddam, 2005). Overprotective parenting styles can create identity confusion in students who struggle with independence. Lack of parental guidance can leave students vulnerable to extremist influences. Confusion or a struggle for self-identity may lead them to radical ideologies that offer them a clear sense of identity and purpose (Hedayah, 2021). A lack of family guidance during the critical transition to adulthood can leave students searching for direction, particularly when faced with the uncertainties of academic pressures, career prospects, and personal development. Without positive family input, students may be vulnerable to manipulation by extremist ideologies or radical groups that offer concrete solutions to their feelings of uncertainty. This study examined the parenting types and also considered the three main parenting styles according to Baumrind (1968) which are authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles to show how they influence vulnerability to radicalisation.

Online platforms provide access to radicalizing material, including extremist propaganda, discussion forums, and social media networks (HM Government, 2021). The internet's

anonymous nature enables individuals to investigate radical ideologies without facing immediate social repercussions (Marwick *et al.*, 2022). These online groups often offer students a sense of belonging thus making them particularly appealing to students seeking answers to personal or social issues (Conway, 2017). Family factors and internet access are significant factors that influence vulnerability to radicalization of university students. Families that offer either insufficient emotional support or promote extreme views can set the stage for students to seek out radical ideologies. The internet, with its vast reach and access to extremist content, can provide students with an environment where these ideologies are easily accessible and reinforced. Addressing both of these factors through counselling families, psychoeducation on influence of the internet can help mitigate the risk of radicalization. Academic institutions serve as optimal environments for cultivating dissent and diverse perspectives, facilitating the expression, discussion, reception, and scrutiny of ideas (O'Donnell, 2016). The provision of counselling services to the vulnerable youth can counteract the increase of violence extremist ideas through fostering positive values, a sense of belonging, developing cognitive, emotional and social skills, and improved social conditions for individuals and communities (UNESCO, 2017).

The Ran Research Paper (2016) further points out that radicalisation gap analysis research in universities is of concern and requires notable attention. Investigating what brings about certain susceptibilities is important to conceptualize protective factors. A study of student's perceptions is important as this shape how students interpret their surrounding and sense of belonging. A study on perceptions allows the researcher to address cognitive and emotional frameworks that contribute to extremist ideologies and behaviour. If students feel isolated or excluded their identity is affected and radical ideologies can be appealing and provide a sense of belonging. It has been observed that certain extremists possess a university degree, that universities may function as both facilitators and impediments to radicalization, and that they can serve as venues for the dissemination efforts of radical speakers (Sas *et al.*, 2020). The author highlights several gaps regarding: the specific role of the university environment in radicalization; the efficacy and appropriateness of permitting or restricting access to extremist ideologies; and the unique educational and societal challenges presented by the reality that university students are adults inside academic environments. Research in universities is needed to address youth identity crisis and how education and counselling may cultivate resistance and resilience against many forms of extremism (Benjamin *et al.*, 2021).

Counseling is a strategy that should be extensively utilized to enhance security-oriented

counter-terrorism measures through a framework for Countering violent extremism (CVE) activities which include the provision of employment opportunities, business possibilities, and life skills, among other interventions aimed at reducing adolescent vulnerability to violent extremism (Ogada, 2017). According to the Ran Research Paper (2016) some of the specific research gaps in the study of radicalization is in the area of families as follows: the role of families in furthering radicalisation and recruitment; further research is required to elucidate the influence of peer groups and online communities in the radicalisation process; the impact of specific environments in either preventing or promoting radicalisation; the dynamics of small groups, including group polarisation and groupthink; strategies to enhance community resilience and facilitate social and political intervention; and the essential conditions for fostering a healthy and inclusive community. These are some of the issues that the research seeks to address.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In response to escalating radicalization, the government has implemented counter-terrorism measures through the enactment of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the establishment of the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), the National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (NSCVE), County Action Plans (CAPs), and the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit. Educational institutions have enhanced their security measures and surveillance to combat terrorist activity. The National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (NSCVE) was accepted by the 47 counties via customized County Action Plans (CAPs. Both NSCVE and CAPS rely on collaboration between the national government, civil society organizations, local communities, development partners and county governments for their success. However, despite these measures, radicalization still continues to increase. These security-oriented interventions to Counter Terrorism are short term in countering radicalisation, the focus should therefore be the provision of long-term interventions that would involve counselling individuals who are vulnerable to promote resilience, self-regulation, and behavioral modification through training, education, and psychological support. Radical groups and terrorists have targeted learning institutions, especially public universities, because they are well positioned for extensive interaction of cultures, politics and ideas contrary to rigid ideologies of extremist groups. Some of the drivers of radicalisation include the family and internet access. The family is usually the first socializing agent of an individual and family support of extremist groups, insecure family setups, absent families,

lack of parental supervision, family tensions and individual's sense of isolation can make university students vulnerable to radicalisation. The internet is also a major platform for information exchange globally and radical groups can use the internet to recruit, train and execute terrorist acts. Universities have invested on computers, bandwidth, and connectivity and students have free access to the internet and are active online therefore, can get different world-views, minimize interaction with the broader community and establish a highly confined social environment that continuously offers reinforcement for radical views. Previous studies that are security oriented, for example, the CHRIPS Terrorism Observatory Report (2022) reported on research done to promote accountability in CVE and Policing in Kenya and an understanding of the role of private security actors as part of the network of policing of counterterrorism and preventive terror measures in Kenya. Other studies have focused on psychological vulnerabilities that lead to extremism like personal grievances Horgan (2014) and Neumann (2013) research findings highlighted the importance of group dynamics and peer influence in driving individuals to extremism However, there is a need to use counselling as a long-term preventive solution to extremist views and establish resilience among populations that could be vulnerable. The study sought to fill this gap to determine university students' perceived influence of selected family and internet access factors vulnerability to radicalisation in Kenya.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The study aims to examine University students' perceptions on how family related factors such as parenting type, parenting style, social economic factors and religious beliefs alongside the role of the internet contributes to students' vulnerability to radical ideas. The study intends to provide preventive measures and counselling interventions to counter radicalization among university students in Kenya.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The following were the research objectives.

- i. To determine university students' perception on the influence of family type on vulnerability to radicalisation.
- ii. To establish university students' perception on the influence of family parenting style on vulnerability to radicalisation.
- iii. To find out university students' perception on the influence of social economic status

on vulnerability to radicalization.

- iv. To examine university students' perception on the influence of religious beliefs on vulnerability to radicalisation.
- v. To establish university students' perception on the influence of selected internet access factors on vulnerability to radicalisation.

### **1.5 Hypotheses of the Study**

The study was guided by the following hypotheses:

H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no statistically significant university students' perceived influence of family type on vulnerability to radicalisation.

H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no statistically significant university students' perceived influence of family parenting style on vulnerability to radicalisation.

H<sub>0</sub>3: There is no statistically significant university students' perceived influence of social economic status on vulnerability to radicalization.

H<sub>0</sub>4: There is no statistically significant university students' perceived influence of religious beliefs on vulnerability to radicalization.

H<sub>0</sub>5: There is no statistically significant university students' perceived influence of selected internet access factors on vulnerability to radicalisation.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

In Kenya, the advancement of sustainable peace and security is enshrined in Vision 2030. Security is also crucial for the social economic development of the nation. This research is expected to assist enhance the use of counselling to counter violent extremism and radicalisation hence contribute to the aspirations in the Kenya Vision 2030. Insight into university students' perception on the influence of selected family and internet access factors on vulnerability to radicalisation may assist university administrators to get information on the status of radicalisation in their institutions so that they can put effective strategies to curb radicalisation. The data provided by the research may be beneficial to university students as they would have information on those at risk of being radicalised so they can be cautious and prevent radicalisation. University counsellors may find the findings of this research important as they can identify and counsel students vulnerable to radicalisation therefore counter extremism and promote behaviour change. The government and institutions of higher learning may use the information generated in the research as a basis of research and formulation of counter radicalisation and violent extremism policies.

### **1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

This research was conducted in two public universities in Kenya. These universities were selected as they admit students from different regions of the country and also have had incidences of radicalisation. The study confined itself to investigate University Students' perceptions on the influence of selected family and internet access factors on vulnerability to radicalisation. The study findings would be used to counsel students and prevent radicalisation. Most students start their undergraduate studies at the age of 18 in Kenyan universities and complete at age 21 or 22 for most of the degree programs. Age 20 is the mean age of this cohort of students, these students took part in the study as they most likely have explored, have an identity and an unwavering dedication to a certain array of values, beliefs, and life objectives that have arisen from deliberate exploration and introspection. The students

were in their third year of study when the research data was being collected. According to Erikson (1968) psychosocial stages of development these students are youth with an identity status who probably have determined the values and objectives that have the utmost significance for them, as well as the purpose or mission that will guide how they live. In this stage ego identity has also developed, this refers to the conscious self-awareness that emerges through social interactions and becomes a primary concern during the identity versus role confusion stage of psychological development (Erikson, 1968).

The study is sensitive, especially because of the fear and suspicion concerning terrorism and association with radicalisation. The researcher guaranteed the respondents and institutions of confidentiality and that information will solely be used for research purposes.

### **1.8 Assumptions of the Study**

The study was carried out based on the following assumptions:

- i. The respondents willingly provided information about their perception of the influence of selected family and internet access factors on vulnerability to radicalisation.
- ii. University students were knowledgeable on the influence of the selected family and internet access factors on vulnerability to radicalisation and therefore they gave their opinion on the influence of these factors on vulnerability to radicalisation.



## 1.9 Definition of Terms

The subsequent words are operationally defined and are crucial to this study:

**De-radicalisation:** This denotes a cognitive repudiation of certain beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives, or a change in opinion (Schmid, 2013). For this study it refers to being free from radical ideas, goal and radical people.

**Extremism:** Vocal or active dissent against core ideals, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for diverse perspectives (Scarcella *et al.*, 2016). For this study it refers to students advocating for, supporting, and having attitudes opposed to the rule of law and respect and tolerance of different religions and views.

**Family:** A group of people connected by blood relations (kinship), adoption, foster care, or marital bonds (civil, customary, or religious). of two (or more, in the case of polygamous families) persons, of opposite sex (The Government of Kenya, 2019). For this study the family is defined as the primary social unit composed of individuals who interact and provide emotional support, financial support and maintain direct influence over an individual values beliefs and behaviour.

**Influence:** The power of a person being affected, controlled or manipulated by something or someone (Ahmadi-Nedushan, 2016). For this study, it refers to students' ability to change their conduct, thoughts or decisions.

**Internet access:** Refers to a process that enables students to connect to the wide area network connecting millions of digital communication devices for the purpose of allowing access to information, contacting each other and sharing information resources (Matisse Enzer, 2008). For this study it refers to students' ability to connect to digital communication devices globally and access radical material and radical groups and share this information to others.

**Perceptions:** Perception is a process where we take in sensory information from our environment as we interact with our environment (Levitin, 2002). For this study it refers to the views university students have on whether the family or internet access makes one vulnerable to radicalisation.

- Radicalisation:** Radicalization refers to the emergence of extremist beliefs and ideologies that may lead an individual to participate in terrorist activities (Koomen & Van der Pligt, 2016).  
For this study it refers to a process where a student or a group of students undergo a psychological, ideological transformation and affiliation to an extremist group and increase their advocacy and actions to an extreme political, social or religious ideology.
- Socio-economic Status:** Socioeconomic status encompasses not just income but also educational attainment, economic stability and individual perceptions of social rank and class. Socioeconomic status encompasses factors pertaining to quality of life and available possibilities and advantages accessible to people within society (American Psychological Association, 2019). For this study it refers to financial status, of the university students' families.
- Terrorism:** It refers to threatened or actual utilization of unlawful force and violence by radicals to achieve a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation (Global Terrorism Index Report, 2015). For this study the same definition is used.
- Violent Extremism:** This study adopted De Leede *et al.* (2017) definition that refers to the use of violence to advance certain political, social, economic, or ideological views.
- Vulnerability:** Vulnerability is defined as the circumstances that result from political, socioeconomic, and environmental elements or processes that intensify the vulnerability of a person, community, assets, or systems to the effects of hazards (United Nation's Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2017). For this study it refers to the susceptibility of individuals or groups of individuals to be radicalised towards violent extremism.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides literature review of the major aspects of the research problem. The concepts that are reviewed in this chapter include global, regional and local radicalization status and trends; the influence of the family and internet access on vulnerability to radicalization; the effects of terrorism and student vulnerability to radicalization and counselling implications. Furthermore, the chapter provides a theoretical grounding of the study as well as a conceptual framework of the expected relationships among variables of interest.

#### **2.2 Global Trend and Status of Radicalisation**

Radicalization is a process wherein an individual or group undergoes ideological and behavioral transformations that result in the rejection of democratic values and perhaps the use of violence, or an escalation in violence, to attain political objectives (Ashour, 2009). Ben-Zur and Zeidner (2009) report that from 1968 to 2004, there were 19,828 acts of terrorism and political violence globally, leading to 25,408 fatalities and 61,160 injuries. Cronin (2002, 2003) notes that while the frequency of attacks decreased in the 1990s, the average fatalities per incident rose. In the year 1991 there were 102 deaths in 565 acts of terrorism, whereas a total of 741 people were killed in 274 attacks in the year 1998.

The rivalry between Al Qaeda and Islamic State affiliates has exacerbated strife in the Horn of Africa, where Al Qaeda-aligned al-Shabaab and the Islamic State in Somalia (ISS) compete for dominance as the preeminent jihadist organization in the region since 2015, culminating in a declaration of war against each other in late 2018. This conflict has considerable ramifications for civilian security nationwide, particularly if the violence extends beyond the sparsely populated Puntland region to metropolitan centers (Weiss, 2019). This finding in Africa indicates that violence against civilians has escalated when competing groups engage in direct conflict, aligns with the results of Wood and Kathman (2015), which elucidate the reasons for the Al Qaeda-Islamic State rivalry and its probable continuation, to exacerbate the civilian death toll across the continent. As per GTI (2022), fatalities due to terrorism decreased by nine percent to 6,701, representing a 38 percent reduction from its apex in 2015. The decrease in

fatalities corresponded with a decline in incidences, as attacks fell by about 28 percent from 5,463 in 2021 to 3,955 in 2022.

The Aon Terrorism and Political Violence Risk Maps (2019) state that there have been fewer terrorist attacks in North America and Europe that were inspired by Islamist extremism and more assaults that were driven by national extremist ideas. The mosque killings in Christchurch, New Zealand, in March 2019, and the Easter bombings in Sri Lanka the same year show that extremist organizations are seeking to kill people and make tensions worse within countries. The number of fatalities linked to terrorism has similarly gone lower by 52% from 2014, from 33,555 to 15,952. But terrorism is still a menace to global security, with more than one fatality reported in 71 countries since 2002. Deaths in Europe similarly decreased by 70%, and Western Europe had the fewest instances since 2012 (GTI, 2019).

Although there has been a general decline in the prevalence of terrorism globally, it continues to pose a substantial and serious issue in a number of countries. In 2019, sixty-three nations reported a minimum of one fatality associated with terrorist attacks, while seventeen nations documented in over of 100 fatalities due to terrorism. However, only Afghanistan and Nigeria had over 1,000 fatalities, and both countries saw significant reductions in fatalities in 2019 (GTI, 2020). The author further notes that in 2019, fatalities due to terrorism decreased for the fifth consecutive year, following a high in 2014. The overall mortality rate decreased by 15.5 percent to 13,826. The decline in fatalities corresponded with a decrease in the effects of terrorism, as 103 nations recorded an improvement in their GTI score, in contrast to 35 that saw a decline. Afghanistan had the most significant decline in terrorism-related fatalities, with an overall reduction of 1,654 fatalities in 2018, representing a 22.4 percent decline from the preceding year. Afghanistan is the country most impacted by terrorism, having surpassed Iraq in 2018.

The Institute of Economics and Peace (2018) asserts that following the increase in terrorist-related fatalities in 2014, the overall death toll from terrorism decreased by 27 percent between 2016 and 2017, with the most significant reductions observed in Iraq and Syria. This indicates the heightened global counter-terrorism initiatives following the escalation of violence in 2013. In 2017, Afghanistan saw the greatest fatalities due to terrorism, whilst Angola and Spain exhibited the most significant decline in their Global

Terrorism Index scores. In 2017, Somalia and Egypt had the most significant increases in fatalities due to terrorism. In Somalia, Al-Shabaab perpetrated the most devastating terrorist incident in 2017, when a truck bomb exploded outside a hotel, resulting in 587 fatalities. In 2017, Egypt experienced the second most significant terrorist incident when the Islamic State's Sinai Province attacked the al-Rawda mosque, resulting in 311 fatalities and 122 injuries.

It was reported that Nigeria saw the second highest decrease in the number of deaths caused by terrorism in 2019, with the figure decreasing from 2,043 to 1,245, representing a reduction of 39.1 percent. Despite the fact that there was a little rise in the number of deaths that were associated with Boko Haram, the most active terrorist organization in the country, this reduction was successfully achieved. At their highest point in 2014, the number of deaths in Nigeria that may be attributed to terrorist acts has decreased by 83%.

As the intensity of terrorist activity in South Asia and the Middle East continues to decrease, new terrorist threats are beginning to emerge in these regions. It is the proliferation of ISIL affiliate organizations in sub-Saharan Africa that stands out as the most notable of these patterns (GTI, 2020). In 2019, sub-Saharan Africa was the location of forty-one percent of all assaults associated to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). This highlights the growing trend of ISIL-related attacks away from the Middle East. Additionally, the author notes that seven of the ten nations that have had the greatest rises in the number of deaths are located in sub-Saharan Africa. These countries include Burkina Faso, Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mali, Niger, Cameroon, and Tanzania. In addition to being confronted with a variety of ecological dangers, these nations are among those that are experiencing the fastest rates of population expansion and are experiencing a lack of societal resilience. In addition, Burkina Faso was the nation that saw the greatest overall rise in the number of deaths that were attributed to terrorist acts. The number of persons who were murdered had increased from 86 in 2018 to 593 in 2019.

The Sahel region in sub-Saharan Africa is now the most dangerous location for terrorists. In 2022, fatalities due to terrorism in the Sahel exceeded those in South Asia and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) combined. In 2022, deaths in the Sahel accounted for 43% of global mortality, a substantial rise from 1% in 2007. Burkina Faso and Mali are notably concerning, since they represented 73% of all terrorist fatalities in

the Sahel in 2022 and 52% of all terrorism-related deaths in sub-Saharan Africa. In both nations, terrorism rose significantly. In Burkina Faso, the number of deaths rose by 50% to 1,135, while in Mali, it rose by 56% to 944. The causes of terrorism in the Sahel region are complicated and systemic. They include detrimental utilization of water, inadequate food, ethnic division, a rapid increase in population, external influence, geopolitical competition, pastoral disputes, the emergence of transnational Salafi-Islam doctrine, and ineffective governance (Debrah, 2021).

Africa Centre for Strategic Studies (2022) also noted that about 95 percent of the increase in militant Islamist violence on the continent since 2019 came the western Sahel region. The authors further posit that in 2022, militant Islamist violence in Somalia decreased by 33 percent in the Lake Chad Basin and by 23 percent in North Africa. In 2022, the documented 6,255 violent incidents signify a 21-percent rise compared to the preceding year. This approximates the 18-percent average annual growth seen in the continent over the previous decade (ACSS, 2022). The quantity of nations documenting a terrorist incident rose from 58 to 66, as per GTI (2025). This negates over ten years of progress, with 45 nations declining and 34 advancing. The four most lethal terrorist organizations escalated their acts of violence in 2024, resulting in an 11 percent increase in deaths. Lone wolf attacks predominate in Western nations, constituting 93 percent of fatal incidents over the past five years.

### **2.3 East Africa Trend and Status**

The growth and pathways towards violent extremism in East Africa region appear to be conditioned by poor socioeconomic factors. The Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) emphasizes that conflicts and trust deficits among regional states, ethnic tensions within states, poverty, unemployment, recurrent natural disasters, inadequate systems that fail to uphold the rule of law and human rights, and a general deficiency in state capacity to provide effective governance are among the numerous factors that enable terrorists in the Eastern African region to recruit, finance, operate, and disseminate their violent ideology. The high unemployment rate, particularly among young people, and how it affects national and regional efforts to fight terrorism. It was noted that not having the fundamental things needed to live and losing a sense of purpose might lead people to terrorism. The CTITF (2011) also said that terrorists have used economic problems to get in touch with groups that are likely to get radicalized and join

them. If we want to stop terrorism, giving people job opportunities should be a top focus at both the national and regional levels. Policies that promote social justice should also be given special attention to help cultures that are economically disadvantaged.

Kimunguyi (2012) observed that Islamist groups in East Africa take advantage of socioeconomic grievances to advance their violent extremism agenda. The possible causes of radicalisation and violent extremism are complex and unique across regions and countries. In the year 1998, nearly simultaneous explosions in two East African cities attributed to Al Qaeda group, one located at the United States Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, the other at the United States Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya occurred and over 200 people were killed. Other terror attacks have occurred in the year 2012 in Tanzania; however, they have been relatively unsophisticated, entailing a rise in arson incidents and the deployment of improvised bombs, acid attacks and handmade guns targeting poorly protected targets and not resulting in mass casualties (LeSage, 2014). According to Kambere (2011) bombing terror attacks have also occurred in Uganda during the 2010 FIFA World Cup Finals where fifteen people died. The assault was seen as retribution by Al Shabaab for the deployment of Ugandan military in Somalia. A second attack occurred in Nakawa, Uganda.

The East African region has, over the years, increasingly been susceptible to radicalization. The increase in radicalization in the region is attributed to a number of factors chief among them being decades of conflicts. This has resulted in cross-border instability among countries in the region. At the same time, economic marginalisation and ethnic profiling add fuel to the radicalisation processes. Specifically, the radicalisation challenges emanating from Somalia as a result of economic and political exclusion are of special concern to the East African region. The International Peace Support Training Centre (2015), observes that conflict and instability in Somalia directly impact on neighbouring countries, paving the way to the vulnerability of youths to radicalisation and violent extremism. Members of a certain ethnic or religious group might perceive themselves as marginalised, prompting them to safeguard their own groupings, as noted by Botha (2014). This perception of marginalisation flourishes in contexts where a feeling of national identity is absent, as noted by Botha (2013). The Global Terrorism Index (2020) reveals that terrorism-related fatalities in Somalia fell to their lowest level since 2013, with an 11.9 percent reduction to 569 deaths compared to the previous year. Terrorism-related occurrences decreased by 16 percent, with 239 recorded attacks in 2019.

The GTI (2020) reports that Al-Shabaab was responsible for 88 percent of the fatalities in 2019, amounting to 503 deaths. Jabha East Africa was the only other operational terrorist organization in Somalia, claiming responsibility for twelve fatalities in 2019. The group pledged loyalty to ISIL in 2016 and has since executed minor strikes, leading to 63 fatalities.

International Peace Support Training Centre (2015) point out that violent extremists in the region want to establish self-recruitment frameworks through the internet. The Internet enables the establishment of virtual communities and forums for education, socializing, communication, and the organization of collaborative activities. Conway (2012) asserts that the internet, especially the social media, facilitates search and access to information which may immerse users into online extremist settings. This creates and increases the possibility of users becoming involved in both online and offline extremist groups or movements. Menkhaus (2014) further notes that the Al-Shabaab effectively use the internet and social media channels for recruitment and fund raising internationally.

Africa Centre for Strategic Studies (2012) identify that radicalization in East Africa also results from demographic growth. The region has recorded phenomenal population growth, establishing it as the area with the largest population of youth globally, a trend anticipated to continue in the future. In spite of the ideological differences among extremist groups in the region, they use similar strategies to enlist youths into their ranks. The authors further posit that radical organisations understand and exploit a combination of different opportunities to recruit vulnerable young people. Political conditions, social and economic reasons, and personal traits make young people in East Africa easy to recruit. The economic, social, and political situations in Eastern Africa are what make young people radicalize. The main problems in this circumstance are poorly decentralized development plans and governance obstacles. It is common for essential services, infrastructure and support to be provided by social networks or religious and political groups in the region. This breeds a sense of government negligence in delivering services and support to communities what are plagued by elevated levels of sustained and intense intra-and inter-state conflicts and poverty. Such disputes lead to instability, poverty, unemployment, and political isolation, rendering the young susceptible to radicalization (Botha & Abdile, 2014; Hellsten, 2016). Unemployment has been observed in Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Sudan. The radicalization of young

individuals is never attributable only to political, religious, or economic ideologies; rather, it is often influenced by social factors, including aspirations, convictions, and perceived possibilities and limitations (Pauwels *et al.*, 2014).

Kenya has a 700-kilometre border with Somalia and has been significantly Kenya has a 700-kilometre border with Somalia and has been profoundly affected by the growing influence of Al-Shabaab. Operation Linda Nchi was established in 2011 due to the abduction of foreign tourists from coastal resorts and the kidnapping of relief workers from the Dadaab Refugee Camp. Kenya joined by the Somali Armed Forces to conduct and coordinate action against Al-Shabaab in southern Somalia. Kenyan troops remained in Somalia under the umbrella of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) a regional peace assistance initiative with 22,000 soldiers from six African nations (Aljazeera, 2011). The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (2016) asserts that with the beginning of Operation Linda Nchi, the annual incidence of Al-Shabaab attacks in Kenya has increased. In 2011, thirty-two assaults were documented. This rose to 84 in 2014. The most lethal attacks by Al-Shabaab in Kenya so far are the 2013 assault on Nairobi's Westgate Mall, resulting in 67 fatalities, and the 2015 killing at Garissa University College, which claimed 148 lives. In response to increasing concerns over extremist recruiting within its territory, the Kenyan Government has implemented various internal security measures that have shown varied outcomes. Operation Usalama Watch, initiated in April 2014, ostensibly intended at expelling al-Shabaab affiliates and foreign elements, was somewhat effective in disrupting and deterring terrorism. The security operation resulted in the mass arrest, deportation, or relocation of predominantly Somali refugees in multiple urban centers in Kenya, provoking condemnation from international human rights organizations that reported allegations of extensive arbitrary arrests, profiling, harassment, extortion, and extrajudicial killings (Njau, 2021). The consequent fear and animosity against security personnel have compromised intelligence-gathering efforts and may have benefited Al-Shabaab recruits (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

Strategies including military or law enforcement actions against entities classified as violent extremist have proved to be ineffective or counterproductive (Van Metre *et al.*, 2023). The Kenyan government was implicated in severe violations of fundamental human rights and the deterioration of the rule of law (International Commission of Jurists, 2016). The government has faced criticism for exacerbating the dangers of

radicalization through its counter-terrorism policy and for the discriminatory treatment and profiling of Somalis and Muslims as distinct and threatening. It is essential to tackle the underlying causes of violent extremism and to balance security and non-security measures in combating radicalization within the nation.

The International Crisis Group (2012) indicates that Somalia's increasing religious radicalism is perceived to be extending into Kenya, where a significant Somali population resides. Al-Shabaab has established an invisible transnational presence and support network among communities in the North East, Nairobi, and coastal regions. They aim to radicalize and enlist young individuals from these areas, often using longstanding grievances against the government. The authors further point out other factors that have led to the success of the Al-Shabaab mission in Kenya which include a troubled history of the Kenyan Somalis, government incompetence and negligence, lack of Kenyan citizenship and rights by the Somalis, Islamism and radicalisation and counter- terrorism operations.

Amble and Meleagrou-Hitchens (2014) argue that Al-Shabaab has experienced differing levels of success in its regional recruiting campaigns. The writers assert that the organization has achieved success in nations such as Kenya, but has encountered difficulties in Somaliland. The techniques and tactics used by Al-Shabaab for effective recruiting differ according to geographical context and intrinsic reasons. Muslims in Kenya have faced political marginalization, leading to a sense of being viewed as second-class citizens (Anderson & McKnight, 2014; Botha, 2013). The absence of investigations into violence that appears to be state-orchestrated exacerbates this issue. In addition, widespread suspicion of the government among Muslims complicates efforts to address extremism. Young Muslims see the rising prejudice they face as indicative of broader systemic discrimination against Muslims globally (Botha, 2013; Mwakimako & Willis, 2014).

Besides recruiting members of Kenya's Somali and Somalis in the diaspora, the Al-Shabaab recruits native Kenyan Muslims to conduct attacks inside their own nation and to participate in Al-Shabaab's campaign against AMISOM (Amble & Meleagrou- Hitchens, 2014). To some extent the Kenyan Muslims claim that they accede to the terror group purely for ideological objectives, having been entangled and influenced by Al-Shabaab's recruiting network in Kenya. Others are lured to join for financial reasons and, to some extent, some are forced against their will to join the group (Meleagrou-Hitchens, 2014).

Botha and Abdile (2014) ascribe recruitment to extremism to the availability of substantial financial incentives for prospective members. The recruitment based on clans and the instability in Somalia, together with the significance of clan politics, have exacerbated tensions. Al-Shabaab has successfully established a presence inside many clans. A large number of Al-Shabaab recruits from Somalia have been attracted to the organization due to clan allegiance or other regional influences, notably the 2006 Ethiopian invasion of Somalia, which exacerbated enduring clan tensions. Botha and Abdile (2014) emphasize that Al-Shabaab use clan and familial networks to enlist informants, often including close relatives, acquaintances, and family members of the targeted persons.

The Global Terrorism Index (2022) reports that terrorism-related deaths in Kenya attributed Al-Shabaab experienced a reduction of 14 percent in 2021. The current figure represents the least recorded number of Al-Shabaab fatalities in Kenya since 2012. A significant number of deaths connected to terrorism in 2021 occurred. Seventeen assaults were documented in the Mandera area of Kenya in 2021. Subsequently, Wajir and Lamu counties reported a total of 18 fatalities. The most lethal assault in Kenya in 2021 occurred in Lamu County, when a roadside explosive claimed the lives of 15 soldiers as it detonated against their vehicle (Erjok, 2023). These trends in the East African region show that violent extremism is still a threat in the region thus the aim of the research to study the university students' perceived influence of selected family and internet access factors on vulnerability to radicalisation in Kenya.

#### **2.4 Influence of Selected Family Factors on Vulnerability to Radicalisation**

The first socializing agent for a child is the family because of the direct contact members have with the child. The family is the main structure that instills a system of principles, traditions, social position, and beliefs in children. A person's familial relationships may serve as a catalyst for the pursuit of identification and belonging beyond the family unit, potentially leading to the formation of a broader collective identity, which might culminate in radicalization (UNDP, 2017). The family significantly influences the child's psychological and social development. Numerous researches indicate that parents and parenting significantly impact youth radicalization (Duriez *et al.*, 2009). There is no definitive explanation about the ways in which parents impact radicalization. Furthermore, parents facilitate their children's development of

prosocial moral internalization through disciplinary interactions (Hoffman, 2000). The author further posits that in addition to discipline encounters, parents may exemplify moral conduct and provide further positive socialization reinforcement, such as commending the child for virtuous actions or granting approval based on the child's commendable behaviour. The

the lack of support, oversight, harsh punishment, inconsistent parenting, and delinquent family members, and familial issues would increase the likelihood of youth exhibiting inappropriate behavior (Hoeve *et al.*, 2008). In order to unearth the assertion that poor parenting influence vulnerability to radicalization this study seeks to examine the extent to which parents influence their children's radicalization process directly or indirectly in the selected universities in Kenya.

The prevalence of Western extremist organizations and individuals in terrorist activities in the UK and USA, combined with their higher education backgrounds, suggests that universities serve as a critical nexus, catalyst, or origin of radicalisation (Adam, 2010). In Saudi Arabia, the majority of incarcerated violent extremists have a history of personal and individual issues, including insufficient parental care attributed to the prevalent polygamous system. This also engenders additional issues concerning inheritance, financial settlements, jealousy, planned marriages, and family and interpersonal relationships (El-Said & Harrigan, 2018). Cachalia *et al.* (2016) assert that childhood socialization and lifelong learning influence people's decisions throughout their lifetimes. This encompasses perspectives on society, politics, religion, and interpersonal relationships. These perspectives are often dynamic, evolving throughout time. The authors assert that specific risk factors may elavate an individual's vulnerability to radicalization. These elements may function at individual, familial, societal, and macro levels, including emotional vulnerabilities such as anger or alienation, discontent with political or socioeconomic conditions, and the subjective justification of violence. Cachalia *et al.* (2016) furthermore observe that certain resilience variables fortify people against embracing pro-violence ideologies or engaging in violent behaviors. Examples of this include strong family structures, financial stability, and solid societal cohesiveness. These resilient factors can be developed though counselling vulnerable populations thus the importance of this study.

While emerging adults endeavor to cultivate their identity independently of their parents (Arnett, 2014), it is possible that parents may impact the progression of this

transition into adulthood thus avoid influence into radicalisation. However, Smith *et al.* (2011) observed that emerging individuals often lack moral development due to parental reluctance to engage in discussions on contentious moral topics. Sieckelinck, Kaulingfreks, and De Winter (2015) conducted research in the United Kingdom, Denmark, and the Netherlands, revealing that family members significantly influence the radicalization and de-radicalisation processes of adolescents and young people. The study findings indicated that radicalisation is influenced by the environment within the family and family members' responses during the process of radicalisation. The study further noted that association with radical groups is often motivated by the need of individual instant answers to the identity crisis questions of adolescents and young adults that parents respond to. At the same time, the youths also seek a feeling of kinship as a replacement for strained familial relationships when divorce or separation occurs. Thus, it is imperative for this study to investigate influence of families in the process of student radicalisation in university.

Kerr and Stattin (2009) observed that parents often withdraw when their teenager exhibits troublesome behavior. The authors assert that instead of intensifying their supervision of the child upon seeing inappropriate conduct, parents often granted the child more autonomy

therefore, making them more vulnerable to radicalisation. Tahiri and Grossman (2013) postulates that young people can be radicalised within their own families because of political and religious grievances, beliefs, and attitudes have been passed on from one generation to another. The young people in such families often encountered significant violence or adversity in their lives which have to be overcome. The authors further note that children also inherit a sense of vulnerability to aggression and frustration, coupled with a desire to take revenge on their family's intergenerational grievances. Thus, young people in such families are highly vulnerable to radicalisation.

According to Sikkens *et al.* (2017) parents' responses to extremist ideology often evolve as their children become radicalized. Upon seeing a child's fanaticism, they would dismiss or overlook his or her convictions. The parental reaction to radicalization might be challenging because of differing parenting styles. Consequently, there seems to be a level of parental ambiguity about the management of a child's radicalization (Van San *et al.*, 2013). Since the risks and challenges associated with violent extremism and terrorism continue to grow and transform, families should be in the front-line in

challenging violent extremism. Grossman (2015) posit that families provide a vital function in influencing and shaping attitudes and responses of the young people to other people and the world. Families are important in shaping the independence and autonomy of the young people. Grossman further explains that families provide fundamental components that strengthen communal resilience against violent extremism. The resilience of individuals and communities against violent extremism is closely associated with the prevention and resistance to radicalization and extremist ideology among the young people. Families are important in detecting early signs and behaviour of radicals among its members. Therefore, it is important to identify early signs and behaviour of radicals for preventative measure for radicalisation. The above assertion, however, does not to show the effects of educating families on how to identify early signs and behaviour of radicals which can be done through counselling and is an important preventative measure for radicalisation.

The presence of close family members, friends, and relatives who are members of extremist groups is also an important driver of radicalization. A study conducted in South East Asia by Atran (2008) found that around twenty percent of individuals inside the terrorist networks were closely related, while seventy percent were acquaintances. Furthermore, the findings of the study indicated that nearly two-thirds of the members joined the extremist groups after being influenced by either friends or family members. Atran (2008) concluded by noting that the influence of close relationship is powerful in ensuring a higher degree of loyalty and trust among extremists and also plays an important role in assisting the network to remain connected. Families may impart harmful influence to the young people by also exposing them to online and offline violent extremist rhetoric and propaganda. King *et al.* (2011) asserts that the normative support offered by families significantly contributes to the perpetuation of violence. Harris-Hogan's (2012)

results indicate that familial ties have significantly influenced the transmission of ideology and the recruitment and retention of radicals within the network in Australia. Numerous external variables affect people' decisions about engagement in violence; nevertheless, a significant determinant for membership in the Australian jihadist network is the impact of familial and intimate ties. Familial and social networks have been essential in deterring more people from affiliating with violent extremist organizations and persuading existing members to abandon terrorism, both in Australia and

internationally (Bjorgo & Horgan, 2009).

The youth sometimes lack support from their parents as they develop their religious and cultural identity. Parents often lack the capacity to address the 'why' questions about religious regulations and restrictions (King, 2008). Parents may lack the capacity to assist their children in the formation of religious meaning and identity, thereby contributing to radicalization (Wessels & Dijkman, 2012). Research conducted on radicalized young people indicates that parents sometimes have the same ideologies as their children. However, they often choose to minimize or disregard the extreme behaviors shown by their children (Van Bergen & Pels, 2013). The parental inability to address polarization, stigmatization, and conflict suggests that they are often oblivious to the consequences of their own stance. Parental opposition may both enhance and diminish the incentive to engage actively with an extremist organization (Van der Valk & Wagenaar, 2010). Parental emotional responses may catalyze more radicalization, particularly in the context of violence. The authors assert that parental interaction may raise children's understanding of the negative repercussions of their behavior. Consequently, parents might encourage their children to leave the extreme group (Van der Valk & Wagenaar, 2010).

According to Maclean (2013) people who are drawn to radical groups wish to be decisive as well as do something momentous. On the other hand, some people get involved in radical groups so as to project the perceived harm or injustice perpetrated against them on the society. Radicalization refers to the difficulties associated with the transition from adolescence to adulthood. A multitude of teenagers seek existential significance and ask questions about their role and where they belong and what matters to them most. Sieckelinck *et al.* (2015) argues that radical groups provide the youths with what the family or society fails to provide. Such needs include youth's sense of identity and belonging, security, and clear purpose. Most of the vulnerable individuals appear to be those who struggle in some way to find an identity, meaningful or significant feeling or want to merge the secular and religious needs.

The radicalisation process varies for every individual and may occur over a prolonged duration or over a short time span. Thus, Mowat (2016) observes that individuals from different backgrounds can be drawn to radicalisation at any age. Individuals can be exposed to extremist messages through different means. These may include the impact of family members, peers, and direct engagement with extremist

organizations or the internet and the media. Mowat (2016) and Grossman (2013) further highlights that individual vulnerability can also expose individuals to radicalisation. A person may experience feelings of loneliness, diminished self-esteem, or dissociation from current social circles.

These may make the individual to be involved in a new or distinct cohort of acquaintances seeking elucidation of personal identity, spirituality, and a sense of belonging. Other personal issues that can push an individual to a radical group is the desire for adventure and excitement to achieve the unmet aspirations (Pfundmair *et al.*, 2024). The author further highlights that other push factors like the perception of injustice, feeling of failure and a feeling of civil rejection, the experience of poverty and the disadvantage of social exclusion is also a driver of radicalisation.

Terrorist groups may provide a sense of security to those vulnerable to radicalisation by subjugating individuality to collective identity. A protective cocoon is formed that provides refuge from a perceived antagonistic environment (Marsella, 2003). Observations about terrorist recruitment suggest that several people are driven to join due to a need for solidarity with family, friends, or acquaintances already affiliated with radical organizations (Della Porta, 1995). For those who ultimately engage in actual terrorism, the initial enticement often lies in the collective or community of fervent radical adherents, rather than with a theoretical ideology or acts of violence (Crenshaw, 1988).

Sieckelinck *et al.* (2015) further explains that the youth experience three journeys in their search for identity. Firstly, the youth can be pushed away by family or neighborhood problems or lack an experience of emotional support. Therefore, an individual may be compelled towards a substitute family or authority embodying ideas that seem to provide resolutions to the conflict and uncertainty. The de-radicalization of these young people starts when they have been subjected to hostility, negativity, and prevalent violence among such groups. Secondly, the young may also be attracted to the compelling allure of extreme groups. Being raised in a nurturing, secure, and intellectually ambitious home environment may elicit a profound emotional reaction to injustice in people. Young individuals want profundity, significance, and a certain objective in life. As the family is unable to fulfill certain demands, many individuals detach and seek a new path within the radical movement. The de-radicalization of these youths is often instigated by ennui or a sudden realization of the extreme organization's

duplicity. Thirdly, individuals with fervent personalities may be attracted to unique and difficult challenges of many kinds. When familial and societal structures fail to meet their aspirations, individuals may turn to extreme organizations for assistance. Such people are recognized for their ability to recall religious or ideological texts verbatim. Ultimately, the de-radicalization of these youths starts with their discontent over the oversimplified nature of extremist ideologies.

Koehler (2013) in a study of 242 European extremists noted that, the intimate social environment of family is the most probable setting to identify the onset of violent extremism. For early prevention and intervention work, it is essential to emphasize the family's participation in the radicalization process and counter-terrorism efforts. The author contends that it is essential to enhance the family unit as a countermeasure against radicalization, rather than only using it as a source of information and intelligence for authorities. Family counselling programs as further indicated by the author are regarded as extremely successful in engaging a significant segment of the pertinent vulnerable groups and addressing the issue of radicalization from a new and innovative perspective. This is a gap the researcher seeks to address in the Kenyan situation.

#### **2.4.1 Influence of Family Parenting Styles on Radicalisation**

According to Baumrind (1968) there are three main parenting styles that the study considered; permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian. A fourth style, neglectful, was later added (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Each parenting style has distinct influences on children's behavior and may be delineated by certain features, along with varying levels of responsiveness i.e., the degree to which parents demonstrate warmth and sensitivity to their children's needs and demandingness, which is the extent of authority parents have over their children in order to alter how they behave (Cohrdes & Göbel, 2022).

Murray (2013) considered parents' response in critical situations as when children violate the law. Enhancing communication between parents and children may enable parents to impact the de-radicalization process, providing de-radicalized youngsters with a secure domestic environment to which one may return (Gielen, 2015). However, according to Okigbo (2015) parents tend to modify their relationships as adolescents mature to facilitate more autonomous decision-making. Consequently, adolescents report lower levels of parental youth relationships compared to younger adolescents. Parental neglect throughout infancy results in the formation of an undesirable self-image and moral framework, thereby leading individuals to immerse themselves in a group, so

allowing a robust group identity to replace the compromised self-identity (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2015).

In the indulgent or permissive parenting style, parents endorse and validate their children's inclinations, wants, and behaviors. The child is involved in discussions about family regulations. There are few expectations about domestic obligations and conduct. Children are let take charge of their activities and there is no pressure to conform to external norms (Baumrind, 1968). The parent use reason rather than authority to achieve their desires. Children reared under this parenting style often have inadequate academic achievement, engage in substance abuse, and display a general lack of discipline. Children view the parent as a friend and not someone responsible for shaping their behaviour. Children raised in such a setting are vulnerable to radicalisation because they may be deviant. At the same time, the children may be rebellious since they are not used to being controlled and guided by parents or the law.

According to Baumrind (1968) authoritarian parents attempt to shape and regulate their children's behaviors through ultimate authority. Parents direct and control the child's activity in a given way. The parent emphasizes compliance, discipline, and inflexibility.

These parents instill and underscore respect for authority, diligence, and established frameworks. The parent's decision is conclusive, irrespective of the child's own convictions. The parent establishes unequivocal behavior rules, discussions are impermissible, and the parent's word is authoritative. Authoritarian parents impose elevated behavioral and performance expectations and regulations on their children, enforcing them with stringent or severe punishment. The parents exhibit little acceptance of their children and provide insufficient support. These may impede the growth of their child's autonomy due to their typically excessive control. These children perform well and interact positively in educational settings, and are unlikely to exhibit anti-social behaviors. Nevertheless, they may exhibit anxiety and withdrawal or possess discontented temperaments. They may display hostility and manifest sentiments of defeat. These behaviors may render children susceptible to radicalization.

According to Bergen and Pels (2013) authoritarian parenting and insufficient attentiveness are a risk factor for radicalization. Frequently, there exists a communication gap and a perceived deficiency of emotional support from the family regarding the children's quest for religious identity and sense of purpose. Parents with

lower educational attainment see interactive contact with their children from an early age as less relevant (Pels *et al.*, 2009). Studies on right-wing extremism indicate that adolescents with parents who advocate an authoritarian and punitive parenting approach are more prone to cultivate a skeptical and negative disposition. This therefore elevates the probability of embracing radical perspectives (Bertelsmann, 2010).

Authoritative parents establish elevated behavioral and performance standards while also maintaining stringent expectations and boundaries for their children. They also provide support along with crucial help to the children. These parents often use logic as a method of control and attend to their children's concerns and suggestions. Authoritative parents judiciously guide their children through life. They promote collaboration, engage in reciprocal exchanges, and explain the rationale behind their actions. This parent prioritizes independence and structured adherence. Children with authoritative parents are permitted to pursue their interests while simultaneously being required to establish standards and adhere to rules and regulations. These parents are adversely involved with their children's life while also permitting the development of autonomy. According to Bloir (1997) the authoritative parenting style is the most favourable style. This style integrates the responsibilities of fostering and sustaining intimate and cordial connections while establishing necessary and enforceable structures and guideline. Authoritative parenting is associated with children demonstrating self-confidence, perseverance, social competence, academic achievement, and psychological development. These children not vulnerable to radicalisation.

The author further asserts that negligent parents often fail to provide acceptance, support, or consistency. They are often inaccessible to their children, disengaged in their lives, and neglect to establish or enforce norms or promote self-regulation. Uninvolved or rejecting parenting is characterized by a deficiency of affection and boundaries. This approach is seen as indifferent and fails to address the child's needs. There is a deficiency in emotional engagement and oversight of youngsters. Onuoha (2013) asserts that children with inadequate parenting are more susceptible to radical ideologies. The increasing prevalence of children without enough parental supervision is a sociocultural element that has intensified the problem of juvenile radicalization and violent extremism in Northern Nigeria. Many Nigerian children are neglected, poor, malnourished, illiterate, live in filth, and suffer from the effects of child labor. Millions of school-aged children in Nigeria, particularly in the north, are not in school. This makes the nation

more illiterate and makes them easier for extremist organizations to manipulate. Also, an increasing number of poor people in Northern Nigeria has led to more and more children living on the streets. Most of these children live in terrible conditions, wandering the streets and asking for money or selling items. For example, Borno and Yobe states have had the worst occurrences of violent extremism, whereas Gombe and Sokoto states are more peaceful because of differences in parenting (Onuoha, 2013). Furthermore, Alechenu (2013) observes that poverty, the high number of orphaned children or children coming from broken families is vulnerable to extremist ideology.

Becker *et al.* (2022) examined the familial dynamics involved throughout the radicalization process. He focused on the interactions between children who supported extreme-right views and their parents. The authors delineated four kinds of interaction within "rightwing families": the protected family, the threatened family, the settled family, and the abandoned family. In a Protective Family, the parents would participate in meaningful discussions with their children regarding their ideology, while consistently providing support. In a Threatened Family, the parents and their child engage in discussions regarding politics and ideology; nevertheless, the communication is predominantly unilateral, with the child attempting to persuade the parent to adopt his views. The authors further posit that in the Settling Family, the parent partially endorses the child's right-wing ideology and hence refrains from intervening. The parents and child do not engage in serious discussions on politics and ideology; however, the parents may attempt to mitigate ideological expression when conservative conduct becomes excessively evident. In Abandoning Families, political and ideological matters remain unaddressed; parental reactions can be characterized as apathetic, as parents struggle to manage their children's behavior.

Sikkens *et al.* (2017) examined parental responses to radicalization. Parents' responses to extremist ideology frequently evolved as their children grew radicalized. Initially, parents were pleased by their child's newfound or rekindled interest in religion or politics; however, upon observing their child's fanaticism, they would ignore or disregard his or her convictions. Moreover, parental reactions to radicalization occasionally diverged from their typical parenting style. Parents probably have difficulty to manage a child's endorsement of extreme ideologies or the gradual process of radicalization, indicating a level of uncertainty regarding how to address the potential radicalization of their child (Pels and De Ruyter 2011; Slotman and Tillie 2006; Van

San *et al.* 2010, 2013).

#### **2.4.2. Influence of Family Religious Affiliation in the Process of Radicalisation**

According to Mandaville and Nozell (2017), focus on the specific concentrate on the particular function that religion might have in countering violent extremism is very important. Religion may serve as a foundation for social identity and cohesion, as well as facilitate mobilisation. The authors further posit that this is an exceptionally potent tool when violent extremist organizations seek to attract marginalized or disenchanted youth in contexts where they have been hindered from effectively adopting alternative identities such as citizenship, ethnic-national ties, or professional standing. Religion may sometimes validate radical actions, including violence. When religion functions as a basis for identity and cohesion in the lack of other affiliations. Consequently, it is essential to examine the impact of familial religious membership on the process of radicalization. The government should engage with religion and religious figures in countering violent extremism (CVE). They need to investigate the problems associated with moderate religious approaches and the identification of reputable religious figures as collaborators in Countering Violent Extremism (CVE).

Religious and community leaders play an important part in influencing community standards and attitudes. Lack of accreditation for religious leaders and educators as well as the absence of standardized norms or requirement to becoming a religious leader affect the congregations. In some circumstances, youth may not be knowledgeable or may not have the motivation or expertise to conduct their research, compare and substantiate what the religious leader is saying about religious, economic or social issues. Instead, they merely accept whatever is said out of respect for the religious leader (Sieckelinck *et al.*, 2015).

Collier (2015) asserts that the danger posed by radical Islam has recently shown in Mali, the Central African Republic, Kenya, and Nigeria. In Nigeria and Kenya, the threat has manifested in the form of terrorism that, while not endangering the nations themselves, significantly undermines their worldwide reputations. The author further observes that this is mostly attributable to the superior military capabilities of Nigeria and Kenya. Nevertheless, in many nations, the security forces are insufficient for the more challenging responsibility of averting the rise of terrorism. Religion-driven terrorism is undoubtedly one of the most dangerous form of terrorism today. While

Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, and other faiths have produced various types of extremism, Islamic organizations have emerged as the most prominent (Zulman, 2017). Extremists have used religion and its doctrines to rationalize their conduct. The proliferation of radicalization in Africa might be seen as a direct consequence of socio-political upheaval stemming from adverse socio-economic circumstances that have afflicted the continent since independence.

According to Ackerman (2014) in East Africa, the emergence of radical Islamic organizations resulted from social upheaval among the Muslim minority, who faced persecution and marginalization. The lack of understanding of authentic religious teachings is a primary catalyst in youth radicalization across all the states in Northern Nigeria (Onuoha, 2014). It is generally agreed on that the most significant element that contributes to the acceptance of radical religious ideas, particularly among younger generations, is a lack of familiarity with the teachings of many religions. In the very recent times in Nigeria, there have been three problematic developments in the practice of religion that are interconnected and harmful. It is possible that the lack of profound understanding of the real religious teaching is not linked to these trends. These trends are the proliferation of religious sects and independent preachers and the growing dependence on preachers instead of the text or scriptures. Onuoha (2014) further asserts that the absence of profound understanding of authentic religious doctrine renders young individuals susceptible to recruitment and radicalization by independent preachers, extreme factions, and religious ideologues. In Kenya an example a local religious extremist jihadi preacher is the late Aboud Rogo while Ayman al-Zawahiri is one of the Muslim global jihadi ideologue leaders.

#### **2.4.3 Influence of Family Socio-Economic Status in the Process of Radicalisation**

According to Conger, *et al.* (1994) low socioeconomic status is characterized by significant economic strain, whereby a family is unable to fulfill its basic necessities, often defaults on obligations, and must reduce daily expenditures to align with available resources. Silke (2008) further defines low social-economic status as including destitution, inadequate housing in detrimental environments, health issues, and an uncertain future. Krueger and Maleckova (2003) contend that economic conditions may play a crucial role, since it is often the more affluent individuals in impoverished nations that are drawn to terrorism. Fair and Shepherd's (2006) research on the impact of

affluence on the populations of 14 African and South Asian nations with a Muslim majority or significant Muslim minority did not reveal poverty as a catalyst for terrorism. Research on radicalisation and violent extremism in Australia highlight the cause as a result of difficult conditions especially poverty in urban centers because this results in feelings of powerlessness, despair, social detriment, and desperation. These factors need redressing in Australia (Markus, 2013).

According to Kavanagh (2011) in a thriving economy, highly educated individuals possess appealing alternatives to engaging in militant activities and are more inclined to abstain from such actions. This complicates the recruitment of highly educated individuals by terrorist organizations. Research in Palestine revealed that suicide bombers were often less impoverished than the overall community. Research among Palestinian suicide terrorists indicated that favorable economic situations resulted in a decreased recruitment of those with higher education levels. Benmelech *et al.* (2012) supporting the findings of Kavanagh (2011) mentioned. A survey by Krueger and Maleckova (2003) of 129 nations that had produced internationally active terrorists, established that increased involvement in terrorism is most strongly linked to a deficiency of democracy or civil liberties domestically, with little linkage to average national Gross Domestic Product. Thus, the economic status cannot be deemed a causative factor for all radicalism and terrorism, and there is little association with the average national income in the analysis of this study. This conclusion indicates that a significant trait of most democratic nations, namely the presence of civil freedoms, renders them less vulnerable to terrorism compared to those devoid of this characteristic.

According to Onuoha (2014), unemployment and poverty are socio-economic challenges that are not only intricately interconnected but glaringly manifested in Northern Nigeria. The Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported that unemployment rate in the nation averaged 14.6 percent from 2006 to 2011, peaking at 23.90 percent in December 2011. This came against favourable economic growth that was witnessed in the country in the same period. The NBS statistics further showed that millions of Nigerians lived in absolute poverty (Ojo, 2013; Vanguard, 2013). According to Onuoha (2018) the youths are disproportionately affected by unemployment and poverty. The combined challenges of unemployment and poverty undermine the moral and psychological resilience of many Nigerians, hindering their ability to adhere to the law. Consequently, a majority of young individuals have adopted crime as a means of

survival or are readily enlisted into violent criminal or terrorist organizations.

Onuoha (2014) contends that individuals in Northern Nigeria continue to experience marginalization regarding economic prospects, rendering them more susceptible to behaviors detrimental to peace and security. In light of the grave socio-economic circumstances, they seem to have no vested interest in the administration. The prospects for unemployed youngsters and street urchins seem grim, rendering them susceptible to exploitation for instigating social unrest, religious discord, and violent extremism. Furthermore, Onuoha (2012) notes that unemployment and poverty are not causative factors of youth radicalization; rather, it is deprivation, challenges, despair, and other adverse circumstances. These make youths to be highly vulnerable to manipulation by extremist ideologues. Komolafe (2012) contended that unemployment and poverty may not be the main factors involved in radicalism, but mass misery may be the epicenter of violent extremism. In addition, youths may engage in violent acts in order to access fundamental necessities and services which include food, education, healthcare, housing, and sanitation. Also, the lives of the poor and unemployed are usually characterized by uncertainty which extremist group prey on in advancing their agenda.

The large and dynamic youthful population in East Africa shapes the landscape of national and regional security. According to Botha and Abdile (2006), the region's population is one of the youngest in the world. At the same time, it is projected to increase significantly over the coming decades. For instance, approximately seventy percent of the population in Kenya is under the age of thirty and projections indicate that it will double by 2030. However, Kenya faces the challenge of feeding, housing, educating and planning for the future generations of young people. In Nigeria, Botha and Abdile (2006) indicated that youths in the region are more vulnerable to conflict and political violence than the older generation and, therefore, are more likely to join radical organizations. Therefore, it is evident that the socioeconomic status of a population drives youths towards joining radical groups.

Cachalia *et al.* (2016) note that educated and ambitious youth who lack prospects for advancement can increasingly get frustrated. The failure to recognize success over extended durations may lead to disappointment and diminishing trust in the government and its institutions. The authors contend that the psychological and social constraints associated with these situations may compel young individuals to pursue a sense of purpose through other avenues. Extremist organizations might exploit this feeling of

despair by presenting young people with the chance to engage in ostensibly honorable or commendable endeavors.

## **2.5 Influence of Selected Internet Access Factors on Vulnerability to Radicalisation**

According to Koomen and Van der Pligt (2016) the internet has provided an extensive range of information, views, and ideas. It provides straightforward methods to exclude undesirable or unpleasant content, so allowing the selection of information that aligns with one's own perspective. This has facilitated the ability of individuals and organizations to segregate themselves from alternative ideas and preferences. The authors further observe that the internet serves to satisfy a feeling of belonging for people or groups that see themselves as marginalized by the dominant social context.

Weimann (2009) posits that the internet serves as a tool for terrorists to recruit and radicalize the youth. UNESCO (2015) reported that the then Secretary-General of the UN articulated the organization's concern over the rise of foreign fighters joining terrorist organizations, confirming an estimated 70 percent increase in foreign terrorist combatants globally between mid-2014 and March 2015. As per the United Nations, estimates indicate that around 25,000 foreign nationals from more than 100 countries have aligned themselves with self-proclaimed ISIS and other extremist organizations. The United Nations further proposed in their Plan of Action to prevent extremism advocates, for more research on the correlation between violent extremists' use of the internet and social media and research on the factors that drive individuals into violent extremism.

Jones *et al.* (2009) observe that internet use among youths has surged significantly on a global scale during the last ten years. Approximately 93 percent of teens in the US actively used the internet by 2008. The internet usage has evolved in the recent years from a passive, individual-oriented and information-gathering process to a dynamic, socially-integrated and user-engaged environment where the youth interact, discuss, create, and share content. Facebook, for example, expanded its global reach by 168%, reaching an audience of 108.3 million users in 2008 (Nielsen Company, 2009).

The Microsoft Digital Advertising Solution (2022) also noted that seventy percent of those aged 14 to 24 years use social networking sites regularly. Similarly, about 80 percent of youth worldwide visit sites such as YouTube. The adolescents using the internet independently include 59%, with social media use mostly on Instagram (72%),

Tik Tok (62%), and YouTube (58%). The youths around the world are increasingly connecting with their peers using communication tools like instant messaging applications and social media platforms.

A study by GSMA Intelligence Consumers in Focus Survey (2022) states that, globally, over fifty percent of the global population now use mobile internet. By the end of 2021, 4.3 billion individuals were using mobile internet, representing 55% of the worldwide population, an increase from 31% in 2014. This equates to about 300 million individuals using the internet in the previous year. According to the European Union (2012), about 76 percent of European households have access to the internet. The European Union (2012) further notes that about 60 percent of the households use the internet daily, with 54 percent using it for essential services like banking. The widespread internet connectivity has led to important changes in the way in which the society is organized. It is crucial to note that violent extremists are part of the society. Therefore, the changes in connectivity have also enhanced the youth radicalisation process and strategy (Al-Sabahi & Montasari, 2023).

Von Behr *et al.* (2013) further suggests that the internet provides an opportunity for radicalisation. This is because of its availability to a large number of individuals, irrespective of gender, race or ethnicity. This makes it possible for people to connect with other people who share their interests from all over the globe at any time conceivable. It serves as a communication tool that may be used to disseminate extreme ideologies and propaganda, in addition to being an important source of information overall. On the other hand, the internet provides a platform that enables those who might otherwise be afraid of being seen with the wrong people to participate in activities. It also makes individual engagements invisible to the authorities. It has also enhanced the speed and reduced the cost of communication. The Institute of Strategic Dialogue (2011) asserts that the internet significantly contributes to the intensification and acceleration of radicalization, both internationally and in East Africa. It provides the user with the knowledge necessary to validate their opinions. This information, material, or content promotes a certain worldview and may serve as powerful catalysts in the radicalization process. The authors additionally observe that the internet fosters an online community enabling users to connect with like-minded individuals whom they would otherwise be impossible to connect with offline. This process normalizes conventional perspectives and behaviors,

including radical ideological perspectives or the use of violence to resolve issues and alleviate grievances.

According to Sieckelinck *et al.* (2015) the internet and social media have proved to be virtual meeting venues for the young people. The young people find their favoured information that does not contradict their views by searching the internet. They feel satisfied because they come across information that supports their ideology and emotions which influence their ideals and consciousness. The formulation of ideals is a fundamental aspect of adolescents, and the ideas need to be prevented from turning into extremism. Tahiri (2013) observes that the internet and emerging communication technologies are profoundly transforming the sense of reality and the ability of youths to differentiate between the 'virtual' and the 'real'. The author further contends that the social and interactive aspects of the internet and emerging social media platforms significantly influence the manifestation of extremist and terrorist perspectives. The internet and social media are dynamic platforms that may either facilitate or obstruct the process of radicalization. This is due to the way in which the internet and social media platforms develop and channel knowledge, attitudes, and viewpoints (Hollewell & Longpré, 2022).

According to UNESCO (2017), the internet has substantial opportunities for facilitating the attainment of the Global Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Nonetheless, it acknowledges that unregulated internet use and associated impacts may result in unfavorable consequences. Weimann (2009) observes that, historically, the indoctrination, recruitment, and training of terrorists mostly depended on direct contact between recruits and recruiters, the internet provides quick, remote, and anonymous connections without physical meeting. Through the use of a number of internet channels, terrorist organizations are using this to their advantage in order to disseminate a wide range of extremist information (Bodo & Trauthig, 2022). There has been an increase in the population using the internet, which has led to an increase in the number of terrorists using the internet. The youths are increasingly using the Internet, instant messaging and social networking sites to stay in constant contact and to share online media such as video clips (Microsoft Digital Advertising Solutions & MTV Networks, 2007).

The internet has proved to be an exceptionally dynamic medium of communication and has recorded phenomenal and growing audience worldwide since the late 1980s. The advancement of more complex technology has established a network with worldwide accessibility and minimal entry restrictions. Internet technology facilitates rapid

communication for individuals with relative quickness, effectiveness, and anonymity across borders to an almost limitless audience (Ejazi, 2022). According to Sanders and Scanlon (2021) the internet technology is becoming a fundamental human right as a result of the numerous benefits that come along with its usage. For instance, the internet allows a unique sharing and access to information and ideas which are fundamental human right in the modern days. However, the internet has been misused for radicalisation and terrorist purposes. Sieckelinck *et al.* (2012) identified six overlapping categories on the uses of the internet for terrorist objectives. These include propaganda, financing, training, strategizing, implementation, and cyber-attacks.

Weimman (2008) says that a lot of terrorist organizations use the internet to attract young people to support or join their organization. Some organizations are making the most popular internet platforms more attractive to young people by producing material that is appealing to them. The terrorists also use internet payment systems to steal money and commit fraud. Smith (2024) posit that terrorist groups employ fraudulent methods, such as stolen or hacked identities and credit cards. They also commit auction fraud, stock fraud, wire fraud, intellectual property violations, and other types of fraud. The author further asserts that money given to groups that appear to be genuine is used for illegal operations. Terror groups also establish shell corporations which purport to be advancing philanthropic undertakings, but in a real sense, they use the solicited funds to advance extremist ideology and attacks. Such organizations may claim to support humanitarian goals but use the' donations and contributions to fund acts of terrorism. Conway (2006) posits that, terrorists also infiltrate charitable organizations and use them cover or promote terrorist ideologies. They also use them to provide material support to militant groups. Sieckelinck *et al.* (2012) also point out that terrorists may utilize the internet to facilitate the perpetration of terrorist activities. Explicit threats of violence, including weapon usage, may be propagated over the internet to instigate public panic, worry, and dread. The internet can further be used to diminish the probability of discovery or to conceal the identities of accountable individuals. The internet may also enable the procurement of goods essential for conducting attacks via e-commerce. Terrorist sometimes cause cyberattacks, this refers to the deliberate penetration of computer networks to launch an attack for purposes of causing damage or disruption (Gjelten, 2010). These attacks are often intended to disrupt the efficient functioning of targets, such as computer systems, servers, or essential infrastructure. A cyberattack

include hacking, the deployment of sophisticated persistent threat tactics, computer viruses, malware, or other methods of illegal or malevolent access (Lehto, 2022).

Conway (2018) observes that the predominant portion of contemporary extremist and terrorist activities occurs on the surface web, accessible using conventional search engines. A greater dependence by radicals, terrorists, and their affiliates on the Dark Web has also been seen. The Dark Web denotes encrypted internet information that is unindexed by traditional search engines and necessitates specialized free software for access. Illicit dark web marketplaces have been used by terrorists for the acquisition of fire arms and other materials. Conway (2018) further posits that during the year 2017 ISIS sympathisers initiated crypto currency, specifically Bitcoin and Zcash, donation campaigns on ISIS affiliated websites and Telegram groups. These crypto currencies benefits include the ability of terrorist sympathizers to transfer funds transnationally with relative anonymity.

Terrorist organizations are swiftly adapting to new technology, altering their operations using artificial intelligence (AI) and encrypted communications. This enhances video material and advanced web magazines are created in several languages. GTI (2025) asserts that encrypted chat networks and cryptocurrency will be used for fundraising, while using AI to generate localized propaganda directed at foreign entities. The reach now extends from Central Asia to North America, illustrating how internet platforms have transformed terrorist recruiting and operations. This technological progress presents new obstacles for security agencies, as extremists increasingly use encrypted applications and dark web forums for radicalization and operational preparation. Artificial intelligence has facilitated intelligence agencies in analyzing greater volumes of data and identifying radicalization at an earlier stage. This is an advantage in the prevention of radicalization and extremism. Truong *et al.* (2023) assert that emerging technologies using decentralized and distributed frameworks, such as blockchain, may be used by different organizations to exchange, transfer, withdraw, or account for numerous asset classes outside of traditional financial networks. Virtual assets, like Bitcoin, facilitate the anonymous worldwide movement of funds, which has been increasingly used to support terrorists. The global use of crowdfunding methods is a known concern for financing terrorism. Crowdfunding is a digital method for companies, organizations, or people to solicit funds through gifts or investments from many contributors (Ogele, 2024). The author further posits that terrorist organizations

adapt their funding techniques to suit local conditions, using area vulnerabilities and possibilities to get financial resources. Terrorist groups that use a context-dependent approach might maintain flexibility and resilience in their financial activities, hence creating significant challenges for counter-terrorism efforts. Terrorist organizations have used crowdfunding sites to support their propaganda initiatives, including the production and distribution of extremist material. The social media and the internet is therefore greatly exploited to further terrorist activities.

Thomson (2011) asserts that social media serves as an excellent instrument for radicalizing and recruiting individuals into a cause. It is perpetually present wherever the user may be. It entices its users with a promise of friendship, validation, or a feeling of significance. For half of its users, it constitutes an addiction. Facebook, Twitter, and blogs motivate people to advocate for political and social reform. The author contends that Al-Qaida promotes homegrown terrorism, asserting that propaganda and online information disseminated through social media provide individuals with greater access to resources necessary for executing "lone wolf" attacks against Western targets. Moreover, social media users are always overwhelmed with information and communications. Although it may result in information overload, the user is not required to be informed about all the many applications. YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and several other social media platforms are progressively interconnected, allowing a status update or message on one site to immediately disseminate to other social networking sites. (Jauhari & Vobugari, 2025). The authors further highlight that a single individual or group may instigate a domino effect of events, shaping the attitudes and behaviors of global populations by a single tweet or social media post, which disseminates the information across all major social media platforms. Social media enhances user awareness, links many individuals globally, and disseminates information rapidly and effectively. Thomson (2011) contends that social media proficiently links individuals to diverse information sources, allowing them to engage with events in real-time as they occur. This elicits an emotional response in the person, prompting them to become a committed and fervent supporter.

Pyszczynski *et al.* (2006) assert that online radicalization primarily stems from prolonged exposure to extremist content, the intensified impact of graphic imagery and videos, and subsequent emotional desensitization, which can foster "mortality salience," an acute awareness of one's mortality that intensifies support for suicide missions and

terrorism. The authors assert that emotionally charged films from war zones, such as those illustrating purported instances of torture, sexual assault, and other heinous acts, might elicit a feeling of moral indignation, which Sageman (2007) has recognized as a significant catalyst for mobilization into violent action.

Sutherland and Cressey (2012) assert that prolonged engagement in virtual communities transforms online forums into criminogenic environments where deviant and extreme behaviors are acquired and normalized through continuous interaction with individuals who share analogous extreme views. The authors assert that emotionally charged movies from war zones, such as those illustrating purported instances of torture, rape, and other atrocities, might evoke moral indignation, a significant catalyst for mobilisation into violent action as described by Sageman (2007). The authors also emphasize that online forums subsequently become like echo chambers, where all moderating forces are eliminated and aggressive voices are magnified. Consequently, individuals develop a subjective perception of reality, and radical ideologies and violence cease to be stigmatized, instead being seen as commendable and acceptable. According to Suler (2004) online disinhibition then occurs. During this period, anonymity and distance foster group antagonism and polarisation. The subsequent phase in online radicalisation stems from interpretations that highlight the social and interactive characteristics of the Internet. Cyberspace allows people to enact their idealised selves, exhibiting attributes and qualities they want but lack. Brachman and Levine (2011) assert that, over time, the practice of role-playing becomes distressing and melancholic as individuals recognise the disparity between their own selves and the roles they inhabit. Following this recognition, several online players start efforts to bridge the divide. Some individuals attempt to reflect their virtual, radical, and pro-violent personas in reality. The authors further posit that this dissonance makes a person seek gamification using the cyberspace, including not just the use of extremist forums and social networking platforms, as well as engagement in online role-playing games such as 'World of Warcraft' and virtual life simulations like 'Second Life.' Another rationale for online radicalisation is to a fundamental feature of the internet: its ability to link individuals with the same interests, regardless of geographical distance or previous acquaintance. The Dutch Domestic Intelligence Agency (2012) argues that the internet facilitates individuals' connections with extremists and terrorist networks, particularly for those lacking real-world contacts in the

violent extremist environment. The internet significantly contributes to the radicalization process; however, it represents only one of several mechanisms utilized for recruiting individuals into extremist groups. Stevens (2009) argues that the technological regulation of internet information is challenging and perhaps counterproductive, hence adopting social approaches that educate and empower online communities could have more success in discouraging the use of the internet for extremist purposes. Many countries, predominantly in the developing world do not have the technical capacities necessary to investigate violent extremist activity online (Jacobson, 2010). Governments therefore have a complex role in Countering Violent Extremism. The study seeks to address the gap identified by Mungai (2019), which asserts that the long-term objective of governments should be to develop resilient people who can resist the appeal of violent extremist internet propaganda and support civic measures to alleviate its effects. To attain this objective, governments, in collaboration with community organisations, play crucial responsibilities in fostering awareness and disseminating information about online radicalisation (Neumann, 2013).

## **2.6 Psychological, Social and Economic Effects of Terrorism**

Terrorism serves as a political instrument employed by extremist groups to attain specific political objectives. Terrorism exerts psychological, economic, and social impacts on nations. The government must seek methods to restore public trust and recover from the attacks due to this impact. Pollack and Wood (2010) observed that following an attack, if a situation appears to be inadequately handled, citizens may experience a decline in confidence toward the government and public institutions. The government may implement measures that could infringe upon civil liberties to foster public confidence. Njau (2021) states that in Kenya, the people demanded the withdrawal of military forces from Somalia and the closing of refugee camps. Below this threshold, terrorism becomes successful and seems to generate a hardening of views and a crystallization of resistance to the aims pursued by the terrorists.

### **2.6.1 Psychological Effects of Terrorism**

According to Waxman (2011), terrorism is characterized as a type of psychological warfare directed at society. The author also notes that an increase in the frequency and lethality of attacks correlates with a greater psychological impact on individuals.

Grieger (2006) notes that individuals impacted by a terrorist attack may develop acute stress disorder or posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Terrorism also has a psychological impact even on those who have not been physically subjected to the attack (Waxman, 2011). The overwhelming media coverage of the terrorist attack may exacerbate psychological trauma on the population.

Stereotyping has consequently increased, leading to negative sentiments in society towards the group that terrorists purport to represent. The separation of Christians from Muslims by terrorists, followed by the killing of Christians, contributes to the perception of Muslims as terrorists. There is a growing trend of hostility and suspicion towards the groups represented by the terrorist organization within society. A study by Arian (2003) reveals that Muslims were perceived as a security threat to Israelis within the setting of Israel. Waxman (2011) observes that terrorism impacts individuals' everyday life, regardless of direct involvement or not. Thus, this study seeks to examine psychological effects facing vulnerable students in selected universities in Kenya.

According to Pollack and Wood (2010) terrorism, arguably more than other catastrophe events, may induce acute stress in those who experience it, including survivors and those who experience the event merely through media coverage. The psychological, economic, societal, and political ramifications of persistent terrorism may have a big effect on the community. Terrorism makes individuals more likely to be harmed, which makes them more venerable to its impacts. Vulnerability is defined as the pre-existing factors that render infrastructure, processes, services, and productivity more susceptible to external hazards (Bohle, 2001). The people after a terror attack could over rely on the government to offer protection.

Bosman *et al.* (2022) asserts that the repercussions of terrorist attacks may reach much beyond the location of the event. Individuals experience indirect suffering due to the effects on others and may even be traumatized by media portrayal. In the United States, Dougall *et al.* (2005) examined the psychological impact of media coverage on a series of incidents involving mailings carrying anthrax spores. Participants who closely monitored the coverage from the outset experienced heightened distress, were more prone to persistent thoughts on the issue that they could not eliminate, and exhibited greater levels of avoidance behaviors.

The Madrid bombings of 2004 and the London bombings of 2005 not only heightened political intolerance and prejudice but also transformed security policy and

societal perceptions of terrorism (Echebarria-Echabe & Fernández-Guede, 2006). Following the bomb explosions in London in 2005, it was determined that British Muslims experienced more distress than adherents of other faiths (Spilerman & Stecklov, 2009). Fear and apprehension after the terrorist attacks were more pronounced among those without prior exposure to terrorism as opposed to those with previous experience. Spilerman and Stecklov (2009) delineate a significant contrast between the persistent kind of terrorism that has impacted Northern Ireland and continues to prevail in Israel, and the more sporadic sort of terrorism that has influenced the U.S. and Western Europe. Tomkinson and Harper (2025) posit that the diminished intensity of dread experienced by those with a history of terrorism indicates their habituation to it. Conversely, those enduring chronic terrorism are under perpetual danger and hence endeavor to adapt to the associated hazards. Behavior that may seem abnormal in instances of incidental terrorism, such as heightened alertness and the evasion of certain locations and circumstances, is rational and reasonable within the framework of chronic terrorism. Spilerman and Stecklov assert that this leads to a new normalcy where individuals remain vigilant and consistently experience stress responses. According to El-Said (2013) terrorism caused some Muslim youths to become radicalized.

Dependence on drone strikes as a crucial component of the United States' counterterrorism policy strategy escalated significantly under President Barack Obama's administration. While less perilous than deploying soldiers to combat zones, the collateral damage inflicted by drone strikes, which includes the fatalities of several innocent bystanders, ultimately radicalized many families, friends, and tribal members of the deceased individuals.

The community can however develop resilience and the society can survive, show limited vulnerability in the face of an attack, rise up, and be able to flourish afterward. Resilience is a tool that a society might employ to fight against giving in to terrorists' demands. The Kenyan people may live regular lives even if Al-Shabaab strikes them all the time and without warning. Even while terror has effects on people's minds, the economy, politics, and society, the country is nonetheless stable. This is resilience.

### **2.6.2 Social Effects of Terrorism**

Henderson (2008) indicated that terrorism has significantly affected social life in Kenya. This assumption aligns with the results of Zaman *et al.* (2012), which indicate

that education and religious activities are among the most adversely affected aspects of society by terrorism. Family institutions have been impacted by terrorism due to the loss of relatives and, more lately, the targeting of children as victims of injuries and fatalities (Falola, 2002). This report asserts that children have been enlisted into terrorist networks inside educational institutions, clubs, churches, and mosques. Social media terror exploits mass marketing strategies to entice young individuals into joining networks, sometimes without the knowledge of their parents or guardians. The damage inflicted by terrorist acts, including the fatalities of several innocent bystanders, has resulted in the radicalization of many families, friends, and tribal members of the individuals killed (El-Said, 2013).

Terrorist acts or threats of terrorism have produced and deepened distrust among Kenyan communities. This might even lead to full-blown religious disputes and suspicions among Kenyans. This is in line with what Zaman *et al.* (2012) observed, that said that education and religious activities are two of the most affected societal domains by terrorism. According to Vanhove (2011), religious places in Kenya are becoming the most dangerous places for terrorists. In fact, at one point, most people were afraid of houses of religion because of threats of violence.

Terrorists have also been able to exploit certain religious organizations to radicalize some young people and cultivate chaos, with the goal of splitting Kenyans along religious lines. The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (2012) says that terrorist attacks leave people disappointed since they are often personal tragedies. Many individuals wouldn't want to create a company because they were afraid that terrorism may happen at any moment and anyplace and tear down the economy (Shafir, 2013). When terrorism happens, it changes society as a whole. For example, after the assaults on the World Trade Center on 9/11, residents of New York and Americans in general altered the way they thought about security and how they felt about radicalization.

Raza and Mansoo (2025) posit that people also started to be more careful and conscious of what was going on around them. Airport security screenings have become increasingly rigorous, resulting in Muslims and Arabs being subjected to racial and religious profiling. Frequently, individuals or law enforcement officers think they are terrorists just because of how they look. Regarding the New York September 11 World Trade Centre attacks, there was a notable rise of Islam phobia in the US. In the country

of Israel, Waxman (2011) writes that Israelis perceived Palestinians as deceitful, aggressive, and without respect for human life. Morgan *et al.* (2011) conducted a comprehensive examination of numerous consequences of the 9/11 assault, with a special emphasis on its social psychological impacts. Americans appeared to respond to the attacks with heightened political intolerance, bias, and discrimination. Positive responses included heightened connection with others, enhanced intents to support friends and family, blood donation, and increased donations of time and financial resources to charitable causes. Nonetheless, these favorable responses were more.

Ben-Zur and Zeidner's (2009) research on the aftermath of the September 11 attacks in New York revealed an increase in smoking and drinking among locals, as well as a rise in alcohol-related issues. Increased engagement, triggered by the loss of a family or acquaintance elicited even more intense emotions, including severe alcohol consumption. Ben-Zur and Zeidner (2009) also reference studies conducted in Israel, which indicated a significant rise in the occurrence of lethal automobile accidents following terrorist attacks. Social and cultural factors, together with individual characteristics such as personality and demographics, may influence the perception of terrorist risks. The perceived risks generate uncertainty and a feeling of unfairness, accompanied by emotions such as anxiety and rage. Such dangers often prompt individuals to align more closely with their own group while distancing themselves from the community deemed accountable for these threats. This may sometimes lead to a process of theological and ideological radicalization (Spilerman & Stecklov, 2009).

### **2.6.3 Economic Effects of Terrorism**

The loss of human life and suffering after a terrorist attack may be substantial and may be seen as an economic detriment, especially in contemporary culture where statistics are paramount. Moustapha (2002) observed that a primary consequence of terrorism is its effect on the economic welfare of society. This research focused on the immediate and indirect repercussions of terrorist strikes. The immediate effects of terrorist attacks may be assessed by calculating the total costs of the resultant material damage. Indirect effects are frequently challenging to quantify. Estimations of the costs of terrorism encounter various issues, including the evaluation of losses, aggregation difficulties, prevention of duplicate counting damages across several sectors or data, and the causation of secondary and indirect impacts (Bruck & Wickstrom, 2004).

Terrorism has a significant economic impact on nations. The impact is much pronounced when the target of the assault is a developing nation. Terrorism has several repercussions, such as diverting foreign direct investment and damaging infrastructure (Enders, 2008). Studies demonstrate that terrorism in developing nations tends to exert a greater influence on the economy than terrorism in wealthy nations (Sandler & Enders, 2008). The primary rationale for this claim is that a developed nation have greater resources and ability to endure prolonged assaults.

In Kenya on the 7th of August 1998, the Al Qaeda network conducted simultaneous assaults against the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. These terrorist activities inhibit travel activity until the public's recollection of the reported incidents diminishes. Terrorism aimed against tourism is seen as a significant catastrophe for the destination, perhaps leading to a severe tourist crisis (Sonmez *et al.*, 1999). Hotels in Kenya had a significant number of cancellations due to the embassy attack. The US embassy in Kenya sustained significant damage, and the news disseminated globally through the media. Several Americans and more than two hundred Kenyans died, while others sustained injuries (Kelley *et al.*, 2002).

## **2.7 Student Vulnerability to Radicalization and Counselling Implications**

According to Meere and Lensink (2015) the most effective method of preventing radicalisation is to sensitize the youth to avoid involvement in violent extremist or terrorist activities, or to convince them to turn away from radical ideas. Student counselors in Kenyan universities are the best professionals to deal with radicalization since they work directly with students who are at risk or targeted. Counseling for students who are at risk should use a wholistic approach. Meere and Lensink (2015) additionally asserts that counselors must incorporate methods and models that demonstrate how to make youth counseling services more appealing and beneficial for vulnerable young people as they transition to adulthood and to help them become less vulnerable to radicalization. Counseling needs to help teens deal with the negative impacts of alienation, which happens a lot and typically leads to social disenfranchisement. Counselors also need to find out what their clients need promptly and work collaboratively in methods that take into account the opinions and experiences of each individual students.

Koehler and Ehrt (2018) assert that the capacity of families and communities to

bring about beneficial change need to be strengthened. Vulnerable students need support, information, counsel, and developmental opportunities, together with parental support if necessary. Early interventions to prevent problems escalating, and recruitment to radical organizations is therefore a matter of urgency (Davies, 2023). Student counsellors need to be offered a modular range of awareness training based on recent discoveries from positive psychology research, notably the use of innovative pedagogical approaches to address issues like as radicalization. Online platforms and mobile applications that transcend limitations of space and time also need to be used.

According to Andre (2017) counseling needs to concentrate on the adolescent phase of transition from childhood to adulthood, which initiates individuation, empowerment, independence, distance, and the severance of ties with parents, the primary agents of socialization. Adolescents thereafter establish new associations with peers, whether in reality or online. Andre (2017) emphasizes that social repression and exclusion are significant factors leading to radicalization and delinquency. To combat violent extremism and make communities stronger, programs should focus on young people to make them more politically aware and encourage them to think critically and be open-minded. They should also encourage them to listen to other people's opinions, respect differences, foster social cohesiveness and harmonious cooperation, while recognizing inequity and prejudice in all circumstances. Adolescents should possess secure environments in which they may express their concerns and respond to things that happen that have connections to terrorism and violent extremism.

Youth Counselling against Radicalisation Guidelines for Front-Line Workers (2015), posits that early detection strategies consist of raising the counsellor's awareness since they interact with vulnerable people or groups at at risk of radicalisation to ensure they are sufficiently equipped to recognise and counter radicalisation. The authors further note that training courses need to be developed to raise awareness and understanding. In addition, educators, youth service providers, community law enforcement officers, child welfare professionals, and mental health practitioners can also make important contributions because they have the ability to identify and refer those who may be susceptible to radicalization. These individuals, however, often lack an extensive understanding of radicalization, fail to recognize the warning signals, and are unaware of appropriate responses. Consequently, it is essential to enhance their knowledge of this problem.

Families and community members seem to be actively engaged, as shown in the context of the Australian neo-jihadist network, where the substantial impact of intimate relationships is evident. Social interactions have also been used to mitigate excessive thought and behavior Harris-Hogan (2012). Numerous significant instances of secure familial relations exist offering a positive impact and guiding individuals away from extremist networks (Koehler, 2013). The author further contends that there are cases of families striving to prevent extremism. The effectiveness of family therapy was also examined in implemented programs carried out in Europe. In Germany, Hayat, a prominent program based on family counseling was used to reduce violent and non-violent radicalization at any stage. Encouraging results on the efficacy and influence of this intervention program against radicalization were observed. According to the Radicalization Awareness Network, the impact of intervention programs is a significant deficiency in the context of radicalization (Borum, 2004). Therefore, it is essential to evaluate the current family-related intervention initiatives addressing radicalization using a stringent approach. Significant issues have to be resolved and understood about the optimal design, implementation, and evaluation of successful intervention programs aimed at countering radicalization. The study sought to fill this gap and interventions in Kenya might concentrate on enhancing protective variables and mitigating the likelihood of vulnerability to radicalization.

Considering that parents' guide their children's behaviors (Bandura, 1991), family-based treatments may enhance positive parental impact. Interventions may enhance social capital within families and provide resources to counter radicalization (Koehler, 2015). Furthermore, treatments may enhance a family's ability to foster self-control, which is particularly significant since poor self-control correlates with antisocial conduct, and its degree is affected by familial dynamics (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 2020). Social control theory (Hirschi, 1969) posits that antisocial conduct is restrained by strong and enduring connections with others, especially parents who may possess unfavorable views and opinions. Consequently, the family may be crucial in comprehending and averting radicalization; nevertheless, further research is required to substantiate this assertion.

## **2.8 Theoretical Framework**

This study is informed by the theory of psychosocial development and the cognitive

dissonance theory.

### **2.8.1 Theory of Psychosocial Development**

The study was guided by the fifth stage of Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1968) which posits that it is a stage of identity versus role confusion and is a stormy and crucial period in an individual's life. In Erikson's theory when individuals fail to resolve the psychosocial crisis at a particular stage negative outcomes can result impacting future development. This can occur at any stage from infancy to old age. The study focused on the fifth stage when an individual searches to cultivate a sense of self and personal identity by engaging in a profound examination of own values, beliefs, and aspirations. Identity is attained at the fifth stage of psychosocial development as there is transition from childhood to adulthood. Independence can be acquired and exploration into the future in terms of career paths and social relationships.

Erikson (1968) highlighted the development of ego identity. Ego identity is the conscious self-conception formed through social interactions, which becomes a primary emphasis during the identity vs role confusion stage of psychological development. Erikson (1968) asserts that our ego identity continuously evolves due to new experiences and information acquired through everyday interactions with others. New experiences provide obstacles that may facilitate or impede identity development.

University students are still in this stage and want to belong and fit in the society. Failure to achieve this leads to role confusion where individuals get confused and helpless hence their hopes are crushed creating feeling of resentment and disillusionment. This may further result in maladaptive antisocial behaviour thus making them vulnerable to radicalisation. Healthy development comprises instances when an individual's intellectual, emotional, and social growth compels a critical, sometimes unconscious, decision about the trajectory of their personality development (Dharavath, 2025). The main conflict in this stage is the contest between the formation of a strong identity or role confusion, the family during this stage plays a key role in the healthy psychological development of the individual. Erikson (1968) posits that adolescents attain a phase in which ideologies facilitate identity development. A young person with diminished self-worth, maybe arising from excessively authoritarian parents, may discover that aligning with a terrorist group serves as a potent "identity stabilizer," offering a feeling of belonging, value, and purpose. Marcia (1993) further expanded on

Erikson's notion of identity crisis which categorically delineates the process of identity formation. Identity crises engender internal conflict and emotional distress, compelling individuals to examine and question their values, beliefs, and goals. In their pursuit of new opportunities, individuals may cultivate new beliefs, adopt other values, and make alternative decisions. The following four identity statuses delineate locations along a continuum that progresses from an initially ambiguous and indeterminate personal identity to a well-defined and distinctive sense of self. The author posits that parents and all the other socializing agents should help individuals develop healthily along this continuum during this stage.

The first identity status is identity diffusion. This identity status represents low exploration and minimal commitment. These adolescents have not contemplated their identities and have not formulated any life objectives. They are reactive, passively navigating through life and addressing each problem as it emerges. Their principal motive is hedonistic; the evasion of suffering and the attainment of pleasure. Examples are students who study through high school and graduated and still do not have life goals. When these students are in the university, they can easily be vulnerable to radicalisation because they do not have personal goals in life.

The second identity status according to Marcia (1993) is the identity foreclosure status. This identity status indicates minimal exploration coupled with a significant level of commitment, defining an individual who makes a life choice without thoroughly evaluating other options. An individual who avoids crisis and proceeds with foreclosure may encounter a more significant crisis in the future. The potential consequences of this delayed crisis remain uncertain. Individuals who invest in a specific outcome, only to face subsequent challenges, may encounter greater difficulties than those who explore alternatives and attain successful outcomes early in the process. In this identity status, individuals do not actively seek to ascertain what holds significance for them. They do not critically examine the values and beliefs instilled in them. These youths construct their identity by embracing the views and values of their family, community, and culture. Students who could have been raised in radicalised families and are in this identity status are vulnerably to radicalisation because they will not question values taught and will passively accept the identity assigned to them.

According to Marcia (1993) the third identity status is termed moratorium, distinguished by an elevated degree of inquiry combined with a diminished level of

commitment. At this stage, adolescents are undergoing an identity crisis that has driven them to explore and experiment with many values, beliefs, and objectives. Nonetheless, they have yet to reach definitive conclusions on the ideas and values they prioritize, as well as the principles that need to guide their life. Consequently, they are not yet committed to a definite identity. They maintain flexibility of their options at this point and thus could be vulnerable to radicalisation.

Marcia (1993) further identifies the final identity status which is the identity achievement. Youths form their identity through active exploration and a firm dedication to certain values, beliefs, and life goals that develop out of this exploration and scrutiny. At this identification state, adolescents will have determined the values and objectives that hold the most significance for them, as well as the purpose or mission that will guide their lives. The author further observes that individuals in the identity success stage may prioritize their values and have navigated the many options of their desired identity. They will have explored various views and values, and examined their life trajectories. To completely attain this kind of identity, individuals must experience positivity and confidence about their decisions and values. This final status should be the goal of counselling so as to develop students who have direction and goals in life and are therefore not prone to radicalisation.

This theory does not focus much on the cognitive processes like perceptions, inferences and feelings that goes on in an individual therefore it will be complimented by the cognitive dissonance theory.

### **2.8.2 Cognitive Dissonance Theory**

The cognitive dissonance theory which was proposed by Festinger (1957) asserts that cognitive dissonance is a psychological phenomenon that arises when individuals' behavior contradicts their attitudes or beliefs. A common reaction to such distress is that individuals progressively begin to accept their own assertions as truth. For example, the more often individuals articulate views that are more extreme than their own beliefs, the more they will begin to accept the validity of such views. In the context of radicalization, individuals may reinterpret their experiences, behaviours, or beliefs to align with extremist ideologies, thus reducing the dissonance between their past beliefs and their new radical worldview (Packer & Powell, 2010).

When individuals encounter information that conflict with their existing beliefs,

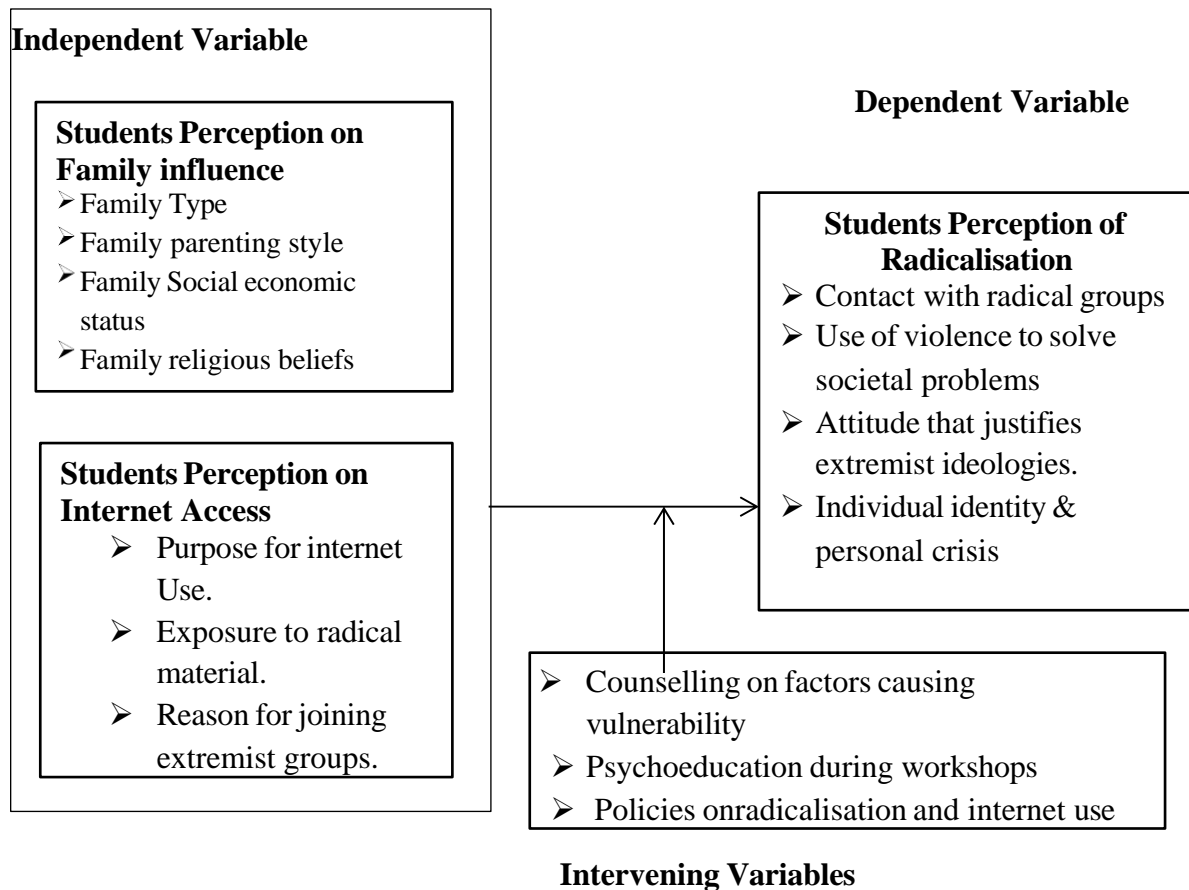
particularly about social, political, or religious issues, they may experience cognitive dissonance. Students can be exposed to a certain worldview but then encounter radical information that challenges it; thus, they may experience psychological discomfort. To reduce this discomfort, they might seek out ideologies or groups that reinforce their existing beliefs, even if those beliefs are extreme or radical (Cooper, 2007).

Vulnerable individuals like students in universities, who maybe struggling with identity and belonging as they are in the fifth stage of Erik Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development could experience cognitive dissonance when their current worldview is contradicted by negative experiences like perceived injustices and societal exclusion. In such cases, radical groups can offer a sense of belonging, certainty, and a cohesive narrative that resolves dissonance by providing an alternative worldview that justifies their feelings and experiences (Hogg & Vaughan, 2014).

Maskaliunaite (2015) holds that people can respond to cognitive dissonance by over-justification. Cognitive dissonance theory suggests that people will justify and rationalize their actions and beliefs to reduce psychological discomfort. The more the investment radicals have made in the radicalization process, such as terminating familial bonds to join a radical organization, the more they would perceive that their involvement justified the sacrifice of those familial ties. The author further observes that cognitive dissonance will lead radicalized individuals to intensify their commitment to their extremist beliefs or affiliations. This theory is important as it plays a role in the emergence of radicalisation and explains the cognitive processes in an individual when radicalized.

## 2.9 Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework exhibits a diagrammatic representation of relationship between the variables.



**Figure 1:** Relationship Between Independent, Dependent and Intervening Variables of the Study

From the conceptual framework, the independent variable encompasses students' perception of the influence of selected family and internet access factors. On the other hand, the dependent variable is students' vulnerability to radicalisation. In an optimal situation, the conceptual framework suggests that students' perceptions on the selected family and internet access factors cause vulnerability to radicalization. However, in reality the conceptual framework shows that there are intervening variables which may affect the causal relationship of selected family and internet access factors and vulnerability to radicalization. These intervening variables are counselling on vulnerability to radicalisation, policies on radicalisation and internet usage in the university and psycho-education to students on

vulnerability to radicalisation during workshops. The effects of these variables were reduced by holding them constant throughout the research period.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the research procedures adopted in the study. It presents the research design, location of study, target and accessible population, sampling procedures and sample size, instrumentation, procedure for data collection and analysis.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The mixed method convergent parallel research design was adopted in the study. This design includes both quantitative and qualitative data collection strategies within the same study. The basic objective of mixed methods research is to utilize the benefits of both quantitative and qualitative research designs and data collecting methodologies to comprehend a phenomenon more thoroughly than is achievable with either quantitative or qualitative designs alone (Dawadi *et al.*, 2021). This entails the concurrent collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, followed by the integration of the results to provide a thorough comprehension of the study issue (Gay *et al.*, 2015). The authors further posit that this design would provide a broad understanding of the study from the focus group discussions, interview data results and a deep understanding of the study from the data from the questionnaires.

#### **3.3 Location of the Study**

This study was conducted in two public universities in Kenya. These universities have well established internet connectivity, admit students from various parts of the country and have had incidences of radicalisation.

#### **3.4 Population of the Study**

The target population for the study were third year students, in public universities. Most students start their undergraduate studies at the age of 18 in Kenyan universities and complete at age 21 or 22 for most of the degree programs, the mean age of this cohort of students is age 20. The university students are in this fifth stage of psychosocial development during this time (Erikson, 1968). In this stage a feeling of self and individual identity is obtained or role confusion develops where individuals get confused and helpless and may develop feeling of resentment and disillusionment. This may also result to maladaptive antisocial behaviour thus

making them vulnerable to radicalisation. The study targeted 443,783 students enrolled in 31 accredited public universities (Commission for University Education, 2013). The 8,405 students who joined the two public universities where data was collected, in the academic year 2018/2019 through the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) board formed the accessible population. These students were in their third year of study during the time they were required to give their perception on the influence of the selected family and internet access factors on vulnerability to radicalisation. The accessible population refers to the group to which the researcher applied the findings of the study. This population constitutes a subset of the target population (Willie, 2024). The researcher selected the sample size from the accessible population. The student counsellors and peer counsellors also gave information on their experiences and perceptions. Table 1 shows the study population from which the samples were drawn.

**Table 1**

*Accessible Population of the Study*

<b>University</b>	<b>Enrollment in Universities</b>	<b>No. of student Counsellors</b>	<b>No. of peer Counsellors</b>	<b>Total</b>
Pubic University A	4540	14	240	
Public University B	3865	14	240	
Total	8405	28	480	8913

Source: KUCCPS (2018/2019), CUE (2018) & KUPCA (2018)

### **3.5 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size**

Sampling is the process of selecting a subset of cases to draw inferences about the total population, whereas a sample is a small part of a larger population that accurately represents it (Gay *et al.*, 2015). In this study, purposive sampling technique was used to select two public universities in Kenya. According to Palys (2008) purposive sampling technique involves a researcher relying on their own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their study. The objective of purposive sampling relies on the researcher's discretion in selecting participants from the population for their study. The aim of purposive sampling is also to concentrate on certain characteristics of a population that are relevant, so allowing the researcher to effectively address the research issues (Campbell, 2020). The author asserts that purposive sampling is used to identify participants capable of

offering comprehensive and thorough insights into the phenomena being studied.

CUE (2018) notes that in the academic year 2018/2019, the two public universities together admitted a total of 8405 students through KUCCPS. Public University A admitting 4540 and Public University B admitting 3865. The Kenya Universities Professional Counselling Association (KUPCA, 2018) also noted that a total of 28 student counsellors and 480 peer counsellors provide counselling services in the two universities.

Cohen *et al.* (2018) observe that the sample size depends on the purpose of the study and the

nature of the population under scrutiny. However, they affirm that the general rule in sample size determination is to use the largest sample possible. A large sample size is necessary because the main interest of research is learning about a population from which samples are drawn. De Vaus (1991) postulated that a sample is connected to the statistical testing and the

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

larger the sample size, the lower the generalization error. The determination of the sample size for the students, student counsellors and peer counsellors was computed using Yamane's 1967 formula (Israel, 2013) as follows:

Where  $n$  is the sample size,

$N$  is the population size, and

$e$  is the level of precision (0.05)

Thus, for a population of 8405 students, the required sample was calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{8405}{1 + 8405 (0.05)^2} = 399.9524 \approx 400$$

For a population of 28 student counsellors, the required sample is:

$$n = \frac{28}{1 + 28 (0.05)^2} = 26.1682 \approx 26$$

And, for a population of 480 peer counsellors, the required sample is:  $n = \frac{480}{1 + 480 (0.05)^2} = 2$

Proportionate stratified sampling was then used to allocate the selected samples among the students, student counsellors' and peer counsellors' strata. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) note that if the strata are unequal in size, the sample must be adjusted to represent the proportion of the various groups. To ascertain the relevant category of the samples, a sampling fraction was computed and then multiplied by each category of the population. The sampling fraction is defined by the equation  $f=n/N$

Where:

f= Sampling fraction

n=Sample

N= Population

Thus, the sample fraction for the students is calculated as:

$$f=400/8405 \quad f= 0.04759$$

sample fraction for the student counsellors:

$$f= 26/28 \quad f=0.92857$$

And the sample fraction for the peer counsellors  $f=218/480$

$$f=0.45416$$

Table 2 below shows the total population and the total number of respondents used in the study.

**Table 2**

*Shows the Sample Size for the Study*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Population (N)</b>	<b>Sample size</b>
Students	8405	400
Student Counsellors	28	26
Peer Counsellors	480	218
Total	8,913	644

As a result, 216 students from public University A; 184 students from public University B; plus 26 student counsellors and 218 peer counsellors from the two universities were selected to participate in the study.

### **3.6 Instrumentation**

The instruments for data collection were the university students' questionnaire (Appendix II), peer counsellors focus group discussion (Appendix III) and student counsellors' interview schedule questions (Appendix IV). Research instruments that measured the same concept, were adapted from existing research. Investigation. The questionnaires were preferred due to their capacity for uniformity in questions, the ability to gather data from a large sample, time efficiency, and enhanced comparability of the information obtained from each set

(Bańkowska, *et al.* 2021). Interviews provided rich detailed information and were appropriate for the sensitive topic of vulnerability to radicalisation. Focus group discussions were also used as these nurture different perceptions and points of view, they also obtain comprehensive information for assessing and validating perceptions, emotions, ideas, and thoughts (Patton, 1990). The items measuring the same variable were categorised under a section in the instruments, as detailed in the subsequent descriptions.

### **3.6.1 University Students' Questionnaire (USQ)**

This included the following components: Section 'A' demographic data, such as gender, family type and annual income; section 'B' contains items on perception on influence of selected family factors on vulnerability to radicalisation; section 'C' contains items on perception on influence of internet access factors on vulnerability to radicalisation. In total, the USQ had 10 items consisting of closed ended and open-ended questions. Section 'B' items were on a 5- point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (SA) to strongly disagree (SD). Scoring of each positive item was done using the key: 1 = Disagree Strongly, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Indifferent, 4= Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. Section 'C' items are on a 5- point likert scale ranging from Always (A) to Never (N). Scoring of each item was done using the key 5 = Always, 4 = Very often, 3 = Rarely, 2 = Very Rarely, and 1 = Never.

### **3.6.2 Focus Group Discussion Questions for Peer Counsellors (FGDPC)**

The total number of focus groups were ten in each university and the group members consisted of eight to ten members each. The Focus group discussion questions contained ten questions relating to university students' perceptions of the influence of selected family and internet access factors on vulnerability to radicalisation, perceptions on factors contributing to vulnerability and contribution of counselling in addressing vulnerability to radicalisation. After collecting data from the focus group discussion transcription of the data was first done to enable further analysis and a permanent written documentation of the group discussion established. Coding was then done and each piece of the coded material was sorted into various themes.

### **3.6.3 Interview Schedule Questions for Student Counsellors (ISQSC)**

This contained ten questions relating to the following: perception of family influence on vulnerability to radicalisation; perception on internet access influence on vulnerability to

radicalisation, and contribution of counselling in addressing vulnerability to radicalisation. After collecting data from the counsellors' interview, transcription of the data was first done to facilitate further analysis, and establish a permanent written record of the interview. Coding was then done and each piece of the coded material was sorted into various themes.

### **3.7 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments**

#### **3.7.1 Validity of the Instruments**

Validity is the ability or the extent to which a research instrument measures the study subject (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). The content validity of the research instrument was assessed by aligning it with the established objectives to guarantee full representation of the relevant information. The researcher furthermore sought professional judgement from specialists in the

Department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations, the Faculty of Education and Community Studies and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. The university supervisors in this research also validated the tools to establish their validity. The validation improved the clarity of the language used in the questions, including necessary items for capturing the variables and excluding those deemed extraneous to the study's variables. Content validity indicates that the items in the instrument accurately represent the broader topics under examination and sufficiently include the scope and complexity of these concerns (Cohen *et al.*, 2018).

#### **3.7.2 Reliability of the Instrument**

The reliability of the instrument refers to a measure of how well the research instrument produces consistent results after repeated trials (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The instrument was pre-tested on a population that is similar to the target population. A sample of 10% of the population of the study is appropriate for pilot studies (Connelly, 2008). The instruments were piloted in Egerton University as these students have comparable characteristics to those of the actual sample. The pilot group constituted of 65 respondents that included 40 students, 3 student counsellors and 22 peer counsellors. The researcher used the pilot sample results to modify the instrument items for clarity and appropriateness, thereby enhancing their reliability. The reliability coefficient was determined by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The overall reliability coefficient of the student questionnaire was 0.797. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2018) a reliability coefficient value of 0.7 or higher was

considered acceptable for the study. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the instrument. This method was considered appropriate since it is used to calculate the reliability of affective instruments and tests scored with more than two choices as in Likert scales.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher acquired a letter of recommendation from the Egerton University Graduate School to apply for a permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Subsequently, participant universities were approached to get authorization for conducting research in their educational institutions. Students, peer counselors, and student counselors were notified of the proposed research in writing. Appointments were scheduled for the researcher to visit the institutions and administer the questionnaires, interview and conduct the focus group discussions. Two research assistants with Masters qualification were trained by the researcher to understand the instrument. The researcher and research assistants then proceeded to collect data in person upon receiving approval. The respondents were given one week to fill questionnaires but most of the filled questionnaires were collected immediately. Some of the respondents preferred to fill the students' questionnaire online so the researcher developed a questionnaire using google forms for the respondents. Focus group discussions were also done with the peer counsellors. The researcher and the research assistants were the moderators of the groups. They divided the respondents into groups of ten members and then set up the group norms, questions were asked, further probing for deeper insights done and the responses were recorded for analysis. The recording was done by use of note taking to capture the key points, observations and nonverbal cues. Interviews were done with the student counsellors and responses recorded by note taking. The instruments were subsequently verified for precision. This was accomplished by verifying the legibility of the responses and ensuring that all questions were answered and whether all contextual information was included before analysis.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

To analyse qualitative data from the focus group discussions and the interviews, several phases were involved, including data coding, categorization, and interpretation. A coding system was used to organise the data for analysis. Codes were used to identify particular responses. The coded qualitative data were then analysed using the QSR NVivo 12 for windows which is designed to help organise and analyse non- numerical data. The descriptive

statistics used included frequencies and percentages to analyze the data gathered from the study's objectives. Analysed data was presented using textual descriptions, illustrative quotes and tables.

Quantitative data obtained were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for windows version 25.0. In each of the five objectives there was one independent variable and one dependent variable. The perceptions on influence of family factors, influence of family parenting styles, influence of social economic status, influence of religious beliefs and influence of selected internet access factors were the independent variables. The dependent variable was vulnerability to radicalisation which was common to all the objectives. The items on perception on the independent variables were indicated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. Chi Square test of independence was use to analyse the data (Field, 2013). According to Agresti (2018), the Chi-square test is a statistical method commonly used to examine the association between two categorical variables. The test assesses whether the observed frequencies of the categories differ significantly from the expected frequencies, assuming that there is no relationship between the variables. Agresti (2018) further explains that the resulting p-value provides a measure of the strength of evidence against the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) of no association with a small p-value indicating strong evidence of an association between the variables. On the other hand, according to Rosner (2011), a large p-value shows weak evidence against the  $H_0$ , suggesting that there is no significant association between the two variables. As stated by Rosner (2011), the significance level ( $\alpha$ ) is a predetermined threshold value used in hypothesis testing to determine the cutoff for the p-value to reject the null hypothesis. The author further asserts that when interpreting the results, a p-value less than the predetermined level of significance (typically 0.05) indicates that there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant association between the variables. The Cramer's V value was interpreted to measure the strength of association between the categorical variables (Cramer,1946). Statistical significance does not necessarily imply practical significance and it is always recommended to consider effect, size and other relevant factors in interpreting the results of a chi-square test (Poncet, 2016). Furthermore, the assumptions underlying the chi-square test were met, including the expected cell frequency assumption, which assumes that the expected frequency for each cell is at least five (Agresti, 2018).

Composite Scores were created and categorized as follows: numerical ratings (1 to 5) were used to calculate a composite score by finding the averages of scores from all

respondents which reflected the overall level of agreement or disagreement with the statements. The composite scores were categorized based on an average highest score of 5.00 and a lowest score of 1.00 by first dividing the range of scores (5 - 1 = 4) by the number of categories/scales (5) to get 0.80. Starting with the lowest score (1.00), 0.80 was added to each subsequent score to create the upper limit of each category. As a result, Category 1: score range: 1-1.80, Category 2: score range: 1.81-2.60, Category 3: score range: 2.61-3.40, Category 4: score range: 3.41-4.20 and Category 5: score range: 4.21-5.00. Finally, labels were assigned to each category based on the upper limits as calculated.

### 3.10 Ethical Considerations

Israel and Hay (2006) assert that researchers must protect their participants, cultivate trust, maintain research integrity, and avert misconduct that could have adverse effects on both the researcher and the institutions, therefore addressing any challenges that may emerge throughout the study. The researcher addressed ethical issues in the study by not revealing the names of the public universities under study as recommended by the Board of Post Graduate Studies of Egerton University in their introductory letter to National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Ethical approval to conduct research was got from the Egerton University Ethics Board. The research team implemented comprehensive ethical safeguards throughout the study. Participation in this research was voluntary, and no incentives were offered for involvement. The participants were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity about their personal opinions on vulnerability to radicalisation. The identity of the respondents and the institutions were not revealed during the study as well as in the final report.

**Table 3**

*Summary of Data Analysis*

Research objectives	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Qualitative
i. To determine university students' perception on the influence of family type on vulnerability to radicalisation.	Perception on influence of family type	Vulnerability to radicalisation	Thematic analysis. Chi square

ii. To determine university students' perception on the influence of family parenting style on vulnerability to radicalisation.	Perception on the influence of family parenting style	Vulnerability to Radicalisation	Thematic analysis Chi square
iii. To determine university students' perception on the influence of social economic status on vulnerability to radicalisation.	Perception on the influence of social economic status	Vulnerability to Radicalisation	Thematic analysis Chi square
iv. To determine university students' perception on the influence of religious beliefs on vulnerability to radicalisation	Perception on the influence of religious beliefs	Vulnerability to Radicalisation	Thematic analysis Chi square
v. To determine university students' perception on the influence of selected internet access factors on vulnerability to radicalization	Perception on the influence of selected internet access factors	Vulnerability to Radicalisation	Chi square Thematic analysis

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter highlights the outcomes and discussions that relate to the study findings on university students' perception on the influence of selected family and internet access factors on vulnerability to radicalization in Kenya and implications for counselling. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, as well as inferential statistics, specifically chi square analysis. SPSS for windows version 25 and QSR Nvivo for windows aided in the analysis. The study findings are presented in form of tables, analyzed and their implications discussed. The study addressed the following research questions:

- i. What are the university students' perceptions on the influence of family type on vulnerability to radicalisation?
- ii. What are the university students' perceptions on the influence of family parenting style on vulnerability to radicalisation?
- iii. What are the university students' perceptions on the influence of social economic status on vulnerability to radicalisation?
- iv. What are the university students' perceptions on the influence of religious beliefs on vulnerability to radicalisation?
- v. What are the university students' perceptions on the influence of selected internet access factors on vulnerability to radicalisation?

#### **4.2 Response Rate**

Data was collected using questionnaires given students, focus group discussion for peer counsellors and interviews for student counsellors. Table 4 indicates the response rate of the study respondents.

**Table 4***Response Rate*

Respondents	N	(f)	(%)
Students	400	329	82
Peer Counsellors	218	218	100
Student Counsellors	26	13	50

Table 4 shows that the response rate for the students and the peer counsellors was over 70% and the Student Counsellors was 50%. The student counsellors' numbers have reduced in Kenyan universities because of natural attrition. The response rate is considered sufficient for the research because according to Gay *et al.* (2015) a response rate of above 50% will increase the confidence with which findings are generalizable to the population from which the sample was developed. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) and Punch (2003) further suggests that in survey research, when the response rate is at 50 % it can be taken as 'adequate'; at 60% 'good' and 70% and above 'very good'.

**4.3 Demographic Data of Respondents**

The demographic data collected from the participants included their gender, family type where respondent was raised in and the annual income of the family. The findings have been outlined and discussed as follows:

**4.3.1 Gender of Respondents**

Table 5 illustrates the gender of the study's respondents to ascertain if gender affects vulnerability to radicalization and to formulate potentially gender-specific prevention methods.

**Table 5***Gender of Respondents*

	Frequency	Percentage
Male	130	39.5
Female	199	60.5
Total	329	100.0

The results on Table 5 showed that among the students who participated in the study, the majority were female students (60.5 percent) the male counterparts constituted (39.5 percent). This could be attributed to the fact that researchers have found that females have a higher propensity to engage in research surveys than males (Porter & Whitcomb, 2005), particularly in the context of internet surveys (Smith, 2008). According to the Kenya Population Census carried out in 2021, the number of females is 26.73 million and 26.28 million males which is a proportion of 50.42% and 49.58% respectively. Demographic data in research is essential for evaluating whether the respondents constitute a representative sample of the target population, this data is representative of the population as the females are more than males also in the census.

#### 4.3.2 Family Type Where the Respondents Were Raised

Table 6 shows a summary of the family types in which the respondents of the study were raised in so as to find out if these variables influences university students' vulnerability to radicalisation.

**Table 6**

*Summary of Family Type*

Family Type	Frequency	Percentage
Both parents living together	235	71.4
Single parent due to death	43	13.1
Single parent due to divorce	9	2.0
Single parent due to separation	23	7.0
Single parent not married	11	3.3
Raised by guardian	8	2.4
Total	32	100.0

Table 6 shows that the majority of students were raised in a family with both parents living together (71.4%), followed by single parent due to death (13.1%), and single parent due to separation (7.0%). The percentage of students raised by a single parent not married or a guardian was lower (3.3% and 2.4% respectively). These findings are significant to the study because of the need to find out if the family type where students are raised has an

association with vulnerability to radicalization. Data from the students are similar to data got from the population census 2019 in Kenya. where 45 per cent of all children in Kenya were not raised by both biological parents, data from the latest Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) shows 5.5 % of Kenyan 12 million households were headed by divorced persons (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics report census, 2019).

### 4.3.3 Family Annual Income

Table 7 provides a summary of the annual income of the study respondents so as to find out if this variable influences university students' vulnerability to radicalisation.

**Table 7**

*Summary of Annual Income*

Income bracket	Frequency	Percent
Below Ksh. 10,000	51	15.5
Ksh. 10,000 - Ksh. 30,000	40	12.2
Ksh. 30,001 - Ksh. 50,000	92	28.0
Ksh. 50,001 - Ksh. 100,000	74	22.5
Above Ksh.100,000	72	21.9
Total	329	100.0

Table 7 reveals that majority of students (28.0 percent) came from the families with annual income of between Ksh. 30,001 and Ksh. 50,000. 44.4 percent of students were from the families with annual income of above Ksh. 50,000. Conversely, 27.7 percent of the students belonged to the families with annual income of less than Ksh. 30,000. From the findings 50.5 percent of the students come from families earning Ksh 30,000- Ksh100,000 annually. These findings are important to the study so as to find out if there is an association between annual income of the family and vulnerability to radicalization. This data compares with the Economic survey 2019 by Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2019) that posits that data on the annual income of families is significant as it aids in comprehending the distinctive characteristics of the population. In Kenya 3% of the population earn Ksh 50,000 and above, 13% earn between Ksh 10,000 and 20,000, 10% earn Ksh 10,000-50,000, 12% earn less than Ksh 5000, 1% retired without pension, 38% of the population have no monthly income while 29% of the population are self-employed.

#### 4.4 University Students' Perceived Influence of Family Type on Vulnerability to Radicalization

The first objective of the study sought to test the following hypothesis.

**Ho1: There is no statistically significant university student's perceived influence of family type on vulnerability to radicalization.**

Cross tabulation between family type and perception of students on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies was carried out and the results of the test are shown in Table 8.

**Table 8**

*Cross Tabulation for Family Type and the Reasons to Justify Extremist Ideologies*

Family type student raised in *		Reasons to justify extremist ideologies Cross tabulation					Total
		Composite scores of students on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies					
Family type		DS	D	I	A	SA	
Both parents	Count	4	41	31	88	71	235
living together	Expected Count	5	32.1	32.1	91.4	74.3	235
	% of Total	1	12.50%	9.40%	26.70%	21.60%	71.40%
Single parent	Count	1	2	5	19	16	43
due to death	Expected Count	0.9	5.9	5.9	16.7	13.6	43
	% of Total	0.30%	0.60%	1.50%	5.80%	4.90%	13.10%
Single parent	Count	0	0	1	2	6	9
due to divorce	Expected Count	0.2	1.2	1.2	3.5	2.8	9
	% of Total	0.00%	0.00%	0.30%	0.60%	1.80%	2.70%
Single parent	Count	2	2	5	9	5	23
due to	Expected Count	0.5	3.1	3.1	8.9	7.3	23
separation	% of Total	0.60%	0.60%	1.50%	2.70%	1.50%	7.00%
Single parent	Count	0	0	1	5	5	11
not married	Expected Count	0.2	1.5	1.5	4.3	3.5	11
	% of Total	0.00%	0.00%	0.30%	1.50%	1.50%	3.30%
Raised by	Count	0	0	2	5	1	8
guardian	Expected Count	0.2	1.1	1.1	3.1	2.5	8
	% of Total	0.00%	0.00%	0.60%	1.50%	0.30%	2.40%
Total	Count	7	45	45	128	104	329

Expected Count	7	45	45	128	104	329
% of Total	2.10%	13.70%	13.70%	38.90%	31.60%	100.0%

SD=Strongly disagree, D=Disagree, I = Indifferent, A =Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

Table 8 shows the cross tabulation for family type where student is raised in and the reasons to justify extremist ideologies. The results show that out of the total 329 respondents, the majority (71.4%) were raised by both parents living together. The highest percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with reasons justifying extremist ideologies were those raised by both parents living together (48.3%). Further, students raised by a single parent due to death (10.7%), single parents due to separation (4.2%), single parents not married (3.0%), single parents due to divorce (2.4%) and raised by guardian (1.8%) either agreed or strongly agreed with reasons justifying extremist ideologies.

On the other hand, 13.7% students raised by both parents living together disagreed or strongly disagreed with reasons justifying extremist ideologies. Additionally, students raised by single parent due to death 0.9%, single parent due to divorce 0.0%, and single parent due to separation 1.2%. Students raised by single parents not married, single parents due to divorce and guardian had no student disagreeing with the reasons. The results indicate that being raised by both parents living together may have a higher tendency to justify extremist ideologies while being raised by a single parent due to separation may have a lower tendency to do so.

These findings vary with studies done by Borum (2004) who posit that it is how children are raised and not the type of family that makes children vulnerable to radicalisation. The author points out those individuals who are vulnerable to radicalisation are raised in severely dysfunctional families in which they undoubtedly endured significant abuse, culminating in hostility against their parents. Their radical worldview serves as a manifestation of their rebellion and animosity against authority. Unstable family situations and not family type may strengthen the radicalization process. The absence of positive parental interactions or death of a family member may compel a child to seek affiliation with a radical organization, which assumes the role of a substitute family (Scremin, 2023).

These findings compliment El Said and Harrigan (2013) in a study in Saudi Arabia which established that most detained violent extremists have a history that is influenced by personal and individual issues, including insufficient parental care resulting from the prevalence of the polygamy system. This also engenders additional issues pertaining to inheritance, financial settlements, jealousy, arranged marriages, and familial and

interpersonal connections. This highlights the fact that family factors contribute to vulnerability to radicalization.

Table 9 shows results of chi-square test of independence on cross tabulation between family type and reasons to justify extremist ideologies.

**Table 9**

*Results of Chi-Square Tests on Cross tabulation for Family Type and Reasons to Justify Extremist Ideologies*

	Chi-square Tests		
	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.662 <sup>a</sup>	20	.177
Likelihood Ratio	27.849	20	.113
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.358	1	.244
No. of Valid Cases	329		

The results of chi-square test of independence likelihood ratio ( $\chi^2(20) = 27.849$ ,  $p = 0.113$ ) showed that the family type in which the students were raised had insignificant association on level of agreement or disagreement to reasons to justify extremist ideologies. Therefore, there was no enough evidence to conclude that the two variables are associated due to lack of statistical significance. It was noted that 19 cells (63.3%) had an expected count less than 5, with the minimum expected count being 0.17. Therefore, we fail to reject hypothesis Ho1.

Table 10 shows the measure of strength of effect on cross tabulation for family type and reasons to justify extremist ideologies.

**Table 10**

*Measure of Strength of Effect on Cross Tabulation for Family Type and Reasons to Justify Extremist Ideologies*

	Symmetric Measures		
		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.279	.177
	Cramer's V	.140	.177

Symmetric measures in Table 10, Cramer's V effect size measure= 0.14 at an approximate

significance of .177 indicates that family type had moderate and insignificant association on vulnerability to radicalisation in regard to the reasons to justify extremist ideologies among university students in Kenya. It can be concluded that being raised by both or disagreement with reasons justifying extremist ideologies. Further, symmetric measures indicate that family type had a moderate and insignificant association with vulnerability to radicalization. Consequently, it is essential to consider additional factors that may contribute to vulnerability to radicalization. The finding of Table 9 and 10 also varies with a study done by King, Noor and Taylor (2011) on the jihadist phenomenon in Australia. Stable familial bonds, in particular, have been a crucial factor in perpetuating radicalization in Australia. The family network facilitates passing of ideology from, for example, from father to son and mother to daughter. Further surveys by King *et al.* (2011) conducted in a study including 20 close relatives of 16 Jema'ah Islamiyah adherents in Indonesia found out that family members agreed with their relatives' participation in violent acts and perceived their familial circle as supportive. Findings also disagrees with that of a study by Ran Research Paper (2018) who found out that having a difficult life when parents' divorce make children vulnerable to radicalisation. Familial interactions have been used to moderate excessive thoughts and behaviors. Regarding the family environment, one of the key informants said that:

*“The radical nature of an individual depends on how the person has been brought up and the traumatic events surrounding their upbringing like divorce that greatly affects children. Being raised by a single parent can increase truancy, radicalisation and children running away from home especially when the mother is neglectful and uncaring.”*

Finding in this study vary with other studies by Sikkens *et al.* (2017) assert that the transmission of extreme ideologies from parents to their offspring is prevalent. They differentiate several opinions on the effect parents may have on their child's radicalization process: the first perspective is the parent's direct parental effect on radicalization. This pertains to a basic intergenerational transfer of ideology, where radicals often adopt the extreme beliefs of their parents, who frequently serve as their role models. Consequently,

parental biases and radical beliefs directly impact their children. This is in line with feedback of the key informants in the Focus Group Discussions of the study in which one of the informants mentioned:

*“Family aspects that can contribute to students’ vulnerability to radicalisation include being raised by radical parents who indoctrinate and expose the children to an extremist social environment”*

Finding however agree with Sikkens *et al.* (2018) in a study consisting of 21 in depth interviews with Dutch former radicals and their family members they found out that former radicals and their families do not acknowledge a direct impact of parental influence on radicalization and de-radicalization. This is an assumption derived from many research findings indicating little evidence of familial effect. Some studies have unequivocally shown that Islamic jihadi radicals and terrorists originate from diverse familial origins. There are also studies indicate that some Muslim extremists have disassociated themselves from their parents' Westernized ideology and lifestyle.

#### **4.5 University Students’ Perceived influence of Family Parenting Style on Vulnerability to Radicalization**

The second objective of the study sought to test the following hypothesis.

**Ho2: There is no statistically significant university students’ perceived influence of family parenting style on vulnerability to radicalisation.**

The Chi-square test of independence was done based on three different parenting styles.

##### **4.5.1 Association Between Authoritative Parenting Style and Vulnerability to Radicalisation**

Cross tabulation between the authoritative parenting style and perception of students on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies was done and the results were summarized in Table 11.

**Table 11**

*Cross Tabulation of Authoritative Parenting Style and Vulnerability to Radicalisation*

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Authoritative parenting style \* Perception of students on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies Cross tabulation

	Total
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Cross	DS	Count	0	0	2	1	4	7
Tabulation		Expected Count	.1	1.0	1.0	2.7	2.2	7.0
Authoritative		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.3%	1.2%	2.1%
parenting	D	Count	0	4	4	11	2	21
		Expected Count	.4	2.9	2.9	8.2	6.6	21.0
		% of Total	.3%	2.4%	2.4%	6.4%	2.7%	14.3%
	I	Count	1	8	8	21	9	47
		Expected Count	1.0	6.4	6.4	18.3	14.9	47.0
		% of Total	0.3%	2.4%	2.4%	6.4%	2.7%	14.3%
	A	Count	3	17	15	48	20	103
		Expected Count	2.2	14.1	14.1	40.1	32.6	103.0
		% of Total	0.9%	5.2%	4.6%	14.6%	6.1%	31.3%
	SA	Count	3	16	16	47	69	151
		Expected Count	3.2	20.7	20.7	58.7	47.7	151.0
		% of Total	9%	4.9%	4.9%	14.3%	21.0%	45.9%
	Total Count		7	45	45	128	104	329
		Expected Count	7.0	45.0	45.0	128.0	104.0	329.0
		% of Total	2.1%	13.7%	13.7%	39.9%	31.6%	100.0%

SD=Strongly disagree, D=Disagree, I = Indifferent, A =Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

Chi-square test of independence was done to determine the relationship between authoritative parenting style and vulnerability to radicalisation in regard to the reasons to justify extremist ideologies among the university students. The test was performed on a sample of 329 students. The cross-tabulation Table 11 showed largest group of students (38.9%) agreed and 31.6% strongly agreed with the reasons to justify extremist ideologies. On the other hand, 2.1% and 13.7% of students disagreed strongly and disagreed with reasons to justify extremist ideologies. 13.7% of students were unable to agree or disagree with the reasons to justify extremist ideologies. Table 12 presents the chi square test of independence on cross tabulation between authoritative parenting style and vulnerability to radicalization.

**Table 12**

*Results of Chi-Square Tests on Cross Tabulation of Authoritative Parenting Style and Vulnerability to Radicalisation*

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	35.117a	16	.004
Likelihood Ratio	37.629	16	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.408	1	.011
No. of Valid Cases	329		

Table 13 presents the measure of strength of effect on cross tabulation between authoritative parenting style and vulnerability to radicalization.

**Table 13**

*Measure of Strength of Effect on Cross Tabulation of Authoritative Parenting Style and Vulnerability to Radicalisation*

Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.327	.004
	Cramer's V	.163	.004
No. of Valid Cases		.329	

The results of Chi-square test of independence likelihood Ratio ( $\chi^2(16) = 37.629$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) revealed a significant association between the two variables. Cramer's V = 0.163 at an approximate significance of 0.004 indicates that authoritative parenting style had moderate and significant association on vulnerability to radicalisation in regard to the reasons to justify extremist ideologies among university students.

According to the study findings, university students are significantly more vulnerable to radicalization when their parents have an authoritative parenting style when it comes to the

justifications for extreme ideologies. The Chi-square test of independence revealed that an authoritative parenting style had a moderate and significant association on a child's vulnerability to radicalization. The analysis showed that a large portion of students agreed with the justifications for extremist ideologies while a far small part disagreed. Hypothesis Ho2 was therefore rejected.

#### 4.5.2 Association Between Authoritarian Parenting Style and Vulnerability to Radicalisation

Table 14 presents a cross tabulation between authoritarian parenting style and perception of students on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies.

**Table 14**

*Cross Tabulation of Authoritarian Parenting Style and Vulnerability to Radicalization*

		Authoritarian parenting style * Perception of students on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies Cross tabulation						
		Perception of students on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies						
		SD	D	I	A	SA	Total	
Authoritarian parenting style	SD	Count	2	5	4	25	47	83
		Expected Count	1.8	11.4	11.4	32.3	26.2	83.0
		% of Total	0.6%	1.5%	1.2%	7.6%	14.3%	25.2%
	D	Count	2	15	9	51	30	107
		Expected Count	2.3	14.6	14.6	41.6	33.8	107.0
		% of Total	0.6%	4.6%	2.7%	15.5%	9.1%	32.5%
	I	Count	2	18	19	35	21	95
		Expected Count	2.0	13.0	13.0	37.0	30.0	95.0
		% of Total	0.6%	5.5%	5.8%	10.6%	6.4%	28.9%
	A	Count	1	4	7	13	5	30
		Expected Count	.6	4.1	4.1	11.7	9.5	30.0

	% of Total	0.3%	1.2%	2.1%	4.0%	1.5%	9.1%
SA	Count	0	3	6	4	1	14
	Expected Count	.3	1.9	1.9	5.4	4.4	14.0
	% of Total	0.0%	0.9%	1.8%	1.2%	0.3%	4.3%
Total	Count	7	45	45	128	104	329
	Expected Count	7.0	45.0	45.0	128.0	104.0	329.0
	% of Total	2.1%	13.7%	13.7%	38.9%	31.6%	100.0%

SD=Strongly disagree, D=Disagree, I = Indifferent, A =Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

Chi-square test of independence was conducted to determine the association between authoritarian parenting style and vulnerability to radicalisation in regard to the reasons to justify extremist ideologies among the university students. The test was performed on a sample of 329 students. The cross-tabulation Table 14 showed largest group of students (38.9%) agreed and 31.6%) strongly agreed with the reasons to justify extremist ideologies. 13.7% of students were indifferent with the reasons to justify extremist ideologies. 13.7% and 2.1% of students disagreed and strongly disagreed with reasons to justify extremist ideologies. Table 15 presents the chi square test of independence on cross tabulation between authoritarian parenting style and vulnerability to radicalization.

**Table 15**

*Results of Chi-Square Tests on Cross Tabulation of Authoritarian Parenting Style and Vulnerability to Radicalisation*

	Chi-Square Tests		
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	55.890a	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	53.751	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	25.918	1	.000
No. of valid cases	329		

The measure of strength of effect on cross tabulation of authoritarian parenting style and vulnerability to radicalization is presented in table 16.

**Table 16**

*Measure of Strength of Effect on Cross Tabulation of Authoritarian Parenting Style and Vulnerability to Radicalisation*

Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.412	.000
	Cramer's V	.206	.000
N of Valid Cases		.329	

The results of Chi-square test of independence likelihood Ratio ( $\chi^2 (16) = 53.751, p < 0.05$ ) revealed that there was a significant association between the two variables. Cramer's V = 0.206 at an approximate significance of 0.000 indicates that authoritarian parenting style had moderate and significant association on vulnerability to radicalisation in regard to the reasons to justify extremist ideologies among university students. Hypothesis Ho2 was therefore rejected.

#### **4.5.3 Association between Permissive Parenting Style and Vulnerability to Radicalisation**

Cross tabulation between permissive parenting style and perception of students on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies was carried out and the results of the test are shown in Table 17.

**Table 17**

*Cross Tabulation of Permissive Parenting Style and Vulnerability to Radicalization*

Permissive parenting style * Perception of students on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies Cross tabulation										
			Perception of students on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies							
		DS	D	I	A	SA	Total			
Permi ssive	DS	Count	4	21	17	54	74	170		
		Expected Count	3.6	23.3	23.3	66.1	53.7	170.0		

	% of Total	1.2%	6.4%	5.2%	16.4%	22.5%	51.7%
D	Count	2	15	15	35	25	92
	Expected Count	2.0	12.6	12.6	35.8	29.1	92.0
	% of Total	0.6%	4.6%	4.6%	10.6%	7.6%	28.0%
I	Count	1	8	9	28	4	50
	Expected Count	1.1	6.8	6.8	19.5	15.8	50.0
	% of Total	0.3%	2.4%	2.7%	8.5%	1.2%	15.2%
A	Count	0	0	2	8	0	10
	Expected Count	.2	1.4	1.4	3.9	3.2	10.0
	% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	2.4%	0.0%	3.0%
SA	Count	0	1	2	3	1	7
	Expected Count	.1	1.0	1.0	2.7	2.2	7.0
	% of Total	0.0%	0.3%	0.6%	0.9%	0.3%	2.1%
Total	Count	7	45	45	128	104	329
	Expected Count	7.0	45.0	45.0	128.0	104.0	329.0
	% of Total	2.1%	13.7%	13.7%	38.9%	31.6%	100.0%

SD=Strongly disagree, D=Disagree, I = Indifferent, A =Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

Chi-square test of independence was conducted to determine whether there was significant association between permissive parenting style and vulnerability to radicalisation in regard to the reasons to justify extremist ideologies among the university students. The test was performed on a sample of 329 students. The cross-tabulation Table 17 showed largest group of students (38.9%) agreed and 31.6%) strongly agreed with the reasons to justify extremist ideologies. 13.7% of students were unable to agree or disagree with the reasons. On the other hand, 2.1% and 13.7% of students disagreed strongly and disagreed respectively with reasons to justify extremist ideologies. Table 18 presents the chi square test of independence on cross tabulation between permissive parenting style and vulnerability to radicalization.

### **Table 18**

*Results of Chi-Square Tests on Cross Tabulation of Permissive Parenting Style and Vulnerability to Radicalisation*

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Chi-square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	38.137a	16	.001
Likelihood Ratio	44.632	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.744	1	.005
No. of Valid Cases		329	

The measure of strength of effect on cross tabulation of permissive parenting style and vulnerability to radicalization is presented in Table 19.

**Table 19**

*Measure of Strength of Effect on Cross Tabulation of Permissive Parenting Style and Vulnerability to Radicalisation*

	Symmetric Measures		
	Value	Approximate Significance	
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.340	.001
	Cramer's V	.170	.001
No. of Valid Cases	329		

The results of Chi-square test of independence likelihood Ratio ( $\chi^2(16) = 44.632, p < 0.05$ ) revealed that there was a significant association between the two variables. Cramer's V = .170 at an approximate significance of 0.001 indicates that permissive parenting style had moderate and significant association on vulnerability to radicalisation in regard to the reasons to justify extremist ideologies among university students. Hypothesis Ho2 was therefore rejected. Findings on the influence of parenting styles on vulnerability to radicalisation is similar to that of research conducted by Rachmatianto and Freyani (2022) which investigated the correlations between parenting styles and excellence and the level of radicalism that is present among senior high school students in Indonesia. A total of 178 students from several schools in City X were participants. The researchers observed that there is a relationship between authoritative parenting, authoritarian parenting and permissive parenting to radicalism. Moreover, authoritative and authoritarian parenting had a significant positive correlation with radicalism.

Finding by Zych *et al.* (2020) demonstrated that parental promotion of moral disengagement, whereby children are taught that immoral activities may be rationalized,

correlated with aggressive behaviors in children. Consequently, some parenting techniques and the expression of radical concepts by parents may inspire their children to embrace radical attitudes and actions. Conversely, some parenting methods or demonstrations of beliefs opposing radicalization may serve as protective factors (Sikkens, *et al.* 2018). These findings support the research findings of there being an association between parental style and radicalisation. From the focus groups discussions conducted with the peer counsellors, one of the key informants also indicated that:

*“Some families lack unity and parents too may not have time for their children leading to lack of monitoring of their behaviour and instilling moral values as a result negative peer influence may result and even radicalisation”*

Findings of the study concur with Field (1979) study on terrorism in Northern Ireland that found that parental upbringing cause vulnerability to radicalization. Children who have had significant impairment in the development of moral reasoning and cognitive abilities feel helpless, hopeless and isolated. Children who are badly treated, and/or unjustly punished, seek revenge. Young adolescents, who were previously terrorized, transform and become terrorists, particularly when they have social support from peers opposing the activities of an unjust government, therefore adopting terrorist methods as a lifestyle (Helmus, 2009). Borum (2004) compliments the study findings that specific personal experiences are often seen among terrorists. Incidences of childhood maltreatment and trauma seem to also be prevalent among terrorists. Histories of childhood abuse and trauma appear to be widespread. In addition, themes of perceived injustice and humiliation within the family sometimes feature prominently in the biographies and personal histories of terrorists (Koehler, 2023). None of these factors provide a causative explanation for terrorism; nonetheless, they may serve as indicators of vulnerability, potential sources of motivation, or methods for adopting or reinforcing an individual's extreme ideology.

Findings, however, differed in Rachmatianto and Freyani (2022) study who found out that the permissive parenting style had a significant negative association with radicalism. Authoritative parenting generated outcomes that contradicted prevailing beliefs on parenting. In households where parents habitually neglect to supervise their children's activities and rarely administer discipline to them when they do wrong, was shown to reduce radicalism. The authors attributed this to the potential influence of other elements within the educational environment where the study was done causing this. However, to be able to prove this, researchers suggested that subsequent study should examine the role of the school

environment as a mediating or intervening variable.

In-depth interview findings in a study on parental influence on radicalization and de-radicalization according to the lived experiences of 21 Dutch former extremists and their families by Sikkens *et al*, (2018) also differ with the findings of the study as the authors state that parents exert no influence on the radicalization process whatsoever. No definitive correlation was identified between a familial history characterized by poverty or hardship and affiliation with extremist organizations.

#### 4.5.4 Family Issues that Contribute to Students' Vulnerability to Radicalization

A summary of the family issues that contribute to students' vulnerability to radicalization as identified by peer counsellors are presented in Table 20.

**Table 20**

*Family Issues that Contribute to Students' Vulnerability to Radicalization as identified by Peer Counsellors*

Theme	Sub-theme	No. of references	Percent
Dysfunctionality in the family	Disunity in the family	2	
	Broken families	2	
	Weak family bond strength	1	22.7
Radical environment	Family support radicalization	3	18.2
	Parents are radical	1	
Domestic violence	Physical, psychological & emotional violence in families	2	18.2
	Conflicts in the family	2	
Parenting style	Poor parenting style	4	18.2
Divorce/separation	Divorce or separation of parents	3	13.6
Negligence	Some parents having no time for their children	2	9.1
	Lack of enough financial resources to meet basic needs	2	9.1
Freedom of expression	Denying students independence of expression	2	9.1

Rejection	Family rejection can push one to extremism	2	9.1
Moral values	Lack of strong ethical values	1	4.5
Family type	Single parenting causes a child to be radical towards a certain gender	1	4.5
Exposure	Lack of knowledge on certain emerging issues	1	4.5
Self-esteem	Low self-regard	1	4.5
Personality	A person's temperament that determines their radical nature	1	4.5
	Grand Total	22	100.0

From the focus group discussions, the peer counsellors identified that dysfunctional families characterized by disunity and weak family bonds (22.7%) was found to be a major aspect that contributes to students' vulnerability to radicalization. Other major aspects that contribute to students' vulnerability to radicalization were; being brought up in a radical family environment that supports or holds radical views (18.2%), domestic violence and conflicts in a family (18.2%) and poor parenting styles (18.2%). In agreement with this, one of the peer counsellors indicated that:

*“Violence and conflicts in families in the form of disagreements, quarrelling, hostile attitudes, and marital instability, disunity and divorce in the family are some of the factors that contribute to a great extent to vulnerability radicalization”*

This aligns with the comments from the study's main informants in which one of them said that:

*“Peer pressure, poverty and get rich quick mentality and the search for social identity also push students to radicalisation because they are lured with money by radical groups.”*

#### **4.5.5 Family Issues that Contribute to Students' Vulnerability to Radicalization as Identified by Student Counsellors**

The student counsellors also identified family issues that contribute to students' vulnerability to radicalization and this is presented in Table 21.

**Table 21**

*Family Issues that Contribute to Students' Vulnerability to Radicalization as identified by Student Counsellors*

Theme	Sub-theme	No. of references	Percent
Poverty	High levels of scarcity of basic needs	6	50.0
Dysfunctionality in families	Weak family bonds in families	6	50.0
Negligence	Parents not providing for basic needs/directions	5	41.7
Abuse	Physical exploitation at home	3	33.3
	Sexual harassment	1	
Parenting style	Poor parenting styles	3	25.0
Divorce and separation	Broken families	2	16.7
Radical views	Family members with extremist views	2	16.7
Drug abuse	Unchecked drug dependence	1	8.3
Family conflicts	Family discord	1	8.3
Indoctrination	Religious brainwashing	1	8.3
Parental over control	Pressure from parents	1	8.3
	Grand total	12	

The findings from the interviews conducted with the student counsellors revealed that high levels of poverty (50.0%), dysfunctionality in families (50.0%) and negligence from parents especially non-provision of the basic needs and directions to their children (41.7%) were provided as major three family issues that contributes to students' vulnerability to radicalization. Physical abuse and sexual harassment at home (33.3%) and poor parenting styles (25.0%) respectively were other family aspects identified by student counsellors that contribute to vulnerability to radicalisation.

The findings from the peer counsellors and student counsellors on the issues that contribute to radicalisation are similar to studies done by Post *et al.* (2003) as cited in Sikkens *et al.* (2018). The research was conducted on 35 convicted Middle-Eastern terrorists, the

majority of whom had no familial connections to the same terrorist group. The parents of these detained individuals either endorsed their children's cause or refrained from discouraging their active participation. The sample also included parents who indoctrinated their children in favor of extreme organizations from a young age. From this the influence of the family into radicalisation is evident.

The findings align with the study of Cowan and Cowan (1992), as referenced in Sikkens *et al.* (2018), which suggests that parental conflict may affect the quality of interactions with their children. Severe domestic problems may result in less parental availability to the child, causing parents to overlook signals their children convey due to their preoccupation with various issues. Bigo *et al.* (2015) similarly demonstrate that unstable family environments may exacerbate the radicalization process, broken families, substance abuse within the family, family violence, and loss of family members are part of the problematic family backgrounds that make individuals vulnerable to radicalization. Borum (2011) further identify that the loss of a family member does not immediately result in radicalization; nonetheless, it may render an individual susceptible to radical factions.

Most student counsellors interviewed were in agreement that several factors in the family contribute to radicalisation. Some of the factors include; family conflict, religious indoctrination and poverty that play a major role by creating an individual who is easily swayed in their beliefs to join radical movements. One of the student counsellors mentioned that:

*“Neglecting and authoritarian parenting styles to a large extent contribute to vulnerability to radicalisation. In addition, poverty, dysfunctional families, sexual and physical abuse at home and lack of proper upbringing to a large extent make children lack direction and thus children can be influence by radical peers.”*

Another student counsellor said that:

*“Not providing for basic needs like finances, food and shelter and not monitoring what children are doing in a family can be a pull factor to radicalisation.”*

The present study's findings correspond with those of Lösel *et al.* (2018), who conducted a systematic analysis utilizing extensive searches across 15 databases, encompassing various individual, familial, educational, peer, communal, and societal characteristics associated with radicalization. Family characteristics, including parental style, non-violent significant others, and homeownership, were found as protective elements against vulnerability to radicalization.

The Global Counter terrorism forum (2015) further posits that the family, as an instrument of culture and ideology, may significantly influence views towards non-violence. Social networks and peer groups significantly influence the processes of radicalization to violence, either by supporting or hindering them. The study underscores the significance of good social networks in bolstering non-violent norms and enhancing resilience against violent extremism. Additional research indicates that the family exerts a greater influence on individual perspectives toward nonviolence than other social networks. The influence of parents appears to be particularly substantial. When parental influence on children's decision-making diminishes, their capacity to avert radicalization to violence is compromised (Khan *et al.*, 2023). The family, as a conduit of culture and belief, can play a central role in shaping attitudes toward non-violence. Social networks and peer groups in general play a profound role in facilitating, or undermining, processes of radicalization to violence (Kruglanski *et al.*, 2019). The research further emphasizes that positive social networks are important in reinforcing non-violent norms and resilience to violent extremism. Additional research found that the family is more significant than other forms of social networks in influencing individual views on nonviolence. Parental impact seems to be especially significant. When parents have less influence on their children's decision-making, they are less equipped to prevent radicalization to violence (Siegel *et al.*, 2019). This is in agreement with the findings of this study.

#### **4.6 University Students' Perceived Influence of Social Economic Status on Vulnerability to Radicalisation**

The third objective of the study sought to test the following hypothesis.

**Ho3: There is no statistically significant university students' perceived influence of social economic status on vulnerability to radicalisation.**

The Chi-square test of independence was carried out to determine university students' perceived influence of social economic status on vulnerability to radicalization in regard to reasons to justify extremist ideologies using 329 students. Table 22 shows the cross tabulation between annual income and vulnerability to radicalization.

**Table 22***Cross Tabulation Between Annual Income and Vulnerability to Radicalisation*

Family annual income * Perception of students on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies		DS	D	I	A	SA	Total
Family income	Count	0	2	14	20	15	51
	Expected	1.1	7	7	19.8	16.1	51
	Count	0.00%	0.60%	4.30%	6.10%	4.60%	15.50%
	% of Total	0	6	3	18	13	40
	Count	0.9	5.5	5.5	15.6	12.6	40
	Expected	0.00%	1.80%	0.90%	5.50%	4.00%	12.20%
	Count	1	1	8	40	42	92
	Expected	2	12.6	12.6	35.8	29.1	92
	Count	0.30%	0.30%	2.40%	12.20%	12.80%	28.00%
	% of Total	1	12	7	32	22	74
	Count	1.6	10.1	10.1	28.8	23.4	74
	Expected	0.30%	3.60%	2.10%	9.70%	6.70%	22.50%
	% of Total	5	24	13	18	12	72
	Count	1.5	9.8	9.8	28	22.8	72
	Expected	1.50%	7.30%	4.00%	5.50%	3.60%	21.90%
	% of Total	7	45	45	128	104	329
	Count	7	45	45	128	104	329
	Expected	2.10%	13.70%	13.70%	38.90%	31.60%	100.00%
	% of Total						

SD= Strongly disagree, D=Disagree, I = Indifferent, A =Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

The results of cross tabulation Table 22 in respect to students who agreed or strongly agreed with the reasons to justify extremist ideologist were from family income bracket Ksh. 30,001 - Ksh. 50,000 (25.0%) followed by from Ksh. 50,001 - Ksh. 100,000 at 16.4%. Family income bracket of above Ksh. 100,000 had the lowest 9.1% of students. Income brackets of Ksh. 10,000 - Ksh. 30,000 and below Ksh. 10,000 had 9.5% and 10.7% respectively. Conversely, the percentage of the students who either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the reasons to justify extremist ideologies were as follows: below Ksh. 10,000 (0.6%), Ksh. 10,000 - Ksh. 30,000 (1.8%), Ksh. 30,001 - Ksh. 50,000 (0.6%), Ksh. 50,001 - Ksh. 100,000 (3.9%) and above Ksh. 100,000 (3.2%). Table 23 shows the chi square test of independence on cross tabulation between annual income and vulnerability to radicalization.

**Table 23**

*Chi-square Statistics on Cross Tabulation Between Annual Income and Vulnerability to Radicalisation*

	Chi-Square Tests		
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	73.054a	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	74.836	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	20.910	1	.000
No. of Valid Cases	329		

The measure of strength of effect on cross tabulation of between annual income and vulnerability to radicalization is presented in Table 24.

**Table 24**

*Measure of Strength of Effect on Cross Tabulation Between Annual Income and Vulnerability to radicalisation*

	Symmetric Measures		
	Value	Approximate Significance	
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.471	.000
	Cramer's V	.236	.000
N of Valid Cases		329	

The Chi-square test of independence likelihood ratio results ( $\chi^2 (16) = 74.836, p < 0.05$ ) revealed that there was a significant association between family annual income and students' perception of vulnerability to radicalization in regard to the reasons to justify extremist ideologies among university students. The minimum predicted count was 0.85 while the expected count for 5 cells (20.0%) was less than 5. Further, Cramer's  $V = 0.236$  at an approximate significance=0.000 indicated strong and significant association between the two variables. Hypothesis Ho3 was therefore rejected.

In conclusion, there was an association between students' vulnerability to radicalisation and their annual family income. The likelihood that students from lower socio- economic groups will accept or strongly agree with the justifications for extremist ideologies is higher especially among those earning between Ksh10,000 and Ksh 50,000. Students from higher socioeconomic levels on the other hand are less likely to agree or strongly agree that social economic standing renders them vulnerable to radicalization. The fact that a sizable portion of students from all income levels disapprove or strongly disagree with radical ideas suggests that these views are not shared by all people. It might be required to conduct further research to comprehend the underlying causes of these trends and to create effective countermeasures to extremist ideologies.

The findings closely compare with a similar study in which Cachalia *et al.* (2016) notes that economic and developmental variables significantly contribute to driving young people to radicalization; nevertheless, they are not universally applicable in all instances. The authors assert that it is not just poverty, but rather conditions that inhibit the fulfillment of goals which may underlie feelings of hopelessness associated with extreme activity. This finding is also consistent with that of Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) study conducted in 2022, where the economic factors contributing to youth radicalization include unemployment, familial discord, instability, and the allure of financial gain. Silke (2008) identified that economic hardship, or a disadvantaged socioeconomic status, is often seen as a significant contributing factor to radicalization and possible terrorism. The findings are also similar to Zych and Nasaescu (2022) systematic review on whether radicalization a family issue. Research was conducted with 148,081 adults and adolescents from diverse geographic regions and found out that high family socioeconomic status ( $z = -0.03$ ), bigger family size ( $z = -0.05$ ), were related to less radicalization. A study by Burgoon (2006) is also consistent with the study findings as the author references studies conducted in Northern Ireland during the 1960s, which revealed heightened support for

political violence and terrorism among impoverished, unemployed, and less skilled and educated respondents.

The findings are inconsistent with that of Komen *et al.* (2016) that the poverty factor was regularly cited as a direct cause of radicalization. The authors observed that, regarding Islamic radicalism, it is notably challenging to locate evidence for such a claim. The economic situation cannot be deemed a causal element for all radicalism and terrorism; its influence appears contingent upon the characteristics of these occurrences. The authors assert that it would be erroneous to draw broad generalizations regarding the influence of economic status. The results also contradict Kavanagh's (2011) examination of Hezbollah combatants, which suggested that poverty had a negative link with participation in the extremist group. The authors conducted a statistical analysis of the factors influencing involvement in Hezbollah in Lebanon. A dataset comprising information on 129 Hezbollah members and a general population survey of similarly aged persons in Lebanon revealed that education and poverty are statistically unimportant indicators of martyrdom for a terrorist group. The findings also do not agree with those of Glazzard *et al.* (2015) on the role of economic factors in addressing the drivers of radicalisation. The authors posit that poverty should not be claimed as automatically contributing to vulnerability to radicalisation. Income, poverty, deprivation, and underemployment do not adequately account for violent extremism. Nevertheless, the authors assert that these characteristics can exacerbate other issues, notably grievances, and may therefore foster a climate favorable to violent extremist organizations. Study finding are also inconsistent with those of United Nations Development Programme (2017) that indicate that

poverty is not the only push factor causing violence and extremism. Socialization processes, influenced by personal, emotional, or psychological factors such as alienation, identity and dignity quests, retribution for past injustices, communication breakdowns between authority figures and youth, and virtual communities on social media, contribute to radicalization.

The study findings are contrary to the US Department State Government Country Reports on terrorism survey of 2022 of at least 129 nations showed that increased involvement in terrorism is predominantly linked to a deficiency of civil rights domestically, with minimal correlation to average national income. This research indicates that an important feature of most democratic nations with civil freedoms renders them less vulnerable to terrorism compared to those devoid of that trait. Fair and Shepherd's (2006) research on the impact of affluence on the populations of 14 African and South Asian nations, characterized by a

Muslim majority or significant Muslim minority, failed to find evidence that poverty serves as an incentive for terrorism, the correlation was actually the opposite: reduced poverty correlated with increased support for terrorism. A plausible explanation is that disadvantaged individuals are unable to prioritize issues that do not pertain directly to their immediate survival needs. Additional evidence is offered by Bhui *et al.* (2014), who conducted an extensive study of men and women of Muslim descent in the English cities of London and Bradford. Their survey indicated minimal endorsement of violent demonstrations and terrorism (under 3 percent of their sample); sympathy was more prevalent among respondents under 20 and engaged in full-time school rather than work. Additional indicators were being born in Britain and income, with individuals earning over €75,000 annually exhibiting greater sympathy. Krueger and Maleckova (2003) propose the argument that terrorism is a type of political involvement, albeit a violent one. Individuals who are relatively well-educated and come from prosperous backgrounds are the most likely to engage in political activity, whether peacefully or otherwise. This is primarily due to the necessity of possessing knowledge and commitment, particularly regarding resources that are often inaccessible to those who are poor and less educated; thus, terrorism is a luxury.

While focusing on family financial support it emerged from the interviews and focus group discussions that the level of financial support influences radicalisation together with other factors. One of the key informants asserted that:

*“Poverty and lack of principles can push students to connect with people who offer financial aid to them which sometimes is the incentive to join radical groups to get rich quick. However, some students are wise and develop resilience because of poverty at home and end up getting justified ways of working to earn money. The universities also provide work-study opportunities and bursaries for needy students so that radical groups and peers don't influence them”*

The Horn Institute and Centre for Sustainable Conflict Resolution (CSCR) in a survey done in (2017), on the Nature, drivers and perceptions of Muslim women and girls toward violent extremism (VE) in Kenya that focused on Muslim women and girls in the Violent Extremist hot-spot areas of Mombasa, Kilifi, Lamu and Kwale at the coast; Mandera, Wajir and Garissa in north eastern; and Isiolo in eastern Kenya. The findings compare with the study finding which reveal that poverty and unemployment are a significant trigger for several pull and push factors influencing vulnerability to extremism. Approximately 13% of respondents identified poverty and unemployment as the foremost risk factors. Fewer than

5% of the respondents rated it as a low-risk factor. These youths do not engage with VE organizations due to poverty, but rather to establish their identities (seeking attention and recognition), which VE affords them. From the survey, it was apparent that the women from poor backgrounds were more aware and cognizant of the risks of Violent Extremism. This is contrary to the study finding that there is an association between social economic factors and vulnerability to radicalisation.

#### 4.7 University Students’ Perceived Influence of Religious Beliefs on Vulnerability to Radicalisation

The fourth objective sought to test the following hypothesis

**Ho4: There is no statistically significant university students’ perceived influence of religious beliefs on vulnerability to radicalisation.**

The Chi-square test of independence was done based on university students’ perceived influence of suicide bombing, perceived influence of misinterpretation of religious teachings and perceived influence of radicalized religious environment on vulnerability to radicalisation.

##### 4.7.1 Perception of Association Between Justification of Suicide Bombing and Vulnerability to Radicalisation

The study was conducted to determine whether there was an association between justification of suicide bombing in selected places and vulnerability to radicalisation using Chi-square test of independence based on sample size of 329 university students. Table 25 shows the cross tabulation results between the variables.

**Table 25**

*Cross Tabulation Between Perception of Suicide Bombing and Vulnerability to Radicalization*

Perception of students on suicide bombing justification in various places*Perception of students on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies. Cross Tabulation		Perception of students on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies					
		DS	D	I	A	SA	Total
Perception of	Count	47	18	7	27	99	198
students on	Expected Count	29.5	17.5	9.0	33.7	108.3	198.0
	% of Total	14.3%	5.5%	2.1%	8.2%	30.1%	60.2%

whether suicide bombing is justified in various places	Disagree	Count	1	2	3	9	26	41
		Expected Count	6.1	3.6	1.9	7.0	22.4	41.0
		% of Total	0.3%	0.6%	0.9%	2.7%	7.9%	12.5%
	Indifferent	Count	1	4	3	9	10	27
		Expected Count	4.0	2.4	1.2	4.6	14.8	27.0
		% of Total	0.3%	1.2%	0.9%	2.7%	3.0%	8.2%
	Agree	Count	0	5	1	8	13	27
		Expected Count	4.0	2.4	1.2	4.6	14.8	27.0
		% of Total	0.0%	1.5%	0.3%	2.4%	4.0%	8.2%
	Strongly Agree	Count	0	0	1	3	32	36
		Expected count	5.4	3.2	1.6	6.1	19.7	36.0
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.9%	9.7%	10.9%
Total	Count	49	29	15	56	180	329	
	Expected count	49.0	29.0	15.0	56.0	180.0	329.0	
	% of Total	14.9	8.8%	4.6%	17.0%	54.7%	100.0%	

SD= Strongly disagree, D=Disagree, I = Indifferent, A =Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

The cross-tabulation Table 25 show that 38.3% of students who agreed or strongly agreed with reasons to justify extremist ideologies, disagreed with suicide bombing of churches, mosques, government buildings, learning institutions and business parks/malls. 10.6% of respondent who agreed or strongly agreed with justification of extremist ideologies, strongly agreed with suicide bombing of various places. Chi square test of independence on cross tabulation between perception of suicide bombing and vulnerability to radicalization was done and the results presented on Table 26.

**Table 26**

*Chi-square Statistics on Cross Tabulation Between Perception of Suicide Bombing and Vulnerability to Radicalisation*

	Chi-Square Tests		
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	59.263a	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	70.020	16	.000

Linear-by-Linear Association	20.920	1	.000
No. of Valid Cases	329		

The measure of strength of effect on cross tabulation of between perception of suicide bombing and vulnerability to radicalization is presented in Table 27.

**Table 27**

*Measure of Strength of Effect on Cross Tabulation Between Perception of Suicide Bombing and Vulnerability to Radicalisation*

Symmetric Measures			
	Value	Approximate	Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.424	.000
	Cramer's V	.212	.000
No. of Valid Cases		329	

The results of Chi-square test of independence likelihood Ratio ( $\chi^2(16) = 70.020$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) showed that there was a significant association on the justification of suicide bombing in selected places and justification of extremist ideologies. 12 cells (48.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.23. Cramer's V Symmetric Measure of 0.212 indicated a moderate association between the two variables (Field, 2013). Hypothesis Ho4 was therefore rejected.

Finding of the study disagree with a study by Pape (2005) in Koome *et al.* (2016) that showed that minimal correlation exists between suicide terrorism and Islamic fanaticism or any other religion. The author analyzed 315 suicide assaults conducted from 1980 to 2003 and determined that the majority are rooted in political strife rather than religion.

#### **4.7.2 Association between Misinterpretation of Religious Teachings, Radicalized**

##### **Religious Environment and Vulnerability to Radicalisation**

Chi-square test of independence was conducted to determine whether there was significant association between perception on misinterpretation of religious teachings, radicalized religious environment and perceptions on reasons to justify extremist ideologies based on a sample size of 329 university students. Cross tabulation between misinterpretation of religious teachings, radicalized religious environment and vulnerability to radicalization

was done and the results presented on Table 28.

**Table 28**

*Cross Tabulation Between Misinterpretation of Religious Teachings, Radicalized Religious Environment and Vulnerability to Radicalization*

Perception of students on the reasons to justify selected extremist ideologies *								
Perception of students on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies. Cross tabulation								
		DS	D	I	A	SA	Total	
Perception of students on misinterpretation of religious teachings and radicalized religious environment	DS	Count	2	1	0	0	0	3
		Expected Count	.4	.3	.1	.5	1.6	3.0
		% of Total	0.6%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
	D	Count	8	9	3	13	85	118
		Expected Count	17.6	10.4	5.4	20.1	64.6	118.0
		% of Total	2.4%	2.7%	0.9%	4.0%	25.8%	35.9%
	I	Count	13	4	5	15	51	88
		Expected Count	13.1	7.8	4.0	15.0	48.1	88.0
		% of Total	4.0%	1.2%	1.5%	4.6%	15.5%	26.7%
	A	Count	14	8	6	21	35	84
		Expected Count	12.5	7.4	3.8	14.3	46.0	84.0
		% of Total	4.3%	2.4%	1.8%	6.4%	10.6%	25.5%
SA	Count	12	7	1	7	9	36	
	Expected Count	5.4	3.2	1.6	6.1	19.7	36.0	
	% of Total	3.6%	2.1%	0.3%	2.1%	2.7%	10.9%	
Total	Count	49	29	15	56	180	329	
	Expected Count	49.0	29.0	15.0	56.0	180.0	329.0	
	% of Total	14.9%	8.8%	4.6%	17.0%	54.7%	100.0%	

SD=Strongly disagree, D=Disagree, I = Indifferent, A =Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

The results in cross tabulation Table 28 revealed that 29.8% of students disagreed with

misinterpretation of religious teachings and radicalized religious environment contributing to radicalization. 20.1% of students were not sure whether to agree or disagree that misinterpretation of religious teachings and radicalized religious environment contribute to radicalization. These students' either agreed or strongly agreed with reasons to justify extremist ideologies. On the other hand, 21.8% of students either agreed or strongly agreed with misinterpretation of religious teachings and radicalized religious environment contributing to radicalization these students' either agreed or strongly agreed with reasons to justify extremist ideologies. Chi square test of independence on cross tabulation between misinterpretation of religious teachings, radicalized religious environment and vulnerability to radicalization was done and the results presented on Table 29.

**Table 29**

*Chi-square Statistics on Cross Tabulation Between Misinterpretation of Religious Teachings, Radicalized Religious Environment and Vulnerability to Radicalisation*

	Chi-Square Tests		
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	22a	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	52.053	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	21.918	1	.000
No. of Valid Cases	329		

The measure of strength of effect on cross tabulation of between misinterpretation of religious teachings, radicalized religious environment and vulnerability to radicalization was done and results presented in Table 30.

**Table 30**

*Measure of Strength of Effect on Cross Tabulation Between Misinterpretation of Religious Teachings, Radicalized Religious Environment and Vulnerability to Radicalisation*

	Symmetric Measures		
		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.404	.000
	Cramer's V	.202	.000
No. of Valid Cases	329		

The results of the Chi-square test of independence likelihood Ratio ( $\chi^2 (16) = 52.053, p < 0.05$ ) indicated that there was a significant association between misinterpretation of religious teachings and radicalized religious environment and justification of reasons for extremist ideologies. Nine cells (36.0%) had expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 14. Cramer's V symmetric measure of 0.202 indicated a moderate association between the two variables (Field, 2013). Hypothesis Ho4 was therefore rejected.

Finding of the study are contrary to Koome *et al.* (2016) who observed that religion, in itself, is typically not the root cause of conflict; rather, it enhances the complexity of pre-existing disputes or conflicts. That is precisely the point made by Satana, *et al.* (2013) who posit that religion is often used in combination with other factors, sometimes as a primary motivation and sometimes as a justification to radicalisation. Mandaville and Nozell (2017), also posit that there exists an interaction between religion and many local or contextual elements, including state violence, corruption, certain forms of socioeconomic challenges, localized conflict, youth disaffection, and identity crises. These factors all contribute to vulnerability to radicalization.

The focus group discussions identified that religious factors were a major pull factor to radicalisation. In agreement with this, one of the peer counsellors indicated that:

*“Religious texts have been manipulated to suit the radical group's agenda this may lure the youth with the promise of religious rewards and a righteous purpose. Religious beliefs are trusted since time immemorial and some religious leaders have been trying to recruit many to their groups.”*

On whether radicalised religious environments contribute to violence one of the key peer counsellor informants said that:

*“Yes, radical religious environments contribute to violence since a different interpretation contrary to the majority religious views may cause chaos among members hence causing differences hence more splinter groups.”*

These findings are similar to studies done by Onuoha (2014) who contends that insufficient comprehension of authentic religious doctrine renders youth vulnerable to recruitment and radicalization by independent preachers, extreme groups, and religious ideologues.

### 4.7.3 Perception on Misinterpretation of Religious Teachings as a Pull Factor Towards Involvement in Radicalization

Table 31 shows the peer counsellors perception on misinterpretation of religious teachings as a pull factor towards involvement in radicalization.

**Table 31**

*Perception on Misinterpretation of Religious Teachings As a Pull Factor Towards Involvement in Radicalization*

Theme	Sub-theme	No. of reference	Percent
Religion	Some teachings preach hate towards	1	30.8
Intolerance	other Religions		
	Some religions are unwilling to accept other religious views	3	
Influence	Can cause swaying to radical ideas	3	23.1
Perception	Wrong religious views given	1	7.7
Brainwashing	It causes indoctrination	1	7.7
Dressing code	Requirements on acceptable attire at the University	1	7.7
Elusion	Lack of clarity about ideas in religion	1	7.7
Governance	Due to incompetence of student leadership	1	7.7
Misinterpretation	Other preachers wrongly explain religious concepts to gain money.	1	7.7
	Grand Total	13	100.0

A majority of peer counsellors in the focus group discussions as indicated in Table 31 said that misinterpretation of religious teachings was a pull factor towards involvement in radicalization. They cited intolerance in religion which is compounded with hate for other religions and doctrines (30.8%) as major reason. 23.1% of peer counsellors said that misinterpretation of religious teachings can cause influence which can sway youth to radicalization. The analysis further revealed that misinterpretation of religious teachings leads to wrong perceptions (7.7%) hence leading to radicalization.

#### 4.7.4 Radicalized Religious Environment Contribution to Violence and Extremist Behaviour

Table 32 shows the peer counsellors view on how radicalized religious environment contributes to violence and extremist behavior.

**Table 32**

*Contribution of Radicalized Religious Environment Contribution to Violence and Extremist Behavior*

Theme	Sub Theme	No. of references	Percent
Influence	Because of peer pressure	3	28.6
	A preacher can sway many	1	
Recruitment	It is easier to convince the youths to join radical groups	1	14.3
	Can have many get enlisted to extremist groups	1	
Superiority complex	Some people will think the teachings is about them	1	14.3
	Radicalized groups consider themselves more of a higher ranking than others	1	
Misinterpretation of religious teachings	Some people interpret the teaching in their own way and use those beliefs to justify violence to others	1	14.3
	Different explanations contrary to the religious view may cause chaos among members	1	
Denomination Conflicts	When there is disagreement among spiritual leaders	1	7.1
Beliefs	Radical views like believing that killing is a direct entry to heaven	1	7.1
Use of force	Use of coercion to enforce belief in doctrines	1	7.1
Behaviour	Environment shapes the behavior	1	7.1
	Grand Total	14	100.0

The finding on Table 32 from the peer counselors focus group discussions indicate that influence from peers and preachers (28.6 %) was cited as major reason to agree with the statement that radicalized religious environment can contribute to violence and extremist behavior. Easy recruitment (14.3%), feeling of being superior (14.3%), interpretation of the teachings in preachers' own way and use of those beliefs to justify violence to others (7.1) was provided as denomination conflicts contributing to violence and extremist behavior.

#### 4.7.5 Radicalized Religious Environment Contribution to Violence and Extremist Behaviour

Table 33 shows the student counsellors view on how radicalized religious environment contributes to violence and extremist behavior.

**Table 33**

*Radicalized Religious Environment Contribution to Violence and Extremist Behavior*

Theme	Sub-theme	No. of references	Percent
Justification of teachings	Because the students may tend to apply the teachings in a perspective not necessarily intended by the religious teacher	3	42.9
Influence	Peer pressure	2	28.6
Use of force	Because they may use force and once one is in the group	1	14.3
Superiority complex	Student may think that once radicalized you are super	1	14.3
Freedom	This is because we are trained not to question God.	1	14.3
	Grand Total	7	100.0

The results in Table 33 from the interviews conducted indicate that all student counsellors agreed that radicalized religious environment can contribute to violence and extremist behavior. The major reasons provided was that there was high tendency to justify and apply values gained in a radicalized environment (42.9%). Additionally, analysis showed that peer pressure (28.6%) among peers in a radicalized religious environment was also cited as

another major reason for their agreement with the statement.

From the Focus Group Discussions one of the informants indicated that misinterpretation of religious teachings was an insignificant risk factor to radicalization.

*“Religious misinterpretations do not really contribute to vulnerability to radicalization; I feel that most cases are as a result of non - religious reasons. Most of the students get into extremism for social and financial gains, others are running away from poverty and dysfunctional families thus seeking solace in extremists’ practices. Once radicalized students see it as a normal way of living and will always behave and adhere to their misguided religious beliefs.”*

The research finding is contrary to findings by United States Institute of Peace Special Report (2017) on Engaging Religion and Religious Actors in Countering Violent Extremism. Substantial data indicated that elevated levels of religious commitment or practice are inadequate predictors of support for or involvement in violent extremism. The authors further proposed that a robust foundation in religion may diminish the propensity for individuals to embrace the narratives of violent extremist organizations.

Findings of the study compare with a survey done by The Horn Institute and Centre for Sustainable Conflict Resolution (2017) on the Nature, Drivers and Perceptions of Muslim women and girls toward violent extremism (VE) in Kenya with a focus on the hot-spot areas of Mombasa, Kilifi, Lamu and Kwale at the coast; Mandera, Wajir and Garissa in north eastern; and Isiolo in eastern Kenya In terms of influencing women and girls to join VE, 13% of respondents interviewed through Focus Group Discussions thought that misinterpretation of religious teachings posed a high risk influence, while another 12% were of the view that it remained a risk but ranked it low. Slightly above 10% of the respondents thought it was an insignificant risk factor.

#### **4.8 University Students’ Perceived Influence of Selected Internet access factors on Vulnerability to Radicalisation**

The fifth objective sought to test the following hypothesis.

**Ho5: There is no statistically significant university students’ perceived influence of selected internet access factors on vulnerability to radicalisation.**

Chi-square test of independence was carried out among 329 university students to determine whether there was significant association between the perception of students on purpose for internet access and reasons to justify extremist ideologies.

#### 4.8.1 Association Between the Purpose of Internet Access and Vulnerability to Radicalisation

Table 34 shows the cross tabulation between perception of students on the purpose for internet access and the reasons to justify extremist ideologies.

**Table 34**

*Cross Tabulation between the Purpose for Internet Access and Vulnerability to Radicalisation*

		Perception of students on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies					Perception of students on the purpose for internet access * Perception of students on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies Cross tabulation	
Perception of students on the purpose for Internet Access	Never	Count	DS 5	D 12	I 8	A 37	SA 68	Total 130
			Expected Count	2.8	17.8	17.8	50.6	41.1
		% of Total	1.5%	3.6%	2.4%	30%	20.7%	39.5%
	Very Rarely	Count	0	10	6	30	18	64
		Expected Count	1.4	8.8	8.8	24.9	20.2	64.0
		% of Total	0.0%	3.0%	1.8%	9.1%	5.5%	19.5%
	Rarely	Count	2	18	15	42	9	86
		Expected Count	1.8	11.8	11.8	33.5	27.2	86.0
		% of Total	0.6%	5.5%	4.6%	12.8%	2.7%	26.1%
	Often	Count	0	4	11	13	4	32
		Expected Count	0.7	4.4	4.4	12.4	10.1	32.0
		% of Total	0.0%	1.2%	3.3%	4.0%	1.2%	9.7%
	Always	Count	0	1	5	6	5	17
		Expected Count	0.4	2.3	2.3	6.6	5.4	17.0
		% of Total	0.0%	0.3%	1.5%	1.8%	1.5%	5.2%
Total		Count	7	45	45	128	104	329
		Expected Count	7.0	45.0	45.0	128.0	104.0	329.0
		% of Total	2.1%	13.7%	13.7%	38.9%	31.6%	100.0%

SD=Strongly disagree, D=Disagree, I = Indifferent, A =Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

Table 34 shows that of 31.9% student who never accessed the internet for the specified purposes either agreed or strongly agreed with perception on the reasons to justify extremist

ideologies among university students. 2.4% of these students were not sure on reasons to justify extremist ideology with another 5.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed with perception on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies. However, very often (1.2%) and always (0.3%) students disagreed or strongly disagreed with perception on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies among university students.

The students who rarely (15.5%) and very rarely (14.6%) accessed or were exposed to radicalization materials online either agreed or strongly agreed with perception on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies among university students. However, 6.4% of these students were not sure of reasons to justify extremist ideologies unlike 9.1% these students who disagreed or strongly disagreed with perception on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies among university students.

On other hand, students were very often (5.2%) or always (3.3%) accessed or were exposed to radicalization materials online either agreed or strongly agreed with perception on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies among university students. Only 1.5 of these students disagreed or strongly disagreed with perception on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies among university students. Chi square test of independence on cross tabulation between perception of students on the purpose for internet access and vulnerability to radicalization was done and the results presented on Table 35.

**Table 35**

*Chi-square Statistics on Cross Tabulation Between Perception of Students on the Purpose for Internet Access and Vulnerability to Radicalisation*

	Chi-square statistics		
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	71.314a	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	73.668	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	15.604	1	.000
No. of Valid Cases	329		

The measure of strength of effect on cross tabulation of between perception of students on the purpose for internet access and vulnerability to radicalization was done and results presented in Table 36.

**Table 36**

*Measure of Strength of Effect on Cross Tabulation Between Perception of Students on the Purpose for Internet Access and Vulnerability to Radicalisation*

		Symmetric Measures	
		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.466	.000
	Cramer's V	.233	.000
No. of Valid Cases		329	

The statistics of Chi-square test of independence likelihood Ratio ( $\chi^2 (16)=73.668$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) showed that there was significant association between the perception on purpose for internet access and perception on reasons to justify extremist ideologies among university students. 9 cells (36.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .36. The Cramer's V = 0.233 at an approximate significance=0.000 indicated moderate and significant association between the two variables. Hypothesis Ho5 was therefore rejected.

The findings in the study agree with findings by Talukder and Tanvir (2022) that 2013 terrorist organizations have utilized the internet to disseminate their ideas, rendering online radicalization a significant threat for Bangladesh. The real world has been converted into a virtual realm, enabling recruiters to connect with a broader audience than previously possible. Neuman's (2013) findings also concur with the study findings in a study on the 'Association between Students' Exposure to Radicalization Materials and Vulnerability to Radicalisation'. According to approximately 40 interviews with government officials and other stakeholders, internet radicalization is a significant focus for countries in their Countering Violent Extremism initiatives. The author further posits that there is a strong consensus among different governments in the United States of America, departments and agencies, together with independent analysts and specialists, it is asserted that the growing importance of the internet in radicalization represents the most significant innovation affecting homegrown radicalization since the September 11 attacks in 2001. Moreover, as the internet continues to advance, so too do the tactics used by those seeking to exploit this technology for the purpose of instigating terror. According to the Institute of Strategic Dialogue (2011) the internet is important in the radicalisation process. The findings reveal that there are limited instances of individuals becoming radicalized only online, although indications suggest that this phenomenon may escalate in the future. Moreover, there is limited evidence about the

Internet's influence on recruitment to terrorist networks or the use of violence; hence, offline socialization continues to be significant. Evidence indicates that Al Qaeda is increasingly prioritizing individual radicalization according to the findings. Recent research on online impacts on terrorist behavior has yielded data both supporting and contradicting the view of internet activities as a distinct risk factor. Distinct lines of research indicate that offenders radicalized online provide a lesser danger to society in comparison to those engaged in more extensive, face-to-face social interactions (Hamid & Ariza, 2022; Kenyon *et al.*, 2021).

Binder and Kenyon (2022) provide a contemporary synthesis of prior research which supports the study findings. The authors categorize online activity into five primary domains: Financing, networking and coordination, recruiting and radicalization, information transmission, and mobilization to action. The authors further conclude that all extreme groups participate in online activities which resemble typical internet use. The Internet was seen as essential in the creation, dissemination, and consumption of extremist material about radicalization.

Studies by Harris-Hogan (2012) are contrary to the study findings as the author posits that the internet played a minor role or its role came at a later stage in the radicalisation process, within the Australian neojihadist context. The author emphasizes that this mostly occurs only when individuals are linked to the network or, at the very least, involved in its peripheral. Individuals are far more vulnerable to recruitment into terrorist networks through intimate social relationships than through any internet means. Zammit (2012) similarly asserts that the internet does not seem to have a substantial impact on jihadist radicalization relative to human connections with radicalizing influences in Australia.

#### **4.8.2 Association Between Students' Exposure to Radicalization Materials and Vulnerability to Radicalisation**

A Chi-square test of independence was conducted among 329 university students to establish whether there was significant association between students' exposure to radicalization materials and perception on reasons to justify extremist ideologies. Table 37 shows the cross tabulation between these variables.

**Table 37**

*Cross Tabulation between Exposure to Radicalization Materials and Vulnerability to Radicalisation*

		DS	D	I	A	SA	Total	
Perception of students on online exposure to radicalisation materials * Perception of students on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies Cross tabulation								
Perception of students on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies								
Perception of students on online exposure to radicalisation materials	Never	Count	6	18	10	54	86	174
		Expected Count	3.7	23.8	23.8	67.7	55.0	174.0
		% of Total	1.8%	5.5%	3.0%	16.4%	26.1%	52.9%
	Very	Count	0	6	9	30	7	52
	Rarely	Expected Count	1.1	7.1	7.1	20.2	16.4	52.0
		% of Total	0.0%	1.8%	2.7%	9.1%	2.1%	15.8%
		Count	1	12	16	32	9	70
	Rarely	Expected Count	1.5	9.6	9.6	27.2	22.1	70.0
		% of Total	0.3%	3.6%	4.9%	9.7%	2.7%	21.3%
	Very	Count	0	8	7	8	1	24
	Often	Expected Count	.5	3.3	3.3	9.3	7.6	24.0
		% of Total	0.0%	2.4%	2.1%	2.4%	0.3%	7.3%
	Always	Count	0	1	3	4	1	9
		Expected Count	.2	1.2	1.2	3.5	2.8	9.0
		% of Total	0.0%	0.3%	0.9%	1.2%	0.3%	2.7%
	Total	Count	7	45	45	128	104	329
		Expected Count	7.0	45.0	45.0	128.0	104.0	329.0
		% of Total	2.1%	13.7%	13.7%	38.9%	31.6%	100%

SD=Strongly disagree, D=Disagree, I = Indifferent, A =Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

The cross-tabulation Table 37 shows that of 42.5% students' who never accessed radicalization materials online either agreed or strongly agreed with perception on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies among university students. The students who very rarely (11.2%) and rarely (12.4%) exposed to radicalization materials online either agreed or

strongly agreed with perception on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies among university students. Among students who never (7.3%) and very rarely (1.8%) and rarely (3.9%) were exposed to radicalization materials online these students disagreed or strongly disagreed with perception on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies among university students. Additionally, students who were very often (2.7%) and always (1.5%) were exposed to radicalization materials online either agreed or strongly agreed with perception on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies among university students. However, very often (2.4%) and always (0.3%) students disagreed or strongly disagreed with perception on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies among university students. Chi square test of independence on cross tabulation between exposure to radicalization materials and vulnerability to radicalization was done and the results presented on Table 38.

**Table 38**

*Chi-square Statistics on Cross Tabulation Between Exposure to Radicalization Materials and Vulnerability to Radicalization*

	<b>Chi-square statistics</b>		
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	78.160a	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	82.159	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	27.761	1	.000
No. of Valid Cases	329		

The measure of strength of effect on cross tabulation of between exposure to radicalization material and vulnerability to radicalization was done and results presented in Table 39.

**Table 39**

*Measure of Strength of Effect on Cross Tabulation Between Exposure to Radicalization Materials and Vulnerability to Radicalization*

	<b>Symmetric Measures</b>		
		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.487	.000
	Cramer's V	.244	.000
No. of Valid Cases		329	

The results of Chi-square test of independence likelihood Ratio ( $\chi^2 (16) = 82.159, p < 0.05$ ) showed that there was significant association between exposure to radicalization materials online and perception on reasons to justify extremist ideologies among university students. 11 cells (44.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .19. The Cramer's V = 0.244 at an approximate significance=0.000 indicated moderate and significant association between the two variables. Hypothesis Ho5 was therefore rejected.

#### 4.8.3 Association Between Reasons for Joining Extremist Networks and Vulnerability to Radicalisation

A Chi-square test of independence was conducted to establish whether there was significant association between reasons for joining extremist networks and reasons to justify extremist ideologies among university students. The study used sample size of 329. Table 40 shows the cross tabulation between these variables.

**Table 40**

*Cross Tabulation between Reasons for Joining Extremist Networks and Vulnerability to Radicalisation*

			Perception of students on the reasons to justify extremist ideologies					Total
			SD	D	I	A	SA	
Perception of students on the reasons for joining extremist network	SA	Count	0	7	9	49	62	127
		Expected Count	2.7	17.4	17.4	49.4	40.1	127.0
		% of Total	0.0%	2.1%	2.7%	14.9%	18.8%	38.6%
	A	Count	2	21	18	40	20	101
		Expected Count	2.1	13.8	13.8	39.3	31.9	101.0
		% of Total	0.6%	6.4%	5.5%	12.2%	6.1%	30.7%
	M	Count	4	7	5	19	13	48
		Expected Count	1.0	6.6	6.6	18.7	15.2	48.0
		% of Total	1.2%	2.1%	1.5%	5.8%	4.0%	14.6%
D	Count	1	8	7	13	7	36	

	Expected Count	.8	4.9	4.9	14.0	11.4	36.0
	% of Total	0.3%	2.4%	2.1%	4.0%	2.1%	10.9%
SD	Count	0	2	6	7	2	17
	Expected Count	.4	2.3	2.3	6.6	5.4	17.0
	% of Total	0.0%	0.6%	1.8%	2.1%	0.6%	5.2%
	Count	7	45	45	128	104	329
Total	Expected Count	7.0	45.0	45.0	128.0	104.0	329.0
	% of Total	2.1%	13.7%	3.7%	38.9%	31.6%	100.0%

SD=Strongly disagree, D=Disagree, I = Indifferent, A =Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

The cross-tabulation Table 40 shows that of 33.7% and 18.3% of student who strongly agreed and agreed respectively with reasons for joining extremist networks among university students. On contrary, a few of students 2.1% and 7.0% strongly agreed and agreed respectively with perception on reasons of students joining extremist networks but disagreeing and strong disagreeing respectively with reasons to justify extremist ideologies among university students. On the other hand, 2.7% and 0.6% of students disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with reasons for joining extremist networks respectively. Chi square test of independence on cross tabulation between reasons for joining extremist networks and vulnerability to radicalization was done and the results presented on Table 41.

**Table 41**

*Chi-square Statistics on Cross Tabulation Between Reasons for Joining Extremist Networks and Vulnerability to radicalization*

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	56.700a	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	55.886	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	23.019	1	.000
No. of Valid Cases	329		

The measure of strength of effect on cross tabulation of between reasons for joining extremist networks and vulnerability to radicalization was done and results presented in Table 42.

**Table 42**

*Measure of Strength of Effect on Cross Tabulation Between Reasons for Joining Extremist Networks and Vulnerability to Radicalization*

		Symmetric Measures	
		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.415	.000
	Cramer's V	.208	.000
No. of Valid Cases		329	

The results of Chi-square test of independence likelihood Ratio ( $\chi^2 (16) = 55.886, p < 0.05$ ) showed that there was significant association between reasons for joining extremist networks and reasons to justify extremist ideologies among university students. 9 cells (36.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .36. Further, the Cramer's V = 0.208 at an approximate significance=0.000 indicated moderate and significant association between the two variables. Hypothesis Ho5 was therefore rejected.

Finding in the study are similar to a study conducted in Bangladesh examined youth vulnerability to violent extremist groups in the Indo-Pacific, identifying youth as the primary target group for radicalization and recruitment by such groups. The study involved participants from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, highlighting that rising unemployment and substantial engagement with the internet and social media among youth contribute to radicalization and recruitment. The study highlighted internet radicalization as a significant contributor to radicalization in Bangladesh (Idris, 2018).

Findings in the study also compare to a survey done by The Horn Institute and Centre for Sustainable Conflict Resolution (2017) on the Nature, Drivers and Perceptions of Muslim women and girls toward violent extremism in Kenya that focused on Muslim women and girls in the violent extremist hot-spot areas of Mombasa, Kilifi, Lamu and Kwale at the coast; Mandera, Wajir and Garissa in north eastern; and Isiolo in eastern Kenya. The findings indicated that it is not universally accurate that the youth who join violent extremist organizations originate solely from impoverished families; instances of middle-class youth succumbing to extremism have also been seen because of easy access to technological platforms.

From the focus group discussions conducted most of the key informants identified online

platforms as one of the places where radicalisation occurs one of them asserted that:

*“Many students have access to the internet and spend much of their time online and can get exposed to radical groups and content online. The internet does play a role in exposing students to radicalization since it broadens the way of thinking of the youths by bringing up the controversies of many contentious issues. On the other hand, some students are careful and choose to consume content that’s non radical from social media and which positively build them. Someone can control his/her accessibility of content in the internet so I don't think online radicalization is a major factor.”*

Briggs (2011) study concur with the study findings as it emphasized the dangers associated with the internet in facilitating the rapid dissemination of radical and extremist ideologies and actions. Specifically, the social and interactive aspects of the internet and other social media platforms were seen by several participants as pivotal in the manifestation of discourses around extremism and terrorism. These communication technologies were seen as dynamic, fluid environments where radicalization as a social process may be either exacerbated or mitigated by the manner in which users of the internet and social media platforms influence and guide the dissemination of information, opinions, and perspectives (Von Behr *et al.*, 2013).

## **4.9 Contribution of Guidance and Counselling in Addressing Vulnerability to Radicalisation in Kenya**

### **4.9.1 Peer Counsellors’ Responses on Guidance and Counselling Addressing Vulnerability to Radicalization**

Table 43 shows peer counsellors’ responses on whether guidance and counselling can be used to address vulnerability to radicalization.

**Table 43**

*Peer Counsellors’ Responses on Guidance and Counselling Addressing Vulnerability to Radicalization*

Theme	Sub-theme	No. of references	Percent
Root cause identification	It creates a platform to address the cause of radicalization	8	44.4

Alternative solutions	It helps students to find options of getting resources to meet their basic needs instead of joining radical groups.	3	16.7
Awareness of Counselling services	It informs students on the disadvantages or the causes of the radicalization	3	16.7
Coping mechanisms	It helps instill adaptive strategies under different situations	2	11.1
Attitude change	It changes perceptions of students They begin seeing things in a different way	2	11.1
Grand Total		18	100.0

The thematic analysis of peer counsellors' responses on contribution of guidance and counselling in addressing students' vulnerability to radicalization showed that it can create a platform to address root causes to radicalization (44.4%), help students to find alternative ways of getting resources, especially funds to meet their basic needs instead of joining radical groups. Further, 16.7% of peer counselors said that guiding and counselling can help create awareness to inform students on the disadvantages and causes of radicalization. This is a phenomenon also noted from the focus group discussions conducted in which one of them asserted that:

*“Guidance and counselling play a significant role in fighting extremism by providing relevant information touching on safe religious practices and fighting myths on radicalism. Students exposed to radicalism can be identified early enough and they can be taken through the counselling process.”*

The importance of guidance and counselling was echoed by most of the key informants whereby one of them said that:

*“Through guidance and counselling underlying psychological issues that could be push factors to vulnerability radicalisation can be addressed i.e. family conflict, low self-esteem. Guidance and counselling can do a lot by having preventive measures for vulnerable students like addressing identity issues to avoid role confusion, address root causes to radicalization, psycho education on countering radicalization and identifying vulnerable student so as to curb extremism.”*

#### 4.9.2 Student Counsellors' Responses on Guidance and Counselling Addressing Vulnerability to Radicalization

Table 44 shows student counsellors' responses on whether guidance and counselling can be used to address vulnerability to radicalization.

**Table 44**

*Student Counsellors' Responses on Guidance and Counselling Addressing Vulnerability to Radicalization*

Theme	Sub-theme	No. of references	Percent
Psycho- Education	It can create awareness through psycho education	4	33.3
Preventive measures	It can provide relevant information touching on safe religious practices and fighting myths on radicalism	4	33.3
Addressing root cause	It can help address underlying psychological issues i.e., family conflict, low self-esteem	3	25.0
Behaviour Change	It can bring about positive behaviour change	1	8.3
Student Identification at all education levels	It can help in identifying susceptible students	1	8.3
	By starting guidance and counselling all the way from primary and running with it through University.	1	8.3
Proper care	It can help enforce proper care among students	1	8.3
	Grand Total	12	100

The thematic analysis was conducted to find out how guidance and counselling contribute to addressing students' vulnerability to radicalization. The results showed that student counsellors said that guidance and counselling can contribute in creating awareness through psycho education (33.3 %), providing relevant information touching on safe religious practices and fighting myths on radicalism (33.3%) and helping in addressing underlying psychological issues such as family conflict and low self-esteem (25.0%).

Findings in the study compare with Sikkens *et al.* (2018) who posit that that family counseling programs have been created for the prevention of violent extremism (CVE).

Specialized counselors assist the family of an individual who has become radicalized by offering alternatives to participation in extremist groups, modifying the individual's emotional attachment to the radical environment, and striving for the cessation of their involvement in such groups (Koehler, 2016). The authors assert that engaging parents to connect with and influence radical youth would be an exceptionally successful strategy, particularly in communities where families and elders hold significant authority (Bjørge & Horgan, 2009). This is in line with the feedback of the key informants of the study from the interviews conducted, one of the informants indicated that:

*“Guidance and counselling will inform and educate students on the dangers of radicalization and students will get to know other avenues of getting finances, safe religious practices and other solutions to their problems which may be making them vulnerable to radicalization. The counsellors can also identify students who are vulnerable so as to counter violent extremism.”*

*“Guidance and counselling can also focus on the family so as to counter violent extremism.”*

The present study's findings are consistent with Harris-Hogan's (2012) research on the significance of family-based treatments aimed at reducing radicalization. An 18-month pilot project in Tunisia entitled "Ending Terrorism Through Youth Service Action Locally" (ETTYSAL) that focused on the family as a protective factor against radicalization reveals how important counseling is. In this program, the author asserts that 100 Tunisian youths were assessed for their susceptibility to joining extremist groups, utilizing 12 risk factors: antisocial tendencies, inadequate parental supervision, family radicalization, significant life events, impulsive risk-taking, guilt neutralization, deviant behaviors, peer influence, peer radicalization, religious extremism, and social vulnerability. The intervention was tailored to the person and centered on family therapy and group activities. ETTYSAL was assessed and found that a family-centered intervention strategy mitigated the risk factors for radicalization to violent extremism.

## **4.10 Other Factors that Contribute to Vulnerability to Radicalization**

### **4.10.1 Student Counsellors' Views on Other Factors that Contribute to Vulnerability to Radicalization**

Table 45 shows student counsellors' views on other factors that contribute to vulnerability to radicalization.

**Table 45**

*Student Counsellors' Views on Other factors that Contribute to Vulnerability to Radicalization*

Theme	Sub-theme	No. of references	Percent
Curiosity	Inquisitiveness to know what being an extremist is all about	2	16.7
Abuse of Drugs	Dependence on psychoactive substances.	1	8.3
Search for Wealth	Search for riches	1	8.3
Depression	Prolonged sadness among students	1	8.3
Group influence	Peer pressure	1	8.3
Internet	Use of the cyber space	1	8.3
Self-esteem	Low self-regard	1	8.3
Naïve Students	Lack of judgement and experience among students	1	8.3
Information	Readily available data on radicalisation	1	8.3
Parental guidance	Lack of parental direction and mentorship	1	8.3
Parenting Styles	Poor child rearing practices	1	8.3
Religious Beliefs	Religious convictions that support radicalisation	1	8.3
	Grand Total	12	100.0

From the interviews conducted with the student counsellors, curiosity to know how it feels to be an extremist (16.7%) was provided as main cause contributing to vulnerability of students to radicalisation. Other causes were abuse of drugs (8.3%), search for quick and big wealth (8.3%), depression (8.3%) Group influence (8.3 %) and internet use (8.3%) these were also identified by student counsellors as other contributing factors to vulnerability to radicalisation.

Findings of the study compare with Rashid (2017) as cited in Idris (2018) who observed that digitization has taken place in Bangladesh due to the government's Digital Bangladesh policy. The author further argues that Bangladeshi youth are particularly vulnerable to online radicalisation. A survey of 250 jailed militants in Bangladesh indicated that around 82

percent were radicalized using various social media platforms.

The findings on factors contributing to radicalisation in the study are similar to Bigo *et al.* (2014) who observed that unstable family situations may fortify the radicalization process. Sikkens *et al.* (2018) further identifies broken families, substance abuse within families, domestic violence, and bereavement of family members as components of a dysfunctional familial background that make youth vulnerable to radicalisation.

#### 4.10.2 Peer Counsellors View on Other Factors that Contribute to Vulnerability to Radicalisation

Table 46 shows peer counsellors' view on other factors that contribute to radicalization of students.

**Table 46**

*Peer Counsellors' View on other Factors that Contribute to Radicalization of Students*

Sub-theme	No. of references	Percent
Discontentment about situations eg religious, political, economic & social	1	16.7
Dysfunctional families	1	16.7
Inequality in wealth distribution	1	16.7
Peer pressure	1	16.7
Sexual harassments	1	16.7
Toxic relationships where partners are controlling and Manipulative	1	16.7
Grand Total	6	100.0

From the focus group discussions conducted the peer counsellors identified discontentment about situations (eg religious, political, economic and social situations) dysfunctional families, inequality in distribution of resources, peer pressure, sexual harassments and toxic relationships were cited as causes contributing to radicalization of students. These finding are similar to Zych and Nasaescu (2022) systematic review on whether radicalization is a family issue. These studies were done with 148,081 adults and adolescents from diverse geographic locations. Four studies reported results that there is a relation between family conflict and radicalization. Where family conflict occurs the more

vulnerable the family members are to radicalisation. Among the studies cited are Kuhn (2004) which focused on conflict with parents, Abdi (2019) and Goede *et al.* (2020) on family conflict in general, and Manzoni *et al.* (2019) on parental inconsistency.

The study findings are similar to Glazzard *et al.* (2015) where the authors posit that extremist ideas are more likely to be adopted from peers and influential figures. Davydov (2015) as cited in Glazzard *et al.* (2015) attributes the culture of violence mostly to the family, peers and the mainstream media that constructs the perception of the world. The study included 21 comprehensive interviews with Dutch former radicals and their relatives, revealing that former radicals and their families do not acknowledge a direct impact of parental influence on radicalization and de-radicalization. Nonetheless, a more indirect connection appears to exist: a dysfunctional family dynamic may impact the radicalization process and family support can possibly play a role in de-radicalization.

#### **4.10.3 University Students view of other factors that contribute to Student's Vulnerability to Radicalisation**

University students views on other factors that contribute to vulnerability to radicalization were collected and the results presented on Table 47.

**Table 47**

*Students View on other factors that contribute to Vulnerability to Radicalization*

Theme	Sub-theme	No. of references	Percent
Poverty	Inadequate funds to buy basic necessities	3	36.3
	Poverty	3	
	Regular fee increments	2	
Influence	Peer influence	5	27.3
	Internet influence	1	
Unemployment	Frustrations caused by unemployment	3	18.1
	False hope for employment after studying	1	
Freedom	Denial of freedom of expression	2	18.1
	Strict regulations	1	
	Student complaints not listened to	1	

Idleness	Lack of something to do.	3	13.6
Environment	Favorable environment for radicalization	2	13.6
	Non conducive school environment	1	
Identity crisis	Search for social identity	3	13.6
Family Background	Family background of students	2	9.1
Social Amenities	Poor social facilities on campus	1	4.5
Rejection	Rejection in the school	1	4.5
Emotional Vulnerability	Emotional vulnerability e.g., anger	1	4.5
Alienation	Detachment from others	1	4.5
Self-esteem	Low self-regard	1	4.5
Divorce	Parents' divorce	1	4.5
Moral values	Lack of ethics and moral values	1	4.5
Personalities	Different temperaments	1	4.5
Discipline	Students don't follow rules and regulations	1	4.5
Preconceived Opinions	Prejudices against a certain group of people	1	4.5
Tribalism	Loyalty to one's social group	1	4.5
Religious Belief	Religious beliefs that support radicalization	1	4.5
Bullying	Intimidation from other students	1	4.5
Sexual Harassment	Sexual harassment from the staff, students or workers.	1	4.5
Challenges in Academics	Challenges in academics	1	4.5
Discontentment	Disappointments among students	1	4.5
Depression	Depressive moods	1	4.5
Drug use	Dependence on psychoactive substances	1	4.5
Get-rich- quickly Mentality	Rush for money	1	4.5
Belief systems	Subscription to radical ideologies	1	4.5
	Grand Total	22	100.0

Acute poverty (36.3%) that comprised of inadequate funds to buy basic amenities, inability to pay fees on time was considered as a major factor responsible for student's

vulnerability to radicalization. Influence from peers and internet (27.3%) and unemployment opportunities after studying (18.1%) were also considered as other major factors.

Findings in the study compare to Idris (2018) who found out that data from the Bangladesh Population Reference Bureau indicates that in 2016, Bangladesh had a youth population of 46.7 million individuals aged 10 to 24 years, constituting nearly 30% of the overall population. Forty percent of the nation's youth were neither engaged in school, work, nor training. Unemployment rates in Bangladesh remain high, especially among those with university degrees. Approximately fifty percent of graduates in Bangladesh are unemployed (Hasan, 2017). Some of these individuals grow disillusioned and harbor resentment against society, rendering them susceptible to recruitment into radical groups. Khan (2017) as cited in Idris (2018) also underscores the insufficiency in young people's access to adequate educational opportunities, health and well-being, employment, political participation, and civic engagement as contributing factors to Radicalisation and radicalism.

Findings in the study are also similar to research examining the vulnerability of Muslim youths to radicalisation and recruitment by violent extremists (VE) groups in Mindanao, Philippines. The study by the International Crisis Group in 2017 focused on four conflict-affected regions, youth participants in the island provinces of Basilan and Sulu observed that poverty as the primary catalyst for those joining violent extremist organizations (Idris, 2018). In the study respondents highlighted those financial incentives made VE organizations more attractive to those with limited livelihood prospects. Franco (2018) as cited in Idris (2018) describes how Mindanao State University was a recruiting ground for VE groups who targeted vulnerable youths. Monetary inducements were a significant determinant in their recruitment.

The study findings also compare to Botha (2013) who posits that an individual without certainty about their identity is susceptible to manipulation, allowing the identity of an organisation to take over their own. Koome *et al.* (2016) also argue that in radical extremist organisations, potential terrorists discover both a feeling of purpose and a sense of belonging, closeness, and identification. The impetus or psychological drive for joining VE is the profound urge for belonging. Terrorist organisations may provide familial security by subordinating individualism to collective identification. This was echoed by most of the key informants whereby one of them said that:

*“Peer influence .and a search for social identity can push students to radical groups especially when these groups make the individual feel accepted and have a sense of*

*belonging to the group.”*

Glazard (2015) asserts that violent extremism is multifaceted and diverse; it cannot be predicted by a single variable alone. The rise of violent extremist groups and individual involvement requires an integration of situational, social/cultural, and individual factors. The study findings identify several factors that contribute to vulnerability to radicalization (Obaidi, 2025). The authors emphasize that religion and ethnicity serve as significant expressions of both individual and group identity. Radicalisation constitutes a social process, with identity serving as a crucial factor in the involvement of individuals in violent movements.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to determine university students' perceived influence of selected family and internet access factors on vulnerability to radicalisation in Kenya and implications for counselling. This chapter presents a summary of the major findings of the study based on the results of the analysis guided by the hypotheses of the study. Conclusions are highlighted based on the findings, recommendations and suggestions for further research have also been outlined.

#### **5.2 Summary of the Major Findings**

The following are the major findings of the study:

- (i) The results of the study show that university students' perception of the influence family type had insignificant association with vulnerability to radicalization.
- (ii) The results of the study showed that university students' perception of the influence of authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles had moderate and significant association with vulnerability to radicalization.
- (iii) The results of the study showed a significant association between university students' perception of the influence of annual income levels with vulnerability to radicalization.
- (iv) The results of the study showed that there was a significant association between misinterpretation of religious teachings and radicalized religious environment and vulnerability to radicalization.
- (v) The results of the study showed a significant association between university students' perception of the purpose for internet access, exposure to radicalization materials online and reasons for joining extremist groups and vulnerability to radicalization.

#### **5.3 Conclusions**

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were reached:

- (i) Family type does not influence university students' vulnerability to radicalization.
- (ii) The authoritarian parenting style had the strongest association on vulnerability to radicalisation followed by the permissive parenting style then the authoritative parenting style.
- (iii) Among all the family factors considered in the study the influence of annual family income had the strongest association with vulnerability to radicalization.
- (iv) Misinterpretation of religious teachings and radicalized religious environment influence vulnerability to radicalization.
- (v) Internet access influences university students' vulnerability to radicalization.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

This section presents recommendations for policy, practice, and further research based on the results, interpretations, and discussions.

### **5.4.1 Recommendations for Policy and Practice**

Based on the data and conclusions drawn from this research, it is recommended that:

- i. Parents need to be sensitized on the different parenting types and how the presence or absence of a parent can affect a child's development and make them vulnerable to radicalization. Counselling programs for the family can be effectively utilised to reach a significant portion of the relevant target vulnerable populations.
- ii. Parents being the architects of the family need to be engaged in education and sensitization programs on best parenting styles that protect their children from vulnerability to radicalisation. Parental participation is indisputably important in prevention of radicalisation. Therapeutic interventions focused on identity, belonging, critical thinking, and familial relationships might enhance students' life skills and expand their knowledge on radicalization.
- iii. There is need to continue to develop effective intervention and sensitisation programs to enhance the level of awareness of how economic factors influence students' vulnerability to radicalization.
- iv. Religious leaders need to be included in this process of early prevention against radicalisation. They are aware of the sensitivity surrounding religious discussions and may facilitate appropriate conversations with vulnerable university students.
- v. Counsellors need to provide digital literacy to help vulnerable individuals critically

assess online content, identify extremist propaganda and avoid joining extremist groups.

#### **5.4.2 Recommendation for Further Research**

- i. Many other factors that cause students to be vulnerable to radicalisation were identified by the peer counsellors and the student counsellors. These factors include curiosity to know how it feels to be an extremist, peer influence, abuse of drugs and search for quick and big wealth. Additional research is necessary to enhance the content of these discussions.
- ii. The findings on whether the family type had an influence on vulnerability of students to radicalisation in Kenya showed that the variables had insignificant influence on vulnerability to radicalisation. Further research should therefore be done because there could be other factors that influence the association between the variables and the context in which the study was done might limit generalizability. Replicating the study in different settings or populations could reveal new insights.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix I: Introductory Letter to Respondents**

I am a PhD student in Egerton University in the Department of Psychology, Counselling and Education Foundations. I am undertaking a study to investigate University students' perception of the influence of selected family and internet access factors on vulnerability to radicalisation in Kenya: Implications for counselling.

I kindly request you to respond to all the questions either by ticking or by providing the information in the spaces provided. Please note that information given will only be used for the purpose of the study and will be treated with confidentiality.

Yours Sincerely,

Lydia Kositany Langat.

## Appendix II: University Students' Questionnaire (USQ)

### SECTION A: Demographic Data

1. Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )
2. In which kind of family type were you raised up in: Both parents living together ( )  
 Single parent due to death: Mother Only ( ) Father Only ( ) Single  
 parent due to divorce: Mother Only ( ) Father Only ( ) Single  
 parent due to separation: Mother Only ( ) Father Only ( ) Single parent not  
 married Mother Only ( ) Father Only ( ) Raised by  
 guardian (Kindly specify): .....
3. Family annual income: Below Ksh10, 000 ( ) Ksh10, 000 - Ksh30, 000 ( ) Ksh30,  
 000 -Ksh50, 000 ( ) Ksh50, 000-Ksh 100,000 ( ) Above Ksh 100,000

### SECTION B: Perception of influence of selected family factors on vulnerability to Radicalisation.

1. Kindly rate the extent to which your parent engages in the following parenting practices.

KEY: 1 = Disagree Strongly, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Indifferent, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree

S/ No	STATEMENTS	RATING				
		1	2	3	4	5
	<b>Authoritative Parenting Style</b>					
a)	My parent/guardian understands my needs.					
b)	My parent/guardian gives reasons why rules should be obeyed					
c)	My parent /guardian explains to me how they feel about my behaviour					
d)	My parent/guardian encourages me to talk about my feelings					
e)	My parent/guardian encourages me to freely express my thoughts, even if they disagree with me.					
f)	My parent /guardian compliments me on my achievements					
g)	My parent/guardian respect my opinion when I express it.					
h)	I have a close affectionate attachment to my parent/guardian					

i)	My parent/guardian considers my preferences when making plans for the family					
j)	My parent/guardian is always very understanding.					
k)	My parent/guardian can cater for my basic needs adequately.					
l)	My parent/guardian treats me as an equal member of the family					
	<b>Authoritarian Parenting Style</b>					
m)	My parent/guardian punishes me by taking privileges away from me					
n)	My parent/guardian explodes in anger towards me when I do wrong.					
o)	My parent/guardian uses physical punishment as a way of discipline.					
p)	My parent/guardian uses negative criticism to make me improve my behaviour					
q)	My parents/guardian uses threats as a form of punishment with no justification.					
r)	My parent/guardian openly corrects me when my behaviour does not meet their expectations.					
s)	My parent/guardian does not respect my opinions when I express it.					
t)	My parent/guardian always points out my past behavioural problems to make sure i will not do them again.					
u)	My parents/guardian keep on reminding me of all the things they have done for me.					
	<b>Permissive Parenting Style</b>					
v)	My parents/guardian finds it difficult to discipline me.					
w)	My parent /guardian threatens to punish me but never does it.					
x)	My parent/guardian gives in when I cause a commotion about something.					

y)	My parents ignore my bad behaviour					
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Adapted from: Robinson, C., Mandleco, B., Olsen, S. F., & Hart, C. H. (1995). Authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting practices: Development of a new measure. *Psychological Reports, 77*, 819-830.

2. What is your perception whether suicide bombing is justified in the provided places as listed in the table below.

1 = Disagree Strongly, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Indifferent, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree

S/No	Places	Score				
		1	2	3	4	5
a)	Churches					
b)	Mosques					
c)	Government Buildings					
d)	Learning Institutions					
e)	Bus parks					
f)	Business parks/Malls					

3. Score Card on perception on other factors contributing to university students' radicalisation.

Instructions: Please score our perception on the following factors that contributing to university students' radicalization: KEY: 1 = Disagree Strongly, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Indifferent, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree

S/No.	FACTOR	Score				
		1	2	3	4	5
a)	Search for social identity					
b)	Peer influence					
c)	Misinterpretation of religious teachings					
d)	Radicalized Religious environment					
e)	Poverty					
f)	Unemployment					
g)	Marginalization					
h)	Unattended historical injustice					
i)	Police harassment					

j)	Cultural profiling					
k)	Family supporting radicalisation					
l)	Poor performance in academics					
m)	Other causes....					

\*ADAPTED FROM: Mapping Dynamics and Perceptions of Violent Extremism: A Study of Nature, Drivers and Perceptions of Muslim Women and Girls toward violent Extremism in Kenya: Horn International Institute for Strategic Studies. Centre for Sustainable Conflict Resolution (CSCR) Issue 1.

a. Kindly rate your perception on the following statements using the scale provided:

KEY: 1 = Disagree Strongly, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Indifferent, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree

S/ No	Reasons to justify extremist ideologies	1	2	3	4	5
a)	My family feels that use of violence is justified to achieve political goals.					
b)	My family feels that the use of violence is justified to achieve religious goals.					
c)	My family feels that they have been treated with injustice therefore have many grievances.					
d)	My family can be able to identify the target of injustice that is believed to be the cause of injustice with certainty.					
e)	My family would dehumanize or degrade an identified target of injustice that is the cause of grievance.					
f)	My family feels that when there is injustice it's acceptable to fight for the cause					
g)	My family feels that when there is injustice it is acceptable to die for the cause.					
h)	My family feels that it is alright to reject society values when there is injustice.					
i)	My family have feelings of hate, anger and frustration related to their view on political ideology.					

j)	My family have feelings of hate, anger and frustration related to their view on religious ideology.					
k)	My family feels that there is a need for group bonding among people with similar political and religious ideologies.					
l)	My family have a sense of belonging and loyalty to the society and country of residence					
m)	My family feel empathy for those outside their own group, tribe or religious group.					
n)	My family have had some members involved in violent actions					
o)	My family feel that violent action is alright if it is for a just cause					

**SECTION C: Influence of internet access on vulnerability to radicalisation.**

1. How often do you use the internet for the following purposes?

Key: Scale: 5 = Always, 4 = Very often, 3 = Rarely, 2 = Very Rarely, and 1 = Never.

S/No	Purpose for Internet Access	RATING					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
a)	Searching for people with views on the use of violence to address societal grievances.						
b)	Sending e-mails to people I have met online who we have similar ideological views.						
c)	Chatting with people I have met online who we have similar ideological views.						

2. Indicate your opinion on the items listed according to the scale provided

Scale: 5 = Always, 4 = Very often, 3 = Rarely, 2 = Very Rarely, and 1 = Never.

S/No	Exposure to radical material	RATING				
		1	2	3	4	5
a)	Have you ever been exposed to radicalised material from radical groups when using the internet?					
b)	Have you met any radical extremists' groups online?					
c)	Has any of our friends referred you to an online platform					

	where radical ideas are shared					
d)	Have you meet any person who communicates online with a person who has radical ideas?					

3. Indicate your percept io n on the following statement relating to r adicalization of youths in University (Scale 1=strongly agree 2= agree 3= moderate 4= disagree 5=strongly disagree)

S/No	Reason for joining extremist groups	RATING				
		1	2	3	4	5
a)	Students join extremist networks for income opportunities.					
b)	Students in Kenyan universities are currently being radicalized by terror networks through the internet?					

### **Appendix III: Focus Group Discussion for Peer Counsellors**

Questions for Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

University: .....

Date: .....

#### **QUESTIONS**

1. a What is your understanding of a radicalised person?
  - b. Are you familiar with any radical extremist groups in your university?
2. Do you think that the radical extremist's groups have a justification in what they do?
3. What is your perception of the reasons for radicalisation of students in universities?  
How have students been involved in this?
4. What is your perception on whether extremists groups can use a non-violent approach to agitate for their demands?
5. Misinterpretation of religious teachings is identified as a pull factor towards youth involvement in radicalisation. Do you think this is true? Explain your response.
6. A radicalized religious environment can contribute to violence and extremist behavior. Do you agree? Explain your response.
7. Family plays a key role in shaping and moulding characters. What family issues or aspects do you think contributes to students' vulnerability to radicalization? And to what extent?
8. Internet is the modern source of information and means of communication. In your opinion does the internet play a role in predisposing students to vulnerability to radicalization?
9. Please outline other factors that you consider are responsible for student's involvement in radicalisation?
- 10 Do you think guidance and counselling can contribute to addressing students' vulnerability to radicalization? If you do, then How? and to What Extent?

## **Appendix IV: Interview Schedule for University Student Counsellors**


### Interview Guide

University ..... Date: .....

### **QUESTIONS**

1. Have you ever come across students with radical ideologies?
2. Do you think that students feel that radical extremist's groups have a justification in what they do?
3. What is your perception of the reasons for radicalisation of students in universities?
4. What is your perception on whether extremists groups can use a non-violent approach to agitate for their demands?
5. Misinterpretation of religious teachings is identified as a pull factor towards youth involvement in radicalisation. Do you think this is true? Explain your response.
6. A radicalized religious environment can contribute to violence and extremist behavior. Do you agree? Explain your response.
7. Family plays a key role in shaping and moulding characters. What family issues or aspects do you think contributes to students' vulnerability to radicalization? And to what extent?
8. Internet is the modern source of information and means of communication. In your opinion does social media play a role in predisposing students to vulnerability to radicalization?
9. Please outline other factors that you consider are responsible for student's involvement in radicalisation?
- 10 Do you think guidance and counselling can contribute to addressing students' vulnerability to radicalization? If you do, then How? and to What Extent?

## Appendix V: Permission to Collect Data University A

  
**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**  
**OFFICE OF ASSOCIATE VICE-CHANCELLOR**  
(Research, Innovation and Enterprise)

P.O. Box 30197-00100  
Nairobi, Kenya  
Website: [research.uoi.ac.ke](http://research.uoi.ac.ke)

Tel: +254-20-4915164  
Email: [avc@uoi.ac.ke](mailto:avc@uoi.ac.ke)

UON/RIE/3/5/Vol.XX

November 21, 2022

Ms. Lydia Kositany Langat,  
Egerton University,  
P. O. Box 556,  
EGERTON,  
Email: [lydiaolangat@gmail.com](mailto:lydiaolangat@gmail.com)

Dear Ms. Langat,


**PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA**

I refer to your request to conduct research at the University of Nairobi, for your project entitled: *"University Students Perception on the Influence of Selected Family and Internet Assess Factors on Vulnerability to Radicalization in Kenya: Implications for Counselling"*.

I write to inform you that your request has been approved.

You are however required to share the findings of your study with the University of Nairobi by depositing a copy of your findings with the Director Library & Information Services on completion of your study.

Yours Sincerely,



**PROF. M. JESANG HUTCHINSON**  
ASSOCIATE VICE-CHANCELLOR (AG.)  
(RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND ENTERPRISE)  
AND  
PROFESSOR OF HORTICULTURE

Copy to:     Director, Library and Information Services  
              Dean of Students

SAB/g

**Appendix VI: Research Permit.**

  
REPUBLIC OF KENYA

  
**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION**

RefNo: 474484 Date of Issue: 14/June/2022


**RESEARCH LICENSE**

**This is to Certify that Ms. LYDIA LANGAT of Egerton University, has been licensed to conduct research in Nairobi, Uasin-Gishu on the topic: University Students' Perception on the Influence of Selected Family and Internet Assess Factors on Vulnerability to Radicalization in Kenya. Implication for Counselling for the period ending : 14/June/2023.**

License No: NACOSTI/P/22/17901

474484

Applicant Identification Number


  
Director General  
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &  
INNOVATION

Verification QR Code



**NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document,  
Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.**

## Appendix VII: Permission to Collect Data University B

  
**MOI UNIVERSITY**  
**OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR**  
**ACADEMICS, RESEARCH, EXTENSION & STUDENT AFFAIRS**

Tel: (053) 43355  
(053) 43620  
Fax: (053) 43412  
Email: [dvc\\_are@mu.ac.ke](mailto:dvc_are@mu.ac.ke) or [dvcaremoi@gmail.com](mailto:dvcaremoi@gmail.com)

P.O. Box 3900  
Eldoret-30100  
Kenya

**REF:** MU/DVC/REP/27B **DATE:** 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

**RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH – LYDIA KOSITANY LANGAT**

The above subject matter refers.

Ms. Lydia Kositany Langat is a PhD student at Egerton University, Department of Counseling Psychology. She has applied for authority to carry out research in Moi University from Third Year students, Staff Counselors and Peer Counselors.


The purpose of this letter is to request you to accord her all the support as she conducts her research on the topic: *“University Students’ Perception on the Influence of Selected Family and Internet Assess Factors on Vulnerability to Radicalization In Kenya. Implication for Counseling.”* By copy of this letter, authority is hereby granted to her to conduct the said research.

After the completion of the research, a complete report both on hard and soft copy will be handed over to the office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academics, Research, Extension & Students Affair.

Any assistance accorded to her will be highly appreciated.


Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

  
**PROF. I. N. KIMENGI, Ph.D.**  
**DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR**  
**(ACADEMICS, RESEARCH, EXTENSION&STUDENTS AFFAIRS)**

SKM/sa

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 (ISO 9001:2015 Certified Institution)

## Appendix VIII: Egerton University Ethical Approval



EU/RE/DVC/009

Approval No. EUREC/APP/174/2022

18<sup>th</sup> May, 2022

Lydia Kositany Langat  
C/O Dean of Students, Box 536-20115, Egerton, Kenya  
Telephone: 0722927140  
E-mail: [lydia.langat@egerton.ac.ke](mailto:lydia.langat@egerton.ac.ke) or [lydiaclangat@gmail.com](mailto:lydiaclangat@gmail.com)

Dear Lydia,

**RE: ETHICAL APPROVAL: UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON  
THE INFLUENCE OF SELECTED FAMILY AND INTERNET ASSESS  
FACTORS ON VULNERABILITY TO RADICALIZATION IN KENYA:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING.**

This is to inform you that *Egerton University Research Ethics Committee* has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is *EUREC/APP/174/2022*. The approval period is *18<sup>th</sup> May, 2022 –19<sup>th</sup> May, 2023*.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

- i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments, MTA) will be used.
- ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by *Egerton University Research Ethics Committee*.
- iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to *Egerton University Research Ethics Committee* within 72 hours of notification
- iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to *Egerton University Research Ethics Committee* within 72 hours
- v. Clearance for Material Transfer of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.

---

*"Transforming Lives through Quality Education"*

## Appendix IX: Publications

### University Students' Perception on the Influence of family parenting style on vulnerability to radicalization in Kenya: Implications for Counselling

Lydia k. Langat\*

PhD Candidate, Department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations,  
Egerton University P.O Box 536-20115, Egerton, Kenya

1. Prof. Ezra Maritim, Chair of Council, Open University of Kenya, P.O Box 2440-00606, Nairobi, Kenya
2. Dr. George Makori, Department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations, Egerton University P.O Box 536-20115, Egerton, Kenya
3. Dr. Halkano Abdi Wario, Department of Philosophy, History and Religion  
Egerton University P.O Box 536-20115, Egerton, Kenya  
\*lydiaclangat@gmail.com

#### Abstract

The threat and likelihood of radicalisation and recruitment into violent extremist groups has increased in Kenya and internationally. Counter-radicalization programs which is the reliance on 'soft' or 'smart' non-coercive policies need to be used so as to win the hearts and minds of groups, individuals and communities most vulnerable to radicalisation. In Kenya, the government has promoted security oriented interventions to fight radicalisation and terrorism over the softer approach called Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). The provision of long term prevention oriented interventions to university students, that would involve counselling individuals who are vulnerable and guiding parents on good parental styles is the aim of this research. The students in public universities are vulnerable to radicalization because they are in a stage of individual search for a sense of self and personal identity, through an intense exploration of personal values, beliefs, and goals. Failure to achieve an identity leads to role confusion where individuals get confused and helpless hence their hopes are crushed creating feelings of resentment and disillusionment. This may further result in maladaptive antisocial behaviour thus making them vulnerable to radicalization. The family during this stage plays a key role in the healthy psychological development of the individual. This study focused on investigating university students' perception on the influence of family parenting style on vulnerability to radicalization in Kenya and implications for counselling. The mixed methods research design was used. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently. The target population comprised of all the 443,783 students enrolled in 31 accredited universities, 120 student counsellors and 960 student peer counsellors. Purposive sampling technique was used to select two public universities in Kenya. Determination of sample sizes were done using Yamane's formula and then proportional sampling employed. The study sample size comprised of 644 respondents as follows: 216 students from University A; 184 students from University B; 26 student counsellors and 218 peer counsellors from the two public universities. Questionnaires, interview schedules and focus group discussions were used to collect data from the university students, student counsellors and peer counsellors, respectively. A pilot study was carried out at Egerton University, Njoro Campus and 65 respondents participated to establish the reliability of the instrument. In the study a reliability coefficient of 0.79 was established using Cronbach alpha. Both descriptive and inferential statistics (chi square) were used to analyze data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 and QSR NVivo 12 for Windows aided in data analysis. The study established that the three parenting styles that were considered in the study which are authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles, had a moderate and significant influence on vulnerability to radicalization. The results of Chi-square test of independence (Likelihood Ratio ( $\chi^2 (16) = 37.629, p < 0.05$ )) revealed a significant association between authoritative parenting style and vulnerability to radicalisation. Cramer's V = 0.163 at an approximate significance of 0.004 indicates that authoritative parenting style had moderate and significant influence on vulnerability to radicalisation among university students in Kenya. The results of Chi-square test of independence (Likelihood Ratio ( $\chi^2 (16) = 53.751, p < 0.05$ )) revealed that there was a significant association between authoritarian parenting style and vulnerability to radicalisation. Cramer's V = 0.206 at an approximate significance of 0.000 indicates that authoritarian parenting style had moderate and significant influence on vulnerability to radicalisation among university students in Kenya. The results of Chi-square test of independence (The Likelihood Ratio ( $\chi^2 (16) = 44.632, p < 0.05$ )) revealed that there was a significant association between permissive parenting style and vulnerability to radicalization. Cramer's V = 0.170 and it is at an

## University Students' Perception on the Influence of family type on vulnerability to Radicalization in Kenya: Implications for Counselling

Lydia k. Langat\*

PhD Candidate, Department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations,  
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1. Prof. Ezra Maritim, Chair of Council, Open University of Kenya, P.O Box 2440-00606, Nairobi, Kenya
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### Abstract

The threat and likelihood of radicalisation and recruitment into violent extremist groups has increased in Kenya and internationally. Those at risk of being radicalised need to be identified and positive alternatives to extremism promoted. In Kenya, the government has promoted security oriented interventions to fight radicalisation and terrorism over the softer approach called Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). The concern is the provision of long term prevention oriented interventions that would involve counselling individuals who are vulnerable to induce resilience. The students in public universities are vulnerable to radicalisation because there is maximum exchange of ideas in the universities contrary to the rigid ideologies of extremist groups. The family as the first socialization agent of an individual can contribute to vulnerability to radicalisation. This study focused on investigating university students' perception on the influence of family type on vulnerability to Radicalization in Kenya and implications for counselling. The mixed methods research design was used. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently. The target population comprised of all the 443,783 students enrolled in 31 accredited universities, 120 student counsellors and 960 student peer counsellors. Purposive sampling technique was used to select two public universities in Kenya. Determination of sample sizes were done using Yamane's formula and then proportional sampling employed. The study sample size comprised of 644 respondents as follows: 216 students from University A; 184 students from University B; 26 student counsellors and 218 peer counsellors from the two public universities. Questionnaires, interview schedules and focus group discussions were used to collect data from the university students, student counsellors and peer counsellors, respectively. A pilot study was carried out at Egerton University, Njoro Campus and 65 respondents participated to establish the reliability of the instrument. In the study a reliability coefficient of 0.79 was established using Cronbach alpha. Both descriptive and inferential statistics (chi square) were used to analyze data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 and QSR NVivo 12 for Windows aided in data analysis. The study found that family type had insignificant influence on vulnerability to radicalisation. The results of Chi-square test of independence on the basis of the interpretation of likelihood ratio test ( $\chi^2(20) = 27.849, p = 0.113$ ) showed that the family type in which the students were raised had insignificant influence on level of agreement or disagreement to reasons to justify extremist ideologies. The study recommended that other factors may contribute to make students more at risk to radicalization therefore more research needs to be done. Therapy related to students' identity, belonging and family relations can improve the student's life skills and broaden their knowledge on radicalization. The development of effective counselling intervention programs and sensitization programs to parents should also be enhanced for the prevention of radicalisation.

**Keywords:** Student's perception, influence of family type, vulnerability to radicalization, implications for counselling

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