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The Influence of Inter-Agency Information-Sharing Frameworks in Managing Illicit Brew in Kiambu County, Kenya

[1] Joseph Muriuki Nguuri, [2] Dr. Joseph Karanja
[1] Masters Student, Department of Security, Diplomacy and Peace Studies, Nairobi, Kenya
[2] Lecturer, Department of Security, Diplomacy and Peace Studies, Nairobi, Kenya

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Corresponding Author: **Joseph Muriuki Nguuri**

Abstract
Illicit brew continues to pose significant security, health, social, and economic risk globally, Kenya included. In response, the government has mobilized various agencies to manage the vice. However, collaboration among the agencies involved remains suboptimal. Notably, the primary challenge lies in the lack of seamless collaboration thus impeding a swift and effective response to the security threat posed by these second-generation alcoholic drinks. The study therefore sought to evaluate the influence of inter-agency information-sharing frameworks in managing illicit brew in Kiambu County. Kenya. Descriptive survey design was employed. Target population for this study comprised of the National Government Administration officers (Chiefs and County Commissioners), police officers, NACADA officers, Chiefs, health officers, Liquor board and sub-county committee representatives, religious leaders, village elders, and community members. The study sample was selected using stratified, cluster, and purposive sampling procedures. Data was collected using both semi-structured questionnaires and interview guides. Questionnaires were administered using drop and approach while face-to-face discussions with the key informants were used for interviews. Prior to collecting field data, a pilot study was conducted in Nairobi County. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics generated using SPSS v24. Thematic content analysis was used to analyze qualitative data. Findings from objective one indicated that information-sharing mechanism through shared inter-agency databases for the exchange of tactical, operational, and strategic intelligence among the agencies enhanced Inter-Agency collaboration in combating illicit brew. In the end, this study recommended the development and implementation of a standardized inter-agency information-sharing protocol.

Keywords: Inter-agencies, Information-sharing Frameworks, Illicit Brews

1. Introduction

Illicit brew is a chronic global public health and social concern that has negative repercussions on society, human well-being, the economy and security. For example, the 2018 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) world drug report noted the psychological harm, alcohol related health problems, and mortality as some of the negative effects connected with illicit brew (UNODC, 2018) [31]. In the same vein, Davies and Walsh (2023) [6] argue that, in addition to the health implications, the proceeds of illicit alcohol have attracted criminal gangs, and violence is frequently used to ensure production and distribution, hence posing significant security risk. In view of the above, governments and non-governmental organizations have been forced to take drastic measures including the development of stringent legislation and initiatives such as inter-agency collaboration as part of interventions designed to combat wanton illicit brews.

Inter-Agency collaboration as argued by Callens and Verhoest, (2022) [3] can be defined as activities aimed at promoting a working relationship among agencies involved. Their work highlights the importance of fostering cooperation among different entities to address shared challenges effectively.In agreement, Sydelko (2022) [28] asserts that Inter-Agency collaboration comprises of synchronization, cooperation, and integration of resources, information, and strategies to handle complex challenges that require prompt attention and action. This perspective emphasizes the multifaceted nature of collaboration necessary for tackling urgent issues. The primary objective of inter-agency cooperation as argued by Delpeuch and Bonnet (2021) [7] is to augment the efficacy and efficiency of reactions through the facilitation of information exchange, collaborative

planning, resource distribution, and coordinated decision-making procedures. Their research underscores the crucial role of structured cooperation in enhancing overall response effectiveness.

However, Ugochukwu (2023) [30] notes that despite the potential advantages offered by Inter-Agency collaboration in combating the proliferation of illicit brews, its actual implementation is faced with numerous structural and functional obstacles which have to be dealt with in order for it to be effective. This highlights the challenges that organizations encounter in realizing the benefits of collaboration. For example, Nohrstedt, Bynander, Parker, and Hart (2018) [22] emphasized the importance of setting clear regulations and obligations to ensure successful collaboration. Their insights underscore that well-defined guidelines are essential for fostering effective inter-agency partnerships. Similarly, Mattessich and Johnson (2018) [16] emphasize the need for such coordinated inter-agency efforts to delineate clear roles and responsibilities and develop shared situational awareness to have a synchronized enforcement response. Whether these prerequisites have been achieved in the context of illicit brew prevention and management remains an aspect that warrants further examination.

In Afghanistan, Ebrahimi and Lim (2018) [9] in an evaluation study to determine the frameworks of inter-agency collaboration against cultivation, production and global trafficking of heroin revealed that a collaborative process for counternarcotics stakeholders includes a shared governance framework. However, the study indicated resource sharing as one of the challenges affecting the collaboration among various inter-agencies. Further, it was recommended agencies adopt optimization and resource pooling to address resource-sharing challenges. Therefore, an emerging concern for this study was on whether resource pooling and optimization had been implemented, as well as the implications for illicit brew in Kiambu County.

In Southeast Asia, Thanh-Luong (2022) [29] analyzed the inter-agency limitations in combating transnational narcotics trafficking in Myanmar, Vietnam, and Malaysia and highlighted the weak institutional frameworks as a hindrance to effective inter-agency collaboration in combatting transnational illicit drugs. Similarly, in Colombia, Villarreal, Rojas, and Ochoa (2018) [34] examined the factors affecting the operational effectiveness of the inter-agency law enforcement and concluded that collaborative capacity building had great potential to increase the synergy to combat organized armed drug traffickers. In their report, a lack of collaborative capacity-building training programs to coordinate key responsibilities for canine and handler teams was reported. Given the above, this study examines the extent to which collaborative capacity-building initiatives mitigated Inter-Agency collaboration challenges and their overall influence in managing illicit brew.

In Nigeria, a study by Ogbu, Shumba, and Abimbola (2023) [23] revealed interagency power dynamics (rivalry), role overlap, unclear objectives, lack of communication and legal policy framework, and lack of unity of purpose (vision) as the root cause of inter-agency failure to combat the security threats. This research sheds light on the internal challenges that hinder effective collaboration among agencies.

In South Africa, Visser (2017) [35] found a lack of inter-agency collaborative governance framework as the reason for failed law enforcement efforts against methamphetamine drugs in Western Cape Province. This highlights the importance of structured collaboration in effectively addressing drug-related challenges.

In Kenya, the benefits associated with Inter-Agency collaboration has been reported by various studies. The focus has been on national security planning and response (Boit & Mutungi, 2023) [2]; combating organized and transnational crime (Muthondeki, 2019) [18]; countering terrorism and extremism (Njiru & Muna, 2023) [21] among others. Particularly, these studies highlighted challenges encountered overlooking the fact that to date, most have implemented a raft of mitigating initiatives which was the focus of this study. Thus, it is was imperative to explore the efficacy of such strategies in terms of their capacity to enhance the use of Inter-Agency collaboration and the overall implication in mitigating security threats such as illicit brew. Specifically, this study attempted to examine the influence of inter-agency information-sharing frameworks in managing illicit brew in Kiambu County.

2. Materials and methods

This study adopted a descriptive survey design to achieve its objectives. This choice aligns with Dubey and Kothari (2022) [8] who emphasize the suitability of this design for describing a phenomenon in its natural state. A descriptive survey design offers several advantages in this context. Firstly, as noted by Salaria (2012) [24], it facilitates the collection and analysis of data necessary to depict the status of the phenomenon under investigation. Secondly, it allows for gathering information from a representative sample of the target population, enabling the description of its characteristics (Kothari & Guarav, 2014) [14]. This characteristic is particularly relevant in this study, as it aims to identify factors for enhancing Inter-Agency collaboration in managing illicit brew within Kiambu County. Furthermore, a descriptive survey design permits the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. This combined approach proves valuable in this research as it facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. By employing this design, the researcher can gather up-to-date information directly from the target population.

This study was conducted in Kiambu County, Kenya. Kiambu County lies between latitude 0° 25´10°20´South and longitude 360°31´370°15´East. The County has an estimated land mass of 2,538.7 KM^2. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), the County has an estimated population of 2,417,735 (County Government of Kiambu, 2019) [5]. The county demographic distributions are characterized as 40% rural and 60% urban. It is home to predominant Kikuyu ethnic groups but being a cosmopolitan area, many other community members from other ethnic groups reside in it. The county borders six other counties; Nairobi and Kajiado Counties to the South; Machakos to the East; Murang'a to the North and North East, Nyandarua to the North West, and Nakuru to the West (County Government of Kiambu, 2019) [5]. The County is categorized into four topographical zones namely Upper Highland (Lari sub-county), Lower Highland (Limuru, Gatundu North, Gatundu South, Githunguri and Kabete sub-counties), Upper Midland (Juja sub-county), and Lower Midland (Thika Town (Gatuanyaga), Limuru and Kikuyu sub-counties) Zones. Generally, Kiambu County's land area

lies between 1200-1360 meters above sea level with rich and fertile soil characterized by high-level upland, plateau, and volcanic soils. The chief economic activity in Kiambu County is livestock farming and the cultivation of various crops both subsistence and commercial use.

Kiambu County was chosen because of the increasingly alarming health incidences related to illicit brew. First, baseline surveys such as by NACADA indicated that alcohol prevalence among the 16-64-year-old age groups in the Central Region stands at 12.8% (NACADA, 2022) [19]. Second, another baseline survey by the Community Education and Empowerment Centre (CEEC) indicated that alcohol prevalence among 16-year-olds in Kiambu County is at 28.9% with results also indicating that youths as young as 11 years also imbibe alcohol (CEEC, 2020) [4]. Third, Kiambu County is documented by the National Authority for Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) as having a significant issue with second-generation (illicit brews) such as Changaa, Kangara, Muratina, with these drinks produced in various towns within Kiambu such as with Kikuyu and Thika towns among the leading ones (NACADA, 2022) [19] and Matelong, Choge & Njure, 2022) [15].

2.1 Target Population

The target population for this study were residents and a specific group of individuals from agencies established to combat illicit brew within Kiambu County, Kenya. This collaborative effort draws upon the expertise of various agencies, including the 600 National Police Service officers, NGAO (96 Chiefs, 1 County Commissioner, 14 Deputy/Assistant County Commissioners) 5 NACADA officials, 9 National Intelligence Service officers, 10 Health Officers, 14 liquor board and sub-county committee representatives and members of community policing namely 146 village elders, 14 religious leaders, and community members. The distribution of the target population is indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Target Population

Category		Frequency
NGAO Officials	Chiefs	96
	County Commissioner	1
	Deputy/Assistant County Commissioner	14
NIS		9
NPS		600
NACADA		5
Health Officers		10
Liquor board officials (sub-county committee representatives)		14
Religious Leaders		14
Village elders		146
Community members		2417735
Total		2418644

Source: NPS (2023); NACADA (2022): NGAO (2023)

Sample size determination in social research varies based on the nature of the study. Researchers such as Schreier (2018) [25] and Nanjundeswaraswamy and Divakar (2021) [20] assert that a sample proportion of between 10 to 30% of the total population is representative and adequate. The current study adopted this consideration to determine the representative sample of Chiefs, Deputy/Assistant County Commissioners, NIS, NACADA, Chiefs, health officers, liquor board and sub-county committee representatives, religious leaders, and village elders. Precisely, 30% of Chiefs, Deputy/Assistant County Commissioners, NIS, NPS, NACADA, Chiefs, health officers, liquor board and sub-county committee representatives, religious leaders, and village elders were selected. For NACADA officials, all them were selected. However, given the number of the targeted NPS officers was large (600), 10% of them, which is 60 were selected.

On the other hand, since the finite population of the community members is large, Slovin's formula was employed to determine the appropriate and representative sample as follows;

Slovin formula is expressed as = $n=N/(1+Ne^2)$ where; n=sample size; N= Total number of community members in Kiambu County (2,417,735 as per 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census) while e= margin of error (the current study adopted 10% confidence level).

Hence, $n= \{2417735 / [(1+2417735] \times 0.1^2)\} = 99.95533$ which is approximately 100 community members.

Overall, the total number of the participants that were selected was 256 comprising 100 NGAO (Deputy/assistant County Commissioners, Chiefs), 3 NIS, 60 NPS, 5 NACADA, 29 Chiefs, 3 health officers, 4 liquor board and sub-county committee representatives, 4 religious' leaders, 44 village elders, and 100 community members. The sample size distribution of the participants is indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of Sample Size

Participants		Population	Sample	Percent (%)
NGAO officials	Deputy/assistant County Commissioners	14	4	1.6
	Chiefs	96	29	11.3
NIS Officers		9	3	1.2
NPS Officers		600	60	23.4
NACADA Officials		5	5	2.0
Health Officers		10	3	1.2
Liquor board and sub-county committee representatives		14	4	1.6
Religious Leaders		14	4	1.6
Village elders		146	44	17.2
Community members		2417735	100	39.1
Total		**2418643**	**256**	**100**

Source: Researcher, 2024

Additionally, the study determined the appropriate number of key informants for an in-depth discussion based on the assertions of Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe, and Young (2018) [33] who indicated a sample of 20-30 participants is sufficient for a qualitative survey study. Similarly, Boddy (2016) [1] noted that 15-50 participants are adequate for qualitative survey studies. Equally, Sim, Saunders, Waterfield, and Kingstone (2018) [27] indicated a sample of between 5-50 key informants is adequate for interview-based survey studies. Drawing on these assertions, the current study selected 22 key informants as the sample size. Specifically, the compositions of the key informants include 6 NGAO officials (3 Chiefs and 2 Deputy/assistant County Commissioners and 1 County Commissioners), 5 NPS Officers, 2 NACADA Officials, 1 Health Officers, 1 Liquor board and sub-county committee representatives, 3 Village elders, and 4 Community members.

This study employs a combination of various sampling techniques due to the diverse target population to ensure rigor in representativeness. Since Kiambu County is vast, with 14 sub-counties and over 96 locations, the researcher clustered the sub-counties of interest based on police reports on the prevalence of illicit brew and number of the individuals affected (victims) documented in the last 5 years. Stratified sampling was utilized where by the target population was categorized into groups known as strata based on their attributes such as their job designation or occupation, educational level, or age and selected (Iliyasu & Etikan, 2021) [11]. For stratified sampling, participants from agencies involved were divided into different strata (groups) based on their categories such as law enforcement agencies (NIS, NPS, NACADA), NGAO officials, Health Officers, Liquor board and sub-county committee representatives and members of community policing (religious leaders, community members, village elders, and Chiefs) to ensure there is adequate representation. Further, to ensure adequate representation, the selected sub-counties were clustered into sub-locations to facilitate easy purposive sampling of the participants.

Purposive sampling on the other hand was based on the participantss experience and or knowledge about illicit brew management and Inter-Agency collaboration respectively. In this study, purposive sampling was used to select a representative sample of law enforcement officers, NGAO officials, health officers, village elders, liquor board and sub-county committee representatives, Chiefs, and community members. The study also integrated a Respondent-Driven Sampling (RDS) approach to select or recruit other participants, largely those involved in the practice of illicit brew production or distribution which is illegal and hence carried out covertly. The use of respondent-driven sampling enabled the researcher to identify the community members (participants) involved in or affected by illicit brew production and consumption in Kiambu County to leverage their relevant experiences or insights (Heckathorn & Cameron, 2017) [10].

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to capture data from the participants. Quantitative data were collected using semi-structured questionnaires while semi-structured interview schedules were used as a guide during face-to-face discussions with the key informants.

Quantitative data collected using the questionnaires were subjected to a rigorous data-cleaning process to ensure there is completeness, legibility, and consistency. Any identified errors were rectified, and the data were coded and categorized for efficient analysis. In this study, SPSS (v24) was used to generate both descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics such as measures of central tendency (means and standard deviation), frequencies, and percentages were used to establish patterns, trends, distributions, and variability within the dataset.

Interview data were transcribed systematically and categorized into themes. The themes reflect the research objectives. Once the transcribing of the recorded responses was concluded, content analysis was utilized to identify themes, concepts, or ideas. As noted by Vaismoradi and Snelgrove (2019) [32], thematic content analysis helps the researcher obtain insightful information and draw conclusions from the data. The qualitative findings were reported using verbatim narratives or quotes to offer a rich understanding of the participants' perspectives and experiences. The findings of the interview were used to triangulate and or corroborate the quantitative findings and insights from reviewed studies. Findings of the interview were presented in the Chapter in themes following the research objectives alongside the quantitative results to provide a holistic interpretation of the research findings.

The principle of informed consent was paramount. Potential participants were comprehensively informed about the research objectives, the data collection procedures involved, and their absolute right to decline participation without any form of pressure. Only those individuals who voluntarily provided their written consent were included in the study. Participants were presented with a clear and concise informed consent form.

Table 3: Information-Sharing Frameworks

Information-Sharing Frameworks	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std.
There are shared inter-agency databases for the exchange of tactical, operational, and strategic intelligence among the agencies	2.2%	0.4%	4.7%	43.0%	49.7%	4.37	0.67
There are standardized information-sharing protocols and guidelines for inter-agency collaboration against illicit brew	0.6%	3.9%	9.1%	48.4%	38.0%	4.19	0.83
There are joint information-sharing systems to facilitate real-time communication and collaboration among the inter-agencies	0.1%	8.6%	17.1%	41.4%	32.8%	3.98	0.97
Liaison inter-agency officers bridge communication gaps and facilitate information exchange among the inter-agencies	2.8%	3.3%	10.2%	53.7%	32.0%	4.15	0.74
Regular meetings (briefs) occur between inter-agency heads on illicit brew management	0.9%	5.5%	13.8%	44.5%	35.3%	4.08	0.91
Total						**4.16**	**0.82**

Key: SD=Strongly Disagree; D= Disagree; N=Neutral; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree; Std.=Standard Deviation

3. Results and discussion

It will be recalled that this study aimed to examine the influence of integrated information-sharing frameworks devised to improve the use of inter-agency coordination to manage of illicit brew in Kiambu County.

3.1 Information-Sharing Frameworks

To establish whether integration of information-sharing frameworks had any effect on inter-agency coordination challenges, the first part aimed to identify measures devised address information sharing constraints. Findings of the respondents' responses are provided in Table 3.

Findings in Table 3 show that the majority of the respondents 49.7% strongly agree that having a shared inter-agency database for the exchange of tactical, operational, and strategic intelligence among the agencies is instrumental for interoperability among agencies involved. Results also show that the majority 48.4% of the respondents agree that there are standardized information-sharing protocols and guidelines for inter-agency collaboration against illicit brew. This is supported by a mean response rating of 4.19. Additionally, findings revealed that the majority 41.4% of the respondents strongly agree that there were efforts to enhance communication though joint information-sharing systems to facilitate real-time communication and collaboration among the inter-agencies. The strong respondents' assertion is emphasized by a mean response score of 3.98. Moreover, results showed that most participants agree there were efforts to have a liaison inter-agency officer to bridge communication gaps and facilitate information exchange among the inter-agencies as emphasized by a mean response score of 4.15. Finally, the findings revealed that the majority (44.5%) of the respondents agree that there were attempt to have regular meetings (briefs) between inter-agency heads on illicit brew management with the aim of improving communication challenges among agencies involved. This is evidenced by a mean response score of 4.08.

The above findings are indicative of the felt need among agencies involved in managing illicit brew to address information sharing challenges encountered during its usage. Notably, access to information can hinder agencies operation. This is so because inter-agency bureaucracies involved during information processing and dissemination thus crippling exchange of tactical, operational, and strategic intelligence for combating illicit brew menace. To this end, an integrated information sharing system such as having a liaison officer and shared database has been championed. The aim is often to increase accessibility and ensure real time data for timely response. The above observations agree with those of Shepherd and Meehan (2012) [26] who emphasized the role of an integration coordinator (liaison officer) in facilitating relationships and ensuring effective information flows between the inter-agencies. Liaison officers are very critical for the seamless sharing of information across agencies which may enhance interoperability among agencies involved. The study further sought to examine the effectiveness of the above measures in addressing information sharing constraints commonly experienced when using multi-agency approach to address security concerns.

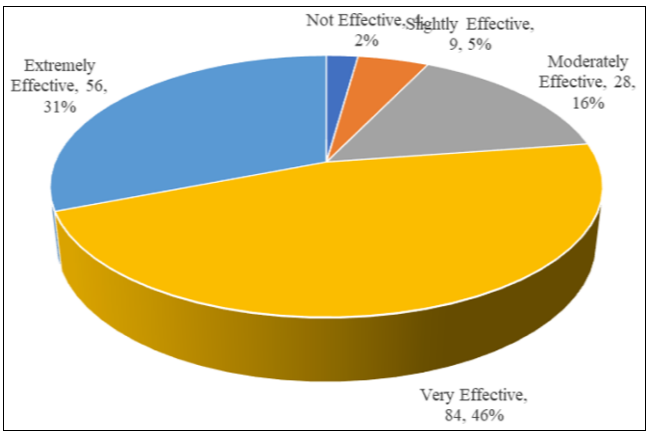

Fig 1: Effectiveness of Shared Databases

Findings in Fig 1 show that the majority (46%) of the respondents indicated that shared databases are very effective in facilitating the exchange of tactical, operational, and strategic intelligence among agencies involved in managing illicit brew. The findings show that 31% indicated they are extremely effective, 16% indicated moderately effective while 5% indicated they are slightly effective and not effective (2%). Overall, most of the respondents affirm that having centralized databases has greatly facilitated inter-agency coordination efforts to effectively target, make arrests, and dismantle illicit brew supply networks. Notably, shared databases are important in facilitating effective intelligence exchange among agencies combating illicit substances such as alcoholic beverages and tobacco products. For example, intelligence gathering bodies such as the National Intelligence Service often facilitated access of the law enforcement to database that contains tactical information crucial to suppressing the distribution of illicit brew. This may include location and electronic financial records of suspected manufactures or distributors of illicit brew. This information can be used stage arrest within the desired scenes thus improving their efficiency. These findings agree with those of Knight (2024) [13] noted the

crucial role of shared databases as a vital strategy for optimizing information sharing among the Homeland Security multi-agencies in the United States arguing that they serve as intelligence fusion centers or centralized repositories of intelligence for multi-agencies thus enabling them to share tactical, operational, and strategic information in real-time.

In the same vein, the importance of a shared data base was reported by a NACADA official during the discussion with the researcher who noted that;

> *We have had remarkable progress in our fight against illicit brew. In the past, we were experiencing several challenges relating to how we share information on illicit brew. In my view, these challenge stems from the lack of centralized information databases. Because of this most agencies had been operating separately or in silos leading to fragmented information. Undoubtedly, having a shared centralized information database has enhanced our operations we can access timely information on key supply chains or distribution networks of illicit brew (K-7 Participant, 2024).*

As observed above, shared databases serve as centralized repositories of intelligence. This has enabled agencies such as NACADA with limited investigative tool benefit greatly from law enforcement units thus coordinate better in terms of tracking, arrest and prosecution of suspected accomplice involved with illicit brew. In the end, timely access to tactical information through shared databases greatly enhances multi-agency ability to suppress the distribution.

3.2 Frequency of Meetings

In an effort to address informational sharing hurdles, respondents in Table 3 indicated that strategies had adopted to increase the number of meetings among agencies involved in managing illicit brew. Consequently, the study further sought to determine the frequency of inter-agency meetings against illicit brew in Kiambu County. The respondents were asked to indicate how often regular meetings occur between agencies involved in illicit brew management in Kiambu County. The results of the analysis are indicated in Fig 2.

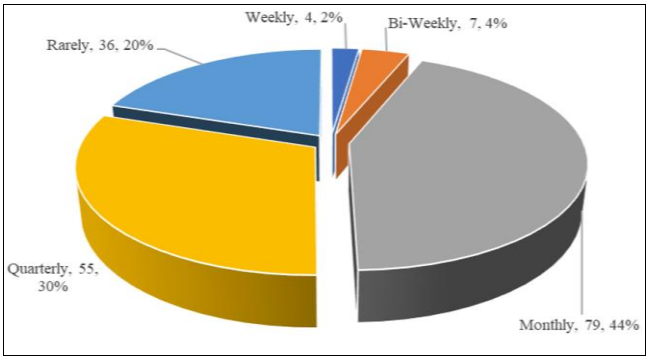

Fig 2: Frequency of Inter-Agency Meetings

Findings in Fig 2 show that the majority (44%) of the respondents indicated that inter-agency meetings against illicit brew are usually held every month. Results also show that some respondents indicated that inter-agency meetings are held on a quarterly (30%), bi-weekly (4%) and weekly (2%) basis. However, 20% of the respondents indicated that inter-agency meetings against illicit brew are rarely organized or held. It can be observed that majority of the meetings are held once a month as reported from the field data. Such rarely organized or held inter-agency meetings may significantly impact efforts against illicit brew and reduce interoperability among agencies. This so because meetings provide a vital channel for feedback and collectively assessing efficacy of intervention put to address information sharing hurdles. Further, without regular meeting among the inter-agencies such as the police, NACADA, KRA, KEBS, and NGAO officers, it becomes challenging to coordinate strategies, identify emerging trends, and effectively combat the production, supply, and consumption of illicit brews. These findings agree with Imam and Fatima (2022) [12] who indicated a lack of regular meetings as a key reason for poor coordination among agencies involved in border security. Therefore, it can be concluded that despite attempts to have frequent meetings in order to address information sharing concerns, such efforts have not been well embraced in reality that putting at risk the collective response among the inter-agencies to illicit substance challenges.

3.3 Conformity with Standardized Inter-Agency Information-Sharing Protocols

The study also probed the respondents on whether the agencies follow the established standardized inter-agency information-sharing protocols and guidelines for managing illicit brew. The findings of the analysis are indicated in Fig 3.

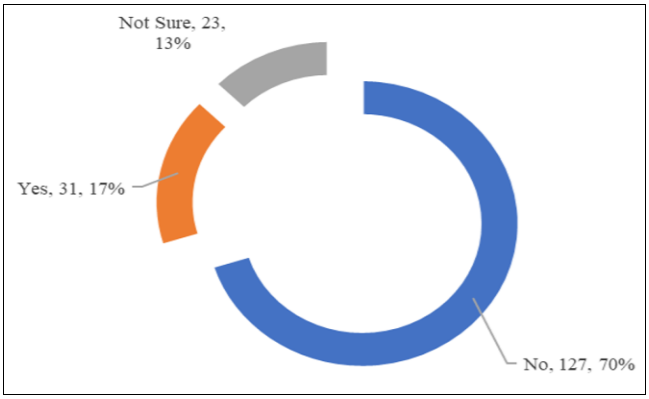

Fig 3: Conformity with Established Standardized Inter-Agency Information-Sharing Protocols and Guidelines for Managing Illicit Brew

Results in Fig 3 reveal that the majority (70%) of the respondents disagree that inter-agencies tasked with combating illicit brew follow established standardized inter-agency information-sharing protocols and guidelines for managing illicit brew. The above observations can be attributed to the use of varying procedures, formats, and terminologies which makes it difficult to share and interpret information accurately against illicit brew production and distribution. These results are consistent with those of Muregi (2017) [17] who noted non-compliance with the established legal and institutional information-sharing frameworks and guidelines among the inter-agency has been an impediment towards operationalization of multi-agency approaches to address security concerns.

Affirming on the suboptimal success of standardized information-sharing protocols or guidelines as a strategy to address inter-agency information constrains, one key informant, who is a law enforcement officer remarked that;

> *Despite the existence of policy guiding on standardized framework for information-sharing protocols within the agencies involved in the fight against illicit brew, its compliance is minimal. This is so because the document lacks implementation mechanisms leading to informal arrangements and ad-hoc information-sharing mechanisms in place. For example, just like in any other security operation, we rely on each other for support and resource mobilization. Lack of standardized information-sharing protocols often results into confusion on the date and time for the raids leading to some agencies not showing up on the material date. This greatly affects the success of the operation especially when key information on intelligence is not available during raids. (K-3 Participant, 2024).*

In view of the above, despite the benefit associated standardized information-sharing protocols, its compliance seems to be limited due to lack of a formal implementation framework hence minimal compliance. A formal implementation mechanism is essential since it obligates heads of agencies to collaborate among themselves and collectively complete the task ahead. Further, a sense of responsibility that is anchored on law rather informalities allow resource allocation and duty allocation thus greatly contributing to the success of the mission at hand. In conclusion, despite the need to have standardized information-sharing protocols in the fight against illicit brew, its compliance is greatly affected by varying procedures, formats, terminologies and the lack of a formal implementation mechanism.

In view of the above the study concludes that strategies put in place to enhance flow of information among agencies involved are relatively effective is addressing challenges experienced. Notably, operational shared joint or centralized database, use of liaison inter-agency officers and frequent meetings conducted greatly alleviated information sharing huddles. However, standardized (common) information protocols strategy was found not effective due to limited compliance among the agencies. This was due to varying inter-agency procedures, formats, and terminologies makes it difficult to share and interpret information accurately resulting in miscommunication and delays in response hence hindering coordinated efforts to disrupt illicit brew supply chains and make arrests.

4. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the study recommends the National Government through the Ministry of Interior, NACADA, Ministry of Health, and other stakeholders develop and implement standardized inter-agency information-sharing protocols to ensure coordinated raids and reduce the likelihood of suspects escaping due to lack of or breakdown in communication. Besides the establishment of standardized inter-agency information-sharing protocols, inter-agency liaison officers should be appointed to facilitate information exchange and coordination.

5. Further Research

Based on the recommendations, further studies should be conducted to focus on the determinants of enhancing Inter-Agency collaboration against other drugs and substances such as heroin, bhang, and cocaine.

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