

Assessing the Effectiveness of East African Community Interventions in Combating Economic Crimes in Tanzania

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of the East African Community (EAC) interventions in combating economic crimes in Tanzania, with a focus on the performance of collaborative mechanisms among EAC law enforcement agencies. Guided by collective action theory and rational choice theory, the research employed a mixed-methods design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Data were gathered from key stakeholders such as law enforcement personnel, policymakers, legal professionals, and civil society representatives using structured interviews and questionnaires. The sampling strategy combined both probability and non-probability techniques to ensure a balanced representation. Ethical standards were upheld through institutional approval and informed consent procedures. Findings indicate that while formal structures for regional cooperation exist, their effectiveness is undermined by bureaucratic red tape, limited technological capacity, and insufficient political will. These obstacles impede efficient intelligence-sharing and coordination across borders, weakening the region's overall response to economic crime. The study recommends enhancing institutional capacity through increased funding, specialized training, and the integration of advanced technologies. Strengthening regional cooperation through improved communication and intelligence-sharing is essential, as is reinforcing political commitment to combat corruption and promote accountability. Public engagement should be heightened through awareness campaigns involving civil society and the private sector. Finally, the study advocates for the creation of a centralized EAC Economic Crimes Unit to lead and coordinate regional anti-crime initiatives.

Key Words: East African Community, economic crimes, regional cooperation, law enforcement, collective action theory, rational choice theory, cross-border crime, intelligence-sharing

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Introduction

Globally, economic crimes, including corruption, money laundering, and tax evasion, significantly hinder economic stability, governance, and equitable development. These crimes are not confined to any specific region but manifest globally, impacting both developed and developing economies. Examples from Malaysia, the United States, and Europe highlight the pervasive and detrimental effects of such practices. The 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) scandal represents one of the most egregious examples of economic crime in recent history. Established in 2009 as a sovereign wealth fund to spur economic development, 1MDB became a vehicle for embezzlement and fraud. Investigations revealed that over \$4.5 billion was misappropriated through a network of international financial institutions, shell companies, and complicit individuals. High-ranking officials, including former Prime Minister Najib Razak, were implicated in the scandal, which led to significant political and economic repercussions for Malaysia. Investor confidence plummeted, the Malaysian ringgit weakened, and the country's reputation on the global stage was severely damaged (Shanmugam & Tan, 2018). The 1MDB case underscored the critical need for stronger international financial oversight and collaboration to combat cross-border corruption and money laundering.

The United States experienced one of its most devastating economic downturns in modern history due to fraudulent practices within the financial sector. The 2008 financial crisis, triggered by the collapse of mortgage-backed securities and excessive risk-taking by major financial institutions, revealed widespread misconduct in lending practices and financial reporting. Institutions such as Lehman Brothers failed, while others required massive bailouts, costing taxpayers billions. The crisis exposed significant gaps in regulatory oversight and accountability, prompting legislative reforms such as the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010. This legislation aimed to increase transparency, regulate financial institutions, and prevent future crises caused by economic crimes (Angelides & Thomas, 2011). The crisis demonstrated the catastrophic consequences of unchecked financial misconduct, affecting not only the United States but also global markets.

In Europe, the LuxLeaks scandal of 2014 revealed how multinational corporations exploited Luxembourg's tax rulings to avoid paying taxes in other jurisdictions. The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) published leaked documents showing that companies such as Amazon, IKEA, and PepsiCo secured preferential tax agreements, reducing their tax obligations to negligible amounts. While these arrangements

were technically legal, they deprived other European nations of critical revenue, exacerbating economic inequalities and undermining public trust in tax systems. The revelations spurred a public outcry and led to calls for tighter regulations on corporate taxation and increased transparency within the European Union (ICIJ, 2014). The LuxLeaks case highlighted the necessity of international cooperation to address systemic issues in global tax governance.

Regionally, economic crimes in Africa, including corruption, money laundering, and embezzlement, have devastating impacts on governance, socio-economic development, and security. The African Union (AU) estimates that the continent loses over \$50 billion annually to illicit financial flows, funds that could significantly contribute to poverty alleviation and infrastructure development (AU & UNECA, 2021). Examples from South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya illustrate the pervasive nature of these crimes and their far-reaching consequences. The “State Capture” scandal in South Africa epitomizes the deep entanglement of economic crime with governance. Between 2009 and 2018, during Jacob Zuma’s presidency, state-owned enterprises (SOEs) were systematically looted by private interests, notably the Gupta family, in collusion with high-ranking officials.

The corruption extended across critical sectors, including energy (Eskom), transport (Transnet), and revenue collection (SARS). Investigations revealed contracts worth billions of rand awarded without due process, siphoning public funds intended for development projects. The scandal caused severe economic stagnation, energy crises, and a loss of public trust in government institutions (Madonsela, 2016). The subsequent Zondo Commission inquiry exposed the scale of the corruption and underscored the need for institutional reforms to restore accountability and governance in South Africa.

In Nigeria, the Dasukigate scandal, which unfolded in 2015, involved the embezzlement of \$2.1 billion meant for the procurement of arms to combat the Boko Haram insurgency. Sambo Dasuki, the former National Security Advisor, was accused of diverting funds to political allies and personal accounts. The diversion not only delayed the acquisition of critical military equipment but also undermined national security efforts, allowing Boko Haram to intensify attacks on civilian populations. This case exemplifies how economic crimes directly exacerbate security challenges and deepen socio-political instability (Dandison, 2015). Dasukigate also highlighted systemic corruption within Nigeria’s defense sector and prompted calls for greater transparency in public procurement processes.

Kenya’s National Youth Service (NYS) scandal is another glaring example of economic crime. In 2015 and again in 2018, investigations revealed that billions of Kenyan shillings allocated to the NYS were fraudulently siphoned through fake tenders, inflated procurement contracts, and fictitious suppliers. Funds intended to empower youth through vocational training and employment programmes were instead funneled into private accounts, leaving thousands of young Kenyans disenfranchised. The scandal severely tarnished public confidence in anti-corruption initiatives and exposed weaknesses in Kenya’s public finance management systems (EACC, 2018). Efforts to prosecute those involved faced challenges, underscoring the need for stronger judicial and institutional mechanisms to address economic crimes effectively.

Tanzania stands out as a case study within the EAC due to its unique socio-economic dynamics, governance frameworks, and recent high-profile scandals that exemplify the challenges of economic crime prevention. The country’s Tegeta Escrow Account Scandal in 2014 involved the misuse of approximately \$133 million intended for energy projects, demonstrating the impact of corruption on essential infrastructure and economic progress (Erick, 2014). Another notable case is the 2020 National Social Security Fund (NSSF) Scandal, where billions of Tanzanian shillings were lost due to fraudulent contracts and corruption within the social security system, eroding public trust in government institutions (Smith, 2020). These incidents highlight the pervasive nature of economic crimes in Tanzania and the pressing need for effective interventions.

Tanzania's inclusion in this study is also justified by its pivotal role in the EAC. As one of the region's largest economies and a central participant in EAC integration initiatives, the country's experience with economic crime and its prevention efforts significantly influence the broader region. Further, Tanzania's government has demonstrated a commitment to combating corruption and economic crime through initiatives such as the establishment of the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB). However, the persistence of high-profile scandals and systemic corruption suggests that regional collaboration under the EAC framework could strengthen these efforts.

This study aimed to critically examine the efficacy of EAC interventions in economic crime prevention, focusing on Tanzania as a case study. By analyzing the successes, limitations, and challenges of these interventions, the research sought to contribute to the understanding of how regional strategies could be optimized to combat economic crimes and foster sustainable development in East Africa.

Economic crimes have become increasingly widespread across the East African Community (EAC), posing serious threats to economic development and social stability. In response, the EAC has implemented a range of regional initiatives, including legal frameworks and collaborative enforcement mechanisms, aimed at curbing these offenses. However, the persistent occurrence of economic crimes suggests that current strategies may be either inadequate or poorly implemented. While existing studies have largely focused on corruption and other economic crimes within individual member states, there remains a significant research gap regarding the effectiveness of EAC's collective regional interventions.

Notably, the literature has yet to sufficiently explore the cross-border nature of economic crimes and the necessity for coordinated regional responses. This study seeks to bridge that gap by examining the efficacy of EAC interventions in preventing economic crimes, with a particular emphasis on Tanzania. It assesses the effectiveness of these strategies, identifies key implementation challenges, and offers practical recommendations to enhance regional cooperation and enforcement.

Through this examination, the study sheds light on both the strengths and limitations of current EAC mechanisms. It highlights areas requiring improvement—particularly in enforcement coordination, policy harmonization, and institutional synergy. In doing so, the research provides actionable insights to support the creation of more robust and transparent economic governance frameworks, not only in Tanzania but across the broader East African region.

Nonetheless, the study encountered several limitations. Chief among them was the difficulty in accessing comprehensive and reliable data on economic crimes and the impact of EAC interventions. Underreporting and inconsistent documentation practices among member states limited the depth of analysis. Moreover, political and legal disparities across EAC countries, including variations in governance systems, legislative structures, and political will, complicated efforts to uniformly assess the implementation and success of regional strategies. The success of EAC initiatives also hinged on the commitment and cooperation of multiple stakeholders—an aspect that varied widely from one member state to another.

To mitigate these challenges, the study adopted a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data. A triangulation strategy was used to strengthen the analysis by drawing on diverse sources, including official reports, case studies, and academic literature. Additionally, the research incorporated perspectives from policymakers, law enforcement personnel, and civil society actors in Tanzania to deliver a

more nuanced, context-specific understanding of the dynamics surrounding economic crime prevention within the EAC framework.

Literature Review

Economic crimes such as money laundering, corruption as well as tax evasion present significant hurdles globally. This necessitates joint efforts through international partnerships and regional alliances for effective solutions to be devised and implemented across borders. Within the European Union context, the Anti Money Laundering Directive (AMLD) plays a significant role in establishing guidelines for member nations to bolster their systems in combating economic crimes. As noted in 2021 by the European Commission in the directive stresses the importance of adopting risk-based strategies that prompt countries to tailor their legislation to target vulnerabilities. Nonetheless, Baker and Lee (2023) highlight a critical gap in the uneven enforcement of these standards among member states, indicating the necessity of a unified strategy for legal harmonization, to ensure effective prevention efforts. Lack of consistency underscores the importance of providing training initiatives and resources, to enhance capabilities in weaker member states.

In the United States of America, the Bank Secrecy Act (BSA) and the USA PATRIOT Act have established structures to combat money laundering and terrorism funding. However, a study by Chien (2022) notes that despite robust regulations, challenges in enforcement and inter agency teamwork impede the efficacy of these measures. The study also reveals a deficiency in cooperation between state enforcement entities, which constrains their ability to carry out joint investigations. To bridge this gap, establishing task forces that integrate local, state, and federal resources could enhance overall effectiveness in combating economic crimes.

In Asia, the enactment of the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terror Financing Act, in Australia stands as a legal structure intended to address economic crimes. Nguyen and Thomas (2021) opine that, even though the act has improved sharing of information between agencies, there are still obstacles in harmonizing different legal frameworks across states in this region. The study points out lack of regional collaboration that hinders efforts to combat economic offenses efficiently. Collaborating with neighboring regions through combined task-forces and shared-intelligence repositories could improve the effectiveness of these structures.

In Latin America, the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America (GAFILAT) plays a role in fighting against money laundering and terrorism financing throughout the region. Formed as part of an effort; GAFILAT aims to promote cooperation among its member countries such as Argentina, Brazil and Mexico, in harmonizing their policies with global anti money laundering standards. A study by Lopez and Ramirez (2020) suggests that, although GAFILAT has advanced cooperation efforts, to some extent; there remains a challenge in enforcing these policies in countries with fragile institutions and widespread corruption issues. They highlight the importance of complementing regional strategies with strong domestic institutions as well as political will to execute reforms productively. One solution proposed involves, establishing independent entities for oversight separate from political interference which could potentially enhancing the reliability and impact of anti-economic crime measures.

In the Caribbean, the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) has emerged as a key player in promoting regional cooperation in the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing. In recent years, CFATF has worked to harmonize financial regulations

across its member states, but a study by Rodriguez and Santiago (2022) highlights the operational gaps caused by limited financial resources and a lack of inter-agency coordination. This issue has been particularly pronounced in smaller island nations, where national financial oversight bodies lack the capacity to engage fully in regional initiatives. The study suggests that CFATF could benefit from increased collaboration with international financial bodies, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to provide technical and financial support to these smaller nations. Expanding the role of regional training centers could also enhance the capacity of local law enforcement to investigate and prosecute economic crimes more effectively.

In Southeast Asia, the ASEAN has made notable strides in improving cooperation among law enforcement agencies in addressing cross-border financial crimes. ASEAN's Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) has been pivotal in facilitating information exchange and cooperative investigations across member states. However, a study by Yusuf and Abdullah (2020) points out that disparities in legal frameworks and judicial independence among member states have hindered effective enforcement of these initiatives. The study highlights the importance of aligning national regulations with regional frameworks, coupled with establishing regional training programmes to enhance investigative capacities, particularly in countries with less-developed law enforcement infrastructure. Strengthening judicial cooperation and creating an ASEAN-wide anti-corruption agency could significantly enhance the fight against economic crimes in the region.

In the Middle East region, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries have put in place measures to combat economic crimes specifically in the financial domains of nations, like the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia. These nations have enforced regulations that conform to global norms; for instance; UAE's Federal Law No. 20 of 2018, which concentrates on addressing Money Laundering and fighting against Terrorism financing. Al-Mutairi and Abdullah (2021) noted that, despite these legislative efforts, gaps persist in monitoring and enforcement due to the region's reliance on informal financial systems, like hawala networks. This makes it difficult to monitor and enforce regulations against illicit financial transactions. The study emphasizes that, although the legal frameworks appear sound in theory, the challenges lie in regulating informal economies and guarantee transparency within these sectors. To fill these voids effectively requires greater integration of financial oversight with global monitoring organizations as well as fostering stronger collaboration between law enforcement agencies and financial entities, in the region.

In Africa, economic crimes like money laundering and corruption pose obstacles to progress and governance efforts in the region. The African Union (AU) through African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and Agenda 2063 has made significant progress by focusing on transparency and accountability to combat corruption. However, the disparity between creating policies and implementing them continues to be a hurdle. According to Adepoju (2022) the varying levels of success in implementing these initiatives across different countries can be attributed to constraints in resources and the inconsistent commitment from leaders. To address this inequality and foster better outcomes in combating crimes in Africa, there is need for a regional approach that promotes sharing of resources and capacity building among African nations. For instance, setting up regional anti-corruption organizations to collaborate with national authorities, could improve the implementation of AU regulations and foster a cohesive strategy for fighting economic crimes.

In West Africa, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has taken steps to combat economic crimes by establishing the ECOWAS Financial Intelligence

Unit (FIU) and regional anti-money laundering regulations. These efforts aim to align laws across member states in handling of financial crimes that span borders. However, a study by Okonwko and Ayodele (2021) finds out that, despite the existence of these frameworks, implementation has been slow, particularly in states with weak governance structures. There appears to be an issue in communication between police forces and local organizations which hinder collaborative investigations and information exchange efforts from progressing smoothly. Strengthening these mechanisms, particularly through the establishment of joint task forces that involve national and regional law enforcement agencies could bridge this gap and foster more effective enforcement of anti-economic crime laws across the region.

In Southern Africa, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has enacted the Protocol against Corruption with an aim of improving collaboration, among member nations in fighting corruption and various types of economic crimes. Nevertheless, Mwanza and Nkuna (2022) highlights that, despite being a progress there is still absence of legal alignment and synchronized enforcement among member countries. This disconnects often leads to criminals exploiting regulatory loopholes by shifting their activities across borders where enforcement is weaker. The study indicates that, establishing an enforcement entity across SADC countries for supervising investigations and sharing intelligence would greatly enhance the regions capacity in combating financial offenses effectively. It could also bridge the gap between adopting protocols and implementing them in real-world scenarios.

In North Africa, the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) has been less active compared to other regional bodies like ECOWAS or SADC, yet individual countries such as Morocco have led the way in anti-corruption and AML efforts. A report by El-Kebir (2021) emphasizes that Morocco's FIU has developed sophisticated systems for tracking financial crimes, including the use of technology to monitor suspicious transactions. Nevertheless, as the report points out, regional cooperation within AMU is weak due to political tensions between member states like Morocco and Algeria and insecurity, which hamper the effectiveness of collective action against money laundering. The study suggests that reviving AMU with a focus on economic crimes collaboration could yield significant benefits for the region, particularly by encouraging dialogue and cooperation on shared security challenges.

The role of regional joint mechanisms among law enforcement agencies within the EAC in preventing economic crimes, particularly in Tanzania, presents both challenges and opportunities. For example, the East African Police Cooperation Organization (EAPCCO) aims to enhance cross-border cooperation in combating economic crimes, including those related to money laundering, corruption, and terrorism financing. However, a study by Kamau and Ngugi (2024) highlights significant barriers to effective collaboration among member countries. The differences in legal systems and enforcement capabilities among the EAC states, including Tanzania, impede the successful execution of joint initiatives. This study emphasizes the need for standardized procedures and comprehensive training programmes to ensure law enforcement agencies can effectively work together across borders, particularly in Tanzania, where enforcement practices may vary from those in neighboring countries.

The EAC has made strides to address economic crimes through regional initiatives, notably the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG). ESAAMLG aims to foster collaboration among member states to align with international standards on Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (CFT). However, a study by Otieno and Wanjiru (2022) identifies significant challenges faced by countries like South Sudan and Burundi in fully implementing these frameworks

due to political instability and weak institutional capacity. While Tanzania is not directly affected by political instability to the same extent, the study underscores that even relatively stable countries in the EAC face hurdles in implementing robust frameworks. For Tanzania, the study recommends that the EAC establish a more effective regional framework for intelligence sharing, enhance the technical capacity of national Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs), and strengthen legal mechanisms to close gaps that transnational crime syndicates exploit. These recommendations could play a crucial role in improving the effectiveness of Tanzania's collaboration with neighboring countries.

Another emerging challenge within the EAC is the rise of digital currencies, particularly cryptocurrencies, which pose new risks for money laundering and other economic crimes. A study by Mwangi (2023) examined how the popularity of cryptocurrency is impacting the region's efforts to combat money laundering. The study found that existing regulations are inadequate to address the complexities introduced by digital currencies, revealing a regulatory loophole. This gap is particularly relevant to Tanzania, where the digital economy is growing rapidly, but legal frameworks have yet to catch up with the new challenges. To tackle this, the study recommends that the EAC develop a regional legal framework specifically designed to regulate digital currencies. Additionally, strengthening the capabilities of law enforcement agencies to oversee and govern these new financial technologies will be crucial for Tanzania's efforts to prevent economic crimes related to cryptocurrencies.

Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the theory of collective action.

Collective Action Theory provides a foundational framework for analyzing how individuals, institutions, and states cooperate to achieve common goals. Originally developed by Mancur Olson (1965) who introduced the free-rider problem. The theory was significantly expanded by Elinor Ostrom. Her work, particularly *in* *Governing the Commons* (1990), demonstrated how communities can collectively manage shared resources by establishing clear group boundaries, defined objectives, monitoring mechanisms, and enforcement rules all of which are essential elements in efforts to combat economic crimes such as corruption, money laundering, and tax evasion.

Subsequent scholars, including Poteete, Janssen, and Ostrom (2010), built on this by emphasizing the role of social capital, trust, and mutual benefit in fostering collaboration. These factors are especially relevant to the East African Community (EAC), where effective cross-border coordination among law enforcement agencies is critical for addressing economic crimes.

In the context of this study, CAT is highly relevant. It helps explain how EAC member states can jointly establish legal frameworks, intelligence-sharing platforms, and coordinated enforcement actions. Notable examples include the Regional Intelligence and Operations Centre (RIOCC) and the EAC Anti-Corruption Strategy, which reflect practical efforts at fostering regional collaboration.

However, CAT has limitations. It assumes that actors will act rationally and in mutual interest, which may not reflect the political realities, institutional constraints, and unequal power relations within and between EAC states. These factors can undermine the efficacy of collective strategies.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study explores the relationships between three key factors: the efficacy of EAC interventions (independent variable), economic crimes prevention (dependent variable), and implementation challenges (intervening variable). Understanding these relationships is crucial for enhancing the efficacy of regional interventions and ensuring economic stability and governance across member states.

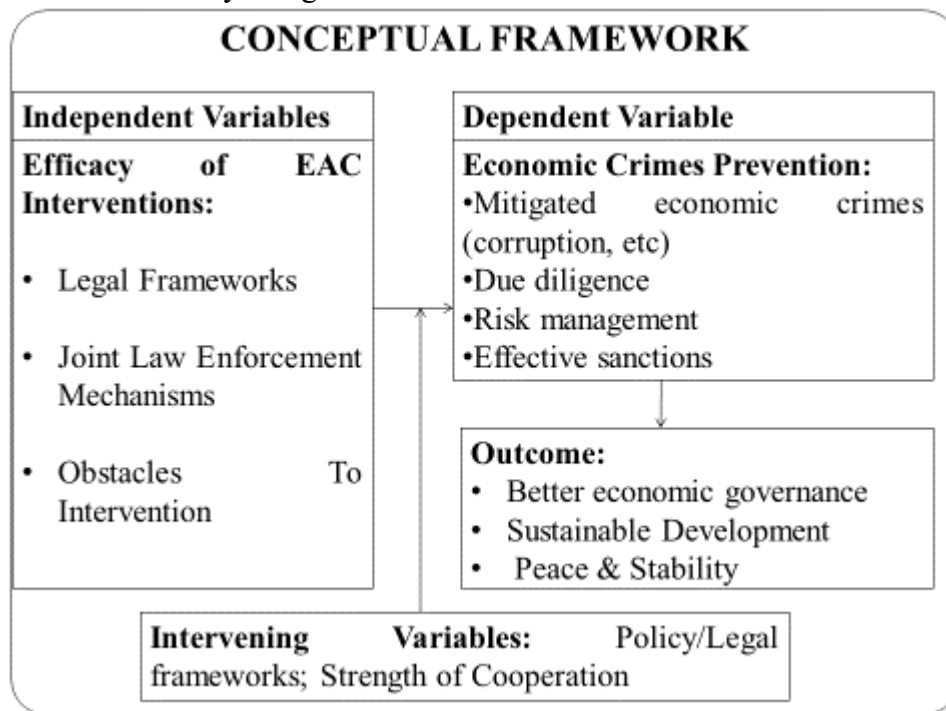


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

This study adopted an explanatory sequential design, a rigorous mixed-methods approach grounded in the pragmatic research paradigm, to critically assess the efficacy of East African Community (EAC) interventions in preventing economic crimes, with a focus on Tanzania. The explanatory sequential design allowed the researcher to first gather quantitative data and then explore the findings in greater depth through qualitative inquiry, providing a richer understanding of the patterns and contextual factors influencing Tanzania’s engagement in combating economic crimes under the EAC framework.

Tanzania was selected as the case study site due to its strategic geographic and economic positioning within the EAC, as well as its role as host to the EAC headquarters, making it central to regional integration initiatives. Furthermore, Tanzania presents a distinct combination of opportunities and challenges in addressing economic crimes. Its dual legal system—comprising statutory and customary law—underscores the complexities of harmonizing national legal frameworks with regional policies. Tanzania’s ongoing efforts to enhance regional cooperation, including participation in joint anti-corruption programmes, also offer practical lessons on the strengths and constraints of EAC interventions.

The target population included key stakeholders involved in the prevention of economic crimes in Tanzania. These comprised five categories: law enforcement officers (including personnel from the Tanzania Revenue Authority’s Financial Crimes Unit, the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau, and the police), policymakers (from EAC

institutions, relevant government ministries, and the TRA Policy Division), legal practitioners (such as prosecutors and anti-corruption lawyers), civil society actors (especially anti-corruption advocacy groups), and academic experts (from universities and think tanks).

A total sample size of 308 respondents was selected using a combination of simple random, purposive, and convenience sampling techniques. Legal practitioners were selected through simple random sampling to ensure unbiased representation. Purposive sampling targeted knowledgeable individuals such as policymakers and law enforcement officials directly involved in anti-economic crime initiatives. Convenience sampling was used to include available and willing participants from civil society and academia, thus enriching the study with diverse and practical perspectives. This multi-pronged sampling approach facilitated a comprehensive and nuanced exploration of the subject matter.

Data collection tools included structured questionnaires and document analysis guides. Reliability was established through the test-retest method, and internal consistency was verified using Cronbach's alpha to ensure that instrument items coherently measured the intended constructs. Content validity was achieved through expert review by specialists in regional governance and economic crime, while construct validity confirmed the instruments' alignment with the theoretical foundations of the study.

The data collection process followed clearly defined procedures aligned with the study's objectives. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and measures were put in place to safeguard participant confidentiality and minimize potential risks. Ethical clearance was obtained from the National Defence University – Kenya (NDU-K) and the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) in Tanzania.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to address the research objectives comprehensively. Quantitative data from the surveys were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), producing both descriptive and inferential statistics. The integration of qualitative insights further contextualized the findings, enabling a holistic assessment of the EAC's strategies in preventing economic crimes in Tanzania.

Research Data Analysis and Presentation

The study's response rate was analyzed based on participation in surveys. Out of the 308 targeted respondents, 245 completed the survey, yielding a survey response rate of 79.5%.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Organization	Sample Size	Survey Respondents	Response Rate (%)
Law Enforcement Officials (TRA - Financial Crime Units, PCCB)	185	175	95%
Policymakers (EAC Officials, Government Ministries, TRA - Policy Division)	92	60	60%
Legal Practitioners (Prosecutors, Anti-Corruption Lawyers)	62	33	50.5%
Civil Society Organizations (Anti-Corruption Advocacy Groups)	43	42	97.7%
Academia/Scholars (University Researchers, Think Tanks)	18	15	93.8%
Total	308	245	79.5%

Source: Field Data 2025

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.2: Occupation of Respondents

Occupation/Title	Percentage
Law Enforcement Officials	26.6%
Policymakers	21.9%
Legal Practitioners	15.6%
Civil Society Organizations	20.3%
Academia/Scholars	15.6%

Source: Field Data 2025

4.3.2 Organization and Department

The organizational distribution of respondents highlights the multisectoral collaboration essential for combating economic crime. Law enforcement officials (26.6%) were the largest group, underscoring their central role in enforcement. Policymakers (21.9%) reflect the influence of governmental and regional institutions in shaping crime prevention frameworks. Legal practitioners (15.6%) emphasize the importance of prosecution, while civil society organizations (20.3%) showcase the role of advocacy and accountability. Academia (15.6%) contributes research and policy insights. Overall, the distribution demonstrates the need for integrated efforts across sectors to effectively address economic crime.

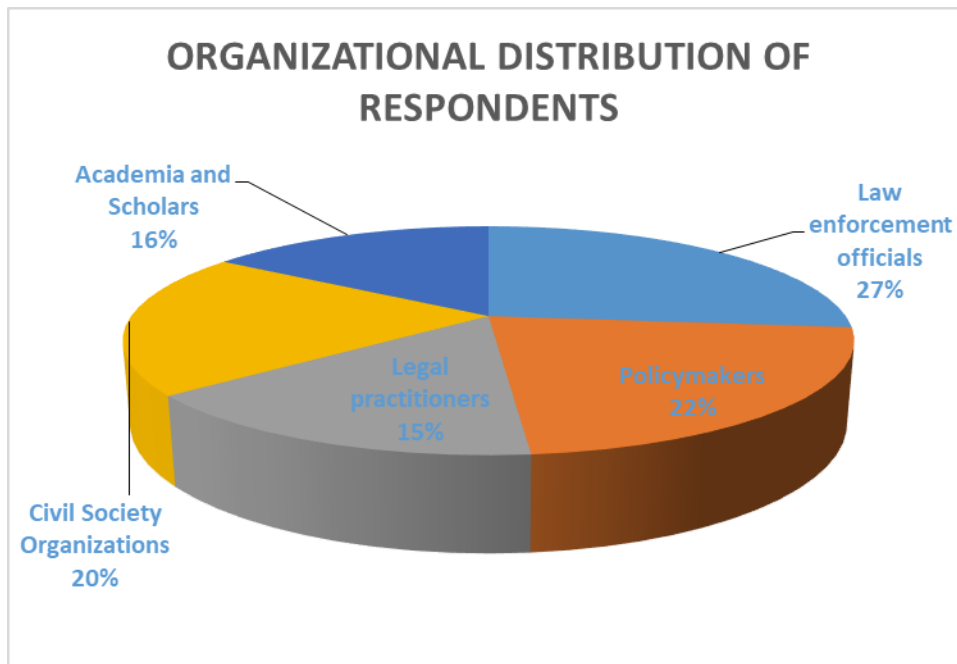


Figure 4.1: Respondents by Organization and Department

Source: Field Data 2025

4.3.3 Age Distribution

The age distribution of respondents reflects a balanced and inclusive perspective on economic crime prevention. A majority (55%) were aged 26–45, representing a dynamic segment that blends innovation with experience, crucial for policy and operational implementation. Younger respondents (15% under 25) bring fresh, forward-thinking ideas, while the 46–55 (25%) and 56+ (5%) groups contribute deep expertise and institutional memory. This mix of generational insights enhances the study’s depth, combining innovation, practicality, and strategic experience in addressing economic crime.

4.3.4 Gender Distribution

The gender distribution of respondents—60% male and 40% female—reflects a notable level of female participation in combating economic crime. While men slightly outnumbered women, the 40% female representation signals progress toward gender inclusivity in traditionally male-dominated fields like law enforcement and finance. Women's involvement brings diverse perspectives, especially in community initiatives, policy development, and stakeholder engagement. This balance enhances the study’s depth and underscores the importance of gender diversity in effectively addressing complex issues such as economic crime.

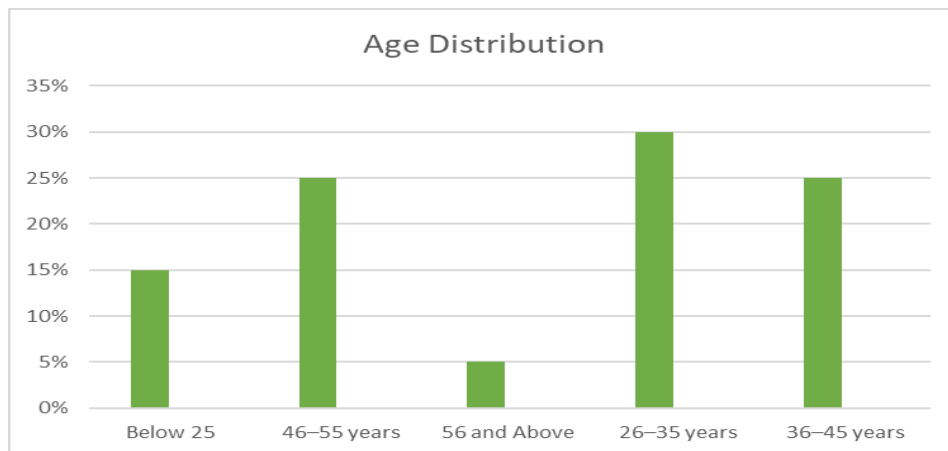


Figure 4.2: Respondents Age Distribution

Source: Field Data 2025

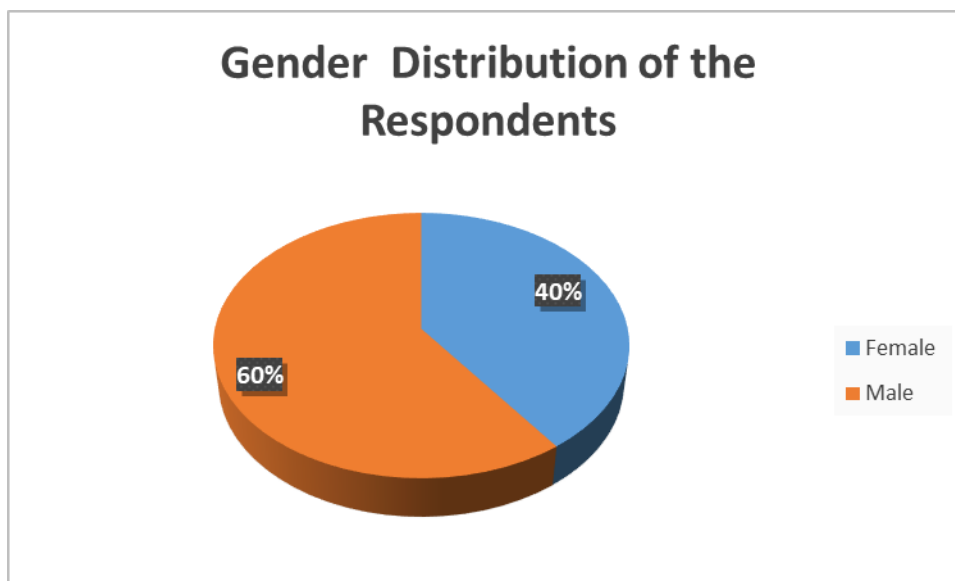


Figure 4.3: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Source: Field Data 2025

4.3.5 Educational Levels

The respondents' educational levels indicate a highly knowledgeable and competent participant pool, with 80% holding higher education qualifications. Among them, 45% had Bachelor's degrees, representing skilled professionals with solid foundational knowledge. Master's degree holders (30%) contributed advanced expertise in key areas like law, finance, and governance, while 5% with Doctorates brought research and policy-level insight. The remaining 20% with diplomas or certificates added valuable practical and grassroots experience. This strong educational profile enhances the credibility and depth of the study's findings, ensuring well-informed and meaningful contributions.

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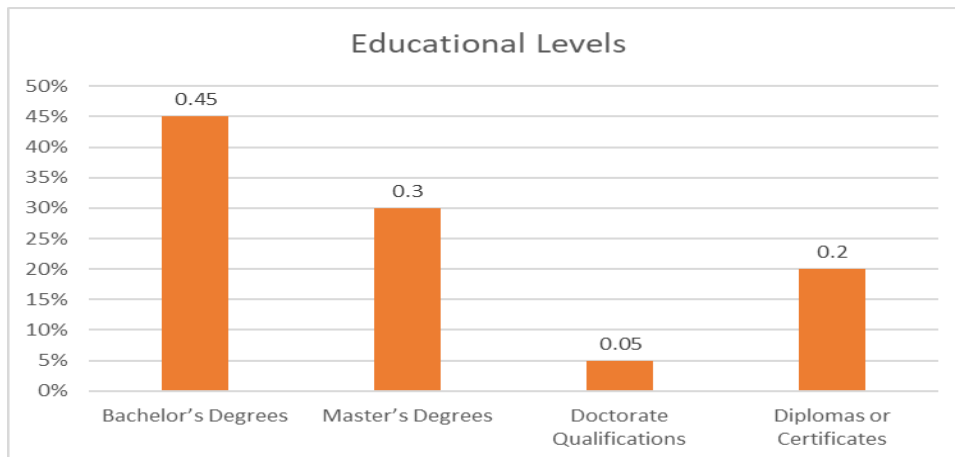


Figure 4.4: Education Levels of Respondents

Source; Field data, 2025

4.3.6 Years of Experience

The respondents' years of experience reflect a rich blend of professional insight. 20% had less than five years, contributing fresh perspectives and technological adaptability. The majority, 50%, had 5–15 years of experience, offering a balance of practical expertise and leadership in policy and operational roles. The remaining 30%, with over 15 years of experience, added institutional memory and strategic depth. This diversity ensures a comprehensive analysis, combining innovation with seasoned understanding in addressing economic crime

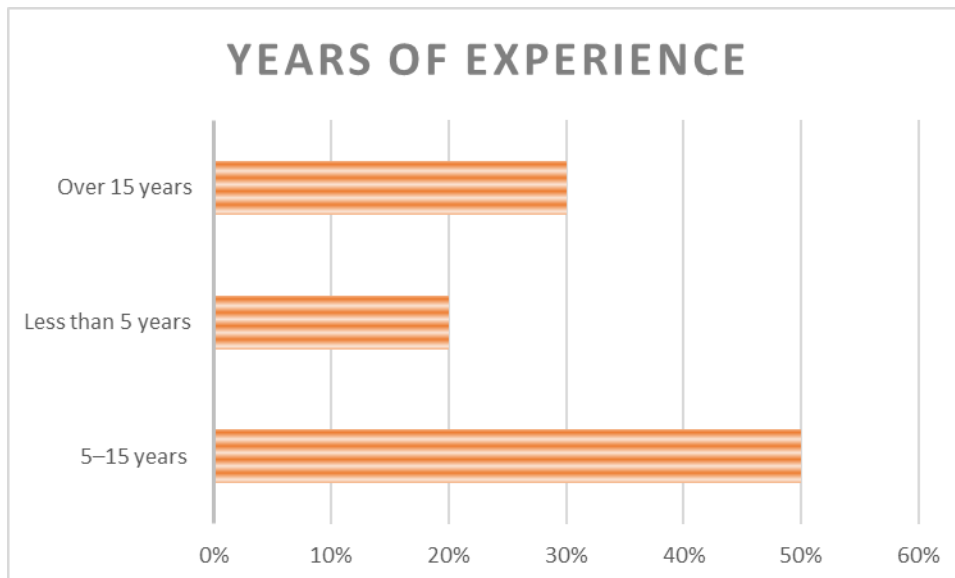


Figure 4.5: Years of Experience

Source: Field Data 2025

Effectiveness of Collaborative Mechanisms Among EAC Law Enforcement Agencies in Preventing Economic Crimes in Tanzania

Respondents evaluated the effectiveness of regional collaboration among law enforcement agencies in combating economic crimes in Tanzania. Using both closed and open-ended questions, the study assessed views on joint mechanisms, intelligence-sharing, and cross-border initiatives among EAC member states. Responses were analyzed through categorical and Likert-scale measures, offering insights into how regional cooperation is perceived in terms of its impact and operational effectiveness in reducing economic crimes.

Table 4.5: Effectiveness of Regional Collaboration Between Law Enforcement Agencies in Mitigating Economic Crimes in Tanzania

Response	Number	Frequency (%)
Very Effective	6	15.0
Effective	16	40.0
Neutral	8	20.0
Ineffective	6	15.0
Very Ineffective	4	10.0

Source: Field Data 2025

The findings show that a majority of respondents (55.0%) view regional collaboration among law enforcement agencies as either “Effective” or “Very Effective,” reflecting a generally positive perception of joint efforts, particularly in intelligence-sharing, coordinated enforcement, and regional policy alignment. However, 25.0% of respondents rated this collaboration as “Ineffective” or “Very Ineffective,” indicating that existing mechanisms do not always deliver optimal outcomes.

Those who perceived the collaboration as ineffective cited challenges such as limited resources, inadequate training, and poor inter-agency coordination. One respondent remarked: “While there is regional collaboration, it is often slowed down by lack of coordination between national and regional law enforcement bodies. Moreover, resources allocated for joint operations are often limited.” (Questionnaire response, 2025).

These concerns are consistent with literature by Mihyo (2020), which underscores that although regional frameworks are established to address cross-border economic crimes, insufficient funding and lack of operational coherence often hinder their impact. To assess this further, respondents were asked to rate their agreement with three statements related to joint law enforcement actions, intelligence-sharing, and the overall effectiveness of regional collaboration using a Likert scale (1 = Strongly Agree, 5 = Strongly Disagree). The results are summarized in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Statements on Collaboration Among Law Enforcement Agencies in Mitigating Economic Crimes

Statements	1 (SA)	2 (A)	3 (NA/D)	4 (D)	5 (SD)
Joint mechanisms enhance collaboration among member states.	18.0%	45.0%	20.0%	10.0%	7.0%
These mechanisms improve the sharing of intelligence on economic crimes.	15.0%	40.0%	25.0%	15.0%	5.0%
Joint law enforcement initiatives are effective in tackling economic crimes.	12.0%	35.0%	30.0%	15.0%	8.0%

Source: Field Data 2025

The findings offer important insights into both the strengths and limitations of regional collaborative mechanisms, serving as a foundation for deeper analysis.

Regarding the first statement, “Joint mechanisms enhance collaboration among member states,” a total of 63.0% of respondents either strongly agreed (18.0%) or agreed (45.0%), indicating broad support for regional cooperation efforts. This aligns with Chikozho (2020), who emphasizes that robust cross-border collaboration strengthens law enforcement and helps close enforcement gaps. However, 17.0% expressed disagreement (10.0% disagreed, 7.0% strongly disagreed), pointing to challenges identified by Koen (2019)—such as political frictions, divergent national priorities, and bureaucratic delays—that often obstruct joint efforts in the East African context.

For the second statement, “These mechanisms improve the sharing of intelligence on economic crimes,” 55.0% either strongly agreed (15.0%) or agreed (40.0%), showing general acknowledgment of the value of intelligence sharing. Nevertheless, 20.0% remained neutral, and another 20.0% disagreed (15.0% disagreed, 5.0% strongly disagreed), reflecting concerns about the quality and timeliness of shared information. This mirrors the Global Financial Integrity Report (2019), which noted that although intelligence-sharing has improved, its

effectiveness is hampered by slow information flow and inconsistent data quality. One respondent commented: “While intelligence sharing has improved, there are still concerns about the quality and timeliness of the information passed between agencies.” (Questionnaire response, 2025). These issues highlight the need for stronger, more efficient intelligence-sharing systems, as emphasized by Olson’s (1965) Theory of Collective Action, which stresses that successful collaboration depends on trust, coordination, and effective resource-sharing.

On the third statement, “Joint law enforcement initiatives are effective in tackling economic crimes,” 47.0% agreed (12.0% strongly agreed, 35.0% agreed), while 23.0% disagreed (15.0% disagreed, 8.0% strongly disagreed), revealing that operational challenges persist. This supports Rational Choice Theory (Axelrod, 1984), which suggests that actors assess collaborative actions based on perceived costs versus benefits. Where resources are scarce or expected outcomes uncertain, participation and effectiveness decline. Respondents highlighted issues such as “limited resources,” “lack of specialized training,” and “difficulties in cross-border coordination.” One respondent noted: “Joint law enforcement efforts often lack the necessary financial and human resources to tackle complex economic crimes,” underscoring the practical constraints that diminish the impact of such initiatives.

Conclusion

The study concludes that although EAC member states have established collaborative mechanisms—such as intelligence-sharing agreements and joint task forces—these efforts face notable challenges. Corruption within law enforcement, limited resources, bureaucratic delays, political interference, and reluctance to share intelligence significantly weaken their effectiveness. While the legal foundation for collaboration exists, its success hinges on stronger institutional coordination, mutual trust, and sustained political commitment to a regional approach in combating economic crimes.

Overall, the study highlights that the effectiveness of the EAC’s interventions in addressing economic crimes in Tanzania is limited by several interrelated factors. To enhance outcomes, member states must harmonize domestic laws with regional frameworks, build institutional and enforcement capacities, and demonstrate greater political will to fight corruption. Ultimately, the success of EAC efforts depends on a unified, region-wide strategy centered on legal alignment, institutional strengthening, and deeper regional cooperation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, makes some recommendations to enhanced effectiveness of EAC interventions in combating economic crimes in Tanzania.

First, by 2030, the EAC Secretariat should establish the East African Economic Crimes Investigation and Intelligence Unit (EAECIIU). This unit will serve as the central coordinating body for, joint cross-border investigations, intelligence sharing among member states and Standardized training for relevant agencies including national police services, financial intelligence units, anti-corruption agencies, and revenue authorities.

Second, the EAC Council of Ministers should allocate dedicated funding to support this initiative. Priority should be given to establishing a Regional Anti-Economic Crimes Database, which will: record profiles of cross-border economic offenders; Monitor suspicious financial activities; and identify high-risk sectors across the region vulnerable to financial crime.

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Third, regular biannual capacity-building programmes and inter-agency workshops should be conducted in rotation across member states. These sessions should focus on: Modern investigative methods; forensic auditing and international legal cooperation and mutual legal assistance.

Lastly, the EAC Police Cooperation Mechanism should be mandated to lead and coordinate enforcement activities across borders. Their key responsibilities will include: Facilitating joint operations; Ensuring harmonized enforcement procedures and preventing any EAC member state from becoming a safe haven for economic offenders

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