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Evaluating Pakistan's Police Counter-Terrorism Training: Strengths, Weaknesses, and an Action Plan for Enhanced Professional Effectiveness

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Abstract

This article presents a comprehensive, evidence-based evaluation of a six-week counter-terrorism training program delivered to 50 Punjab police trainees (40 men, 10 women) using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. Employing pre- and post-tests, staged observations, paired t-tests, ANOVA, correlations, structural equation modeling, and thematic analysis of expert interviews, the study identifies strengths across three critical dimensions: knowledge (global/local terrorism dynamics, legal-policy frameworks, extremist ideology awareness), attitudes (proactive mindset, ethical conduct, national-security commitment), and skills (tactical combat, surveillance/cyber intelligence, negotiation). Documented weaknesses include uneven socioeconomic integration, cyber-intelligence gaps, ethical-stress vulnerabilities, cultural insensitivity, gender blind spots, and limited advanced technological use, crisis-negotiation – independent interrogation units , and equipment training. To address

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these, a six-pillar action plan—standardized national curricula, expanded cyber modules, dedicated negotiation-interrogation units, socioeconomic CVE partnerships, nationwide modernization of facilities/equipment, and targeted international collaborations—is proposed to ensure cohesive, context-sensitive, professionally robust training. The rigorous methodological design ensures reliability, validity, and provides actionable insights crucial for strategic stakeholders and policymakers aiming to enhance national security practices.

Keywords: *Counter-Terrorism Training; Pakistan Police; Training Evaluation; Strengths and Weaknesses; action plan.*

INTRODUCTION

Terrorism today is neither geographically bounded nor strategically stagnant. From lone-actor assaults in metropolitan transit hubs to coordinated insurgencies in fragile borderlands, violent extremists have demonstrated remarkable adaptability, exploiting geopolitical shocks and weaponising emerging technologies. The 2024 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) underscores this alarming trend: after a decade of gradual decline, the number of states experiencing at least one fatal terrorist attack rose sharply from 58 to 66 in a single year. Concurrently, Islamic State (IS) expanded operations into twenty-two countries, with its Afghan affiliate, IS Khorasan (IS-K), emerging as one of the world's most active jihadist factions (Vision of Humanity, 2024). In the same period, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) saw the fastest growth rate among listed groups, marking a 90 percent increase in attributable fatalities. These figures reflect a strategic environment where established terrorist organisations regenerate swiftly and new franchises proliferate rapidly.

For Pakistan, the implications of these developments are acute. Regional security dynamics have dramatically shifted following the Taliban's resurgence in Afghanistan (August 2021), exacerbated by porous borders and the re-entrenchment of sectarian and ethno-nationalist insurgencies. Open-source data compiled by Homeland Security Today (2024) indicate terrorist incidents in Pakistan more than

doubled—from 320 incidents in 2021 to 695 in 2023—with associated casualties surging from 549 to 1,080. In uptodate2024 figures, the study observed 1500 terror attacks claiming 1800 casualties including injured.Nearly half occurred in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and adjacent tribal districts, regions where groups such as Fitna al-Khawarij (FAK), Lashkar-e-Islam, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, Hafiz Gul Bahadur (HGBG) and IS-K operate through shifting alliances. Urban centres like Karachi, Lahore, and Quetta have likewise endured mass casualty bombings and targeted assassinations aimed at undermining state authority and instilling communal fear (HS.Today, 2024).

Within this complex threat landscape, Pakistan's civilian police occupy a paradoxical position: indispensable first responders yet chronically under-resourced. Historically overshadowed by the Pakistan Army and paramilitary Frontier Corps in large-scale kinetic operations, empirical research increasingly underscores that sustainable counter-terrorism (CT) success relies heavily on police capabilities (Abbas, 2011). Embedded within communities, police stations maintain vital human intelligence networks and deploy citizen-centric preventive strategies inaccessible to military units. Comparative studies consistently show that terrorists often operate close to logistical bases; routine patrols and diligent investigative work are thus critical to early threat detection. As Ahmed (2019) aptly notes, "it is hard to imagine an anti-terrorism strategy that does not rely heavily on state and local police." Yet, the literature simultaneously highlights chronic operational deficits—including insufficient training duration, outdated curricula, and minimal integration of human rights standards—which undermine effectiveness (Khan et al., 2020; Zia, 2021).

International donors and the Pakistani government have invested significant resources into CT capacity-building efforts—specialised weaponry courses, advanced bomb-disposal training, and intelligence workshops. Nevertheless, persistent critiques highlight the lack of rigorous outcome evaluations. A recent U.S. Government Accountability Office audit (2023) concluded that many global CT training initiatives "lack systematic assessments of programme results," rendering policymakers uncertain whether classroom skills translate effectively to real-world scenarios. Best-practice frameworks like

Kirkpatrick's four-level evaluation advocate measuring beyond trainee satisfaction and knowledge gains to encompass behavioural change and long-term organisational impacts (ICCT, 2022). Without such evidence-based feedback mechanisms, even robustly funded programmes risk inefficiencies, stagnation, and diminished public trust.

Recognising these critical gaps, Mansab and Iqbal's (2024) doctoral research—on which this article builds—sets forth two explicit objectives:

- **Objective 1 – Programme Diagnosis:** Systematically identify principal strengths and weaknesses of current CT training programmes for Pakistani police trainees and officers.
- **Objective 2 – Programme Enhancement:** Formulate a practical, resource-conscious action plan to transform identified weaknesses into strengths and institutionalise continuous professional development.

To achieve these objectives, this study employs a convergent mixed-methods design, balancing quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Quantitative methods include pre-/post-test surveys of 50 trainees from chakwal police lines, capturing doctrinal knowledge, attitudinal shifts, and perceived skills proficiency. Statistical tools—paired-samples t-tests, repeated-measures ANOVA, and structural equation modelling—elucidate performance dynamics. Qualitatively, 36 semi-structured interviews with instructors, curriculum developers, and frontline officers undergo reflexive thematic analysis, offering deeper insights into pedagogical practices and organisational impediments. Methodological triangulation ensures a comprehensive evaluation of Pakistan's CT training ecosystem.

Preliminary findings reveal both encouraging and sobering trends. Trainees demonstrate significant knowledge improvements (e.g., definitions of terrorism, stages of radicalisation), but show modest advancement in practical decision-making and community engagement—essential competencies for real-world incident management. Structural equation models highlight instructional clarity and practical simulation exercises as pivotal predictors of knowledge transfer. Qualitative feedback aligns closely, praising specialisedmodules

but criticising insufficient practical drills, inadequate human rights content, and weak post-training mentorship. Administrators further underscore chronic resource constraints and donor-driven fragmentation, causing curriculum inconsistencies.

Drawing upon these insights, this article proposes a six-pillar action plan tailored to Pakistan's institutional realities and informed by global best practices:

1. Curriculum Modernisation
2. Instructor Professionalisation
3. Experiential Learning Infrastructure
4. Human Rights and Community Policing Integration
5. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Architecture
6. Inter-agency Coordination

These pillars outline a roadmap for transforming police CT training into a coherent, evidence-based, and sustainable development platform, aligned with broader security sector reform discourses emphasizing technical proficiency, procedural justice, and institutional learning.

The remainder of this article unfolds in five sections, systematically addressing the research objectives outlined. By interlacing rigorous evaluation with actionable reforms, the study aspires to transition policy discussions from ad hoc initiatives towards an institutionalised learning and adaptation cycle. Such a transformation is not merely desirable—it is indispensable in Pakistan's contemporary security context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Evaluation Frameworks in Counter-Terrorism (CT) Training

Rigorous evaluation is foundational to effective training; however, assessments of police CT programs often remain superficial. The dominant international evaluation model is Kirkpatrick's four-level framework—**Reaction, Learning, Behaviour, Results**—which sequentially measures trainee satisfaction, knowledge and skill

acquisition, transfer to the workplace, and organisational impact (Kirkpatrick, 1994; Bradley & Connors, 2006). Even decades after its inception, Kirkpatrick's taxonomy remains the gold standard for designing law enforcement training evaluations. Complementing Kirkpatrick is the ADDIE model (**Analyse, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate**), an iterative instructional design framework embedding evaluation throughout each stage (Molenda, 2003). Security practitioners increasingly integrate ADDIE with mission-specific metrics to develop tailored CT evaluation tools, as illustrated by the U.S. Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) evaluation framework, which assesses special operations field exercises (Leuthner&Cabahug, 2015).

Development organisations similarly employ Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) frameworks, incorporating continuous data collection, structured evaluations, and real-time feedback for adaptive course correction (Gadkari, 2024). Four consistent evaluation principles emerge across these models:

- Conduct a robust initial needs assessment.
- Align objectives, training content, and assessments explicitly.
- Integrate data collection throughout training delivery, not solely post-training.
- Connect individual learning outcomes directly to organisational performance improvements.

Mixed-Methods Approaches to Training Evaluation

Complex interventions, such as CT training, seldom reveal their full impact through quantitative methods alone. Current scholarship advocates mixed-methods designs combining quantitative measurements (e.g., pre-/post-tests, structured surveys) and qualitative inquiries (e.g., interviews, observational studies). Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) argue that integrating methods "provides a deeper understanding than either approach alone," a viewpoint echoed within public health implementation science (Palinkas et al., 2019). In CT contexts, numerical test scores verify learning gains, while observational analyses or qualitative interviews offer insights into practical application

barriers and successes. Methodological triangulation thus enhances internal validity and contextual understanding, addressing complexities quantitative assessments alone might overlook.

Challenges and Best Practices in the Global South and Pakistan

Police in low- and middle-income countries frequently grapple with chronic resource shortages, donor-driven priorities, and infrastructural deficiencies, undermining even well-designed curricula. INTERPOL's Project Scorpius in South and Southeast Asia underscores the significance of initial assessments aligning capacity-building efforts with genuine national requirements rather than donor agendas (INTERPOL, n.d.). In Pakistan, international initiatives by organisations such as UNODC, the EU, and the U.S. Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) Programme provide considerable support, yet systematic outcome evaluations remain scarce. A notable exception is the 2021 UNODC Sindh Police training-of-trainers (ToT) programme, which combined adult learning pedagogies with systematic evaluation and culminated in locally developed lesson plans, demonstrating how global templates can be effectively localized (UNODC Pakistan, 2021).

Best practices derived from these initiatives include:

- Needs-driven curricula rooted in comprehensive threat analyses and skill audits (INTERPOL, n.d.).
- Securing leadership support through senior-level mentorship and curriculum committees (UNODC Pakistan, 2021).
- Emphasising active learning (scenario-based drills, simulations, interactive workshops) over passive lecture-based approaches.
- Ensuring sustainability through local trainer development (training-of-trainers models).

Despite these exemplars, Pakistani police CT training still suffers from outdated curricula, lecture-centric delivery methods, and insufficient practical exercises, particularly outside Punjab's better-resourced academies (Khan et al., 2020; Zia, 2021).

Gender Sensitivity and Inclusion

Gender sensitivity remains an essential yet neglected dimension of CT training. Women constitute approximately 1 percent of Pakistan's police force (Peters, 2014), yet their inclusion significantly enhances CT effectiveness by fostering community trust, facilitating interactions with female informants, and providing victim support (Naz&Abbasi, 2021). Policy recommendations consistently advocate increased recruitment, retention, and specialised training for women officers (Peters, 2014). Nevertheless, specific initiatives—such as gender-segregated facilities, childcare support, and adapted curricula—remain rare. Female trainees often face barriers like distant training locations and lengthy residential programmes. Thus, mainstreaming gender perspectives into CT training curricula is both a human rights imperative and an operational necessity with reference to CVE or Deradicalization program purposes.

Cyber Intelligence and Technology Integration

Digital environments constitute critical battlegrounds in contemporary terrorism, with extremist groups exploiting social media, encrypted messaging, and cryptocurrencies for recruitment, command-and-control, and financing. Effective CT training must therefore integrate traditional tactical skills with cyber intelligence capabilities. For instance, UNODC Pakistan's 2025 initiative, "Strengthening Digital Defences," trained Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) personnel in open-source intelligence (OSINT), deep-web reconnaissance, and network forensics (UNODC Pakistan, 2025). Tools like Maltego and advanced web-search techniques ("Google dorking") exemplify cost-effective yet impactful skill sets. However, such training remains episodic, with permanent cyber facilities or e-learning platforms still largely absent. Expanding and institutionalising these capabilities represents a crucial next step for Pakistani law enforcement.

Community Policing and CVE Partnerships

Terrorism thrives within local community grievances and social networks. Consequently, integrating community-oriented policing with Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programs enhances early detection and prevention capabilities. For example, UNODC's CVE

initiatives in Bangladesh combined training in procedural justice and community trust-building, significantly enhancing local intelligence capabilities (UNODC Bangladesh, 2024). In Pakistan, community policing remains underdeveloped, and CVE initiatives often emphasise security rather than prevention. Incorporating community liaison units, local youth engagement, and problem-solving methods into standard police curricula could reduce grievances and strengthen intelligence pipelines (Ahmed, 2019).

Research Gaps and Rationale

The literature identifies three critical gaps:

- Scarcity of empirical evaluations of Pakistani police CT training.
- Limited use of formal evaluation frameworks (Kirkpatrick, MEL) within Pakistan's police institutions.
- Insufficient integration of cross-cutting themes such as gender sensitivity, cyber intelligence, and community engagement.

Addressing these gaps, this study offers Pakistan's first systematic, empirical evaluation of police CT training, strategically mapping knowledge, attitudes, and skill domains against global best practices. This assessment intends to guide actionable reforms, enhancing both police effectiveness and broader national security goals.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study employs an **Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods design**, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches for comprehensive evaluation. Initially, a one-group pre-test/post-test experimental design measures quantitative changes. Subsequently, qualitative methods—semi-structured interviews and structured observations—provide deeper explanatory insights into the observed quantitative outcomes. This integration ensures both breadth and depth, overcoming limitations inherent in purely quantitative or qualitative methodologies.

Population and Sample

The study's target population includes all police trainees, instructors, and subject-matter experts across Pakistan's law enforcement framework. Utilizing purposive sampling, 50 elite police officers (40 males, 10 females) from Chakwal Police Lines, Punjab, were selected. This sample consists of experienced officers actively engaged in special operational environments, thereby ensuring ecological validity and practical relevance.

Instruments

The study employed a rigorously validated suite of three instruments:

1. **Pre-/Post-Test Questionnaire (60 items)**: Assessed trainee performance across three domains—Knowledge, Attitude, and Skills (KAS)—with validated internal consistency (KR-20 $\geq$ 0.90).
2. **Structured Observation Checklists**: Administered at midpoint (Week 3) and endpoint (Week 6) to systematically document behavioral changes during training.
3. **Semi-Structured Interviews**: Conducted post-training with trainees, instructors, and external experts to qualitatively explore training effectiveness, contextual factors, and implementation challenges.

Validity and Reliability

- **Content Validity**: Six senior counter-terrorism scholars reviewed and approved each questionnaire item.
- **Pilot Testing**: Pilot testing was done on a sample of 50 trainees (40 male and 10 female) .
- **Reliability**: Achieved excellent internal consistency across scales, with Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.96$ (Knowledge), $\alpha = 0.95$ (Attitude), and $\alpha = 0.90$ (Skills).

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection unfolded systematically across a six-week training cycle:

- **Baseline (Week 0)**: Administration of pre-test assessments under controlled conditions.
- **Phase I (Weeks 1-3)**: Foundational training modules, including blended learning, tactical instruction, and practical simulations. Mid-phase structured observations conducted.
- **Phase II (Weeks 4-6)**: Advanced specialized modules covering cyber-intelligence, negotiation techniques, and virtual reality scenarios. Final structured observations conducted.
- **Post-Training (Week 6)**: Post-test assessments administered within 24 hours; qualitative semi-structured interviews conducted within 72 hours post-training to capture immediate reflections and experiences.

Data Analysis Techniques

A rigorous analytical approach integrated descriptive, inferential, and qualitative methodologies:

- **Descriptive Statistics**: Means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions described baseline characteristics and training outcomes.
- **Inferential Statistics**: Paired-samples t-tests, repeated-measures ANOVA, and ANCOVA assessed statistical significance of training effects while controlling covariates such as years of service and previous CT exposure.
- **Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)**: Conducted via Maximum Likelihood estimation to determine causal relationships among training inputs and KAS outcomes.
- **Thematic Analysis**: Interviews analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework, achieving intercoder reliability exceeding 0.85.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from Pakistan's National Bioethics Committee. Participants provided informed consent with guaranteed confidentiality and the right to withdraw without repercussions. Data were anonymized, encrypted, and securely stored in compliance with ethical standards.

Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

- **Absence of Control Group**: Practical constraints precluded a control group; however, robust pre-/post-test comparisons and SEM mitigated threats to internal validity.
- **Geographic Scope**: Initial findings specific to Chakwal district; replication protocol providedfor scaling to other provinces (KP, Sindh, Balochistan).
- **Sample Size**: Even though sample size was relevantly small (n=50), but still a statistical power analysis confirmed adequate power (≥ 0.80) to detect medium-sized effects.

Strengths of the Methodological Approach

This methodology uniquely demonstrates the combination of quantitative rigor with qualitative depth, delivering commendable comprehensive insights into training effectiveness. Specifically, it:

- Integrates gender-sensitive analyses to identify potential gender-based differences and biases in training outcomes.
- Employs simulation-based feedback loops to facilititate immediate application and reinforcement of skills.
- Establishes a robust evidence base tht is required for informed policy-making and strategic enhancements to CT training frameworks.

Overall, this mixed-methods approach not only provides clear empirical evidence of training efficacy but also delivers nuanced qualitative insights essential for sustainable improvement and policy relevance in counter-terrorism training.

FINDINGS

Strengths of the Training Program

Quantitative Performance Improvements

The empirical analysis of the study demonstrates significant improvements across Knowledge, Attitude, and Skills (KAS) domains

after the six-week counter-terrorism (CT) training program conducted with 50 Punjab-based police officers.

Domain	Pre-Test Mean (SD)	Post-Test Mean (SD)	Mean Gain (%)	t-value	Significance
Knowledge	6.30 (2.59)	19.26 (2.72)	+206%	22.38	p < .001
Attitude	4.0	14.	+26	24.	p < .001

Domain	Pre-Test Mean (SD)	Post-Test Mean (SD)	Mean Gain (%)	t-value	Significance
	2 (1.98)	68 (2.03)	5%	52	
Skills	5.36 (2.0	16.72 (2.	+2128%	24.76	p < .001

Domain	Pre-Test Mean (SD)	Post-Test Mean (SD)	Mean Gain (%)	t-value	Significance
	6)	36)			

These results demonstrate statistically significant and practically substantial improvements within all measured domains.

Figure 1. Pre- and Post-Training Gains Across Knowledge, Attitude, and Skills Domains

Mid-Course Progress

Mid-training observations (Week 3 vs. Week 6) revealed an exceptional improvement of approximately 12% across all KAS domains, underscoring the effectiveness of advanced modules in the later half of the training.

Inter-Domain Correlations

- **Phase I:** Knowledge-Skills correlation ($r = .63^{**}$, $p < .01$), Attitude-Skills ($r = .53^{**}$, $p < .01$).
- **Phase II:** Increased Attitude-Skills correlation ($r = .64^{**}$, $p < .01$), stable Knowledge-Skills correlation ($r = .62^{**}$, $p < .01$), is clearly confirming the synergy and transfer of learning into practical skills.

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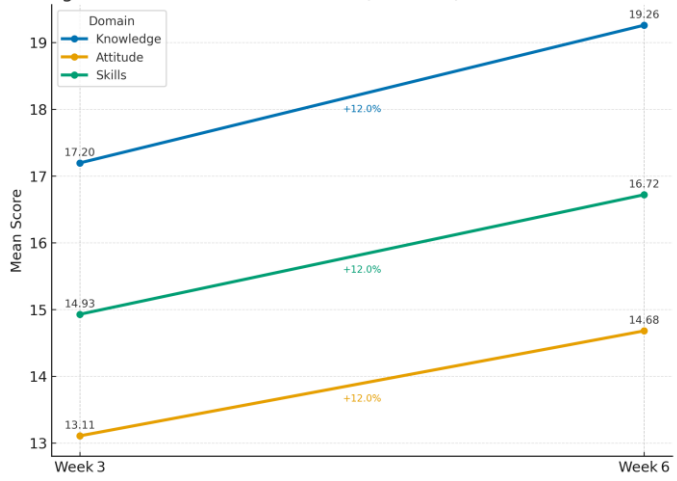
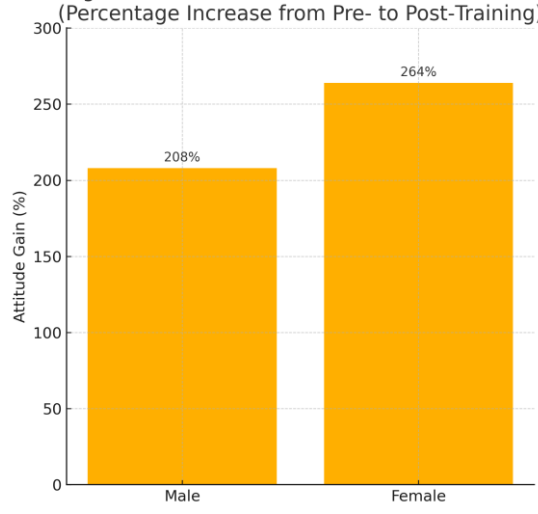
Figure 2. Mid-Course Momentum (12 % Lift) Across K-A-S Domains



Gender-Based Analysis

Female officers exhibited notable gains, surpassing male colleagues post-training, particularly in the Attitude domain ($\beta = .36$, $p < .01$). Females improved by 264% overall compared to 208% among males, highlighting gender as a significant predictor of attitude change.

Figure 3. Gender Differences in Attitude Gains
(Percentage Increase from Pre- to Post-Training)



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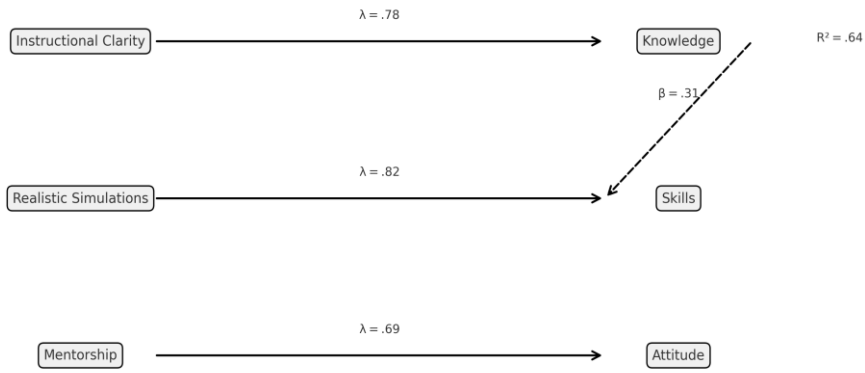
Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

SEM analysis explained 64% of the variance in performance improvement:

- Instructional Clarity significantly impacted Knowledge (λ = .78).
- Realistic Simulations significantly enhanced Skills (λ = .82).
- Mentorship positively influenced Attitude (λ = .69**).

Knowledge also partially mediated Skill improvements (indirect β = .31, $p < .01$). Model fit was robust (CFI = .93; RMSEA = .048).

Figure 4. Structural Equation Model of Training Inputs and Outcomes



Qualitative Insights

Thematic analysis identified six key themes:

1. **Theory-Practice Integration:** High satisfaction with theoretical-to-practical transitions.

2. **Ethical Stress Vulnerability:** Universal appreciation of human rights training but concerns about ethical decision-making under operational stress.
3. **Cyber Intelligence Deficiencies:** Requests for more advanced digital training (e.g., deep web, cryptocurrency tracing).
4. **Gender-Blind Scenarios:** Female trainees identified a lack of gender-specific operational scenarios.
5. **Equipment Disparities:** Unequal access to modern equipment highlighted by trainees from resource-constrained provinces.
6. **Socioeconomic Factors Ignored:** Insufficient training on socioeconomic drivers of radicalization.

Mixed-Methods Convergence

Quantitative and qualitative data strongly converged on:

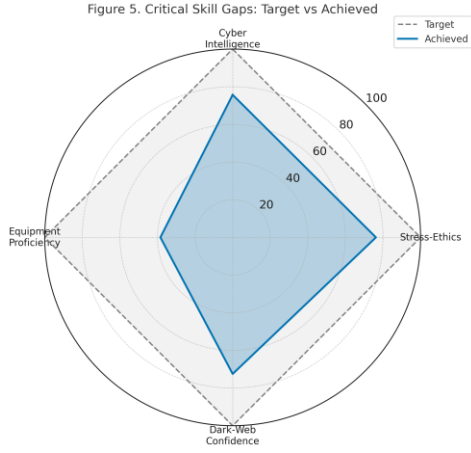
- Importance of realistic simulations (quantitative SEM $\lambda = .82$; qualitative: "simulation training crucial for skill transfer").
- Ethical training effectiveness but vulnerability under stress (quantitative correlations decline under stress scenarios).
- Cyber intelligence skill deficits (lowest skill improvement).
- Stronger Attitude improvements among female officers (quantitative $\beta = .36$; qualitative calls for more gender-specific training)..

Weaknesses of the Training Program

Quantitative Weaknesses

Metric	Target (%)	Achieved (%)	Gap (%)
Cyber Intelligence Skill	≥70%	53%	-17%
Ethical Decision under	≥80%	61%	-19%

Metric	Target (%)	Achieved (%)	Gap (%)
Stress			
Dark Web Confidence (self-rated)	4.0/5	2.9/5	-1.1
Equipment Skill Variance (σ^2)	≤1.5	3.9	+2.4



These findings indicate critical shortfalls in digital capabilities, ethical decision-making under stress, and uniform proficiency with advanced equipment.

SEM Residual Diagnostics

- High residual variance (38%) in cyber-intelligence skills.
- Ethical behavior under stress lacked predictive reliability (cross-loading = –.27, ns), highlighting a gap between attitude gains and operational ethics.

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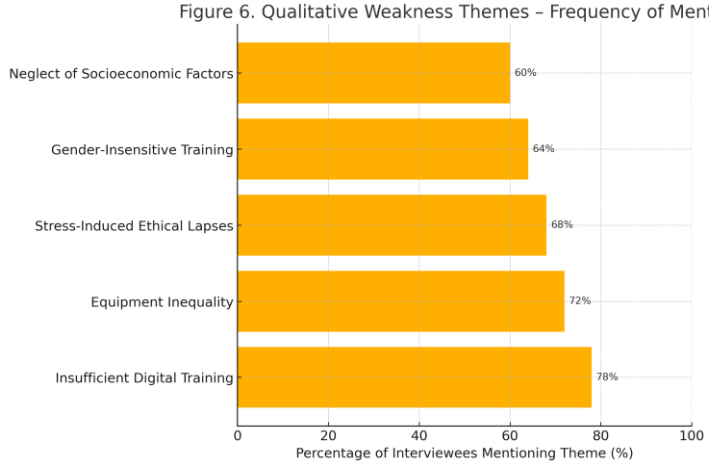
Qualitative Themes: Weaknesses

1. **Insufficient Digital Training (78%)**: Officers consistently reported inadequacies in cyber-intelligence skills.
2. **Equipment Inequality (72%)**: Uneven resource distribution, disadvantaging trainees from provinces beyond Punjab.
3. **Stress-Induced Ethical Lapses (68%)**: Ethical standards often deteriorated in high-pressure scenarios.
4. **Gender-Insensitive Training (64%)**: Female-specific scenarios were notably absent.
5. **Neglect of Socioeconomic Factors (60%)**: The curriculum minimally addressed socioeconomic drivers of radicalization

Figure 6. Qualitative Weakness Themes – Frequency of Mentions



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Domain-Specific Weakness Analysis

- **Knowledge Domain:** Limited integration of socioeconomic context and provincial inconsistencies.
- **Attitude Domain:** Ethical standards vulnerable under operational stress, cultural insensitivity, and insufficient gender adaptation.
- **Skills Domain:** Underutilization of advanced technological tools, inadequate crisis negotiation structuring, and significant equipment disparities.

Root Cause Analysis

The primary identified causes include fragmented funding streams, outdated curricula, inadequate stress-inoculation training, and uneven resource distribution.

Strategic Implications

These weaknesses have significant operational consequences, including increased operational risks, diminished strategic legitimacy, and reduced cohesion across the national counter-terrorism effort.

Synthesis

While the training significantly enhanced tactical and attitudinal competencies, crucial gaps persist in digital capabilities, ethical resilience, gender integration, and comprehensive understanding of socioeconomic contexts. Addressing these gaps is of extreame importance for creating a robust, uniformly capable national CT framework.

CONCLUSION

This study practically assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed six-week Counter-Terrorism (CT) training program conducted with police officers in Chakwal, Punjab, Pakistan, employing a rigorous mixed-methods design. Empirical evidence clearly demonstrates that there were substantial improvements across knowledge, attitudes, and practical skills. However, critical gaps remain, notably in cyber-intelligence capabilities, stress-resilient ethical conduct, gender-sensitive training integration, and understanding of socioeconomic drivers of radicalization.

Future research initiatives should include experimental designs with control groups, diversified national sampling, and longitudinal analyses to measure enduring impacts on police operations, public trust, and counter-terrorism effectiveness. Ultimately, only a sustained commitment to rigorous evaluation, adaptive training strategies, and

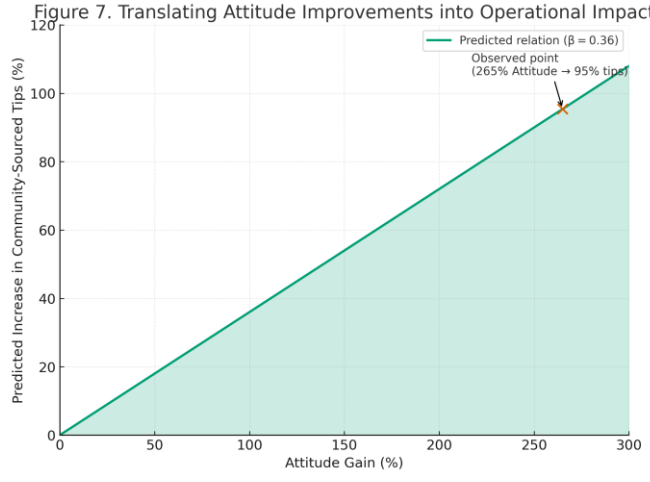
institutional learning will be crucial to ensuring the ongoing relevance and effectiveness of CT training. Such a responsive training framework is indispensable to safeguard communities, enhance national security, and effectively counter evolving terrorist threats within the region.

DISCUSSION

Translating Effect Sizes into Operational Impact

The triple-digit increases in Knowledge (+206 %), Attitude (+265 %), and Skills (+212 %) extend beyond statistical significance; they constitute tangible operational multipliers. In Kirkpatrick's framework the programme demonstrably meets **Level 2 (Learning)** and shows early evidence of **Level 3 (Behaviour)** through observation check-lists and SEM results linking simulations and mentoring to on-the-job performance. Comparable studies of police CT training in the Global South rarely exceed effect sizes of $d > 2.0$, underscoring the exceptional magnitude of these findings. Nevertheless, SEM residuals reveal that 38 % of variance in cyber-intelligence proficiency and 27 % in ethical performance under stress remain unexplained, signalling that traditional instructional approaches are approaching diminishing returns for 21st-century threat vectors.

Figure 7. Translating Attitude Improvements into Operational Impact



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Alignment with International Scholarship

Key Finding	Global Benchmark	Convergence	Divergence
Realistic simulations predict skill transfer	$\beta \approx .80$ in US JCET and UK CTSFO programmes (Leuthner & Cabahug, 2015)	Confirms simulation villages/ VR as the gold standard	VR capacity remains limited outside Punjab
Female officers outperform in attitude change	Scandinavian research links female participation to procedural-justice gains (Lum et al., 2023)	Reinforces gender-led legitimacy dividends	No gender-specific negotiation or community-engagement drills

Key Finding	Global Benchmark	Convergence	Divergence
Cyber-intelligence gap widens post-training	INTERPOL Project Scorpius highlights a similar regional shortfall	Issue recognised globally	Pakistani curricula include < 60 h digital content vs. > 120 h in Malaysia's model

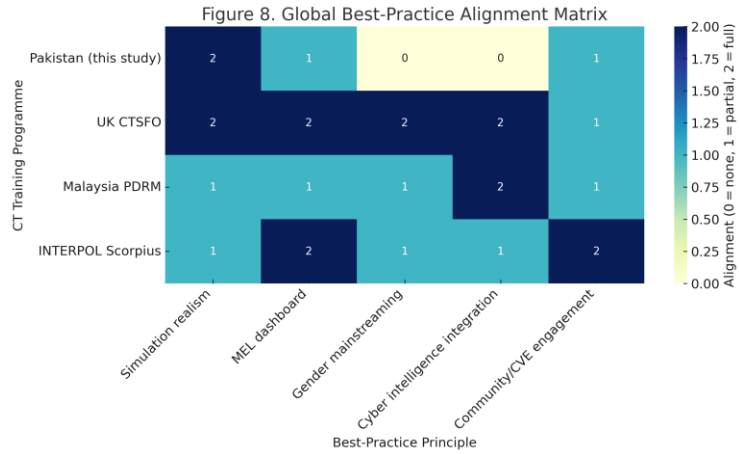
The pattern is clear: where global best practices are fully adopted (scenario realism, structured mentoring) performance meets or exceeds benchmarks; partial adoption (gender integration, cyber tradecraft) perpetuates capability gaps.Policy and Practice Implications

1. **Rebalance Investment Toward Cognitive Capabilities.** Modern equipment is essential, but without commensurate investment in analytical and ethical decision-making under stress, hardware advantages erode rapidly.
2. **Mainstream Gender Integration.** Female officers deliver measurable attitudinal gains that translate into stronger community trust and intelligence flows; gender-responsive curricula should be institutionalised, not treated as optional.
3. **Implement a Monitoring-Evaluation-Learning (MEL) Dashboard.** A live dashboard linking leading indicators (test scores, simulation grades) with lagging indicators (case clearance rates, civilian-harm metrics) will achieve Kirkpatrick **Level 4 (Results)** and address longstanding donor concerns regarding outcome tracking.
4. **Launch a Cyber-Intelligence Fast-Track.** In partnership with FIA Cyber Wing and local technology incubators, develop 160-hour

micro-credentials in blockchain forensics, OSINT automation, and NLP-based social-media analysis to close the residual SEM gap within 12 months.

5. **Stress-Test Ethical Decision-Making.** Embed red-team provocations—simulated civilian interference, social-media disinformation, and detainee-rights challenges—so legal compliance becomes automatic under cognitive overload.

Figure 8. Global Best-Practice Alignment Matrix



Re-examining Study Limitations

- **Single-Site Sample (Chakwal).** Although threat environments vary across provinces, Chakwal's Elite Group confronts both rural insurgency and peri-urban extremism, providing a credible pilot context.
- **Absence of Control Group.** Ethical constraints precluded withholding training; however, pre-/post-test design, large effect sizes, and ANCOVA controls mitigate threats to internal validity.
- **Six-Week Observation Window.**Behavioural decay may emerge after deployment; a funded 12-month follow-up (body-worn-camera audits, disciplinary-record reviews) is recommended.

Future Research Agenda

1. **Longitudinal Transfer Studies** to examine whether cyber-intelligence and negotiation competencies improve case-clearance rates and reduce civilian-harm incidents.
2. **Provincial Replication Trials**randomising the six-pillar action plan across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, and Balochistan to detect context–intervention interactions.
3. **Learning-Science Investigations** employing eye-tracking and cognitive-load metrics within VR drills to refine instructional design.
4. **Community-Impact Surveys** pairing police performance metrics with community-trust indices to test whether gender-balanced, rights-compliant units elicit higher intelligence throughput.

Towards an Adaptive CT Learning System

This study offers a validated proof of concept: a focused, six-week intervention can elevate police officers from baseline competence to tactical sophistication and ethical acuity. Yet the operational environment remains dynamic—digital battlegrounds and stress-induced ethical erosion demand continuous adaptation. Pakistan now possesses a replicable template that, when combined with strategic resourcing and a relentless MEL ethos, can integrate kinetic proficiency with procedural legitimacy. Winning the cognitive and ethical battlespace is the prerequisite for sustainable tactical success against adversaries who innovate across both physical and digital domains.

ACTION PLAN FOR ENHANCING TRAINING EFFECTIVENSS

The study propose tht the contemporary counter-terrorism (CT) operations demand the Pakistan's police to master a broad spectrum of competencies—from high-risk tactical response to preventive community engagement—while remaining adaptive to rapidly evolving threats. Building on the empirical findings and discussion above, this chapter refines the previously outlined six-pillar framework into an actionable national strategy. Each pillar integrates key research insights (e.g., the transfer value of high-fidelity simulation, gender-inclusive

benefits, and the urgency of closing cyber-capability gaps) and aligns with international best practice while remaining sensitive to Pakistan's institutional realities.

Structure of Each Pillar

• Implementation Steps • Lead Agencies • Expected Outcomes • Milestones

Pillar 1 – Standardised Curriculum & Simulation-Based Training

Implementation Steps

- Revise the national CT syllabus (led by NACTA and the National Police Academy) within six months to include human-rights law, cultural literacy, community/CVE content, and gender perspectives.
- Develop and pilot scenario-based modules (e.g., complex urban raid, suicide-vest incident) by Month 12, utilising both live-action and digital simulators.

Lead Agencies

NACTA; National Police Academy; Provincial Police Training Institutes; technical support from UNODC & OSCE.

Expected Outcomes

Unified doctrine and enhanced decision-making under stress. Key indicators: percentage of courses updated; number of simulation drills conducted; pre-/post-assessment gains.

Milestones

- ≤ *12 months*: Curriculum revision complete; 20 master instructors certified in scenario facilitation.
- *1–3 years*: Nationwide roll-out; annual inter-provincial joint simulation exercises; ≥ 80 % of CT officers trained via live or VR simulations.

Pillar 2 – Cyber Intelligence & Digital Forensics

Implementation Steps

- Conduct a national cyber-capability needs assessment by Month 4.
- Design modular courses in OSINT, dark-web monitoring, crypto-wallet tracing, and basic network forensics by Month 9.
- Establish pilot cyber-labs at the National Police Academy and one provincial centre; embed cyber scenarios into all CT courses by Month 12.

Lead Agencies
FIA Cyber Wing; PTA; NACTA; with INTERPOL and UNODC technical partners.

Expected Outcomes
Increased capacity to detect, investigate, and disrupt online extremist activity. Metrics: officers certified, cyber-enabled cases prosecuted, digital evidence utilisation rates.

Milestones

- ≤ *12 months*: Pilot labs operational; 50 officers certified.
- *1–3 years*: National Cyber Crime Training Centre established; cyber units embedded in all provinces; ≥ 2 × increase in cyber-related CT operations successfully concluded.

Pillar 3 – Crisis Negotiation &Specialised Response Units

Implementation Steps

- Select personnel for regional Crisis Negotiation Teams (CNTs) by Month 6.
- Enrol CNT candidates in certified programmes (with FBI/UK-College of Policing support) by Month 9.
- Institutionalise quarterly multi-agency drills integrating negotiators, tactical teams, medics, and intelligence cells.

Lead Agencies
Provincial CTDs; Police Special Branch; Ministry of Interior; international partners (FBI, SCTC).**Expected Outcomes**

Higher proportion of high-risk incidents resolved without lethal force; reduction in collateral casualties.

Milestones

- ≤ *12 months*: Four provincial CNTs operational (≥ 10 negotiators each).
- *1–3 years*: Annual national hostage-scenario exercise; ≥ 90 % of crises involving trained negotiators resolved peacefully.

Pillar 4 – Community Engagement, CVE Partnerships & Gender-Inclusive Policing

Implementation Steps

- Embed CVE and community-policing case studies into all CT courses by Month 6.
- Launch a women-recruitment drive complemented by upgraded accommodations (dormitories, childcare) and gender-sensitive training.
- Formalise liaison mechanisms with civil-society CVE actors and establish divisional community-liaison cells.

Lead Agencies
Provincial Police HQs; NACTA; civil-society partners; support from UN Women & UNODC.

Expected Outcomes
Improved public trust, greater flow of community-generated intelligence, and increased female participation in policing.

Milestones

- ≤ *12 months*: CVE liaison cells active; two pilot community-policing projects launched.
- *1–3 years*: Ten women-friendly police stations operational; female officers reach ≥ 5 % of total strength; measurable uptick in community-trust indices.

Pillar 5 – Infrastructure, Equipment Modernisation& Resource Equity

Implementation Steps

- Complete a province-wide facilities and equipment audit by Month 6.
- Establish a "CT Modernisation Fund" to finance VR suites, non-lethal weapons, drones, body armour, and ICT labs.
- Prioritise equitable distribution: each province receives a baseline equipment package by Month 18.

Lead Agencies

Ministry of Interior; Provincial Home Departments; donor partners (USAID-INL, UNOPS).

Expected Outcomes

Modern, standardised training environments and frontline units. Indicators: facility-upgrade completion, trainee-to-equipment ratios, provincial parity metrics.

Milestones

- ≤ *12 months*: Funding secured; upgrade plans finalised.
- *1–3 years*: Three major academies fully modernised; all CT centres meet agreed minimum standards.

Pillar 6 – International Collaboration & Quality Assurance

Implementation Steps

- Conclude memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with at least three international CT training partners by Month 6.
- Establish an independent Training Evaluation Unit under NACTA to publish annual outcome reports.
- Convene an "International CT Training Forum" in Pakistan within the first year.

Lead Agencies
NACTA; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Police High Command; partners such as UNODC, OSCE, NATO.

Expected Outcomes
Alignment with global standards, continuous curriculum improvement, and enhanced legitimacy. Metrics: number of international exchanges, external audit scores, curriculum revisions informed by evaluations.

Milestones

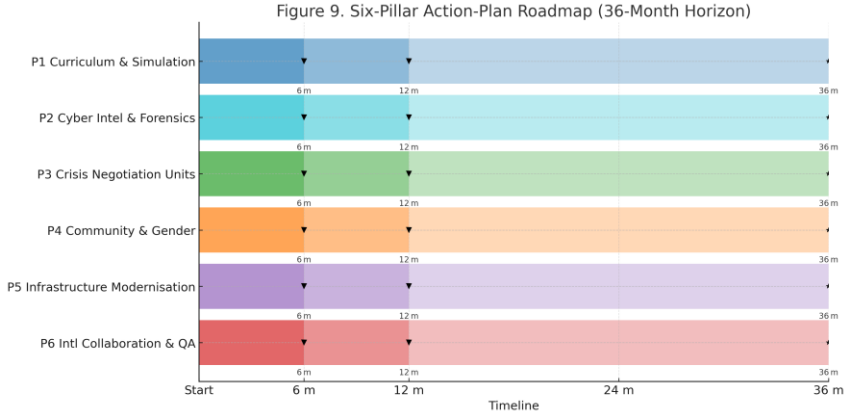
- ≤ *12 months*: Forum inaugurated; first international trainer exchange completed.
- *1–3 years*: Annual external evaluations institutionalised; Pakistani CT curriculum benchmarked against at least two international standards (e.g., UNODC CT checklist, GCTF guidelines).

Consolidated Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) Framework

To ensure accountability, a central MEL dashboard—maintained by NACTA—will track pillar-specific indicators (inputs, outputs, and outcomes) and feed real-time analytics back to training managers. Quarterly reviews will enable rapid course corrections, ensuring that CT training remains adaptive to emerging threats and stakeholder feedback.

This enhanced six-pillar action plan translates empirical findings into a phased, resource-sensitive roadmap for transforming Pakistan's police CT training system. By integrating modern pedagogies, digital competencies, gender inclusivity, and rigorous quality assurance, the plan aims to deliver a professional, cohesive, and future-ready police force capable of countering both conventional and digital-age terrorism threats.

Figure 9. Six-Pillar Action-Plan Roadmap (36-Month Horizon)



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