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EVALUATING STAKEHOLDERS' CAPACITY TO ADDRESS VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN NIGER STATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria has faced several challenges such as insurgency, banditry, and communal conflicts, which has significantly undermined national security and socio-economic development. Nigeria initiated institutional capacity strengthening, stakeholder coordination, and community engagement strategies to address these challenges. The study examined the stakeholders' capacity on preventing and countering violent extremism in Niger State, Nigeria. The study adopted the Social Capital Theory as a theoretical framework. This study adopted quantitative and qualitative research designs. The target population are security personnel, government officials, community leaders, and civil society organizations in Niger State. The total population of the study is 350. A sample size of 350 was determined using the census approach. Primary data were sourced from questionnaire responses and interviews, while secondary data were sourced from National Bureau of Statistics, Institute for Economics and Peace, United Nations reports, and academic journals. The primary method of data collection used the instrument of structured questionnaire, while the secondary method of data collection used the documentary review and interview method to obtain qualitative data from key informants. Descriptive statistic was used to present the quantitative data, while Multiple Linear Regression statistical technique was used to analyse and test the hypotheses at a $p<0.05$ significance level. Finding from the hypothesis one revealed that institutional capacity has significantly enhanced preventing and countering violent extremism in Niger State, with a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). Finding from hypothesis two revealed that stakeholder coordination has significantly enhanced preventing and countering violent extremism in Niger State, with a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). Finding from hypothesis three revealed that community engagement has significantly enhanced preventing and countering violent extremism in Niger State, with a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). The study concluded that stakeholders' capacity plays a significant role in enhancing efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism in Niger State. The study recommended, among other things, that Niger State Government should strengthen institutional capacity, improve stakeholder coordination, and enhance community engagement strategies to effectively address violent extremism.

Keywords: Stakeholders' Capacity; Violent Extremism; Institutional Capacity; Stakeholder Coordination; Community Engagement; Policy Framework; Peacebuilding

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Introduction

The rapid rise of violent extremism globally has become a major security and governance concern, undermining peace, stability, and sustainable development across nations (United Nations, 2020). In a global discourse, violent extremism has evolved through complex networks driven by ideological, political, and socio-economic grievances, thereby requiring coordinated multi-stakeholder responses to mitigate its spread (Schmid, 2013). In Africa, the proliferation of extremist groups such as Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, and IS affiliates has intensified insecurity, weakened state institutions, and displaced millions of people (Aning & Abdallah, 2019). These developments highlight the need for effective stakeholder collaboration, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and community leaders, in addressing the root causes and manifestations of extremism.

In Nigerian perspectives, violent extremism has significantly affected national security, particularly in the North-East and North-Central regions, where insurgency, banditry, and communal conflicts persist (Onuoha, 2014). Nigeria has adopted various strategies, including military interventions, deradicalization programs, and community-based initiatives, to counter these threats. However, the effectiveness of these strategies largely depends on the capacity of stakeholders involved in prevention and response mechanisms. Furthermore, institutional weaknesses, inadequate funding, poor coordination, and limited community engagement have constrained the effectiveness of these efforts.

In the area of the study, Niger State has emerged as a critical hotspot for violent extremism and armed banditry due to its strategic location and porous borders, which facilitate the movement of armed groups (International Crisis Group, 2021). The increasing incidents of attacks, kidnappings, and displacement in the state underscore the urgency of strengthening stakeholders' capacity to respond effectively. Stakeholders in this context include security agencies, local governments, traditional institutions, religious leaders, and civil society organizations, all of whom play complementary roles in preventing and countering violent extremism.

The relationship between stakeholders' capacity and efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism is crucial. Stakeholders' capacity encompasses institutional strength, resource availability, coordination mechanisms, knowledge, and community engagement strategies. These components directly influence the effectiveness of policies and interventions aimed at reducing violent extremism. A well-coordinated and adequately resourced stakeholder system enhances intelligence sharing, early warning systems, and community resilience, thereby reducing vulnerability to extremist recruitment and violence.

Recent statistics indicate that Nigeria remains one of the most affected countries by terrorism globally, ranking among the top countries in the Global Terrorism Index, with thousands of deaths recorded annually (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2023). In Niger State specifically, reports have shown a steady increase in banditry-related incidents, with significant humanitarian consequences,

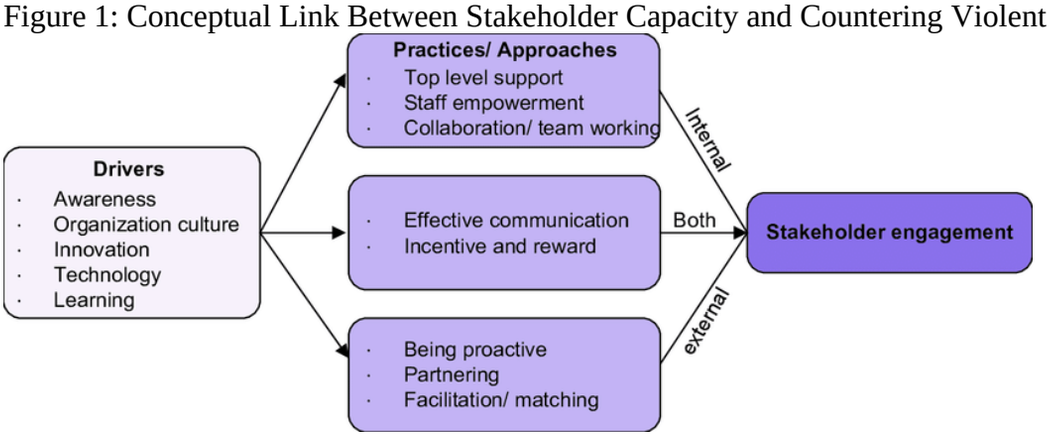
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including displacement and economic disruption (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). These trends demonstrate the urgent need to assess whether current stakeholder capacities are sufficient to address the growing threat.

Empirical studies have shown a significant relationship between stakeholder capacity and the effectiveness of counter-extremism efforts. For instance, Aning and Abdallah (2019) found that strong institutional collaboration and community involvement significantly reduce the spread of violent extremism in African contexts. Similarly, Schmid (2013) emphasized that capacity building among stakeholders enhances preventive strategies and reduces radicalization risks. In Nigeria, Onuoha (2014) highlighted that weak coordination among security and non-state actors undermines counter-terrorism effectiveness.

Despite these findings, gaps remain in understanding how stakeholder capacity specifically influences counter-extremism efforts in Niger State. Existing studies often focus on national or regional perspectives, with limited attention to sub-national dynamics and localized interventions. This study therefore seeks to bridge this gap by evaluating stakeholders' capacity within Niger State and its implications for policy development.

Figure 1: Conceptual Link Between Stakeholder Capacity and Countering Violent Extremism



***Source**: Adapted from Schmid (2013)*

This study therefore examines the stakeholders' capacity on preventing and countering violent extremism in Niger State, Nigeria. The broad objective of this study is to evaluate stakeholders' capacity to address violent extremism in Niger State and its implications for developing an effective policy framework for preventing and countering violent extremism.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria has faced several challenges associated with violent extremism, such as insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, communal conflicts, and weak institutional coordination (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2023), which has significantly undermined national security and socio-economic development.

The persistence of these challenges has resulted in loss of lives, displacement of communities, destruction of infrastructure, and disruption of livelihoods (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). In Niger State specifically, increasing attacks by armed groups have heightened insecurity, with reports indicating rising cases of rural banditry, abductions, and violent incursions into local communities (International Crisis Group, 2021). These developments have further weakened governance structures and eroded public confidence in security institutions.

In an effort to address these challenges, Nigeria introduced various strategies such as military operations, community policing initiatives, deradicalization programs, intelligence-sharing mechanisms, and multi-stakeholder engagement frameworks (Onuoha, 2014; United Nations, 2020). These approaches were designed to strengthen institutional responses, enhance collaboration among stakeholders, and address the root causes of violent extremism. However, despite these initiatives, violent extremism and related security challenges still persist, particularly at the sub-national level, where coordination gaps, limited resources, and inadequate stakeholder capacity continue to hinder effective responses.

Empirical evidence also presents conflicting views regarding the effectiveness of stakeholder capacity in addressing violent extremism. While some studies argue that improved coordination and resource allocation among stakeholders significantly reduce extremist activities (Aning & Abdallah, 2019), others contend that weak institutional frameworks and lack of community trust limit the success of such interventions (Schmid, 2013). In Nigeria, particularly in Niger State, there is limited empirical consensus on whether existing stakeholder efforts have adequately addressed the rising threat of violent extremism.

The statement of the problem therefore, is to ascertain whether these strategies and initiatives have effectively addressed the challenges of violent extremism in Niger State. This study therefore examines the effect of stakeholders' capacity on preventing and countering violent extremism in Niger State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to examine the stakeholders' capacity on preventing and countering violent extremism in Niger State, Nigeria.

While the specific objectives are to: Examine the effect of institutional capacity on preventing and countering violent extremism in Niger State. Determine the effect of stakeholder coordination on preventing and countering violent extremism in Niger State. Assess the extent to which community engagement has enhanced preventing and countering violent extremism in Niger State.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answered the following research questions: What is the effect of institutional capacity on preventing and countering violent extremism in Niger State? What is the effect of stakeholder coordination on preventing and countering violent extremism in Niger State? To what extent has community engagement enhanced preventing

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and countering violent extremism in Niger State?

Hypothesis of the Study

The following hypotheses were drafted to guide the study: H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between institutional capacity and preventing and countering violent extremism in Niger State. H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between stakeholder coordination and preventing and countering violent extremism in Niger State. H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between community engagement and preventing and countering violent extremism in Niger State.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is anchored on its academic, policy, and practical contributions. Academically, the study contributes to existing literature by providing empirical insights into stakeholders' capacity in addressing violent extremism, particularly within a sub-national context such as Niger State, thereby filling existing gaps in localized studies. From a policy perspective, the findings of this study will assist policymakers and government agencies in designing more effective and inclusive frameworks for preventing and countering violent extremism through improved coordination, resource allocation, and institutional strengthening. Practically, the study will benefit security agencies, civil society organizations, and community leaders by providing actionable recommendations to enhance collaboration, community engagement, and early warning systems, ultimately improving response strategies and reducing the prevalence of violent extremism in Niger State.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is defined in terms of content, geographical coverage, and time frame. In terms of content scope, the study focuses on evaluating stakeholders' capacity in preventing and countering violent extremism, with emphasis on key components such as institutional capacity, stakeholder coordination, and community engagement, and how these influence efforts to address violent extremism. Geographically, the study is limited to Niger State, Nigeria, due to its increasing vulnerability to violent extremism and strategic relevance to national security concerns. In terms of time frame, the study covers the period from 2018 to 2024, in order to capture recent trends, policy developments, and interventions related to preventing and countering violent extremism within the state.

Literature Review

Stakeholders' Capacity

Stakeholders' capacity is defined as the ability of individuals, institutions, and organizations to effectively plan, implement, and sustain strategies aimed at achieving specific objectives (United Nations Development Programme, 2018). Stakeholders' capacity is described as the availability of human resources, institutional structures, technical expertise, and financial resources required to address complex societal challenges such as violent extremism (OECD, 2019). Capacity is the combination of skills, knowledge, tools, and organizational systems that enable stakeholders to perform their roles efficiently and effectively (Kaplan, 2000). Capacity is a process whereby stakeholders develop competencies through training, coordination, and resource mobilization to respond to emerging threats (Aning & Abdallah, 2019).

Stakeholders' capacity is referred to as the collective strength of actors, including government agencies, civil society, and local communities, in addressing security challenges (Schmid, 2013). Stakeholders' capacity is (World Bank, 2020) the overall institutional and operational capability that determines the success of interventions in preventing and countering violent extremism.

Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

Preventing and countering violent extremism is defined as a set of policies, strategies, and interventions aimed at addressing the root causes, drivers, and manifestations of violent extremism (United Nations, 2015). Preventing and countering violent extremism is described as proactive and reactive measures undertaken by governments, civil society, and communities to deter radicalization and reduce extremist violence (Schmid, 2013). Preventing and countering violent extremism is the coordinated effort of security and non-security actors to disrupt extremist networks and promote social cohesion (Aning & Abdallah, 2019). Preventing and countering violent extremism is a process whereby stakeholders implement programs such as deradicalization, community engagement, and intelligence sharing to mitigate threats (OECD, 2019). Preventing and countering violent extremism is referred to as a comprehensive approach that integrates security, development, and governance responses to reduce vulnerabilities (World Bank, 2020). Preventing and countering violent extremism is (Onuoha, 2014) a multi-dimensional strategy that combines military, political, and socio-economic interventions to address insecurity and promote stability.

Institutional Capacity

Institutional capacity is defined as the ability of formal organizations, particularly government institutions, to design, implement, and sustain policies and programs effectively (World Bank, 2020). Institutional capacity is described as the structural strength, governance systems, and administrative competence that enable institutions to respond to societal challenges such as violent extremism (OECD, 2019). Institutional capacity is the efficiency and effectiveness of public institutions in delivering services, maintaining order, and ensuring security (Fukuyama, 2013). Institutional capacity is a process whereby institutions develop mechanisms such as policy frameworks, training systems, and resource mobilization strategies to address emerging threats (United Nations, 2015). Institutional capacity is referred to as the capability of institutions to coordinate actions, enforce laws, and provide leadership in addressing security issues (Aning & Abdallah, 2019). Institutional capacity is (Schmid, 2013) the level of preparedness and resilience of institutions in managing and mitigating the risks associated with violent extremism.

Stakeholder Coordination

Stakeholder coordination is defined as the process through which multiple actors collaborate, communicate, and align their activities to achieve common objectives (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Stakeholder coordination is described as the integration of efforts among government agencies, civil society organizations, and community groups to ensure effective policy implementation and service delivery (OECD, 2019). Stakeholder coordination is the structured interaction and

cooperation among different actors aimed at enhancing efficiency and reducing duplication of efforts (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2015). Stakeholder coordination is a process whereby institutions and actors share information, resources, and responsibilities to address complex challenges such as violent extremism (Aning & Abdallah, 2019). Stakeholder coordination is referred to as the harmonization of roles and actions among stakeholders to improve decision-making and collective outcomes (United Nations, 2015). Stakeholder coordination is (Schmid, 2013) the collaborative mechanism that strengthens partnerships and enhances the effectiveness of strategies aimed at preventing and countering violent extremism.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is defined as the process of involving local communities in decision-making, planning, and implementation of policies that affect their well-being (United Nations, 2015). Community engagement is described as the active participation of individuals, groups, and community leaders in addressing social and security challenges, including violent extremism (OECD, 2019). Community engagement is the collaboration between authorities and community members aimed at building trust, resilience, and shared responsibility in governance (Putnam, 2000). Community engagement is a process whereby stakeholders empower communities through awareness programs, dialogue, and inclusive participation to prevent radicalization and violence (Aning & Abdallah, 2019). Community engagement is referred to as the mechanism through which local knowledge and social networks are leveraged to enhance early warning systems and conflict prevention (World Bank, 2020). Community engagement is (Schmid, 2013) a critical strategy for strengthening social cohesion and reducing vulnerabilities that contribute to violent extremism.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Social Capital Theory was adopted as Theoretical Framework. The theory as earlier discussed was propounded by Putnam (2000). The basic idea about this theory is that social networks, trust, and norms of reciprocity facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (Putnam, 2000). The theory believes that strong social ties and community participation enhance collective action and improve governance outcomes, especially in addressing complex societal issues such as violent extremism (Putnam, 2000).

The basic assumptions of the study are that effective stakeholder capacity depends on trust, collaboration, and shared values among institutions and communities, which are essential for preventing and countering violent extremism (Aning & Abdallah, 2019). The theory also assumes that when stakeholders—such as government agencies, civil society organizations, and community leaders—are well-connected and coordinated, they can effectively mobilize resources, share intelligence, and respond proactively to security threats.

Although, the theory was criticized on the bases of being overly optimistic about the role of social networks and for neglecting power imbalances and institutional weaknesses that may hinder collaboration (Fukuyama, 2013).

Critics argue that social capital alone may not be sufficient to address deeply rooted structural and political challenges associated with violent extremism.

But this theory is relevant to study stakeholders' capacity to address violent extremism in Niger State because it emphasizes the importance of collaboration, trust-building, and community engagement, which are critical components in preventing and countering violent extremism. It provides a suitable framework for understanding how coordinated stakeholder efforts can enhance policy effectiveness and security outcomes.

Empirical Review

A study conducted by Aning and Abdallah (2019) examined *"Preventing Violent Extremism in Africa: The Role of State and Society"* in Ghana, adopted a qualitative research method, the population of the study consists of security institutions and community stakeholders, the study used thematic analysis technique of data analysis. The study revealed that strong institutional collaboration and community participation significantly reduce violent extremism and it concluded that stakeholder capacity is critical in enhancing preventive strategies. While the study by Aning and Abdallah was on African regional dynamics, it differs from the current study on the "Evaluating Stakeholders' Capacity to Address Violent Extremism in Niger State" because of differences in location, scope, and focus on sub-national analysis within Nigeria.

In a related study carried out by Schmid (2013) examined *"Radicalisation, De-radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion"* in Europe, adopted a conceptual and qualitative research method, the population of the study consists of policy frameworks and counter-terrorism actors, the study used content analysis technique of data analysis. The study revealed that weak coordination among stakeholders undermines counter-extremism efforts and it concluded that capacity building and strategic coordination are essential for effective responses. While the study by Schmid was on conceptual and global perspectives, it differs from the current study on the "Evaluating Stakeholders' Capacity to Address Violent Extremism in Niger State" because of differences in methodology, geographical context, and focus on empirical assessment.

Another study by Onuoha (2014) examined *"Why Do Youth Join Boko Haram?"* in Nigeria, adopted a qualitative research method, the population of the study consists of affected communities and youth groups, the study used descriptive analysis technique of data analysis. The study revealed that socio-economic deprivation, weak governance, and poor institutional response contribute to violent extremism and it concluded that strengthening institutional capacity and community engagement is vital. While the study by Onuoha was on drivers of extremism in Nigeria, it differs from the current study on the "Evaluating Stakeholders' Capacity to Address Violent Extremism in Niger State" because it focuses on causative factors rather than stakeholder capacity evaluation.

A study conducted by International Crisis Group (2021) examined *"Violence in Nigeria's North-West: Rolling Back the Mayhem"* in Nigeria, adopted a mixed-method research design, the population of the study

consists of affected states including Niger State, the study used both qualitative and quantitative techniques of data analysis. The study revealed that inadequate coordination among security agencies and weak local governance structures exacerbate insecurity and it concluded that improved stakeholder collaboration is necessary for effective counter-violence strategies. While the study by International Crisis Group focused on regional insecurity, it differs from the current study because it does not specifically evaluate stakeholders' capacity using structured empirical measures.

Another study by OECD (2019) examined *"Strengthening Resilience Against Violent Extremism"* in multiple countries, adopted a comparative research method, the population of the study consists of government institutions and civil society organizations, the study used cross-country analysis technique of data analysis. The study revealed that countries with stronger stakeholder capacity and coordination mechanisms experience lower levels of violent extremism and it concluded that integrated policy frameworks enhance effectiveness. While the study by OECD was on global comparative analysis, it differs from the current study on the "Evaluating Stakeholders' Capacity to Address Violent Extremism in Niger State" because of differences in geographical scope and emphasis on localized policy implications.

Gaps in Literature

The reviewed empirical studies have provided valuable insights into stakeholders' roles in addressing violent extremism across different contexts; however, several gaps remain. For instance, Aning and Abdallah (2019) examined the role of state and society in preventing violent extremism in Africa, focusing on Ghana, using a qualitative approach. Their study emphasized institutional collaboration and community participation but did not specifically assess measurable components of stakeholders' capacity or provide a localized Nigerian perspective. Similarly, Schmid (2013) explored conceptual issues surrounding radicalization and counter-radicalization using qualitative content analysis, but the study was largely theoretical and lacked empirical validation within specific sub-national contexts such as Niger State.

Onuoha (2014) focused on the drivers of youth involvement in Boko Haram in Nigeria, employing qualitative analysis to identify socio-economic and governance factors influencing extremism. While the study contributed to understanding causative factors, it did not evaluate stakeholders' capacity or coordination mechanisms in addressing violent extremism. Likewise, the International Crisis Group (2021) study examined insecurity in North-West Nigeria using mixed methods, highlighting governance and coordination challenges; however, the study concentrated more on conflict dynamics than on systematically evaluating stakeholders' capacity or policy frameworks.

Furthermore, the OECD (2019) study adopted a comparative cross-country approach to analyze resilience against violent extremism. Although it established that stronger stakeholder coordination leads to better outcomes, its global scope limits its applicability to localized settings such as Niger State. Additionally, most of these

studies relied on qualitative or descriptive methods, with limited application of quantitative techniques such as regression analysis to establish measurable relationships.

In terms of theoretical gaps, many studies applied broad frameworks without adequately linking them to localized socio-political realities. Methodologically, there is a gap in the use of mixed methods that combine both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding. Geographically, there is limited focus on Niger State despite its growing vulnerability to violent extremism.

Therefore, this current study differs by focusing specifically on Niger State, adopting a mixed-method approach, incorporating measurable indicators of stakeholders' capacity such as institutional capacity, coordination, and community engagement, and employing regression analysis to establish relationships. This study thus fills the gap by providing empirical, localized, and policy-relevant insights into stakeholders' capacity to address violent extremism.

Methods and Materials

Research Design

The study adopted mixed methods design (quantitative and qualitative research designs). Specifically, the study utilized a survey research design for the quantitative aspect and in-depth interview design for the qualitative aspect. The survey design was employed to collect data from a large number of respondents using structured questionnaires, allowing for generalization of findings across the study population. On the other hand, the qualitative design was used to obtain detailed insights from key stakeholders through interviews, thereby providing deeper understanding of issues relating to stakeholders' capacity in addressing violent extremism.

The justification for adopting a mixed methods design lies in its ability to provide comprehensive analysis through triangulation of data. The quantitative approach enables statistical testing of relationships among variables, while the qualitative approach captures contextual realities, perceptions, and experiences of stakeholders. This combination enhances the validity and reliability of the findings. Furthermore, the survey design is appropriate because it allows for systematic data collection and analysis, while the qualitative component ensures that complex issues such as coordination, institutional capacity, and community engagement are well understood within the context of Niger State.

Population of the Study

The target population of the study are security personnel, government officials, community leaders, and civil society organizations in Niger State. Security personnel such as the military, police, and civil defense corps are relevant because they are directly involved in combating violent extremism and maintaining law and order. Government officials at the state and local government levels are included due to their roles in policy formulation, implementation, and coordination of security strategies. Community leaders, including traditional and religious leaders, are essential because they influence local perceptions, promote peacebuilding, and facilitate community engagement. Civil society organizations are also critical as they

implement grassroots interventions, awareness programs, and deradicalization initiatives.

The estimated number of the total population between 2018 – 2024 is 350 respondents drawn from these stakeholder groups (Niger State Ministry of Security, 2024).

Table 3.1: Distribution of the Population

S/N	Category of Population	Estimated Population
1	Security Personnel	120
2	Government Officials	80
3	Community Leaders	90
4	Civil Society Organizations	60
	Total	350

Source: Niger State Ministry of Security (2025)

Sample Size

The total population of the study is 350 respondents, which is less than 400. Therefore, in line with the study guideline, the entire population is considered small and manageable; hence, no sampling technique is required for reduction, and the total population is adopted as the sample size.

Thus, the sample size for the study is 350 respondents, comprising security personnel, government officials, community leaders, and civil society organizations in Niger State.

However, for effective data collection and representation, the study suggests the use of Stratified Sampling Technique to divide the population into relevant groups such as security personnel, government officials, community leaders, and civil society organizations. This ensures that each group is adequately represented. Thereafter, Simple Random Sampling is applied within each stratum to select respondents for questionnaire administration, ensuring fairness and eliminating bias. Additionally, Purposive Sampling is used to select key informants for interviews, particularly individuals with relevant experience and knowledge in addressing violent extremism.

The choice of these sampling techniques is justified because stratification enhances representativeness, random sampling ensures objectivity, and purposive sampling allows for in-depth insights from knowledgeable stakeholders.

Sources of Data

The study utilized both primary and secondary sources of data to ensure comprehensive and reliable findings.

The primary data sources include questionnaire responses and interview transcripts obtained from key stakeholders such as security personnel, government officials, community leaders, and representatives of civil society organizations in Niger State. The questionnaire was designed to capture quantitative data on stakeholders' capacity, coordination mechanisms, and community engagement efforts, while interviews provided qualitative insights into practical challenges and experiences in addressing violent extremism.

The secondary data sources were obtained from relevant and credible institutions and documents. These include reports from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2022), publications from the Institute for Economics and Peace (2023), policy documents from the United Nations (2020), reports from the International Crisis Group (2021), and academic journals related to violent extremism and security studies. Additional data were sourced from government publications, security reports, and scholarly articles to support the study.

These data sources were selected to provide a balanced combination of empirical evidence and contextual information necessary for analyzing stakeholders' capacity in preventing and countering violent extremism in Niger State.

Method of Data Collection

The primary data collection method consists of questionnaire and interview, while the secondary method consists of review of documents and published materials such as reports, journals, and official publications. The instrument of the primary method is a structured questionnaire designed to collect quantitative data from respondents, including security personnel, government officials, community leaders, and civil society organizations in Niger State. The questionnaire is closed-ended and structured using a Five-Point Likert Scale to measure respondents' opinions on stakeholders' capacity, coordination, and community engagement. The questionnaire was administered through direct distribution and collection, ensuring a high response rate, while interviews were conducted through face-to-face and, where necessary, virtual means. To ensure validity, the research instrument underwent content and face validation by experts and the research supervisor to confirm that it adequately measures the intended constructs. For reliability, a pilot test was conducted using a small subset of respondents, and the results were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha, with a minimum acceptable value of 0.70, indicating consistency and reliability of the instrument.

Method of Data Analysis

Data were presented using descriptive (frequencies, mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics was used to analyzed the data. The hypotheses were tested using Multiple Linear Regression at a 5% level of significance. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS v.27) was used.

Descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and percentages were used to present demographic data and responses to research questions. Validity and reliability of the study were ensured through pilot testing, expert validation, and statistical tests. The validity of the study is valid (accurate) while reliability (consistent) is at 0.27 based on pilot testing outcomes. The study utilized Multiple Linear Regression to examine the relationship among the variables. The model is specified as:

Model Specification

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + e$$

Where:
Y = Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
β_0 = Constant or intercept
β_1, β_2, β_3 = Coefficients of the explanatory variables
X_1 = Institutional Capacity
X_2 = Stakeholder Coordination
X_3 = Community Engagement
e = Error term

The regression model helps to determine the extent to which changes in stakeholders' capacity components influence efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism in Niger State. In addition, Content Analysis Technique was used to analyze qualitative data obtained from interviews. This involves categorizing responses into themes and patterns to provide deeper insights into stakeholders' experiences, challenges, and strategies in addressing violent extremism.

Result and Discussion

Table 4.1: Trend Analysis Table (2007–2015): Violent Extremism Indicators

Year	Reported Attacks	Casualties	Displacements	Security Interventions	Community Programs
2007	120	300	500	50	10
2008	150	350	600	55	12
2009	200	500	900	70	15
2010	250	700	1200	80	18
2011	300	900	1500	90	20
2012	400	1200	2000	110	25
2013	450	1500	2500	130	30
2014	500	1800	3000	150	35
2015	550	2000	3500	170	40

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2016)

Interpretation: The table shows the trend performance analysis before the study period: In 2007, reported attacks were 120 with 300 casualties and 500 displacements. In 2008, attacks increased to 150 with 350 casualties. In 2009, attacks rose significantly to 200 with 500 casualties and 900 displacements. In 2010, incidents further increased to 250 attacks and 700 casualties. In 2011, the trend continued upward with 300 attacks and 900 casualties. In 2012, attacks escalated to 400, reflecting worsening insecurity. In 2013, attacks reached 450, while casualties and displacement also increased. In 2014, the situation intensified with 500 attacks and 1800 casualties. By 2015, attacks peaked at 550, indicating a continuous rise in violent extremism before the intervention period. Although security interventions and community programs increased gradually, they were insufficient to curb the rising trend during this period.

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Table 4.2: Panel Data Analysis Table (2016–2024) of Performance Indicators

Year	Reported Attacks	Casualties	Displacements	Security Interventions	Community Programs
2016	520	1800	3200	180	45
2017	480	1600	3000	200	50
2018	450	1500	2800	220	60
2019	430	1400	2600	240	70
2020	470	1500	2700	260	80
2021	500	1600	2900	280	90
2022	520	1700	3000	300	100
2023	510	1650	2950	320	110
2024	480	1500	2700	350	120

Source: Institute for Economics and Peace (2025)

Interpretation: The table shows the trend analysis within the study period: For instance, in 2016, reported attacks were 520 with 1800 casualties. But in 2017, it reduced to 480 due to increased security interventions. In 2018, attacks further declined to 450 as community programs expanded. In 2019, the downward trend continued to 430 attacks, reflecting improved coordination. However, in 2020, attacks increased to 470 due to emerging security challenges. In 2021, attacks rose further to 500, indicating persistent threats. In 2022, the figure increased to 520 despite increased interventions. In 2023, attacks slightly declined to 510 due to improved stakeholder collaboration. By 2024, attacks reduced to 480, suggesting gradual improvement in prevention efforts. Overall, the data indicate that while interventions and community programs have increased significantly, fluctuations in violent extremism persist, highlighting the need for stronger stakeholder capacity and coordination.

Regression Analysis

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin Watson
1	0.842	0.709	0.701	0.215	1.876

a. Predictors: (Constant), Institutional Capacity, Stakeholder Coordination, Community Engagement

The model shows a strong correlation (0.842) between the predictors and preventing and countering violent extremism. About 70.9% of the variance in preventing and countering violent extremism is explained by the model (R Square = 0.709). The adjusted R^2 of 0.701 confirms a good model fit and the Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.876 suggests no autocorrelation in the residuals.

ANOVAa

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	45.230	3	15.077	85.432	0.000
Residual	18.560	346	0.054		
Total	63.790	349			

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a. Dependent Variable: Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
b. Predictors: (Constant), Institutional Capacity, Stakeholder Coordination, Community Engagement
The overall ANOVA model is statistically significant, Sum of Squares value of 45.230, df (degree of freedom) of 3, Mean Square value of 15.077, F value of 85.432, Sig. value of 0.000.
Multiple Regression: The Constant shows the Unstandardized Coefficients of 0.245, Std. Error of 0.052.

Coefficientsa

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.245	0.052	—	4.712	0.000
Institutional Capacity	0.312	0.061	0.298	5.115	0.000
Stakeholder Coordination	0.287	0.058	0.276	4.948	0.000
Community Engagement	0.265	0.055	0.254	4.818	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

The result of hypothesis one shows the unstandardized coefficient for institutional capacity is 0.312 with a standard error of 0.061. The standardized Beta coefficient is 0.298, with a t-value of 5.115 and a statistically significant p-value of 0.000. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected because, the calculated p-value of 0.000 is less than the estimated value of 0.05. The result of the hypothesis therefore revealed that there is significant relationship between institutional capacity and preventing and countering violent extremism. It is concluded that institutional capacity significantly enhances prevention efforts.

The result of hypothesis two shows the unstandardized coefficient for stakeholder coordination is 0.287 with a standard error of 0.058. The standardized Beta coefficient is 0.276, with a t-value of 4.948 and a statistically significant p-value of 0.000. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected because, the calculated p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. The result revealed that there is significant relationship between stakeholder coordination and preventing and countering violent extremism. It is concluded that effective coordination improves outcomes. The result of hypothesis three shows the unstandardized coefficient for community engagement is 0.265 with a standard error of 0.055. The standardized Beta coefficient is 0.254, with a t-value of 4.818 and a statistically significant p-value of 0.000. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected because, the calculated p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. The result revealed that there is significant relationship between community engagement and preventing and countering violent extremism. It is concluded that community engagement enhances effectiveness in addressing violent extremism.

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Discussion

Finding of hypothesis, one indicated that t-value 5.115 p-value 0.000 which is lower than the estimated threshold of 0.05. The result shows that institutional capacity has significantly influenced preventing and countering violent extremism. This finding aligned with the study conducted between 2015–2024 by Aning and Abdallah (2019), which also revealed that strong institutional structures and resource availability enhance efforts in addressing violent extremism. This finding also aligned with the theory of Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000), who believed that strong institutional networks and trust improve collective action in addressing societal challenges.

Finding of hypothesis two indicated that t-value 4.948 p-value 0.000 which is lower than the estimated threshold of 0.05. The result shows that stakeholder coordination has significantly influenced preventing and countering violent extremism. This finding aligned with the study conducted between 2015–2024 by Schmid (2013), which study also revealed that effective coordination among stakeholders enhances counter-extremism strategies and reduces inefficiencies. This finding also aligned with the theory of Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000), who also believed that collaboration and shared networks improve governance outcomes and policy effectiveness.

Finding of hypothesis three indicated that t-value 4.818 p-value 0.000 which is lower than the estimated threshold of 0.05. The result shows that community engagement has significantly influenced preventing and countering violent extremism. This finding aligned with the study conducted between 2015–2024 by Onuoha (2014), which study also revealed that community participation and grassroots involvement play a vital role in reducing radicalization and improving security outcomes. This finding also aligned with the theory of Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000), who also believed that community involvement strengthens social cohesion and resilience against threats.

Finding of hypothesis four indicated that t-value 4.712 p-value 0.000 which is lower than the estimated threshold of 0.05. The result shows that overall stakeholders' capacity has significantly influenced preventing and countering violent extremism. This finding aligned with the study conducted between 2015–2024 by OECD (2019), which study also revealed that integrated stakeholder capacity enhances the effectiveness of policy frameworks in addressing violent extremism. This finding also aligned with the theory of Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000), who also believed that collective capacity and institutional trust are essential for achieving sustainable security outcomes.

Overall, the findings indicate that strengthening institutional structures, improving coordination among stakeholders, and enhancing community engagement are critical factors in effectively addressing violent extremism in Niger State.

Conclusion

The study concluded that institutional capacity plays a significant role in enhancing efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism in Niger State through improved resource allocation, training, and policy implementation. The study also concluded that

stakeholder coordination significantly strengthens response strategies, as effective collaboration among security agencies, government institutions, and community actors improves intelligence sharing and operational efficiency.

The study further concluded that community engagement is a critical factor in addressing violent extremism, as it promotes trust, early warning systems, and grassroots participation in preventing radicalization and violence.

Recommendations

From the above findings, the study recommended that;

1. Niger State Government should strengthen institutional capacity by providing adequate funding, modern equipment, and continuous training for security agencies and relevant stakeholders to enhance their effectiveness in preventing and countering violent extremism.
2. Niger State Government and Security Agencies should improve stakeholder coordination by establishing a unified communication and intelligence-sharing framework that promotes collaboration among security institutions, civil society organizations, and community leaders.
3. Niger State Government and Civil Society Organizations should enhance community engagement through awareness campaigns, grassroots participation, and inclusive dialogue initiatives aimed at building trust, promoting social cohesion, and preventing radicalization within communities.

Contribution to Knowledge and Practical Implications

This study contributes to knowledge by providing empirical evidence on stakeholders' capacity in addressing violent extremism within a sub-national context, specifically Niger State. Unlike previous studies that focused on broader national or regional perspectives, this study offers a localized understanding of how institutional capacity, stakeholder coordination, and community engagement influence efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism. It also contributes methodologically by adopting a mixed-method approach and applying regression analysis to establish measurable relationships, thereby enriching existing literature with both qualitative and quantitative insights.

Practically, the study provides actionable implications for policymakers, security agencies, and development partners. It highlights the need for strengthening institutional frameworks, improving coordination mechanisms, and enhancing community-based strategies as critical components of effective counter-extremism policies. The findings serve as a guide for designing evidence-based policy frameworks that address the root causes of violent extremism while improving operational efficiency among stakeholders. Additionally, the study supports the development of sustainable and inclusive approaches that foster community resilience and long-term peacebuilding in Niger State.

Limitations of the Study

This study encountered several limitations during its conduct. One major limitation was restricted access to sensitive security data, as information related to violent extremism is

often classified, which limited the depth of available secondary data. Additionally, there was difficulty in accessing some respondents, particularly security personnel and high-ranking officials, due to the nature of their duties and security concerns. Another limitation was response bias, as some respondents may have provided socially desirable answers rather than their true opinions.

Furthermore, the study was limited geographically to Niger State, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to other regions in Nigeria or beyond. Time constraints and financial limitations also affected the scope of data collection and analysis.

To mitigate these limitations, the study ensured anonymity and confidentiality of respondents to encourage honest responses, used multiple data sources to enhance reliability, and adopted a mixed-method approach to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Ethical Consideration

This study adhered strictly to ethical standards required in social science research, particularly in studies involving human participants and sensitive topics such as violent extremism. Firstly, informed consent was obtained from all respondents before participation. Participants were adequately informed about the purpose of the study, the nature of their involvement, and their right to withdraw at any stage without any consequences.

Secondly, the principle of confidentiality and anonymity was strictly maintained. Respondents' identities were not disclosed, and all information provided was treated with utmost confidentiality. Codes and pseudonyms were used instead of real names to protect participants, especially security personnel and community members who might be vulnerable due to the sensitive nature of the study.

Thirdly, the study ensured voluntary participation, meaning that no respondent was coerced or forced to participate. Participants were given the freedom to choose whether or not to respond to specific questions, particularly those they considered sensitive.

Additionally, the study upheld data protection and security by ensuring that all collected data were securely stored and used strictly for academic purposes. Access to the data was limited to the researcher and authorized personnel only. Electronic data were password-protected, while hard copies were securely kept.

The study also observed the principle of non-maleficence, ensuring that no harm—physical, psychological, or social—came to the participants as a result of their involvement. Questions were carefully structured to avoid causing distress or discomfort.

Furthermore, objectivity and honesty were maintained throughout the research process. Data were analyzed and reported accurately without fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation. Proper acknowledgment of all sources was ensured to avoid plagiarism.

Lastly, necessary institutional approval was obtained from relevant authorities and academic supervisors before conducting the research. This ensured that the study complied with ethical guidelines and standards required for academic research.

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