

Development and Validation of Indigenous Violent Extremism Beliefs Scale (VEBS)

Feriha N. Peracha¹, Asma Ayub², Raafia Raees Khan³, Zaeema Farooq⁴ and Andleeb Zahra⁵

Abstract

The validation and implications of an indigenously developed Violent Extremism Beliefs Scale (VEBS) is presented. The aim of this study was to develop a tool which can assess violent extremist beliefs. The item pool was generated from case studies of violent extremist offenders who have undergone successful Deradicalization and rehabilitation as well as violent extremist offenders still undergoing this (Deradicalization and rehabilitation) process, interviews of psychologists and social workers working with the identified groups, previous literature, books and cases studies of individuals involved in militancy in Swat region of KPK (Pakistan). The population selected for the validation of scale consisted of inductees a) who were present at deradicalization centers (specifically Sabaoon) and those who were re-integrated from the center. 31 items scale was administered to the selected population. Exploratory factor analysis revealed a four factors structure for the scale, that is, i) religious violence and extremism, ii) extent of positive thinking, iii) power politics, iv) risk taking and impulsivity. Present scale has significant importance for Pakistan, and globally. Violent Extremism Beliefs Scale (VEBS) can serve as assessment tool in the regions where terrorism and extremism are devastating issues and vulnerable which demand PVE efforts therefore screening could identify the level of vulnerability and also serve to highlight the facets of intervention for correctional services.

Keywords: Violent Extremism Beliefs Scale (VEBS), terrorism, extremism, politics, de-radicalization, reintegration.

1. Introduction

Globally there are significant threats from extremist groups resorting to violent means to advance their agenda—be it ideological, religious or political. These waves of violence, terrorism and militancy have resulted in large-scale mobilization of resources for inter and intra-state wars that have left hundreds of thousands dead across the world, and millions more wounded and traumatized-psychologically. According to Daily Mail 32,658 people killed by terrorists around the world in 2014 only (Daily Mail, 2015⁶).

Preventing and combating violent extremism demands an understanding of what drives an individual to resort to it, taking into consideration that not all people experiencing the same external circumstances, are driven to resort to violence, not even people growing up in the same household. In order to prevent Violent Extremism (PVE) it is extremely important to identify factors which motivate a person toward extremism. A prerequisite to this is to define violent extremism.

¹ferihaperacha@gmail.com, SWAaT (Social Welfare, Academics & Training) Pakistan.

²asmaayub01@gmail.com, SWAaT (Social Welfare, Academics & Training) Pakistan.

³raafia.raees@gmail.com, SWAaT (Social Welfare, Academics & Training) Pakistan.

⁴ZaeemaFarooq (Research consultant), SWAaT (Social Welfare, Academics & Training) Pakistan.

⁵andleeb.zahra15@gmail.com, SWAaT (Social Welfare, Academics & Training) Pakistan.

⁶Chorley, M. (2015). Revealed: Number of people killed by terrorists worldwide soars by 80% in just a year. Daily Mail online. Retrieved from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3322308/Number-people-killed-terrorists-worldwide-soars-80-just-year.html>

While a precise definition has eluded many experts, research and evidence from around the world, as well as experiential observations on the nature of violent extremism has contributed to the development of the current definition by USAID, which is accepted, i.e. "Violent extremism refers to advocating, engaging, preparing or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic, political and religious objectives that are rigid, uncompromising and intolerant." (Hassan, 2010⁷).

The belief system of an individual is extremely important in this regard. Belief is the initial step before a person commits any action. Therefore preventing a mind from becoming violently extremist (PVE), it is imperative to start with an understanding belief system of that individual's mind. The vast majority of the literature has focused on the causes of radicalization – including psychological factors^{8,9}, economic marginalization^{10,11}, political marginalization¹², and process-oriented factors like religiosity¹³. Therefore, these factors were key in developing a scale which would cover all the aspects that collectively could be used in CVE programs, such a scale should serve as a prerequisite prior to inducting an individual into derad programs as it would enhance the intervention that would be required to deradicalize and rehabilitate the vulnerable individual.

Religious and political motives are extremely important with reference to a person joining a violent extremist group. Literature also supports the importance of these factors. Social Movement Theory explains why people are politically active, either individually or collectively. It contains different schools of thought or perspectives on this issue^{14, 15, 16}. The four most prominent perspectives relevant to mention include a) Framing Theory, b) Collective Identity Approach, c) Political Opportunity Structure, and d) Resource Mobilization Theory. According to Framing Theory, individuals interpret situations according to a certain reference framework, the frame, influencing their consequential behavior¹⁷. Collective Identity Approach assumes the more an individual feels the need to belong to a group, the higher the chances that that individual participates in politics on behalf of the group¹⁸. Political Opportunity Structure states "exogenous factors enhance or inhibit prospects for mobilization"¹⁹.

Finally, Resource Mobilization Theory focuses on societal support and assets within society that need to be mobilized²⁰. Research conducted by Botha²¹ indicates that majority of Al-Shabaab respondents in Kenya referred to religion, 6% combined religion with economic reasons, while a further 4% referred to economic reasons. In contrast, members of another active group Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) respondents gave a very different picture: purely ethnic reasons were the most prevailing (25%); political reasons (21%); followed by combinations of

⁷Hassan, M. (2010). Development Advocate Pakistan. United Nations Development Programme Pakistan.

⁸Silke, A. (2005) 'Fire of Iolous: The Role of State Countermeasures in Causing Terrorism and What Needs to be Done', *The Root Causes of Terrorism*, T. Bjørgo. London: Routledge.

⁹Horgan, J. (2005). *The Psychology of Terrorism*. New York: Routledge

¹⁰Bakker, E. (2006) *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe, their Characteristics and the Circumstances in which they Joined the Jihad: An Exploratory Study*. The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations.

¹¹Krueger, A. B., & Malečková, J. (2003). Education, poverty and terrorism: Is there a causal connection? *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 17(4), 119-144.

¹²Sharma, K. (2016). Factors Facilitating Radicalization in Kenya and Somalia. Expanding researches on counter violent extremism. Hedayah and Edith Cowan University.

¹³Ansari, H., Cinnirella, M., Rogers, M. B., Loewenthal, K. M., and Lewis, C. A. (2006). Perceptions of martyrdom and terrorism amongst British Muslims. In M. B. Rogers, C. A. Lewis, K. M. Loewenthal, M. Cinnirella, R. Amlöt and H. Ansari (Eds.), *Proceedings of the British Psychological Society Seminar Series Aspects of Terrorism and Martyrdom*. eCOMMUNITY: International Journal of Mental Health & Addiction.

¹⁴Buechler, S.M. (1995). New Social Movement Theories. *The Sociology Quarterly*, 36 (3), 441-464.

¹⁵Jasper, J.M. (2010) Social Movement Theory Today: Toward a Theory of Action? *Sociology Compass*, 4 (11), 965-976.

¹⁶Morris, A.D., & McClurg-Mueller, C. (Eds). (1992). *Frontiers in social movement theory*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

¹⁷Benford, R.D. & Snow, D.A. (2000). Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26, 611-639.

¹⁸Klandermans, B. (2002). How group identification helps to overcome the dilemma of collective action. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 45 (5), 887-900.

¹⁹Meyer D.S. & Minkoff, D.C. (2004). Conceptualizing political opportunity. *Social Forces*, 82 (4), 1457-1492.

²⁰McCarthy, J.D. & Zald, M.N. (1977). Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 82 (6), 1212-1241.

²¹Botha, A. (2016). Factors Facilitating Radicalization in Kenya and Somalia. Expanding researches on counter violent extremism. Hedayah and Edith Cowan University.

ethnic and economic (14%), religion and economic reasons (14%); and ethnic and political (2%). A further 12% of MRC respondents (in contrast to 4% among al-Shabaab respondents) referred to economic reasons.

Other than the political motives, impulsivity of a young teenager also plays a vital role. The overwhelming majority of people who become radicalized to violence are young and male, generally aged between mid-teens and mid-20s^{22, 23}. Findings in various researches suggest that higher levels of impulsivity, confidence, risk-taking and status needs play a partial role in the attraction that violent extremism holds for. In addition, holding more positive attitudes toward vengeance and a greater likelihood to exhibit and approve of vengeful behavior may also be important²⁴.

A key consideration for individuals who design CVE programs is the extent to which a specific emphasis should be placed on individuals identified as "at-risk" of being attracted to violence, as opposed to the broader community. In many or most cases the actual perpetrators of violence are far less numerous than their supporters. For instance, those sympathetic to suicide or martyrdom attacks in the Palestinian Territories have often far outnumbered those involved in delivering such violence²⁵. This shows need of an assessment measure which can correctly identify individuals "at risk" It is difficult to determine the parameters of an individual being a violent extremist offender but the above stated factors hold significance in this regard. Previous literature on terrorism was considered the base and rationale of the development of the current assessment scale.

The purpose of the present research was to develop indigenous tool to measure violent extremist beliefs. This work was built upon preliminary field experience by the researchers and as a reliable aiding tool for SWAaT for Pakistan (SWAaT) to assess inclination of the inducted population in the Deradicalization centers towards violent extremism. In the modern era the focus is now being shifted from Countering violent extremism (CVE) to preventing violent extremism (PVE). Therefore this scale can be very helpful screening individuals with violent extremist beliefs in future PVE programs

2. Method

All the standardized procedures of scale development were followed during the scale development.

2.1 Procedure of scale development

2.1.1 Construct Identification

The process of construct identification consisted of three dimensions i.e. i) interviews from professionals who have worked with identified group, ii) existing literature and iii) case studies of identified group which are or have been part of the De radicalization project supervised by SWAaT for Pakistan.

2.1.2 Interviews from the professional

6 professional (3 males and 3 females) who were either clinical psychologists or social workers) working with the identified group for at least 5 years were selected for the interviews. An interview guide was prepared to conduct interviews from these professionals. The questions were related to the reasons of extremism, the qualities which terrorists possess, political, religious and economical motives related to terrorism. The interview guide was built upon previous literature and field experiences of psychologists/ social workers working with violent extremist individuals in the de-radicalized centers.

²²Bakker, E. (2006) *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe, their Characteristics and the Circumstances in which they Joined the Jihad: An Exploratory Study*. The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations.

²³Wadgy, L. (2007) 'The Psychology of Extremism and Terrorism: A Middle-Eastern Perspective', *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 12 (2), pp.141–155.

²⁴Silke, A. (2008) 'Holy Warriors: Exploring the Psychological Processes of Jihadi\ Radicalization', *European Journal of Criminology* 5(1), pp.99-123.

²⁵Gunning, J. (2007). *Hamas in Politics: Democracy, Religion, Violence*. London: Hurst Publishers Ltd.

The interview guide contained following questions

1. What is extremism in your opinion?
2. What are the qualities of extremist?
3. In your opinion, what is the difference between an extremist terrorist and common criminal/ordinary criminal
4. What are the reasons which contribute for a person's inclination towards extremism.
5. What are the familial reasons, if any
6. How can education impact an individual
7. How the surrounding environment impacts the individual
8. What could be the motives behind extremism
9. What are the political motives behind extremism
10. What are the religious motives behind extremism
11. What other motives are possible (from your experience) that could contribute towards extremism
12. What is the impact of extremism on a community
13. What is the impact of extremism on people's everyday life

2.1.3 Item Generation from Previous Literature

Four books were taken as a sample to generate maximum possible items. The books were Political Extremism and Rationality²⁶, Religious Extremism²⁷, The Psychology of Counter-Terrorism²⁸ and The Psychology of Terrorism²⁹.

2.1.4 Item generation from case studies

The case studies of reintegrated individuals were also consulted to extract the information and to validate the data gathered from first two steps. The case studies include their initial reasons for joining militancy, their actual experiences and beliefs. These beliefs and narratives were used to create the item pool.

2.2 Item writing

Items were written in a scale format, for the initial item pool. Rating scale was 5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neutral, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree. Originally generated 36 items (of first and second list) that sampled the domain of the construct were pooled together. This pool of items was presented to 7 judges (2 lecturers of psychology, 3 clinical psychologists, and 2 professor of psychology) for structure of statements, clarity of language and face validity of item statements. On the basis of consensus, 31 items were finally selected (recommended by at least 75% of judges). The criterion for selection was (a) fidelity to the construct; (b) clarity; (c) redundancy; and (d) comprehensibility.

2.3 Item tryout

For the purpose of item try out a sample of (N=161) individuals with age range (16-24 years) were selected. The sample consisted of inductees those who are living in de-rad centers and re-integrated individuals those who are reintegrated (completed the process of de-rad centers). The final scale of 31 items was administered to an independent sample of 166 male adolescents and adults of identified group who show their willingness to participate in the study. All the items were read out orally by the concerned social worker/psychologist and ratings were given by the participants verbally. They were asked to rate the statement for which they feel that it is more appropriate for them. The responses were kept confidential, anonymity of respondents was solicited and they were ensured that this assessment would in no way affect their process of de-radicalization in the authorized centers following this procedure.

²⁶Breton, A. (2002). *Political extremism and rationality*. New York: Cambridge university press.

²⁷James, O. (2006). *Religious extremism*. UK: Evans brothers limited

²⁸Silke, A. (2011). *The psychology of counter-terrorism*. New York: Routledge.

²⁹Horgan, J. (2005) 'The Social and Psychological Characteristics of Terrorism and Terrorists', *Root Causes of Terrorism: Myths, Reality and Ways Forward*, T. New York: Routledge.

3. Results

3.1 Factor Loadings of the items selected for Violent Extremism Beliefs Scale obtained from Principal Component Factor Analysis

Table 1 Factor Loadings of the items selected for Violent Extremism Beliefs Scale obtained from Principal Component Factor Analysis (N=161)

Serial no.	Item Verbatim	Loading		Eigen-value	% of variance	Total variance	% of
	Religious power violence and extremism			4.05	13.07	13.07	.76
1	Use of force on people to make them understand your point of view	43	37				
2	It is fair if friend or acquaintanc0000e uses violence on others in the name of religion	37	20				
3	It is right to take up arms to achieve one's goals	44	11				
4	Its right to have control on the lives of others	60	33				
5	One should go to any extent to convert other people to their faith	64	09				
6	Unfair treatment from people of the country	32	13				
7	Nothing wrong in going to any extent to acquire power	57	39				
8	Doing war if one is against the beliefs of other county	55	17				
9	Its worrisome if someone is against one's religious beliefs	40	13				
10	Spending time in praying rather than taking care of the rights of others	54	05				
11	Madarasa's are better as compared to public schools	50	20				
12	Only life after death is important	46	33				
13	Everything that religious scholars say should be compulsory to follow	58	16				
	Extent of positive thinking			2.89	9.31	22.38	.63
14	Not all the banned organizations force children to join them	35	39				
15	Not considering oneself answerable for any of the actions committed	54	15				
16	Treating people belonging to every religion fairly	52	33				
17	Treating people equally will reduce problems	70	04				
18	Imposing ban on the use of illegal weapons	54	26				
19	People of every religion should be allowed to practice their faith in Pakistan	75	24				
20	It's important to authenticate verses of Quran before spreading them	54	36				
	Power politics			2.08	6.69	5.96	.38
21	It is necessary to use force to change the system of governance in this country	72	12				
22	If the government goes against our beliefs than we should take steps to the extreme to change the system	45	40				
23	Going against the system of governance	57	34				
24	It's not important to understand every verse of Quran in the context of its respective Ayyat	38	46				
25	Only people of one's own sect follow religion correctly	55	.30				
	Risk taking and impulsive behavior			1.85	5.96	35.03	.48
26	Inducing fear in someone is thrilling	66	14				
27	The use of weapons gives a sense of power	45	32				
28	Thinking that never done anything wrong in life	.50	04				
29	Dangerous activities induce thrill	73	08				
30	It's better to forgive than to take revenge	.31	35				

Note: Factor Loadings $\geq .30$

Exploratory factor analysis technique with varimax rotation was used to extract factors and total 31 items were categorized into four categories. The criteria selected to retain items in a factor was factor loading of .30 and above³⁰ to get clear picture of the scale. Only one item was excluded on the basis of factor loading. Factor 1 religious power violence and extremism included 13 items related to religious power, religious violence and religious extremism. Factor 2, extent of positive thinking had seven items and they were related to the extent of positive/moderate thinking one can possess. Factor 3, power politics had 5 items and they were related to attainment of power through politics. Finally, factor 4 was labeled as risk taking and impulsive behavior. This factor had four items based on compulsivity and risk taking tendencies of an individual.

3.2 Descriptive Statistics of Violent Extremism Beliefs Scale (VEBS)

Table 2 Descriptive of Violent Extremism Beliefs Scale (VEBS) (N=161)

Scales	k	M(SD)	Scoring range	Mini-max scores	Cut off	α
Violent Extremism Beliefs Scale	30	57.00(11.48)	30-150	38-98	56	.68
Religious power violence and extremism	13	23.43(8.29)	13-65	13-57	21	.76
Extent of positive thinking	7	11.39 (4.35)	7-35	7-31	10	.63
Power politics	5	12.33(3.54)	5-25	5-25	12	.38
Risk taking and impulsive behavior	5	9.85(3.35)	5-25	5-21	9	.48

The table above shows descriptive statistics of violent extremism scale. Mean, median, scoring ranges are given above. The scale overall shows moderate reliability considering the construct was administered on inductees and reintegrated population which is not a very large population available. All the subscales also showed satisfactory to average reliability.

Table 3 Inter-correlation Matrix of Violent Extremism Beliefs Scale (VEBS) (N=161)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Violent Extremism Beliefs Scale	-	.83**	.41**	.43**	.36**
Religious power violence and extremism	-	-	.06	.27**	.06
Extent of positive thinking	-	-	-	-.14	.11
Power politics	-	-	-	-	-.05
Risk taking and impulsive behavior	-	-	-	-	-

**p<.001

The table above showed inter-correlation among violent extremism beliefs and its subscales. The total violent extremism beliefs had significant positive relationship with all its subscales. High score on subscales like religious power violence and extremism, power politics, risk taking and impulsive behavior was leading to high level of violent extremism beliefs. Similarly low extent of positive thinking was also leading to high level of violent extremism beliefs. The first subscale, religious power violence and extremism, had significant positive relationship with power politics and insignificant positive relationship with extent of positive thinking and risk taking and impulsive behavior. However, the first subscale religious power violence and extremism had insignificant positive relationship with extent of positive thinking.

The second subscale extent of positive thinking had insignificant positive relationship with risk taking and impulsive behavior. Low level of positive thinking was increasing risk taking and impulsive behavior. Extent of positive thinking had insignificant negative relationship with power politics. Low level of positive thinking was insignificantly leading towards low inclination towards power politics. Finally, power politics had insignificant negative relationship with risk taking and impulsive behavior. High inclination in power politics was leading towards low level of risk taking behavior and impulsive thinking. It can be concluded that inter-correlations represent the significant picture of the construct.

³⁰Pallant, J. (2001). SURVIVAL MANUAL: A step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS. 4th edition. Australia: Allen & Unwin

4. Discussion

The scale was developed by research department of SWAaT (Social Welfare, Academics & Training). SWAaT, a Non-Profit Organization, works primarily towards Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) through deradicalization and rehabilitation of individuals involved in violent extremist activities and groups. Sabaoon (Malakand), Quetta (Balochistan) and Bara (KPK) are the center of deradicalization in Pakistan. After the process of deradicalization those reintegrated (from these centers) are monitored through the "Monitoring Cell", also supported by SWAaT. As the organization has direct access and has worked with the violent extremist individuals, this scale is a valid and reliable measure of violent extremism as it was constructed from the concerned population. The reliability index (.68) was also in the satisfactory range. Since this scale has been constructed upon a unique construct and validated upon a challenging yet smaller population reliability index of .68 can be considered satisfactory. Values above .7 are considered acceptable; however, values above .8 are preferable. While different levels of reliability are required, depending on the nature and purpose of the scale, Nunnally³¹ recommends a minimum level of 0.7. Cronbach alpha values are dependent on the number of items in the scale. Ideally, the Cronbach alpha coefficient of a scale should be near or above 0.7³². However, considering the nature of the construct, acceptable reliability for the measure holds significance. All the subscales also showed average to satisfactory range of Cronbach alpha, considering the number of items in three subscales was less than 10. Exploratory Factor Analyses (EFA) yields a 4 factor structure for the scale i.e. i) religious power violence and extremism, ii) extent of positive thinking, iii) power politics, iv) risk taking and impulsive behavior. The factor solution was reflecting the theoretical and practical backgrounds assumed for the scale development.

The first factor of the scale was religious power, violence and extremism. The eigenvalue of factor 1 was 4.05 which accounted for 13.07 % of variance. It included 13 items. The items were related to using religion as an excuse for violent extremism like being violent on others in the name of religion, thinking it right to go to any extent to convert others to their faith and believing it worrisome if anyone is against one's religious beliefs. The items related to violent extremism beliefs were "thinking it justified to take control of the lives of other" and "using force to make others understand your view point". Exercising violence in the name of religion has been reported extensively. Al Qaeda, Boko Haram, Tehreek-e-Taliban, ISIS and many other smaller and larger terrorist groups commit violent activities in the name of religion. According to the report of the Guardian³³ 18,000 deaths were reported in 2013 and that was raised from previous year by 60% and majority of these killings were done by four terrorist groups: Islamic State (Isis) in Iraq and Syria, Boko Haram in Nigeria, the Taliban in Afghanistan and al-Qaida. This subscale of VEBS is very pertinent and statements reflect an extremist mind that is ready to spread violence by making religion a justification. The items are worded very carefully and neutrally, in order to facilitate the identification of an extremist mind belonging to any religion. With reference to the findings obtained from al-Shabaab militants it was found that they religiously believed in terms of "us vs them". That is, they referred to members of the organization (68%) and Muslims (32%) as "us". When asked to identify "them," al-Shabaab respondents referred to other religions (67%) and government (30%)³⁴. These findings clearly support the fact that religious violent extremism is crucial factor that needs to be assessed. Hence the first factor of the scale is extremely important and relevant in this regard.

The second factor extracted from factor analyses was positive thinking. The eigenvalue of factor 2 was 2.89 which accounted for 9.31 % of variance whereas the cumulative percentage of the variance was 22.38%. The factor had 7 items. The items were related to treating people belonging to different religions fairly and equally, imposing ban on illegal weapons and understanding the message of Holy book or Scripture in true sense before spreading it. The violent extremists tend to have low level of balanced and positive thinking. This was reflected in the results of the study as well. Previous researches showed that violent extremist tend to have lower level of positive thinking.

³¹Nunnally, J.O. (1978). *Psychometric theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

³²DeVellis, R.F. (2003). *Scale development: Theory and applications* (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

³³Arnett, G. (2014). Religious extremism main cause of terrorism, according to report. The Guardian, 18th November 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2014/nov/18/religious-extremism-main-cause-of-terrorism-according-to-report>

³⁴Botha, A. (2016). Factors Facilitating Radicalization in Kenya and Somalia. Expanding researches on counter violent extremism. Hedayah and Edith Cowan University.

Bartlett, Birdwell, and King³⁵ in their research on radicalization identified five elements which provide the appeal in the journey to violent radicalization. Lack of balanced think and lack of religious knowledge were identified as important factors.

The third factor was named **aspower politics**. The eigenvalue of factor 3 was 2.06 which accounted for 6.69 % of variance whereas the cumulative percentage of the variance was 29.07%. The factor had 5 items and the items were related to using force to change the system of governance in the country. Moreover, believing that it is necessary to do war against the government if they are against their religious beliefs was also asses in this scale. It's not always religion which motivates a person to commit violent extremism. Political motives are very important in this regard and this subscale measures a very vital domain of violent extremism. The importance and relevant of this subscale can be emphasized with the findings obtained from FTF groups in Tunisia. They found some empirical support to socioeconomic explanations of radicalization. According to the fact-finding missions conducted in SidiHassine and DouarHisher³⁶, FTF are largely the product of widespread socioeconomic insecurities³⁷. They are usually very dissatisfied with the status quo and have come to believe in the need to use violence because they see no other way for change. Foster's study showed that they draw on "a reservoir of misery, hurt, helplessness, and rage from which the foot soldiers of terrorism can be recruited"³⁸. Majority of the Syrian Krudish militants were also politically motivated. They joined extremist groups because of their and their family's political motives³⁹.

The fourth and last factor of the scale that was significant was risk taking and impulsive behavior. The eigenvalue of factor 4 was 1.85 which accounted for 5.96 % of variance whereas the cumulative percentage of the variance was 35.03%. The factor had 5 items. This factor was extremely important as majority of the individuals in de-rad center Sabaoon were younger and they exhibited impulsivity and thrilling in violent activities during their involvement with militants. The items of this factor were related to thinking that use of weapons gives a sense of power, feeling that dangerous activities are thrilling inducing fear in someone is very thrilling. Age is a very important factor. Al-Shabaab in Kenya and Somalia, specifically targeted the youth and young adults between the ages 15 to 25. Being naturally impatient, their frustration can easily lead to action. Young people are not only more susceptible to indoctrination; they are also more inclined to get physically involved. Young people also see the immediate, believing that they can change the world around them⁴⁰. The reintegrated individuals in de-radicalization center Sabaoon also revealed that majority (80%) respondents' age was between 15-17 years and 13% respondents belonged to the age group of 12-14 years. and only 7% respondents' age was between 18-19 years.

The link between impulsivity/ risk taking behavior and violent activities has been very evident these days. Impulsivity of a young teenager also plays a vital role. The overwhelming majority of people who become radicalized to violence are young and male, generally aged between mid-teens and mid-20s^{41,42}. Thus, this scale will cover a very particular and crucial domain of impulsivity and risk taking behavior when it comes to violent extremism. Descriptive statistics and cut off scores were also established. The scale has internal consistency and measures a wide domain. The mean score of total VEBS was 57 (SD= 11.48) and cut off score was 56. Similarly all the subscales also had their respective cut off scores. Correlations were also established which again indicated the internal consistency of this scale.

³⁵Bartlett, J., Birdwell, J. and King, M. (2010). The edge of violence. Demos

³⁶Salem, J. H. (2014). *Salafism Jihadism in Tunisia: current state and prospects: an Ethnographic Case Study*. Tunisian Institute of Strategic Studies.

³⁷Fatnassi, M. (2014). *Salafism Jihadism in Tunisia: current state and prospects: A field study of the phenomenon of Salafism in a popular neighborhood*. Tunisian Institute of Strategic Studies.

³⁸Forest, J. J. (2012). *Confronting the terrorism of Boko Haram in Nigeria* (pp. 29–31, 35). DTIC Document. Udi.

³⁹Berge, W. V. (2016). The Cleavage in Syrian Kurdish Politics: Equality vs. non-Violence. Expanding researches on counter violent extremism. Hedayah and Edith Cowan University.

⁴⁰Botha, A. (2016). Factors Facilitating Radicalization in Kenya and Somalia. Expanding researches on counter violent extremism. Hedayah and Edith Cowan University.

⁴¹Bakker, E. (2006) *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe, their Characteristics and the Circumstances in which they Joined the Jihad: An Exploratory Study*. The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations.

⁴²Wadgy, L. (2007) 'The Psychology of Extremism and Terrorism: A Middle-Eastern Perspective', *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 12 (2), pp.141–155.

5. Conclusion

Pakistan is a country most affected by terrorism. This country has witnessed thousands of casualties as result of suicide bombing. An operation has been going on in the Northern part of the country against violent extremists since the early 2000's. The country is facing many challenges and one of them is to cope with violent extremism. The development of an Indigenous Violent extremist Beliefs Scale (VEBS) was immensely important in this context. The present scale was conceptualized upon previous literature and the themes extracted from interviews of the individuals working with the concerned vulnerable population.

VEBS is a comprehensive scale to measure violent extremism. The factors obtained from VEBS are comprehensive and their applicability has been supported by the previous literature. VEBS revealed satisfactory psychometric properties as well. The subscales also showed significant correlations between one domain and the other. The scale has ability to assess the violent extremist beliefs and may be conducive in differentiating between the populations who are at risk and who are not.

5.1 Implications

The scale is very first indigenous measure of violent extremist beliefs and it has so many implications for the society dealing with violent extremism. The scale can be used as screening measure in order to prevent violent extremism (PVE). This scale can be administered on different areas of the country in order to screen and monitor violent extremist individuals.

References

- Ansari, H., Cinnirella, M., Rogers, M. B., Loewenthal, K. M., and Lewis, C. A. (2006). Perceptions of martyrdom and terrorism amongst British Muslims. In M. B. Rogers, C. A. Lewis, K. M. Loewenthal, M. Cinnirella, R. Amlôt and H. Ansari (Eds.), *Proceedings of the British Psychological Society Seminar Series Aspects of Terrorism and Martyrdom*. eCOMMUNITY: International Journal of Mental Health & Addiction.
- Arnett, G. (2014). Religious extremism main cause of terrorism, according to report. *The Guardian*, 18th November 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2014/nov/18/religious-extremism-main-cause-of-terrorism-according-to-report>
- Bakker, E. (2006) *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe, their Characteristics and the Circumstances in which they Joined the Jihad: An Exploratory Study*. The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations.
- Bartlett, J., Birdwell, J. and King, M. (2010). *The edge of violence*. Demos
- Benford, R.D. & Snow, D.A. (2000). Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26, 611-639.
- Berge, W. V. (2016). *The Cleavage in Syrian Kurdish Politics: Equality vs. non-Violence*. Expanding researches on counter violent extremism. Hedayah and Edith Cowan University.
- Botha, A. (2014). *Radicalisation to Commit Terrorism from a Political Socialisation Perspective in Kenya and Uganda*. University of the Free State.
- Botha, A. (2016). *Factors Facilitating Radicalization in Kenya and Somalia*. Expanding researches on counter violent extremism. Hedayah and Edith Cowan University.
- Breton, A. (2002). *Political extremism and rationality*. New York: Cambridge university press.
- Buechler, S.M. (1995). New Social Movement Theories. *The Sociology Quarterly*, 36 (3), 441-464.
- Chorley, M. (2015). *Revealed: Number of people killed by terrorists worldwide soars by 80% in just a year*. Daily Mail online. Retrieved from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3322308/Number-people-killed-terrorists-worldwide-soars-80-just-year.html>
- DeVellis, R.F. (2003). *Scale development: Theory and applications* (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Fatnassi, M. (2014). *Salafism Jihadism in Tunisia: current state and prospects: A field study of the phenomenon of Salafism in a popular neighborhood*. Tunisian Institute of Strategic Studies.
- Forest, J. J. (2012). *Confronting the terrorism of Boko Haram in Nigeria* (pp. 29–31, 35). DTIC Document. Udies.
- Gunning, J. (2007). *Hamas in Politics: Democracy, Religion, Violence*. London: Hurst Publishers Ltd.
- Hassan, M. (2010). *Development Advocate Pakistan*. United Nations Development Programme Pakistan.

- Horgan, J. (2005) 'The Social and Psychological Characteristics of Terrorism and Terrorists', *Root Causes of Terrorism: Myths, Reality and Ways Forward*, T. New York: Routledge.
- Horgan, J. (2005). *The Psychology of Terrorism*. New York: Routledge
- James, O. (2006). *Religious extremism*. UK: Evans brothers limited
- Jasper, J.M. (2010) *Social Movement Theory Today: Toward a Theory of Action?* *Sociology Compass*, 4 (11), 965-976.
- Klandermans, B. (2002). How group identification helps to overcome the dilemma of collective action. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 45 (5), 887-900.
- Krueger, A. B., &Malečková, J. (2003). Education, poverty and terrorism: Is there a causal connection? *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 17(4), 119-144.
- Meyer D.S. &Minkoff, D.C. (2004). Conceptualizing political opportunity.*Social Forces*, 82 (4), 1457-1492.
- McCarthy, J.D. &Zald, M.N. (1977). Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 82 (6), 1212-1241.
- Morris, A.D., &McClurg-Mueller, C. (Eds).(1992). *Frontiers in social movement theory*.New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Nunnally, J.O. (1978). *Psychometric theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Salem, J. H. (2014). *SalafismJihadism in Tunisia: current state and prospects: an Ethnographic Case Study*. Tunisian Institute of Strategic Studies.
- Silke, A. (2008) 'Holy Warriors: Exploring the Psychological Processes of Jihadi\ Radicalization', *European Journal of Criminology* 5(1), pp.99-123.
- Silke, A. (2005) 'Fire of Iolous: The Role of State Countermeasures in Causing Terrorism and What Needs to be Done', *The Root Causes of Terrorism*, T. Bjørgo. London: Routledge.
- Silke, A. (2011). *The psychology of counter-terrorism*. New York: Routledge.
- Pallant, J. (2001).*Survival manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS*. 4th edition. Australia: Allen & Unwin
- Wadgy, L. (2007) 'The Psychology of Extremism and Terrorism: A Middle-Eastern Perspective', *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 12 (2), pp.141–155.