

The Behaviour Shields against Terrorism

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Abstract

Limited empirical research into terrorist offenders' rehabilitation invites researchers to conduct further researches in the area. Rehabilitating terrorist offenders is a challenging issue, particularly in determining if the offender is genuinely deradicalised, hence observing their verbal and non-verbal attitudes and actions can be an option, and if there is an adequate method in measuring behaviour changes. This study aims to systematically identify behaviour protections against terrorism for the purpose in the prevention of re-offending. Focus Group Discussion with Indonesian counterterrorism experts and professionals were conducted in data collection with qualitative method of analysis. The study shows there are eighteen protective behaviour indicators against terrorism when assessing offenders and their risks. The findings may assist practitioners in designing terrorism prevention and rehabilitation.

Keywords

terrorism; protections; shields; prevention; rehabilitation; parameters for prevention



I. Introduction

Limited empirical research into terrorism and its offenders' rehabilitation invites researchers to conduct further researches in the area (Abbas & Siddique, 2012; Borum, 2011; Tausch et al., 2009). The deficiency of empirical research on terrorism rehabilitation is related to suspicion and confidentiality (Bhui et al., 2012; Shepherd, 2007) and difficulties in approaching terrorists or accessing terrorist offenders' personal data/responses on rehabilitation (El-Said, 2015; Koehler, 2017a; Koehler, 2017b; Mastroe & Szmania, 2016; O'Duffy, 2008; Romaniuk, 2015; van der Heide & Schuurman, 2018; van Hemert et al., 2014; Williams & Kleinman, 2014). A study by Sukabdi (2018, 2021) identifies eighteen psychological risk factors that are clustered into one of three higher domains: Motivation, Ideology, and Capability. Six risk factors in Motivation are Economic, Justice, Situational, Social, Superiority, and Actualisation Motives. Six risk factors in Ideology are Values, Attitudes, Layers in Ideological Groups, Beliefs about Objectives, Militancy, and Understandings on Philosophy and Contexts. Six risk factors in Capability are Military, Intelligence, Information and Communication Technology, Social Domination, Mechanical and Electrical, and Language Skills.

In terms of rehabilitation of terrorist offenders, researches and theories have been dedicated to understand radicalization; nevertheless, empirical researches on outputs and process of rehabilitation still need further investigation (Borum, 2011; Bjorgo & Horgan, 2008; Horgan, 2009; Jacobson, 2010; Koehler, 2017b; Marsden, 2017; Porges, 2010). For example, the literature on radicalisation and deradicalisation provide limited explanation on how some important terms should be well-defined (Rabasa et al., 2010; Raets, 2017). Allen (2007, p. 4) defines the word 'radicalisation' as "the processes of adopting an extremist belief system, including the willingness to use, support, or facilitate violence, as a method to effect

societal change”; while ‘deradicalisation’ is “the process of abandoning an extremist worldview and concluding that it is not acceptable to use violence to effect social change. Islamist radicalisation is explained as a belief that to renovate an Islamic state Muslims must do jihad, which is armed fight against any enemies of Islam; this includes the heads of Muslim states who have changed God’s authority with theirs (Gerges, 2006; Rabasa et al., 2010).

In contrast, European efforts to prevent radicalisation seem to show more promise, but it is difficult to measure the success of these programs because their outcomes are not easily observed. For example, the Slotervaart Action Plan in Amsterdam have not developed measurable indicators to assess the success of the programs, thus it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to evaluate the effects of these programs. To conclude, there are reasons to be skeptical when reviewing the programs’ claims of effectiveness (Rabasa et al., 2010). Furthermore, using case studies to show the benefits or failings of these interventions is also problematic in that it is unclear whether these individuals are representative of the broader terrorist population or if their outcomes are common.

Reviewing literature on rehabilitation of terrorist offenders (through disengagement or deradicalisation) helps researchers in this study recognise the variety of goals of various programs to terrorist offenders. The review helps the thematic analysis in this study which is in defining behaviour protective factors mentioned by the counterterrorism practitioners involved in this study.

II. Research Methods

This study used a qualitative method due to the depth of information explored in the study. Researches on religious terrorism contain several issues, for instance, difficulties in engaging terrorists (O’Duffy, 2008), sensitivity (Bhui et al., 2012), and suspicion from both legal authorities and terrorist networks (Shepherd, 2007); thus, a qualitative design was more suitable in discussing protective behaviours against terrorism. The study will be outlined according to COREQ (Consolidated criteria for Reporting Qualitative research) checklists for qualitative study (Tong, Sainsbury, & Craig, 2007) which can be viewed in supplemental material. An ethics application in conducting this study was proposed to an ethical committee of a university. The board was provided with explanation about the study. The committee office approved the study on September 2015.

2.1 COREQ Domain 1: Research Team and Reflexivity

Personal characteristics. The author/researcher conducted a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with participants. When the study was performed, the author was a Ph.D. and obtained a practice license as forensic psychologist in Indonesia. She worked as a senior lecturer and a consultant for the National Anti-Terrorism Agency. The author had been working in Counterterrorism field since 2008 and representing Indonesia in global counterterrorism forums.

Relationship with participants. The relationship between the researcher and participants was established prior to this study on several occasions/events on counterterrorism. This may affect the participants’ responses/create bias. In this case, none of participants questioned or disproved the researcher’s model by Sukabdi (2018, 2021). Furthermore, participants might want to build a strong connection with the agency the researcher worked in, thus they might provide with normative answers. In terms of objectives of the researcher, the participants of this study knew about the researcher in person and her personal goals/motives for performing this study, which is by explanation about the study and inform consent form. The researcher

specified her assumptions and personal interests in this study that is to examine how Indonesians' mental immunity/vaccine against terrorism and religious violent extremism could be achieved.

2.2 COREQ Domain 2: Study Design

Theoretical framework. Stating to the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) Model by Andrews, Bonta and Hoge (1990) which emphasizes on Risk and Need of offenders for Responsivity to terrorism, this study applied a grounded theory on terrorism risk factors by Sukabdi (2018, 2021). As described earlier in the previous section, Sukabdi (2018, 2021) defined 18 psychological terrorism risk/need factors (Table 1 and Figure 1). These risk factors were used in determining protective behaviour indicators against terrorism.

Table 1. 18 Psychological Terrorism Risk and Need Factors in Indonesia

Risk and Need Factors	
1.	<i>Economic Motives</i> : motives of terrorism associated with economic and biological needs.
2.	<i>Justice Motives</i> : motives of terrorism associated with the need to search for fairness.
3.	<i>Situational Motives</i> : motives of terrorism associated with the need for safety and security.
4.	<i>Social Motives</i> : motives of terrorism associated with the needs for social support, sense of belonging, and social identity.
5.	<i>Power Motives</i> : motives of terrorism associated with a need for political power, including reaching a higher position in the hierarchy within a terrorist organization.
6.	<i>Actualization Motives</i> : motives of terrorism associated with the need to give impact to others.
7.	<i>Values (Doctrines)</i> : thoughts, concepts, dogmas, doctrines, and ideas which are favorable to violence and other destructive behaviors.
8.	<i>Violent Ideology-Driven Attitudes</i> : attitudes toward outside social group driven by thoughts, concepts, dogmas, doctrines and ideas which are favorable to violence and destructive behavior.
9.	<i>Beliefs about Objectives (Targets of Missions)</i> : goals, objectives, purposes and targets of life driven by thoughts, concepts, dogmas, doctrines and ideas which are favorable to violence and destructive behavior.
10.	<i>Layers in Ideological Groups</i> : roles, status, involvement, grades, layers, levels, positions, tasks, and ranks in ideological groups, driven by thoughts, concepts, dogmas, doctrines, and ideas which are favorable to violence and destructive behavior.
11.	<i>Terrorism Militancy</i> : presentations of a belief system which include loyalty, persistence, and commitment to a more dominant figure, or to a set of doctrines which are favorable to violence and destructive behaviors.
12.	<i>Understandings on Philosophy and Contexts</i> : presentations of a belief system which incorporates knowledge and understanding of religious teachings and philosophy and its implementation in many contexts.
13.	<i>Intelligence Skills</i> : skills to acquire, collect, manage, store, retrieve, combine, compare, distribute, build, and use information including complex data, to manage or conduct terrorism activity.
14.	<i>Language Skills</i> : skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing in multiple languages, used to manage or conduct terrorism activity.
15.	<i>ICT (Information and Communication Technology) Skills</i> : skills in using and creating Information and Communication Technology, such as computers, programs, cyberspace, Information Technology (IT) and Dark Web, used to manage or conduct terrorism activity.
16.	<i>Military Skills</i> : skills in physical fighting, battlefield, warfare, and conflicts, used to manage or conduct terrorism activity.
17.	<i>Social Domination Skills</i> : skills in influencing others, such as persuading, negotiating, recruiting, mobilizing, directing, manipulating, controlling, financing, and leading people, used to manage or conduct terrorism activity.

Risk and Need Factors	
18.	<i>Mechanical and Electrical (M and E) Skills</i> : skills in using and creating technical, mechanical and electrical device(s) for managing or conducting terrorism activity.

Source: Amelia (2020); Slamet (2019); Sukabdi (2018, 2021)

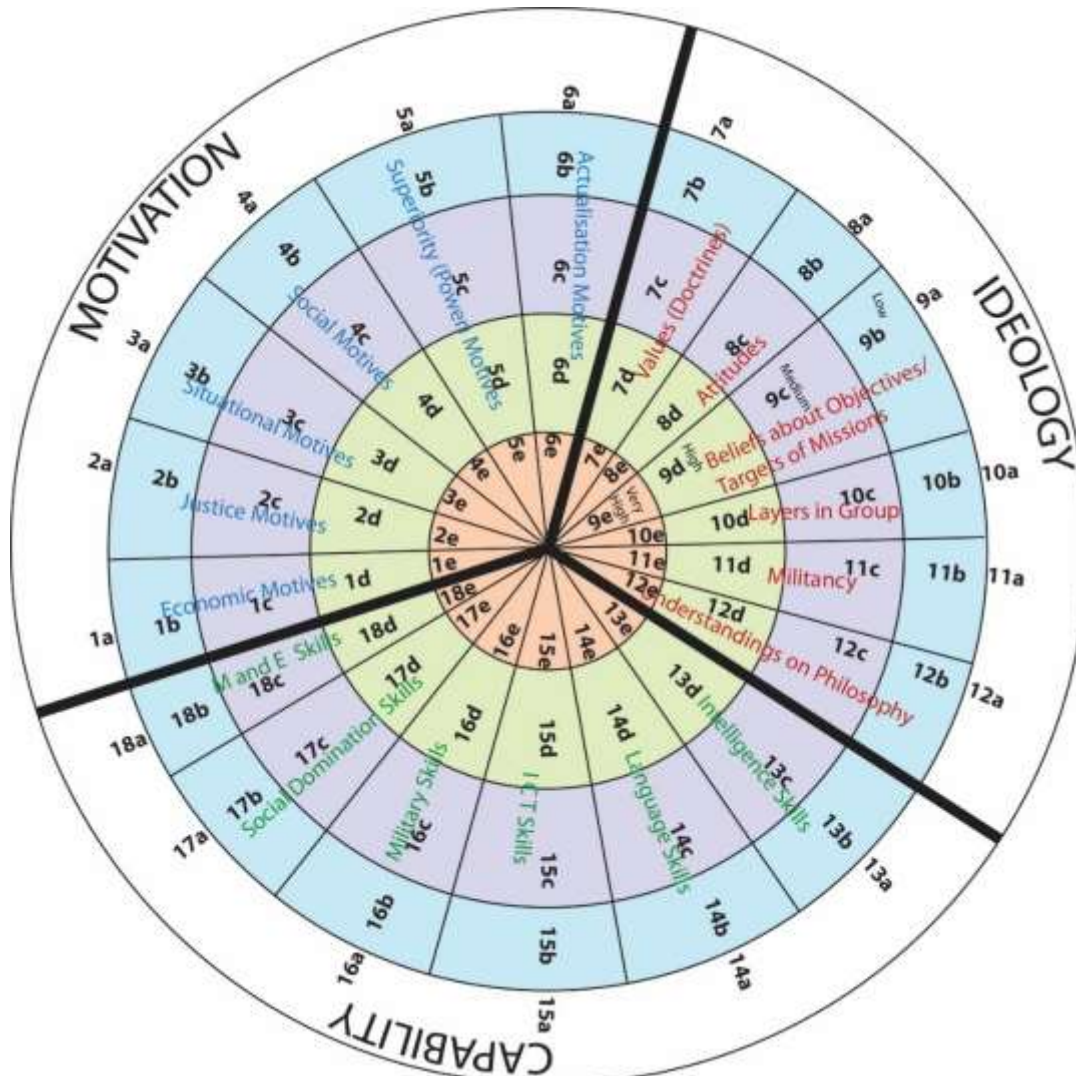


Figure 1. Terrorism Risk Factors

Source: Sukabdi (2020)

Participant selection. 34 of 40 counterterrorism practitioners and experts recommended by the National Anti-Terrorism Agency (BNPT) and the National Police were involved in this study. 6 of the 40 suggested candidates of participants could not participate due to personal reasons (e.g., retired, hospitalised, not sure about their competence to be involved in the study).

The 34 counterterrorism practitioners and experts in Indonesia (5 females, 29 males) as participants were between age of 30 to 70 (mean: 47). The names of participants were carefully selected based on recommendations (due to their nation-wide products such as research, analysis, day-to-day assessments of offenders inside prisons, and criminal investigations in the country) and official positions in counterterrorism. Participants' official positions are security analyst, risk mitigation analyst, leader of department/units, leader of investigations, military generals in charge of counterterrorism operations, terrorism

prosecutor, special task force leader, congressman in charge of counterterrorism, and prison cleric/chaplain. Their experiences in the field were up to 30 years.

III. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

The result of this study demonstrates targeted behaviour protections of terrorist offenders against future invitation to terrorism. In other words, the potential for the birth of terrorist acts that are identical to bombings, suicide bombings and criminal acts such as robbery is a necessity (Priadi, 2018). Terrorism being a reality everywhere in the world, focusing on a historical and sociological approach (Dione, 2018). Thus terrorism can be an ideology that likes intimidation such as acts of violence against innocent people in a country with certain motives (Munawir, S. 2020). The behaviour protections could be used as objectives/targeted behaviour in rating checklist during disengagement and deradicalisation programs to track the effectiveness of the programs, which is for the prevention of re-offending. These protections could be used as indicators in evaluating the success of rehabilitations programs.

The protective behaviour indicators against terrorism revealed in this study are as follows:

Behaviour protection I: Achieving *economic satisfaction*. This includes ability to provide self and family with sufficient economic resources and fulfil basic physiological needs. This can be indicated by consistent income and steady employment. The following quotes are participants' answers:

"A set of behaviour protections is a guarantee that a terrorist offender will not commit any terror actions anymore. It is a vaccine or immune system against terrorism. For example, the offenders who are rehabilitated usually show some changes in behaviour and attitude which avoid them from terrorism. They become self-reliant, capable in fulfilling their basic needs, having steady employment, pursuing decent career or education, showing no more criminal record, and so on". (Participant 5)

"Ambon terror actors became much more co-operative when we helped fulfil their basic needs. To them, their own welfare and their families became their most important agenda." (Participant 7)

Behaviour protection II: Following *ethics procedures*. This includes an offender's behaving ethically and complying with local wisdom, rules, and laws, when perceiving injustice. It is indicated by a willingness to report crime, sharing information, and following legal procedures in seeking justice.

"One of obvious indicators showing that an offender has changed or shown a continuous progress is he consistently helps officers when he heard about any information regarding terrorism attack in future. I mean, he does not hide the information about upcoming terrorism attack he knows. It is even better if he can help in uncovering terrorism network." (Participant 5)

"Anybody could see or perceive injustice, however what we do about it will define our mentality. The militants should report and follow procedures in this country if they perceive injustice... If they commit their own act of revenge by

not complying with regulation and legal procedures, it is very dangerous and may lead to reciprocal actions in future by their opponents or other believers.” (Participant 22)

Behaviour protection III: Performing beneficial *coping strategies*. This includes an offender’s constructive coping strategy to personal situational issues and indicated by positive and capable adjustment to stress, emotional stability, positive feelings towards life, optimism, enthusiasm to challenges, positive role(s) in community, self-control, constructive life-planning, and self-regulation.

“Terrorist offenders are often seen to come from either a troubled life, broken home, relationship issues with either parent or radical kinship. The key is if they could manage their personal issues in a constructive manner and become a positive habit. This positive habit can ‘lock’ the former offenders’ behaviour to always be positive and avoid them from terrorism invitation. Everybody has grievances, but we all need to perform positive coping-strategy. We need to have self-control and good stress-management to survive from negative or violent temptation.” (Participant 17)

“Self-regulation and positive feelings towards life can help the terrorist offender prevent him from committing negative behaviour when troubling situation comes.” (Participant 19)

Behaviour protection IV: Demonstrating *social invulnerability*. This is indicated by self-confidence, positive social identity, constructive social-networking, self-efficacy, self-independence, self-reliance, and healthy social relationships.

“There is social vulnerability in these young offenders which also includes feelings of isolation, aloneness and insecurity which is one of the factors for joining groups or movements that are bigger than themselves which in turn gives greater self-confidence and inner strength. Thus, rehabilitation programs should promote character strength, such as self-confidence, self-efficacy, self-independence, and self-reliance. The former young offenders who can achieve this would then have a social shield against terrorism.” (Participant 32)

“One protection against terrorism for youth or any terrorist offender is healthy social relationships. They are not supposed to be controlled by or bluntly obedient to other senior people.” (Participant 33)

Behaviour protection V: Presenting *constructive political motives*. This includes an offender’s socially positive expressions of power needs and indicated by positive social engagement, positive involvement in society, altruism, and participation in peace campaigns.

“Many terrorist offenders who have changed show positive expression of their power needs. The need is still there, of course, but there is a change of its expression. We all have a need of power that needs to be fulfilled to some extent. The positive expression of this need is such as altruism, doing peace campaign, and so on. It is always good to influence people to be positive.” (Participant 20)

Behaviour protection VI: Showing *prosocial behaviour*. This includes an offender's null contribution to terrorism and indicated by integrity, honesty, productivity, and accountability in various social environments.

"Basically, it seems that all they want to do is to have an impact on society, but sadly, in the wrong way, like 'bad self-actualisation'. Therefore, prevention and rehabilitation should address this need of actualisation. The outcomes of these programs should promote pro-social behaviour or giving zero impact on terrorism." (Participant 22)

Behaviour protection VII: Demonstrating *inclusiveness*. This includes an offender's compliance with principles, beliefs, or a set of beliefs which promote coexistence, tolerance, and peacefulness. It is indicated by consistent inclusiveness, acceptance of co-existence, and acceptance of dialogues (i.e., interfaith dialogues).

"The term 'radical' is to explain when a person chooses to take the more difficult route in religious practice rather than the easier one, adding unnecessary burdens and difficulties for him as well as others. Radicalism is also shown in exclusiveness and rejection to coexistence. On the contrary, the term 'non-radical' is when a person chooses inclusiveness and co-existence; he is willing to live side-by-side with other believers. Terrorist offenders who are deradicalised will accept interfaith dialogues." (Participant 16)

Behaviour protection VIII: Demonstrating positive attitudes towards previously perceived enemies. It includes an offender's showing consistent acceptance to previous perceived enemies such as the outgroups (e.g., other believers, outside members of their group/movement) which signifies respect towards social environment. It is indicated by a commitment in making positive changes, collaborating with those in outer circles, accepting favours, changing unfavourable attitudes, admitting mistakes, stating apology to the terrorism victims, and performing community services.

"The hardcore offenders enjoy imposing their beliefs onto others, very hostile towards the perceived enemies. The deradicalised offenders admitted mistakes, not aggressive, and stated their apologies to bombing victims even though they were too afraid to declare it in public." (Participant 31)

Behaviour protection IX: Setting clear and *constructive goals* of life. This includes an offender's having a definitive positive purpose of life and indicated by positive self-determination for achievements, constructive future plans and a focus on good quality of life, well-being, and family's welfare.

"When we asked some young offenders if they would like a scholarship to enroll at school and then offered work after their prison sentence, they all rejected it, and when asked why, they all cited, 'that they were just not interested.' These young people were so lost and disoriented that they were ready and willing to become suicide bombers just awaiting their instructions. After several programs of rehabilitation, they change and set up good objectives of life. Now they are focusing on education and better quality of life." (Participant 12)

Behaviour protection X: Opposing *against violent ideological groups*. This is indicated by expressions of opposition against them (i.e., in visions, missions, actions, objectives and goals).

“We need to show great respect to the offenders who openly denounce violent ideology and do some peace campaign in public. Their admitting mistakes in the past is always a creditable action. Therefore, placing them back into the same institution with other hardcore offenders is tantamount to abuse.”
(Participant 11)

Behaviour protection XI: Committing to *positive changes*. This includes an offender’s being a consistent recipient to positive changes. It is indicated by ongoing commitment to positive dialogues, communications, visits, shared events, community engagement, self-improvement programs, learning opportunities, and collaborations with outer circle (outgroups).

“Sadly, the general public is mistaken when they believe that terrorist offenders are obedient to God, they are only obedient to some leaders. One way to rehabilitate them is by introducing them ma’reefatullah or spirituality towards God. This will soften their heart and make them look for opportunities for self-improvement such as self-development trainings.” (Participant 19)

Behaviour protection XII: Supporting *universal wisdom*. This includes an offender’s accepting the divine universal wisdom of sacred-texts and religious teachings and understanding various contexts of religious practice. It is indicated by spiritual consciousness, peaceful religious practices, consistent openness to local wisdom, critical thinking on various meanings of religious concepts, acceptance to interfaith dialogues, and continuous learning of religious concepts and their implementation in different contexts.

“The terrorist offenders who were open to discussions about their beliefs and openly welcomed criticism, transformed rapidly and also became more pleasant people. [...] I think the key point to prevent them from terrorism is by improving their critical thinking. Avoid them from blunt obedience or taqlid.”
(Participant 10)

Behaviour protection XIII: Practicing *intelligence skills for positive outcomes*. This is indicated by an offender’s commitment to use intelligence skills for a positive impact.

“The terrorists who are experts in intelligence skills are those who can perform surveillance, coding and decoding, counter-surveillance; counter deradicalisation, counterintelligence, recruitment and spotting, analysis or forecasting, and micro expressions. We know how to counter all these from the ones who are already deradicalised.” (Participant 4)

Behaviour protection XIV: Practicing *language skills for positive outcomes*. This is indicated by an offender’s commitment to use language skills for positive impact.

“The high-risk offenders can use their fluency in Arabic to translate violent manuscripts into Indonesian for the Indonesian militants, producing propaganda. Whereas the rehabilitated ones are now working for us and teaching us Arabic.” (Participant 23)

Behaviour protection XV: Practicing *Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills for positive outcomes*. This is indicated by an offender's commitment to use ICT skills for a positive impact.

"We use the term ICT as it is even broader than Information Technology (IT). The highest risk terrorists having these skills are more than capable of carrying out cyber hacking and cyber-attacks. In contrast, the deradicalised ones are transferring their knowledge to us and help us protect from being hacked." (Participant 30)

Behaviour protection XVI: Practicing *military skills for positive outcomes*. This is indicated by an offender's commitment to use military skills for a positive impact.

"Terrorists learn their military skills in illegal military camps. The hardcore terrorists are proficient in using an array of weapons, setting up booby traps, battle planning, bomb designing, chemical, biological, radioactive, nuclear and explosive weapons (CBRNE), war strategy, tactics, guerrilla warfare and weapons technology, all learnt in tadrib and i'dad. The ones who are deradicalised use those skills for positive results such as teaching officers. Therefore, it is important to give them a chance to deliver these skills to us (use them for greater impact) in our government centers. It is impossible for them to delete these skills from their memory (brain). Empowerment programs are important as restorative justice to give former offenders opportunities for community service." (Participant 21)

Behaviour protection XVII: Practicing *social domination skills for positive outcomes*. This is indicated by an offender's commitment to use their social domination skills for positive impact.

"It would be excellent if social domination skills could be used for a greater more positive impact to society, for peace campaign, for example. When the offenders use these skills for positive outcomes that will shield him from terrorism." (Participant 20)

Behaviour protection XVIII: Practicing *Mechanical and Electrical (M and E) skills for positive outcomes*. This is indicated by an offender's commitment to use mechanical, electronic, electro-mechanical, and aerodynamic skills for positive impact.

"We call it M and E skills. These are skills to make bombs which use electronic, or electro-mechanical devices. The smartest terrorists could make car bombs. But some cases show that these people show and even teach us how bombs are made. They are the ones who are rehabilitated and become deradicalised." (Participant 23)

3.2 Discussion

The study delivers an important implication about the targets of deradicalisation as well as rehabilitation. The results suggest that terrorism risk assessment of an offender needs to be performed carefully and most probably, given the breadth of issues requiring evaluation, by joint involvement of multiple examiners from multidisciplinary backgrounds (e.g., security officers, clerics, criminologists, psychologists, sociologists, engineers, and anthropologists). Accordingly, particular disciplines would conduct particular parts (such as the use of

Information Technology, intelligence, mechanical, and electrical skills) of protective behaviours.

Applying qualitative methods, the study attempts to overcome distinctive issues in terrorism empirical researches such as worries in engaging offenders, secrecy, and suspicion from authorities and terrorist offenders, as mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, it has limitations in regard to the replicability of the study and participants' bias of response. The study may be difficult to be replicated in other culturally different contexts (other countries). Furthermore, the FGD for data collection was set up in the military base (regimented setting). This may affect participants in articulating their opinions in details/non-normative manners.

Future research will be required to determine whether protective behaviour indicators identified here are similar to other settings. Further studies in other regions, replicating the current research, are needed to examine the generalisability of the findings of this study. A comparable study, investigating protective behaviour indicators against terrorism from several countries with different social political and economic issues, may produce different results. That is, where an ideology other than Islam (i.e., *supremacism*, *chauvinism*, *communism*, or other religion) is used to justify violence.

IV. Conclusion

Findings from this study suggest 18 protective behaviour indicators against terrorism which is for prevention of re-offending. The study could assist clinicians, counterterrorism practitioners, and policy makers to target the output of prevention and rehabilitation programs and manage any interventions against terrorism. Supporting previous studies regarding the process of terrorism rehabilitation and the observed changes during deradicalisation (Sukabdi, 2017), the study combines technical (e.g., from day-to-day investigators) and conceptual approaches (e.g., from heads of security units and scholars) to formulate desired outputs of rehabilitation according to counterterrorism practitioners.

The constructs of protective behaviour indicators were formulated based on structured professional judgment approach (Monahan, 2011) within a qualitative research design. These protective behaviour indicators can act as parameters for measurement when conducting terrorism assessment rehabilitation. They can help establish whether the goal, that is, to transform offenders from being at 'very high' to 'no' risk has been accomplished. The behaviour indicators also help practitioners detect offenders at risk.

The findings support Positive Psychology Theory which highlights the "good life" of living which focuses on individual well-being (Martin & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Ben-Shahar, 2007). The protective behaviour indicators in the study are similar to some of the character strengths brought by Peterson and Seligman (2004). Positive Psychology, as it emphasizes optimism and positive human functioning (Borrego, Jimenez, & Calderon, 2009) focuses on increasing five elements of life--positive emotion, engagement, meaning, positive relationships, and accomplishment, it states its position that when people experience a sense of purpose and meaning, keen to develop positive relationships, and reach accomplishment with high degree of gratitude to others and surroundings (reaching the "achieving life", a life dedicated to accomplishment for the sake of accomplishment, in its extended form) (Moss, 2012; Seligman, 2011). Furthermore, in countering violence extremism, according to Villarosa and Hwang (2011), it is important to include three elements: 1. de-legitimizing violence, 2. leaders' disapproving the messages that justify violence so junior recruits would follow, and 3. offering positive constructive alternatives. They argue that these factors motivated individual members to disengage from violence. They also identify the common drivers toward disengagement: significant disappointment with bombing and other factors (roles, mindsets, and ideology), development of connection

with the outgroups or those outside the jihadi circles, change in priorities, government's soft approaches, and loss-profit calculation (Villarosa & Hwang, 2011). This is in line with the fundamental principles of Positive Psychology.

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