Intelligence gathering and the role of Vigilante group in combating insecurity in Nigeria

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Abstract

Insecurity has become a major challenge in Nigeria, affecting socio-economic development and national stability. Intelligence gathering, which involves the systematic collection of information to prevent and address security threats, is critical in combating these challenges. Alongside formal security agencies, vigilante groups have emerged as grassroots actors in maintaining peace and order, especially in regions where state resources are limited. This study examines the effect of intelligence gathering and the role vigilante groups in combating insecurity in Nigeria. Utilizing a survey research design and covered literate community leaders, literate vigilante groups, Police, Military and State Security Service in Nigeria and determined sample size of 480 using Cochran (1977) sample size determination formula. The study employed questionnaire as instrument for data collection. The data was analyzed using partial least square structural equation modeling. The study found that intelligence gathering has positive but insignificant effect on combating insecurity in Nigeria, while role of vigilante group has positive and significant effect in combating insecurity in Nigeria at 5% significant level. The study concludes that intelligence gathering and the role vigilante groups influences in combating insecurity in Nigeria. The study recommends that government and security agencies of Nigeria invest in improving the capacity and infrastructure for intelligence operations. This should include enhancing data collection systems, fostering inter-agency collaboration, and providing specialized training for personnel involved in intelligence work. Additionally, integrating advanced technology such as surveillance, data analytics, artificial intelligence and appropriate implementation of security report could significantly enhance the effectiveness of intelligence efforts

Keywords: Combating Insecurity, Intelligence Gathering, Interagency Collaboration, Vigilante Group

Introduction

In recent years, Nigeria has faced significant challenges regarding security, with rising levels of criminal activity. Insecurity has become a pervasive challenge in Nigeria, affecting the safety and socio-economic stability of the country. The rising incidents of terrorism, armed robbery, kidnapping, and communal clashes have called for innovative strategies in combating insecurity. These security threats have overwhelmed the formal security agencies, such as the police and the military, which are often criticized for their limited capacity, inadequate funding, and inefficiency. The rising insecurity has necessitated alternative approaches to enhancing security. Two key elements often highlighted in this effort are intelligence gathering and the role of vigilante groups.

Intelligence gathering involves the systematic collection, analysis, and dissemination of information to anticipate, prevent, or respond to criminal activities and security threats. In the context of Nigeria,

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effective intelligence gathering is crucial in combating insecurity by enabling security forces to act proactively against terrorism, kidnapping, and other forms of violence. Despite its importance, challenges such as poor coordination, inadequate resources, and corruption hinder its effectiveness in Nigeria (Adebayo, 2021). Strengthening intelligence networks and improving collaboration between security agencies could enhance the ability to combat insecurity (Olajide & Adewole, 2020).

Vigilante groups have long been part of Nigeria's informal security architecture, especially in rural and semi-urban areas where state security presence is often weak. These groups, formed by local communities, operate with the primary aim of providing protection and maintaining order within their localities. While their activities were initially limited to traditional law enforcement methods, the growing sophistication of crime has necessitated that they take on a more active role and collaborating with formal security agencies. In recent years, vigilante groups have emerged as critical players in addressing insecurity, especially in regions where formal security forces are either absent or ineffective. Vigilante groups are locally organized security outfits that collaborate with state security forces to combat crime at the grassroots level. Their involvement has been instrumental in curbing certain crimes and maintaining order in communities (Ibekwe & Obi, 2022). However, the role of these groups remains contentious, as there are concerns about their legality, methods, and long-term sustainability. While some studies have recognized their positive contributions to community security (Adeyemi et al., 2023), others have cautioned against their excessive power and lack of oversight (Onuoha & Ihejirika, 2021).

Despite the growing efforts to curb insecurity in Nigeria, the persistence of violent crimes, kidnappings, insurgency, and communal conflicts continues to threaten national stability. Intelligence gathering, which involves the collection and analysis of information for security purposes, is often viewed as critical for preempting and addressing these security challenges. However, empirical evidence on its effectiveness in the Nigerian context remains inconclusive, with some studies suggesting its impact is limited by institutional weaknesses, corruption, and inadequate resources (Okereke, 2022; Eme & Onyishi, 2021). Similarly, the role of vigilante groups in combating insecurity has garnered significant attention, particularly in regions where formal security institutions are either overstretched or perceived as ineffective. While these groups have contributed to local security in some instances, concerns about their legality, accountability, and potential for human rights violations persist (Oladayo, 2023). The existing literature often fails to comprehensively evaluate the combined effects of intelligence gathering and vigilante group activities on national security. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by examining the roles of both intelligence

gathering and vigilante groups in combating insecurity in Nigeria, aiming to provide a more integrated and evidence-based approach to security management.

It is in the light of the above that this paper investigates the effect of intelligence gathering and the role of vigilante group on combating insecurity in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

i. examine the effect intelligence gathering on combating insecurity in Nigeria; and
ii. assess the effect of the role of vigilante group on combating insecurity in Nigeria

Literature Review

Combating Insecurity

Combating insecurity refers to the various strategies, policies, and measures employed to reduce or eliminate threats to the safety and stability of a society. Insecurity encompasses a wide range of issues, including terrorism, armed robbery, kidnapping, communal clashes, insurgency, and other forms of violence that undermine peace and development (Onuoha & Ezeoha, 2021). Combating insecurity requires a multidimensional approach, including the use of intelligence gathering, military interventions, community policing, and social programs aimed at addressing the root causes of insecurity such as poverty, unemployment, and political instability (Abdulrahman & Nkwede, 2022). Effective security strategies also rely on collaboration between governmental agencies, security forces, civil society, and local communities to ensure that threats are detected early and addressed in a sustainable manner. In the Nigerian context, the role of non-state actors such as vigilante groups has also emerged as a critical element in addressing local security challenges, especially in areas where formal security structures are lacking (Akinwale, 2023).

Combating insecurity in Nigeria has become a critical focus for both the government and civil society due to the escalating threats posed by terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, and communal violence. Nigeria faces numerous security challenges, including the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast, farmer-herder conflicts in the central regions, and increasing incidents of armed robbery and kidnapping in the southern states (Ogbonnaya & Eke, 2021). Efforts to combat these threats have involved military interventions, the establishment of regional security outfits, and enhanced intelligence gathering by security agencies. However, these efforts have often been hampered by corruption, inadequate resources, and poor coordination among security agencies (Okoli & Orinya, 2022).

To strengthen the fight against insecurity, there has been a growing emphasis on involving local communities through initiatives such as community policing and the engagement of vigilante groups, particularly in rural areas where state security presence is limited. These non-state actors have been instrumental in supplementing formal security measures, helping to bridge the gap between the

government and local populations in tackling criminal activities (Akinwale, 2023). Despite these efforts, combating insecurity in Nigeria requires a more holistic approach that includes addressing underlying issues such as unemployment, poverty, and poor governance, which continue to fuel the insecurity crisis

Intelligence Gathering

Intelligence gathering refers to the systematic collection, analysis, and dissemination of information that is crucial for decision-making in matters related to national security, law enforcement, and counterterrorism efforts. This process involves a wide range of activities, including human intelligence (HUMINT), signals intelligence (SIGINT), open-source intelligence (OSINT), and geospatial intelligence (GEOINT), which collectively provide insights into potential threats and vulnerabilities (Adeleke, 2022). The primary objective of intelligence gathering is to preempt security threats by obtaining actionable information that can be used to prevent, mitigate, or respond to criminal or terrorist activities before they occur (Ogundele & Adebayo, 2021).

In Nigeria, intelligence gathering is a critical component of combating insecurity, especially in the fight against insurgencies like Boko Haram, as well as banditry, kidnapping, and other forms of violent crime. However, the effectiveness of intelligence gathering in Nigeria is often hampered by challenges such as poor interagency collaboration, inadequate training, and the lack of advanced technological tools necessary for modern intelligence operations (Ibrahim & Akinola, 2023). Despite these challenges, improving intelligence capabilities remains vital for enhancing national security and ensuring a more proactive approach to addressing Nigeria's multifaceted security crises.

Vigilante Groups

Vigilante groups are self-organized, community-based security outfits that arise in response to perceived inadequacies in formal law enforcement. These groups typically consist of civilians who take on the responsibility of maintaining order, preventing crime, and safeguarding their communities from various forms of insecurity, such as theft, kidnapping, and insurgencies. Vigilante groups often operate informally, outside the purview of government-sanctioned security agencies, though some may have local government backing or recognition (Adebayo & Ojo, 2023).

In Nigeria, vigilante groups have gained prominence in regions plagued by high levels of insecurity, where government forces struggle to maintain effective control. The rise of these groups is especially evident in areas such as the North-East, where Boko Haram insurgency persists, and in the North-West, where banditry and cattle rustling are rampant (Adejumobi, 2022). While vigilante groups can play a significant role in curbing insecurity, their operations can sometimes lead to human rights

violations and extrajudicial actions, raising concerns about accountability and the rule of law (Eze & Ibrahim, 2021).

Role of Vigilante Groups

The role of vigilante groups in Nigeria has become increasingly significant in addressing the country's growing insecurity challenges. Vigilante groups often operate in regions where formal security forces are either overstretched or ineffective. They provide localized security services such as crime prevention, intelligence gathering, and protection of property, particularly in rural or underserved areas (Eme & Onyishi, 2021). Their community-based approach allows them to respond swiftly to threats, drawing on local knowledge and trust that government agencies may lack.

In many cases, vigilante groups have been recognized for filling the security void, particularly in regions like the North-East and North-West, where insurgency, banditry, and kidnappings are prevalent (Ajayi & Adesina, 2022). Their involvement often complements the efforts of formal security forces, particularly in intelligence gathering and local surveillance. However, there are concerns about the legitimacy and accountability of these groups, especially when they resort to extrajudicial actions or human rights violations (Oluwaseun & Adamu, 2023). Despite these challenges, the role of vigilante groups in reducing crime and assisting state security forces is widely acknowledged as critical to Nigeria's efforts to combat insecurity.

Vigilante groups in Nigeria play a significant role in local security, particularly in regions where state law enforcement agencies are perceived as inadequate or ineffective. These groups often emerge in response to rising insecurity, including kidnappings, armed robberies, and communal clashes (Ezeani, 2021). It typically operate on the premise of community self-defense, relying on local knowledge and networks to monitor and respond to criminal activities (Adebayo, 2022). Their presence has been noted to foster a sense of safety among residents, as these groups often engage in patrolling neighborhoods and providing timely alerts about potential threats (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2021).

However, the role of vigilante groups is not without controversy. While they can supplement state security efforts, concerns about human rights abuses and the potential for vigilante violence have been raised (Obadare, 2020). The effectiveness of these groups often hinges on their relationship with formal security forces, with successful collaborations enhancing overall security outcomes (Adeleke, 2023). As such, the role of vigilante groups in Nigeria remains complex, acting both as a vital security resource and a source of tension within the broader framework of national security.

Empirical Review

Intelligence Gathering and Combating Insecurity

Jacob (2022) examined the recent security challenges Nigerians and non-Nigerians encounters in their daily existence to eke a living. the objectives were stated to include, underscore the overarching relevance of intelligent gathering in preventing crime and understand the elaborateness of intelligence gathering that can be utilized to mitigate crimes outcomes. The study found that intelligence gathering is the disconnect that has precipitated this state of affairs in Nigeria. Equally responsible is the people's loyalty which is first and foremost skewed to ethnoreligious and political considerations instead of the country.

Ezeji (2021) examined the adoption of intelligence led policing strategies, approaches and technologies to combat insecurity in Nigeria. Data was obtained qualitatively; interview technique was used to elicit information from fifty-five participants. Findings reveals that, despite adoption of intelligence, insecurity has spread to all states of Nigeria, criminals are in possession of sophisticated weapons, incessant killings and kidnappings of Nigerians are predominant, police still rely on reactive model of policing. The study adopts qualitative research approach and collected data through interview, the study should have use questionnaire which would have allow for larger participant.

Adegoke (2020) conducted a study on intelligence gathering and challenges of insecurity in Nigeria. The study adopted the theory of structural functionalism to examine intelligence gathering and challenges of insecurity in Nigeria. The secondary data method was adopted by use of police records, internets newspapers and academic journal for data collection. The study argues that there is positive relationship between the effective intelligence gathering and the state of security. The study concludes that intelligence gathering is the product of the processed information by the agencies of the government which are provided for both policy makers and other law enforcement agencies. It is useful processed information for maintenance of security in any country. This is because it gives a good ideas and direction in getting the trend and pattern of criminal activities within a system. It is the duty of a government to provide for security of lives and properties of its citizens. The implementation of intelligence gathering is yet to yield full positive result in combating insecurity in Nigeria, therefore need for it improvement. The study relied was conceptual and theoretical in nature and did not conduct any statistical analysis.

Role of Vigilante Groups and Combating Insecurity

Yisrael (2023) conducted a study on vigilante groups and crime management in the Calabar metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria. This study is qualitative, employing both primary (interviews) and secondary sources and it aims at investigating vigilante groups and crime management in Nigeria

with Calabar Metropolis as case study. While community participatory theory serves as theoretical framework, findings of the study reveal that community vigilante groups in Nigeria have contributed immensely to crime prevention and management. However, they also face certain challenges which disrupt their effectiveness and efficiency. The paper thus recommends among other things that Nigerian leadership should give them more recognition as part of the security sector as well as provide adequate funding to support vigilante groups in the dispensation of their duties.

Adamu et al. (2023) conducted a study on the role of vigilante groups in curbing banditry in Birnin Bwari Local Government area from 2012-2018. One hundred (100) questionnaires were administered to some selected political wards due to the large size of the study area through the application of stratified sample technique. The questionnaires were both close ended and open ended. The study used descriptive statistics to analyzed data obtained. The method of data analysis involved the use of simple frequency distribution table. The study found that vigilante groups help in combating rural banditry in BirninGwari LGA from 2015-2019. The study also found that that vigilante groups gives protection of lives and property in BirninGwari LGA from 2015-2019. Equally, the study found that d that the vigilante help in arresting and handing over arrested bandits to the police for further investigation in BirninGwari LGA from 2015-2019. The study only relied on descriptive statistics to analyzed data obtained.

David (2016) investigated the role of vigilante groups in the management of security to urban centres: a case study of sungusungu in suneka township, Kisii County. The research targeted the residents of Suneka Township (Judgmental sampling method was used to pick a sample size of 110 respondents), where the members or former members of Sungusungu, the local chief and his assistant and the police officers utilized as key informants. The study utilised Questionnaires collect data which was analyzed by the aid of content analysis method and the use of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study established that crime was the most prominent factor that motivated individuals to join the Sungusungu vigilante group. Also, the study established that the residents of Suneka had supported the operations of the Sungusungu. Finally, the study established that through the vigilante group operations the security of the area had improved although some section of the population was not comfortable with it.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Situational Crime Prevention Theory. The Situational Crime Prevention Theory (SCP), developed by Ronald V. Clarke in 1980, focuses on reducing the opportunities for crime by altering the environment in ways that make committing a crime more difficult, risky, or less rewarding (Clarke, 1980). The main idea of the theory is to prevent crime by managing and designing

the immediate environment, targeting specific crimes in specific contexts. It posits that offenders make rational choices based on the perceived risks, effort, and rewards of committing a crime, and that altering these factors can prevent criminal behavior. Clarke (1980) outlined five strategies for situational crime prevention: increasing the effort to commit a crime, increasing the risks of detection, reducing the rewards, removing excuses for offending, and reducing provocations (Cornish & Clarke, 2003). These methods shift the focus from the criminal to the crime itself, making it more challenging to commit crimes without necessarily changing the motivations of offenders.

Several scholars have contributed to the development of SCP by expanding its applicability and addressing its limitations. For instance, Marcus Felson introduced the Routine Activity Theory, which aligns with SCP by emphasizing how everyday activities create opportunities for crime (Felson, 2002). Pat Mayhew further contributed by focusing on practical applications of SCP in real-world settings, such as in reducing residential burglaries and street crimes. However, the theory has faced criticisms. One major criticism is that SCP tends to displace crime rather than prevent it, meaning that criminals may simply change their targets or methods instead of abandoning their intentions altogether (Wortley, 2003). Additionally, critics argue that SCP focuses too much on "target hardening" and neglects the social and psychological factors that lead individuals to commit crimes in the first place (Garland, 2001).

The Situational Crime Prevention Theory is highly relevant to the study of intelligence gathering and the role of vigilante groups in combating insecurity in Nigeria. Vigilante groups and law enforcement agencies can apply SCP principles by increasing the risks and efforts involved in criminal activities through community-based surveillance and intelligence gathering. By focusing on specific crimes within their communities and altering the local environment, vigilante groups can make it more difficult for offenders to act. Intelligence gathering, which involves identifying potential threats and understanding criminal patterns, also complements SCP by increasing the risks of detection for criminals. Together, these strategies help create a less favorable environment for crime, which aligns with the situational crime prevention framework and can significantly enhance local security efforts in Nigeria (Adebayo, 2022)

The reason for adopting this theory can be justify based on the fact that the theory highlights the importance of gathering information about potential criminal activities and environments where crime might occur. Vigilante groups often rely on local knowledge and intelligence gathering to prevent or reduce crime, which fits well with the framework. Vigilante groups can be seen as enhancing the risks faced by potential criminals by increasing community surveillance and local enforcement, which aligns with the situational crime prevention approach of deterring crime by altering environmental

conditions. The theory advocates for involving the community in crime prevention efforts. Vigilante groups, being community-based, play a direct role in monitoring and preventing criminal activities, making them key agents of situational crime prevention.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design. The study covered literate community leaders, literate Vigilantes and security personnel (Police, Military and SSS). Literate community leaders, vigilantes, and security personnel (including Police, Military, and SSS) are ideal respondents for this study due to their unique and direct involvement in local security matters. Community leaders possess an in-depth understanding of the socio-cultural context and local security challenges, making them valuable sources of insight into how intelligence is gathered and utilized at the grassroots level. Vigilantes, as informal security actors, provide firsthand perspectives on their role in complementing formal security efforts and their collaboration with intelligence agencies. Finally, trained security personnel such as the police, military, and State Security Service (SSS) are well-versed in formal intelligence procedures, law enforcement, and crime prevention strategies. Their expertise helps provide a balanced view of how both formal and informal security actors work together to combat insecurity. Including these respondents ensures a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of intelligence gathering and vigilante roles in enhancing security efforts in Nigeria.

However, due to the difficulties associated with conducting research among all subjects of a population and the difficulties in obtaining the exact population of all literate community leaders, literate Vigilantes in Nigeria, Cochran (1977) sample size determination formula for calculating an infinite or unknown population was used to determined sample size was determined using. The sample size determination formula proposed by Cochran (1977) is $n = Z2 \times P (1 - P)/C2$, where n is the sample size for the study, Z2 is the Z value at the 95% confidence interval, C is the margin of error (5%), P is the population proportion, 0.5, and 1 - P is 0.5. A sample size of 384 was obtained using this formula. However, 25% attrition rate was applied to the determined sample size, resulting in a revised sample size of 480.

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire, and respondents were chosen using the stratify and purposive sampling technique. The questionnaire was distributed equally to literate community leaders, literate Vigilantes and security personnel (Police, Military and SSS) in Nigeria. therefore, 96 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to each group of participants (literate community leaders, literate Vigilantes, Police, Military and SSS). For Police, Military and SSS, the study focused on only those in intelligent unit. The questionnaires were administered through a combination of in-person visits and, where necessary, telephone or online surveys to ensure maximum response rate. Trained research assistants, fluent in English language were employed to assist with

data collection. The reliability of the instrument used was accessed using Cronbach alpha. Cronbach alpha value of greater than 0.7 is appropriate (Hair, et al., 2022).

Out of the 480 questionnaires distributed, 365 were completed correctly and deemed valid for analysis, representing 76% of the total distributed. The data was analyzed using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in determining the measurement, structural models and hypotheses testing through SmartPLS 3.0 software (Hair, et al., 2019). Validity and reliability of the measures were first of all ascertained before testing the hypothesized relationships using algorism and bootstrapping techniques (Hair, et al., 2019). The model for the PLS-SEM is depicted pictorially below:
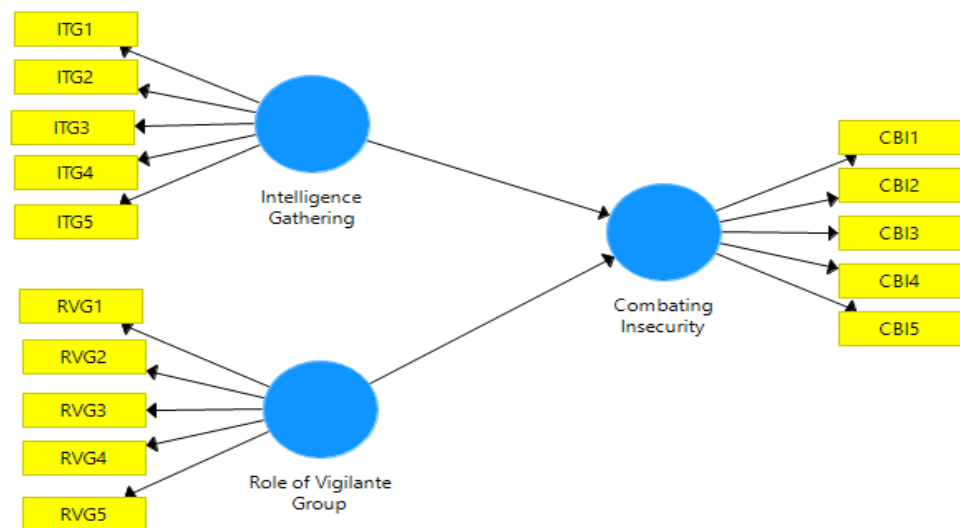
Model Specification

Fig. 1: Model Specification

Source: author's computation SmartPLS Output, 2024

Result and Discussion

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Dependent and Independent Variables

Variables	Min.	Max.	Mean	Standard Deviation	Kurtosis	Skewness
Combating Insecurity	1	5	1.714	0.235	-1.113	0.127
Intelligence Gathering	1	5	1.171	0.556	-1.243	0.022
Role of vigilante Group	1	5	3.813	1.508	-1.122	0.031

Source: author's computation SmartPLS Output, 2024

Table 1 above shows the behavior of the variables under study and provided the statistical description of the variables as expressed in the data collected in terms of the mean value and standard deviation value for all variables used in this study. The minimum and maximum values in all the respective

cases is 1 and 5 respectively, this indicates that the responses or scores for combating insecurity ranged between 1 and 5, representing a wide range of opinions or observations.

The mean value of 1.714 with standard deviation value of 0.235, Kurtosis value of -1.113 and Skewness value of 0.127 for combating insecurity. The mean score of 1.714 suggests that on average, respondents rated combating insecurity low, likely indicating that efforts in combating insecurity may be perceived as insufficient. A low standard deviation value of 0.235 suggests that the responses are closely clustered around the mean, implying consistency in how respondents rated this variable. Negative kurtosis of -1.113 indicates a distribution with lighter tails, meaning there are fewer outliers, or extreme scores, than in a normal distribution. A small positive skewness value of 0.127 suggests a slightly right-skewed distribution, meaning that there are more scores on the lower end of the scale, but a few higher scores pulling the average upward.

The mean value of 1.171 for intelligence gathering suggests a very low average score, indicating that intelligence gathering efforts are perceived as being quite weak or ineffective. This standard deviation value of 0.556 intelligence gathering is higher than that of "Combating Insecurity," suggesting a broader spread of responses and greater variation in opinions regarding intelligence gathering. The Kurtosis value of -1.243 is negative value suggests that the distribution has fewer extreme responses (light tails). And the Skewness value of 0.022 is closed to zero indicates that the distribution is relatively symmetrical, suggesting a balanced distribution of responses between low and high ratings. The role of vigilante group has Mean value of 3.813 which suggests a higher average rating, implying that respondents generally have a positive perception of the role vigilante groups play in combating insecurity. The standard deviation value of 1.508 which is the highest standard deviation among the three variables, indicating significant variability in responses. This suggests that opinions on the effectiveness or role of vigilante groups are more polarized. The negative (-1.122) value of Kurtosis suggests fewer outliers in the data, similar to the other variables. And the skewness value of 0.031 is very close to zero, indicating a nearly symmetrical distribution, with respondents' ratings balanced across low and high values.

The Low Ratings for Combating Insecurity and Intelligence Gathering: Both variables have low mean values, suggesting that respondents perceive efforts in these areas as weak or ineffective. Positive Perception of Vigilante Groups: The higher mean for the role of vigilante groups suggests that respondents generally have a more favorable view of vigilante groups in combating insecurity. Consistency and Variability: The low standard deviation for "Combating Insecurity" indicates consistency in responses, while the high standard deviation for "Role of Vigilante Group" suggests more divided opinions.

The mean values of the variables with their respective standard deviation values for each of the variables under study are less than 1, also the gap between the mean values and the standard deviation values in all the respective cases is small and this indicates that the data for the variables are normally and evenly distributed. This was seen in the Kurtosis and Skewness values in all respective cases are less then1. Although the normality of data is the issue of concern when applying the ordinary least square (OLS) regression, however, while applying the PLS-SEM, this assumption is overridden and not an issue that could prevent any further analysis or produce a form of bias in the result, (Hair, et al., 2019).

Measurement Model Evaluation
The measurement model was evaluated using convergent validity. Convergent validity is determined by examining the factor loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) (Gholami, et al, 2013; Hair, et al., 2022). All the constructs used in this study has achieved the acceptable factor loadings of above 0.7; composite reliability (CR) of all the constructs were all above 0.7 and Average variance extracted (AVE) are also above 0.5, this indicates the validity of the instrument as recommended by Hair et al. (2019). This is shown in the figure 2 and Table 2.
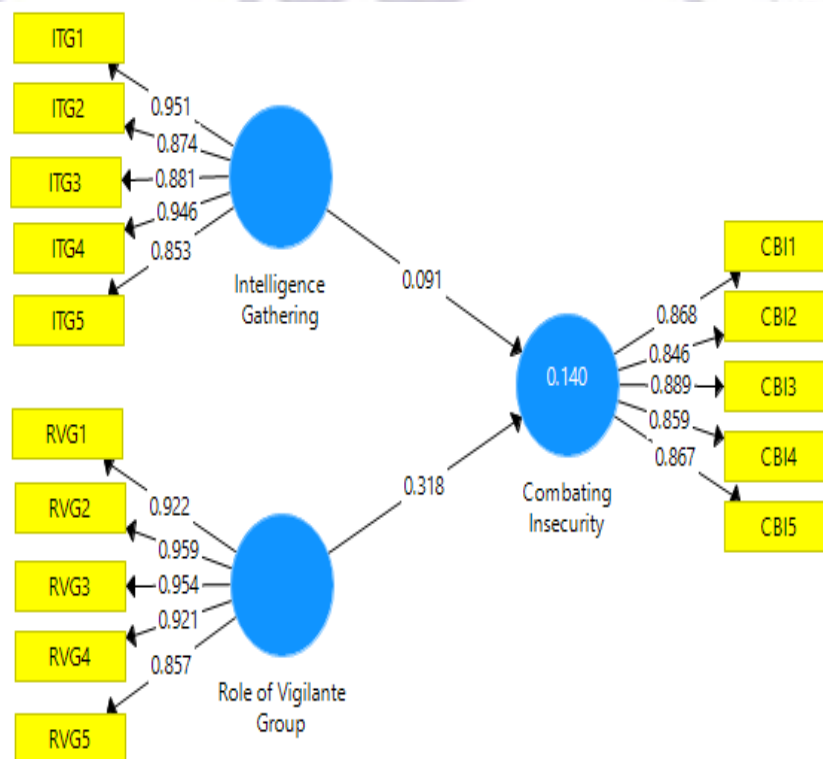

Fig. 2: Measurement model of the study constructs and indicators.
Source: SmartPLS Output, 2024

Table 2: Convergent validity

Variables	Indicators	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Combating Insecurity	CBI1	0.868	0.919	0.937	0.750
	CBI2	0.846			
	CBI3	0.889			
	CBI4	0.859			
	CBI5	0.867			
Intelligence Gathering	ITG1	0.951	0.942	0.956	0.813
	ITG2	0.874			
	ITG3	0.881			
	ITG4	0.946			
	ITG5	0.853			
Role of vigilante Group	RVG1	0.922	0.956	0.966	0.852
	RVG2	0.959			
	RVG3	0.954			
	RVG4	0.921			
	RVG5	0.857			

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2024

The table presents the factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) for three latent variables: Combating Insecurity, Intelligence Gathering, and Role of Vigilante Group. These measures assess the reliability and validity of the constructs used in the study.

Factor Loadings for Combating Insecurity: The loadings for the indicators CBI1 to CBI5 range from 0.846 to 0.889, all of which exceed the acceptable threshold of 0.7, indicating that these indicators are strongly correlated with the underlying construct of Combating Insecurity. This suggests that the chosen items are valid measures for this construct. It Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.919 above the 0.7 threshold, indicating excellent internal consistency, meaning the items measuring Combating Insecurity are reliable. It Composite Reliability value is 0.937 above 0.7 which further confirms the high reliability of the construct. This shows that the indicators collectively have a strong correlation with the latent variable. And the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value is 0.750 which is well above 0.5, indicating good convergent validity. This means that 75% of the variance in the indicators is explained by the construct, demonstrating that the indicators are representative of Combating Insecurity.

The Factor Loadings Intelligence Gathering: The loadings for ITG1 to ITG5 range from 0.853 to 0.951, indicating a very strong relationship between the indicators and the construct Intelligence Gathering. All the loadings exceed the threshold of 0.7, confirming the validity of the indicators. It

Cronbach's Alpha is 0.942 which shows excellent internal consistency, confirming that the items reliably measure Intelligence Gathering. It Composite Reliability value is 0.956: The composite reliability score is also very high, which further supports the reliability of the construct. The indicators consistently reflect the Intelligence Gathering construct. And the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value is 0.813: An AVE of 0.813 indicates that 81.3% of the variance in the indicators is captured by the latent variable, providing strong evidence of convergent validity.

The Factor Loadings for Role of Vigilante Group construct. The loadings for RVG1 to RVG5 range from 0.857 to 0.959, all above 0.7, showing that the indicators are strong measures of the Role of Vigilante Group construct. It Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.956 is very high suggesting excellent internal consistency, confirming that the indicators consistently measure the role of vigilante groups. It Composite Reliability value is 0.966. The composite reliability of 0.966 is exceptionally high, indicating that the indicators are highly reliable in measuring the construct. And Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value is 0.852 which shows excellent convergent validity, as 85.2% of the variance in the indicators is explained by the latent variable.

Discriminant Validity

Table 3: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Combating Insecurity	Intelligence Gathering	Role of vigilante Group
Combating Insecurity			
Intelligence Gathering	0.371		
Role of vigilante Group	0.270	0.566	

Source: author's computation via SmartPLS Output, 2024

Table 3 above shows the results of Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio for the variables used in this research. The table presents the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) values, which assess discriminant validity in the study. Discriminant validity ensures that the constructs being measured are distinct from one another. Generally, HTMT values below 0.85 or 0.90 indicate that there is adequate discriminant validity between the constructs. Here's the interpretation of the results.

The HTMT value of 0.371 indicates a low to moderate correlation between the constructs Combating Insecurity and Intelligence Gathering. This value is well below the threshold of 0.85, suggesting that the two constructs are distinct from one another. This confirms that Combating Insecurity and Intelligence Gathering are measuring different aspects in the study.

The HTMT value of 0.270 indicates a low correlation between Combating Insecurity and Role of Vigilante Group. This value is also far below the threshold of 0.85, suggesting strong discriminant

validity between these two constructs. This implies that Combating Insecurity and Role of Vigilante Group are clearly distinct and measure different dimensions in the study.

The HTMT value of 0.566 shows a moderate correlation between Intelligence Gathering and Role of Vigilante Group. Although this value is higher than the previous two comparisons, it is still well below the 0.85 threshold, indicating acceptable discriminant validity. This means that while there is some relationship between Intelligence Gathering and the Role of Vigilante Group, they remain distinct constructs within the model.

From the table, the result in all the respective cases indicated that there is absent of discriminate validity problems. Since discriminate validity problems are present only when HTMT values are high than 0.90 for structural models as suggested by Henseler, et al. (2015). In this case all the HTMT values for the variables used are less than 0.90 therefore proved the absent of discriminate validity problems.

All HTMT values are below the recommended threshold of 0.85, confirming that the constructs in the study Combating Insecurity, Intelligence Gathering, and Role of Vigilante Group exhibit strong discriminant validity. This means that these constructs are distinct and measure different concepts, supporting the overall quality of the measurement model.

Assessment of Structural Model

Prior to assessing the structural relationships, collinearity must be examined to make sure it does not birth biasness in the regression results. If collinearity assumptions are satisfied, the next step is to examine the coefficient of determination (R^2) value of the endogenous construct(s).

Table 4: Collinearity Statistics (Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

Variables	Combating Insecurity
Intelligence Gathering	1.402
Role of vigilante Group	1.402

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2024

The Table 4 shows The Collinearity Statistics (Variance Inflation Factor, VIF) results are presented for two variables: Intelligence Gathering and Role of Vigilante Group with respect to their relationship to Combating Insecurity. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is a measure used to detect the presence of multicollinearity in a regression model. Multicollinearity occurs when independent variables are highly correlated with each other, which can affect the reliability of the regression results. The VIF value for both Intelligence Gathering and Role of Vigilante Group have identical value of 1.402.

VIF values below 5 generally indicate that multicollinearity is not a concern in the model. The VIF value of 1.402 is well below the threshold of 5, suggesting that there is no significant multicollinearity between the variables (Intelligence Gathering and Role of Vigilante Group) with respect to their impact on Combating Insecurity. This indicates that the predictors (Intelligence Gathering and Role of Vigilante Group) are independent enough to provide reliable estimates in the model without causing distortions due to multicollinearity. The low VIF values (1.402) suggest that the model is free from multicollinearity issues, and the independent variables are distinct in their contribution to explaining Combating Insecurity. Therefore, the results from the regression analysis are reliable. The VIF values in table 4 above were less than 5 indicating the absence of critical collinearity issues among the indicators of formatively measured constructs, (Hair, et al., 2019).

Model Goodness of Fit

Table 5: Model Goodness of Fit (GOF)

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.060	0.060
d_ULS	0.426	0.426
d_G	2.269	2.269
Chi-Square	1,967.020	1,967.020
NFI	0.687	0.687

Source: author's computation SmartPLS Output, 2024

Table 5 presents the results of the model's goodness of fit. To validate the PLS model, it is essential to evaluate its goodness of fit, as recommended by Hair et al. (2017). In this study, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) was used as the primary index for assessing model fit. The SRMR was chosen because it provides an absolute fit measure, where a value of zero represents a perfect fit. Following the guidance of Hu and Bentler (1998), who suggested that an SRMR value below 0.08 indicates a good fit, the model in this study achieved an SRMR value of 0.060. Since this value is below 0.08, it confirms that the model fits well, as supported by the recommendations of Hu and Bentler (1998) and Ringle et al. (2019).

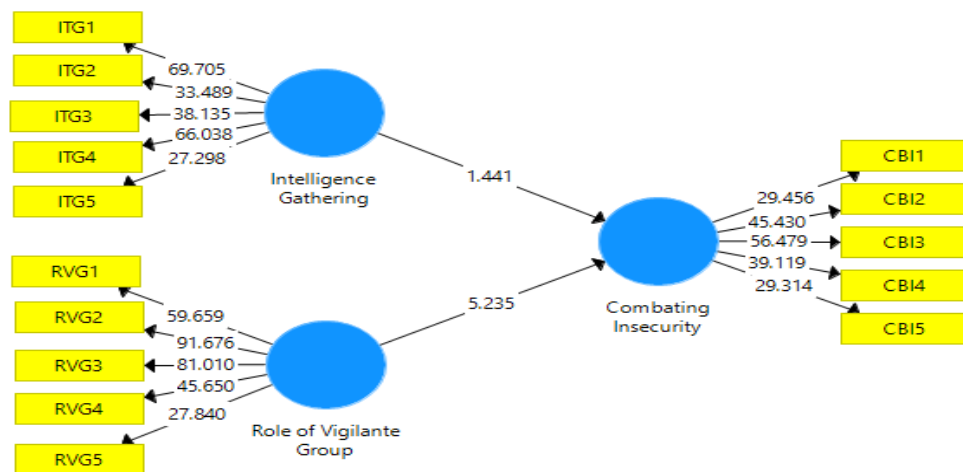**Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing**

Fig. 3: Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing

Source: Author's computation via SmartPLS, 2024

Table 6: Results of the Structural Model Analysis (Hypotheses Testing)

Hypotheses	Relationship	Path Coefficient Beta (β)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P value	Decision	R^2	Adj. R^2
H$_{O1}$	ITG-> CB1	0.093	0.063	1.441	0.150	Accepted	0.140	0.135
H$_{02}$	RVG-> CBI	0.319	0.061	5.235	0.000	Rejected		

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2024

The fig. 3 and Table above show the structural model and hypotheses testing result for this study. The table shows the values for Beta, standard Error, T-statistics, P Value, R^2 and Adj. R^2. The beta value, t-values and the corresponding p-value were used in assessing the structural model in this study. This was done through the bootstrapping procedure.

The bootstrapping result from the Smart PLS shows that path coefficient intelligent gathering and combating security (ITG-> CB1) is positive but statistically insignificant. The result from this analysis shows that intelligent gathering has positive but insignificant effect on combating security in Nigeria at 5% level of significant. This decision was based on the positive beta (β) value of 0.096 (10%), t-value of 1.144 which is less than 1.96 and its corresponding p-value of 0.150 (β value = 0.096, T-value = 1.144 and P-value = 0.150). This result has provided the sufficient ground for accepting of the hypothesis which states that intelligent gathering has no significant effect on combating security in Nigeria. Therefore, this null hypothesis is Accepted.

Path Coefficient (β): 0.093: This indicates a weak positive relationship between intelligence gathering (ITG) and combating insecurity (CBI). The impact of ITG on CBI is positive, but the effect size is relatively small. Standard Deviation (STDEV): 0.063: The standard deviation shows how much

variation there is in the relationship between ITG and CBI. T Statistics: 1.441: The T-statistic value is below the threshold of 1.96, which indicates that this relationship is not statistically significant at the 5% significance level. P Value: 0.150: The P-value is above 0.05, meaning that the relationship between ITG and CBI is statistically insignificant. This suggests that intelligence gathering does not have a significant impact on combating insecurity in Nigeria. Decision: Accepted: The null hypothesis (H01) is accepted, meaning that intelligence gathering does not significantly influence combating insecurity in Nigeria.

The result implies that in the Nigerian context, intelligence gathering is currently not having a significant impact on combating insecurity. Despite its positive relationship with combating insecurity, the weak and statistically insignificant effect suggests that the existing intelligence-gathering processes may be inadequate, inefficient, or underutilized. This could indicate gaps in the quality, timeliness, or implementation of intelligence information in addressing security challenges. For Nigeria, this calls for a review and strengthening of intelligence mechanisms, including better coordination, resource allocation, and training to enhance the effectiveness of intelligence gathering in reducing insecurity across the country.

The result of the test of the hypothesis with respect to role of vigilante group and combating insecurity (RVG->CBI), the bootstrapping result from the output of Smart PLS above reveals that path coefficient of the role of vigilante group has positive and significant effect on and combating insecurity in Nigeria at 5% level of significant. This decision was based on the beta (β) value of 0.319 (14%), t-value of 5.235 which is grater than 1.96 and its corresponding p-value of 0.000 (β value: 0.319, t-value: 5.235 and p-value = 0.000). This result has provided sufficient ground for the rejection of the null hypothesis which states that role of vigilante group has no significant effect on combating insecurity in Nigeria. Therefore, this null hypothesis is hereby rejected.

The Path Coefficient (β) of 0.319 indicates a moderate positive relationship between the role of vigilante groups (RVG) and combating insecurity (CBI). The impact of RVG on CBI is stronger than ITG. The Standard Deviation (STDEV) value is 0.061: There is relatively low variation in the relationship between RVG and CBI, indicating consistency in the results. T Statistics is 5.235: The T-statistic value is well above the critical threshold of 1.96, suggesting that the relationship is highly statistically significant. The P-value 0.000 is less than 0.05, indicating a statistically significant relationship between RVG and CBI. Decision: Rejected: The null hypothesis (H02) is rejected, meaning that the role of vigilante groups has a significant positive impact on combating insecurity in Nigeria.

The result highlights that vigilante groups (RVG) play a significant and positive role in combating insecurity in Nigeria. With a moderate impact and statistically significant findings, this suggests that the involvement of vigilante groups has a meaningful effect on improving security outcomes. The strong relationship indicates that these groups, often operating at the community level, are effective in supplementing formal security efforts. This has important implications for policy and governance, as it suggests that integrating and formalizing the role of vigilante groups in Nigeria's security framework could enhance efforts to curb insecurity. However, it also calls for better regulation, training, and oversight to ensure these groups act lawfully and effectively.

For the predictive relevance of the model, R^2 value was used to explain the predictive relevance. The R^2 value from table 6 shows the variance in the dependent variable (combating insecurity in Nigeria) as explained by the independent variables (intelligence gathering and role of vigilante group). The result shows a R^2 value of 0.140 (14%) accounted by the predictive variables on the criterion variable of the model. That is, the coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.14 indicates that only 14% of the variation in combating insecurity in Nigeria can be explained by the combined impact of intelligence gathering and role of vigilante group. While the remaining 86% variation in combating insecurity in Nigeria can be explained by other variables or factors not captured in this study.

The R^2 value of 0.140 indicates that only 14% of the variation in combating insecurity in Nigeria is explained by the independent variables—intelligence gathering and the role of vigilante groups. This suggests that while these factors do have some impact, they contribute only a small portion to addressing insecurity. The remaining 86% of the variation in combating insecurity is influenced by other variables or factors not included in this study, such as government policies, law enforcement effectiveness, socioeconomic factors, and community engagement.

The Adjusted R^2 value of 0.135, slightly lower than the R^2 value, accounts for the number of predictors in the model and adjusts for potential overfitting. This close similarity between the R^2 and Adjusted R^2 values suggests that the model is stable, but it also points to the need for future studies to include additional factors that might better explain the complexity of insecurity in Nigeria. This result highlights that relying solely on intelligence gathering and vigilante groups, while important, may not be sufficient to significantly reduce insecurity. Broader, multifaceted approaches are necessary, as such, policymakers and stakeholders should consider integrating a wider range of strategies to tackle insecurity in Nigeria. This could include improving the capacity and coordination of formal law enforcement agencies, addressing underlying socioeconomic drivers like unemployment and poverty, and enhancing community-based initiatives. Additionally, efforts to improve infrastructure, governance, and the justice system are crucial to ensure that the fight against insecurity is more

comprehensive and effective. By diversifying the approaches to combating insecurity, it is more likely that significant and sustainable improvements will be achieved.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the above findings from this study, it is concluded that intelligence gathering, while having a positive relationship with combating insecurity, does not have a statistically significant impact. This indicates that despite the potential of intelligence gathering to support security efforts, it is currently not being fully utilized or is insufficiently effective in reducing insecurity in Nigeria. This result suggests a need for enhancing the systems, processes, and coordination involved in intelligence gathering to improve its role in combating insecurity.

On the other hand, the study found that vigilante groups play a significant and positive role in combating insecurity in Nigeria. This indicates that community-based security efforts, like those of vigilante groups, are making a meaningful contribution to reducing insecurity. Their localized knowledge, quick response capabilities, and ability to supplement formal security agencies appear to be effective. However, to sustain and improve these outcomes, there is a need to provide better training, resources, and legal frameworks for vigilante groups to ensure they operate effectively and in accordance with human rights standards.

In line with the findings and the conclusions drawn by this study, the following recommendations are made:

i. Government and security agencies of Nigeria invest in improving the capacity and infrastructure for intelligence operations. This includes enhancing data collection systems, fostering inter-agency collaboration, and providing specialized training for personnel involved in intelligence work. Additionally, integrating advanced technology such as surveillance, data analytics, artificial intelligence and appropriate implementation of security report could significantly enhance the effectiveness of intelligence efforts. Strengthening these areas will help ensure that intelligence gathering plays a more substantial and significant role in reducing insecurity across the country.

ii. Government should formalize the role of vigilante group within the broader security framework. This can be achieved by providing training, resources, and legal recognition to vigilante groups to ensure they operate effectively and ethically. Establishing clear guidelines and oversight mechanisms will also help maintain accountability and prevent potential abuses of power. Furthermore, the integration of vigilante groups with formal security forces could enhance community policing efforts, enabling a more coordinated approach to tackling insecurity in local areas.

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