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Intellectual Security as a Mediator Between Awareness of Threats of Citizenship Values and Psychological Reactance Among a Sample of Saudi Students

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الأمن الفكري كمتغير وسيط في العلاقة بين الوعي بمهددات قيم المواطنة والتمرد النفسي

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Abstract

The literature has established that threat to freedom activates psychological reactance in people, and yet, there is scant evidence about the association between threat of citizenship values and psychological reactance. The current study aimed to examine the association between awareness of citizenship values threats and psychological reactance, and to investigate the mediation role of intellectual security in this relationship. A sample of 416 students (71.6% of which were females mean age = 25.3; SD = 7.11; range = 18-42) was recruited in this study. They completed the Psychological Reactance Scale, the Intellectual Security Scale and the Awareness of Threats of Citizenship Values Questionnaire as well as a set of demographic questions. To answer the main question, a path analysis was conducted using structural equation models. Findings showed that the threat of citizenship values was positively related to psychological reactance, and intellectual security negatively mediated this relationship. Conclusion: it seems that intellectual security plays an important role in mitigating the negative thoughts that people might have when they are threat-

المستخلص

أثبتت الأدبياتُ أن التهديد للحرية يُنشِّط التمرد النفسي لدى الأفراد، ومع ذلك، لا دليلَ يُذكر على العَلاقة بين مهددات قيم المواطنة والتمرد النفسي. وقد هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى فحص العَلاقة بين الوعي بمهددات قيم المواطنة والتمرد النفسي، والتحقق من دور الأمن الفكري كمتغير وسيط في هذه العلاقة، وتكونت عينة الدراسة من (416) طالبًا، 71.6% منهم إناث، في المدى العمري من 18 – 32، بمتوسط 25.3 عامًا وانحراف معياري قدره 7.11 من الأعوام، طُبقت عليهم مقاييس التمرد النفسي والأمن الفكري، ومهددات قيم المواطنة، بالإضافة إلى مجموعة من الأسئلة الديموغرافية. للإجابة عن تساؤل الدراسة الرئيس، وتم إجراء تحليل المسار باستخدام نماذج المعادلات الهيكلية. وأظهرت النتائج أن هناك ارتباطًا إيجابيًا دالًّا بين الوعي بمهددات قيم المواطنة والتمرد النفسي، وأن الأمن الفكري توسط سلبًا في هذه العلاقة. والخلاصة: أن الأمن الفكري يؤدي دورًا مهمًّا في تخفيف الأفكار السلبية التي قد تراود الأفراد عند تعرضهم

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ened. Recommendations: Given the importance of instilling intellectual security in young people, it is recommended to educational institutions and counselors to make it a priority in their programs so that the youth grow up with cognitive tools that allow them to stay away from deviant behaviors when faced with threat.

للتهديد. ونظرًا لأهمية غرس الأمن الفكري لدى الشباب، توصي الدراسة المؤسسات التعليمية والمرشدين بجعله أولوية في برامجهم حتى يتحصن الشباب بأدوات معرفية تساعدهم على الابتعاد عن السلوكيات المنحرفة عند التعرض للتهديد.

1. Introduction

Originally, psychological reactance was postulated by Brehm (1966). They defined psychological reactance as «a motivational state that is activated when real or perceived freedom is threatened». As a result, people can act aggressively in response to the threat (Brehm & Brehm, 1981). It was reported that high levels of psychological reactance were related to less trust, more vigilance, control, anxiety, worry, and suspicion (Buboltz et al., 1999; Thomas Dowd et al., 1994). Psychological reactance was also associated with personality disorders (Seibel & Dowd, 2001). Thomas Dowd et al. (1994) found a relationship between psychological reactance and the inability to make good impressions on others, carelessness about obligations and resisting rules and regulations.

Some studies established a relationship of psychological reactance with unhealthy behaviors. For example, it was reported in a sample of junior high school students that psychological reactance was related to tobacco use (Miller et al., 2006). Another study also concluded that in comparison with people with lower psychological reactance, people with higher psychological reactance were more prone to smoking behaviors and risky sexual behaviors (Miller & Quick, 2010).

In different cultures, people react differently to threats and use different strategies to restore the lost freedom (Miron & Brehm, 2006). People from collectivistic and individualistic cultures differ in their expectations of control and choice, which makes them experience sensitiveness to threat differently (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999). Further, people with independent self-construal are more concerned with threats to their individual freedom, and people with interdependent self-construal are more concerned with threats to the group freedom (Jonas et al., 2009). Another study also reported that the experience of reactance was depending on values, whether the values were individual or collective (Trafimow et al., 1991). Graupmann et al. (2012) reported that on threat to freedom of choice, it was reported that more reactance was aroused in people from individualistic cultures when the threat was coming from ingroup. People from individualistic cultures value more freedom, competition and independence (Hofstede, 1991), whereas individuals from collectivistic cultures including Korea or Saudi Arabia, value more group achievement, interdependence and social harmony (Moon & Franke, 2000).

Although Brehm (1981) conceived psychological reactance as immeasurable, many assessments have been made (Dowd, 1991; Lindsey, 2005; Merz, 1983). However, Shen and Dillard(2005) claimed that the Hong Psychological Reactance Scale (Hong & Faedda, 1996) was conceptually more sound. Consequently, this scale was adopted to assess psychological reactance. Nonetheless, most studies come from individualistic countries and few were from collectivistic cultures such as Saudi Arabia, which yields the need for studies from there.

The collectivistic-individualistic culture juxtaposition applies also when it comes to citizenship identities. For example, countries such as France, the US or Italy base their national identities on law and institutions (Reeskens et al., 2007). This is also evident in the speeches of former president of the US Barack Obama: "What makes someone American is not just blood or birth, but allegiance to our founding principles". On the other hand, collectivistic countries such as Japan or in our case Saudi Arabia usually consider their national identities based on ancestry (Reeskens et al., 2007).

Further, alongside with their freedom, people of value their citizenship values. In this era of globalization where immigration and acculturation are inevitable, these citizenship values are threatened. Further, this fast socio-cultural change might be perceived by people as threats to their cultural norms and values (Berry, 2008). It is well-conceivable that these threats to citizenship values might activate psychological reactance in people. Nonetheless, threats of citizenship values received little attention in the literature. Zamzam (2015) developed a scale to assess threat of citizenship values, and this scale has four subscales1) awareness of social threats2), awareness of economic threats3), awareness of security threats, and4) awareness of cultural threats. Studying the impact of subgroup threat on global citizenship, Reysen et al (2014) reported that when the country was threatened, there was a drop in global citizenship identification. Threat can be defined as the worry that an adverse event is going to happen (Fritsche et al., 2011). Studies have indicated that threat originates from exposure to any of the many forms of violence, including terrorism (Huddy & Feldman, 2011), or war (Hiers et al., 2017). These kinds of threats might result in many different negative outcomes such as deviant behaviors or psychological reactance, and yet, existing evidence concerns exclusively threat to freedom choice and psychological reactance. Therefore, the first goal of this study was to contribute to the literature by investigating the relationship between awareness of threats of citizenship values and psychological reactance

When people are threatened, they tend to have deviant ideation, and intellectual security has been postulated as an important factor-solution in these situations (Abdel-Nour, 2021; Almahaireh et al., 2021). Intellectual security allows people to understand the religious, social and political issues that facilitate community stability and public order (Ahmad & Dammas, 2018). As such, intellectual security can protect people when their citizenship values are threatened, and prevent them engaging in unhealthy behaviors associated with psychological reactance. Security is a central demand that people thrive for and communities cannot flourish without. Intellectual security can be defined as the «integrity of people's thoughts from radical intellectual deviation or misconceptions» (Al-Anzi & Al-Zbon, 2017). Some researchers have argued that if intellectual security is attained, all other kinds of security will be attained including social, political, economic, health and nutrition, because they are closely related (Al-Otaibi, 2017; Ali, 2017). Since intellectual security secure Speople from having deviant thoughts and false beliefs (Waswas & Gasaymeh, 2016), it is assumable that it might be essential in mitigating the negative ideas that might arise in front of a threat, such as threats of citizenship values that are imminent due to the rapid socio-cultural change. Therefore, the second goal of this study was to examine the mediation role of intellectual security in the relationship between awareness of threats of citizenship values and psychological reactance.

Problem statement:

Little is known about the relationship between threat of citizenship values and psychological reactance, and the contribution intellectual security was never investigated. Accordingly, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1 - What is the relationship between awareness of threat of citizenship values and psychological reactance?

2 - What is the relationship between awareness of threat of citizenship values and intellectual security?

3 - What is the relationship between psychological reactance and intellectual security?

4- Does intellectual security play a mediation role in the relationship between awareness of threat of citizenship values and psychological reactance? Importance of the Study:

Theoretical importance:

The globalization has produced a threat to citizenship values worldwide. When people are threatened, they tend to surrender to radical ideas through psychological reactance. Nonetheless, no study has examined the relationship between awareness of threat of citizenship values and psychological reactance. Moreover, little is known about how to mitigate this process. This study is the first to propose the mitigation of intellectual security and posits that intellectual security can protect threatened people from having radical ideas.

Practical importance:

This study would benefit researchers, social workers, counselors, and families in the first place. Researchers can investigate further and in other settings, the contribution of intellectual security especially on how intellectual security helps to prevent deleterious behaviors that occur in response to threat. Social workers and counselors can use this study to prevent radical ideas by instilling intellectual security especially in young people. This study can also be beneficial for families. When it comes to giving education to children, intellectual security can be taught in the family.

Study terminologies

1. Awareness of threat of citizenship values

Awareness of threat of citizenship values is a construct that concerns how people understand and conceive all that threaten their citizenship values (Zamzam, 2015). This includes 4 dimensions: 1) awareness of economic threats, 2) awareness of social threats, 3) awareness of security threats, and 4) awareness of cultural threats. Awareness of threat of citizenship values arises when one of these 4 domains is threatened, especially in this time of globalization with perpetual immigration and acculturation (Ozer & Obaidi, 2022)..

Awareness of threat of citizenship values can be defined procedurally as «the degree to which participants score on the Threats of Citizenship Values Questionnaire» (Zamzam, 2015).

Psychological reactance

Psychological reactance can be defined as 4 a motivational state that is activated when real or perceived freedom is threatened «(Hong & Page, 1989)». When people activate psychological reactance, they can act aggressively in response to the threat. People believe that they have freedom of thought and behaviors and psychological reactance is activated when people are trying to restore that freedom of free thoughts and behaviors when they are lost (Rosenberg & Siegel, 2017).

Psychological reactance can be defined procedurally as «the degree to which participants score on the Psychological Reactance Scale (Hong & Page, 1989)».

Intellectual Security

Intellectual security can be defined as «Ensuring that the ideas and minds of individuals are free from all forms of misconception that may pose a threat to the life of the individual, the community and the achievement of security and stability in all areas of life (Al-Haidar, 2010)».

It is also defined as «an individual or collective conception that includes values that safeguard society from the forces of deviation and gives them ideas that provide people with happiness and reassurance and protect them from fears and terrorism (Almahaireh et al., 2021,p.29)».

Intellectual Security is defined procedurally as «the degree to which the participant scores on the Intellectual Security Scale (El Keshky & Al-Otaibi, 2020)».

2. Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach by corelating descriptive approach to investigate the relationship between awareness of threat of citizenship values, psychological reactance and intellectual security and to investigate the role of intellectual security as a mediation variable in this relationship.

2. 1 Data and participants

The permission to carry out this study was provided by King Abdulaziz University. This is an observational study that was conducted online and used a cross-sectional design. Convenience sampling method was used so that many and diverse respondents are reached out. The questionnaire was sent to respondents via emails, Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter. Participants were briefed about the aim and outcome of the study and provided informed consent before completing the survey. As many as 563 participants returned the completed survey, but a total number of 416 respondents completed the survey with no missing data.

The sample characteristics and the descriptive statistics are summarized in Table 1. Around 71.6% of the respondents were females and 28.4% were males. About 85.5 were undergraduate students and 14.4% were postgraduate. Around 74% were single while 26% were married. About 39.2% were from households earning less than 5000 SR per month, 22.4% were from households earning between 5000 SR and 10000 SR, 18% were from households earning between 10000 and 15000 SR and 20.4% were from households with a monthly income of 15000 SR or more.

The mean age was 25.3 (SD = 7.11, range = 18-42). The mean score for psychological reactance was 53.7 (SD = 10.6, range = 1890-). The mean score for intellectual security was 40.9 (SD = 6.29, range = 1155-). The average score for awareness of social threats was 70.5 (SD = 18.2, range = 20-100). The mean score for awareness of economic threats was 51.06 (SD = 13.2, range = 14=70). The average score for awareness of security threats was 40.2 (SD = 14.2, range = 1575-). Finality The mean score for awareness of cultural threats was 53.7 (SD = 19.05, range = 1680-).

2. 2 Measures

The questionnaire contained a set of demographic questions and three scales: 1) the Psychological Reactance Scale (Hong & Page, 1989) 2) the Intellectual Security Scale (El Keshky & Al-Otaibi, 2020), and 3) the Awareness of threats of citizenship values Questionnaire (Zamzam, 2015).

1- The Threats of Citizenship Values Questionnaire (Zamzam, 2015) was used to assess the awareness of citizenship values threats. This scale consists of 65-items with four subscales: 1) awareness of social threats of Citizenship Values (20 items) (e.g., 'The weakness of religious

Table 1 - Sociodemographic characteristics of the sample

جدول **1 -** الخصائص الديموغرافية للعينة

Variable	n	%/mean (SD)	Mean	SD
Gender				
Female	298	71.6	54.5	11.2
Male	118	28.4	51.5	8.61
Education				
Undergraduate	356	85.6	54.3	10.7
Postgraduate	60	14.4	50.06	9.40
Marital status				
Single	308	74	54.25	10.6
Married	108	26	52.18	10.5
Income				
less than 5000SR	163	39.2	54.3	10.4
5000 - less than 10000SR	93	22.4	53.2	11.2
10000 - less than 15000SR	75	18	51.4	9.2
15000SR and more	85	20.4	55.09	11.2
Age	416	25.3 (7.11)		
Psychological reactance	416	53.7 (10.6)		
Intellectual security	416	40.9 (6.29)		
Awareness of social threats	416	70.5 (18.2)		
Awareness of economic threats	416	51.06 (13.2)		
Awareness of security threats	416	40.2 (17.2)		
Awareness of cultural threats	416	53.7 (19.05)		

faith among young people') 2) Awareness of economic threats of Citizenship Values (14 items) (e.g., 'The large discrepancy in income levels among citizens') 3) Awareness of security threats of Citizenship Values (15 items) (e.g., 'Non-compliance with regulations and laws'), and 4) Awareness of cultural threats of Citizenship Values (16 items) (e.g., 'Spreading the culture of pornography through satellite channels'). The items are answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to (5 = strongly agree). Scores can range on mastery from 65 to 325, with higher values representing higher levels of awareness of threats of citizenship values.

2 - The psychometric properties of the Awareness of Threats of Citizenship Values Questionnaire have shown an internal consistency of α(= 0.92, 0.83 0.85and 0.86) for the Awareness of social threats, Awareness of economic threats of Citizenship Values, Awareness of security threats of Citizenship Values and Awareness

of cultural threats of Citizenship Values, respectively (Zamzam, 2015). In this study, the Cronbach's alphas were 0.95, 0.95, 0.96, 0.96 for the awareness of social threats of Citizenship Values, Awareness of economic threats of Citizenship Values, Awareness of security threats of Citizenship Values and Awareness of cultural threats of Citizenship Values, respectively.

3 - The Psychological Reactance Scale (Hong & Page, 1989) is an 18-items scale. The scale includes items like 'I try to resist rules and regulations' or '"I become frustrated when I am not allowed to make my own decisions'. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with 1 being disagree completely, 5 agree completely, and 3 neither agree nor disagree. Scores can range on mastery from 18 to 90, with higher values representing higher levels of psychological reactance.

The scale demonstrated good psychometric properties (Hong & Page, 1989), and in this study, Cronbach's alpha was 0.83.

The Intellectual Security Scale (El Keshky & Al-Otaibi, 2020) is a 50-items scale that is rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The 50 items are divided into seven subscales, in this study, only the Security subscale (11 items) was used (e.g., 'I practice the realization of thought and reason in any issue I face').

Each item is scored from 1 to 5, strongly disagree to strongly agree. Scores can range from 11 to 55, with higher values representing higher levels of intellectual security The internal consistency was good (Cronbach's alpha = 0.91) and the test -retest reliability was 0.89 (El Keshky & Al-Otaibi, 2020). In this study, the internal consistency reliability was also good (Cronbach's alpha = 0.75).

2. 3 Data analysis

The analysis included descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficients between the variables, Cronbach's alphas which were computed using the 'psych' statistical software package (Revelle, 2017) and the SEM (structural equation models) for the mediation analysis using the 'lavaan' package (Rosseel, 2012). The SEM model allows a path analysis from the independent variable to the mediation variable and from the mediation variable to the dependent variable. The SEM model also allows to calculate the indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable through the mediation variable. The total degree of awareness of threats of citizenship values was the latent variable, while the dimensions of awareness of threats of citizenship values and intellectual security and psychological reactance were measured

Table 2 - Pearson correlations between the variables

جدول 2 - معاملات ارتباط بيرسون بين المتغيرات

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Psychological reactance	1					
2. Intellectual security	-0.15**	1				
3. Awareness of social threats	0.21***	0.37***	1			
4. Awareness of economic threats	0.21***	0.40***	0.82***	1		
5. Awareness of security threats	0.12**	0.28***	0.70***	0.70***	1	
6. Awareness of cultural threats	0.08	0.29***	0.64***	0.68***	0.84***	1

Notes: **p<0.01 and ***p<0.001

variables because they are unidimensional.

These analyses were conducted in RStudio (Rstudio Team, 2022). In the SEM model, we assessed model fit by comparing different fit indices including chi-square, SRMR, RMSEA, TLI, and CFI (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The SEM model is plotted using the 'lavaanPlot' package (Lishinski, 2020).

4. Results

The Pearson correlations between the variables are displayed in Table 2. Psychological reactance was negatively correlated with intellectual security (r = -0.15, p<0.001). psychological reactance was positively correlated with awareness of social threats (r = 0.21, p<0.001), awareness of economic threats (r = 0.21, p<0.001) and awareness of security threats (r = 0.12, p<0.01). Intellectual security was positively correlated with awareness of social threats (r = 0.37, p<0.001), awareness of economic threats (r = 0.40, p<0.001), awareness of security threats (r = 0.28, p<0.001) and awareness of cultural threats (r = 0.29, p<0.001).

To answer the main question, a structural equation model was estimated. In this model, direct relationship between threat of citizenship values and psychological reactance as well as

indirect relationship between threat of citizenship values and psychological reactance through intellectual reactance were estimated. This model indicated moderate fit indices. To improve model fit, modification indices were inspected. There were two correlated errors, awareness of social threats and awareness of economic threats which were highly correlated, and awareness of security threats and awareness of cultural threats which were also highly correlated. When we controlled these two correlated errors in the model, better model fit was achieved (χ^2 = 7.34, df = 6, p<0.05; RMSEA = 0.02; SRMR = 0.01; CFI = 0.99; TLI = 0.99). In this model, all the paths were significant. There was a positive relationship between threat of citizenship values and psychological reactance (β = 0.28, p<00.01). Further, intellectual security negatively mediated the relationship between threat of citizenship values and psychological reactance (β_{ind} = -0.102, p<00.01). This model is plotted in Figure 1.

5. Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between awareness of threats of citizenship values and psychological reactance, and the mediational role of intellectual security in
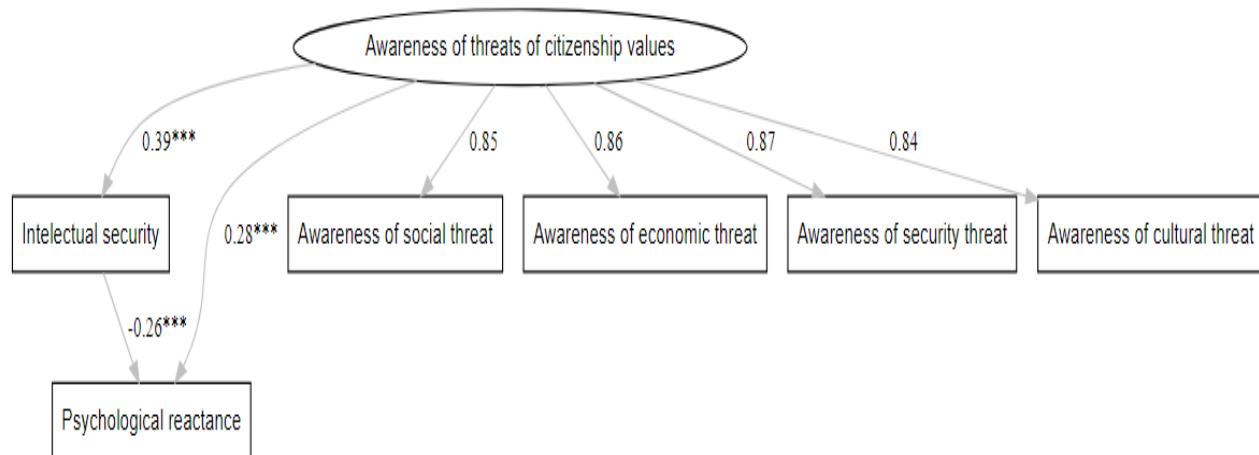
شكل 1 - نموذج المعادلة البنائية الهيكلية للتنبؤ بالتمرد النفسي

Figure 1- *SEM model predicting psychological reactance*

this relationship. There was a negative correlation between psychological reactance and intellectual security, and a positive correlation between psychological reactance and awareness of threats of citizenship values. The main findings revealed that awareness of threats of citizenship values was positively associated with psychological reactance. Further, this relationship was negatively mediated by intellectual security.

The positive relationship found between awareness of threats of citizenship values and psychological reactance corroborates prior research. There is established evidence that any threat to one's freedom of actions or thoughts activates psychological reactance. As people are always threatened by other people, there will always be activation of psychological reactance in those threatened people (Steindl et al., 2015). Studying the moderators of psychological reactance theory, Quick, Scott, and Ledbetter (2011) reported that threat was positively related to trait reactance. Choice-threatening messages about smoking were also found to predict psychological reactance, which increased the smoking behaviors (Miller et al., 2006). This is because when people are aware of a threat, they use psychological reactance as a defense mechanism, trying to restore the threatened freedom (Quick, 2012).

This relationship might be also explained by the shared relationship of threat to citizenship values and psychological reactance with extremism. The awareness of threat to people's cultural or ethnic identity was related to extremism (Obaidi et al., 2018; Obaidi et al., 2019). Others have argued that these threats to people's cultural, ethnic or religious identity can cause extremist defensive reactions (Ozer & Obaidi, 2022). Similarly, psychological reactance is related to extremism because people with high psychological reactance would resist

to anti-radicalism messages (Bélanger, 2021)I8 additian, A study on Pakistani youth revealed that when presented with secular curriculum, youth with psychological reactance tended to have more radicalized ideology (Sajjad et al., 2017). Psychological reactance was also associated with obsessive passion for a cause (Bélanger et al., 2021). Intellectual security negatively mediated the relationship between threat and psychological reactance. Intellectual security protects people from being misled in the face of threat to their will and culture (Almahaireh et al., 2021). As such, when individuals are threatened, the degree of their intellectual security will play an essential role in determining whether they will display deviant behaviors or not. Many people have acknowledged that intellectual deviation is the most dangerous threat to security, and intellectual security plays an important role in mitigating intellectual deviation (Abdel-Nour, 2021). Others have also argued that intellectual security was an important factor for a secure and stable life (Al-Haidar, 2001). Putting emphasis on the importance of intellectual security for students, Al-Sulaiman (2006) recommended promoting intellectual security at different stages of education. Intellectual security also plays an important role in this era of globalization where people are threatened by immigration, acculturation, loss of jobs and uncertainty, which may lead people to have deviant behaviors. Abdelkader (2022) found a negative correlation between intellectual security and extremism. Others argued that absence of intellectual security opens doors for extremist behaviors (Al-azawi, 2017). This evidence shows that intellectual security is a concept that havse to be instilled in youth.

This study has limitations that have to be acknowledged. First, the design of the study was cross-sectional. longitudinal designs may bring

better insights. Thenefor Future research should use these kinds of designs. There is a scholarly debate about the use of cross-sectional design for mediation analysis, arguing that it may yield unexpected results (Maxwell & Cole, 2007; Maxwell et al., 2011). Nonetheless, many researchers still use cross-sectional designs to conduct the mediation analyses (MacKinnon & Fairchild, 2009), probably because of the cost burden. Second, this study used a convenience sample. Random sampling methods should be used in future research. Third, the data collection was held through online medias, which allows to reach many and diverse respondents, but this may lead to contextual effects because situations respondents were in when they completed the survey (Deuling & Burns, 2017). Fourth, this study used self-reported data and this hase been associated with common-method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). It is suggested for future research to also include objective measures, for example those observed directly on the field.

This study was the first to investigate the relationship between awareness of threat of citizenship values and psychological reactance, and the mediation role of intellectual security. These relationships might be culture-sensitive, sofuture research should investigate cultural differences in these relationships. Further, it would be very important for future studies to examine how to design effective interventions to instill intellectual security.

6. Recommendations

Intellectual security played an important role in mitigating the impact of awareness of threat of citizenship values on psychological reactance. Therefore, it is recommended that this construct of intellectual security be instilled in young people. For example, schools should include in their curriculums curriculum programs of intellectual security.

This study yields also practical implications for educational institutions, policy makers, and counselors for whom intellectual security could be the right emphasis when it comes to designing policies to prevent deviant behaviors in students and young people in general.

7. Conclusion

This study contributed to the literature by establishing a relationship between awareness of threat of citizenship values and psychological reactance, and by showing that intellectual security can play a mediating role. It seems that intellectual security could mitigate the negative thoughts or deviant ideation that people could experience when they are threated. Therefore, it is important to instill intellectual security in young people. Programs to teach intellectual security in educational institutions should be emphasized.

Conflict of interest
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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