The level of satisfaction of psychological needs as a function to predict the attitude towards extremism amongst university students

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Abstract

The study aimed to investigate the level of psychological needs satisfaction and the students' attitudes towards extremism at the faculty of the college of education in Kuwait University. Further aim was to discover the possibility to predict students' attitudes towards religious, political and social extremism based on their level of satisfaction of psychological needs. In order to achieve the goals of the study, two scales were used, attitudes towards extremism scale and psychological needs scale, on a sample of 897 male and female students of Kuwait University, who were chosen randomly. A variety of statistical methods were used in order to obtain study findings. The results of the study indicated a statistically significant relationship between students' attitudes towards extremism and students' gender, in favour of male students. The study also showed that students' attitudes towards extremism can be predicted by knowing the level of psychological needs satisfaction.

Keywords: Attitudes, psychological needs, extremism;

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1. Introduction

The world is witnessing rapid, successive developments and changes across all aspects of life, with such situations having subsequently cast a shadow over the social arena. Special values and norms as held by societies have been affected and have shifted in line with such changes, which could potentially lead people to experiencing feelings of tension, stress and psychological distress that could ultimately exceed their limits, with some such individuals unable to adjust and adapt. This inability could lead them to insurgency. Insurgency takes many forms, one of which is extremism, which similarly encompasses a number of other forms within its umbrella, including religious extremism, political extremism, social extremism, rejection, rebellion, violence and aggression, amongst others. Studies suggest that a number of different psychological variables could provide reasons as for why the attitude towards extremism could be rationalised.

Furthermore, it is recognised that the attitude towards extremism may also be related to the extent to which young people achieve their psychological needs. The individual aims at fulfilling a number of different goals in mind of achieving their needs at this stage, whilst also reducing psychological tension (Altayeb, 1993; Badr, 1998; Hijazi, 2011). Importantly, youth are recognised as being the most vulnerable group when it comes to extremism; they are anxious and tense as they search for a specific role in society and consider a goal to set for their lives. On the other hand, it is also possible that such a population may feel that they do not fit in with society and therefore feel that they do not belong, meaning they are more likely to develop behaviours that conflict with social values and are thus described as extremists. According to Bernard (2005), a number of Arab youth who have been seen to adopt extremism were originally ordinary youth who could not satisfy their psychological needs across their societies, which may have had a number of different negative impacts on their behaviour – some of which may not be identifiable – causing them to feel pushed to extremism with the view that it might satisfy their psychological needs and accordingly help them to achieve happiness.

The stability of peoples and civilisations' emergence and growth does not depend on what countries possess in terms of natural resources and physical energies as much as there needs to be the presence of human resources of creative minds and creative skills. Much of the responsibility for preparing the manpower needed for social and economic development plans can be seen within educational institutions in different countries, where universities are recognised as being the most important institutions (Alnaji, 1999). By examining youth across the university stage, they were found to represent the future of society and were ultimately recognised as the cornerstone upon which progress is built in all fields and are recognised as the most vital, active and persuasive when it comes to work and giving (Larton 2005; Richard, 2005; Staub, 2006). Generally, It was argued that religious fundamentalism, as well as state terrorism, needs to be addressed in schools; thus, schools have a potential role in averting the more negative and violent forms of extremism in a country. It examines the nature of extremism such as identity formation and religious belief, radicalisation, faith schools and the myth of equal value; justice, revenge and honour; and free speech, humour and satire (Davies, 2008). It is with this taken into consideration that the interest in satisfying youth needs at the university level may have the effect of preventing them from the danger of extremism that could harm them and their societies. The phenomenon of extremism amongst youth at the university level is noted; this may be owing to a lack of satisfaction in psychological needs, such as the need for self-actualisation, social interaction, achievement, knowledge and others (Alfaramawi,

2008). A number of different researchers have agreed that depriving university students of satisfying their needs could lead to extremism in the individual's pursuit to satisfy their different psychological needs (Alshaykh, 1983; Afifi, 2007; AlBadrana & Bani Fayad, 2011; Ibrahim, 2008).

1.1. Importance of the study

This study derives its importance from the pronounced emphasis and attention directed towards the subject, which deals with the psychological attitude towards extremism as demonstrated amongst students at the university level and its relationship to their psychological needs. The study also derives its significance from the recognised standing of the category at its core, namely youth at the university level. The pace of life is one consideration, which, in turn, is seen to affect various aspects of religious, intellectual and political life, and which subsequently reflects the lack of opportunities to satisfy the needs of young people in general and youth at the university level in particular, including the pressures on education and jobs. For the future and in mind of achieving openness to the cultures of others, which could result in the attitude of university youth to extremism, this work is believed to hold much value and is being well positioned in providing contributions in this field of study.

Due to the seriousness of the phenomenon of extremism on society, the researcher considers the urgency to investigate this phenomenon in the context of Kuwait. To the researcher's knowledge, no studies have been conducted in this regard in the context of Kuwait. The results of this study may provide decision-makers and officials in educational and community institutions with a better, more in-depth and wide-ranging understanding of the phenomenon of extremism, which could, in turn, provide various opportunities in regards to making decisions based on scientific grounds, in mind of curbing the phenomenon of extremism in Kuwait. The problem of the study can be summarised in relation to the importance of answering the following question: 'To what extent could the level of satisfying psychological needs predict the level of attitude towards extremism amongst university students?'

1.1. Theoretical framework
1.1.1. The term 'psychological needs'

Psychological needs constitute a subject that has attracted the attention of researchers for many years, ranging from McDougall through to Freud and Maslow. Physiological need is a term that was consequent to explain the foundation for motivation. This term is the basic foundation of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Physiological needs are considered the first step in internal motivation according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This theory states that humans are compelled to fulfil these physiological needs first in order to pursue intrinsic satisfaction on a higher level (Lambert, 2018). If these needs are not achieved, it leads to an increase in displeasure within an individual. In return, when individuals feel this increase in displeasure, the motivation to decrease these discrepancies increases physiological needs as a state which alludes to the unpleasant decrease in pleasure and the increase for an incentive to fulfil a necessity. In order to pursue intrinsic motivation higher up Maslow's hierarchy, physiological needs must be met first. This means that if a human is struggling to meet their physiological needs, then they are unlikely to intrinsically pursue safety, belongingness, esteem and self-actualisation. The issue of psychological needs presents a variety of explanations for the behaviours an individual experiences. At the same time, it also triggers and guides individuals' behaviours, acquiring its features from the environment an individual lives within. Psychological needs acquire their characteristics from the culture of the environment in which the individual lives.

The importance of psychological needs differs from one society to another. As an example, the individual's psychological needs differ in the context of Eastern societies than in Western societies, with the difference in psychological needs potentially existing with a single society or environment. This difference may be owing to the nature of the role played by the individual in the environment in which he lives. It may be observed that the needs of males differ from those of females; the difference in psychological needs may refer to social and educational levels within the individuals of one environment (Alwatban & Ali, 2005). Psychological needs play an important role in shaping the behaviour of the individual. The pattern of behaviour of the individual depends largely on their satisfaction in line with psychological needs and their sense of stability and psychological security (Almafdy, 1994; Alradaan, 2017, 2018). Some hold the view that society and its culture has a role to play in establishing the way in which people satisfy their needs. As an example, in some Western countries, particularly in the case of the United States of America, as an example, it is easy to achieve independence, which is one of the most important psychological needs. On the contrary, it is not easy for an individual to achieve his or her need for belonging or community there, and it is sometimes difficult to achieve the need for independence in Arab countries whilst the need to belong is facilitated by the nature of the Arab society, with customs and traditions potentially imposing restrictions when it comes to achieving psychological needs (Staub, 2006).

The inability to satisfy psychological needs could weaken the internal motivation of the individual, which may, in turn, reduce the individual's overall access to a state of integration of personality and social growth, which can subsequently limit the development processes; this may include internal motivation and individual building standards, values and the behaviour of the community. Satisfying psychological needs leads to independence and a sense of belonging, with failure to satisfy such needs potentially leading to a sense of dispersion, alienation and psychological inability to unite and integrate with the community (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan et al., 1991). Psychological needs are defined as those needs that are related to the psychological equilibrium of the individual, where satisfying such needs leads to an individual experiencing psychological stability and alleviating the stress resulting from deprivation (Abdulrahman, 1998). It is also defined as a natural desire that the individual aims to satisfy in order to achieve psychological balance and regularity in life (Abu Allam, 2004). Psychological needs are broken down into basic and secondary needs: basic needs include the need for food, drink, gender, shelter and security; secondary needs include independence, a sense of belonging, self-actualisation, knowledge, achievement and others.

Murray believes that the need is the driving force of human behaviour, and further maintains that the need is a complex of a concept in an area within the brain and is associated with underlying physiological processes. Murray imagines that needs are stimulated internally or externally, and that, in both cases, need leads to activity carried out by the individual in order to satisfy those needs. The presence of need can be identified through several indicators, the most important of which include the effect of the behaviour or the end result, the method used to reach the learned behaviour, the response to a particular type of alert, the expression of a particular emotion or feeling and pleasure in satisfaction or distress in non-satisfaction (Hall & Lenthie, 1978, 231–236). Murray has highlighted needs in terms of their characteristics and accordingly classified these into basic needs and secondary needs, emphasising the physiological processes associated with psychological processes, and stating that satisfying physiological needs are the basis for stimulating one's behaviour to satisfy secondary psychological needs. Murray believes that the need for self-actualisation and the need for

achievement are amongst the most important psychological needs in the individual, and defines the need for self-actualisation as the main component in driving the behaviour of the individual and in the formation of attitudes. He also defines the need for achievement as the ability of the individual to achieve a difficult task or control some difficult conditions and ability to overcome obstacles that may face individuals' self-actualisation (Petri & Govern, 2004).

Rogers holds the view that the most genuine and strong psychological need is self-actualisation, with this need seen to be a fundamental tendency to fight when confronted with the threat of self-actualisation, and then moving towards maturity. He further adopts the stance that self-actualisation is the primary driver of one's own behaviour, with satisfying other needs only a prelude to satisfying the basic need of self-actualisation. Rogers (1961) believes that the hypothesis that man works quietly towards self-actualisation and that growth is completely false, and it is true that man moves through struggle and pain towards self-actualisation and empowerment (Kyle, 2014). He believes in the positive optimism of man and that people may act aggressively against society – not because of their bad nature but rather to deny their right to self-actualisation (Rogers, 1961). Corey (2005) further believes that the need for self-actualisation is easily hindered if the right environment for growth is not present and the individual becomes frustrated and unable to achieve it. It is one of the most important human needs to survive and to continue to work. Communities are advanced by those who have a great need for self-actualisation, with failure to achieve self-actualisation potentially, leading the individual to a satisfactory state of vanity and selfishness that could potentially harm the individual and lead him to collapse, rebellion and extremism against society (Ahmad, 2003).

Maslow sees the needs hierarchically with gradual levels and believes that human needs, in general, can be divided into two important parts: basic needs (physiological needs and need for security) and secondary needs (need for love and belonging, need for self-esteem and need for self-actualisation) (Lambert, 2018). The need for self-realisation is ranked at the top of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Ahmad, 2003; Jaber, 1990). Maslow further believes that people do not move in the right direction towards self-actualisation unless their basic needs are met – and then only if they have the right environment to reach the stage of achievement and goals accomplishment (Kassin, 2003). Maslow identifies self-actualisation as the individual seeks to reach an advanced level of achievement of his abilities, talents and abilities, where the individual reaches psychological stability by adapting to the environment and society (Alsarsi & Abdelmaqsood, 2000).

The self-determination theory (SDT) considers that psychological needs are necessary in order to achieve healthy growth and functional effectiveness. If such needs are satisfied permanently, the person will then grow and work effectively, with the capacity to enjoy health and well-being. If frustrated, however, this could ultimately affect the health and effectiveness of the individual. In this vein, mental and psychological disorders, prejudice towards others and aggressive and abusive behaviours can be understood as reactions resulting from the frustration of secondary psychological needs that humans need (Deci & Ryan, 1991). This theory assumes that there are three basic and comprehensive psychological needs: the need for independence, the need for belonging and the need for efficiency. These needs are referred to as basic psychological needs and are seen to be the cornerstone of all SDT areas. Such needs are also believed to form the basis of cognitive evaluation theory, which emphasises the impact of social factors on the motivation of individuals and their psychological stability, as well as the way in which the social context, social relationships,

communication and social interaction affect self-actualisation and psychological growth within the dynamics of the human psyche, in addition to the correlation of satisfaction of such psychological needs with effective performance, the balanced mental health of the individual and progress in achieving their aspirations and improving their life outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

The current study focuses on the (secondary) psychological needs for many reasons: the first is owing to the fact that individuals are similar in physiological needs and vary in secondary psychological needs where the satisfaction of basic needs and the need for security are easy to achieve at the present time, particularly in a society characterised by well-being, a high standard of living and geographic and psychological security, as in the case of Kuwaiti society. It has also been found through the completion of previous studies, as well as in similar contexts to Kuwait as a Muslim and Arab society, such as through the works of Al-Badranah and Fayyad (2011), for example, that secondary psychological needs are amongst the most important drivers of extremism behaviours, the most important of which includes the need for self-actualisation and the need for achievement, the need for social communication and the need for knowledge. It is noticeable from the theoretical framework of the current study – which is seen to include the variable attitudes towards extremism and the variable of psychological needs – that there is a clear interaction between the two variables, where such a relationship can be explained by the fact that failure to satisfy these psychological needs may affect the behaviour and attitudes of the individual, especially for young people, where the need to satisfy such needs is concentrated (Faye & Sharp, 2008) due to its impact on the proper development of the growth of youth personality and balance; thus, mental health can be achieved in this category, while on the contrary – and also in the case of failure to satisfy these mental psychological needs – this could lead to a lower level of mental health, as well as the presence of negative psychological deposits, psychological preparations for getting mental disorders, tendencies towards aggression, rebellion against society and the tendency and attitude towards extremism.

Community psychology emerged as a reaction to mental health practice that focused on individual factors and unduly neglected the relationship between the individual, their context and the wider dynamics of community life (Fondacara & Weinberg, 2002). Community psychology represents a paradigm shift away from a 'victim-blaming' approach to explore the impact interrelated systems have on an individual's functioning (Felner, Felner, & Silverman, 2000). It embodies the application and practice of psychology outside the traditional, compartmentalised boundaries of clinic-based services (Orford, 1992). It aims to move away from individual blame to explore intervention at a systemic level; as it is one of the central tenets of community psychology is promoting psychological well-being through primary prevention at different systemic levels (MacKay, 2006). Primary prevention tends to be universally focused and aims to reduce the incidence of mental health difficulties by promoting resilience and reducing risk factors in 'non-disordered' individuals (Felner et al., 2000). Effective primary prevention programmes are based within a sound theoretical framework of risk and resilience factors, considering the impact developmental processes have on risk and resilience and take an ecosystemic approach (Kellam et al., 1999).

Resilience is a the main gate for the primary prevention paradigm, it is a term that could shed light on the field of positive psychology which focus on understanding the strengths within individuals, families and communities, and what they need to flourish. Speaking of flourishing, this term could be referred to the ability among individuals possessing a notable degree of emotional well-being, happiness and satisfaction, recognising purpose in their lives, having a sense of personal growth and

evolutionary change as opposed to being victimised by life's events (Keyes, 2002). Dent and Cameron (2003, p. 205) define resilience as 'the concept that is used to describe the flexibility that allows certain children and young people who appear to be at risk to bounce back from adversity, to cope with and manage major difficulties and disadvantages in life, and even to thrive in the face of what appear to be overwhelming odds'. This definition highlights the ability of a resilient person not only to cope with challenging circumstances, but to spring back and return to a normal life balance. There are numerous definitions for resilience although the common theme appears to refer to the ability to 'bounce back' from adversity (Place, Reynolds, Cousins, & O'Neil, 2002).

In fact, the theory of resiliency is a set of ideas that discusses the impact of challenging events on individuals and families and how well they have adjusted with the traumatic experience. Masten (2001) stated talking about the origin of resilience theory. Masten discovered common traits among resilient children who have faced adversity. She figured out that resilience is a combination of what she calls 'ordinary factors' such as their relationships, individual differences, family, personality and even genetics. In other words, resiliency is the phenomena of being characterised by the ability to adapt and develop and get good outcomes, in spite of serious threats. Resilience in an individual is associated to the capability to learn how to live with ongoing fear, the ability to demonstrate positive adaptation, in spite of serious life circumstances, and the ability to adapt and challenge the experiences of life (Masten, 2001). Michael Rutter (1987) also reported that resilience is better explained in terms of the correlation between risk and protective factors. Thereby, these risk and protective factors are operating in interplay combination with a variety of individuals' development dimensions or levels, such as biological, emotional and cognitive dimensions. Risk factors can be defined as those stressors that increase the likelihood of the emotional, social or behavioural problems' development among young people (Werner & Smith, 1992). Those risk factors comprise internal and external influences, such as psychological, economic and social factors, which could affect family, community, self-esteem, self and social-identity, personality, relationship, socio-economic status and stressful life events. An essential theme within the resiliency definition to adversity is the stimulus of the resiliency process and the mediating mechanism which of the effects of these risks. The mediating mechanism in resiliency consists of variables known as protective factors. Protective factors could be defined as those environmental variables that barrier or mediate the negative influence of biological or psychosocial events over time (Werner, 1989).

Identifying risk and protective factors on the vein of extremism could briefed into a variety of factors – within person and within the environmental – which could be invested to ease and support person to overcome and mal-adjustment due to stressors. This could be made by altering thoughts, emotions and behaviour through educating individuals regarding extremism, extremism ideology and extremism groups impact on individuals' taking part in the extremism field. Guidelines for primary preventative approaches, especially in schools and university, sound to be effective in reducing risk and promoting resilience in young people and youth against extremist groups. A community psychology approach was utilised in this research to gain the views of young people about the most effective ways to develop their own thoughts about effective strategies to prevent violent extremism in school guidelines and build resilience locally (DCSF, 2009). Clinch's (2011) study attempted to identify 9-year secondary students' views through focus group design about effective strategies to prevent violent extremism. Findings support education strategy about extremism among young

people based on the risk, protective and residence terms. Summarily, depending on resilience theory, early identifying for the level of extremism among students and education programmes could guide the process of primary preventing to reduce the extremism attitudes among students and might be affective in minimising the impact of these extremism attitudes on all individual's life dimensions. The current study is considering the psychological needs theories and residence theory as a base for its goal. Thus, one of the protective risk factors is the level of the satisfaction of person psychological needs as this satisfaction could lead the person to have resilience towards extremism.

1.1.2. The term 'Attitudes'

The term 'attitude' is commonly used by individuals, groups and professionals to describe a psychological state prompting or influencing an individual to implement some form of action. It has been utilised in the field of social psychology for a number of years and is considered to be of pivotal importance, with Allport (1935, p. 798) stating that, 'the concept of attitude is probably the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary American social psychology', and with Eagly and Chaiken (1993) further supporting this view. However, regardless of its long-term use in psychology and its history, a number of different definitions have been put forward for the concept. Attitudes have taken a prominent place in psychology in general and in social psychology in particular. This may be owing to the fact that psychosocial attitudes are the most important outcomes in the process of socialisation, and also the fact that attitudes are determinants of disciplined and organised social behaviour. Importantly, attitude may be defined as 'psychosocial readiness or cognitive neuroscience to respond positively or negatively to people, objects, topics or polemical attitudes in the environment that triggers this response' (Zahran, 2003, p. 72).

With the above in mind, it is pertinent to highlight the view of Moliner and Tafani (1997), who, when analysing attitudes and their overall nature, highlight that, regardless of the range of different definitions, there remains consensus regarding three main points: firstly, that the concept depends on a process which cannot be examined directly owing to the fact that it is inherent to the individual; secondly, the attitudinal process comprises an observable aspect in terms of the response and expressed views, which can be evaluated; and thirdly, the response of an individual with regard to an entity, element or object can be examined in terms of beliefs, emotions, feelings and the data comprised, thereby establishing behavioural intentions towards such. In this same vein, attitudes are described by Ajzen (2005, p. 3) as being 'a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution or event', although the author goes on to state that the evaluative nature of an attitude is ultimately what underpins attitude and characterises such (p. 4). Furthermore, Ajzen (2005) emphasises that there is much value associated with classifying and labelling attitude-relevant responses, such as those according to feelings, cognition and behaviour, for example, which therefore suggests that attitude may be considered as one of three different types, although all types are fundamentally evaluative in nature.

The researcher defines attitude in the present study as a fixed set of beliefs, feelings and behaviours that are of importance to individuals towards certain topics or issues and is represented by acceptance and rejection and expressed verbally or behaviourally. The definition of attitudes put forward by Triandis, Adamopoulous, and Brinberg (1971, p. 2) recognised these three elements: 'an attitude is an idea charged with emotion which predisposes a class of actions to a particular class of social situations' (p. 2). This definition relates the overall notion of attitude to the cognitive element,

the affective component, which is linked with emotion, and the tendency to action in regard to the behavioural aspect.

1.1.2.1. The components of attitudes

Ajzen (2005) argues that attitude is a 'complex' and a 'multidimensional construct' consisting of three components, namely emotional or affective, which represents the positive or the negative feelings about the object; a cognitive component, which comprises ideas and beliefs about it; and a cognitive component, relating to the tendency to behave in a particular way towards it. This three-component framework has been further illustrated through the presentation of an exemplar by Eagly and Chaiken (1993, p. 1), who explain the term 'attitudes' as being the psychological propensity communicated through assessing a particular entity with either like or dislike. As this definition suggests, evaluation may refer to various different response assessments, whether affective, behavioural or cognitive, covert or overt. Moreover, this particular description also highlights the fact that an attitude may be established and developed in direct regard to evaluative responding, thus implying that individuals do not have attitudes until they are recognised as being communicated in an affective, behavioural or cognitive response

(A) Cognitive component

The cognitive component of attitude includes all that the individual possesses in terms of cognitive operations, beliefs and thoughts in regards to attitude, as well as the arguments underpinning the acceptance of the attitude relating to the subject. The cognitive component may be divided into perceptions, concepts, beliefs and expectations. Eagly and Chaiken (1993) further highlight that cognitive responses are occasionally referred to by other terms, including cognitions, inferences, information, knowledge and opinions. Overall, an individual assessing an object in a positive way is likely to provide positive attributes, whilst negative attributes may be used for negative attitudes. Importantly, the attributes linked with the object are recognised as being either favourable or unfavourable assessments, and are therefore recognised by psychologists on an evaluative continuum, ranging from extremely negative through to extremely positive, with the inclusion of a neutral position at the centre of the scale.

(B) The effective component:

Within this component, there is the inclusion of emotions, feelings, moods and sympathetic nervous system activity experienced by individuals in direct relation to the attitude object (Ajzen, 2005; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Importantly, in the cognitive component, i.e., the thoughts network, the attitude object is positioned centrally, with each network component recognised as comprising some degree of importance, whether positive or negative. Thus, when conducting an assessment concerning the overall value of learning, it should be noted that, without valuing their direct environment and surroundings, people cannot learn, owing to the fact that environmental aspects assigned to a particular object are undoubtedly imbued with value. Accordingly, it is stated that affective responses may be either extremely positive or extremely negative, positioned according to the dimension of meaning and its perceived value. The emotional component may be identified by one's feelings and desires towards the subject, his inclination towards it or his hatred of it, or otherwise his love or hatred of it, which confirms the nature of pushing and moving on the emotional side of the attitude (Al Abdullah, 2003).

(C) The behavioural component:

The behaviour component exists in the practical response towards the attitude in some way, with Khalifa and Mahmoud (2006) clarifying that the behavioural component is based on the individual's readiness to carry out certain actions or responses that correspond to his or her directions. The majority of individuals' attitudes are shaped by the social environment belonging to him/her or otherwise by the process of socialisation as an interactive process between the individual and society. One's attitude towards specific subjects affects his behaviour owing to the fact it concerns his knowledge of the subject and his sense towards it (Zahran, 2003). This particular element represents the way in which an individual reacts to the attitude object, with further consideration to the intentions to act, as articulated in overt behaviour (Ajzen, 2005; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Such reactions may be established through the evaluative aspect of meaning, which also runs from extremely negative to extremely positive. For instance, mental health promotion may be viewed by teachers either positively or negatively, with teachers who hold the more optimistic view facilitating and encouraging any changes necessary, whilst more negative opinion holders will be more inclined to refuse to implement the required actions. It has been suggested that those who assess an object in a positive, constructive way are more likely to partake in supportive actions, whilst those holding more negative views will seek to hinder or obstruct such actions.

As can be seen from the breakdown of these elements, a vital consideration is that reactions are significantly complicated, and are not only attitude-based; for example, they might interconnect with the social situation and background of the relationship between people. Undoubtedly, there is much that is attractive about the three-component framework, although it should be recognised that an attitude may be established by an individual without the presence of all three elements. Attitudes lead to many functions at the personal and social levels, meaning individual attitudes can effectively address different life situations. The most important of these include the utilitarian function, which is seen to refer to assisting the individual in achieving particular goals and adapting to his or her social situation and community and the organisational and economic function, in which the individual responds according to the attitudes he or she adopts for the persons or ideas that determine his/her behaviour and direction in a consistent manner. Furthermore, the expressive function in which the individual's attitudes provide opportunities for self-expression, determines his/her identity in the community and avoiding isolation through the defensive function is carried out through the formation of the individual's attitudes, which means to justify internal conflicts or failure to defend himself (Nashawati, 2003).

1.1.3. The term 'extremism'

The concept of extremism is one of the concepts that remains difficult to define for many reasons, and is perhaps the most important, referring to the linguistic meaning of extremism, which is accompanied by deviation from the moderation that is relative and differs from one society to another according to the prevailing values in each society. Essentially, what one community considers extreme can be familiar to another society. In this vein, moderation and extremism depend on the environmental, cultural, religious and political variables that the society undergoes (Bayoumi, 2004). Extremism is defined as the violation of society's social and political values, which is one manifestation of personality disorders that result from the psychological pressures and conflicts of the extremist during an individual's lifetime (Alfakhrani, 1998). Extremism may also be defined as a

response in personality that expresses rejection and discontent towards what is in society. A set of characteristics of the extreme personality reflects a set of extreme methods of behaviour, such as intolerance, rigidity, intellectual inertia and alienation from others (Richard, 2005). The behaviour of the extremist person is characterised by deviation from the attribute of moderation, which is evident in the individual's hardness and the stupidity of his emotions, as well as the pessimistic view and devaluation of others, the intense rush, inability to exercise self-restraint, blind imitation, fabrication of ideas, isolation in society and demonstration of aggression. The extremist is characterised by a rigid approach that does not believe in dialogue with others, freedom of religion or dealing with foreigners. Furthermore, extremists may be identified through differences in the extent and depth of their extremist behaviour (Rashwan, 1999). Extremism is a social phenomenon adopting several forms, including tribal violence and intolerance, sectarianism, partisan, religious extremism, political extremism and social extremism (Bayoumi, 2004). Intellectual extremism defines as an out-of-the-ordinary phenomenon, which is linked to the rigidity of knowledge and intellectual closure; this may be characterised by the inability to accept any beliefs that differ from the beliefs of the same person or group (Abdulsattar, 1992). Furthermore, it was found that intellectual extremism increases the state of psychological tension experienced by the individual, which pushes him to postpone satisfying his motives and needs, with the degree of psychological tolerance reduced, where cultural and social factors play a major role in supporting attitude towards extremism, with many intellectual issues potentially contributing, whether directly or indirectly, to the phenomenon of extremism (Swaif, 1968).

The low level of culture amongst students of higher education institutions, especially in religious culture, is a natural input to extremism. The method used in religious awareness against extremism is not commensurate with the rapid spread of extremism. Young people do not find the intellectual role models that guide them in the right direction, especially with the existence of some religious extremism in some societies (Shoman, 2008). The opening up of cultural media is recognised as having a significant influence on the beliefs of young people and their intellectual and religious tendencies, which may be one of its hidden goals: to distort the image of Islam before Arabs and Muslims or to otherwise strengthen the West to extremist groups in order to impede the development and progress Arab countries may seek to achieve (Saad, 2005). The social factors influencing the formation of ideas, concepts and attitudes amongst young people have underpinning concepts that are related to the religious aspect of the family, the relationship of youth to the society, its beliefs and attitudes and the social inequalities amongst groups of society, all of which are seen to contribute greatly to the formation of abnormal ideas amongst young people (Ibrahim, 1998).

Families, communities, schools and institutions play an important role in the formation of individuals and groups; therefore, authorities need to ensure they are aware of what they want from young people and should also be aware of their mistakes in the processes of the formation of them. Importantly, extremism is always associated with the social basis from which it originates: what a community considers extreme can be familiar to another society, and what is considered extreme at one time can be familiar in another time. Moreover, the extreme person will always find himself right whilst others hold a contrasting view (Fattah, 2001).

Religious extremism may be described as extreme and excessive religious practices, religious beliefs and religious behaviours characterised by aggression, violence and militancy, which is part of the

formation of extremist religious groups in achieving their goals (Imran, 1994). Those factors that are religious in nature are recognised as being the most important of all factors in the lead to religious extremism; the lack of insight into the reality of religion and its affairs, the lack of right understanding to the reality of religion and its affairs and the lack of going deep in its secrets and understanding of its purposes – especially amongst young people – leads to excesses in the prohibition and desolation of thought and tendency to extremism (Laila, 2005). Many problems have arisen in the present age due to the lack of religious awareness amongst young people, leading them to join religious extremist groups (Alnajjar, 1998). Alesawi (1990) points out that political extremism may arise from a lack of opportunities for individuals to participate in political life, to express their views and to contribute to political decision-making. In this same vein, the works of Hassanin (1992) and Ibrahim (1998) conclude that there is a great political vacuum for Arab youth, which is encouraged by the political classes and national parties, thus contributing to the weak attractiveness and effectiveness of the political parties of the youth. Essentially, this could deprive young people in the university of political practices within the student unions; thus, they will turn to political organisations and extremist groups in order to find the freedom they crave to express their ideas, in light of the absence of the role of political and people organisations and the absence of freedom and democracy in some Arab countries. Accordingly, they turn to extremist causes in order to fulfil their demands and satisfy their goals (Hwaidi, 2001).

Several studies have considered the psychological needs of university students discussing the attitude towards extremism, some of which are centred on the relationship between the attitude towards extremism and psychological needs and demographic variables and factors affect the level of extremism among students. A work of Alshaikh (1983) aimed at drawing a comparison between the psychological needs between extremist and non-extremist (200 male and female) university students who aged between 21 and 23 years old. The study found statistical significant differences in the latent and overt needs amongst extremist students rather than non-extremist students, including, for example, the need for knowledge and social interaction, as well as the need for self-actualisation. The study found that the shortfall in terms of fulfilling psychological needs can lead extremist university students to feel frustrated, which, in turn, generates aggressive behaviours. In the same vein, losing the feeling of social status could lead persons to feel less loyal to their country, which subsequently positioned them as more likely to feel prone to extremism; therefore, this situation was found to be frustrating to such individuals, with such individuals then starting to think about rebelling and retaliating against society and practicing aggression with the difficulty of interacting with social institutions. This would then lead to them adopting an extreme attitude (Zaidan, 2001).

Congruently, a lack of satisfying the need for self-actualisation recognised as one of the most important factors leading to the formation of extremist attitudes amongst university students (Afifi, 2002; Alwatban & Ali, 2005). Correspondingly, the lack of fulfilling person's psychological security needs was identified as a significant indicator that could lead to negative religious extremism attitudes (Abdallah, 1996). Studies revealed where attitude towards extremism significantly extreme thinking was seen to be affected by the variable of gender. However, findings of some studies showed a statistical significance for the variable of gender on the level of extremism attitude, in favour of males (Abdallah,1996; Afifi, 2002); other studies identified that youth attitudes towards extremism attributed to the variable of gender, in favour of females (Mahmoud & Alshafie, 2001;

Noureddin, 2004). In fact, it could reflect a sense of danger that some research results indicated where high school student were not immune to terrorist thinking. For example, various studies concluded that religious extremism is common amongst high school male and female students (Alkhazandar, 2009; Alsubhi, 2013; Noureddin, 2004). Bernard (2005) addresses the most important motives and needs of youth affiliated to extremist groups and the most successful methods in avoiding extremism and identifying the possible methods to draw youth out of the extremist groups. Bernard's study showed that youth tend to join extremist groups owing to their own recognised failure to join civil groups in society, or otherwise as a result of feeling rejected by civil groups at high school or university. Alternatively, it could be owing to a feeling of being unable to achieve self-actualisation amongst their peers. On the other hand, Bernard found that friends would be the most important factor to leaving extremist groups, with the study confirming the impact of the degree of social interaction of extremists and their persistence in belonging to extremist communities, which further confirms the social need for interaction amongst young people. Moreover, regarding families in the Arabian Gulf, the role of these families designated to be vital in protecting their children from extremism through assuring the role of social interaction, socialisation and social non-marginalisation within the family and the community and the role of Islamic centrist education, especially towards youth, in limiting the attitude towards religious extremism. The role of family and civil society institutions in preventing terrorism and extremism was articulated as the most common reason behind youth attitude towards extremism, practically individuals' social marginalisation (Zainulabidin, 2015). In fact, extremism may not be connected to specific major for the students at the university. For instance, Kareem and Dulami (2019) reported a moderate level of extremism among students' university and that the field and the year of study have shown no difference in the students' attitudes towards extremism. Riziq (2006) also identified moderate level of religious extremism amongst university students of various faculties of Almansoura University, namely Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Law and Faculty of Commerce.

From the view of resiliency, factors such as economic factors, religion factors, social interaction and cultural factors was vocalised as substantial indicators for a lack of psychological needs satisfaction such as non-fulfil economic aspects, and the need to achieve social status might lead to political and ideological extremism (Ibrahim, 2008; Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009). Social media has its vital role in the prevalence of extremism characteristics (Albadarneh & Bani Fayad, 2011; Nisim, Halperin, Sharvit, & Hobfoll, 2009). It was found that religious extremism is the most common type of extremism amongst students and correlated with political and social factors, significantly, the need for social interaction, communication and social relationships all amongst the most prominent factors leading students towards religious extremism. Moreover, various irrational thoughts regarding social situations including dependency, absolute self-perfectionism, negative conclusions, exaggeration, acceptance by everyone and false generalisation were found to be correlated with extremism (Ahmad & Alsharkasi, 2009). Violence behaviour is also identified as one of the extremism indicators (Alsbaihi & Alrawajfeh, 2010).

1.1.4. Study questions
1. What is the level of the psychological attitude towards religious, political and social extremism amongst male and female students of the Faculty of Basic Education?

2. What is the satisfactory level of psychological secondary needs amongst male and female students of the Faculty of Basic Education?
3. Are there statistically significant differences in the psychological attitude towards extremism amongst male and female students of the Faculty of Basic Education, and could these be attributed to the sample's demographic variables, such as gender?
4. To what extent can the psychological needs of male and female students of the Faculty of Basic Education predict the level of their psychological attitude towards extremism?

2. Methods and materials

This study follows the descriptive analytical approach, which relies on the findings of the work when describing and clarifying the phenomena, and aims at identifying facts through current circumstances in order to determine the important relationships amongst the current phenomena through information-collecting, analysis and interpretation so as to achieve practical results. Objectives, population and a sample of the studies are shown below. The researcher, following a review of the related literature, has devised two scales, one for psychological needs and the other measuring psychological attitude towards extremism. Both scales were presented to a group of experts and lecturers from the psychology department at the University of Kuwait with the aim of verifying the contents of both scales. Importantly, Cronbach's alpha equation was used to calculate the reliability of both scales, with the result of the reliability coefficient found to be 0.84, which is recognised as high. In the current study, the researcher defines 'psychological needs' as the total degree the respondent achieves when answering questions pertaining to the psychological needs scale, which has been conducted for the current study. This relates to the need to self-actualisation, the need for social interaction, and the need for social status. Therefore, respondent's achievement of a score spanning from 0 to 4 on the psychological needs scale. Additionally, theoretical definitions of 'attitude' and the previous study, the researcher defines attitude as being the total degree achieved by the respondent when answering the questions of the attitudes scale, conducted for the current study. Also, theoretical definitions of attitude and the previous in consideration to extremism – which the researcher notably classifies as religious extremism, social extremism and political extremism – the researcher defines extremism, in this particular study, as the total degree the respondent achieves by answering the questions of scale.

2.1. Sampling of the study

The population of the study consists of all the faculty of students at the college of education in Kuwait University within the General Committee of Applicable Education and Training registered in the academic year 2014–2015 with a total of 17,147 male and female students, according to the committee statistics of the same year. A sample of the study was chosen through the application of cluster random sampling, with a total of 20 out of 207 classrooms chosen for the first academic semester. The sample of the study totalled 1,035 male and female students. The number of processed questionnaires totalled 897.

3. Findings and discussion

Regarding the first question: What is the level of the psychological attitude towards religious, political and social extremism amongst male and female students of the Faculty of Basic Education? In order to answer the first question, means and standard deviations were utilised to

calculate for students' responses towards psychological attitude towards extremism (*n* = 897). The mean was determined to be 2.24 with a standard deviation of 1.01, as shown in Table 1, in which the degree spanning 0–1 indicates no psychological attitude towards extremism. The range of 1–2 indicates a little psychological attitude towards extremism, whilst 2–3 presents a moderate psychological attitude towards extremism and 3–4 indicates a strong psychological attitude towards extremism. The following results were found in regards to the types of extremism. The mean value of psychological attitude towards religious extremism was found to be 2.30, with a standard deviation value of 0.98 for the sample of the study. Psychological attitude towards political extremism was found to have a mean value of 1.86, whereas standard deviation value was 0.81 and psychological attitude towards social extremism had a mean value of 2.11 and a standard deviation value of 1.07. The results show that the psychological attitude level towards extremism in general amongst male and female students of the Faculty of Basic Education was moderate, with their psychological attitude towards religious extremism found to be higher than their psychological attitude towards political and social extremism.

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation values for the psychological attitude towards extremism

Field	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	Rank
Psychological attitude towards religious extremism	897	2.30	0.98	(1)
Psychological attitude towards social extremism	897	2.11	1.07	(2)
Psychological attitude towards political extremism	897	1.86	0.81	(3)
Total degree	897	2.24	1.01	****

*Statistically significant at the level of 0.05.

Regarding the second question: Are there statistically significant differences in the psychological attitude towards extremism amongst male and female students of the Faculty of Basic Education that could be attributed to the gender variable? A *t*-test method was chosen for the independent samples of the sample responses to the scale (*n* = 897), with the results showing statistically significant differences in the level of psychological attitude towards extremism, in favour of males, as shown in Table 2. Importantly, the table shows statistically significant differences at the level of 0.05 between the means of the level of the psychological attitude attributed to the gender variable with a mean value of 2.38, in favour of males, and a standard deviation value of 1.22, in which male students were found to be more extremist than female students.

Table 2. *t*-test results to detect the differences between the means of the psychological attitude towards extremism within the sample of the study according to the gender variable

Gender	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	t	Indication level
Females	616	2.11	0.98	−6.60	0.000
Males	281	2.38	1.22		***

*Statistically significant at the level of 0.055.

In order to answer the third question: What is the satisfactory level of psychological secondary needs amongst male and female students of the Faculty of Basic Education? Means and standard deviations for the psychological needs were calculated, with the results showing, in general, that male and female students of the sample utilised in the study might not satisfy their psychologically needs to a satisfactory degree. Accordingly, the results showed a moderate increase in the degree of 'the need to satisfy psychological needs' amongst male and female students of the sample of the study, as shown in Table 3. The mean value for the need to satisfy the psychological needs for the sample of the study was found to be 2.92 with a standard deviation 0.75, in which the degree of 0–1 was seen to suggest there being no need to satisfy psychological needs, whereas 1–2 inferred a low need to satisfy psychological needs, 2–3 showed a moderate need to satisfy psychological needs and 3–4 provided a high need to satisfy the psychological needs.

The results showed that the students of the sample in the study had a moderate need to satisfy their need for social interaction with a mean value of 2.4 and a standard deviation of 0.80, with a high-level need to satisfy their need for self-actualisation with a mean value of 3.43 and a standard deviation of 0.76. Furthermore, there was a semi-high value of need to satisfy their need for social status identified with a mean value of 3.01 and a standard deviation of 0.71.

Table 3. Mean and standard deviation for the satisfactory level of psychological needs

Item	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	Order
The need for social interaction	897	2.74	0.80	(3)
The need for social status	897	3.01	0.71	(2)
The need for self-actualisation	897	3.43	0.76	(1)
Total degree	897	2.92	0.75	***

Regarding the fourth question: Do the psychological needs predict the level of psychological attitude towards extremism for university students? And to what extent can each of those needs predict the psychological trend towards extremism? After verifying that the data was linear and statistically consistent with the curve, there was the application of a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test in order to establish whether the prediction level of the psychological attitude towards extremism by satisfying the psychological needs was statistically significant (see Table 4). Furthermore, multiple linear regression equations were used (Table 5).

As shown in Tables 4 and 5, through the use of the regression coefficient value (Beta) and the signification level, we are able to predict the level of the psychological attitude, of male and female students at the Faculty of Basic Education, in regards to extremism. This is possible by establishing the satisfactory level of their needs for social interaction and social status in which the predictive level was statistically significant, whilst the results showed the satisfactory level of the need for self-actualisation as not being statistically significant for the prediction of students' level of inclination towards extremism.

It can be seen from the study findings that the phenomenon of extremism in the Arab community is the result of the sharp and profound changes experienced by the Arab society, which are seen to have stemmed from the global changes and Arab conflicts, on the other hand, coupled with the danger following the spread of the phenomenon lived by Arab societies nowadays. Importantly, and without question, the impacts of extremism are reflected across societal security, as well as its social, political and economic stability, with such impact most likely connected to entities where this phenomenon affects, in which the dangers of this phenomenon are reflected in Arab societies' nature and attitudes, especially amongst youth populations.

Table 4. Two-way ANOVA test results for the prediction level of the attitude towards extremism for the sample of the study

Item	Mean square	Df	Sum of squares	*F*	Sig
Psychological needs	15,950.912	3	5,316.971	15.660	0.000
	292,328.625	861	339.264		***
Total	308,279.538	864	0.035		

*Predictors: the need for social interaction, the need for social status and the need for self-actualisation; dependent variable: extremism.

Table 5. Results of multiple linear regression equation to predict the level of the psychological attitude towards extremism for the sample of the study

Item	Standard error	'*t*' value for the regression coefficient	Beta	Sig
The need for social interaction	0.184	6.422	0.256	0.000
The need for self-actualisation	0.238	0.507	0.022	0.461
The need for social status	0.0288	−4.691	0.288	0.000

*Statistically significant at the level of 0.05; dependent variable: level of attitude towards extremism.

In spite of the seriousness and prevalence of extremism amongst young people at the regional level, it is noted that a scarcity and lack of studies have discussed this issue. Hence, the researcher's interest in this phenomenon has come to highlight this issue and reveal the most important factors and reasons leading youth to such society-destructive phenomenon. The researcher reviewed the

theoretical literature regarding the extremism phenomenon, where the main questions of the current study emerged: What is the level of the psychological attitude towards religions, intellectual and political extremism amongst male and female students of the Faculty of Basic Education? What is the level of the need to satisfy secondary psychological needs amongst male and female students of the Faculty of Basic Education? To what extent could psychological needs predict the level of psychological attitude towards extremism amongst male and female students of the Faculty of Basic Education? Are there statistically significant differences in the psychological attitude towards extremism amongst male and female students of the Faculty of Basic Education? and Can these be attributed to demographic variables, such as gender?

The researcher has devised two different scales, both of which have been implemented within a sample of students from the Faculty of Basic Education in Kuwait. The data were then collected and analysed in order to answer the questions.

The most important findings of the current study are detailed as follows:

The prevalence of the psychological attitude towards extremism amongst male and female students at the faculty of the college of education in Kuwait University, with a moderate degree, can be attributed to the view that extremism represents an important and strong indicator for university youth rejection and the rebel model against the different forms of power surrounding university students. It is considered that all of this forms pressure groups in terms of the university and its rules, study pressures, parents pressures outside the university, societal pressures, including culture, traditions, rules and responsibilities, which the university youth consider to be a source of pressure that ultimately hinders their freedom and decreases the space within their psychological entity, inducing the desire to rebel and get rid of it.

The results have also shown that the degree of psychological attitude towards religious extremism was greater than the degree towards social and political extremism, with this result agreeing with the results of previous studies (Banjar, 2006; Riziq, 2006; Ibrahim, 2008). The obvious prevalence of religious extremism amongst university students, as the researcher maintains, could be owing to the view that religious extremism may be attributed to some religious factors, such as the wrong understanding of religious matters, which could lead youth to tend to religious extremism (Laila, 2005). Many problems have emerged in the present age as a result of the lack of religious awareness amongst youth, which reflects the failure of institutions of higher education to perform their religious function; this could have led students to seek religious science from multiple sources, encouraging them to join religious extremist groups to learn from them.

Importantly, a lack of religious awareness programmes in the syllabus, combined with insufficient religious curriculums prior to the university stage, a lack of religious seminars in colleges and general guiding lectures relating to anti-extremism, and the absence of lecturers' religious instruction for students as a result of crowded lecturing schedules present the most fundamental factors of weak religious awareness amongst youth at university (Alnajar, 1998).

The researcher believes that religious extremism is one of the main reasons that could potentially lead to political and social extremism since the characteristics of religious extremists qualifies them to become prey of political extremism, with some of these features including that extremists are hard-headed and do not allow others to express their opinions, holding the belief that they are right

and others are totally wrong, and challenging religion scientists and their advisory opinions (Fatwa). In this case, most extremists are half-educated, and their source of learning involves listening to preachers either directly or through modern technologies. They also isolate themselves from society and abandon governmental jobs. Furthermore, their mental level is characterised by a rigid method, not thinking, being unable to adopt any thought that differs with their own or what their group believes. They are also unable to mediate, innovate or think (Alzahrani, 2013). Such characteristics qualify youth to easily adopt political extreme thoughts.

The current study has found statistically significant differences in the level of the psychological attitude towards extremism, in favour of males. This means that male students are more extremist than female students. These results agree with the results garnered in the works of Abdallah (1996), Afifi (2002), Noureddin (2004), Alsbaihi and Alrawajfeh (2010) and Albadarneh and Bani Fayyad (2011). This can be attributed to differences in nature, parent treatment and socialisation, as received by both genders in a traditional Arab society in general and the masculine Gulf society in particular in which males are distinguished when they act aggressively, bold or courageously, whilst females are rewarded by shy behaviour, which encourages them to act negatively, thinking that it is a feminine behaviour to satisfy others and be admired. If we looked at this from a psychological standpoint, this satisfies the female's need for acceptance, which could encourage her to live in a way that may be optional by her rather than being forced, separately and away from any involvement in society's problems and challenges. She believes that being negative is the most important feature of her, as a female, with males being supported if their behaviour is seen to be aligned with the masculine behaviour pattern. Furthermore, females receive support for their behaviour if it is seen to be aligned with known female behaviours within traditional Arab and Gulf societies; therefore, each of them forms their own personality in a different way. Socialisation plays an important role in determining the extremist personality, with aggressive and bullying behaviour towards children leading them to rebel against authorities, be aggressive and become extremists, ultimately ending up emotionally imbalanced.

The results of the current study disagree with some of the previous works carried out in this field, which have discussed the differences between genders in extremism, such as that carried out by Mahmoud and Alshafie (2001), which similarly found statistically significant differences in extremism between males and females, in favour of females, with the lack of alignment in results potentially referring to the difference in the sample's nature and the tools utilised by the studies in comparison to the current study. In addition, some studies have not discussed psychological attitude towards social, religious and political extremism, which is discussed in the current study.

This work has been successful in establishing that male and female students of the sample of the study may not satisfy their needs to a satisfactory level, and possess a moderate degree of need of satisfying their needs for social satisfaction, self-actualisation and social status. This may highlight the sample of the study as having a moderate degree of dissatisfaction when it comes to satisfying their previous needs, with such a lack potentially requiring attention, and finding methods and techniques to satisfy such needs for university students. In this vein, the role of the university to create awareness programmes and provide more activities to focus on satisfying such needs outside of the campus becomes apparent. In this vein, it is possible to discuss the justifications provided by this study, namely that unsatisfied psychological needs could potentially lead youth to adopt a tendency towards extremism (Alshikh, 1983).

The study has also found that we can predict the level of students' psychological attitude towards extremism by identifying the level of satisfying their need for social interaction and social status, in which the prediction level was statistically significant. The results showed that the satisfaction level of the need for self-actualisation was not statistically significant in predicting students' psychological attitude towards extremism. This points out that unsatisfied youth in regards to their need for social interaction and achieving social status within the community could lead them towards extremism – more so than their need for self-actualisation. This is psychologically obvious, with the individual who feels that he does not belong to the community in which he lives, not being able to socially interact with his society members through social relations and not feeling his status and value all, potentially resulting in feelings of psychological insecurity. Therefore, the individual will not feel valued and will not have any desire to achieve (Alradaan & Alswaileh, 2014).

The human being is a social creature who is continuously striving to belong and connect with others in such a way so as to fulfil special needs and to reduce emotional tension of feeling isolated from a group in which individuals need to belong. These needs increase in line with the individual feeling threatened and marginalised from groups, especially within communities. This is described as intellectual isolation, where the individual lacks democracy and dialogue, and there are no opportunities to express or participate in decision-making. Extremist groups make use of such feelings of social marginalisation amongst youth to attract them in to adopting extremism, with the university atmosphere, in some universities and colleges, encouraging the prevalence of extremism aspects amongst youth by not providing them with sufficient opportunities to express their opinion or participate in leadership. All of this contributes to the tendency to adopt extremism, coupled with the lack of students practicing in activities and services, a lack of dialogue between students and the lecturers committee – more particularly, between the faculty management, the university and the students – in addition to restricting students' freedom to practice the activities that they want. Moreover, there is can be a pronounced lack of efficiency and experience for most of workers in the field who are supposed to be more understanding of those students, getting preoccupied with educational activities without paying attention to the benefit of students' activities and how they can be supported worsens the situation.

By reviewing the related studies carried out in the recent past, the researcher notes that some studies discussing the psychological attitude towards extremism have focused on adults (Abdallah, 1996) or on younger ages, such as high school or middle school children (Almafdi, 1994). Importantly, some focus should have been directed towards the youth population at university, which has been affirmed by most studies as the prevailing group, as shown in the works of Albadarneh and Bani Fayyad (2011) and Afifi (2002).

From a statistical point of view, irrespective of psychological needs predicting the level of psychological attitude towards extremism, in which the prediction value was found in this work to be statistically significant, this value could be weak and does not exceed 10%, which means that there might be other factors and variables playing a significant role in identifying psychological attitude towards extremism and its prediction. Importantly, the researcher might not have addressed these factors. Through examining extremism, especially amongst youth, it has been determined that this can come as a result of various reasons, including psychological, social, political and economic, all of which have not been addressed by the researcher. The triggering factor of extremism may refer to youth characteristics, features and what they have been through in terms of socialisation, their

parental relationship and friends, in addition to the community in which they have lived, with all standing in contrast to the values and paradox between youth reality and their ambitions, aspirations and unclear views about the future (Roland, 2005).

Accordingly, from a psychological point of view, the researcher suggests the need to study the psychological factors of youth attitude towards extremism as connected to youth psychology, with consideration directed towards, for example, psychological determinants that motivate youth in terms of physical structure, preparations for psychological disorders and psychological survey for psychiatrists, which could encourage youth to adopt extremism.

As has been established in this study, youth populations seek identity, appreciation and self-actualisation, and if this has not been found within their families or universities, they will then try to find it within other groups or institutes. In order to determine the extremism factors related to youth, there is a need to set the features of the youth stage at the fore and to take these into consideration when conducting any research, in addition to the socialisation processes and other factors, such as desire to achieve self-actualisation across students' community, considering that aggressive behaviours might be a way of achieving fame or leadership.

Emptiness and a lack of self-esteem amongst youth in government authorities, especially in universities, combined with an absence or lack of role model (either at home, school, university or work) could make them feel psychologically distressed within these communities, causing them to back off and become indignant against society. In this case, they might express their withdrawal through violence and extremism, and by joining extremist institutes in order to prove themselves and their psychological identity. Furthermore, there are other factors that could lead youth towards extremism, such as parental treatment, socialisation, parents' level of education and psychological features related to youth themselves, such as psychological alienation, psychological loneliness, friendships and other issues related to self-actualisation and development (Saleh & Alqurashi, 2013).

As the researcher is experienced as a member of the lecturing committee for university students and has worked in psychological and academic consultations, it may be stated that there might be another psychological theory related to psychological needs in other fields of research, as in the case of the social learning theory of Bandura (McLeod, 2016) and rational emotional behaviour therapy for scientist Ellis and Dryden (2007), as well as a number of other theories that could potentially be better positioned and therefore more capable and effective when it comes to understanding and interpreting the phenomena discussed by the current research, which is attitude towards extremism and its prediction from rational and logical perspectives within the cognitive formation. Owing to the fact that this theory is based on irrational and illogical thoughts, this could lead one to anomalous and extremist behaviours, which might cause a lot of psychological and mental illness. Such theories might be employed in designing awareness and training programmes based on the need to encourage the fight against irrational and extremist ideology, replacing it with more logical approaches.

The researcher, according to research theories and methodologies, and in line with so-called social desirability (Van, 2008), holds the view that the use of a questionnaire or scale in the research helps when it comes to attracting positive responses that are aligned with general taste and give a good impression amongst respondents, since the respondents do not express their real feelings when asked about their attitudes towards extremism because it could make them feel accused. Therefore,

the researcher recommends using another tool that reflects their feelings without fear, such as observation, or developing another scale to detect attitudes towards extremism by asking respondents about the prevalence of extremism amongst youth or their colleagues in the university from their perspective. It is considered that this could decrease their concern when completing the questionnaire and answering the scale paragraphs.

4. Recommendations

A greater politicisation of young people through the forging of critical (dis)respect and the use of a secular basis of human rights, specifically forms of citizenship education, is needed, which not only provides skills to analyse the media and political or religious messages, but also enables critical idealism to be fostered (Davies, 2008). The researcher suggests that the university – before any other social facilities – could have a great and effective role in limiting the phenomenon of university youth extremism since universities are at the top of the educational hierarchy as beacons for society, holding the responsibility of preparing a specialised workforce for economic, social and developmental plans. Furthermore, universities should continuously work on developing this workforce, feeding it with all that is new and modern and protecting it from cultural invasion and ideological corruption in order to always be prepared and not limited to some extent of knowledge, experience or skills. It is known that the success of universities is measured by the services it provides to the community, with the most important messages and visions the universities seeking to achieve, in addition to education and scientific research, recognised as social service, defining, promoting and developing culture.

Today, universities are living the problems of their communities and playing an important role in protecting people and nations across different stages of social and economic development. In this regard, universities are just like any social entity and can affect and be affected by security, economic and social influences and powers. Universities have essentially become the main tools of society, interacting with its requirements to solve its problems and achieve a better life for its children. Accordingly, it may be seen that its role has become the most important in achieving all aspects of development.

Undoubtedly, amongst the most important strategic issues that clearly affect the development of societies are national security issues that have been associated with societies since the birth of man and which provide total security for the country and citizen at the same time. More recently, the world has witnessed security challenges, represented through the presence of terrorism, which have threatened social stability. This challenge has resulted in the recognised importance of employing knowledge and scientific research in universities in the service of national and strategic security issues at the current stage due to the conviction that these issues have direct effects on the life and security of individuals. The most important amongst these is national security and what societies face today from the crime of terrorism, which is the crime of the century (Awad, 2003).

Hence, the role of the university is to establish ways to confront the phenomenon of extremism. It is not only a complex and threatening phenomenon, but is also threatening youth, who are the present and the future; therefore, all social institutions should work together to confront and deal with this dangerous phenomenon. In this vein, the most important methods for dealing with extremism could be recognised through opening dialogues with youth and teenagers by scientists and advocates to express their minds, establishing the root of the doctrine of crises, finding answers and compromises

to the problems of reality and its developments. This could be carried out through embedding educational curriculums with sufficient religious subject to form the moderate Muslim personality. Also, Muslim countries need to create an atmosphere of freedom and advice so that the youth will not find other ways of expressing criticism and objection. In addition, encouraging Islamic movements to practice self-criticism and intellectual review and justifying the extremism suspicions with the religious method, intellectual sense and moderately would be needed. Ways such as finding a correct and accepted reference, which could gain youth's trust, correct belief education in line with the Holy Quran and Prophet Mohammad education to His nation and especially to His companions, empowering educational institutions and unifying their role in confronting the corrupted ideology, especially across universities, families, schools and mosques, educating university youth to balance soul needs and body needs, acknowledging the importance of scientific and cultural changes in serving the community and its needs and purifying curriculums within the Arab and Islamic world from remaining intellectual invasion, could work effectively in altering and reducing the extremism attitudes.

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