Reviewer’s report

Title: From social adversity to sympathy for violent radicalization: The role of depression, religiosity and social support

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Reviewer: Wilfried Cools

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From a statistical point of view, the authors have used the mediation package in R to establish whether each of three variables could be a mediator, using a mixed model to express the direct effect.

The description of the models is not always clear, whether each potential mediator is considered in a separate model for example (or jointly, and with or without inter-relations?). Simply specifying the actual equations that are considered would be of great help to understand the process. Typically in mediation analysis the relations are estimated and visualized, which would also be of help to understand what is and is not modeled. The use of DAG is completely unclear, does it simply visualize the relations or does it estimate them, possibly using Bayesian Network analysis ? And how are the estimates then used ? It appears that a simple variable selection focusing on interaction effects within a mixed model is what should be done.

While significant, differences of 2 to 3 on an SVR scale of 0 - 66 does not seem that important ? Can the authors discuss why such differences matter ?

Why cronbach alpha's are provided, even after suggesting subscales ?
If SVR values tend to be low, does it have consequences on the normality of errors (skewness) ?
If depression/anxiety is high, does that suggest these are atypical students and can you generalize from them ?

Conclusion: while the analysis are not shown to be wrong, the authors also do not appear convincing that the analysis are correct either. Maybe a statistical expert can be asked to help communicate and if necessary improve the analysis ?

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