

ABSTRACT

The current research investigated faith development in Muslims along two dimensions: stages and contexts. In order to study stages, it tested Fowler's (1981) faith development theory and its modifications from stage to style approach (Streib, 2005) to observe movement from fundamentalist to mature faith orientations. To study contexts in which Muslim faith is understood, the research used qualitative methodologies to inductively explore the contents of Islamic religious faith as well as the cognitive and psychological processes involved in various understandings and constructions of Islam. The inductively explored indigenous data was analyzed in the light of faith development paradigm and other research in areas of religiosity and fundamentalism. The research laid a special focus on Muslim fundamentalism in all its phases. The study explored expressions of fundamentalist style in Islamic culture, the cognitive and psychological processes involved in these understandings, and arrived at a model of Muslim fundamentalism. The dissertation comprises of four studies with methodology both qualitative and empirical depending upon research questions at each step. Study 1 involved conducting faith development interviews with a small sample of Muslims from prominent religious affiliations to build case profiles and to present four cases representative of different stages/styles of faith. It also drew findings concerning Muslim fundamentalism and its correlates drawing both on faith development theory and other research surrounding fundamentalism. Study 2, using Inductive Thematic Analysis, extended into contents of faith of the same participants to analyse meaning making of Islamic beliefs taking a relational perspective of faith development theory, i.e., how do various understandings of Islamic religious faith shape the relation of self with others and which content makes Muslims closed (characteristic of fundamentalist orientation) and open

(characteristic of mature faith orientations) to other faith orientations and communities. Study 3, using grounded theory, conducted investigations of various constructions of Islamic faith in Pakistan building on preliminary question from faith development interview about concept of mature faith. The findings unleashed the cognitive, psychological and social processes involved in fundamentalist Islamic faith and also approaches and orientations beyond it. The various approaches to Islam brought forward in the current findings were analyzed in relation to previous research placing various versions of Islam along faith development stages. Study 3 also resulted in a model of Muslim fundamentalism grounded in indigenous understandings of Islam. Building on this model, Study 4 conducted both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis and arrived at a four factor model of Muslim fundamentalism namely Totalitarianism, Cognitive Orientation, Authoritarianism and Exoteric religiosity. Urdu translation of Religious Schemas Scale was also administered to find out correlations between two measures and to investigate religious styles in the sample. Besides gender differences, age wise differences were calculated on both measures. Results favoured a styles approach to faith development where faith development did not follow a hierarchical and chronological age- related pattern (stage approach) and was independent of age (style approach). Summing up the findings of all the phases, the research concluded that faith development theory offers a comprehensive paradigm to explore different faith orientations and ways of relating to the Transcendent in Muslim contexts, from fundamentalist to more reflective ways open for dialogue. Secondly, the culturally rooted constructions of Islamic faith could be meaningfully related to the concepts of faith development theory supporting the capacity of this paradigm towards indigenous grounding in different cultural contexts. Thirdly, the application of faith development theory in a highly religious and collectivistic culture led to important insights regarding faith development as, the centrality of self in faith development, the moral orientations

beyond the Kohlberg's model found in collectivistic cultures, as well as cognitive orientations as *contextualized thinking* that is relevant to various aspects of faith development as well as the new dimensions recently added to the theory (Keller & Streib, 2013). Also, the indigenous exploration of Muslim faith illuminated that fundamentalism shows both global as well as specific cultural dimensions as Totalitarianism or political radicalization. Furthermore, the local understandings highlighted the exoteric and esoteric dimensions along which religiosity and its role in fundamentalism can be understood, while relating these concepts with previous research establishing intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity. The findings on fundamentalism are discussed with reference to faith development paradigm and other research/models on fundamentalism. Overall, the current research brought together faith development theory, indigenous explorations of Islam, and other surrounding research to make inferences about various dimensions of Muslim faith development. Limitations, recommendations and implications of the research are discussed.