THE ROLE OF RELIGIOSITY IN SHAPING ATTITUDES TOWARDS CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF FEAR OF TERRORISM

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Abstract
The research investigates the attitudes towards capital punishment in the context of fear of terrorism with moderation of religiosity. This study has applied the theory of terror management to understand how religious beliefs shape the fear of terrorism and attitudes toward capital punishment. The data collection was conducted in twin cities of Pakistan i.e., Islamabad/ Rawalpindi. A sample of lawyers participated in this study. The findings of the study indicated a significant impact of fear of terrorism on capital punishment, meaning respondents favored the capital punishment for terrorists. Terror management theory offers an understanding that how religion is used as means to address humans' limitations, especially in mitigating death anxiety by addressing death awareness. Results from this study confirmed that low religiosity leads to attitudes in favor of capital punishment. While people with high religiosity use death awareness and immortality as their psychological security and do not favor capital punishment. The paper concluded by discussing findings, contributions, limitations, and implications for future research.
Key Words: Fear of terrorism, Capital Punishment, Religiosity, Terror Management Theory, Lawyers

BACKGROUND

The global increase in terrorism in recent years has heightened public fears and worries about individual safety (Sunstein & Vermeule, 2005). The fear of terrorism, which is characterized by the concern and anxiety brought on by the potential for terrorist strikes or attacks, has emerged as a significant social problem. This anxiety affects people's perception of their level of safety as well as their attitude towards numerous societal issues, including as the criminal justice system and harsh punishments like capital punishment are affected. Prior research has examined beliefs and individual characteristics that effect the attitudes toward capital punishment (e.g., Maggard, Payne, & Chappell, 2012; Unnever & Cullen, 2012). For understanding the complexity of attitude toward capital punishment it is essential to know the dynamics of the interaction between fear of terrorism and support for the capital punishment . Religion was the most important in forming attitudes towards capital punishments (Rade, Holland, Gregory & Desmarais, 2017). For example, Glenn (1990) specifies that death executions are based on religious values and these values are not only to punish the offenders but also to act on religious power. There are many supporting traditional arguments related to capital punishment such as many religions provide guides for capital punishment in many Holy Books (Rade et al., 2017). According to Jonas, Sullivan, and Greenberg (2013), religiosity which refer as Individual's religious views, believes and practices (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986; Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Greenberg, 2015) may serve as a psychological protection mechanism in wake of terrorism by reducing the existential anxiety brought on by the enhanced chance of individual's mortality. Although, many researchers have examined the impact of religiosity on capital punishment (Rade et al., 2017: Maggard et al., 2012; Unnever & Cullen, 2012) but limited attention has been paid to explore the potential impact of moderation of religiosity on the relationship of fear of terrorism and capital punishment.

This study intends to investigate how religiosity of individual moderates the relationship between fear of terrorism and support for capital punishment. By applying the Terror Management Theory (TMT), the study contributes to the current literature by identifying how religious beliefs affect people's fear to terrorism and capital punishment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nineteen and twenties centuries are typically called as the era of murder and killing which can be defined as terrorism. Terrorism is deeply injected in roots of nations and has old history (Rajput, 1990). Terrorism is a state of violence without the law (Blakesley et al, 2007). Terrorism, crimes during wars and crimes against the human have been committing from the ancients' times. Word terrorism is used to depict the behaviors which are universally condemn and mostly used for the opponents. In this modern time many states define terrorism as violence and bombing in their own state. The following definition of terrorism is enough to understand what terrorism is: to violate the rights of innocent people and use power against innocent individuals for the purpose of obtaining control over political, military parties from the other group. An innocent is one who is not guilt person and aggressor. Terrorism is always being a tool for revolution, rebellions and command or authority. Probably mostly the purposed of terrorist is exhibition where innocent people suffer to deliver and set of massages for one's foe. Sometimes terrorist activities are practices to carry out fake-religious purpose that can be call as expiation (Blakesley, 2007). The blasting and shelling or firing is defined as terrorism, and the target of these terrorist activities is to attack on the central and prevailing population of society (Konty et al., 2004). Masses are totally at the mercy of terrorists who are always ready to hit peoples, places etc. at everywhere, anytime, therefore entirely a secondary site stays with terrorists. This feeling of helplessness is completely the result of these circumstances in which no one knows, when someone (terrorist) will attack. The basic purpose of Terrorists is to create atmosphere of fear among people, the effect of fear enlarge when fear is refined. People feel fearful from terrorism when they have faith in that they might become the victim of any terrorist activity. Al-Qaida, Hamas, and Tamil Tigers etc are extremist organization engaged in terrorist activities and normally they deliver the most preferred response to others. Despite of the prevailing of terrorism policy makers and intellectuals are trying to know the fact that why and how they (terrorist) work. Though many work and research has been done on the origin of terror and from where they (terrorist) get motivation, but much need is to know that what type of strategies they use to accomplish their plans and how these approaches are successful or fail Terrorist do not work only to create fear among target population also to compel governments and other organizations to respond in a way which is in favor of them (Kydd &Walter, 2006).

In the background of terrorism in Asia region, there is resemblance and linkages among the countries of region (Bajpai, 2002, & Mishra, 2021). In the region of Asia countries are destitute in different geographical, political, and economic issue. Slow Economic growth, financial issues, increasing unemployment, and illiteracy are main reasons behind terrorism. Therefore, Poverty, literacy and political freedom have effect on terrorist conscription (kydd & walter, 2006). Therefore, Punishment is mostly meaning a way to get rid from crime in society. Punishment and terrorism are seemed to interrelate (Blakesley, 2007). There is always a growing trend among masses to treat terrorism as immoral activity (Coady, 1985). To suggest capital punishment for terrorists is difficult morally, legally and for policy advice. As McDonnell (2004), illustrates that those involved on 11 September 2011 attacks must be punished by death because they are guilty of death of 3,000 innocent people. And taking the life of theses number of people on huge level in fact remind the awfulness of the regime of Nazi. So, it will be wild Justice to punish terrorists. The fact is that some crimes are so inhuman that ultimately as result of this society or masses demand an appropriate punishment for culprits, because miscreant deserve this regardless of this that whether this punishment work as hindrance of crime or not.

Theory and Hypotheses Development:

The Terror Management Theory (TMT) (Greenberg et al. 1986; Pyszcynski et al., 2015) offers an important framework for comprehending the connection between the fear of terrorism and capital punishment. According to TMT, people are driven to reduce existential fears brought on by the knowledge of their own mortality. When there is a threat of violence or death, existential anxieties can be triggered. These fears can have an impact on attitudes and behaviors, including support for capital punishment. It means that individuals may endorse capital punishment to regain a sense of security and control (Burke et al., 2010). The defense mechanism to allay existential anxieties and

bolster a feeling of stability and justice in society can be the notion that capital punishment can be successful to manage their fear of terrorism. In literature death penalty or capital punishment has always link to reducing terrorism (Coady, 1985) which ultimately reduces the fear of terrorism. Punishment and terrorism seem to interrelate (Blakesley, 2007). Though there are notorious issues about capital punishment but when it is argued with terrorism then capital punishment is the most appropriate punishment for terrorists. Generally, one can debate the effectiveness of capital punishment but when terrorism is argued with capital punishment, then national security issues rise because of terrorism and national security should be supreme over all matters. Furthermore, in some views, imprisoning terrorists rather than executing them is also risky. There might be chances, that other groups of terrorists can kidnap masses to release their fellow terrorists (Stetler et al., 2020). keeping in view the above discussion we proposed the following hypothesis:

H1: Fear of terrorism has a positive and significant relationship with the support of capital punishment.

Moderation impact of religiosity:

Although capital punishment has been studied in many aspects, but numerous researchers investigate the relationship between religiosity and favorable attitude toward capital punishment. The relationship of both has been studies in the literature (Alarid & Wang, 2001). The research around religiosity and capital punishment suggests that more religious persons tend to be more supporters of capital punishment as compare to non- religious (Grasmick, et al., 1993; Young; 1992, Alarid & Wang, 2001). People who support the capital punishment support their argument with Holy Books saying that "an eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth" (Alarid &Wang, 2001). Meanwhile, many authors have established no association or unreliable interactions between these perceptions studied (Thinley & Ziegler, 2020). But when religiosity acts as a moderator in the relationship it acts as a defense mechanism that reduces the fear of terrorism building on TMT, people use cultural belief systems, such as religion, as a coping mechanism for the existential anxiety brought on by realizing they are mortal. According to Pyszczynski, Solomon, and Greenberg (2015), religion offers a framework of meaning, purpose, and values that gives people a sense of security and transcendence over death. This religious worldview has the power to affect people's attitudes and actions, including how they feel about retribution and justice. TMT implies that those with greater degrees of religiosity may rely on their religious beliefs to manage the existential anxieties caused by fear of terrorism. As a result, the effect of fear of terrorism on their support of capital punishment might be lessened. Similarly, individuals with a lower degree of religiosity may rely upon capital punishment to reduce their existential anxieties caused by fear of terrorism. As a result, the effect of fear of terrorism on their support of capital punishment might be increased. This notion also lends its support to the literature which argue that religion makes sense about life and death (Young, 1992). The relationship between death anxiety and religiosity is adverse (Rababa et al., 2021; Kızılgeçit & Yıldırım,2023: V. Fortner et al., 1999). Keeping in view the following discussion we proposed the following hypothesis:

H2: Religiosity will moderate the relationship between the fear of terrorism and support for capital punishment, such that individual with higher level of religiosity will show weaker effect on the relationship of fear of terrorism and support for capital punishment as camper to lower level of religiosity.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
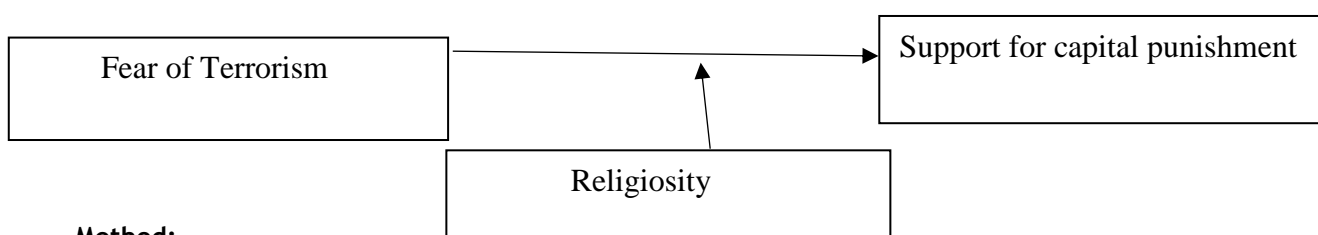
Method:
Research context, participants, and procedure:

Participants of the study were lawyers from two major cities of Pakistan Islamabad and Rawalpindi. A sample of lawyers was chosen as capital punishment is a topic that cannot easily understandable by everyone as well as lawyers undertake cases in which capital punishment is granted and also see the consequences of capital punishment so it is important to know about the perspective of capital punishment for further policy measures. The lawyers were recruited through a purposive sampling technique from district bar associations. The data were collected from 300 lawyers. In order to achieve a high response rate, the data were collected from 300 lawyers using a personally administered survey instrument during business hours along with a cover letter outlining the goal of the study (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). 240 lawyers answered (80% response rate). Participants gave their informed consent after being asked to participate in the survey voluntarily. The responders were split between 48.3% women and 51.7% men. In terms of age, 29.2% of respondents fell within the 25-34 age range, 63.9% within the 35-45 age range, and 7.9% within the 45-plus age range.

In the educational background, above. 63.5 % have the education of LLB, 33% have done LLM, and 3.5% have completed Bar at law. For job experience (law practice), 57.5 % have experience of 3 to 5 years, 25.8% were having experience of 6 to 10 years and 16.7 % of lawyers have experience of more than 10 years.

Following the suggestion of Podsakoff et al. (2003), the study employed the temporal separation technique to reduce the common method bias and collected demographic data one month before the main questionnaire. Participants created a unique code to connect the main questionnaire with the demographic survey. In order to avoid common method variance, the present study additionally utilized a number of the strategies recommended by Podsakoff et al., (2003 & 2012). First, the wording utilized in the items was simple and easy to understand by the responders. The study's goal and an explanation are stated in the cover story, which is the second step.

Measures:

The study used a slightly adaptive 6-item scale used to measure the lawyer's general support for capital punishment developed by O'Neil et al., (2004). A sample item is "I think the capital punishment is necessary' Scale anchors ranged from 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree). A slight fear of terrorism was measured with a 5-item scale and a fear of Victimization was measured with 3 item scale develop by Wang (2022). A sample item of fear of terrorism is "I fear that terrorism will only get worse in the next five years." A 6 - items scale of religiosity has been adapted from Hoge (1972). A sample item of religiosity is "Religious beliefs influence all my dealings in life", The Scale anchors for the instruments ranged from 1 (not at all) to 5 (totally).

Data Analysis and Results:

Before data analysis, the distribution of variables has been checked, and the values of skewness and kurtosis fell within an acceptable range of normality which is below the absolute values of 2(skew) and 7(kurtosis). Process Macro version 3.1 on SPSS 23 was used for statistical analysis. For model fitness, the study used AMOS V 26. F-test in one way, ANOVA has been used to find those demographic variables that have a significant relationship with the study variables. Those demographic variables which show significant relationships are controlled while conducting correlation and regression analysis. The F value was insignificant, proving that the lawyers, age, gender, education, and experience, do not significantly correlate with the study variables.

Before data analysis, the distribution of the variables was examined, and the values of skewness and kurtosis, which are below the absolute values of 2 (skew) and 7, respectively, fell within an acceptable range of normalcy. For the statistical analysis, SPSS 23 and Process Macro version 3.1 were also employed. The study made use of AMOS V 26 to assess model fitness. In addition to using the F-test, ANOVA has been utilised to identify the demographic characteristics that significantly influence the study variables. While performing correlation and regression analysis, those demographic factors that demonstrate meaningful associations are controlled. The F value was non-significant, demonstrating that there is no significant relationship between the research variables and the lawyers' age, gender, education, and experience.

Common method Bias:

To test the common method bias has been measured through the unmeasured latent method factor test (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The results showed that all method factor loadings were insignificant and substantive variances were greater than their method variances. This indicated that common method bias was not a significant problem with regard to our data.

The unmeasured latent method factor test has been used to assess for common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The findings demonstrated that substantive variations were bigger than method variances and that all method factor loadings were inconsequential. This proved that our data did not suffer much from common technique bias.

Measurement Model:

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was carried out in AMOS V23, and a maximum likelihood estimator was used to assess the measurement model's fitness. The convergent validity was assessed by comparing the factor loadings of scale indicators on each construct with the average variance extracted (AVE) values of each construct, with the lowest factor loading being 0.61 and the highest being 0.97. Researchers believe that convergent validity is established if the value for factor loadings is equal to or greater than 0.3 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The findings (Table 1) indicate that for all three constructs, the value of AVE exceeds the suggested range of 0.5. Convergent validity has therefore been proven. For each scale, discriminant validity was verified using the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion. The square root of the variable's AVE value was greater than the correlation of the variable with each other (see Table 1). As a result, each scale's psychometric characteristics were acceptable. The reliability of the measurement model is assessed with the use of global goodness-of-fit metrics. All global fit indices indicate that the measurement model's general validity has been established (χ^2 = 162.293, df = 112, p =.000, RMSEA =.043, CFI =.9830, TLI = 0.986, SRMR = 0.037).

Hypothesis Testing

The values in Table 2 show that H1 and H2 have been accepted. The fear of terrorism is significant and positively affects the support of capital punishment. One unit increase in fear of terrorism results in a 0.3677 unit increase in support for capital punishment respectively. The Hayes Process Macro Model 1 was utilized to test the moderating impact. The moderator and independent variables were mean-centered per the advice of Aiken et al. The second hypothesis explores the moderating role of religion in the relationship between support for capital punishment and fear of terrorism. The outcome demonstrated that the interaction term had an impact on the capital punishment that was statistically significant (ß = 0.0348, p = 0.01). When religiosity is high, there is less of a relationship between fear of terrorism and support for the capital punishment . As shown in Table 4, it was determined that the interaction term had a statistically significant impact on the capital punishment (ß = 0.2878, p = 0.00), showing that religion had a negative moderating influence on the association between the fear of terrorism and the capital punishment . The Slope test also revealed that while the relationship between fear of terrorism and capital punishment is strong at a 1-standard deviation from the mean (ß = 0.3595), CI [0.4416, 0.0417], it is weak at a +1-standard deviation from the mean of religiosity (ß =0.0141), proving hypothesis 2. The association between fear of terrorism and support for capital punishment becomes weaker when religiosity is high. The moderation graph for the moderating role of religiosity between fear of victimization and capital punishment is given in Figure 2.

Table 1: mean, std, convergent, and discriminant validity

		Mean	SD	AVE	CR	1	2	3
1	Capital punishment	4.6	0.84	0.56	0.83	0.74		
2	Fear of Terrorism	4.1	0.78	0.59	0.88	0.588	0.76	
3	Religiosity	3.4	1.15	0.83	0.96	0.49	0.371	0.91

Table 2: Hypothesis Testing

| Hypotheses	Effects	B	S. D	t	p
H1	Fear of Terrorism (TE)⟶ Capital Punishment	0.3677	0.0505	7.2787	0.000
	Interaction Term (TE*R) ⟶ Capital punishment	- 0.2878	0.0431	-6.6764	0.000
Capital Punishment R^2=0.483, Adjusted R^2=0.515, N=240					

Table.3: Testing of Moderation Effect

H1	B	S. D		T	
Fear of Terrorism (TE) Capital Punishment	0.3677	0.0505		7.2787	
Moderation Analysis(H2)					
Variables	**Fear of terrorism (X)**	**Religiosity(w)**		**Capital Punishment(Y)**	
	t	95% CI		SE	B
		LL	UL		
TEx Religiosity	-6.6764	-0.3727	-0.2029	.0431	-.2878***
Religiosity(-1SD)	8.6265	0.2774	0.4416	.0417	.3595***
Religiosity(+1SD)	7.2734	0.0878	0.1161	.0517	.0141***

*Notes: *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); ***Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed). Abbreviations: (–1SD), –1 standard deviation; (+1SD), +1 standard deviation; LL, lower limit; UL, upper limit; SE, standard error; β, the beta coefficient*

As shown in Table 2, it was determined that the interaction term had a statistically significant impact on the capital punishment (β = 0.2878, p = 0.00), showing that religion had a negative moderating influence on the association between the fear of terrorism and the capital punishment . The Slope test also revealed that while the relationship between fear of terrorism and capital punishment is strong at a 1-standard deviation from the mean (β = 0.3595), CI [0.4416, 0.0417], it is weak at a +1-standard deviation from the mean of religiosity (β =0.0141), proving hypothesis 2. When religiosity is high, there is a weak relationship between fear of terrorism and support for capital Punishment. Figure 2 shows the moderation graph showing the moderation effect of religiosity on the relationship between Fear of terrorism and Capital Punishment

Figure 2: Moderation Plot
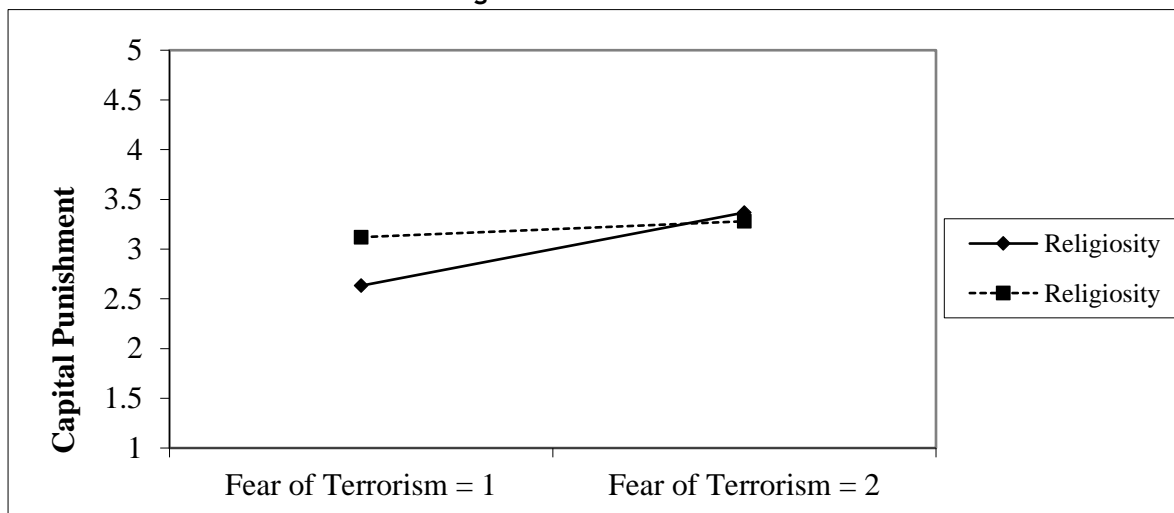
DISCUSSION:

This study was aimed to investigate the moderating effect of religiosity on the relationship between fear of terrorism and capital punishment. The results of the moderation analysis provide insight into the relationship between religiosity, fear of terrorism, and Capital Punishment. The study examined the relationship between terrorism fear and support for the capital punishment and how religiosity influences that relationship. The finding of the study showed that terrorism has significant impact on changing attitude towards capital punishment. As Pakistan is one of most badly affected nations by terrorism and fighting war against terrorism, so it is natural that masses will favor capital punishment for terrorists. As McDonnell (2004), indicates in his study that those people (terrorist) involved on 11 September 2011 incident must be punished by death because they are guilty of death of thousands of innocent individuals as terrorism creates death anxiety (Friedman & Rhole, 2008).

The finding of moderation analysis has demonstrated that individuals who are less religious are more likely to support the capital punishment because of increased presence of fear of terrorism. Whereas individuals who are more religious are less likely to be impacted by terrorism fear and exhibit low support for capital punishment. These findings are consistent with earlier research that emphasizes how religion affects people's attitudes toward crime and punishment (Johnson & Vriens, 2016: Bader et al. 2013). These results also supplement the theory of TMT. Terror management theory offers the understanding that people with less religious beliefs would be more interested in material goals, like achievement, entertainment, and material gain (Hui et al, 2014; Shults et al, 2020). Therefore, in case of life-threatening event non-believers hold more strongly to their self-growth and life goals (Hui et al, 2014). The central point in this article is that fear of terrorism can not be understood without understanding role of religion in shaping the coping strategies for fear of terrorism and ultimately attitudes towards capital punishment. Therefore, we are convinced that this attempt to understand role of religion in coping with fear of terrorism and shaping attitudes towards capital punishment will open new questions for future research. Particularly this study contributes to the TMT in understanding *how* various religious orientations differentially address life threatening situations and fears (Vail et al, 2010). It is important to add that respondents using religiosity as an adaptation to address fear of terrorism are equally under the threat of terrorism. They only used religion to the extent of their psychological comfort. The future research can address what kind of religious beliefs are more critical for shaping fear of terrorism.

The findings of this research have implications for understanding the nuanced interactions between religion, fear, and attitudes toward harsh punishment. The results highlight the significance of taking religion into account when evaluating how contextual elements, such as religiosity on support of capital punishment. It is crucial to remember that this study has a number of limitations. Since the study is intended to correct, responses that were self-reported may have some inherent biases. Longitudinal studies should be used in future studies to better understand the temporal dynamics of these relationships and the causal processes. To examine the underlying mechanisms by which religiosity impacts views on the capital punishment , the study only included one moderator. Future research may potentially incorporate other mediators and moderators to further understand attitudes toward the capital punishment .

In conclusion, this moderation analysis shows that, especially in the context of the terrorism threat, religiosity significantly influences people's support towards capital punishment. These results illustrate the intricate interplay between these elements and add to the body of knowledge on the junction of religion, fear, and attitudes toward punitive actions.

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