

Abstract: In today's secular world, the relationship between the tourists' and their belief plays major part in influencing individual's visiting religious sites. The visitation patterns of individuals all depend on the strength of their religious beliefs. In current literature very limited research is available which explores the understanding and motivation of visitation patterns of religious tourists. The literature which is available, suggests that religion is a fundamental part of our life and culture in various different in modern world (Raj and Bozonelos, 2015; Raj and Rashid, 2011; Usmani, 2001).

Even in modern society, which has become increasingly secular and culturally motivated, the Hajj is considered the culmination of each Muslim's religious duties and aspiration. It is stated in the Holy Qur'an, that every physically and financially able Muslim should make the Hajj to the Holy City of Makkah once in his or her lifetime.

The hajj is obligatory once in a lifetime for those Muslims who can afford it; provided there is safety and security for travel and that leaves provision behind for any dependent family, while away from home performing the hajj. The hajj constitutes a form of worship with the whole of the Muslim's being: with his body, mind and soul, with his time, possessions and the temporary sacrifice of all ordinary comforts and conveniences person normally enjoy. The person should assume for few days the condition of a pilgrim whole at God's service and disposal.

The paper will explore the experiences of those Muslim Americans who have attended the Hajj ritual and determine if there are any differences in experience by socioeconomic demographics. These demographics include age, gender, education and occupation. Ostensibly, economic considerations are important when undertaking religious tourism. Could these considerations also matter for the experience itself?

Keywords: Hajj, Travel, Worship, Experience, Tourism and pilgrims

Introduction

The Hajj is one of key principal of Islamic belief and a mandatory religious duty once in a lifetime for Muslim who is able, financially and physically, to complete this journey. It is a fifth pillar of Islamic faith. It is stated in the Holy Qur'an, that every physically and financially able Muslim should make the Hajj to the Holy City of Makkah once in his or her lifetime. The hajj constitutes a form of worship with the whole of the Muslim's being: with his body, mind and soul, with his time, possessions and the temporary sacrifice of all ordinary comforts and

conveniences person normally enjoy. The person should assume for few days the condition of a pilgrim whole at God's service and disposal.

The Hajj is a journey for individual pilgrim to attend and show their submission to Allah (God). The individual pilgrim shows both outward and inwards acts of journey through performing worship duration of the journey. Hajj takes place during the first days of the lunar month of Dhul-Hajjah, the 12th month of the Islamic year, and lasts for as long as five days.

Over the last two decades number of people attending Hajj pilgrimage has increased due to better travel arrangements from diverse countries such as United States of America, Canada, Cuba, Caribbean Islands, Brazil and other Southern American countries assemble in Makkah during the last month of the Islamic calendar year. Griffin and Raj 2017, Raj and Bozonelos, 2015, Raj, 2007; and Usmani, 2001; Wolfe, 2000 argue that pilgrimage routes are progressively being secularized by the tour operators, with the explicit promotion of routes for tourism and leisure.

The paper will explore the experiences of Muslim pilgrimage from United States of America who have attended the Hajj ritual and determine if there are any differences in experience by socioeconomic demographics. These demographics include age, gender, education and occupation. Ostensibly, economic considerations are important when undertaking religious tourism.

Islamic Monotheism and Hajj

The main concept of Islamic monotheism is acceptance of one God (in Arabic Tawhid) and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the messenger of God. The key principal of Islamic monotheism is built on the oneness of God and all worship and devotion to God alone. Therefore, another fundamental Islamic monotheism is to belief that God has created all mankind and granted them their mean of leaving and he is the creator and the provider. The religion is a fundamental part of our life and culture in various different ways in the modern world (Qurashi, 2017 Raj, 2007; Usmani, 2001; Wolfe, 2000). In the current literature, very limited research is available that explores the motivation and visitation patterns of individuals who are travelling mainly for religious purposes. The literature which is available does suggest address the issues of motivation of Muslim travelling from USA to hajj pilgrimage.

The Hajj is an obligatory once in a lifetime experience for those Muslims who can afford it, provided there is safety and security for travel and it leaves provision behind for dependent family, while away from home performing the Hajj. The Hajj constitutes a form of worship with the whole of the Muslim's being: with their body, mind and soul, with their time, possessions and the temporary sacrifice of all ordinary comforts and conveniences which a person normally enjoys. The person should assume for few days the condition of a pilgrim entirely at God's service and disposal.

According to Raj (2007) an important part for the acceptance of the hajj by God is to take part in the assembly at Arafat. It is known as the “Wuqoof of Arafat”, the stay in Arafat. Pilgrims stay at the plain of Arafat until the end of the ninth day. The next stop is in Muzdalifah in order to collect some pebbles. It is said that it should be forty-nine of them. These pebbles are important in order to stone the three stone pillars in Madinah in order to withstand the evil rather do Allah’s will. On the last three days of the hajj pilgrims perform another ritual, the sacrifice of an animal in Mina. This ritual is taking place in memory of Prophet Abraham who should have sacrificed his son Ishmael. The Holy Qur’an stated that every physically and financially able Muslim should perform the Hajj to the Holy City of Makkah once in his or her lifetime.

And (remember) when we prepared for Abraham the site of the (scared) House, (saying): ‘Do not ascribe anything as associate with me, and sanctify My House for those who circumambulate it and those who stand and those who bow and those prostrate themselves (there).

(Qur’an, Chapter 22, verse 26)

And proclaim the hajj to men; they will come to thee on foot and (mounted) on every camel, lean on account of Journeys through deep and distant mountain highways.

(Qur’an, Chapter 22, verse 27)

The hajj is key principal of Islamic Monotheism that every Muslim should perform their religious duty as a hadith mentioned by Kandhalvi (1980):

“Whoever has to perform should do so in haste, for a sickness may overtake him, or his means of conveyance may become unavailable, or some other necessity may prevent his departure.”

The Qur’an very clearly says that the hajj is part of the Islamic faith for Muslim to perform the hajj during their lifetime and it is not a tourist sensation that pilgrimage enjoy while on journey to Makkah. The people who go on hajj feel mutual in the view that nothing can quite prepare them for the sheer beauty of the experience and the overwhelming feeling of humbleness that overcomes during the pilgrim of hajj. The hajj is motivated religious traveller to holy city of Makkah to perform faith, belief and the religious duties during hajj period as described the Islamic faith. Hajj is a spiritual journey to a sacred site of Makkah on the basis of a person’s religious belief. The pilgrims who performing hajj are not normal tourist, they are individuals who are carrying out the religious act and show great humbleness and devotion during their pilgrimage to Makkah. Caidi, 2019, Qurashi 2017, Raj 2015, Usmani 2001, Al-Qahtanee 1997a, b, Kandhalvi, 1980, stated that, for Muslims, hajj represents judgement day: a symbolic representation of what is to come to each of us.

American Muslims and the Hajj Experience

The hajj is a religious belief for a Muslim faith and religious spiritual journey of hajj provides a comprehensive practice from generation to generation. Hajj pilgrims travel from all around the world the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Africa, Europe, America and Australia. Over the last 2 decades American Muslims from the U.S. have increasingly been participating in the Hajj pilgrimage. Most publications on the Hajj recount the experiences of Muslim Americans during the Hajj are often in the first-person narrative. Pilgrims from the U.S. share the unanimous view that nothing can quite prepare them for the sheer beauty of the experience and the overwhelming feeling of humbleness that overcomes them during the hajj journey. For example, Yusef Maisonet, Alabama, USA, (2007) stated that:

“Many Muslims call Umrah the “little pilgrimage.” When we got to the Kabba, I almost fainted because of the beauty of the Kabba and the entire experience of being there. What I’ve been praying toward all of these years was right in front of me.”

Jawahrah, California, USA, (2009) further shares the experience of hajj.

“When we got close to the area where the steps are to go down closer to the Kaabah, we looked up, and I swear when you look up and see the Kaabah for the first time its totally incredible. There are really no words to describe it, you really gotta be there to feel it.. We kinda stood there dumbfounded and speechless for a like half minute.”

Similar accountings are provided by ethnographers of the American Muslims. Smith (1999) quotes a pilgrim in her work, where the Muslim woman recounts how significant was the experience for her as a religious person,

“How was I to know this would be the journey of a lifetime. Tears poured down my face like a fresh spring shower. The air left a sweet taste in my mouth, as if I had eaten the most succulent piece of fruit. I am here, really here. My eyes scanned this canvas of buoyant faces, effervescent smiles and nodding heads affirming the peace felt in their hearts. The serenade of voices from many tongues, this a cornucopia of Allah’s servants, made a soothing welcome...My Hajj experience served as my vehicle for the placating of my soul. This excursion took me up the paths and down the trails of the human spirit. The internal strength I gained induced a genuine love of Allah.”

One of the most popular stories of Muslim Americans going on Hajj is the autobiography of Malcolm X, specifically in Chapter 17 he recounts his

pilgrimage to Makkah and Madinah. El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, as he preferred to be called after completing Hajj, provided one of the first detailed accounts of pilgrimage, from his initial application to his interactions with Muslims from all ethnic/racial backgrounds to his notoriety as a leader in the Nation of Islam (Malcolm X, 1965). El-Shabazz writes quite positively of his experience in Makkah and of his pilgrimage. Additionally, his media presence back home made him a mini-celebrity during Hajj. Curtis (2009) states that the Hajj was a turning point for El-Shabazz. Encouraged by the missionary work of Mahmoud Youssef Shawarbi, an Egyptian professor of Islamic Studies, El-Shabazz urged members of the National of Islam to embrace Sunni Islam teachings and participate in Hajj.

Other pilgrims offer more grounded versions of their stay. Kalam's (2004) discussion of his first Hajj pilgrimage was harrowing. He highlights the difficulties of the Hajj pilgrimage, including the two million plus pilgrims that are present, coupled with the lack of attention provided by the Mutawafs. His article is mostly critical, though he ends his observation on a positive note proclaiming that the Hajj provided a great experience. Curtis (2009) cites the experience of Idris Diaz, a convert to Islam, where he compared Hajj to a form of "Islamic boot camp", with the intense heat and large throngs of pilgrims.

Social scientific surveys of Muslim American participating in pilgrimage and their experiences are in their infancy. Pew Research Center has published three different reports on Muslim Americans, in 2007, 2011 and 2017 respectively. In each one of these surveys, the Pew Center researchers ask Muslim respondents about demographic data, their levels of religiosity, their political and social experiences and their views on domestic and foreign policy issues. Yet, not a single question is asked if the respondent has completed Hajj, nor any additional questions on how the Hajj has affected their views. As discussed above in the literature, first-hand experiences of those who complete Hajj often discuss the transformative experience of the pilgrimage. Thus, the surveys could be considered incomplete when assessing the religious beliefs and practices of Muslim Americans.

The 2017 Pew survey reports several indicators that suggest Hajj questions should be included. First, Muslim Americans are considered more religious in comparison to non-Muslim Americans. Two-thirds of Muslim Americans say that religion is very important to them and six-in-ten respondents say they report praying at some of the five salah every day. Second, the Pew also reports that four-in-ten Muslim Americans attend a mosque or Islamic center at least once a week. Interestingly, 69% of Muslim Americans say they pursue spiritual life outside of the Mosque and even those who attend Mosque are divided on the centrality of the mosque to their spiritual life (Pew Research Center, 2017). The importance of religion and spirituality among Muslim Americans strongly suggests that questions on the Hajj are pertinent. As completing the Hajj pilgrimage is one of the five pillars of Islam, this is an important measure of religious observance among Muslim Americans. Indeed, as Muslim Americans are more affluent and educated, they may have more financial means to complete Hajj.

Another survey reflects the work of Raj and Bozonelos (2015), where the authors provide descriptive statistics on pilgrimage experience. The respondents make it clear that the Hajj is just not a tourist phenomenon but the “journey of a lifetime” for pilgrims. And even though the survey itself was somewhat limited in its parameters, the preliminary work shows that the intentions of the respondents to travel to Makkah were for spiritual and religious reasons. 93% of respondents understood the importance of Hajj to their sense of religiosity. Given that attending Hajj or Umrah is an expensive undertaking from the United States but visiting the Holy Cities in Saudi Arabia have a sacred quality within Islamic belief and this act of pilgrimage is a defining moment in the life of pilgrims. In addition, it is important to appreciate the visitor’s motivation for visiting the pilgrimage sites. From a Muslim’s point of view, pilgrims find love and pleasure, they enhance their knowledge and dedicate themselves to God. Griffin and Raj (2017) further support the argument that religious visitors fulfill their satisfaction of their requirements by visiting sacred sites and enhance their pilgrimage through wider experience needs which may include quality of food, accommodation, stories associated with pilgrimage site. Caidi (2019) argues that:

“Goals and expectations are adjusted or rethought based on growing experiences and a greater awareness and understanding of the local context in the holy sites. Participants retuned their expectations of what it means to be a pilgrim through their evolving experiences, perceptions, and feelings.”

The firsthand experience plays key role in enhancing the knowledge and perceptions of the pilgrims visiting holy sites and developing logistical preparation for the hajj visitors. Quarshi (2017) offers different view, in the case of Hajj being coming more commodification and aiding the corporate takeover of religion, spirituality and religious principles are being ignored by the Saudi Arabia government. He further argues that corporate values and benefits dominate the religious and spiritual value of the custom. Which leads to the commodification is changing pilgrims’ spiritual experience and the authenticity of sacred site.

Going to Hajj from the United States

People from U.S. have been travelling to Makkah for the hajj for numerous decades. Howell (2013) documents the efforts of the Federation of Islamic Associations of the United States and Canada (FIA). Founded in the early 1950s, FIA is one of the first organizations dedicated to supporting Muslim life in North America. It’s newsletter, the *Morning Star*, was one of the first periodicals dedicated to covering announcements within Muslim communities, including plans for Hajj travel. Lately, the number of pilgrims has seen a steady increase, with peaks in the mid-2000s before quotas were implemented in the early 2010s. Curtis (2009) suggests that Muslim Americans have come to embrace their religion in what he refers to as the era of Islamic Awakening. In this era, Muslims

in American society have been more likely to engage in Islamic practices, including donning Islamic-style clothing, fasting during Ramadan, avoiding interest-bearing accounts, making an effort to halal foods, and if possible, go on Hajj. Statistics from the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Hajj show that tens of thousands of Americans fulfill their religious obligations and make the pilgrimage to Makkah.

Table 1: Number of Pilgrims from North America

Year	Washington	New York	Los Angeles	Houston	Total
1435/2014	1,638	7,079	1,854	1,155	11,726
1434/2013	1,968	7,953	1,759	586	12,266
1433/2012	2,454	8,821	2,208	1,084	14,567
1432/2011	3,190	7,620	2,613	1,373	14,796
1431/2010	3,500	7,091	2,182	1,271	14,044
1430/2009	3,468	5,335	1,639	624	11,066
1429/2008	3,277	5,738	1,860	953	11,801
1428/2007	3,538	7,016	2,118	1,070	13,742
1427/2006	5,030	8,375	3,675	953	18,033
1426/2006	4,694	5,878	2,732	187	13,491
1425/2005	4,225	5,338	2,992	195	12,750
1424/2004	3,236	4,996	2,292	193	10,717
1423/2003	3,618	5,593	2,100	225	11,536
1422/2002	1,819	4,600	2,200	361	8,980
1420/2000	3,931	4,311	2,015	619	10,876
1416/1996	1,845	2,458	841	195	5,339

Indeed, the recent statistics released by General Authority of Statistics show that the number of pilgrims from North and South America and pilgrims of Australia reached 22,267 in 1438/2017, or about 1.27% of the total 2.3 million who visited that year (Statistics, 2018).¹ Similarly, the number of travel agencies that provide Hajj pilgrimage packages for Muslim Americans have also increased. For the 1437/2016 Hajj, the Saudi Embassy website lists forty-eight agencies that have been approved for visas under the 1437/2016 Hajj quota scheme.²

Obtaining a Hajj visa for Muslim Americans is a straightforward process. The Consular Section of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Washington DC posts a list of requirements that are updated annually (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2018). Applicants must operate through a licensed U.S. travel agency if traveling to Saudi Arabia for Hajj. Currently, visas are not issued to individuals that have performed Hajj in the last five years. Travellers must fill out an application (though a different version exists if the applicant is going through the New York Consulate).³ All Hajj

¹ Unfortunately, the government website did not further breakdown those statistics.

² The number of visas assigned to the Americas for the 1437/2016 Hajj was lower than usual, 10,754. This reflects a global 20% reduction in the number of pilgrims admitted by the Saudi ministry during a major construction phase in the holy city, which also saw a crane collapse on pilgrims in September 2015 (Government of the United Kingdom, 2018)

³ The full list of requirements for the Hajj visa are listed on the Consular and Travel Services Webpage.

visitors must have hotel and airline reservations, usually booked through the travel agency. Per the Ministry's website, women under the age of forty-five must be accompanied with a Mahram (relative, either by blood or marriage). Women over the age of forty-five can travel within a group but require a notarized letter from their closest male relative that they do not object. Converts to Islam are required to have a "convert graduation certificate". These certificates are provided upon request through the convert's local mosque. There is no standard for the certificates yet should have certain points of information testifying to the conversion.⁴

Once Muslim Americans enter the state of Ihram and arrive in Saudi Arabia, each traveling party is assigned to a Mutawaf, or pilgrimage guide. Mutawafs are organized by region and by madhab⁵. For example, Muslim Americans are assigned to the National Tawafa⁶ Establishment for Pilgrims of Turkey and Muslims of Europe, Americas and Australia (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia M. o., 2018). Mutawafs are usually from the region themselves. For example, Hajj tour guides for Muslim Americans live or have lived in the U.S. or Canada are thus more aware of needs and services that Americas may need⁷. The Tawafa establishments were created by the founding King of Saudi Arabia to provide services to pilgrims coming from specific parts of the world. Per a report by the International Islamic News Agency. Quarshi (2017)

The Tawafa establishments provide services to the pilgrims, including accommodation, food catering, and transportation and solving problems that may arise during the pilgrims' stay at the holy places. They also assist the pilgrims in shopping and visiting historic sites as well as keeping their travel documents until they finish their Hajj rituals. (International Islamic News Agency, 2018)

Methods

This research is an examining inquiry into the phenomenon of influencing factors for individual is visiting religious sites, authors employed a purposive sampling method for in-depth understanding of the issues from the perspectives of the research. Teddlie and Yu (2007), non-probabilistic sampling can be used for a variety of reasons, most notably when seeking to survey marginalized populations. Contemporary research in political science and sociology suggests that Muslim Americans could be considered a marginalized population. The onslaught of negative media attention and hostile political climate has challenged Muslim

⁴ Conversion certificate letters often include the following information: the mosque's letterhead, your full legal name, your location, date of birth, gender, address or city/country, marital status, Imam's name and signature, two witnesses (names and signatures), your signature, the date

⁵ For example, there is a specific Tawafa establishment for pilgrims that come from Iran that caters to the mostly Shi'a pilgrims that adhere to the Maliki madhab.

⁶ Tawaf, the Arabic word for circumambulation, is a required ritual where pilgrims circle around the Kaaba seven times in a counter-clockwise rotation.

⁷ Services could include English translations of directions, calls made back home, access to medical care.

Americans to find their voice in American society. This challenge centers on the phenomenon of Islamophobia. According to Gottschalk and Greenberg (2007) Islamophobia is defined as,

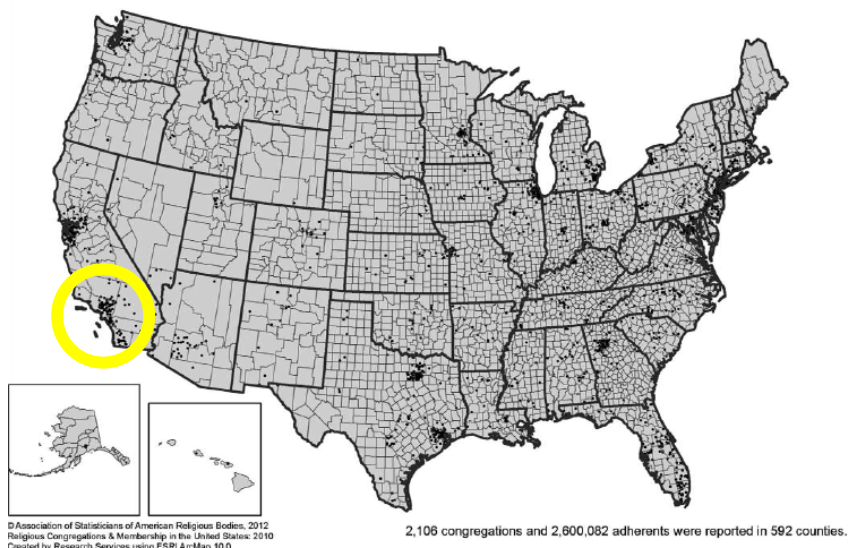
the process by which Americans and Europeans negatively portray Muslims so effectively and so universally that the terms “Islam” and “Muslim” have come to inherently invoke suspicion and fear on the part of many.

Interestingly, the authors do not assert that the *phobia* in Islamophobia is an anxiety borne out of individual psychological traumas. Islamophobia is a social anxiety. The authors state that,

Instead of arising from traumatic personal experiences, like its more psychological cousins, this phobia results for most from distant social experiences that mainstream American culture has perpetuated in popular memory, which are in turn buttressed by a similar understanding of current events.

This research incorporates survey work completed at several Mosques in Southern California – Victorville, Corona, Riverside, and San Diego. Even though the survey is regionally based, we are confident in the results as the region as Southern California is considered one of the major clusters of Mosque congregations in the country (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Location of Muslim Congregations in the United States



In addition, there is variation in the locales that were chosen. Victorville and Riverside are considered more working-class cities, whereas Corona is considered a bit more affluent and San Diego much more affluent cities. Likewise, the Mosque in Riverside is located near a major University of California campus and the Mosque in San Diego is where many of the Muslim students from UC San Diego and San Diego State University attend. Finally, the Mosques themselves are ethnically diverse. The congregation at the Mosque in Corona is mostly attended by Pakistani and Indian Muslim Americans. The Mosques in San Diego and Victorville are mostly attended by Arab Americans, and the Mosque in Riverside is probably the most diverse.

The researchers asked permission from the Imams and committee members through phone calls and follow up personal visits. At first, the Mosque/Islamic Center boards were quite tentative. A number of Imams & Islamic Center leaders keep deferring our requests, finally relenting after we were able to show them previous research we had conducted regarding the topic. In addition, the survey was conducted after the Friday prayer with a view to include as many people of different ages and background of the sample population as possible. Questionnaire fielding was done over several Fridays by Muslim Student Association (MSA) volunteers. Similar, we reached out to Hajj organizers, sending the survey as Word document in email, with little response. Finally, we made use of online survey software (Qualtrics). The email and link⁸ to the survey was sent through the Islamic Center of San Diego listserve. The response rate was also low.

The MSA volunteers staffed tables outside of the main building. Trying to position the tables strategically presented problems. The mosques serve both men and women, this incorporating several entrances in the design of the building. The women MSA volunteers staffed the tables stationed at the Women's entrance exclusively. Both men and women staffed the tables stationed at the Men's entrances.

A total number of 300 questionnaires were collected. The questionnaire, adopted from a version developed for the IRTP Religious Tourism Group (2012), is composed of 24 questions. These approaches were combined as suggested by Finn, Elliott-White and Walton (2000), as a strategy to maximize the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of each method. The research purpose and importance of respondent participation was explained prior to all interviews, to acquire 'informed consent'. This also served to persuade the participant of the value and credibility of the research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007). Appropriate assurances were made regarding confidentiality and anonymity as recommended by Bell (1993) and Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (1996). All interviewees were also asked for permission to tape-record dialogue.

8

Profile of the Survey Participants

Several demographic instruments were included in the survey. The first was Age (*Question 22: What is your age?*). Respondents were able to write in their age. The age range for the respondents is 19 to 75, with a median age of 49. Second was identification as Male/Female. 85% of respondents identified as Male, whereas 15% identified as Female. The third was demographic question asked the respondent their highest level of education (*Question 23: What is your highest level of educational qualification?*). Of the available responses, 41% identified having post-graduate qualification (Master’s or Doctoral Degree), 41% identified as having undergraduate qualification (Bachelor Degree). Another 9% chose vocational education qualifications and school-based qualifications each. Finally, asked survey participants about their current and/or normal occupation (*Question 24: Which of the following best describes your current ‘occupation’, or your ‘normal occupation’ if currently unemployed?*). 46% identified as a director, senior manager, senior official or a professional, such as a doctor, a lawyer, or a teacher. Another 31% identified as an administrator/manager, supervisor, technical or sales person. The rest of the respondents identified as manual workers (8%), home-makers (6%), students (8%), or retired (2%). Below in Table 2 is a summary of the above demographic profile of the survey respondents.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents

Demographic Question				
What is your age?	Age Range: 19 to 75	Median Age: 49		
Are you male or female?	Male: 85%	Female: 15%		
What is your highest level of education?	Postgraduate Education: 41%	Undergraduate Education: 41%	Vocational Education: 9%	School-Based Qualification: 9%
Which of the following best describes your current “occupation”, or your “normal occupation” if currently unemployed?	Director, senior manager, senior official or a professional: 46%	Administrator/manager, supervisor, technical, or sales person: 31%	Manual worker: 8%	Home-maker: 6%

Findings and Discussion

Table 3 below highlights the results from Question 19 in the survey, which asked, “For each statement below, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your experience during your visit to this religious place.” Survey respondents generally had favorable views of

their pilgrimage to Makkah. Only when asked if “I felt out of place while walking around”, was there more variance in the responses.⁹

Our next step was to understand some of the possible correlations that may exist between the different responses in Question 19 and the demographic variables we included in the survey. We are interested in finding factors that are dependent upon each other regarding the religious experiences of Muslim Americans on Hajj. For this, we used a simple Chi Square analysis, which helps us differentiate statistically significant relationships from just chance. In addition, Fisher’s exact significance testing model used to look at the bivariate relationships. Each cell is *treated* as a categorical variable, rather than interval or ratio variables, which would require a t-test. Likewise, the use of Fisher’s test is preferred when the sample size is smaller. As only 300 questionnaires were collected, we are hesitant to make sweeping generalizations about Muslim American experiences during Hajj. Similarly, as this is exploratory research, our null hypothesis is that no correlation exists, rather than positing alternative hypotheses. The Table below reports only the statistically significant relationships, with an alpha set at 0.10.

Table 3: Experience During Your Visit to Makkah for Hajj

Question 19 in the Survey	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No View
<i>For each statement below, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your experience during your visit to this religious place.</i>					
I felt out of place while walking around	21%	16%	31%	28%	4%
I felt I was in a haven from everyday life	40%	46%	10%	0%	4%
I felt a strong religious/spiritual sense of place	71%	29%	0%	0%	0%
The architecture was awe-inspiring	55%	33%	6%	0%	6%
I experienced a real sense of a historical place	50%	38%	0%	6%	6%
I had an uplifting religious/spiritual experience	58%	38%	4%	0%	0%
I feel better in myself because of the visit	63%	37%	0%	0%	0%
I felt ‘humbled’ while walking around	67%	32%	0%	0%	0%

Several statistically significant bivariate relationships come out of the analysis. Age appeared to be correlated with several experiences: *I felt I was in a haven from everyday life*; *I felt a strong religious/spiritual sense of place*; and *I feel better in myself because of the visit*. While a Chi Square analysis may not be able to tell us the direction (positive/negative) of the correlation, we surmise that the older Hajj participants may be the most likely to relate to these sentiments. Given that

⁹ Our expanded survey differentiates from our previous survey where more Muslim Americans agreed rather than disagreed.

most Hajj participants are older, they are also more likely to afford Hajj. Similarly, older Hajj participants may have a deeper appreciation for their pilgrimage, more particularly if it is their first trip. Identification as a male is associated with just one experience: *I felt I was in a haven from everyday life*. As 85% of the respondents in this survey are male, we are hesitant to draw any conclusions from this correlation. Education is also only correlated with one experience: *I experienced a real sense of a historical place*. This is an interesting correlation as it suggests that education affects how the respondent experienced the history of Makkah itself. As with Age, we are unable to ascertain whether the correlation was positive or negative. Nevertheless, findings indicate that educated Hajj participants would be more interested and possibly better understand the history of the holy city.

The last demographic variable, Occupation, is statistically associated with four experiences: I felt out of place while walking around; I felt I was in a haven from everyday life; I had an uplifting religious/spiritual experience; and I feel better in myself because of the visit. This analysis unearths several findings. First, Occupation and Education are often closely associated socioeconomic indicators. That Occupation as a variable has more correlations than Education is telling. Part of the explanation may lie with the immigrant experience of Muslim Americans, where quite a few are small business owners, who often lack a formal education. Indeed, 41% of the respondents identified themselves as a director, senior manager, senior official or a professional, which could possibly include entrepreneurs. Second, occupation may be more closely correlated with Age, which exhibited similar correlations in the analysis.

Table 4: Chi-Square Results

Chi Square Results	Age	Male	Education	Occupation
(a) I felt out of place while walking around				Pr = 0.000 Fisher's = 0.057
(b) I felt I was in a haven from everyday life	Pr = 0.013	Pr = 0.007 Fisher's = 0.048		Pr = 0.046 Fisher's = 0.162
(c) I felt a strong religious/spiritual sense of place	Pr = 0.078			
(d) The architecture was awe-inspiring				
(e) I experienced a real sense of a historical place			Pr = 0.009 Fisher's = 0.038	
(f) I had an uplifting religious/spiritual experience				Pr = 0.000 Fisher's = 0.031
(g) I feel better in myself because of the visit	Pr = 0.081			Pr = 0.025 Fisher's = 0.017
(h) I felt 'humbled' while walking around				

The results from the analyzed comments of the participants, indicated that respondents who identified as a director, senior manager, senior official or a professional, the mode response to the above questions was, “the Kaaba”. Thus, for professionals their main lasting was seeing, touching, or being in the presence of the Kaaba itself. *I had an uplifting religious/spiritual experience.* This follows the research conducted by Kaell (2016) who employs ethnographic methodology to researching the experience of pilgrims. She posits that research of pilgrimages must focus on the experience itself instead, highlighting a more performative, constructivist view. In addition, Coleman and Eade (2004) note that research needs to focus on the physical movement of pilgrims as they move towards sacred sites and their embodied performances at the sites to understand for the entire pilgrim experience. This may help explain why the Kaaba is the mode response as Muslims on the Hajj must circumambulate around the Kaaba several times to complete the pilgrimage.

Another common response was visiting the Masjid/grave of the Prophet Muhammad in Madinah. It also helps understand what they mean by a religious/spiritual experience. Rickly-Boyd (2013) contends that place “matters”, authenticating the religious experiences of a pilgrim. Thus, visiting the gravesite of the Prophet Muhammad allows the pilgrim to further access the sacredness of the Hajj.

- Visit to Madinah mosque
- Peace in masjid al nabawi
- Visiting prophet mosque
- The Kaaba/ Prophet grave

For those who identified as an administrator/manager, supervisor, technical or sales person, the written responses were more varied. The Kaaba was rarely mentioned and the visiting the Masjid/grave of the Prophet Muhammad did not come up as a response. Results indicate descriptions of the respondent’s feelings and general experience of participants. This relates to one of the responses analyzed: *I feel better in myself because of the visit.*

- The entire trip and every part of it, emotional and physical
- The group of brothers I was with helped me every time
- The entire experience was moving in every way
- Standing in hand of Allah (connection by heart)
- Great life changing experience
- The greatness of this house and how people come from everywhere to house of Allah

This is also where results provided some of the few critical comments provided by some of the respondents.

- Very bad transportation
- I felt so tired, hard work to go to heaven
- Hardship/sweetness/love

It is interesting that most of critical comments were correlated with identification as an administrator/manager, supervisor, technical or sales person. This may reflect that Muslim Americans in these positions may have lower incomes than the who identified as a director, senior manager, senior official or a professional. Thus, they may have paid for a Hajj travel package that was less comfortable. Indeed, the prices for these packages vary in price tremendously. For example, on the low end, Dawn Travels¹⁰ offers an economy package where for \$5,800, where pilgrims mostly stay in one-star accommodations. Makkah Tours¹¹ offers more upscale packages, ranging between \$6,300 to & \$7,700, with stays in two or three-star hotels. Finally, Dar El Salam Islamic Word Travel¹² offers an executive package for as much as \$17,900, with accommodations in five-star hotels and a privatized experience.

Finally, student responses were much more focused on the activities themselves, primarily that the Hajj itself is a required obligation for the faith:

- it is a religious obligation
- to fulfill my duty
- I have been praying in the direction of the haram my whole life and my father passed away without seeing it.

This contextualization is interesting. While many of the student related responses were positive regarding their spiritual experience, they were also more likely to discuss the obligatory aspect of the Hajj itself. A review of the literature reveals little about the consumption of spirituality of younger pilgrims, an area that may need further research.

Conclusion

In sum, our survey looks at the pilgrimage experience of Muslim Americans completing the Hajj ritual. Muslim Americans are a growing segment within Hajj experience. Their experiences are rarely ever researched using survey methods and statistical analysis. Our analysis reveals that age and occupation are the demographic variables most associated with the Hajj experiences of Muslim Americans. While the Chi Square analysis does not show us whether the correlation is positive or inverse, we assume that older, professional Muslim Americans are more likely to favorable views of their pilgrimage.

During the survey implementation, the MSA volunteers would interact with various community leaders that approached our tables, often with questions regarding our research. While excited about our research, they expressed disappointment that did not collect enough surveys. Fieldnotes taken by the volunteers revealed several quotes written down: “Not enough people had gone to Hajj” “Only Shayks & Imams” “Only older Muslims had gone to Hajj”. Indeed,

¹⁰ Details available at <http://www.dawntravels.com/economy-hajj-package.htm>

¹¹ Details available at <https://hajjmakkahtours.com/>

¹² Details available at <http://www.darelsalam.com/2018-hajj-packages/>

foreign exchange students were not included in the analysis, even though they were more likely to have completed Hajj.

In future research surveys at Eid-al-fitr gatherings throughout Southern California. Barreto and Bozonelos (Barreto, 2009) implemented an “exit-poll-style” survey at Eid prayers, which often include large gatherings of Muslims, with potentially more who have gone to Hajj. In addition, we will ask Mosque/Islamic Center leaders again to email survey link to their membership rosters. As noted above, Imams and the governing boards of these centers have been reticent to provide us access to their membership rosters. Given the hostile climate that can exist towards Muslim houses of worship, this is understandable, and plan to work with community leaders to allay any concerns.

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