

## **A TAWHIDIC-LINKED EXPERIENCE OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT FROM THE LESSONS OF HAJJ PILGRIMAGE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

A Tawhidic-linked experience of strategic management from the lessons of hajj pilgrimage (fifth pillar of Islam) enables the practice of strategic management to be explored from hajj pilgrimage experience as a contingency perspective of strategic management. This study aims to explore the hajj pilgrimage rituals and practices that are based on Tawhidic paradigm to link them theoretically and practically with the strategic management function, concept and process. This study solicited the views of selected hajj pilgrims under the arrangement of establishment (muassasah) for Lembaga Tabung Haji (LTH) on the possible linkage between hajj pilgrimage rituals and strategic management based Tawhidic paradigm through personal interview and observations during the 2013 hajj season. The results of the study suggested that there is some theoretical and practice linkage of Tawhidic paradigm and hajj pilgrimage to strategic management. Given to the nature of hajj service arrangement and the operations (manasik) of hajj, some aspects of hajj pilgrimage rituals and exercises have limited linkages to apply with strategic management. The study is limited to a few hajj experiences on specific hajj season, which may not be conclusive, comprehensive, robust and generalizable. However, the lessons are specific to the hajj contexts only. Future research should get more hajj participants from various hajj seasons with more research instruments.

Keywords: Strategic management, Hajj pilgrimage, Tawhidic paradigm

## INTRODUCTION

The fifth pillar of Islam is the performance of *hajj* pilgrimage. This act of worship is the apex of worship after the declaration of *syahadatain* (two sentences of declaration that there is God but Allah and Prophet Muhammad PBUH as the messenger of Allah), five times of daily prayers, fasting in the month of Ramadhan, and paying *zakat*. Unlike other acts of worship which can be performed at anywhere on the prescribed schedule, the *hajj* worship is limited to specified places and days in the last month *Zulhijjah* of the Muslim lunar calendar. Some *hajj* pilgrims could arrive in the 11<sup>th</sup> month *Zulkaedah* of the Muslim lunar calendar (Roshimah Shamsudin, Aiza Maslan Baharudin & Noor Shakirah Mat Akhir, 2014). Prior to departure, one needs to obtain *hajj* visa from the Government of Saudi Arabia through the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia despite full preparation of physical, spiritual, emotional, and intellectual. If one carefully reflects the whole episodes of *hajj* pilgrimage, this spiritual journey resembles a public assembly in the next life after death (Shariati, 2014; Haq & Jackson, 2009; Metcalf, 1990).

Muslim population comprised approximately 2 billion out of 7 billion world populations. However, the host of *hajj* pilgrimage could allow 2 million Muslims from the entire world to perform *hajj* (Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 2013). Crowd management, logistics adequacy, and disease control are among the main reason for limiting the number of *hajj* pilgrims (Shariati, 2014; Haq & Jackson, 2009). There have been increasing trend from 2009 until 2012, and later dropped by 20% due to the reconstruction and renovation of *Masjidil Haram* and other facilities to perform *hajj* rituals. Table 1 shows the number of pilgrims from 2009 until 2014.

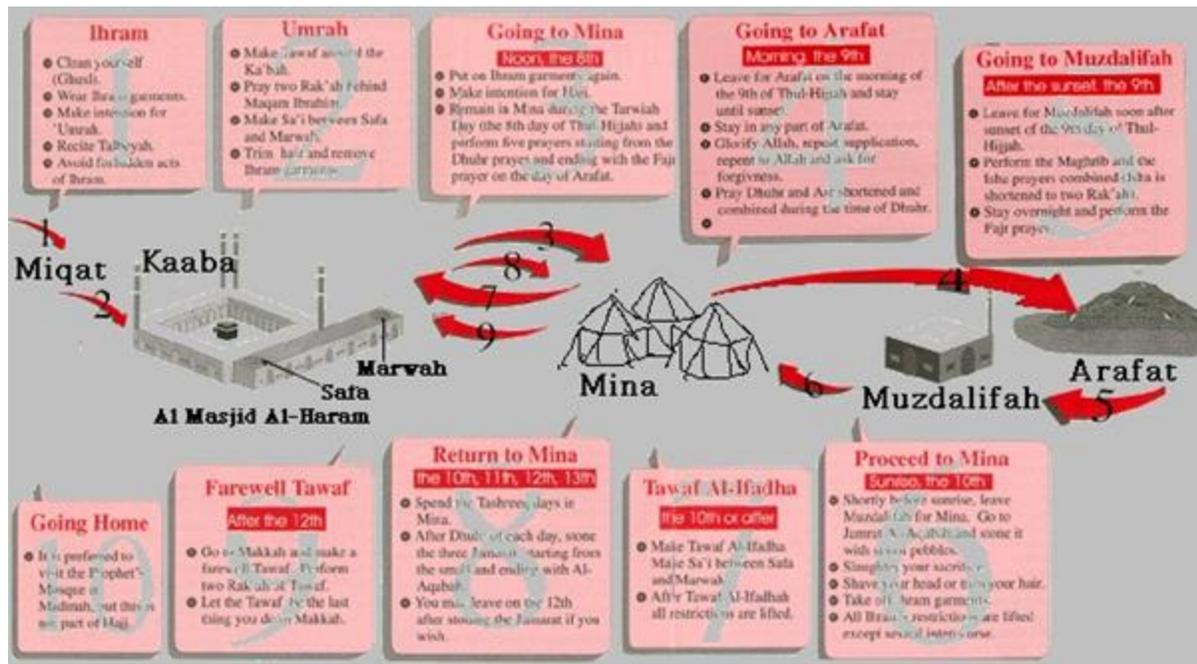
Table 1: Number of Pilgrims from 2009 until 2014

Year	No of Local Pilgrims	No of Foreign Pilgrims	Total Pilgrims
2009	154,000	1,613,000	1,767,000
2010	989,798	1,799,601	2,789,399
2011	1,099,522	1,828,195	2,927,717
2012	1,408,641	1,752,932	3,161,573
2013	700,000	1,379,531	2,079,531
2014	700,000	1,389,053	2,089,053

Source: Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia Net. (2013).

The *hajj* and *umrah* are not small industry. A few businesses are involved in the *hajj* and *umrah* industry. *Hajj* can be regarded as annual or seasonal business, which happened in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> month of Muslim lunar calendar. The continuous and all year round business is the *umrah* activities. *Umrah* is shorter version of *hajj* when it does not involve mass gathering in a few locations such as Arafah, Muzdalifah, and Mina. *Umrah* is much simpler. *Umrah* participant is required to make intention at the specified place (*miqat*) and from there the male will put on two pieces of cloth called *ihram*. In the *ihram*, one has to observe 13 prohibitions that related to clothing, beauty, perfume, sexual relationship, protecting of the environment and the animal. The *umrah* person will perform circumbulating (*tawaf*) at *kaabah* for 7 times, and then proceed to seven rounds of *saie*. The *umrah* is completed with a cut of a few hairs to mark the end of the *umrah*. The *umrah* can be repeated as many times as one wish to perform. Unlike *hajj*, one has to begin with stopover in Arafah on 9<sup>th</sup> *Zulhijjah*, later a brief stopover at Muzdalifah on the way to Mina for stoning. Figure 1 illustrates the *hajj* journey and its rituals.

Figure 1: Graphical and Geographical Illustration of Hajj Rituals



Source: Islamiccity (2015).

The *hajj* and *umrah* requires huge preparation as both require huge investment of effort, time and wealth. Both are obligatory worship in Islam, which is the fifth pillar of Islam. Exemptions are given for those who could not afford to do so. The affordability is not just limited to wealth possession in terms of money, but also visa to perform *hajj* or *umrah*, which is subjected to the immigration regulations of Saudi Arabia Kingdom Government. If one plans to perform *umrah*, one can do so throughout the year. But for *hajj*, one has to register with the hajj organizers that recognized by the Saudi Government. This requires long term planning on how one could get a visa to perform *hajj* (Memish, Stephens, Steffen, & Ahmed, 2012).

This act of worship can be related to the study of strategic management since both involves dynamic process with static aim, which is sustainable competitiveness and long term profitability.

The main objective of the study is to explore some lessons from *hajj* pilgrimage that can be applied as *Tawhidic*-based strategic management. The nature of strategic management resembles a journey, from one destination to another destination, with preparation and planning to foresee and address future challenges, so that organizations could respond with reactive or proactive or combination of both reactions, for sustainable competitive advantage and profitability. While the motives of the conventional paradigm in business is to continue to make more profit, the motives of *Tawhidic* paradigm manifests the trust and duty as servants and vicegerents of Allah in the attempt to please Allah vis-à-vis business activities. In other words, business activities and strategic management serve as instrument to seek pleasure of Allah.

The discussion of the study is divided into several parts. Part 1 provides the literature review of the key constructs. Part 2 explains the methodology. Part 3 provides the findings and discussion of the study. Finally, it ended with a concluding remark.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This part provides literature review on the key constructs of the paper. The first construct is Tawhidic paradigm. The second construct is strategic management. Finally, the lessons derived from *hajj* pilgrimage.

### *Tawhidic paradigm*

Tawhidic paradigm is about Islamic monotheism that is the understanding that every deed in this life must gain pleasure of Allah. The terms “tawhid” means one, which reflect the oneness of Allah. “Paradigm” refers to deep understanding with intention to perform as habit in daily life (Choudry & Hussain, 2005; Arham, 2010; Sarif, 2014). Tawhidic paradigm can be defined as the quality of having deep thinking and intention to perform the action for the sake of fulfilling the trust and duty as servants and vicegerents of Allah as part of seeking His Pleasure. Hassan (2010, pp.195-196) classified the tawhidic paradigm thinking personality as *Ulū al-Albāb* due to the ability of the person to “unify scientific and worldly knowledge with religious values, thinking and contemplation (*fikr* and *tafakkur*) with spiritual remembrance (*dhikr*) of Allah (SWT) and with *taqwa*... (that deep ethical consciousness of the pleasure and displeasure of Allah [SWT]), and are not afflicted with the diseases of the spiritual heart which al-Ghazali called *al-muhlik* (destructive elements).” This definition is in line with a few definitions by various scholars such as Al-Tabari as the possessors of great mind (*ashāb al ‘uqūl al kabīrah*), Al-Zamakhshari as those who observed and reflected (*al-Kashshāf*), Ibnu Kathir as pure and consummate intellects (*al-‘uqūl al-tāmmah al-zakiyyah*), and al-Alūsī as unadulterated intellects (*al-‘uqūl al-khālisah*)

The role of human is to worship Allah that is to obey all commandments from Allah and to refrain from all the prohibitions (Arham, 2010; Sarif, 2014). As individual, everyone is required to worship Allah through specific as well as general worship. This is the role of human as servants of Allah. One the other hand, every man is required to discharge the role as vicegerent of Allah to ensure the world is developed in line with the Divine Commandments (Hassan, 2010; Sarif, 2014). Table 2 highlights the processes and practices on each pillars of Islam.

Table 2: The Processes and Practices on Pillars of Islam

Pillars of Islam	Process	Practice
Testimony of faith	Pronounce “There is God but Allah and Prophet Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.”	Entry requirement of Islam
Perform Five prayers a day	To perform 2 <i>rakaat</i> (repeats of surrender) during <i>Fajr/Subuh</i> (dawn time around 6 a.m. – 7.30 a.m.), 4 <i>rakaat</i> of <i>Zuhr</i> (noon around 1.15 p.m.- 4.30pm), 4 <i>rakaat</i> of <i>Asar</i> (mid-afternoon around 4.45 p.m. – 7.10 p.m.), 3 <i>rakaat</i> of <i>Maghrib</i> (sunset around 7.15 p.m. – 8.30 p.m.), and 4 <i>rakaat</i> of <i>Isya</i> (night from 8.35 p.m. – 5.50 a.m.)	Purification of soul – an inner strength to avoid committing vices, evil, and sins.
Give zakat	Give certain percentage of wealth/property/possession ( <i>haul</i> ) for specified duration/period ( <i>hisab</i> ) to 8 categories of recipients ( <i>asnaf</i> )	Purification of possession – a symbol of gratitude
Fasting in the month of Ramadhan (9 <sup>th</sup> month of the Islamic calendar)	Abstaining of food, drink, sexual relation, and vices from dawn until sundown	Purification of soul, physical, desire, and action to reflect the appreciation of the comfort and sympathy to the disadvantaged
<i>Hajj</i> pilgrimage	Perform <i>hajj</i> rituals on specified days (from 8 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <i>Zulhijjah</i> ) at specified locations with obligations, rites, rituals, activities on specific terms and conditions	Spiritual journey to show case historical,

### Strategic management

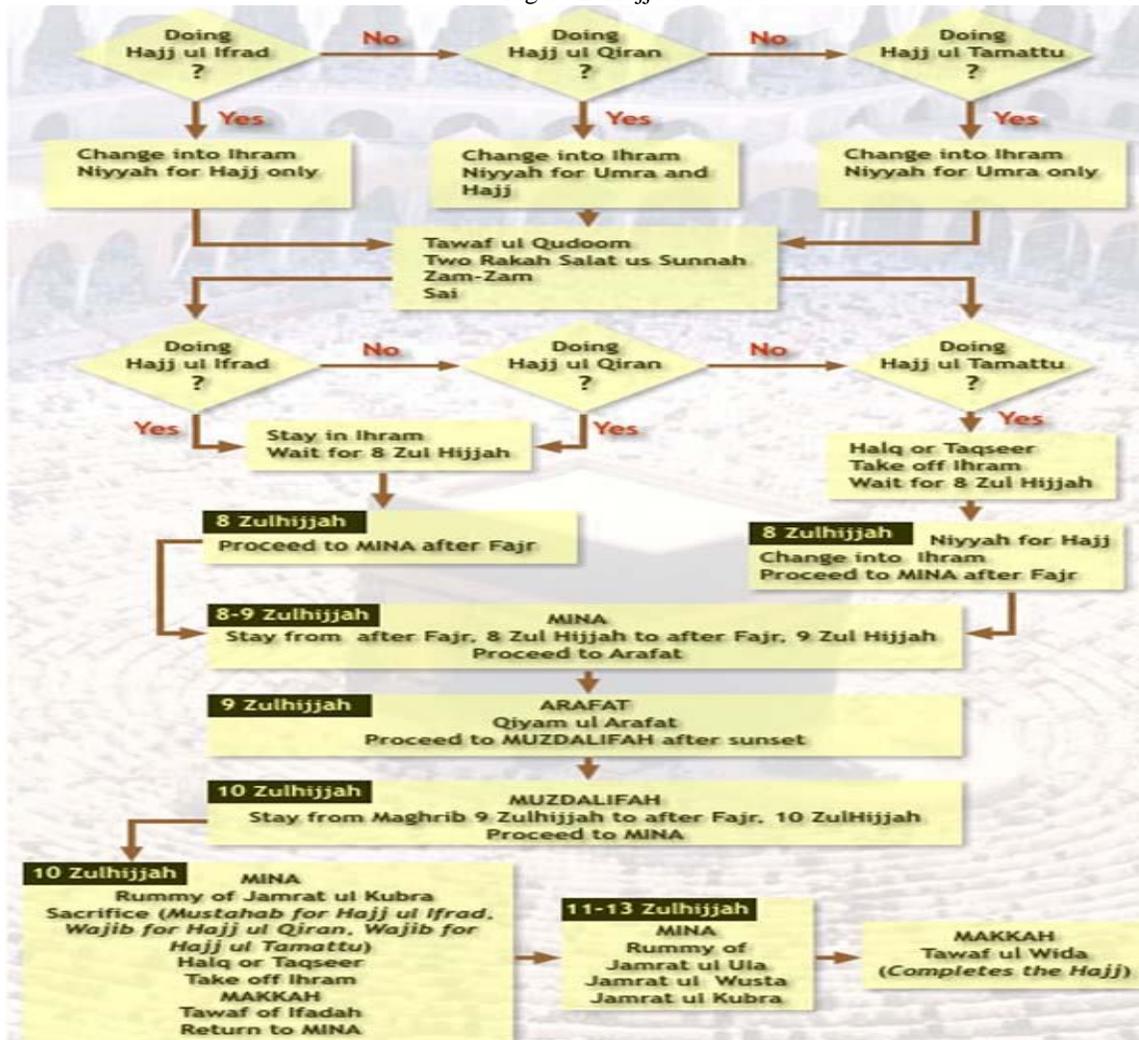
Strategic management is about art and science in determining the appropriate actions and ways for sustainable competitive advantage and high profitability. The process involves formulation, implementation and evaluation of strategic choices and actions that are sustainable, competitive and profitable. Prior the strategy formulation, the business environment needs an assessment to determine its attractiveness and potential to make profit on long term basis.

According to Senge (2014), strategy can be regarded as learning process due to the nature of strategic management that requires continuous assessment on the market. The market is not static and keeps changing due to the dynamism of the variables in the market such as the economic, political, technology, social and legal changes. Strategy also can be considered as a process of adapting and changing (Teece, Pisano, and Shuen, 1997), which requires innovation and able to bring innovation to work (Teece, 2010).

### Lessons from Hajj

The *hajj* pilgrimage is compulsory act of worship for every Muslim as it is part of the pillars of Islam. There are terms and conditions one must fulfil before doing the hajj pilgrimage. Prior to hajj, one must equip with knowledge about the act of the worship of hajj and also other knowledge to enhance the value of the worship. Figure 2 illustrates the hajj activities.

Figure 2: Hajj Flow Chart.



Source: All State Travel. (2014). Hajj Flow Chart. Retrieved from <http://www.gohajjumrah.com/flowchart.shtml>

### Social economics effect

McLoughlin (2013) found cultural and political economy impact from the hajj pilgrimage. The movement of hajj participants from everywhere around the globe signifies the unity in diversity of Muslim from different geographical and political economic background (Al Kodmany, 2009; Collins & Murphy, 2010). With standard knowledge of hajj, every hajj participants put on white two pieces of cloth of male and standard cloth of modesty for female.

The presence of about 2 million hajj participants from all over the world at Arafah on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Zulhijjah (the 12<sup>th</sup> month of Muslim calendar) to make a stopover (wukuf) resembles a world congress of Muslim with specific deed of worship, prayers, sermon, moment of reflections and so forth (Hedin, 2014). When it reaches night, all hajj participants moved from Arafah to Muzdalifah for another temporary stoppage (ma'bit) for another reflection of moment (Bahurmoz, 2006). In the early morning of 10<sup>th</sup> Zulhijjah, everyone walk to the complex of stoning (jamarat) for the act of symbolic stoning called *Jamrah Aqabah* with 7 pieces of stones.

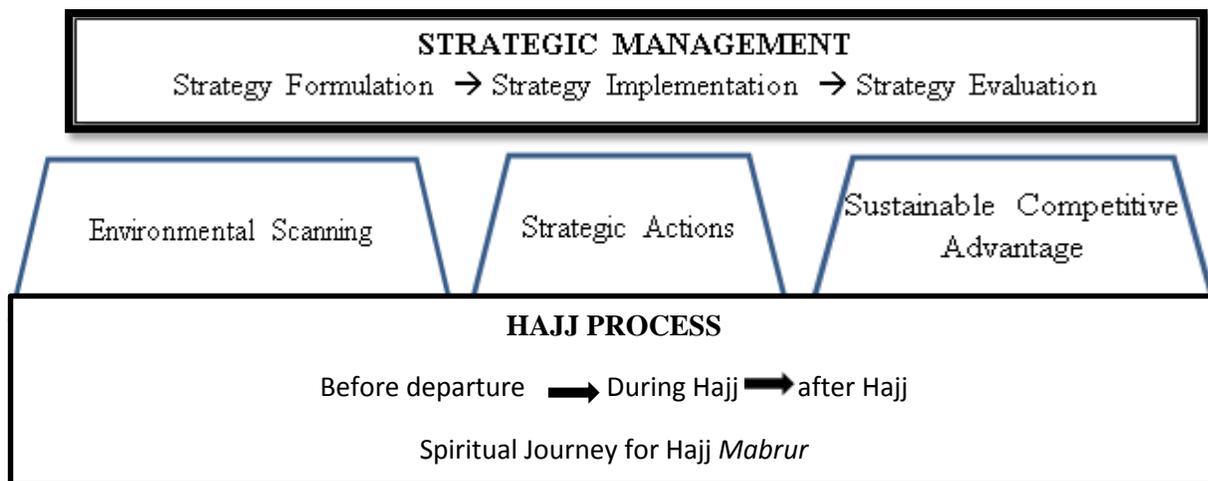
The stoning reflects throwing out all the evils both spiritual and physical in every hajj participants before making a symbolic hair cut (tahalul awal) for spiritual victory (Al Kodmany, 2011). This moment of happiness is shared with fellow hajj pilgrimage by sacrificing animals to be eaten and shared with others on 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of Zulhijjah. The stoning (small, medium and big stoning areas) is being repeated on the 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Zulhijjah and camped at the camping site of Mina. During the day, hajj participants may proceed with stoning, sacrifice animals, and to complete some of hajj deed in Makkah such as tawaf and saie.

### Public health

For health authority, the big crowd gathering can easily attract infectious disease. Ahmed, Barbeschi and Memish (2009) argued that the infectious disease must be controlled to enable the hajj performed their hajj deed in peaceful and healthy manner due to the spiritual and physical requirements of the hajj deed. This situation has motivated the public health sector to provide health care and medicine for the epidemic and infectious diseases in the hajj (Al Turki, 2014).

All the constructs are combined to see the effect of Tawhidic paradigm on strategic management based on hajj pilgrimage. Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework of the study.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study.



### METHODOLOGY

The main objective of the study is to explore some lessons from *hajj* pilgrimage that can be applied as *Tawhidic*-based strategic management. The study used personal interview with selected *hajj* pilgrims from Malaysia and personal observations during *hajj* year of 2013. The qualitative research approach allows the study to be explored and examined

deeply due to the tacit nature of the information, which could not be done adequately by quantitative methods, such as survey (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990). The purpose of a qualitative research is to understand the context deeply instead of making generalization. Nevertheless, the reliability of the non-structured questions asked the informants and validity of the study has been examined. Thus, this study aims to understand the linkages and *Tawhidic* paradigm presence in *hajj* experience that can be related to strategic management principal activities.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to Haji M, *hajj* pilgrimage is the peak of Islamic pillar after performing the two *kalimah syahadah*, *solat*, and fasting and gives *zakat*. In terms of long term management, the preparation for *hajj* is more than other worships in Islam although the duration to perform *hajj* is limited to a few days only. Haji M said:

*Our religion is full with art and science. Even in the religious obligations, we can easily learn and adapt some managerial skills related to our daily life. In solat for example, it trains us to be punctual, which is time management. In zakat, we have to be very sure and exact regarding the full year duration and the rate of zakat. For hajj, we have to manage everything, our prayers, our movement, our deed, to attain hajj mabrur. This worship demands our effort, our time, our wealth and our inner self to perform it. When talk about business, hajj trains us to be sincere, perseverance, and steadfast, although we might face uncertainties.*

In terms of daily management such as planning, assessment on the situation, what actions are strategic and give more outcomes and so forth, Haji M commented:

*As businessman, I can see this hajj activities began with making intention, then to follow the hajj manasik from 8<sup>th</sup> Zulhijjah until 13<sup>th</sup> Zulhijjah. The places that were strange to us but we have to go there. We tried to imagine the places but going through the map and information that we brought with us. The good thing with us was the hajj guide and hajj operation crew members.*

Based on Haji M's argument, *hajj* pilgrimage provides the spiritual training in strategic management, both strategic planning and strategic thinking, on how to prepare plan to execute actions that can produce more profit on long term basis. There is common objective between *hajj* and business. The main objective of *hajj* is to secure *hajj mabrur* (accepted *hajj* by Allah), and the objective in business is to please customers and other stakeholders, so that more profit and earnings per share can be obtained.

Some people were worried to travel to the places that they were not sure. Since *hajj* is part of spiritual journey for the sake of accepted *hajj*, the dependency to Allah is essential at all time. Haji Jay argued:

*Hajj can be easy and can be difficult, it depends on how well the person equips with knowledge and other skill. That's why we must not skip the hajj course. In my case, I attended several hajj courses that were conducted by different trainers. I gained different insight from different hajj courses. The syllabus of hajj courses is similar, but the tacit experience of the trainers was unique. When one is already in Makkah, one will work very hard to perform as many umrah as possible while waiting for hajj period. Nevertheless, we cannot neglect our health. In hajj, physical health is very important. The manasik (activities) of hajj needs physical movement from one place to another. If we prepare well, we won't face much difficulties. We still facing challenges, which are known. We just have to behave.*

Based on Haji Jay's argument, through *hajj* one will be trained to be steadfast and perseverance to complete the task of *hajj* within the limited, fast, and scheduled moments. While the act of *hajj* is certain, the situation of big crowd could be hampered with uncertainty due to challenges in logistic and movement of *hajj*.

Haji HM contended:

*Crowd management has been the concern of many people when comes to hajj. Despite many years in organizing the manasik of hajj, the organizers of hajj still have to face challenges. One must prepare physically fit to perform hajj. In every action, one needs energy to perform it. To stone alone, in my case, I have to walk for 5 km to reach the stoning complex, after stoning, I have to walk again for another 5 km. From 10, 11, 12 and 13, hajj participants from our camp site have to walk on average 10km a day just for the stoning. We may plan for our deed, but sometimes, it can be unexpected or beyond our imagination. When we are in uncertainty, we must have knowledge about our deed.*

The concern of Haji HM is more related to the journey of *hajj* itself. The concern is valid due to the nature of *hajj* activities that challenging the fitness of health, physical, mental, spiritual and intellectual. With prior knowledge and fully prepared to perform *hajj*, it helps the smooth process of doing *hajj*.

Based on the feedback of selected *hajj* pilgrims, *hajj* activities can be linked with the strategic management applications. *Hajj* activities consist of the pillars of *hajj*, obligations of *hajj*, observation of *hajj*, rites, rituals and other good activities can be related to various tasks of strategic management. The *Tawhidic* paradigm lies in the strategic intention of *hajj* activities (to perform all *hajj* activities for the sake of acceptance from Allah) and the process strategic management activities. Table 3 summarizes the *hajj* activities and the strategic management applications.

Table 3: Hajj Activities and Strategic Management Applications

Hajj activities	Strategic management applications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pillars</li> <li>• Obligations</li> <li>• Observation</li> <li>• Rites</li> <li>• Rituals</li> <li>• Activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intention</li> <li>• Vision-Mission-Objectives (VMO)</li> <li>• External and internal factors assessment</li> <li>• Guidelines for implementation</li> <li>• Procedures</li> <li>• Implementation and evaluation</li> </ul>

### LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study is limited to a few *hajj* experiences on specific *hajj* season, which may not be conclusive, comprehensive, robust and generalizable. However, the lessons are specific to the *hajj* contexts only. Future research should get more *hajj* participants from various *hajj* seasons with more research instruments.

### CONCLUSION

The *hajj* journey is full with spiritual experience with the intention to execute the worship for the sake of accepted *hajj* or *hajj mabrur*. While the journey requires full preparation, the act of the journey occurred only once in a life time of a Muslim. However, the uniqueness of *hajj* pilgrimage is due to its embedded practical experience of strategic management in executing the *hajj*. Although it is once in a life-time, the experience of *Tawhidic* paradigm is paramount. If this experience is practiced in the rest of the life, one will gain the bounties of an accepted *hajj* or *hajj mabrur*, which is the Pleasure of Allah and ready to be admitted into the best level of Heaven. The results of the study suggested that the theoretical linkage is *Tawhidic* paradigm as a contingency view on the unity of command and guidance in formulating, implementing, evaluating and improving activities and the practice linkage of *Tawhidic* paradigm and *hajj* pilgrimage to strategic management related to the process of formulation, implementation, evaluation and continuous improvement. Given to the nature of *hajj* service arrangement and the operations (*manasik*) of *hajj*, some aspects of *hajj* pilgrimage rituals and exercises have limited linkages to apply with strategic management. The study is limited to a few *hajj* experiences on specific *hajj* season, which may not be conclusive, comprehensive, robust and generalizable. However, the lessons are specific to the *hajj* contexts only. Future research should get more *hajj* participants from various *hajj* seasons with more research instruments.

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