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Global Journal of Economics and Business (GJEB)

المجلة العالمية للاقتصاد والأعمال

Journal Homepage: https://www.refaad.com/Journal/Index/2

E-ISSN 2519-9293 | P-ISSN 2519-9285

Vol. 15, Issue 2, 2025, pp. 240 - 255

Obstacles to Effective Strategic Planning in Transportation and Crowd Management: An Applied Study in the Hajj and Umrah System

العوائق أمام التخطيط الاستراتيجي الفعّال في إدارة النقل وإدارة الحشود: دراسة تطبيقية في نظام الحج والعمرة

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Received استلام البحث	Revised مراجعة البحث	Accepted قبول البحث
2024/11/11	2024/11/26	2024/12/19

DOI: https://doi.org/10.31559/GJEB2025.15.2.7

Abstract:

Objectives: This study aims to investigate the challenges faced by employees in the Hajj and Umrah System in implementing effective strategic planning for transportation and crowd management.

Methods: A survey was conducted with 63 employees, collecting data on key demographics, including gender, professional experience, education level, and age. The study analyzed participants' perceptions of obstacles affecting strategic planning, transportation, and crowd management.

Results: Findings reveal that 69.4% of participants recognize significant barriers to strategic planning, such as insufficient human resources and inadequate inter-unit coordination. Additionally, 71.2% acknowledge that limited resources, expertise, and follow-up hinder transportation operations, while 70.0% identify similar challenges in crowd management, including a lack of qualified personnel and budget constraints. No significant differences in perceptions were found based on demographic factors.

Conclusions: The study highlights a consensus among employees on the barriers to effective strategic planning. Policymakers and management are urged to improve resource allocation, provide advanced training, and enhance coordination to optimize transportation and crowd management strategies. Additionally, future research should explore the impact of specific training programs and innovative technologies to address resource constraints and improve coordination among units in the Hajj and Umrah System.

Keywords: *Strategic planning; Hajj and Umrah; transportation; crowd management; resource allocation.*

الملخص:

الأهداف: تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى دراسة التحديات التي يواجهها الموظفون في نظام الحج والعمرة في تنفيذ التخطيط الاستراتيجي الفعّال لإدارة النقل وإدارة الحشود.

المنهجية: تم إجراء دراسة استقصائية شملت 63 موظفًا، وجمعت بيانات عن الخصائص الديموغرافية الرئيسية مثل الجنس، والخبرة المهنية، والمستوى التعليمي والعمر. تم تحليل إدراك المشاركين للعوائق التي تؤثر على التخطيط الاستراتيجي، والنقل، وإدارة الحشود.

النتائج: أظهرت النتائج أن 69.4% من المشاركين يدركون وجود عوائق كبيرة في التخطيط الاستراتيجي مثل نقص الموارد البشرية وضعف التنسيق بين الوحدات. كما أشار 71.2% إلى أن نقص الموارد والخبرة والمتابعة يعيق العمليات النقلية، بينما أشار 70.0% إلى وجود تحديات مشابهة في إدارة الحشود، بما في ذلك نقص الكوادر المؤهلة وقيود الميزانية. ولم تظهر فروقات ذات دلالة إحصائية بناءً على العوامل الديموغرافية.

الخلاصة: تسلط الدراسة الضوء على إجماع بين الموظفين بشأن العوائق التي تواجه التخطيط الاستراتيجي الفعّال. يدعو البحث صانعي السياسات والإدارة إلى تحسين تخصيص الموارد، تقديم تدريب متقدم، وتعزيز التنسيق لتحسين استراتيجيات النقل وإدارة الحشود. كما يجب على الباحثين المستقبليين دراسة تأثير البرامج التدريبية المحددة والتقنيات المبتكرة للتغلب على قيود الموارد وتحسين التنسيق بين الوحدات في نظام الحج والعمرة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: *التخطيط الاستراتيجي؛ الحج والعمرة؛ النقل؛ إدارة الحشود؛ تخصيص الموارد.*

Citation

Alamoudi, R. (2025). Obstacles to Effective Strategic Planning in Transportation and Crowd Management: An Applied Study in the Hajj and Umrah System. *Global Journal of Economics and Business,* 15 (2), 240-255. https://doi.org/10.31559/GJEB2025.15.2.7

1 Introduction

The Hajj and Umrah system places significant emphasis on transportation and crowd management, recognizing them as essential components in ensuring the safety and efficiency of the pilgrimage experience. One of the primary functions of this system is to handle the large crowds of pilgrims, Umrah performers, and visitors to the two holy mosques in Makkah and Madinah. Successful Hajj, Umrah, and visitation operations hinge upon the effective implementation of strategic crowd management plans.

The Hajj and Umrah system incorporates long-term, medium-term, and short-term strategic plans to manage crowds and facilitate transportation between various distant religious sites. As such, the system's effectiveness in developing and executing well-structured plans is crucial for the success of each pilgrimage season. Recognizing the importance of strategic planning, the system focuses on creating clear, precise plans to handle the year-round presence of visitors at the two holy mosques.

The role of strategic planning in the Hajj and Umrah system lies in providing a framework that not only guides daily operations but also aligns with the system's broader objectives. Through strategic planning, the system is able to maintain order, ensure safety, and fulfill its objectives across all seasons of pilgrimage.

1.1 Research Problem

The research problem addressed in this study revolves around identifying the obstacles to effective strategic planning in transportation and crowd management within the Hajj and Umrah system. While previous studies have explored challenges in strategic planning and crowd management in various contexts, there is a lack of research specifically focused on the unique and high-stakes environment of the Hajj and Umrah system. This environment is characterized by an unprecedented density of individuals within a limited timeframe, where even minor inefficiencies can have significant logistical and safety implications.

The gap lies in the limited understanding of how specific factors such as resource allocation, inter-agency coordination, and personnel expertise impact strategic planning efforts in this context. Unlike static institutional settings examined in prior research, the dynamic and large-scale nature of Hajj and Umrah operations demands tailored strategies. By addressing this gap, the study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing insights into these challenges and offering actionable recommendations to improve transportation and crowd management strategies within this critical framework.

1.2 Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

- What are the obstacles to implementing effective strategic planning in transportation and crowd management from the perspective of employees in the Hajj and Umrah system?
- What is the impact of the obstacles to effective strategic planning (lack of resources and expertise, lack of knowledge, lack of flexibility, weak monitoring, accumulation of problems, weak accountability, and transparency) on transportation operations in the Hajj and Umrah system?
- What is the impact of the obstacles to effective strategic planning (lack of resources and expertise, lack of knowledge, lack of flexibility, weak monitoring, accumulation of problems, weak accountability, and transparency) on crowd management in the Hajj and Umrah system?
- Is there a statistically significant relationship between the obstacles to implementing effective strategic planning in transportation and crowd management from the perspective of employees in the Hajj and Umrah system according to variables such as gender, education level, and years of experience?

1.3 Importance of the Study

The importance of this study lies in its potential to assist officials in the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by providing a methodology to address obstacles to effective strategic planning in transportation and crowd management. Understanding these obstacles is crucial, as they form the backbone of a system aimed at development, innovation, and excellence in implementing strategic plans for crowd management and transportation. Additionally, this study contributes to the theoretical literature and previous research, particularly in the Arab context, regarding these obstacles. It will aid in establishing programs and plans to mitigate the challenges faced in applying effective strategic planning within the Hajj and Umrah system, especially considering the limited previous Arab studies on this topic.

1.4 Variables of the Study

The study includes two independent and dependent variables as follows:

- The independent variable represents the obstacles to effective strategic planning, from which the researcher selected (lack of resources and expertise, lack of knowledge, lack of flexibility, weak follow-up, accumulation of problems, and weak accountability and transparency) for measurement.
- The dependent variable includes two elements in the study, which are (transportation and crowd management), both of which are negatively and positively affected by the elements of the independent variable in the study.

1.5 Hypotheses of the Study

This study assumes the following:

- There is a statistically significant relationship at a significance level of (0.05) between the obstacles to effective strategic planning (lack of resources and expertise, lack of knowledge, lack of flexibility, weak follow-up, accumulation of problems, and weak accountability and transparency) and transportation operations within the Hajj and Umrah system.
- There is a statistically significant relationship at a significance level of (0.05) between the obstacles to effective strategic planning (lack of resources and expertise, lack of knowledge, lack of flexibility, weak follow-up, accumulation of problems, and weak accountability and transparency) and crowd management operations within the Hajj and Umrah system.
- There are statistically significant differences at the significance level of (0.05) between the mean responses of the sample individuals regarding the obstacles to effective strategic planning in transportation and crowd management attributed to the variable of educational level.

There are statistically significant differences at the significance level of (0.05) between the mean responses of the sample individuals regarding the obstacles to effective strategic planning in transportation and crowd management attributed to the variable of practical experience.

2 Literature Review

The challenges of crowd management and strategic planning have been widely studied across various settings. Martella (2017) conducted an analysis of crowd incidents over the past decade, concluding that inadequate investment in advanced technologies was a key factor in ineffective crowd management. This finding underscores the importance of leveraging modern tools to optimize operations in complex environments. Al-Kaltham and Badraneh (2012) explored obstacles to strategic planning in the College of Education at Umm Al-Qura University, identifying academic rank as a significant influence on strategic planning effectiveness. Their study highlights how organizational structure and hierarchy can affect planning processes. Similarly, Hassan (2017) examined strategic planning challenges within technical education under the Ministry of Education, emphasizing organizational, financial, human, and methodological barriers as key hindrances.

In the realm of higher education, Al-Omari and Salameh (2009) studied the effectiveness of strategic planning in Jordanian universities. Their findings revealed that public university faculty perceived strategic planning efforts to be more effective than those in private institutions, primarily due to differences in resources and application depth. Al Saud (2016) contributed insights specific to Hajj and Umrah, identifying logistical issues such as prolonged waiting times and overcrowding as persistent challenges in human crowd management. These issues resonate strongly with the current research context, where crowd density and mobility significantly impact strategic planning outcomes.

Furthermore, Ibrahim et al. (2017) assessed strategic planning barriers in private schools in Oman, ranking these challenges as moderate in significance. Awda (2017) focused on Baghdad's public universities, highlighting financial, organizational, administrative, and human obstacles as primary factors impeding effective planning. These findings collectively indicate that while strategic planning faces common challenges globally, the context—whether educational, organizational, or operational—plays a critical role in shaping the nature and impact of these barriers.

This study builds on these insights by focusing specifically on the Hajj and Umrah system, where the unique interplay of crowd dynamics, resource constraints, and inter-agency coordination challenges demand a tailored approach to strategic planning. Unlike previous studies that largely addressed static institutional settings, this research aims to address the dynamic and high-stakes environment of Hajj and Umrah operations,

thereby contributing to the existing body of knowledge with practical implications for policymakers and practitioners.

2.1 Nature and Definition of Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is globally recognized for its ability to outline future objectives and guide progress, whether at the individual, family, community, or governmental level. Developed countries, in particular, emphasize well-informed, forward-looking planning while retaining the flexibility to adjust to dynamic circumstances. Planning, in general, is defined as "the process of setting plans based on accurate information to achieve specific objectives over a future period, considering expected circumstances and in the best possible manner" (Saqr, 2020, p. 12).

In the context of the Hajj and Umrah system's crowd management, planning plays a crucial role in meeting the increasing global demand for pilgrimage. It involves devising short-, medium-, and long-term plans aimed at expanding the capacity of the two holy mosques and surrounding sacred sites, as well as increasing the availability of hotels and accommodations necessary for hosting pilgrims. Additionally, it requires strengthening the Saudi economy's productive capacity to keep up with the demand for goods and services associated with the influx of pilgrims.

Planning serves as the foundational step for executing tasks at every level, with scientific studies underscoring the importance of structured planning in achieving high efficiency. A well-defined plan acts as a roadmap, steering efforts away from randomness and impulsive decisions toward deliberate, goal-oriented actions (Mushtahi, 2011).

Strategic planning, specifically, is defined as "the process through which internal and external environments are analyzed and studied using past and present databases to predict future outcomes and the objectives to be achieved" (Ali, 2012, p. 11). This comprehensive approach ensures that the Hajj and Umrah system's crowd management strategies are both proactive and adaptable to future needs.

2.1.1 The Nature and Definition of Crowd Management

There is no universally accepted definition of "crowd" in the existing literature, as interpretations vary depending on the context, purpose, or dynamics of the gathering (Challenger, 2009). Definitions often focus on aspects like the characteristics of the gathering, the motivations behind it, or the social bonds that unite those involved. According to Al-Zahrani et al. (2021), a crowd can be defined as "several individuals; these individuals are people who cannot live alone or isolated from others due to their behaviors. They form a group, driven by luxury and inherent conflict within human psychology. A crowd is a group of people in society who may have social relationships, mutual social interactions, and possibly a shared fate, goal, or interests they seek to achieve" (p. 8).

Crowd management, on the other hand, is described as "an administrative process aimed at controlling, organizing, and regulating crowds through the functions of planning, organizing, supervising, directing, monitoring, and evaluation" (Al-Rihaili, 1439). This process is essential in structured settings such as the Hajj and Umrah, where large numbers of individuals gather for religious purposes, requiring careful planning and organization to ensure safety, efficiency, and satisfaction.

2.1.2 Crowd Management Processes

Crowd management involves several interrelated processes, as highlighted by Al-Kubawi and Zaid (2026, p. 2). These processes include:

- Crowd Analysis: This process interprets data to study the natural movement patterns of groups or human crowds, tracking movement trends to understand crowd flow. Crowd analysis examines how changes in density and other factors affect crowd behavior, providing insights for managing movement in high-density areas.
- Crowd Density: Defined as the number of individuals per square mile or within specific units, crowd density directly influences the perception of space. High density often leads to feelings of congestion and may contribute to tension within public spaces due to the limited space and crowd behaviors.
- Crowd Behavior: This refers to the actions displayed by individuals within a gathering, often marked by increased boldness and emotional reactions. In such environments, individuals may act without full awareness of responsibility, often mimicking familiar actions of those around them without considering the consequences.

- Crowd Dynamics: The study of crowd dynamics examines how and where crowds form, movement patterns when critical density levels are exceeded, and the potential risks of overcrowding. This process is crucial for devising methods to ensure crowd safety and prevent injuries in dense gatherings.
- Crowd Medicine: This specialized field focuses on the health risks associated with large crowds and mass gatherings. Crowd medicine aims to develop effective healthcare strategies to manage and respond to potential medical needs during these events.
- Crowd Psychology: This area explores the psychological factors that influence individual behavior within crowds. When people join a crowd, they often lose a degree of individual control and may feel compelled to mimic the actions of others, sometimes disregarding the consequences of their behaviors.
- Crowd Simulation: This involves simulating large groups or characters, commonly used in training scenarios for crisis response, evacuation planning, and visual media. Crowd simulation helps prepare for real-life crowd management challenges by modeling crowd behavior in various scenarios.

2.1.3 Theories Explaining Crowd Management

- Crowd Theory or Collective Conscience: French sociologist √âmile Durkheim introduced the concept of collective conscience, which refers to the shared behaviors and attitudes within a society. Durkheim viewed society as a collective entity with its own consciousness, exerting an influence over its members. He described crowds as part of this organic entity, suggesting that, like an organism, they have specific needs. This idea emphasizes the importance of addressing the needs of crowds as one would address societal needs (Abdulrahman, 2016).
- Emergent Norm Theory: Developed by Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian in their work Collective Behavior, this theory posits that crowds initially lack strong social and psychological bonds. As a crowd forms, however, leaders emerge who guide behavior by suggesting actions and establishing norms. These leaders introduce informal rules, or "emergent norms," that regulate the behavior of individuals within the crowd (Forsyth, 2012).

2.1.4 Types of Crowds

According to Murad (2017: 36-37), sociologist Hubert Blumer categorized crowds into four main types:

- Casual Crowd: Individuals come together spontaneously, often to witness a specific event, like gathering around a car accident.
- Conventional Crowd: People gather for a planned event, such as watching a movie in a theater.
- Expressive Crowd: This crowd engages in shared rituals and movements, exemplified by participants in the Hajj rituals, particularly at Arafat.
- Active Crowd: Seen in demonstrations or mass movements, this type is characterized by intense emotional reactions.

According to Andrix (2015: 16), crowds can also be classified based on additional criteria:

1. **Form and Composition:**
   - Planned Crowds: Prearranged with established leadership, often for a single occurrence.
   - Spontaneous Crowds: Unplanned gatherings with no set goal or leadership, like crowds forming around an accident.
   - Consensus Crowds: Lacking formal leadership, yet governed by mutual understanding, such as audiences in a sports stadium.
2. **Purpose or Objective:**
   - Crowds with a Predefined Goal: Includes hostile crowds characterized by violence and protests.
   - Crowds without a Predefined Goal: Formed out of fear due to accidents, natural disasters, or crises.
   - Crowds for Specific Occasions: Gatherings like those for Hajj rituals.
   - Crowds to Obtain Something: For example, people gathering for ticket sales.
3. **Leadership and Organization:**
   - Crowds with Predefined Leadership: Organized groups, such as student or worker protests.
   - Crowds with Temporary Leadership: Selects a temporary leader in the moment, often swayed by speeches.
   - Crowds without Leadership or Organization: These act chaotically and impulsively.
4. **Emotion:**
   - Speech Crowd: Expresses emotions verbally through chants or slogans.

- Action Crowd: Shows emotional states through actions, including potentially destructive acts.

5. **Location:**
- Gathered Crowd: Individuals are physically present in one location, displaying collective behavior.
- Dispersed Crowd: Individuals interact or are influenced remotely, often through social media or communication channels.

6. **Emotional State:**
- Volatile Crowd: Displays inconsistent emotions, alternating between feelings like joy and sadness.
- Focused Crowd: Unified in a single emotional state.

3 Research Approach and Methodology

This section discusses the methodology employed in this study, covering the study method, sampling, data collection tools, data validity and reliability, and measurement and data analysis tools.

3.1 Research Methodology

Research methodology is a systematic approach to solving a problem. It is the science of studying how research should be conducted. Essentially, the procedures by which researchers describe, explain, and predict phenomena are referred to as research methodology.

3.2 Descriptive Method

Descriptive research involves collecting data to test hypotheses or answer questions about the current status of the subjects in the study. This approach determines and reports the state of affairs as they are. The descriptive method was used in this research, as it is a valuable and suitable approach for investigating respondents' opinions in this type of study.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

The primary data source is a questionnaire used for data collection. Additionally, secondary resources, such as books, journals, statistics, and government websites, were utilized in gathering data.

The questionnaire was developed by the researcher and reviewed by experts in the field from several Saudi universities. It was then distributed to the sample population to gather their opinions regarding obstacles to effective strategic planning in transportation and crowd management. The questionnaire consists of the following sections:

1. **Preliminary Information**: Includes questions on gender, years of professional experience, educational level, and age.
2. **Study Dimensions**: Composed of 23 statements divided into three dimensions. Responses to these statements are measured on a five-point Likert scale:
   - **Obstacles to Implementing Effective Strategic Planning in Transportation and Crowd Management from the Perspective of Employees in the Hajj and Umrah System** – Contains 10 statements.
   - **The Extent of the Impact of Obstacles to Effective Strategic Planning** (such as lack of resources and expertise, lack of knowledge, lack of flexibility, weak follow-up, accumulation of problems, and weak accountability and transparency) **on Transportation Operations in the Hajj and Umrah System** – Contains 6 statements.
   - **The Impact of Obstacles to Effective Strategic Planning** (including lack of resources and expertise, lack of knowledge, lack of flexibility, weak follow-up, accumulation of problems, and weak accountability and transparency) on Crowd Management in the Hajj and Umrah System – Contains 7 statements.

Table 1: Five-level Likert items

Answer	Weight	Weighted Mean
Strongly disagree	1	1 –< 1.80
Disagree	2	1.80 –< 2.60
Hesitant	3	2.60 –< 3.40
Agree	4	3.40 –< 4.20
Strongly Agree	5	4.20 – 5.0

The table above shows the weights for responding levels of the statements and the weighted mean – according to five-level Likert scale. Likert scaling is a bipolar scaling method, measuring either positive or negative response to a statement.

3.4 Research Population and Sample

The population consist of employees of Hajj and Umrah System. A sample of 63 employees of Hajj and Umrah System were randomly selected to participate in the study.

3.5 Data Analysis

After the completion of data collection process, sorting and coding were conducted, then, all data were entered to the computer for analysis by (SPSS version 24) program for windows "famous package of statistics analysis".

3.7 Data Presentation and Analysis

Several statistics were used in this study, in order to answer the questions developed by researcher, such as frequency and percentage, mean and standard deviation, cronbach's Alpha, Pearson Correlation Coefficient, independent sample t-test, and one-way analysis of variance (One –Way ANOVA).

3.8 Internal Consistency

A measuring device or instrument is considered valid when it measures only what it is intended to measure. The questionnaire should be designed with this in mind to ensure accuracy and relevance.

The internal consistency was calculated for the questionnaire by calculating the correlation coefficient between each statement and the total of its dimension, and the results are shown in the table below:

Table 2: Internal Consistency by method of Pearson Correlation

Dimensions	No.	Person Correlation Coefficient	No.	Person Correlation Coefficient
First dimension	1	.581**	6	.800**
	2	.621**	7	.813**
	3	.788**	8	.825**
	4	.819**	9	.786**
	5	.761**	10	.815**
Second dimension	11	.571**	14	.844**
	12	.731**	15	.851**
	13	.811**	16	.774**
Third dimension	17	.714**	21	.787**
	18	.641**	22	.865**
	19	.868**	23	.771**
	20	.837**		

(**) Correlation is significant at level (0.01).

The above table 2 shows the correlation coefficients between each statement and the total score of the dimension belongs to. It is found that the correlation coefficients range from (0.571 – 0.868) which are high, positive and statistically significant at level (0.01), and this indicates high internal consistency for the questionnaire in its dimensions.

Reliability:

It refers to consistency throughout a series of measurements, however, the researcher should frame the items in a questionnaire in such a way that it provides reliability. The most common method for reliability is Cronbach's Alpha which the researcher opted.

Table 3: Reliability test by method of Cronbach's Alpha

Dimensions	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
First dimension	10	0.918
Second dimension	6	0.858
Third dimension	7	0.895
Overall	**23**	**0.954**

Table 3 above shows the results of reliability test by using Cronbach's Alpha method. It is found that the coefficients of Cronbach's Alpha for the first dimension is 0.918, and for the second dimension is 0.858, and for

the third dimension is 0.895, and for the overall questionnaire is 0.954. All these values are high and acceptable for the researcher.

4 Data Analysis Results and Interpretation

This chapter includes data analysis and interpretation of results. The start point will be from the demographic characteristics of participants, followed by answering study questions and studying the differences in participants' opinion toward the dimensions.

4.1 Demographic characteristics of participants

Table 4: Frequency distribution of participants according to preliminary data

Variable	Groups	n	%
Gender	Male	35	55.6%
	Female	28	44.4%
Years of Professional Experience	1 year – less than 5 years	22	34.9%
	5 years – less than 10 years	9	14.3%
	10 years – less than 15 years	5	7.9%
	15 years or more	27	42.9%
Educational Level	High School	3	4.8%
	Bachelor's Degree	29	46.0%
	Advanced Diploma	7	11.1%
	Master's Degree	17	27.0%
	Doctorate	7	11.1%
Age	20 years – less than 30 years	11	17.5%
	30 years – less than 40 years	15	23.8%
	40 years – less than 50 years	22	34.9%
	50 years – less than 60 years	15	23.8%
	Total	**63**	**100.0%**

The sample consists of 63 participants who are employees working in the Hajj and Umrah System. Regarding gender, it is found that 35(55.6%) of participants are males, while the females are 28(44.4%) [Figure 1]. Regarding Years of Professional Experience, it is found that 27(42.9%) have experience (15 years and more), 22(34.9%) have (1 to less than 5 years of experience), and only 5(7.9%) have (10 to less than 15 years) of experience [Figure 2].

Regarding education level, it is found that 29(46.0%) of participants their education level is (bachelor degree), 17(27.0%) have master degree, 7(11.1%) have advanced diploma, and 7(11.1%) have Doctorate, and only 3(4.8% have high school education). [Figure 3]. Regarding Age, it is found that 22(34.9%) of participants in the age group (40 to less than 50 years), 15(23.8%) in the age group (30 to less than 40 years), 15(23.8%) in the age group (50 to less than 60 years), and 11(17.5%) in the age group (20 to less than 30 years) [Figure 4].

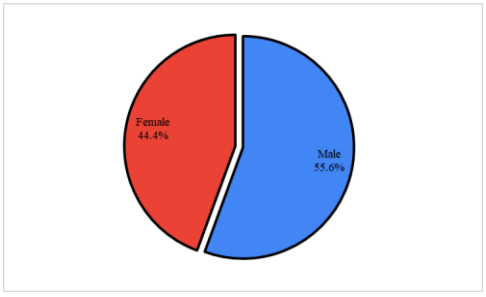

Figure 1. frequency distribution according to Gender

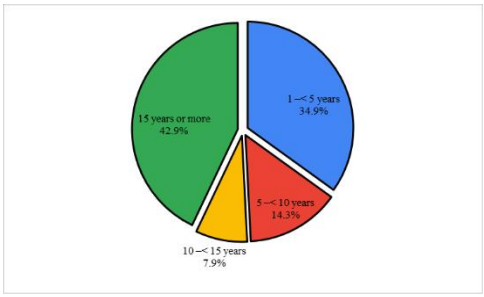

Figure 2. frequency distribution according to Years of Professional Experience

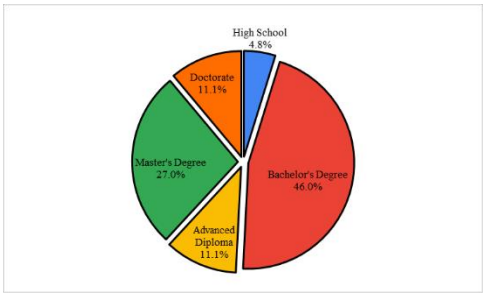

Figure 3. frequency distribution according to Education Level

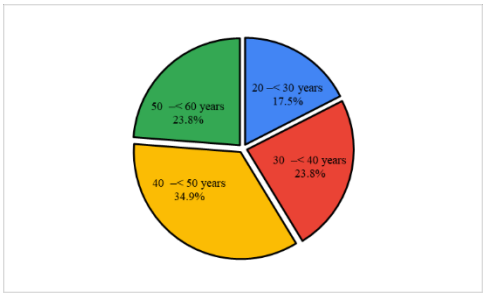

Figure 4. frequency distribution according to Age

4.2 Results of Research Questions

Q1. What are the Obstacles to Implementing Effective Strategic Planning in Transportation and Crowd Management from the Perspective of Employees Working in the Hajj and Umrah System?

To answer this question; means, standard deviation and percentages were calculated for the responses toward each statement in the first dimension (Obstacles to Implementing Effective Strategic Planning in Transportation and Crowd Management). The results were shown in the following table:

Table 5: Means, standard deviations and percentages for the participants' responses toward the Obstacles of Implementing Effective Strategic Planning in Transportation and Crowd Management

N	Statements	Mean	Std.	%	Level	Rank
1	The Hajj and Umrah system suffers from a lack of human resources regarding strategic planning for transportation and crowd management.	3.89	1.23	77.8%	Agree	1
2	The Hajj and Umrah system suffers from a lack of financial resources regarding strategic planning for transportation and crowd management.	3.51	1.18	70.2%	Agree	4
3	Lack of focus among leaders in the Hajj and Umrah system is one of the obstacles to strategic planning in transportation and crowd management.	3.63	1.08	72.6%	Agree	3
4	Strategic planners suffer from a lack of knowledge regarding transportation and crowd management.	3.46	1.19	69.2%	Agree	6
5	Weak coordination between units in the Hajj and Umrah system negatively affects effective strategic planning for transportation and crowd management.	3.76	1.27	75.2%	Agree	2
6	There is weak follow-up in the implementation of strategic plans related to transportation and crowd management in the Hajj and Umrah system.	3.49	1.19	69.8%	Agree	5
7	The Hajj and Umrah system suffers from administrative rigidity, which negatively affects its transportation and crowd management operations.	3.27	1.11	65.4%	Neutral	8
8	There is weak leadership support for the Hajj and Umrah system in managing transportation and crowd operations.	3.14	1.27	62.8%	Neutral	10
9	There is a lack of accountability in the Hajj and Umrah system regarding the implementation of strategic plans.	3.35	1.22	67.0%	Neutral	7
10	There is inability to set clear objectives concerning strategic planning in the Hajj and Umrah system.	3.24	1.21	64.8%	Neutral	9
	Overall Dimension	**3.47**	**1.20**	**69.4%**	**Agree**	

The previous Table 5 shows the mean, standard deviation and percentages of answers for each statement in the first dimension (Obstacles of Implementing Effective Strategic Planning in Transportation and Crowd Management). The means of statements came in the ranger (3.14 – 3.89) with percentages (62.8% – 77.8%). The overall mean of the dimension which is (3.47) lies in the range (3.40 -< 4.20) – according to Five-Likert scale with overall percentage (69.4%) and overall standard deviation (1.20), which indicates that the majority of participants of employees working in the Hajj and Umrah System agree with 69.4% that there are obstacles of implementing effective strategic planning in transportation and crowd management.

According to the mean value of each statement, the statements have been ranked in descending order from the highest mean to the lowest, so it is found that the statement (The Hajj and Umrah system suffers from a lack of human resources regarding strategic planning for transportation and crowd management) came firstly with the highest mean (3.89) and level of response (Agree), then the statement (Weak coordination between units in the Hajj and Umrah system negatively affects effective strategic planning for transportation and crowd management) came in the second order with mean (3.76) and level of response (Agree), then the statement (Lack

of focus among leaders in the Hajj and Umrah system is one of the obstacles to strategic planning in transportation and crowd management) came in the third order with mean (3.63) and level of response (Agree), then the statement (The Hajj and Umrah system suffers from a lack of financial resources regarding strategic planning for transportation and crowd management) came in the fourth order with mean (3.51) and level of response (Agree).

In the fifth order the statement (There is weak follow-up in the implementation of strategic plans related to transportation and crowd management in the Hajj and Umrah system) came with mean (3.49) and level of response (Agree), then the statement (Strategic planners suffer from a lack of knowledge regarding transportation and crowd management) came in the sixth order with mean (3.46) and level of response (Agree), then the statement (There is a lack of accountability in the Hajj and Umrah system regarding the implementation of strategic plans) came in the seventh order with mean (3.35) and level of response (Neutral), then the statement (The Hajj and Umrah system suffers from administrative rigidity, which negatively affects its transportation and crowd management operations) came in the eighth order with mean (3.27) and level of response (Neutral), then the statement (There is inability to set clear objectives concerning strategic planning in the Hajj and Umrah system) came in the ninth order with mean (3.24) and level of response (Neutral), then the statement (There is weak leadership support for the Hajj and Umrah system in managing transportation and crowd operations) came lastly in the tenth order with the lowest mean (3.14) and level of response (Neutral).

Q2. To what Extent the Impact of Obstacles to Effective Strategic Planning (lack of resources and expertise, lack of knowledge, lack of flexibility, weak follow-up, accumulation of problems, weak accountability and transparency) on Transportation Operations in the Hajj and Umrah System?

To answer this question; means, standard deviation and percentages were calculated for the responses toward each statement in the second dimension (The Extent of the Impact of Obstacles to Effective Strategic Planning on Transportation Operations in the Hajj and Umrah System). The results were shown in the following table:

Table (6): Means, standard deviations and percentages for the participants' responses toward the Extent of the Impact of Obstacles to Effective Strategic Planning on Transportation Operations in the Hajj and Umrah System

N	Statements	Mean	Std.	%	Level	Rank
11	The Hajj and Umrah system develops alternative plans when one of the main plans fails (due to lack of resources and expertise), which positively impacts transportation operations.	3.89	1.02	77.8%	Agree	1
12	Weak application of knowledge in the Hajj and Umrah system negatively affects effective transportation strategies.	3.84	1.08	76.8%	Agree	2
13	There is weak follow-up in the effective strategic plans for transportation, negatively impacting the achievement of the system's strategic goals.	3.38	1.02	67.6%	Neutral	5
14	There is a lack of flexibility in administrative processes in the Hajj and Umrah system, negatively affecting effective strategic planning for transportation.	3.29	1.08	65.8%	Neutral	6
15	Weak accountability and transparency in the administration of the Hajj and Umrah system negatively impact the strategic planning of transportation.	3.44	1.12	68.8%	Agree	4
16	Lack of administrative follow-up in the system has led to the accumulation of administrative problems, which has affected effective strategic planning for transportation.	3.54	1.15	70.8%	Agree	3
	Total	**3.56**	**1.08**	**71.2%**	**Agree**	

The previous Table 6 shows the mean, standard deviation and percentages of answers for each statement in the second dimension (The Extent of the Impact of Obstacles to Effective Strategic Planning on Transportation Operations in the Hajj and Umrah System). The means of statements came in the ranger (3.26 – 3.89) with percentages (65.8% – 77.8%). The overall mean of the dimension which is (3.56) lies in the range (3.40 -< 4.20) – according to Five-Likert scale with overall percentage (71.2%) and overall standard deviation (1.08), which indicates that the majority of participants of employees working in the Hajj and Umrah System agree with 71.2% to the extent of the impact of obstacles to effective strategic planning (lack of resources and expertise, lack of

knowledge, lack of flexibility, weak follow-up, accumulation of problems, weak accountability and transparency) on transportation operations in the Hajj and Umrah System.

According to the mean value of each statement, the statements have been ranked in descending order from the highest mean to the lowest, so it is found that the statement (The Hajj and Umrah system develops alternative plans when one of the main plans fails (due to lack of resources and expertise), which positively impacts transportation operations) came firstly with the highest mean (3.89) and level of response (Agree), then the statement (Weak application of knowledge in the Hajj and Umrah system negatively affects effective transportation strategies) came in the second order with mean (3.84) and level of response (Agree), then the statement (Lack of administrative follow-up in the system has led to the accumulation of administrative problems, which has affected effective strategic planning for transportation) came in the third order with mean (3.54) and level of response (Agree).

The statement (Weak accountability and transparency in the administration of the Hajj and Umrah system negatively impact the strategic planning of transportation) came in the fourth order with mean (3.44) and level of response (Agree), then the statement (There is weak follow-up in the effective strategic plans for transportation, negatively impacting the achievement of the system's strategic goals) came in the fifth order with mean (3.38) and level of response (Neutral), then the statement (There is a lack of flexibility in administrative processes in the Hajj and Umrah system, negatively affecting effective strategic planning for transportation) came lastly in the sixth order with the lowest mean (3.29) and level of response (Neutral).

Q3. What The Impact of Obstacles to Effective Strategic Planning (lack of resources and expertise, lack of knowledge, lack of flexibility, weak follow-up, accumulation of problems, weak accountability and transparency) on Crowd Management in the Hajj and Umrah System?

To answer this question; means, standard deviation and percentages were calculated for the responses toward each statement in the third dimension (The Impact of Obstacles to Effective Strategic Planning on Crowd Management in the Hajj and Umrah System). The results were shown in the following table:

Table 7: Means, standard deviations and percentages for the participants' responses toward the Impact of Obstacles to Effective Strategic Planning on Crowd Management in the Hajj and Umrah System

N	Statements	Mean	Std.	%	Level	Rank
17	The Hajj and Umrah system suffers from a lack of qualified human expertise in crowd management, negatively impacting the implementation of its strategies for pilgrims and visitors.	4.03	1.14	80.6%	Agree	1
18	The Hajj and Umrah system suffers from limited resources due to insufficient budgets allocated to crowd management programs, which negatively affects its strategies.	3.54	1.08	70.8%	Agree	2
19	The Hajj and Umrah system does not base its information organization on a database, resulting in a lack of knowledge that could help address crises in its crowd management plans for pilgrims and visitors.	3.48	1.16	69.6%	Agree	3
20	There is weak follow-up on the administrative and field decisions implemented by the Hajj and Umrah system as part of its crowd management plans for pilgrims and visitors.	3.38	1.10	67.6%	Neutral	5
21	The Hajj and Umrah system suffers from lack of flexibility in its administrative leadership, which affects the implementation of its strategies for crowd management of pilgrims and visitors.	3.43	1.03	68.6%	Agree	4
22	Weak administrative oversight in the Hajj and Umrah system has led to weak accountability and transparency in performance, negatively impacting its strategic plans for crowd management of pilgrims and visitors.	3.30	1.10	66.0%	Neutral	7
23	Weak administrative oversight mechanisms in the Hajj and Umrah system have led to the accumulation of problems, negatively affecting crowd management operations for pilgrims and visitors.	3.35	1.06	67.0%	Neutral	6
	Total	**3.50**	**1.10**	**70.0%**	**Agree**	

The previous Table 7 shows the mean, standard deviation and percentages of answers for each statement in the third dimension (The Impact of Obstacles to Effective Strategic Planning on Crowd Management in the Hajj and Umrah System). The means of statements came in the ranger (3.30 – 4.03) with percentages (66.0% – 80.6%). The overall mean of the dimension which is (3.50) lies in the range (3.40 -< 4.20) – according to Five-Likert scale with overall percentage (70.0%) and overall standard deviation (1.10), which indicates that the majority of participants of employees working in the Hajj and Umrah System agree with 70.0% to the impact of obstacles to effective strategic planning (lack of resources and expertise, lack of knowledge, lack of flexibility, weak follow-up, accumulation of problems, weak accountability and transparency) on crowd management in the Hajj and Umrah System.

According to the mean value of each statement, the statements have been ranked in descending order from the highest mean to the lowest, so it is found that the statement (The Hajj and Umrah system suffers from a lack of qualified human expertise in crowd management, negatively impacting the implementation of its strategies for pilgrims and visitors) came in the first order with mean (4.03) and level of response (Agree), followed by the statement (The Hajj and Umrah system suffers from limited resources due to insufficient budgets allocated to crowd management programs, which negatively affects its strategies) in the second order with mean (3.54) and level of response (Agree), then the statement (The Hajj and Umrah system does not base its information organization on a database, resulting in a lack of knowledge that could help address crises in its crowd management plans for pilgrims and visitors) came in the third order with mean (3.48) and level of response (Agree), then the statement (The Hajj and Umrah system suffers from lack of flexibility in its administrative leadership, which affects the implementation of its strategies for crowd management of pilgrims and visitors) came in the fourth order with mean (3.43) and level of response (Agree).

The statement (There is weak follow-up on the administrative and field decisions implemented by the Hajj and Umrah system as part of its crowd management plans for pilgrims and visitors) came in the fifth order with mean (3.38) and level of response (Neutral), then the statement (Weak administrative oversight mechanisms in the Hajj and Umrah system have led to the accumulation of problems, negatively affecting crowd management operations for pilgrims and visitors) came in the sixth order with mean (3.35) and level of response (Neutral), then the statement (Weak administrative oversight in the Hajj and Umrah system has led to weak accountability and transparency in performance, negatively impacting its strategic plans for crowd management of pilgrims and visitors) came in the seventh order with mean (3.30) and level of response (Neutral).

4.3 Differences between participants according to demographics.

The researcher used independent samples t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to study the differences between participants in their opinion toward questionnaire's dimensions according to participants' demographic characteristics, and the results are as follows:

Table 8: Independent samples t-test result for the differences between participants in their opinion toward dimensions according to gender

Dimensions	Gender	N	Mean	Std.	T Test	Sig.
Obstacles to Implementing Effective Strategic Planning in Transportation and Crowd Management from the Perspective of Employees Working in the Hajj and Umrah System	Male	35	3.41	0.91	-0.642	0.523
	Female	28	3.56	0.91		
The Extent of the Impact of Obstacles to Effective Strategic Planning on Transportation Operations in the Hajj and Umrah System	Male	35	3.52	0.83	-0.471	0.639
	Female	28	3.62	0.83		
The Impact of Obstacles to Effective Strategic Planning on Crowd Management in the Hajj and Umrah System	Male	35	3.44	0.82	-0.580	0.564
	Female	28	3.57	0.91		

The previous Table 8 shows the results of independent samples t-test for the differences between participants in their opinion toward dimensions according to gender. By comparing p-values with significance level (0.05). It is found that all p-values are greater than (0.05), however, there are no significant differences between participants in their opinion toward the dimensions according to gender, since the corresponding p-values are greater than the significance level (0.05).

Table 9: One-Way ANOVA for the differences between participants in their opinion toward dimensions according to Years of Professional Experience

Dimensions	Sources of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Obstacles to Implementing Effective Strategic Planning in Transportation and Crowd Management from the Perspective of Employees Working in the Hajj and Umrah System	Between Groups	0.49	3	0.164	0.191	0.902
	Within Groups	50.69	59	0.859		
	Total	**51.18**	**62**			
The Extent of the Impact of Obstacles to Effective Strategic Planning on Transportation Operations in the Hajj and Umrah System	Between Groups	1.86	3	0.620	0.905	0.444
	Within Groups	40.42	59	0.685		
	Total	**42.28**	**62**			
The Impact of Obstacles to Effective Strategic Planning on Crowd Management in the Hajj and Umrah System	Between Groups	1.87	3	0.625	0.841	0.477
	Within Groups	43.81	59	0.743		
	Total	**45.69**	**62**			

The previous Table 9 shows the results of ANOVA test for the differences between participants in their opinion toward dimensions according to Years of Professional Experience. By comparing p-values with significance level (0.05). It is found that all p-values are greater than (0.05), however, there are no significant differences between participants in their opinion toward the dimensions according to Years of Professional Experience, since the corresponding p-values are greater than the significance level (0.05).

Table 10: One-Way ANOVA for the differences between participants in their opinion toward dimensions according to Education level

Dimensions	Sources of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Obstacles to Implementing Effective Strategic Planning in Transportation and Crowd Management from the Perspective of Employees Working in the Hajj and Umrah System	Between Groups	3.24	4	0.811	0.981	0.425
	Within Groups	47.94	58	0.826		
	Total	**51.18**	**62**			
The Extent of the Impact of Obstacles to Effective Strategic Planning on Transportation Operations in the Hajj and Umrah System	Between Groups	2.47	4	0.617	0.898	0.471
	Within Groups	39.81	58	0.686		
	Total	**42.28**	**62**			
The Impact of Obstacles to Effective Strategic Planning on Crowd Management in the Hajj and Umrah System	Between Groups	5.81	4	1.452	2.112	0.091
	Within Groups	39.88	58	0.688		
	Total	**45.69**	**62**			

The previous Table 10 shows the results of ANOVA test for the differences between participants in their opinion toward dimensions according to Education level. By comparing p-values with significance level (0.05). It is found that all p-values are greater than (0.05), however, there are no significant differences between participants in their opinion toward the dimensions according to Education Level, since the corresponding p-values are greater than the significance level (0.05).

Table 11: One-Way ANOVA for the differences between participants in their opinion toward dimensions according to Age

Dimensions	Sources of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Obstacles to Implementing Effective Strategic Planning in Transportation and Crowd Management from the Perspective of Employees Working in the Hajj and Umrah System	Between Groups	0.78	3	0.259	0.30	0.82
	Within Groups	50.40	59	0.854	3	3
	Total	**51.18**	**62**			
The Extent of the Impact of Obstacles to Effective Strategic Planning on Transportation Operations in the Hajj and Umrah System	Between Groups	0.84	3	0.281	0.40	0.75
	Within Groups	41.44	59	0.702	0	3
	Total	**42.28**	**62**			
The Impact of Obstacles to Effective Strategic Planning on Crowd Management in the Hajj and Umrah System	Between Groups	3.29	3	1.097	1.52	0.21
	Within Groups	42.39	59	0.719	7	7
	Total	**45.69**	**62**			

The previous Table 11 shows the results of ANOVA test for the differences between participants in their opinion toward dimensions according to Age. By comparing p-values with significance level (0.05). It is found that all p-values are greater than (0.05), however, there are no significant differences between participants in their opinion toward the dimensions according to Age, since the corresponding p-values are greater than the significance level (0.05).

4.4 Results Summary:

1. A sample of 63 employees of Hajj and Umrah System were participate in the study. The results revealed that 55.6% of participants are males, 42.9% have experience (15 years and more), 46.0% of participants their education level is (bachelor degree), and 34.9% of participants in the age group (40 to less than 50 years).
2. The majority of participants of employees working in the Hajj and Umrah System agree with 69.4% that there are obstacles of implementing effective strategic planning in transportation and crowd management, since they agree that;
   - The Hajj and Umrah system suffers from a lack of human resources regarding strategic planning for transportation and crowd management
   - Weak coordination between units in the Hajj and Umrah system negatively affects effective strategic planning for transportation and crowd management.
3. The majority of participants of employees working in the Hajj and Umrah System agree with 71.2% to the extent of the impact of obstacles to effective strategic planning (lack of resources and expertise, lack of knowledge, lack of flexibility, weak follow-up, accumulation of problems, weak accountability and transparency) on transportation operations in the Hajj and Umrah System, since they agree that;
   - The Hajj and Umrah system develops alternative plans when one of the main plans fails (due to lack of resources and expertise), which positively impacts transportation operations
   - Weak application of knowledge in the Hajj and Umrah system negatively affects effective transportation strategies.
4. The majority of participants of employees working in the Hajj and Umrah System agree with 70.0% to the impact of obstacles to effective strategic planning (lack of resources and expertise, lack of knowledge, lack of flexibility, weak follow-up, accumulation of problems, weak accountability and transparency) on crowd management in the Hajj and Umrah System, since they agree that;
   - The Hajj and Umrah system suffers from a lack of qualified human expertise in crowd management, negatively impacting the implementation of its strategies for pilgrims and visitors
   - The Hajj and Umrah system suffers from limited resources due to insufficient budgets allocated to crowd management programs, which negatively affects its strategies.
5. There are no significant differences between participants in their opinion toward the dimensions according to each of; gender, Years of Professional Experience, Education Level, and Age.

5 Conclusion

This study investigated the obstacles to effective strategic planning in transportation and crowd management within the Hajj and Umrah system, focusing on employee perceptions across various demographic groups. The findings reveal critical insights that highlight areas requiring immediate attention for improving strategic planning processes:

5.1 Key Findings

A significant majority of employees (69.4%) agree that the Hajj and Umrah system faces considerable obstacles in implementing effective strategic planning, such as inadequate human resources and weak inter-unit coordination.

Obstacles to strategic planning, including lack of resources and expertise, insufficient knowledge, weak follow-up, and poor accountability, were found to have a notable impact on both transportation operations (71.2%) and crowd management strategies (70.0%).

The absence of significant differences in employee perceptions based on gender, professional experience, education level, or age suggests a shared understanding of these challenges across the workforce.

5.2 Implications

The study underscores the importance of addressing resource and personnel deficiencies in the Hajj and Umrah system. Enhancing the system's capacity to recruit and retain qualified professionals and improving inter-unit coordination are critical steps for optimizing transportation and crowd management strategies.

The results highlight the need for increased investment in budget allocation and capacity-building programs to mitigate the impact of strategic planning obstacles. Developing flexible, knowledge-driven strategies and ensuring consistent follow-up and accountability will significantly improve operational outcomes.

5.3 Contributions

This research provides a contextualized understanding of the challenges faced by the Hajj and Umrah system, offering practical insights for policymakers and practitioners. The findings contribute to the broader literature by addressing strategic planning in a high-stakes, dynamic operational setting, which has been underexplored in previous studies.

By identifying specific barriers and their impacts, the study lays the groundwork for targeted interventions to enhance the efficiency and safety of transportation and crowd management during these critical religious events.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Scholars

- Future studies should explore additional organizational and technological factors that may affect strategic planning in the Hajj and Umrah system.
- Conducting longitudinal studies to assess the long-term effectiveness of implemented interventions could provide valuable insights.
- Comparative analyses with other high-demand operational contexts, such as large-scale public events or festivals, could identify best practices applicable to the Hajj and Umrah system.
- Exploring the role of advanced technologies, such as AI-driven crowd management systems, in overcoming current obstacles could be a promising avenue for research.

In conclusion, the study highlights the need for a comprehensive and resource-oriented approach to strategic planning in the Hajj and Umrah system. Future efforts should focus on strengthening human resources, improving coordination mechanisms, and fostering a culture of accountability to ensure the sustainable management of transportation and crowd dynamics.

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