

Reconsidering Campus Diversity: An Examination of Muslim Students' Experiences

Since desegregation laws took shape in the 1950s, race/ethnicity have been considered primary to how campus diversity is theorized and examined. The value of structural diversity and how to achieve it within institutions of higher education, with regard to representation and access, is still being debated in the courts and protested on college campuses (Gurin, Dey, Hurado, & Gurin, 2002; Hero & Tolbert, 1996). A new racial climate governed by shifting racial ideologies is evident in current debates and the continuing struggle to increase racial/ethnic diversity in higher education (Bowman & Smith, 2002). Consequently, a more complex, multi-dimensional view of campus diversity and the related impact on students' educational gains is needed and must periodically be reconsidered.

Religion, perhaps one of the most fundamental characteristics defining one's ethnicity has recently gained widespread interest in the field of higher education (Astin et al., 2005). In fact, several researchers have argued that religious identity and engagement have become more important to this generation of college students than in more recent generations (Astin et al.; Garza & Herringer, 1986; Nash, 2001). Current world events and subsequent U.S. foreign policies have also thrust national and international attention on certain religious communities, specifically

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those rooted in Islam. Society's interest in Islam has extended to American university campuses, where Muslim students have likely become more visible as a result. Yet the presence and unique needs of Muslim students on college campuses have received relatively little attention in higher education literature (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003). This is particularly perplexing given this era of globalization, the U.S. terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and arguably, the resultant growth of Islamophobia and xenophobia that have since become commonplace in American society (Haddad, 2001).

Hence, the purpose of this study is to: (a) provide a brief synthesis of current demographics available on the Muslim population in the U.S.; and (b) determine whether differences exist between Muslim, Christian, and Jewish students' college experiences, GPA and educational satisfaction. This study is unlike most studies on Muslim students that have been qualitative in nature, focusing on individual college experiences or changes in religious beliefs (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003). The analyses in this study are quantitative and explore the differential experiences of Muslim students in higher education and whether Muslim students' academic success (i.e. GPA) and educational satisfaction differs from their Christian and Jewish peers. The following research questions were used to guide this study:

- Does a religious preference of Islam (i.e. being Muslim) significantly influence the kinds of college experiences students have on campus? If so, are there differences between Muslims and their Jewish and Christian peers?
- Are there also differences between Muslim, Jewish, and Christian students' academic achievement and overall educational satisfaction?

Muslim Population in the U.S.

Islam spans across all racial/ethnic groups as the world's second largest religion and the third largest religion in the U.S. (ARIS, 2001). The specific number of Muslims currently residing in the United States is difficult to determine, particularly since the United States Census Bureau and Immigration and Naturalization Service has not systematically tracked religion since 1936 and other such Census efforts were totally abandoned in the mid-1950s (United States Census Bureau, 2001). Contrary to some religious institutions, most Islamic mosques do not maintain membership lists (Broadway, 2001). A review of available statistical data, however, shows population estimates of Muslims in the U.S. varies between 1.8 to 7 million (Pluralism Project, 2003; Smith, 2001).

Smith (2001), commissioned by the American Jewish Committee, performed an analysis of 20 separate estimates between 1996 and 2001 and concluded an average of 5.65 million Muslims living in the U.S. After September 11th, Smith (2001) observed that the average figure cited in the media increased to 6.7 million, or 2.4% of the total population (Fienberg & Murray, 2001n; Hasan, 2000; Roof, 2000). The 2000 Mosque Study Project (MAPS), however, also estimated the total population between 6 to 7 million. According to the 2001 American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS), these estimates appear 5 times the actual size (Kosmin, Mayer, & Keysar, 2001). Smith (2001) and Nimer (2002) have argued that the methods and figures used to estimate the Muslim population in American vary considerably and are considered by some as unscientific, with unproven methodologies.

While researchers do not agree upon an exact figure, they do concur that the Muslim population in America is growing. ARIS researchers, for example, compared 1990 and 2001 data, and inferred that the number of Muslim adults grew from 527,000 to 1,104,000 over the eleven years (Kosmin, Mayer, & Kedsar, 2001). According to some projections, Muslims will become the second largest religious group in America during the twenty-first century (Benowitz, 1998). Esposito (2002) has even estimated that if trends continue, Islam will become the largest religion in the U.S. by 2200. As the number of Muslims in the U.S. increase, college enrollments are likely to reflect such demographic trends. These projections, however, face similar questions of reliability, particularly given the difficulty in accurately calculating the current Muslim population.

Even though there have been slight decreases in the number of international students attending U.S. colleges and universities, higher education appears to be a high priority for Muslims in the United States. Approximately 24% of MAPS survey respondents have had some college attendance, and an additional 58% were college graduates (Project MAPS, 2001). Only 6% had not completed high school. Smith's research corroborates these findings; he notes that Muslims are generally younger and better educated than the general public (Smith, 2001). Additionally, from his own work and review of several additional studies, Smith believes that the number of Muslims among college students is proportionately higher than the numbers within the general population.

Ethnic/Racial Heritage

According to CAIR (Council on American-Islamic Relations), 64% of Muslim Americans were born outside of the United States, in 80 different countries, while 36% were born in the United States (2006). The majority of Muslims, although mostly depicted as Arab or Middle-Eastern,

are Asian from Southeast Asian countries (Varieties of Worship, 2001). Over 28% of all Muslims are Asian and only 15% are Arab (Bagby, 2001). The Project MAPS study found that only 26% of its participants were of Arabian heritage (Project MAPS, 2001). The most common ethnicity reported was South Asian (32%), which represents countries such as Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and even Afghanistan. The difference between a South Asian versus a Southeast Asian categorization is the inclusion of Afghanistan (Varieties of Worship, 2001).

Similarly, Bagby, Perl, and Froehle (2001) found that Muslim Americans have a wide variety of backgrounds, with 15% claiming Arabian descent, 28% of South Asian descent, and 27% with African-American heritage. Additionally, Bagby determined that the remaining Muslim American population reports ethnicities including Albanian, Bosnian, Iranian, Turkish, and European American (Nanji, 1996). Interestingly, Kosmin et al. analyzed twenty major religions in America by the racial identity of its membership, and Muslims were most evenly distributed across racial boundaries. In contrast to popular misconceptions, Muslims reflect the racial/ethnic diversity found across the American population. Yet, when Muslims are from Arab countries or the Middle-East, which includes Persian and North African countries, the U.S. census defines their race as White (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007); however, individuals from those regions may choose other racial/ethnic categories to describe their racial/ethnic identity. As a result, the category of race or national origin (i.e. international student) alone may offer little clarity when examining this student population.

College Experiences, GPA, and Educational Satisfaction

A variety of institutional and background characteristics, prior to students' college entry, have long been reported as significant predictors of students' college GPA and educational satisfaction. They have included institution type, high school GPA, race, gender, class standing, parental education, study time, and educational aspirations (Anaya & Cole, 2001; Astin, 1993; Cole, 2007; Davis, 1994; Hurtado, 1994; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005); a few of these characteristics, particularly race/ethnicity, have also been linked to students' educational satisfaction (Cole & Jackson, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Yet, a students' religious preference, particularly for Islam, has rarely been considered a student characteristic integral to academic success or educational satisfaction. Given Smith's (2001) assertion that Muslims tend to be more highly educated than the general public, it is expected that Muslim students would have higher levels of academic achievement: there is not

enough empirical research, however, to suggest whether Muslim students' educational satisfaction will differ from their non-Muslim peers.

Among students' college experiences, student-faculty interactions have most often been correlated with students' academic achievement and educational satisfaction (Astin, 1993; Cole, 2007; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). In fact, research has reported that the affects of student-faculty interactions on academic performance (GPA) diminish over time. These interactions appear to have the most impact during students' first couple of years in college. Whereas in the latter years of students' college experience, these interactions appears to have more influence on students' academic growth than on performance (Terenzini & Wright, 1987). Faculty support and encouragement, of all student-faculty interactions, seems to have the most positive and consistent effect on students' educational satisfaction; although differential findings have been identified by race/ethnicity (Cole, 2008; Cole, in press a). Based on the differences reported by race/ethnicity, it is expected that differences by religious preference will also be found.

When students interact with their peers in academic-related activities, research has also found significant affects on GPA; similarly findings have been less consistent regarding students' educational satisfaction (Astin, 1993; Cole, in press-a; Cole, in press-b; Cole & Jackson, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Peer tutoring and reciprocal peer-teaching, has been fairly consistent as a positive indicator of students' academic success (Pascarella & Terenzini). Contrary to other empirical work that has revealed the positive benefits on academic achievement from peer involvement, 'studying with other students' has recently been reported to have negative effects on Latino students' GPA and not significant toward students' educational satisfaction (Cole, in press-b). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), based on a comprehensive synthesis of the college impact literature, reported that "nonclassroom interactions with peers have a net positive impact on learning" (p. 121). They further suggest that talking to peers about an idea discussed in class were among the most important peer effects on students' learning outcomes; although, these findings were based primarily on White students. Considering the inconsistency of these findings, it is unclear the extent religious preference will reveal differences among peer involvement in academic activities.

While students involved in diversity-related activities have benefited from these activities through increased openness and understanding of diversity (Antonio, 2004; Astin, 1993; Chang, 1999), they have also gained in their critical thinking skills and in a variety of other learning outcomes (Gurin et al., 2002). Similarly, students involved in religious activities have enhanced student learning, particularly when students

have “serious discussions about religious . . . [and] political beliefs” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 121). These activities have most often been correlated with increases in religious conviction, social integration, overall religiousness, emotional well-being, and overall knowledge of people from different races and cultures (Bryant, 2007); although, college attendance has been significantly related to declines in religious participation (Funk & Willits, 1987; Lee, 2002; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). As a result of these findings and this study’s focus on religious preference as an additional diversity-related construct, it is expected that diversity-related and religious activities will reveal salient differences across Muslim, Jewish, and Christian students.

Theoretical and Conceptual Constructs

The two fundamental principles, which required theoretical grounding to support the analyses used in this study were: (a) the inclusion of religious and racially/ethnically diverse college experiences (Bryant, 2007; Gurin et al., 2002); and (b) why differences in the frequency and quality of students’ college experiences have the potential to significantly affect important educational outcomes such as students’ academic achievement and educational satisfaction (Astin, 1993). Gurin et al., for instance, have argued that racial/ethnic diversity on campus can profoundly affect students’ learning outcomes. Theoretically, Gurin et al. suggests that complex social structures (i.e. racial/ethnic diversity; Coser, 1975) can create opportunities of interpersonal contact that alter the way students think and behave by (a) interacting with unfamiliar people; and (b) encountering people who “hold different expectations” (Gurin et al., p. 6). Of course, complex social structures have more potential to enhance educational outcomes if students use “active thinking” or what Langer (1978) calls conscious modes of thought (Gurin et al.). Conscious modes of thought are most active when students “develop new ideas and ways of processing information” (Gurin et al., p. 6). In other words, Gurin et al. suggest that students who use conscious modes of thought (i.e. active thinking) in complex social environments (i.e. diverse environments) are more likely to enhance their intellectual engagement and cognitive growth in and out of the classroom (Gurin et al.). If racial/ethnic diversity create a more complex social environment, is it likely that religious diversity also contributes to this complexity? If so, it is also likely that religious diversity reveals significant differences in the way students experience and benefit from college.

With regard to the second principle, Astin’s (1993) involvement theory asserts that the more students are involved, either physically or men-

tally, in a variety of collegiate activities the more they are likely to benefit from that involvement (Astin, p. 298). Student involvement occurs in non-academic and academic activities during their college experience, which include studying, participating in student organizations, time spent on campus, and interactions with faculty and peers. Theoretically, gains in academic achievement, student learning and development are reflective of the time and energy invested by the student in related activities. Given that Muslim students are important to religious diversity and, perhaps racial/ethnic diversity too, exploring how and whether they experience college differently may be important for understanding the complexities of campus diversity, as well as students' educational outcomes like GPA and satisfaction.

Conceptually, complex social structures are identified by students' racial/ethnic background and their religious preference for Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Active thinking, although a psychological construct, is considered through behavioral indicators measuring diversity-related and religious activity variables. Involvement is constructed empirically by student-faculty interactions, peer involvement in academic activities, as well as through the behavioral indicators of "active thinking"—diversity-related and religious activities. In sum, it is expected that the complex social structure will contribute to explaining students' academic achievement, while indicators of active thinking and student involvement will provide the ways in which academic achievement occurs.

Methods

This study examined, through ANOVA and Scheffé tests, the extent to which Muslim student experiences differed from their Jewish and Christian peers. The longitudinal design of this study utilized survey data from students' first and fourth year of college. While analyses only using Muslim student data are preferred over comparisons by religious preference, there were only 66 Muslim students in this data sample. Moreover, the exploratory nature of this study warrants such between-group comparisons to support the need for further inquiry into the college impact specific to Muslim students. As a result, a sample of students who identified with one of the three largest religions (i.e. Christianity, Judaism, and Islam) in the U.S. was used. As such, this analysis considered (a) whether differences existed between Muslim, Jewish, and Christian students; and (b) the nature of those differences in terms of their peer involvement in academic activities, diversity-related and religious behaviors, and general faculty support.

Data

A sample of the 1999 freshman survey data (Student Information Form or SIF) and the 2003 follow-up data (College Student Survey or CSS) was obtained from Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP). The 1999 freshmen survey (SIF) was administered during orientation and through the first month of classes. The follow-up survey (CSS) collected in 2003 was mailed home to a sample of 1999 SIF students. Participating institutions included a national sample of baccalaureate-granting institutions of which the majority was private, four-year institutions (over 65%) (see Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000 for detailed sampling procedures). From a total of 10,537, full-time, traditional-aged (18–24) students, a random sample of approximately 70 Christian and 67 Jewish students were selected to create equivalent samples for which to compare to the 66 Muslim students identified in the total sample. Of the 203 students included in these analyses, the majority was female (53.4%), from four-year institutions (81.7%), with high school grades of B or better (93.2%), and had parents with at least some college education (70.5%). In terms of race/ethnicity, there were 72.1% White, 5.3% African American, 0.5% American Indian, 14.4% Asian, and 2.4% Latino (see Table 1). For Muslims students in particular, 37 were U.S. citizens, 37 were male, 20 White, 7 Black, 1 American Indian, 28 Asian, 10 other racial group, 88.1% had an average high school grade of B or better, and 64.7% had a parent with at least some college education.

Variables

Astin's (1993) Input-Environment-Outcome (I-E-O) model is a commonly used analytical framework for educational assessment and was used to organize the variables in this study. As discussed above, the theoretical support relies on the conceptualization of student involvement theory as they are embedded in complex social structures. The kinds of student involvement within these complex social structures have been found to have an impact on students' educational outcomes such as student-faculty interactions, academic success, and educational satisfaction (Cole, 2007; Cole & Espinoza, 2008).

Input (I) variables, data collected during students' first year of college, were conceptually organized by students' background characteristics (i.e., age, gender, level of parental education race/ethnicity, religious preference, speak English as second language, and U.S. citizen), college entry variables (i.e., degree aspirations and living on or off-campus) and pre-college variables for college GPA (i.e. high school grades). While these variables are not used in the ANOVA, they provide an important

TABLE 1
 Descriptive data for students' background characteristics and college entry variables (N = 203)^a

| Independent Variables ^a | Muslim Mean (SD) (n = 66) | Jews Mean (SD) (n = 67) | Christians Mean (SD) (n = 70) |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Background Characteristics | | | |
| Gender of Student: (Male, Female) | 1.45 (—) | 1.57* (—) | 1.57 (0.50) |
| Age of Student: (1 = 16 or less, 2 = 17, 3 = 18, 4 = 19, 5 = 20, 6 = 21 or more) | 3.41 (0.63) | 3.16* (0.41) | 3.20* (0.47) |
| Race/Ethnicity: | | | |
| White | 1.27 (0.45) | 1.99* (0.12) | 1.87* (0.34) |
| African American | 1.11 (0.31) | 1.00* (—) | 1.06 (0.23) |
| American Indian | 1.02 (0.12) | 1.00 (—) | 1.00 (—) |
| Asian | 1.42 (0.50) | 1.00* (—) | 1.03* (0.17) |
| Hispanic | 1.00 (—) | 1.02 (0.12) | 1.06* (0.23) |
| Other | 1.23 (0.42) | 1.01* (0.12) | 1.03* (0.17) |
| Spirituality (1 = lowest 10 %, 2 = below avg., 3 = avg., 4 = above avg., 5 = top 10%) | | | |
| A citizen of U.S. (1 = No, 2 = Yes) | 3.81 (0.91) | 2.85* (0.91) | 3.57 (1.01) |
| Speak English as first language (1 = No, 2 = Yes) | | | |
| Parents' Education (6 = High school or less, 12 = Some college, 18 = Graduate degree) | 1.57 (—) | 2.00* (—) | 1.99* (—) |
| 11.74 (3.62) | 13.73* (2.48) | 11.47 (3.43) | |
| College Entry | | | |
| Live Off or On Campus: (Off, On Campus) | 1.81 (—) | 1.97* (—) | 1.93 (—) |
| Degree Aspirations: (None, AA or equiv., Bachelors, Grad. school) | 3.95 (0.22) | 3.8* (0.52) | 3.83 (0.38) |
| Average H.S. Grades: (D, C, C+, B-, B, B+, A-, A) | 6.51 (1.46) | 6.72 (1.15) | 6.79 (1.18) |

Note. Asterisk indicates, based on *t*-test, a significant difference between that group and Muslims students.

^aData collected in 1999.

description of the data sample used in this study. In this sample, according to *t*-test, Muslim students differ from their Jewish and Christians peers primarily in that they are likely to be older, non-U.S. citizens, speak English as second or third language, and represent a greater diversity of racial/ethnic groups.

It is the environmental (E) variables or college experience variables that are of most importance to this study (see Table 2). In the first college experience category, time spent on religious activities was grouped

into one factor and two variables: "Attendance and prayer" (2 items; "attended a religious service" and "hour/week in prayer/mediation"; $\alpha = 0.7$), "Time spent discussing politics" and "Time spent discussing religion." Peer involvement in academic activities, the second category, included four variables: "Worked on group projects in classes," "Studied with other students," "Tutored another college student," and "Hours per week spent on studying." The third category, diversity-related activities included five variables: "Taken an ethnic studies course," "Attended racial/cultural workshop," "In racial/ethnic student organization," "Had roommate of different race/ethnicity," and "Socialized with someone of difference ethnic group." The fourth college experience category, student-faculty interactions, was composed of one factor measuring "General Faculty Support" (9 items; $\alpha = 0.9$). The variables included in this factor were: encouragement for graduate school, opportunity to work on research project, advice about educational program, respect, emotional support/development, letter of recommendation, intellectual challenge/stimulation, opportunity to discuss coursework outside of class, and help in achieving professional goals.

TABLE 2
Descriptive data for students' college experience variables ($N = 203$)^a

| Independent Variables ^a | Mean | SD |
|---|-------|-------|
| Religion (Not at All, Occasionally, Frequently) | | |
| Time spent on religious service or prayer (2 items; $\alpha = 0.7$) | 3.71 | 1.79 |
| Time spent discussing politics | 2.14 | 0.615 |
| Time spent discussing religion | 2.11 | 0.605 |
| Interracial Interactions: (Not at All, Occasionally, Frequently) | | |
| Take an ethnic studies course | 1.45 | 0.50 |
| Attended racial/cultural awareness workshop | 1.30 | 0.46 |
| Had roommate of different race/ethnicity | 1.49 | 0.50 |
| In racial/ethnic student organization | 1.26 | 0.44 |
| Socialized with someone of different ethnic group | 2.63 | 0.53 |
| Peer Involvement in Academic Activities: (Not at All, Occasionally, Frequently) | | |
| Time spent on studying/homework (1 = none, 5 = 6–10, 8 = >20) | 5.68 | 1.50 |
| Studied with other students | 2.42 | 0.59 |
| Tutored another college student | 1.59 | 0.65 |
| Worked on group project in class | 2.46 | 0.53 |
| Student-faculty Interaction (Not at All, Occasionally, Frequently) | | |
| General faculty support (9 items; $\alpha = 0.9$) | 19.86 | 4.12 |

^aData collected in 2003.

The other variables from the data collected during students' fourth year were average college grade and satisfaction with overall college experience. These variables would typically be considered outcome (O) variables because the input and environmental variables are expected to have an impact on these educational gains, at least in theory. College GPA was measured on a likert scale from "C- or less" to an "A" (1 = C- or less, 2 = C, 3 = B- or C+, 4 = B, 5 = A- or B+, 6 = A). Satisfaction with overall college experience was measured on a 4-point likert scale from dissatisfied to very satisfied (1 = dissatisfied, 2 = neutral, 3 = satisfied, and 4 = very satisfied).

Analysis

Statistical analyses consisted of descriptive statistics, *t*-tests, factor analyses, ANOVA, and Scheffé test. Descriptive statistics and *t*-test were provided to describe the student sample and determine whether significant differences exist between Muslims and Jews, and between Muslim and Christian students' background characteristics and college entry variables. *T*-tests were not conducted for the college experience variables because *t*-tests are limited primarily to two comparison groups. Instead, ANOVAs were conducted to determine whether significant differences existed in college experience variables across Muslims, Jews, and Christians (see Table 3). The Scheffé test was then used to determine how each group differed from the other on each college experience variable found to have statistically significant differences (see Table 4). Principal Component Factor Analyses (PCA) were conducted and Cronbach's alphas were calculated (as noted above) in order to reduce the number of college experience variables and develop conceptually reliable factors. Notably, OLS regression and multilevel regression analyses were considered, but the sample of Muslim students available in the data was too small.

Findings

The findings reported in Table 3 revealed that there were no statistical differences across religious groups in (a) the average amount of hours per week students spent studying, (b) the frequency in which they study with other students, (c) time spent discuss politics, (d) time spent discussing religion, (e) take ethnic studies courses, (f) the support they receive from faculty, and (g) average college grades. The latter two findings were unexpected given that most research studies examining differences across racial/ethnic groups typically report significant variations in average college grades and the frequency of students' contact

with faculty (Cole & Espinoza, 2008; Davis, 1994; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Sellers, Chavous, & Cooke, 1998). The findings also indicated that 8 of the 15 college experience variables were significantly different, which means that Muslims, Jews, and Christians reported statistically different levels of frequency across several qualitatively different college experiences. The Scheffé test reported in Table 4 provided specific information regarding significant differences and the direction (i.e. positive or negative) of these differences between groups.

The Scheffé test revealed that Muslim students tutored another college student, attended racial/cultural awareness workshop, had a roommate of different racial/ethnic background, participated in racial/ethnic specific student organizations, and socialized with someone of different ethnic group more than their Christian counterparts. Muslim students also indicated that they spent less time in religious service or prayer. Yet,

TABLE 3
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for College Experience Variables

| College Experience Variables (Independent Variables) | ANOVA | |
|---|--------------------------------|-----------|
| | Sum of Squares ^a | F |
| Peer Involvement in Academic Activities | | |
| Time spent on studying/homework | 0.947 | 0.209 |
| Worked on Group Projects in Class | 3.629 | 6.878*** |
| Studied with Other Students | 0.058 | 0.083 |
| Tutored Another College Student | 3.133 | 3.810* |
| Discussion & Time Spent on Religion | | |
| Time spent in religious service or prayer | 97.050 | 17.743*** |
| Time spent discussing politics | 75.318 | 1.89 |
| Time spent discussing religion | 71.980 | 1.00 |
| Diversity-Related Activities | | |
| Taken an Ethnic Studies Course | 0.607 | 1.221 |
| Attended Racial/Cultural Awareness Workshop | 1.939 | 4.735** |
| Had Roommate of Different Race/Ethnicity | 3.498 | 7.396*** |
| In Racial/Ethnic Student Organization | 5.838 | 17.526*** |
| Socialized w/someone of diff. ethnic group | 3.400 | 6.324** |
| Student-faculty Interaction | | |
| General Faculty Support | 30.553 | 0.902 |
| Educational Gains | | |
| Average College Grades (GPA) | 0.911 | 0.663 |
| Satisfaction with Overall College Experience | 4.362 | 4.168* |

^aBetween groups.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

there were no significant difference between Muslims and Christians in overall college grades or satisfaction with their college experiences. The latter was not the case when comparing Muslim students with their Jewish counterparts. Muslim students indicated greater frequency when working on group projects in class, spending time in religious service or prayer, attending racial/cultural awareness workshops, having roommates of different racial/ethnic backgrounds, and participating in racial/ethnic specific student organizations. Muslim students, however, reported being less satisfied with their overall college experience than their Jewish peers.

In sum, Muslim students differed from both Jewish and Christian students, in that, they spent more time attending racial/cultural awareness workshops, having a roommate of a different race/ethnicity, socializing with someone of a different racial /ethnic group, and participating in a

TABLE 4
Post-Hoc Scheffé Test

| College Experience Variables (Independent Variables) | Scheffé Test | |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Mean diff M-C ^a | Mean diff M-J ^b |
| Peer Involvement in Academic Activities | | |
| Time spent on studying/homework | -0.162 | -0.046 |
| Worked on group projects in class | 0.037 | 0.298** |
| Studied with other students | -0.041 | -0.026 |
| Tutored another college student | 0.292* | 0.233 |
| Discussion & Time Spent on Religion | | |
| Time spent in religious service or prayer | -0.696* | 0.994** |
| Time spent discussing politics | 0.207 | 0.127 |
| Time spent discussing religion | 0.115 | 0.141 |
| Diversity-Related Activities | | |
| Taken an ethnic studies course | 0.115 | 0.115 |
| Attended racial/cultural awareness workshop | 0.213* | 0.198* |
| Had roommate of different race/ethnicity | 0.276** | 0.276** |
| In racial/ethnic student organization | 0.357*** | 0.357*** |
| Socialized w/someone of diff. ethnic group | 0.253* | 0.296** |
| Student-faculty Interaction | | |
| General faculty support | -0.911 | -0.195 |
| Educational Gains | | |
| Average college grades (GPA) | -0.069 | -0.164 |
| Satisfied with overall college experience | -0.217 | -0.358* |

^aMean difference between Muslims and Christians.

^bMean difference between Muslims and Jews.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

racial/ethnic specific organization. Muslim students also indicated that they spent more time working on group projects in class and in religious service, prayer, and meditation than Jewish students; yet, Christian students reported more time in this religious service and prayer than both Muslims and Jews. Muslim students, however, reported being more involved in tutoring another college student than Christian students. Yet, the only statistical difference in students' educational gains was that Muslim students were less satisfied with their educational experiences than Jewish students.

Limitations

There are several limitations which constrain the generalizability of the findings. First, the small sample of Muslim students available in the data prevented the use of a more robust statistical examination like regression analysis. Students' religious preference was subsequently used to create sub-samples of Christian and Jewish students for which to compare with the Muslim students in the sample. Future studies might consider conducting more explanatory statistical analysis of only Muslim student experiences when such data is available. Second, institutional-level data was not controlled for beyond selecting students attending a predominantly white four-year college or university. Given the size of the sample and that this data includes a higher percentage of four-year, private institutions, the findings have limited generalizability.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study's findings suggest at least four main discussion points. First, despite the differential findings for in-class group-work and tutoring other students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), Muslim students' academic performance (GPA) was not significantly different than their Jewish or Christian peers. Furthermore, while Muslim students may be more highly educated than the general public (Smith, 2001), these findings do not suggest that they perform better academically than their Christian or Jewish peers.

Second, the findings suggest that being Muslim does have an impact on the kinds of experiences students have while in college. These differences also appear distinct from their Christian and Jewish peers. In fact, of all the college experiences examined in this analysis, the diversity-related activities were the most distinct for Muslim students. The findings revealed that Muslim students reported having more diversity-related activities than their Jewish or Christian peers. While there were no sig-

nificant differences in taking an ethnic studies course across groups, there were differences in each of the other diversity-related experiences, which included attending a racial/cultural awareness workshop, having a roommate of a different race/ethnicity, socializing with someone of a different racial/ethnic group, and participating in a racial/ethnic student organization.

Prior research has suggested that when such differences exist on diversity-related experiences, students who have these experiences often gain in openness and understanding of diversity (Antonio, 2001; Astin, 1993; Chang, 1996) and a variety of learning outcomes (Gurin et al., 2002); yet, other research (Cole, 2007) has suggested that those benefits mostly accrue for non-minority students and that the structural diversity created by the inclusion of racial/ethnic minority students significantly enhances the educational gains for white students. The significant difference between Muslim and Jewish students' educational satisfaction appears to suggest that such a finding may be likely. In other words, the lower level of educational satisfaction reported by Muslim students may be a function of the kinds of diversity-related activities they have in college. Further examination is needed to determine whether these differential activities are significantly related to Muslim students' educational satisfaction. Based on these findings, religious diversity is likely to have an impact on students' educational outcomes, as well as contribute to the overall construct of campus diversity.

Third, time spent in religious service or prayer was significantly different across groups. Muslim students seem to reside in the middle between Christian students who reported the most involvement and Jewish students who were the least involved in these activities. While these variables are beginning to emerge in analyses of academic achievement and performance, the findings reported in prior research are inconclusive. For instance, Bryant (2007) and Sax, Bryant, and Gilmartin (2002) concluded that religious behavior negatively affected returning to college as a sophomore (i.e. a difference measure of academic success), which was attributed in part to time spent on religious activities. Fiesta, Strange, and Woods (2002), however, reported positive benefits of religion on academic success, which could also inform the type of impact from students' involvement in these activities on their academic performance. Fiesta et al. and Bryant (2007) have argued that such a positive relationship between religious identity and academic success are the likely benefit of a positive well-being, knowing oneself and having direction. The implication for institutional agents, particularly those in student affairs, is that helping students develop a religious identity could have a positive effect on students' educational outcomes, perhaps lim-

ited to those who desire such religious growth. This also assumes that institutional agents can facilitate or provide opportunities for such growth to take place within a religiously diverse campus environment.

Finally, religious diversity over and beyond race/ethnicity provides a value-added theoretical construction to campus diversity. The theoretical value, primarily in terms of informal interactional diversity (i.e. the extent students interact with those religiously different from themselves), is established when operationalizing Coser's (1975) complex social structures. In other words, religious diversity provides an additional layer of socially complex structures to those visually and culturally identified through racial/ethnic differences. Additionally, "socializing across race/ethnicity" appear to be qualitatively different from "time spent in religious service and prayer," in that, Langer's conscious modes of thought may be activated differently when students are interacting in diverse environments versus participating in ethnocentric environments. Yet, further study is needed to determine whether such differences exist and if so, what the impact on students' educational gains is.

In conclusion, the findings suggest that Muslim students are an integral part of the campus community and embracing their presence can lead to diversity-enriched campus environments. As such, this study extends the theoretical and empirical scope of campus diversity. The contribution of Muslim students to campus diversity is not only in their presence, but also in the extent they interact with peers who are ethnically and religiously different from themselves and vice-versa. Further research, however, is needed to better unearth the extent to which religious diversity adds dimension and complexity to the understanding of campus diversity. For instance, why are Muslim students more engaged in interactional diversity but report being less satisfied with their education experience? Does Muslim students' interactional diversity come at the expense of their educational satisfaction? If so, what are the implications for practice and how should campus diversity initiatives be implemented, while considering the psychological load some students might bear and the quality of educational experiences students have in creating diverse campus environments? In this post-9/11 era of globalization, such inquiry is long over due.

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