

**The Influence of Mosque Attendance on  
the Probability of Giving and  
Volunteering**

**By**

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### ***Introduction***

A tremendous amount of research has focused on the giving and volunteering patterns of congregations in the United States. This interest in why people give to religious organizations stems from the fact that in 2004 over 35% of all charitable contributions went to religious causes.<sup>1</sup> The ability to isolate the causes of religious giving may assist religious organizations to maximize their fundraising efforts while allowing non-religious organization to explore the possibilities in using these ideas for their fundraising efforts. A great deal of research has focused upon the causal factors of giving within religious organizations. However, the bulk of the research focuses on Christian and Jewish congregations. There has been no major study of American Muslim philanthropic institutions.

The American Muslim community consists of over 8 million individuals that are served by over 3000 Islamic centers, 500 Islamic schools and over 20 national organizations. This growing subset of the American philanthropic sector is understudied. While many scholars have been able to make assertions regarding giving and volunteering patterns within the Christian and Jewish congregations these findings cannot be automatically attributed to American Muslims. This paper seeks to explore the reasons why American Muslims donate money and time to religious organizations.

The traditional view amongst scholars has been that religious giving is affected by the church attendance of individuals. The belief is that the more a person attends church

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<sup>1</sup> *Giving USA 2005* (Glenview, IL: Giving USA Foundation 2005) p. 99

the stronger that persons giving and volunteering to religious causes.<sup>2</sup> However, even this view has recently been challenged.

In order to better understand the reasons why American Muslims give, it is vital that one examines the motivations associated with religious donations. All Muslims are required to pay 2.5% of their income towards the charity called zakah. However, the donation of zakah money is the act of giving itself and not necessarily a causal factor in the giving and volunteering habits of American Muslim.

There are various reasons why individuals donate time and money to religious organizations. One such factor is the influence of attendance on both giving and volunteering. People that attend their mosque more often have signaled an interest in the mosque, taken advantage of the services of the mosque (ie. Congregation prayer and spiritual upliftment) and have shown a commitment to participate in mosque activities. These people know first hand the benefits of the existence of the mosque but also the mosque's need for resources. It is not surprising that scholars and researchers have argued that attendance has a positive influence in volunteering and giving.

Just because Muslims are required to pay the zakah charity does not mean that all Muslims comply with this requirement. In some cases this may be due to the ignorance of this requirement. However, in most cases it can be attributed to a lack of commitment to this religious principal. Zakat is one of the five pillars (or requirement) of the Islamic faith. Another pillar is the requirement to pray five times a day. It could be argued that if one follows one of these five pillars they are most likely to follow the other requirement. Praying five times a day is probably the most difficult of all the pillars requiring a deep

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<sup>2</sup> Lunn, John, Robin Klay & Andrea Douglas, "Relationships Among Giving, Church Attendance, and Religious Belief: The Case of the Presbyterian Church (USA)" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (2001) p. 768

commitment to fulfill religious obligations every day. Thus it could be argued that people that pray five times a day have a deeper commitment to the Islamic faith and are therefore more likely to donate or volunteer to Islamic organizations.

People that give money or time to religious organizations are in affect trying to promote the ideals of those organizations. Thus it can be argued that people that give money have a positive opinion of the role of faith in not only their lives but to the society at large. An attempt to give money and time could be interpreted as an individuals attempt to further those activities. People who give and donate money can be seen as believing that the increased influence of religion in daily life is a positive development. Thus one could argue that they believe that the role of religion should have a stronger influence in the daily lives of Americans.

Other important variables worth analyzing would be gender, education and income level. Each could be seen as having an influence on giving and volunteering patterns. This is especially true of education and income levels. Those people with more resources have a greater ability to donate both time and money compared to someone who is struggling to make ends meet. Those with higher levels of education may have a more enlightened view about the role of faith in positively furthering society.

This paper contends that the relationship between religion and philanthropic activities must be understood by analyzing the underlying motivations of such behavior. In exploring the relationship between philanthropic activity and religion it is important that the various factors discussed above be tested empirically. The 2004 Zogby American Muslim Poll provides researchers with the opportunity to examine these relationships.

The Zogby organization was contracted by the Muslims in the American Public Space (MAPS) Project at Georgetown University to conduct two polls of the American Muslim community. The first poll was conducted in 2001 while the second was conducted in 2004. The focus of this study was primarily the political opinions of American Muslims. However, a number of questions help us study the relationship between religion and philanthropic behavior within the American Muslim community.

This random telephone survey asked a number of important questions including:

- i. On average, how often do you attend the mosque for salah and Jum'ah Prayer?
- ii. Concerning daily salah or prayer, do you in general, pray all five salah daily, make some of the five salah daily, occasionally make salah, only make Eid Prayers, or do you never pray?
- iii. Agree or disagree - The influence of religion and spiritual values in American life should increase.
- iv. Gender, education and income levels.
- v. Whether the individual donates money or time to a religious organization?

This paper asserts that the probability that an adult individual choosing to give money or time increases with an increase in mosque attendance, prayer habits and ones belief of the importance of faith in society.

### ***Literature Review***

Research on religion and philanthropy has grown over the past few decades. In fact the *Review of Religious Research* published a “Special Issue” in December 1994 on the patterns of financial contributions to churches.<sup>3</sup> Johnson argues the

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<sup>3</sup> Johnson, D. Paul, “Patterns of Financial Contributions to Churches” *Review of Religious Research* (December 1994) p. 99

importance of studying this area of religious work. Hoge argues that there are nine individual predictors of church giving.<sup>4</sup> These include:

- i. Income
- ii. Age
- iii. Education
- iv. Children in the family
- v. Church involvement
- vi. Effect of pledging
- vii. Personal faith and attitudes about church
- viii. Size of congregation
- ix. Services of the congregation

Yang and Hoge analyze the 1987 – 89 General Social Survey and the 1998 Gallup survey. They argued that the main predictors of giving are strength of faith and involvement in the church. They also suggested that church attendance was the single most important factor for giving and volunteering.<sup>5</sup>

Lunn, Klay and Douglass analyzed data from a survey of members and elders of the Presbyterian Church (USA). They like other scholars came to the conclusion that in the Presbyterian Church (USA) those who attend church regularly give more than those that are not regular attendees.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Hoge, Dean R., "Introduction: The Problem of Understanding Church Giving" *Review of Religious Research* (December 1994) p. 107 - 8

<sup>5</sup> Yang, Fenggang & Dean R. Hoge, "Determinants of Religious Giving in American Denominations: Data From Two Nationwide Surveys" *Review of Religious Research* (December 1994) p. 148

<sup>6</sup> Lunn, John, Robin Klay & Andrea Douglass, "Relationships Among Giving, Church Attendance, and Religious Belief: The Case of the Presbyterian Church (USA)" *Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion* (2001) p. 774

Chang also came to the same conclusion upon analyzing the 1990 Independent Sector/Gallup Organization Survey of Giving and Volunteering.<sup>7</sup>

However, a recent study by Dr Jonathon Gruber of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology suggests that an increase in an individual's donation results in a decline in attendance of the local church.<sup>8</sup> Despite a variation between denominations the ultimate findings remained consistent. These findings are very different from all the previous studies that show a positive correlation between church attendance and philanthropic behavior.

This variation of opinions make it even more important that we analyze the relationship Muslims and mosque attendance. None of the studies above included Muslims or mosques in their studies. While most focused on Christian denominations a few attempted to include Jewish congregations into their study.

### ***Data and Method***

The data used in this study are based on the 2004 American Muslim Poll conducted by Zogby International for the Muslims in the American Public Space Project funded by the Pew Charitable Trust. Zogby International conducted interviews of 1,846 persons, 18 years and old, nationwide who identify themselves as Muslim. From Thursday, August 5 to Wednesday, September 15, 2004, phone interviews were conducted. All calls were made from Zogby International headquarters in Utica, N.Y. The telephone list was created by matching the zip codes of 300 randomly selected

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<sup>7</sup> Chang, Cyril F., "The Influence of Church and Synagogue Attendance on the Probability of Giving and Volunteering" *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing* (1994) p. 21

<sup>8</sup> *Giving USA 2005* (Glenview, IL: Giving USA Foundation 2005) p. 104

Islamic centers, against their respective local telephone exchanges. Listings of common Muslim surnames were then identified from the local telephone exchanges and called.

An additional sample of Afro-American Muslims was interviewed in-person September 1-15, 2004, at locations in New York, Washington, D.C., Atlanta, GA, and Detroit, MI. The additional surveys were required to account for Afro- American Muslims with Anglo-American or non-Muslim surnames who were not called on in the telephone survey. A slight weight was added to ethnicity to more accurately reflect the Muslim population. The margin of error is +/- 2.3 percentage points. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

The dependent variable of the study are based upon the survey question: "Have you ever donated time, money or been an officer of any mosque or other religious organizations?" Two separate dependent variables were created: (1) The Individual has donated money to any mosque or other religious organization. (2) The Individual has volunteered time to any mosque or other religious organization. A yes answer was quantified as "1" and a no was quantified as "0".

The data was organized using the cross-tabulation to understand general trends between the various dependent and independent variables. Then the logistic regression technique was used for estimating the influence of mosque attendance, prayer habits, opinions regarding importance of religion on the decisions of giving money and volunteering time.

The first independent variable is the frequency of mosque attendance. In the survey, the respondents were asked the following question: On average how often do you attend the mosque for salah and Jumaah Prayer? Respondents could answer with the

following: 1 = Weekly; 2 = Weekly for Jum'ah; 3 = 1-2/month; 4 = Few/especially for the Eid; 5 = Seldom; 6 = Never; & 7 = Not Sure.

The second independent variable is the respondents prayer habits. In the survey, the respondents were asked the following question: Concerning daily salah or prayer, do you in general, pray all five salah daily, make some of the five salah daily, occasionally make salah, only make Eid Prayers, or do you never pray? Respondents could answer with the following: 1 = Pray all five salah daily; 2 = Make some of the five salah daily; 3 = Occasionally make salah; 4 = Only make Eid Prayers; 5 = Never pray; 6 = NS.

The third independent variable is the importance of the influence of religion on American society. In the survey, the respondents were asked the following question: Agree or disagree - The influence of religion and spiritual values in American life should increase? Respondents could answer with the following: 1 = Strongly agree; 2 = Somewhat agree; 3 = Somewhat disagree; 4 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Not Sure. Additional independent variable include income, gender and education.

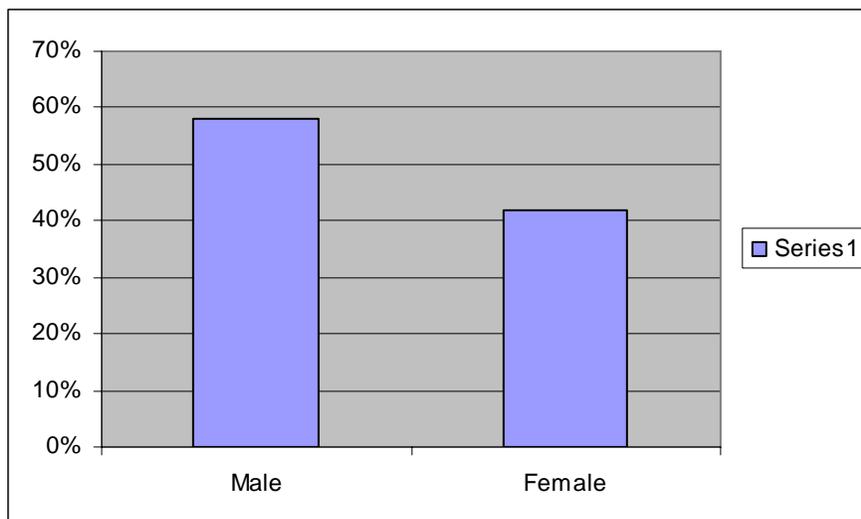
This paper proposes the following hypothesis:

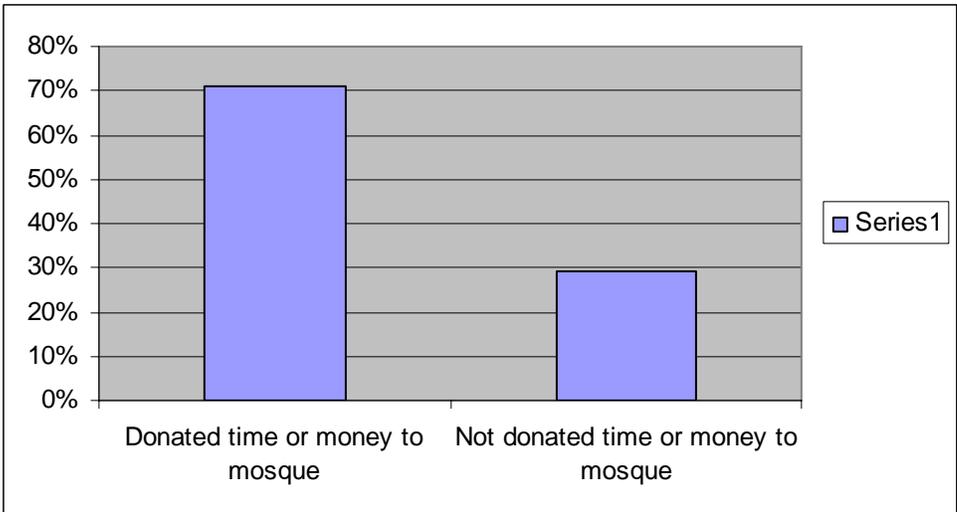
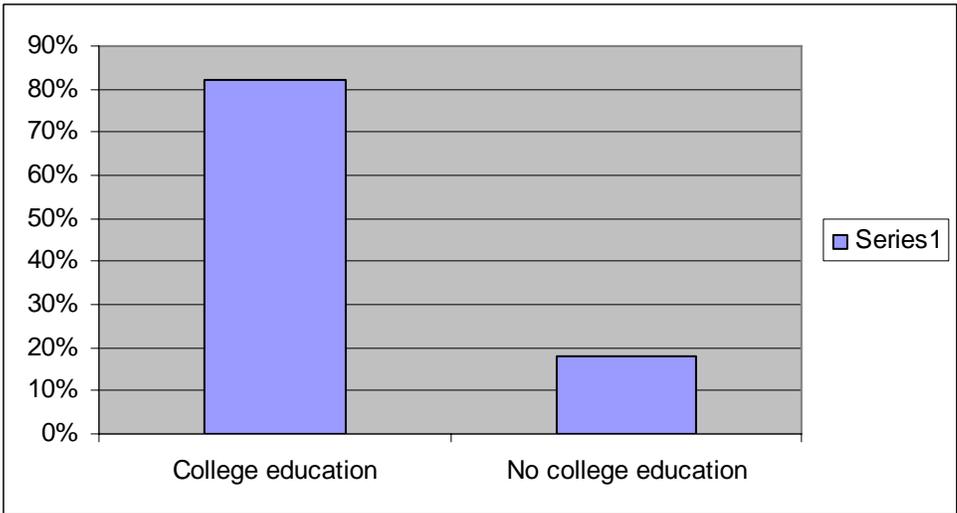
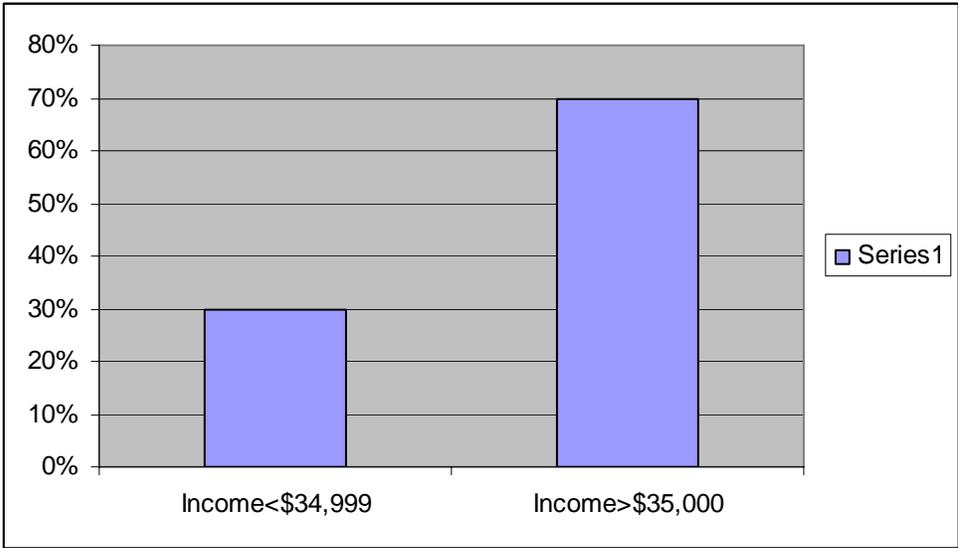
- i. Giving and volunteering is positively affected by mosque attendance.  
Therefore the more an individual attends mosque the more likely that person will either donate money, time or both to a mosque or a religious organization.
- ii. Giving and volunteering is positively affected by regular prayer habits.  
Therefore, the more an individual prays the daily prayers the more likely that person will either donate money, time or both to a mosque or a religious organization.

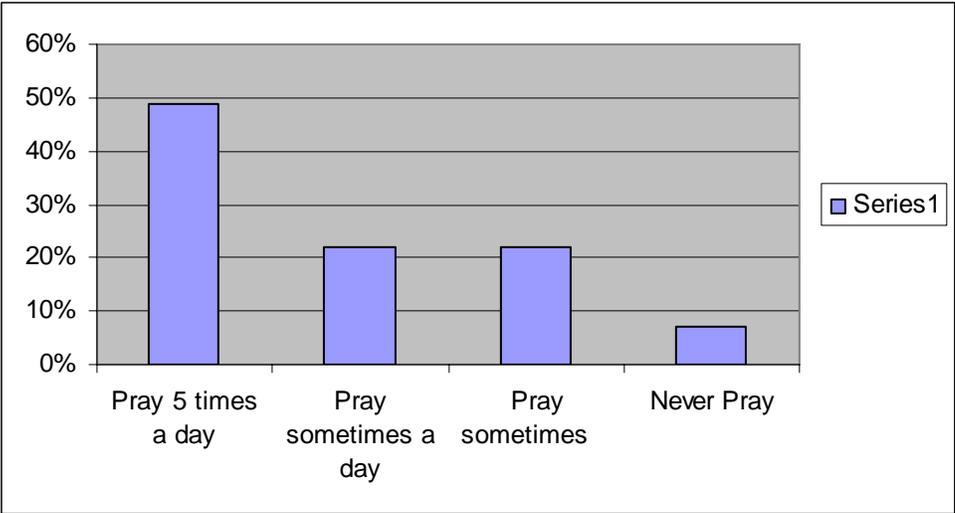
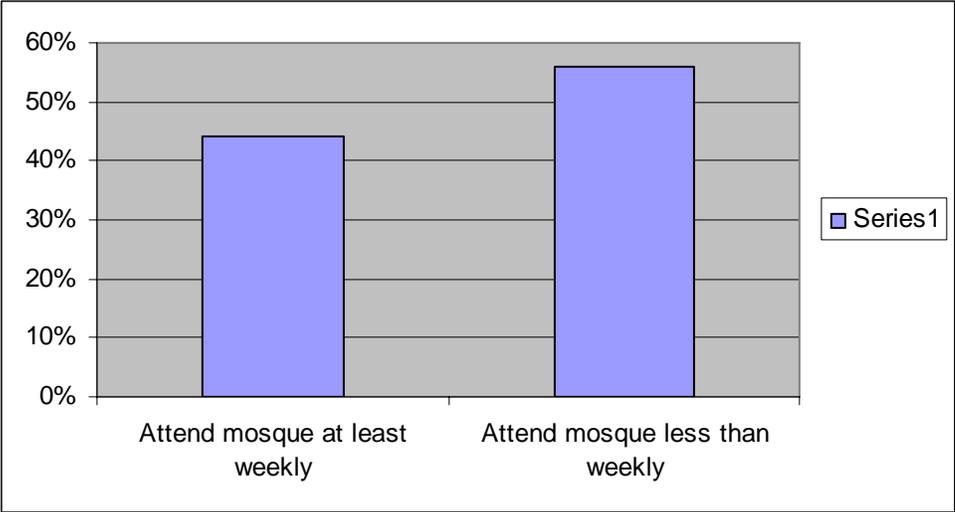
iii. Giving and volunteering is positively affected by a person's belief that the role of religion should increase in American society. Therefore, the more an individual believes that the influence of religion should increase in American society the more likely that person will either donate money, time or both to a mosque or a religious organization.

### *Analysis*

The descriptive statistics suggests that 58% of the sample were male while 42% were female. Furthermore, 30% of the sample earned less than \$34,999 while 70% earned more than \$35,000. 82% of the sample had some college education or were college graduates while 18% did not have any college education. 71% of the sample say they have donated time, money or both to a mosque or religious organization. 44% of the sample attend mosque at least weekly while 56% of the sample is less devout. Nearly half or 49% of the sample pray all five prayers daily while another 22% make some salah daily, while 7% say they never pray. 85% of the sample say that the influence of religion in American life should increase.







The estimated logistic equations for giving money and volunteering are presented at the end of the document. Not all the independent variable are statistically significant as in the giving equation GENDER is .301 which is above .05. However the remaining independent variables are statistically significant for giving.

Income is positive in the giving equation. This suggests that as family income increases the likelihood of the individual's chances to give donations. This could be

attributed to more disposable income to fulfill the philanthropic tendencies of the individual.

Education is also positive in the giving equation suggesting that as educational level increases so does the likelihood of the individual donating money to the mosque or religious institution. There have been a number of studies that show that educational level positively affects the persons tendency to be more philanthropic.

However, this study confirms Dr Gruber's analysis compared to the traditional hypothesis that mosque attendance is positively linked to giving of donations. In this equation attendance is negative suggesting that the more a person attends the mosque the less likelihood the chances that the person give to the mosque or a religious institution. This is surprising as most organizations assume higher participation results in higher chances of donations.

The equation also shows negative relationships with prayer or the influence of religion. Meaning that the more one prays or the more that one believes that religion should influence American society will result in a lower chances in that person donating.

In the volunteering equations all the independent variables are significant with the exception of education. The equation has positive relationships with income, gender and education while have a negative relationship with mosque attendance, prayer and influence of religion.

Finally, if the dependent variable is changed to: Have you ever donated time, money or been an officer of any mosque or religious organizations? With the possible responses as: 1= donated time; 2 = donated money; 3 = served as an officer; 4 = a combination of these; 5 = none of these; 6 = not sure. The independent variables remain

the same as before the results are different. Gender, income, education and influence of religion are not significant as they are higher than .05. However both mosque attendance and prayer have positive relationships with volunteering and giving. Meaning that the more an individual attends mosque and prays the more the likelihood that the individual will donate or volunteer for a mosque.

### *Conclusion*

This paper uses data from a national survey of American Muslims by Zogby International known as the American Muslim Poll. The American Muslim Poll was conducted for the Muslims in American Public Space Project. The paper uses the logistic regression technique to examine the relationship between mosque attendance and giving and volunteering. The results of the study suggest two different outcomes. When the dependent variable is divided into two variables of volunteering and giving it shows a negative relationship with mosque attendance, prayer and influence of the role of religion. While surprising it could be argued that the reasons for giving towards religious organizations may have different reasons. For example, the survey asks about giving to religious organizations at large. Further breakdowns asking questions regarding giving to the mosque may show a positive linkage. People identify organizations like the Council of American Islamic Relations, Muslim Public Affairs Council and the Islamic Society of North America as religious but the reasons to give to these organizations may be due to their roles in combating a negative public perception of Muslims in American society. A majority of those polled in the American Muslim Poll stated concern about the negative image of Muslims in American public perception.

It is interesting to note that when the dependent variable is left as volunteering and giving combined it shows a positive relationship. However, the data is statistically less significant as only the two factors relating to attendance and prayer are below .05 while the remaining factors are above .05.

American Muslim individual and institutional philanthropic activity requires further analysis and study. More polls like the American Muslim Poll are needed that focus more on philanthropic activity. While the American Muslim Poll is an important beginning the field requires much more work in this area.

**Coefficients(a)**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Std. Error	Beta
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	.690	.062			11.164	.000	
	Gender	.025	.025	.025	.025	1.034	.301	
	Income	.031	.008	.107	.107	3.978	.000	
	Education	.030	.015	.053	.053	1.982	.048	
	89. On average, how often do you attend the mosque for salah and Jum'ah Prayer	-.076	.008	-.265	-.265	-9.367	.000	
	96. Concerning daily salah or prayer, do you in general, pray all five salah daily, make some of the five salah daily, occasionally make salah, only make Eid Prayers, or do you never pray?	-.037	.010	-.103	-.103	-3.741	.000	
	41. Agree or disagree - The influence of religion and spiritual values in American life should increase.	-.044	.012	-.091	-.091	-3.729	.000	

a Dependent Variable: The individual donates money

**Coefficients(a)**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		T	Sig.	Std. Error	Beta
		B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error				
1	(Constant)	.726	.062			11.794	.000		
	Gender	.067	.024	.065		2.724	.007		
	Income	.017	.008	.059		2.240	.025		
	Education	.020	.015	.034		1.305	.192		
	89. On average, how often do you attend the mosque for salah and Jum'ah Prayer	-.087	.008	-.298		-10.807	.000		
	96. Concerning daily salah or prayer, do you in general, pray all five salah daily, make some of the five salah daily, occasionally make salah, only make Eid Prayers, or do you never pray?	-.047	.010	-.128		-4.779	.000		
	41. Agree or disagree - The influence of religion and spiritual values in American life should increase.	-.060	.012	-.122		-5.078	.000		

a Dependent Variable: The individual volunteers time

**Coefficients(a)**

Model		Coefficients		t	Sig.	Std. Error	Beta
		Unstandardized	Standardized				
		B					
1	(Constant)	3.142	.181		17.372	.000	
	Gender	.045	.072	.016	.633	.527	
	Income	-.038	.023	-.048	-1.673	.094	
	Education	.025	.045	.016	.555	.579	
	89. On average, how often do you attend the mosque for salah and Jum'ah Prayer	.079	.024	.100	3.339	.001	
	96. Concerning daily salah or prayer, do you in general, pray all five salah daily, make some of the five salah daily, occasionally make salah, only make Eid Prayers, or do you never pray?	.082	.029	.084	2.874	.004	
	41. Agree or disagree - The influence of religion and spiritual values in American life should increase.	.056	.035	.042	1.618	.106	

a Dependent Variable: 32. Any mosque or other religious organizations