

# Investigating the Role of a Mosque in a Residential Neighborhood of Rajshahi City



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**Abstract:** Since the early days of Islamic practice, the mosque, as the principle religious institution, has played a central role in developing communities across the globe. With the spread of religion around the globe, in many regions, the role of the mosque has been reduced to only being a platform to pray daily. This change in practice suggests that there is a difference between Islamic values and human perception. Bangladesh, with its majority of people being Muslims, is also facing the same scenario. This research attempts to study the Muslims' perceptions and practices in the present time to get an idea of how they are visualizing the role of mosques in their daily lives. A residential neighborhood in Upashahar, Rajshahi, is studied as a case study the research is designed around conducting a survey of the residents belonging to different age groups, genders and academic qualifications. The research findings suggest that there is undoubtedly a deviation seen among the Muslims' practice from the traditional norms of Islamic doctrine. This research is a conscious attempt to create awareness among practicing Muslims. The limitation here is that the studied case cannot illustrate the picture for the broader urban context. This ultimately creates the scope for further research to be conducted on this topic to get a coherent picture.

**Keywords:** Religious institution; residential neighborhood; Islamic values; human perception; practice.

## Bir Caminin Toplumsal Rolü: Rajshahi Şehrinin Bir Mahallesindeki Müslümanların Algılarının İncelenmesi

**Özet:** İslami uygulamaların ilk günlerinden bu yana cami, temel dini kurum olarak sosyal etkileşimin geliştirilmesinde merkezi bir rol oynamıştır. Dinin dünya çapında yayılmasıyla birlikte, birçok bölgede caminin rolü sadece günlük ibadetlerin yapıldığı bir platforma indirgenmiştir. Uygulamadaki bu değişim, İslami değerler ile insan algısı arasında bir fark olduğunu göstermektedir. Halkın çoğunluğu Müslüman olan Bangladeş de aynı senaryo ile karşı karşıyadır. Bu araştırma, Müslümanların camilerin sosyal alandaki rolünü nasıl algıladıklarına dair bir fikir edinmek amacıyla Müslümanların algı ve uygulamalarını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Rajshahi, Upashahar'da bulunan bir mahalle örnek olay olarak incelenmiştir. Araştırma, farklı yaş gruplarına, cinsiyetlere ve akademik niteliklere sahip mahalle sakinlerine yönelik bir anket çalışması etrafında tasarlanmıştır. Araştırma bulguları, Müslümanların uygulamaları arasında İslami öğretinin geleneksel normlarından şüphesiz bir sapma olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu araştırma, uygulamacı Müslümanlar arasında farkındalık yaratmaya yönelik bilinçli bir girişimdir. Buradaki sınırlama, incelenen vakanın daha geniş kentsel bağlam için resmi gösterememesidir. Bu da sonuçta, tutarlı bir resim elde etmek için bu konuda daha fazla araştırma yapılmasını gerektirmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Dini kurum; sosyal etkileşim; konut mahallesi; İslami değerler; insan algısı; uygulama

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Muslim place of worship is referred to as a mosque, the House of Allah. The term mosque comes from an Arabic word 'masjid', meaning a place of prostration. In Islamic practice, Muslims are to go to the mosque five times a day to perform their prayers. It is important to take note of Dr. Spahic Omer's comment since it emphasizes the importance of mosque institutions in Muslim culture. Without a doubt, he claimed, the mosque has been and always will be the focal point of Muslim life [1]. The ritual of praying in a mosque organizes daily life and builds social connections between people from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

During the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), all the activities of the Muslims i.e., religious, educational, social, economic, political, cultural etc. were mainly centered on the mosque. The mosque simultaneously served as a school, a parliament, a courthouse and a community center as well. The mosque was the center where the community learned their religion, the society discussed new laws, and judgments were passed. In addition, the mosque was an institution where neighbors were able to meet with one another, share their problems and hold their celebrations. The role of the mosque in Muslim societies from the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to the present time is further explained in the literature review section under the title of mosque-centered activities.

However, as Islam has spread over time, there have been deviations from ideal practices in the day-to-day lives of Muslims in many regions around the globe. Moreover, today is highly urbanized and technologically advanced age contributes to the same. Muslim individuals departing from the ideal practices of Islamic doctrine is a long-standing and vast topic to cover. The research focuses on the issue of how Muslim people's reliance on mosques as a hub for communal life has reduced and how this has led to mosques failing to serve as a platform for community. This research attempts to study the current practices of the Muslim community and determine whether they deviate from traditional Islamic norms and practices.

Speaking of Bangladesh, it ranks eighth among all countries by population [2] and according to the Population & Housing Census 2011, 91.04% of Bangladesh's population is Muslim [3]. Yet there has not been a lot of research conducted on the mentioned topic to generate awareness. The dire need to generate discussions around these issues has paved the way for this research.

The research is focused on a neighborhood area in Rajshahi City, Bangladesh. Rajshahi, a part of the Varendra region of North Bengal, is one of the oldest regions of Bangladesh. Many Hindu kings, Muslim sultans, British companies and Zamindars once ruled it. It shares a deep connection with Shah Makhdum, who was a Sufi Muslim figure and who brought Islam to the Varendra region. Moreover, Rajshahi division has the second-largest Muslim population and around 93.67% of its population is Muslim by religion. The chosen study area is Upashahar Residential Area situated in Rajshahi City. It is the first planned neighborhood in Rajshahi City. Then, upon deciding the study area, a survey is designed with a sample surrounding a mosque to gather primary data from the responses of the residents of the residential neighborhood. The justification behind the study area and the mosque selection will be discussed in the methodology section.

Firstly, the literature is studied to gain a deeper understanding of the practices, trends and patterns around the globe. Then, upon deciding the site, a questionnaire survey was designed. The data gathered is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The data is analyzed in the form of descriptive statistics and thematic analysis to draw conclusions and have a fruitful discussion about the current practices of the Muslim community.

In order to reflect on the fading importance of the mosque as a hub for the community, this research was designed to investigate the contemporary practices of the Muslims in the study area. However, there is definitely this limitation of only collecting data from a sizeable portion of a neighborhood. This indicates that this research cannot illustrate the results for a broader population. Still, this research would highlight the need to conduct further research in this direction to reach a broader sample.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In Islam, believers, worship as a way of life, and the notion of the mosque as a community center, are inseparable. They originate from each other, needing one another for their proper functioning and continued existence [4]. The literature review was conducted to gain a better understanding of how mosques are fulfilling their original purpose and playing a variety of roles in the lives of believers through different timelines around the globe.

### 2.1. Mosque-Centered Activities

In many places of the world today, the mosque's role has been reduced to that of a venue for prayer exclusively. But this was not how mosques were used in the early days of Islam. Additionally, mosques' function as the focal point for the growth of Islamic da'wah cannot be isolated from the spread of Islam. Thus, the literature is researched here to comprehend the functions of a mosque for the Muslim community, ranging from the Prophet's (pbuh) Mosque to the Islamic Golden Ages to Modern customs.

#### *Mosque of Prophet (PBUH)*

Construction of the city's main mosque was the first and most pressing duty related to the Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) objective to form a community when he moved from Makkah to Madinah. Everything else had to wait until the Prophet's Mosques were finished, including building homes for the migrants, the bulk of whom were underprivileged and essentially homeless. When finished, the Prophet's Mosque had a very straightforward shape. Despite its unassuming appearance, the mosque has been a genuine hub for local growth from its founding and has quickly developed into a multifaceted structure. The mosque was designed to serve a variety of religious, social, political, administrative, and cultural purposes in addition to prayer services at set times. It served as a stimulant and a benchmark for projects aimed at advancing civilization throughout the Muslim world.

In Medina, it was a simple layout, made out of date tree stumps and leaves. Hazrat Ibn Umar relates that in the time of Holy Prophet Muhammad, the pillars of his mosque were made of stumps from date trees and its roof was made with leaves of date trees [5].

The main functions performed by the Mosque revolved around being a center for individual and congregational worship practices, a learning center, the seat of the Prophet's government, a welfare and charity center, a detention and rehabilitation center, a place for medical treatment and nursing, and a place for some leisure activities. The Prophet's Mosque was the nerve-center of the wide spectrum of the community's activities. It was also a center of gravity for the civilizational aspirations of the fast-emerging Muslim community (ummah) [4].

#### *Mosques during Islamic Golden Ages*

Two significant dynasties are engaged in terms of history. One is the Umayyad dynasty, whose monuments date from 680 to 745 and which ruled from 661 to 750. The only Islamic dynasty to have ever ruled the entirety of the Islamic-conquered world. The Abbasid dynasty is the second one, and while it nominally ruled until 1258, in practice its princes had little influence on culture after the second decade of the 10th century.

The mosque, also known as the masjid, is the only apparently new purpose that emerged during this time. The Prophet's home in Medina served as the primary location for the early Muslims' religious and other activities. The establishment of masjids outside of Arabia in each center that the new faith conquered is the fundamental phenomenon of the early decades that followed the invasion. These weren't just or even predominantly places of worship. Instead, they served as the religious community centers where all social, political, educational, and personal concerns were conducted. Common prayer and the khutbah ceremony were a couple of them. The first mosques were built primarily to serve as the restricted space in which the new community would make its own collective decisions. It is there that the treasury of the community was kept, and early accounts are full of anecdotes about the immense variety of events, from the dramatic to the scabrous, that took place in mosques. Since even in earliest times the Muslim community consisted

of several superimposed and interconnected social systems, mosques reflected this complexity, and, next to large mosques for the whole community, tribal mosques and mosques for various quarters of a town or city are also known [6].

### *Contemporary Practices*

Islamic centers have been popular in recent years. The world over, people engage in this practice. These are public forums that welcome everyone and spread awareness about Islam. These centers' missions and vision statements inform us that they serve as community centers rather than just places for prayer. The Center is dedicated to upholding an Islamic identity, establishing and sustaining a strong Muslim community, and advancing an all-encompassing Islamic lifestyle based on the Holy Quran and the Prophet Muhammad's Sunnah.

### 2.2. Mosque Accessibility

Women were allowed to pray along with men during the times of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Even though, it was a rule for men to go to mosques to pray five times, he was lenient with women stating that their prayers are as good as the ones in mosques even if performed from the home. Women were active in public life and regularly attend the prayer at the mosque including Fajr and 'Isha, during the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Children and babies accompanied their mothers to the mosque. The Prophet (pbuh) explicitly stated that men should not prevent the female slaves of Allah from entering the mosque of Allah, even at night. At the same time, the Prophet (pbuh) did not make it a rule that women must pray in the mosque [1].

Given the Prophet's (pbuh) advice and example there should never be a mosque that tells women to leave when they want to enter and participate in prayers or other activities. It is a woman's right to choose whether she wishes to participate in mosque activities, and she must have open access to the mosque. In accordance to the argument above, Islam does not forbid women from entering mosques or praying along with men shoulder to shoulder. However, it has become the norm in placing rules on women as such [1].

In Arab world, we see that women participate in regular congregational prayers in a mosque. We never heard of any unexpected occurrences due to women's participation in congregational prayers of mosque. We can have a mesmerizing scenario on the 27th day of Ramadan in the Prophet's Mosque, Masjidul Haram, and Masjidul Aqsa. Especially, in Masjidul Haraam and Prophet's Mosque, women participate in regular congregational prayers [7].

Western world also has achieved new heights in their practices. One such instance is The Women's Mosque of America. It was founded in 2015 by two South Asian American Muslim women – comedy writer M. Hasna Maznavi and attorney Sana Muttalib. It was conceived as a space to empower Muslim women to take on active roles in their individual community mosques and influence changes in a mosque culture that is often unwelcoming to women [8].

Yet in some parts of Muslim world, there is a different scenario. One such part is Indian subcontinent. "Most mosques in the Middle East, South East Asia, and Africa always have spaces for women," said Sania Mariam, the head of a collective called the Muslim Women's Study Circle. The Indian subcontinent is an anomaly, she said [9].

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

In this section, the research design is detailed. In this research a survey was conducted in the study area to collect primary data. From the targeted population, a representative sample was gathered. A questionnaire was formulated to collect data. The data was then analyzed, both qualitative data and quantitative data.

### 3.1. Mosque Selection

The survey's design is concentrated on a particular mosque, as was already indicated in the introduction. The mosque was selected for a purpose. The Government of Bangladesh has undertaken a program to build 560 model mosques and Islamic cultural centers at the District and Upazila levels. The Model Mosque at Rajshahi Upazila level is opened at Upashahar Neighborhood (previously the mosque was known as Central Jame Mosque). A radius of 400 meters around the mosque, a five-minute walk, is the study area where the survey is conducted. This selection of a Model Mosque leaves scope for further systematic investigation and analysis of other model mosques of the country.



Figure 1. Study Area

### 3.2. Population

As already mentioned in the introduction, the research would be conducted in the Upashahar residential area, a neighborhood in Rajshahi city and the residents of the neighborhood are the target population group here. Rajshahi City is composed of 30 wards and the study area is situated under the 14th number ward. According to the Population & Housing Census 2011, the population of the 14th number ward was around 22,070 [3]. However, along with the study area, the 14th number ward covers other areas too. Hence, the assumed target population narrows down to around 10,000.

### 3.3. Sampling

From the information on population stated above, the sample size is determined. With a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, the sample size should be 370. Due to constraints like time and finances, the sample size is narrowed down to the minimum. The sample size is 100 (with a 10% margin of error).

A sample of 100 residents was determined employing the stratified structured sampling method to ensure representation from different genders and age groups. The ratio of males and females is equal, 50 males and 50 females, so opinions from both groups can be highlighted. Along with the age, there were four major age groups: 0- 18 age group, 18- 30 age group, 30- 50 age group and 50+ age group and four education levels: primary, secondary, undergraduate and postgraduate; although participants from a variety of professions took part. Male and female respondents were evenly distributed throughout each age group.

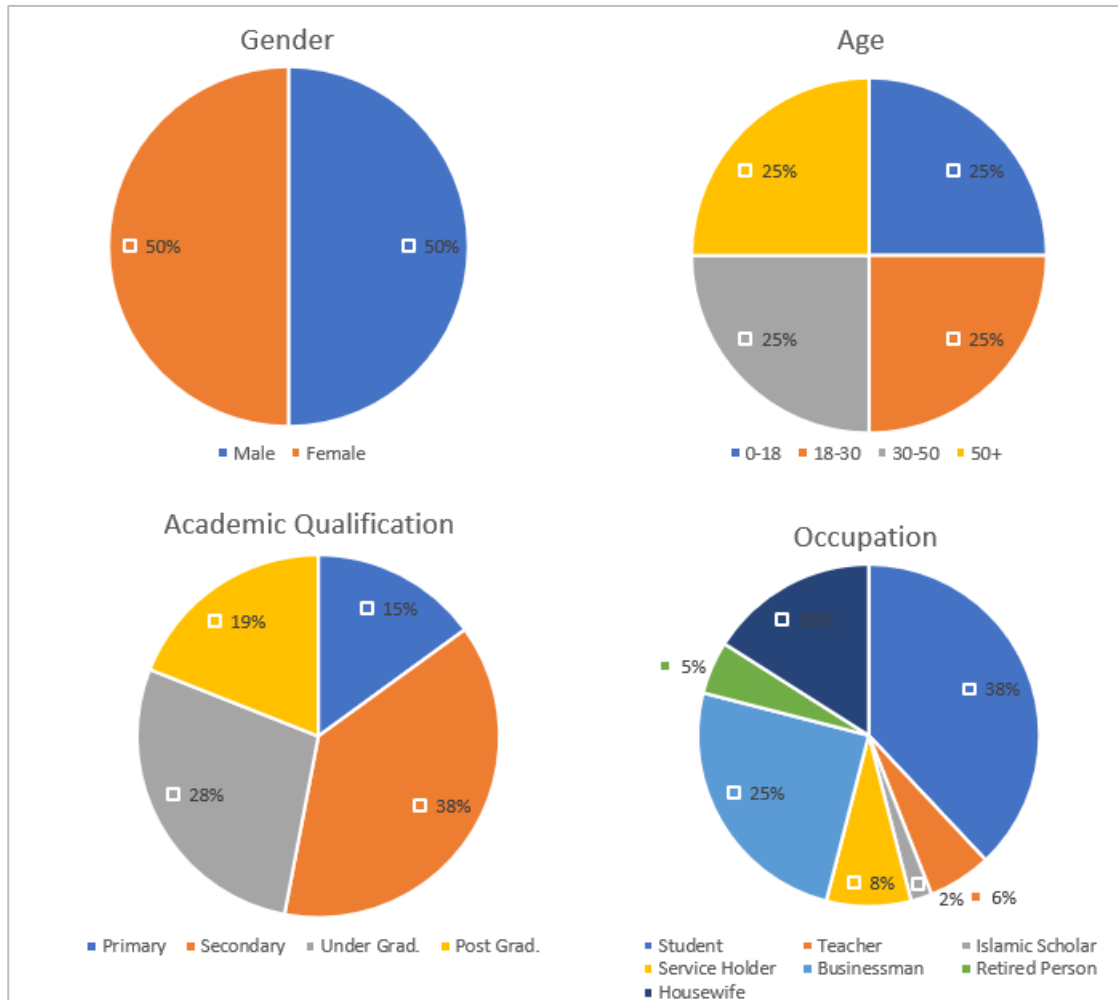


Figure 12. Sampling

### 3.4. Data Collection

- A questionnaire was first created to collect data, create a thorough picture of people's reliance on mosques and hence apprehend the role of mosques in a society. It covered subjects including how frequently individuals visited the mosque, how much time they spent there and what kinds of activities they engaged in aside from worshipping.
- A pilot test was conducted to ensure the clarity, validity and reliability of the questionnaire. An initial sample of about 30 individuals underwent the pilot test. Based on the findings of this test, certain open-ended questions were included in the survey in order to assess respondents' level of familiarity with Islamic doctrine and collect comments on potential improvements.
- Finally, the questionnaire was developed to capture information on the following dynamics.
  1. Mosque accessibility: The intention was to gather data about the daily participation of men and women and the probable causes leading to less participation. In addition, data was gathered to assess their opinion about mosques being accessible to everyone, especially women.
  2. Mosque-centered activities: The questions were designed to determine how many active hours residents generally spent in the mosque and what activities they engaged in. In addition, questions were asked to assess their depth of knowledge and gather some opinions.
  3. Islamic knowledge: This section was added after the pilot test. The inquiries assisted in determining the sources of the locals' Islamic knowledge.
- A combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions was included to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The closed-ended questions were designed to capture quantifiable information and

summarize frequencies, percentages, etc.; while open-ended ones were added to gather qualitative data and summarize patterns, themes, etc.

- The questionnaire was administered through face-to-face interviews, considering the convenience and preferences of participants.
- The privacy and confidentiality of the participants were ensured, as was their voluntary participation, by obtaining informed consent.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

- Quantitative analysis was conducted and descriptive statistics was utilized to summarize frequencies, percentages, etc. and examine patterns and trends related to mosque accessibility, mosque activities and Islamic knowledge.
- Thematic analysis was conducted to identify recurring themes and patterns in the qualitative data obtained from open-ended questions.

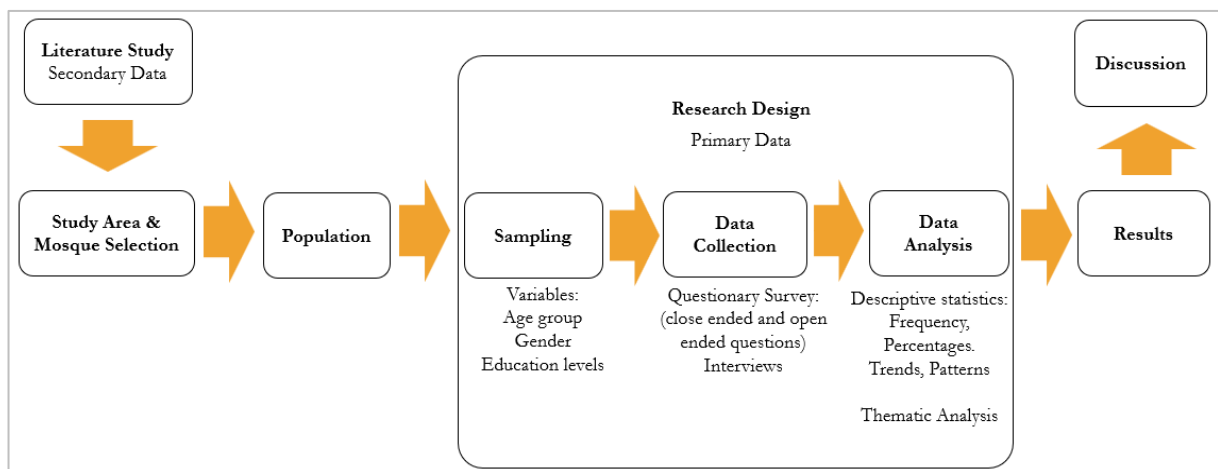


Figure 13. Research Methodology Flow-chart

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section, findings from the gathered data will be presented, focusing on different sections of the questionnaire, namely mosque accessibility, mosque activities and Islamic knowledge. Descriptive statistics is used to summarize the quantitative data i.e., frequency, percentages etc. to explore patterns and relationships. Thematic analysis is used to identify recurring themes and patterns to summarize the qualitative data. The results would be separately analyzed for different age groups, genders and educational levels to identify any patterns.

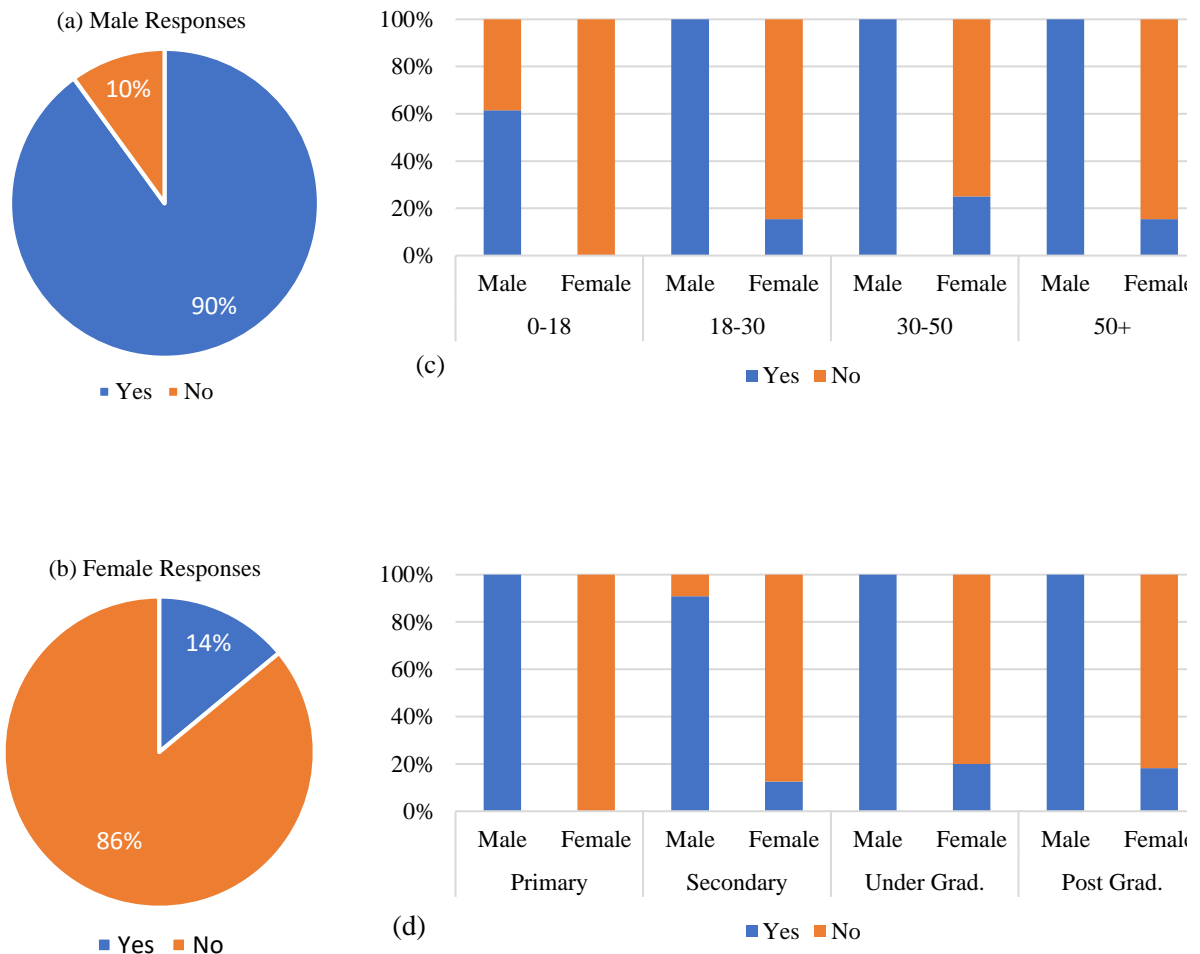
### 4.1. Mosque Accessibility

This section of the questionnaire was basically designed with closed-ended questions. The goal was to identify the group or section of society that is frequent (daily) mosque goers and who is not and the reasons why. It was also crucial to learn how welcoming mosques were for women in the study area and to solicit their thoughts on whether or not women should be allowed to enter the mosque. The gathered data was analyzed based on the set variables of age, gender and academic qualification to identify patterns (if there were any).

## Mosque Goers

Overall, 52% of the respondents reported that they go to the mosque to say their prayers. Almost 90% of men go to the mosque to say daily prayers, while only 14% of women go to the mosque, that too on Fridays and occasionally. (Figures 4(a) and 4(b)).

Figure 14. The charts show percentages of mosque goers based on (a) male responses (b) female responses (c) age groups and (d) academic qualifications



It is found that among male respondents, about 61.5% of participants aged 0-18, 100% of participants aged 18-30, 100% of participants aged 30-50 and 100% of participants aged 50 above go to the mosque; while among female respondents, none from participants aged 0-18, 12.5% of participants aged 18-30, 20% of participants aged 30-50, 18% of participants aged 50 above go to the mosque. The data is again analyzed based on academic qualifications for both genders. It is found that among male respondents, about 100% of participants with primary education, 91% of participants with primary education, 100% of participants with under graduation, 100% of participants with post-graduation go to the mosque to say their prayers while in case of women respondents none with primary education, 12.5% of participants with primary education, 20% of participants with under graduation and 18% of participants with post-graduation.

In fine, it can be concluded that the majority of female respondents do not go to mosques to say their prayers within the study area. Regarding the percentages according to their age groupings and educational backgrounds, there was no discernible difference in patterns.

### Reason Behind the Current Practice



It is already found that women do not go to mosque to say their prayers. The reasons were asked and the results are illustrated in the figure below. The results show that women belonging to different age groups and academic qualifications are not used to going to the Mosque for their daily prayers. From the literature, it is already established that women have access to mosques just as men do, according to Islamic doctrine. But the current practice in this neighborhood does not align with the Islamic lifestyle.

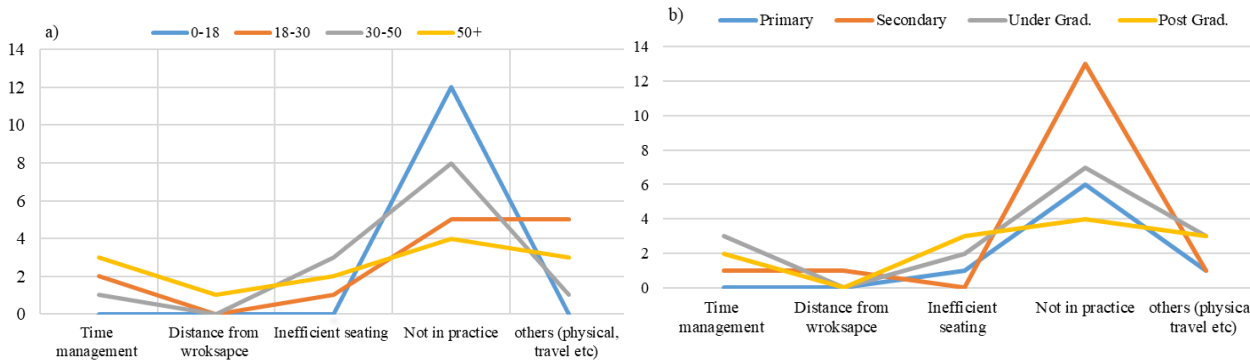
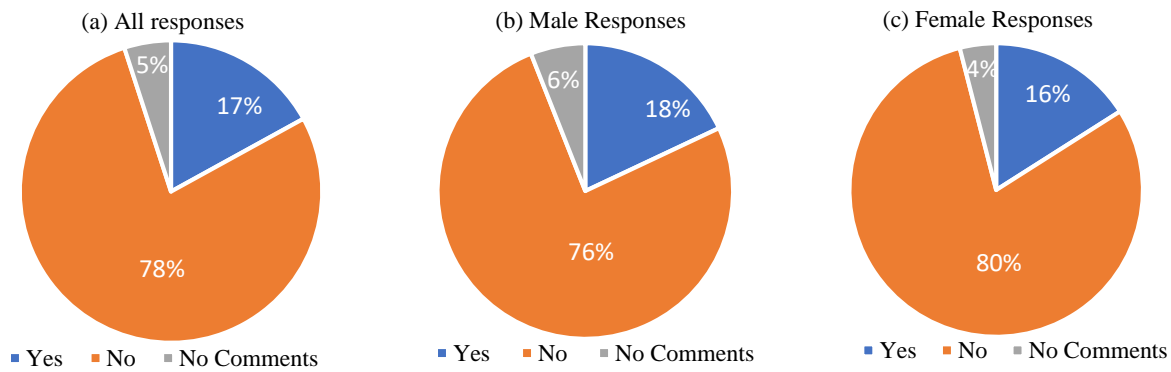


Figure 15. Analyzing the reasons for women not going to mosque based on (a) age groups and (b) academic qualifications

Woman-Friendliness of Mosques

Based on the fact that women do not visit mosques here, obtaining the sample’s perspectives regarding the woman-friendliness of mosques was a crucial question.

Figure 16. The charts show opinions on mosques being women-friendly by (a) all responses (b) male responses (c) female responses



From the above figure, it is found that overall, 78% of the total respondents do not think that mosques here are women-friendly, whereas around 76% of male respondents and 80% of female respondents agree with the same.

Opinion on women going to Mosques

The discussions in the aforementioned sections have already made it necessary to determine the sample's position on whether or not women should visit the mosque every day.

The findings are very contradictory. The majority of the sample's male participants agreed that women should pray regularly, while the women's group did not express this opinion firmly. It is evident from the graphs that the trends, based on age groups and academic qualifications, are the same for both genders.

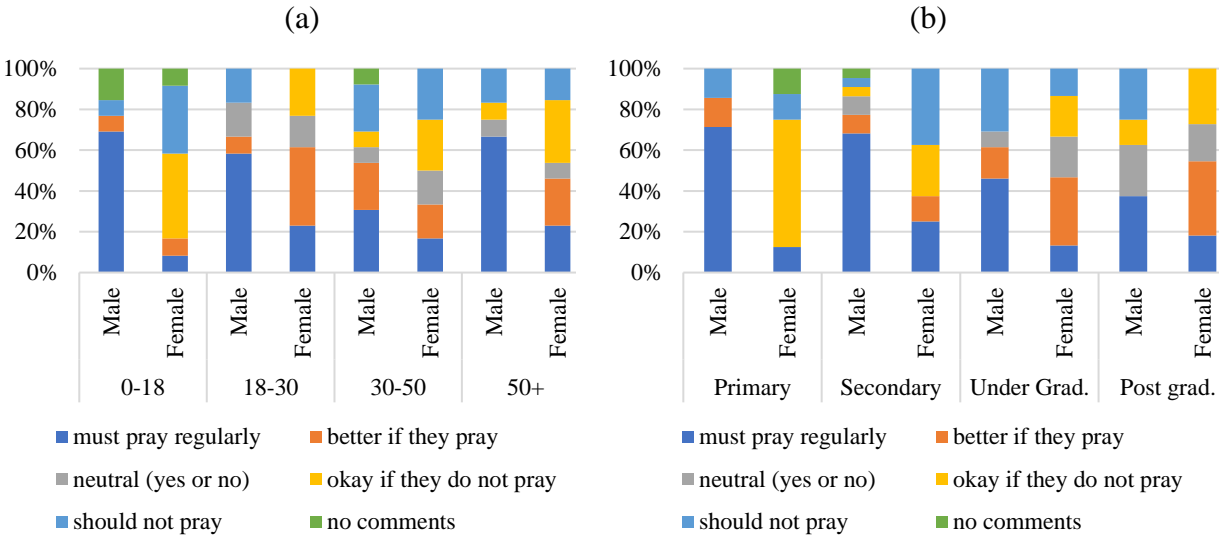


Figure 17. The charts show responses on the topic of women going to mosques by (a) age groups and (b) academic qualifications

From the discussions in this section of “Mosque Accessibility”, in the study area it is found that:

- The majority of female respondents do not attend mosques for prayers, regardless of age or academic qualifications. This is due to differences in religious practices and cultural differences.
- Another fact, i.e., the unfriendliness of mosques toward women, points in the same direction.
- In the literature review, it is already pointed out that there is no restriction on women entering mosques. Still, the responses from women on the topic of entering mosques show the deviation from traditional norms.

4.2. Mosque-Centered Activities

Next section of the questionnaire, mosque centric activities, was designed with both close-ended and open-ended questions. The intention was to gather information about people's involvement in mosque-related activities and to determine whether or not individuals knew the activities that are ideally practiced in Islamic lifestyle. Additionally, opinions on whether or not mosques can effectively implement values and what steps mosques might take to safeguard societal values were solicited.

Participation in Mosque-Centred Activities

The gathered data shows that more than half of participants are not participating in mosque-centric activities. Further summarizing the data based on the variables, gender, age and academic qualification, would provide a clear picture.

The results, illustrated in Figure 8 below, show that neither gender's participation is satisfactory. However, women's participation is comparatively lower than men's, which is consistent with the fact that they do not visit mosques frequently.

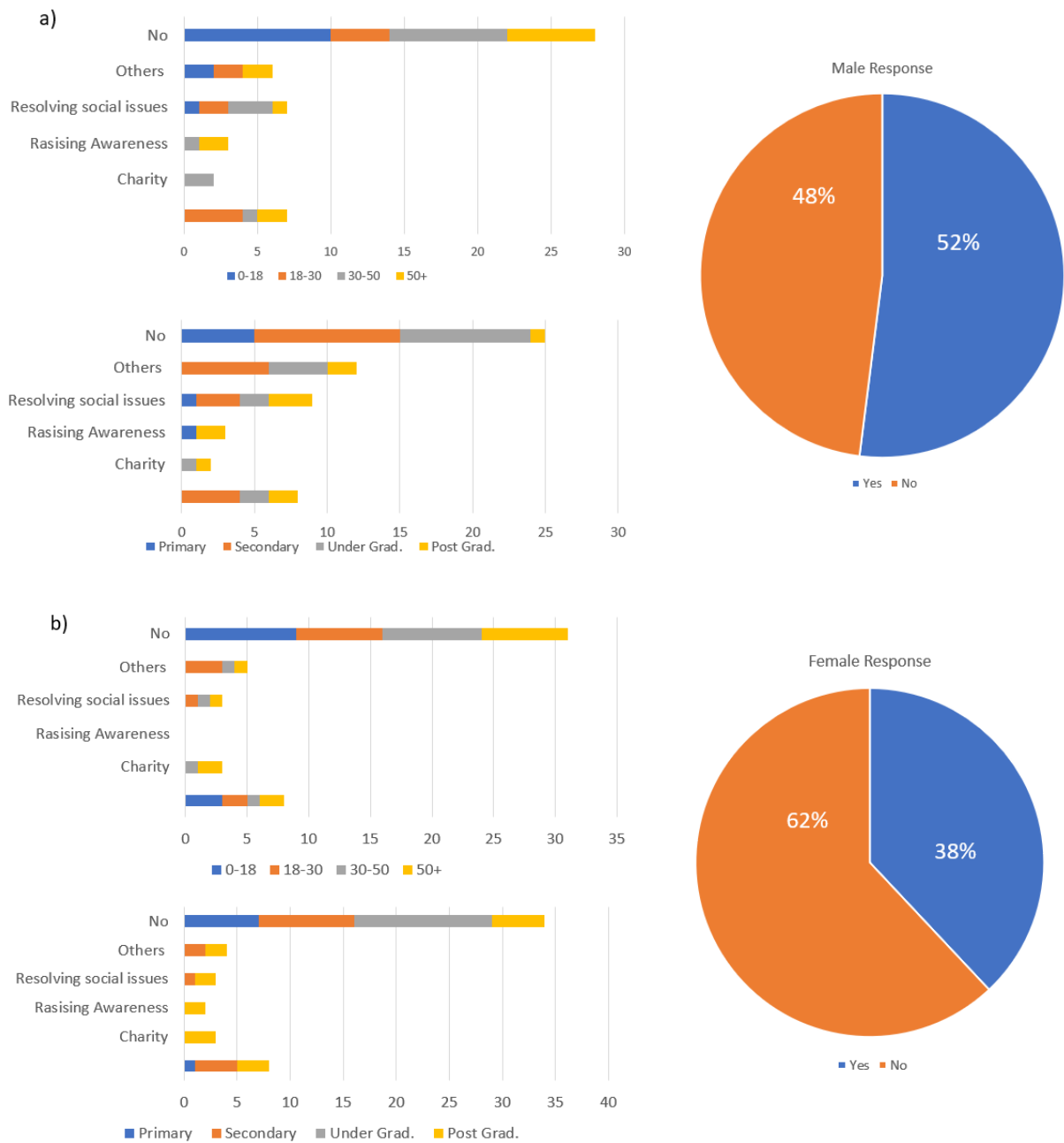


Figure 18. Participation in mosque-centered activities of a) male respondents and b) female respondents based on age groups and academic qualifications

Knowledge about Mosque-Centered Activities in Islam

A qualitative question was asked to understand mosque-centered activities in Islam, and a thematic analysis was conducted to identify meaningful patterns and themes. From the answers of the respondents, meaningful patterns were looked for and analyzed by repetitive data reading, coding, and theme creation.

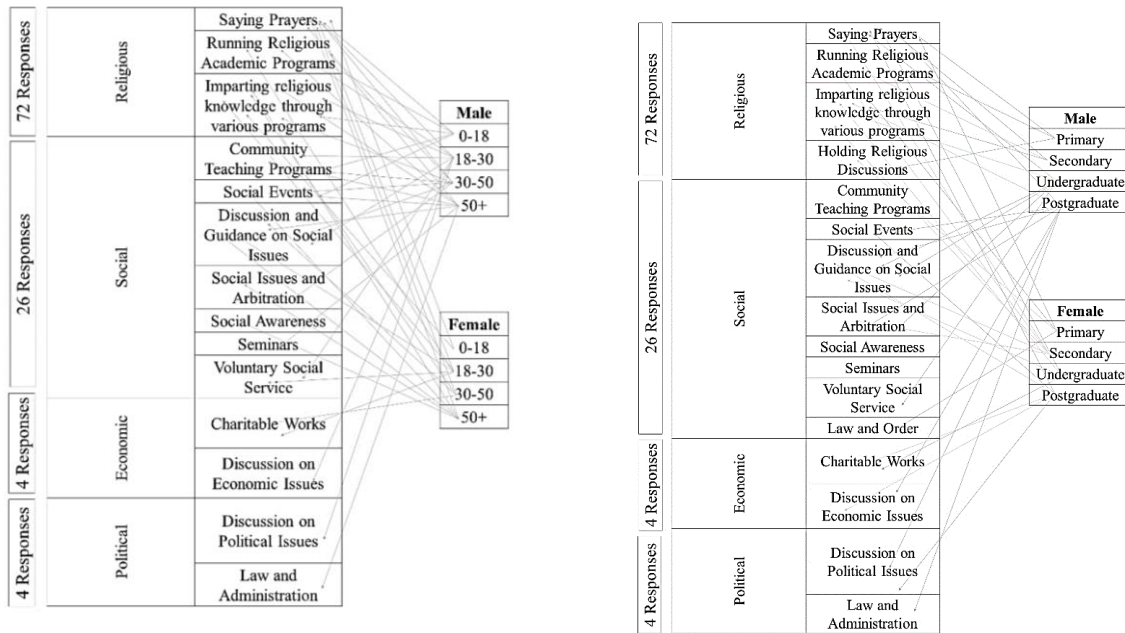


Figure 9. Thematic analysis of opinions on mosque-centered activities in Islam, based on age groups and academic qualifications

Both analytic diagrams show that the bulk of replies, which pertain to all variables—gender, age, and academic qualifications—were about religious activities while only a small number were concerning social features. It didn't change, even with higher educational degrees. The matrix makes it clear. This clearly hints towards the lack of knowledge among Muslims about the Islamic doctrine and traditional norms.

#### Mosque's Role in Implementing Social Values

This sub-section illustrates the opinion on whether mosques play an effective role in implying social values in our daily lives or not. About 61% of the sample responded "yes." The outcomes are presented based on a variety of factors, including gender, age group, and academic background.

From the below figure (Figure 10), it is obvious that not every response was a unanimous "yes." Almost 40% of the sample's respondents gave different answers. It is quite obvious from this that people do not hold the mosque in high regard as a social institution.

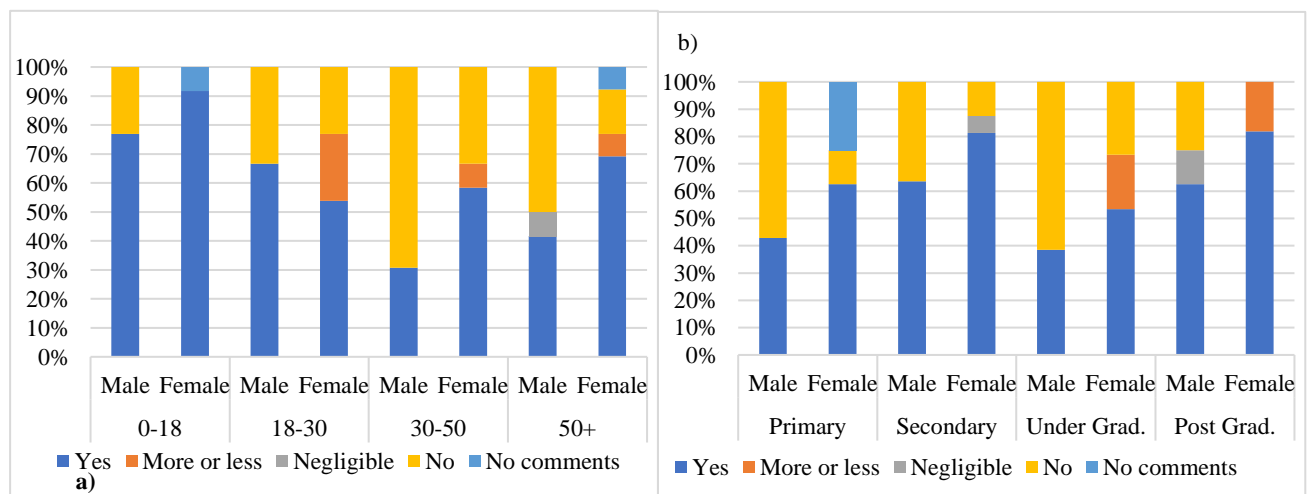


Figure 19. The charts show opinions on mosques playing a role in implementing social values based on genders, age groups and academic qualifications

From the discussions in this section of “Mosque-Centered Activities”, in the study area, it is found that:

- There is a lack of awareness regarding the activities performed in a mosque aside from prayer.
- The rate of low activity is worrying.
- The data further suggests that the majority of the sample does not view the mosque as a hub for a variety of community activities.

4.3. Islamic Knowledge

This section of the questionnaire was included to provide a clearer picture of the sample's sources of Islamic knowledge. The majority of respondents, according to the findings in the previous sections, do not participate in mosque-related activities other than praying. Even the female members of society don't often visit mosques to offer prayers. However, the mosque is the venue where Muslims learn about Islamic philosophy with the assistance of scholars. Moreover, different discussion programs can be a source of this knowledge. Therefore, acquiring information on the sample's Islamic knowledge sources is crucial to analyzing the current trend.

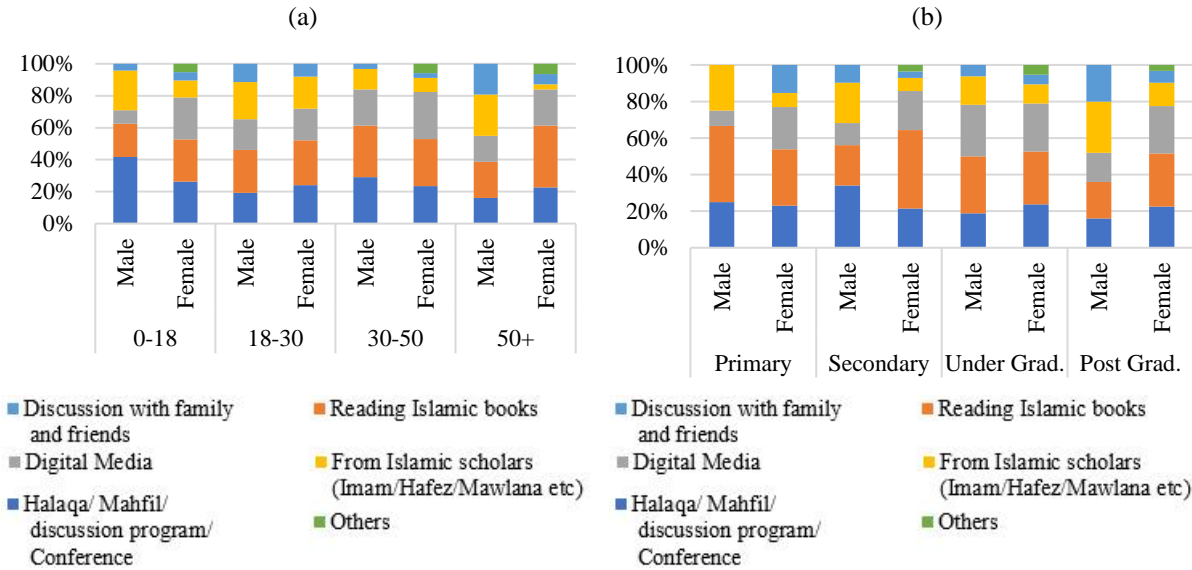


Figure 20. Responses of the respondents when asked about their source of Islamic knowledge a) age groups, b) academic qualifications

The charts show that all categories depend on conversations with family and friends, reading Islamic books and digital media. However, when it is about scholars and discussion programs, the involvement is not that great. Again, involvement is extremely low among the female respondents. This pattern found here also suggests that the sample does not rely on the mosque for their daily lives.

Overall, from the findings and discussions from all the above sections and subsections, a concern arises about the issue of mosques being inclusive in Rajshahi city. Moreover, a substantial portion of the respondents are not aware of the activities conducted by mosques in their neighborhood. This suggests that mosques are failing to play an active role in organizing various events and programs that cater to the interests and needs of the community. This awareness is vital in order to fostering community engagement and promoting social cohesion within the neighborhood.

**SUGGESTIONS**

An open-ended question was asked to gather suggestions from the respondents for actions the mosques could take to safeguard our social ideals. Their answers were reviewed and a thematic analysis was conducted. From the answers of the respondents, meaningful patterns were looked for and analyzed by repetitive data reading, coding and theme creation. The three broad categories were religious, social and

economic. Thematic analysis revealed religious, social, and economic aspects, with 50 responses focusing on religious activities, 25 on social aspects, and a few on economic aspects.

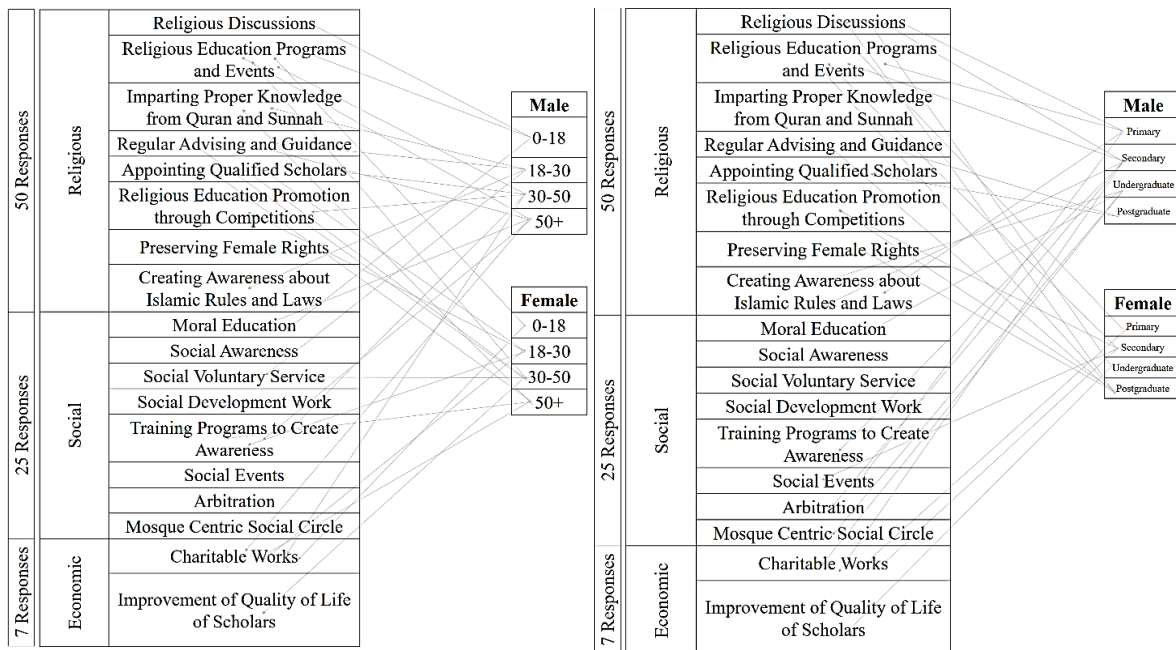


Figure 21. Thematic analysis of opinions about mosques taking actions to protect Islamic values

From the responses, one thing can be interpreted that there is a demand to raise the standard of Islamic education provided by the mosques. They placed a high value on qualified scholars who could disseminate accurate information about Islam based on the Quran and Sunnah. Also, suggestions such as conducting authentic discussions and promoting religious education programs and events and receiving regular advice were given to strengthen community learning and bonding. Another sincere suggestion was made to take steps to enhance the scholars' access to economic resources so they can actively play their roles.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Since the mosque's founding, it has played a multifaceted role in regions all across the world. This function has evolved across continents and situations spanning timelines, resulting in the curtailment of its operations and the relinquishment of its original purpose. This research was conducted to visualize the present practice trends in a Muslim community in a residential neighborhood of Rajshahi City, Bangladesh. The findings show a substantial discrepancy between the practices of the populace and what Islam teaches us to be. It might be concluded that there is a knowledge gap that has developed over time among the participants. Several recommendations made by them highlight their need for raising the standard of the Islamic teaching system and providing infrastructural support for the same. This research has a limitation in that the study's sample was confined to a residential neighborhood within a city, making it unable to represent the city's cohesive image. In addition, it makes room for more studies on the same subject using various sample sizes in order to present a coherent picture.

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