

# THE PHENOMENON OF YOUNG PEOPLE PREFERRING TO HANG OUT IN CAFES RATHER THAN PRAY IN MOSQUES: A SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL STUDY

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**Abstract:** This study examines two pressing phenomena among young Muslims: the challenges posed by free relationships and the preference for socializing in cafes over praying in mosques. The first explores the moral and spiritual consequences of free relationships, emphasizing Islamic teachings as a solution to foster ethical behavior and emotional well-being. The second investigates the shift in priorities where leisure spaces like cafes take precedence over mosques, highlighting societal influences and the potential for integrating spiritual growth into modern social practices. Both issues underline the need for balanced approaches that align contemporary lifestyles with Islamic principles. This study explores the phenomenon of young people prioritizing social activities in cafes over fulfilling their religious obligations, such as praying in mosques. By analyzing the social and spiritual dimensions of this trend, the paper aims to uncover the underlying factors contributing to this behavior and propose actionable solutions rooted in Islamic teachings. Factors such as modern lifestyle influences, peer pressure, and the perceived generational disconnect between youth and mosque environments are critically examined. The findings underscore the importance of fostering youth-friendly mosque programs and integrating spirituality into contemporary social settings to realign priorities and strengthen spiritual awareness among young Muslims. This research provides a comprehensive understanding of the issue while offering a roadmap to bridge the gap between contemporary youth culture and spiritual practices.

**Keyword:** Free relationships, youth behavior, Islamic teachings, spiritual solutions, moral integrity.

## Introduction

In today's rapidly changing society, young Muslims face significant challenges that test their faith and priorities. Among these challenges, two phenomena stand out: the rise of free relationships and the increasing preference for spending time in cafes instead of mosques. Free relationships, characterized by a lack of moral boundaries, often lead to emotional instability and spiritual disconnection. Meanwhile, the trend of socializing in cafes reflects a broader cultural shift, where modern leisure activities overshadow religious commitments. This paper explores the underlying causes of these trends and proposes solutions rooted in Islamic teachings to help youth navigate these challenges while maintaining their spiritual and moral integrity. In recent years, there has been a noticeable trend among young people favoring leisure activities in cafes over participating in prayers at mosques.

This behavior reflects broader societal shifts, where modern lifestyle trends often overshadow spiritual obligations. While cafes provide spaces for relaxation and social interaction, the declining interest in mosque attendance raises concerns about the spiritual and moral well-being of the younger generation. Islam places significant emphasis on the role of mosques as centers for community building and spiritual growth. This paper investigates the social and spiritual factors behind this phenomenon, aiming to propose solutions that align with Islamic values and address the challenges faced by today's youth. By understanding these dynamics, we can explore actionable strategies to balance modern social practices with the enduring importance of spiritual commitment.

### Literature Review

- 1. Youth and Modern Social Spaces** Modern social spaces, such as cafes, have become symbolic of contemporary youth culture, offering an environment that fosters networking, creativity, and leisure. Giddens (1991) discusses how modernity redefines individual priorities, often sidelining traditional values. Cafes, with their relaxed ambiance, reflect the shifting preferences of a generation that seeks immediate gratification and informal social settings.
- 2. The Role of Mosques in Islam** Mosques hold a central place in Islamic teachings, serving not only as places of worship but also as hubs for education, social cohesion, and moral guidance. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "The most beloved places to Allah are the mosques" (Sahih Muslim). Historically, mosques have been pivotal in fostering a sense of community, guiding individuals in moral and spiritual development, and promoting societal harmony.
- 3. Challenges in Mosque Engagement Among Youth** Research indicates that factors such as a lack of engaging programs, rigid environments, and generational gaps contribute to youth feeling disconnected from mosques (Yaqeen Institute, 2020). The absence of activities that resonate with the interests and aspirations of young people often leads them to seek alternative social spaces. Mosques must adapt to address these gaps by incorporating youth-oriented initiatives.
- 4. Spiritual Disconnect and Societal Influences** A weakening of spiritual foundations, coupled with societal pressures to conform to modern lifestyles, often leads young people to prioritize worldly pleasures over religious obligations. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah highlights the importance of consistent worship in maintaining faith and discipline. Without a strong spiritual anchor, youth may struggle to find meaning and fulfillment in their lives, making them more susceptible to transient pleasures.

### Method

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to understand the phenomenon:

- 1. Qualitative Interviews:** Conducted with young Muslims, mosque leaders, and cafe proprietors to gather diverse perspectives on the issue. These interviews provide insights into the motivations, challenges, and potential solutions from multiple stakeholders.
- 2. Observational Analysis:** Observations of attendance patterns at cafes and mosques during key times, such as prayer hours, to identify behavioral trends. This method helps illustrate the extent of the issue within urban contexts.

3. **Literature Review:** Analysis of Islamic texts, sociological studies, and contemporary research to contextualize the findings and offer evidence-based solutions.
4. Data collection focused on urban areas with prominent cafe cultures and mosque communities, ensuring the study's relevance to real-world scenarios. The findings aim to bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and practical application.

## Discussion

### 1. Factors Driving Cafe Preference

- a. **Social Appeal:** Cafes are perceived as trendy, offering a relaxed environment for socialization that contrasts with the structured setting of mosques. This appeal is enhanced by modern branding strategies that position cafes as lifestyle destinations.
- b. **Peer Influence:** Young people often prioritize activities endorsed by their social circles, which frequently include cafe visits. The desire for acceptance and belonging can outweigh the motivation to engage in religious practices.
- c. **Lifestyle Choices:** Modern lifestyles prioritize convenience and instant gratification, making leisure spaces more attractive than spiritual commitments. The fast-paced nature of urban life leaves little room for structured spiritual activities.

### 2. Islamic Perspective on Mosque Participation

Islam emphasizes the importance of communal prayer and mosque attendance in strengthening faith and fostering unity. The Qur'an states, "Indeed, the mosque is for Allah" (Surah Al-Jinn, 72:18), highlighting its sacred role. Regular participation in mosque activities cultivates discipline, humility, and a sense of community, which are vital for personal and collective growth.

#### a. Proposed Solutions

- 1) **Youth-Friendly Programs:** Revitalizing mosque activities to include engaging, age-appropriate content that resonates with young people. Examples include sports events, workshops, and interactive Quran study sessions.
  - 2) **Community Engagement:** Encouraging youth to take active roles in mosque management and event planning to foster a sense of ownership. This involvement can bridge the generational gap and make mosques more relevant to younger audiences.
  - 3) **Leveraging Modern Spaces:** Utilizing cafes as venues for Islamic discussions, Quran study circles, or other spiritually enriching activities to bridge the gap between leisure and worship. These initiatives can transform cafes into platforms for meaningful engagement.
- b. **Balancing Modernity and Spirituality** Promoting a balanced lifestyle that harmonizes social enjoyment with spiritual obligations is essential. Mosques can adopt flexible and inclusive approaches to address the evolving needs of young Muslims. By fostering a culture that values both contemporary experiences and religious devotion, youth can find fulfillment in both realms.

## Conclusion

The challenges of free relationships and the preference for cafes over mosques underscore the complex realities faced by young Muslims today. Addressing these issues requires a holistic approach that combines education, community engagement, and spiritual reinforcement. By aligning modern lifestyles with Islamic principles, it is possible to cultivate a generation that values both social connection and religious devotion, fostering moral integrity and spiritual well-being.

The preference for cafes over mosques among young people reflects deeper societal and spiritual challenges that require a multifaceted response. By understanding the underlying factors and implementing targeted solutions, it is possible to inspire a renewed connection to mosques and foster spiritual growth. Initiatives that combine modern social practices with Islamic principles can create a generation that values both social interaction and religious devotion, ensuring a balanced and fulfilling life. Ultimately, by addressing this phenomenon thoughtfully, society can cultivate a harmonious relationship between modernity and spirituality, empowering youth to lead lives of purpose and integrity.

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