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YOUTH-MANAGED MOSQUES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: A NETNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF GOOGLE PLACES REVIEWS IN INDONESIA, BRUNEI DARUSSALAM, AND SINGAPORE

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Abstract

Purpose: *Mosques are increasingly expected to serve young Muslims as spaces of worship, learning, and sociability, yet little is known about how mosques managed by young people are experienced and publicly evaluated. This study identifies the characteristics of youth-managed mosques in Southeast Asia as expressed in user reviews on Google Place.* ***Design/methodology/approach:*** *A qualitative netnographic design was applied to six mosques in Indonesia (Masjid Sejuta Pemuda, Masjid Pemuda Indonesia, Masjid 17 Purwokerto), Brunei Darussalam (Zainab Mosque, Hassanal Bolkiah Mosque), and Singapore (Assyafaah Mosque). A corpus of 719 reviews, drawn from 2,206 listed reviews, was open-coded (1,634 initial codes), organised into ten themes, and complemented by transparent frequency counts and heuristic indicators of data quality.* ***Findings:*** *Social Role and Community (42.0% of reviews), Comfort and Cleanliness (27.8%), and Design and Architecture (20.6%) were the most frequent themes. Theme profiles diverged sharply: reviews of Masjid 17 Purwokerto and Assyafaah Mosque were dominated by the physical space, whereas reviews of Masjid Sejuta Pemuda and Masjid Pemuda Indonesia centred on social role, caretaker hospitality, and openness (free meals, 24-hour access, traveller-friendliness).* ***Research limitations/implications:*** *Reviewer age is unobservable, only 5.4% of reviews explicitly mention youth, and at least 13.1% were written by people who had not visited; the findings therefore describe youth-managed mosques appreciated by a digital public rather than youth preferences, and the corpus is uneven across countries.* ***Practical implications:*** *Mosque managers should combine basic comfort and maintenance, hospitable service, and deliberate management of their digital presence.* ***Originality/value:*** *The study offers a multi-country, review-based thematic map of youth-managed mosques in Southeast Asia and an integrative framework that distinguishes space-centred from community-centred profiles of public appreciation.*

Keywords: *mosque, youth, netnography, Google Place, da'wah management*

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Mosques are central community institutions, yet many struggle to remain relevant to young people. This study reads 719 public reviews to show what people notice and value in six mosques managed by young Muslims in Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, and Singapore. Appreciation rests on a clean and comfortable space, hospitable caretakers, and visible service to the wider community. The study also cautions that online praise is not the same as youth preference. Mosque administrators, policymakers, and community organisations can use these findings to set practical priorities and to interpret digital feedback responsibly.

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INTRODUCTION

Young people occupy a strategic position in the future of any society, and the vitality of religious institutions depends in part on whether those institutions remain meaningful to them (Yusuf et al., 2022). In Southeast Asia, young Muslims grow up amid digital media, urban lifestyles, and globalised values that can loosen their ties with traditional institutions (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021). The demographic weight of this group is considerable: national statistics counted roughly 64.22 million young people in Indonesia in 2024, about one-fifth of the population (Ramadani et al., 2024). Indicators of vulnerability are equally visible. Indonesia's first national adolescent mental health survey (I-NAMHS), conducted in 2021 within the multi-country National Adolescent Mental Health Surveys (Erskine et al., 2023), found that about one in three adolescents aged 10–17 years (34.9%, approximately 15.5 million) experienced a mental health problem in the preceding twelve months, while about one in twenty (5.5%) met criteria for a mental disorder (Universitas Gadjah Mada et al., 2022). Comparable concerns have been documented elsewhere in the region, including suicidal ideation and behaviour among out-of-school adolescents in Manila (Estrada et al., 2019). Longitudinal evidence links religiosity and spirituality with better mental health (Garssen et al., 2021); Indonesian data suggest that the relationship differs across age groups (Aziz et al., 2021); and qualitative work with young Muslims in Australia reports that religion and spirituality enhanced their well-being (Khawaja & Hebbani, 2025). If religion can be a resource for young people, the places in which it is practised and organised, above all the mosque, deserve close scholarly attention.

Historically, the mosque has been more than a place of prayer; it has served as a centre of learning, deliberation, and community service (Al-Faruqi, 1986; Humaysah et al., 2023). Yet a growing body of work documents the weakening connection between young people and mosques. Youth are described as an indispensable asset for the continuity of Islamic tradition who nevertheless appear detached from most mosque activities (Mahat et al., 2022), and studies in Malaysia link low participation to activities that do not match youth tastes and to the perception that the mosque is for Friday prayers and festivals only (Jalil et al., 2022; Mahat et al., 2022; Yusuf et al., 2022). Beyond Muslim-majority settings, research on how young people make sense of religion through everyday places in the city points to the importance of the local settings in which belonging is negotiated (Kapinga & Van Hoven, 2021). In Indonesia, the Remaja Islam Masjid (RISMA) organisations have been the main vehicle for youth engagement, but they often experience cycles of activity and stagnation (Anggara & Ferdiyan, 2022; Ibrahim et al., 2020). Prior studies therefore emphasise different levers: programmes and leadership cadres (Nudin & Fakhruroji, 2023; Udin et al., 2023), youth empowerment and belonging (Arfaizar, 2024; Bagaskara et al., 2024), conducive facilities, social media, and amenities such as cafeterias and playgrounds (Jalil et al., 2022), and the competitive pull of cafés (Kamaluddin, n.d.). Research on the built environment adds that comfort, cleanliness, acoustics, and aesthetics shape how worshippers evaluate a mosque (Hassanain et al., 2021; Mustafa, 2023). These streams rarely speak to one another, and it remains unclear which characteristics of the mosque itself are salient to those who evaluate it.

Three gaps follow. First, most mosque–youth research examines programmes, organisations, or participation, whereas the characteristics of the mosque as it is experienced and publicly described remain under-specified. Second, the dominant designs, surveys and interviews with existing participants (Jalil et al., 2022; Mahat et al., 2022; Yusuf et al., 2022), do not capture the naturally occurring, unsolicited evaluations that young and digitally active publics post online. Netnographic analyses of reviews have illuminated religious tourism sites, including the pilgrimage mosques of Makkah and Medina (Zarkada et al., 2024) and pilgrim

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destinations in India (Nayak et al., 2023), but they concentrate on iconic destinations rather than everyday mosques run by young Muslims, and they seldom examine who is speaking. Third, cross-national evidence from Southeast Asia is scarce, and the question of how far online reviews can legitimately be read as evidence about young people has hardly been addressed.

This study therefore aims to identify the characteristics of youth-managed mosques as they are expressed in Google Place reviews of six mosques in Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, and Singapore. It addresses four research questions: (RQ1) Which themes characterise the reviews and how frequently do they occur? (RQ2) How do theme profiles differ across mosques and countries? (RQ3) How do themes co-occur, and which limitations do reviewers voice? (RQ4) To what extent can the review evidence be interpreted as speaking for young people, given reviewer anonymity, non-visitor reviews, and reputation-based praise?

The study makes four contributions, following guidance on articulating contribution in knowledge-building research (Lim et al., 2022). Theoretically, it integrates the servicescape, social infrastructure, and digital religion perspectives into a framework that separates space-centred from community-centred profiles of public appreciation. Empirically, it provides multi-country evidence from 719 coded reviews on mosques that are managed by young Muslims. Methodologically, it combines reflexive thematic coding with transparent frequency counts and a signal audit of youth mentions, non-visitor reviews, and general-evaluation-only reviews. Practically, it offers mosque administrators and da'wah managers a grounded set of priorities and a cautionary reading of digital feedback.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual foundations

Three concepts anchor this study. A *youth-managed mosque* is defined operationally as a mosque whose development and daily programmes are led by young Muslims with the aim of advancing a thriving Islamic civilisation, which is also the criterion used to select the research sites. *Mosque characteristics* refer to the attributes of a mosque that users notice, value, or criticise when they describe their experience; they are treated here as expressions of experience rather than as objective audit measures. *Digital review evidence* refers to publicly posted, unsolicited evaluations on a platform that structures what can be said and who is heard (Kozinets et al., 2021).

The primary grand theory is servicescape theory (Bitner, 1992), which holds that the designed physical environment shapes evaluations and behaviour. Applied to places of worship, the religious servicescape has been linked to visitors' intention to revisit (Alhothali et al., 2021) and to the sustainability of religious travel (Alhothali et al., 2023). Post-occupancy research on a mosque in Saudi Arabia identified 34 performance elements spanning technical, functional, and behavioural requirements, and found worshippers most satisfied with acoustical comfort, spirituality, and aesthetics (Hassanain et al., 2021). Studies of religious destinations similarly show that spirituality shapes cognitive, affective, and conative responses (Kim & Chen, 2021), that pilgrims' experiential support depends on what the destination offers (Nisar et al., 2022; Yoo et al., 2022), and that restorative qualities relate to well-being (Lin & Hsieh, 2022). A netnography of 913 TripAdvisor reviews of Makkah and Medina found that cleanliness and maintenance, staff, and atmosphere were prominent alongside religion-specific variables (Zarkada et al., 2024). Reviews of heritage sites likewise reveal sentiment and topics tied to facilities and atmosphere (Baniya et al., 2021). Servicescape thinking thus predicts that physical comfort, cleanliness, facilities, and design will be central vocabulary in reviews.

Servicescape theory alone cannot account for the social value that mosques create. The

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perspective of the third place or social infrastructure (Oldenburg, 1999) emphasises informal, hospitable gathering places that sustain community life, and Islamic thought has long conceived the mosque as an institution that links worship with social life (Al-Faruqi, 1986). The interplay of faith, service, and management is also the core concern of da'wah management, in which mosque administration shapes participation (Nudin & Fakhruroji, 2023). Finally, because the evidence is mediated, the study draws on digital religion, which treats online and offline religious practice as intertwined (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021), and on netnography as a method for studying such practice (Kozinets, 2020). Online reviews are not neutral records: their credibility and usefulness shape how they are used (Filieri et al., 2021), review platforms differ in the destination images they convey (Guo et al., 2021), and Muslim travellers rely heavily on the opinions of other Muslims (Adel et al., 2021), with religiosity influencing word of mouth (Abror et al., 2021). Engagement on social pages can likewise be driven by the tone of interaction (Dhaoui & Webster, 2021). Reviews therefore blend experience, reputation, and recommendation.

Research propositions

Because the study is qualitative and exploratory, it develops propositions rather than hypotheses. The propositions combine the theoretical expectations above with prior mosque and review research. *P1 (space-centred profile).* Where a mosque's distinctiveness lies mainly in its setting rather than in conspicuous social programming, reviews will be dominated by physical-environmental themes (comfort and cleanliness, facilities, design, parking). This follows servicescape logic and the prominence of cleanliness, infrastructure, and architecture in reviews of religious sites (Alhothali et al., 2021; Hassanain et al., 2021; Zarkada et al., 2024). *P2 (community-centred profile).* Where a mosque is known for youth-led hospitality and social service, reviews will be dominated by social-managerial themes (social role, caretaker service, openness) and will refer less to physical attributes. This reflects the social-infrastructure view of the mosque (Oldenburg, 1999) and evidence that management and youth involvement shape participation (Bagaskara et al., 2024; Ibrahim et al., 2020; Nudin & Fakhruroji, 2023).

P3 (stand-alone spiritual evaluation). Spiritual atmosphere will often be expressed as a holistic, experiential judgement that is not bundled with technical attributes, consistent with the affective and spiritual dimensions identified in religious destination research (Kim & Chen, 2021; Zarkada et al., 2024) and with evidence on spirituality and well-being (Khawaja & Hebbani, 2025). *P4 (reputation inflation).* Digitally visible mosques will attract reviews from non-visitors and reputation-based praise, inflating the social-role theme without describing on-site experience, in line with the role of word of mouth and online opinion in Muslim consumers' judgements (Abror et al., 2021; Adel et al., 2021; Filieri et al., 2021). *P5 (youth ambiguity).* Because reviewer age is unobservable and youth are rarely named, review-derived characteristics describe mosques that are appreciated publicly, not the preferences of young people, a caution that follows from the platform-mediated nature of the data (Kozinets et al., 2021).

Research model

Figure 1 translates these arguments into the research model. The three theoretical lenses converge on the youth-managed mosque as a setting that combines physical arrangements, management, and programmes. The experience of the mosque is expressed through ten review themes that are synthesised analytically into three dimensions: physical–environmental, functional–spiritual, and social–managerial. The dimensions are not categories voiced by

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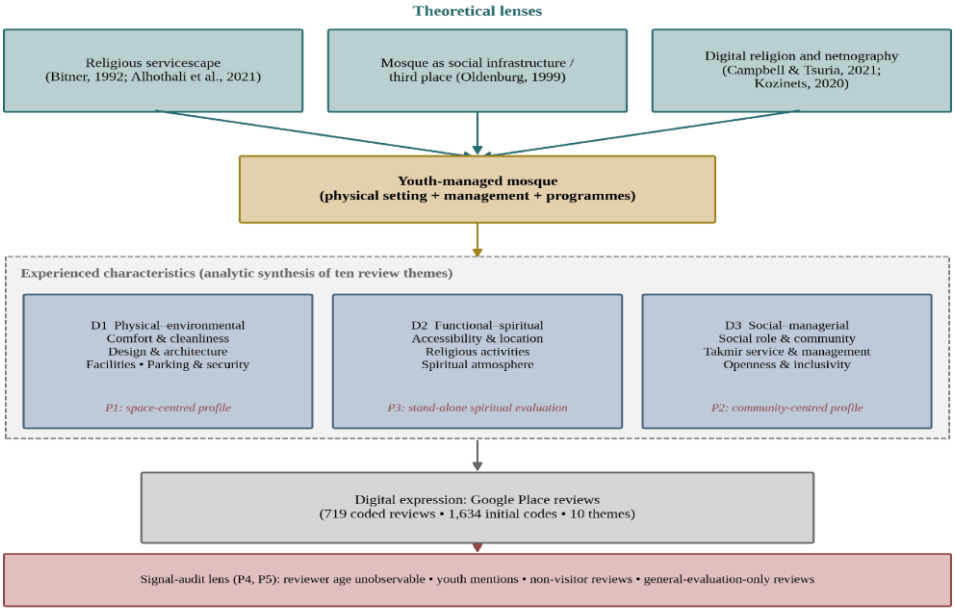
reviewers; they are an analytic synthesis by the authors. The propositions P1–P3 concern the profile of themes, whereas P4 and P5 form a signal-audit lens that conditions how the review evidence can be read. The model thus aligns objectives, theory, propositions, and empirical analysis, and guides the method and the results.

Figure 1
Research Model of Mosque Characteristics in Digital Reviews



Source: authors' conceptualisation.

METHOD

The study is qualitative and adopts a netnographic design, that is, an ethnographic approach adapted to naturally occurring online communication (Kozinets, 2020). A qualitative design was chosen because the aim is to explore what users find salient about mosques in their own words, and netnography was chosen because the data originate from an online platform, Google Place. The study followed an unobtrusive (non-participatory) mode: reviews already public were observed and recorded without interaction with reviewers. Analysis combined reflexive thematic coding (Braun & Clarke, 2021, 2022, 2023) with review-level frequency counts, an approach that supports transparent, codebook-informed theme development (Naeem et al., 2023; Vears & Gillam, 2022). This pairing fits the objective of both characterising themes (RQ1) and comparing their prominence across mosques (RQ2). Figure 2 summarises the workflow.

The sites are mosques developed and managed by young Muslims with the purpose of building an outstanding Islamic civilisation. The researchers searched for youth-managed mosques in Southeast Asia and, among those found, selected the six with the largest number of reviews: three in Indonesia, two in Brunei Darussalam, and one in Singapore (Table 1). Selection was therefore purposive and review-driven, and it is not intended to be statistically representative. Because review volume differs sharply, the corpus is uneven by design: 591 reviews (82.2%) come from Indonesia, 110 (15.3%) from Singapore, and 18 (2.5%) from Brunei Darussalam. Transferability, rather than generalisability, is the relevant standard; the descriptions below allow readers to judge the relevance of the findings to other settings.

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Table 1
Mosques Analysed and Number of Reviews

Mosque	Location	Listed reviews*	Coded reviews	Median words per review
Masjid Sejuta Pemuda	Jl. Lamping, Gedongpanjang, Citamiang, Sukabumi, West Java, Indonesia	800	267	11
Masjid Pemuda Indonesia	Jl. Kalikepiting No. 111, Pacar Kembang, Tambaksari, Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia	462	147	13
Masjid 17 Purwokerto	Jl. Dr. Angka, Karangjengkol, East Purwokerto, Banyumas, Central Java, Indonesia	368	177	8
Assyafaah Mosque	1 Admiralty Lane, Singapore	516	110	8
Zainab Mosque	Jalan Kampong Lumut, Mukim Liang, Brunei Darussalam	30	10	8
Hassanal Bolkiah Mosque	Jln Tutong, Tutong, Brunei Darussalam	30	8	30.5
Total		2,206	719	

Source: authors' data, 2025. *Number of reviews listed on Google Place when the units of analysis were determined. Coded reviews are those copied and retained after screening.

The primary data are user reviews on the Google Place pages of the six mosques; secondary data are books and references on netnography and Google Place. Data were collected in 2025 through two techniques: documentation, i.e., copying user comments from the Google Place pages, and observation, i.e., reading the reviews and comments to gain insight into what makes a mosque appropriate for young people (Kozinets, 2020). Copied reviews were screened, and reviews that were irrelevant to the research problem, overlapping, or repeated were excluded, which produced a corpus of 719 reviews. Reviews are short (median 8–13 words in five mosques and 30.5 words at Hassanal Bolkiah Mosque) and are mostly written in Indonesian, with some in English or Malay. All quotations in this article were translated into English by the authors. Reviews are public, reviewer names were not recorded in the quotations, and no personal identifiers are reported, in line with ethical guidance for netnographic research (Kozinets, 2020).

Because the study is qualitative, measurement refers to the operational definitions used to count and compare themes. *Theme prevalence* is the number of reviews with at least one code assigned to the theme; a review counts once per theme, so percentages (calculated on all 719 reviews, each of which has at least one classified code) do not sum to 100. *Co-occurrence* is the number of reviews coded with both of two themes. Three *signal indicators* were derived through a heuristic search of marker words and phrases: (a) explicit mention of youth (e.g., *pemuda*, *remaja*, young people, Gen Z; mosque names containing the word *pemuda* were excluded); (b) markers of non-visitors (e.g., "have never been there", "hopefully I can visit one day", "saw it on TikTok"); and (c) reviews whose codes are all general evaluations (e.g., "popular", "inspiring", "the best", prayers for the administrators). Because these searches are heuristic, their results are reported as lower bounds.

Analysis followed Miles et al. (2014) and proceeded in five steps (Figure 2): (a) repeated reading of all reviews to gain an overall picture; (b) open coding to identify the main idea or keyword of each review (initial codes), with one review yielding on average two to three codes;

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(c) grouping codes with similar meaning into initial themes; (d) theme review to check for overlap; and (e) a comprehensive description that incorporates review excerpts. Initial coding yielded 1,634 codes, of which 1,618 (99.0%) were grouped into ten themes: Comfort and Cleanliness; Facilities and Infrastructure; Design and Architecture; Accessibility and Location; Parking and Security; Religious Activities; Takmir Service and Management; Social Role and Community; Spirituality and Devout Atmosphere; and Openness and Inclusivity. The remaining 16 codes (for example, the origin and meaning of a mosque's name) were set aside because they convey information rather than characteristics. During theme review, the ten themes could be merged into six macro-themes, but the ten-theme structure was retained because merging concealed meaningful distinctions: Facilities and Spirituality were absorbed by Comfort, Parking blended with Location, and Openness blended with Social Role. Code-to-theme mapping followed a consistent rule across the corpus. Table 2 illustrates the path from review to theme.

Table 2
Illustrative Coding Path from Review Excerpt to Theme

Review excerpt (translated)	Initial codes	Themes
"A beautiful and comfortable mosque. There should be a mirror in the women's ablution area." (Masjid 17 Purwokerto)	Mosque is beautiful; mosque is comfortable; no mirror for women	Design and Architecture; Comfort and Cleanliness; Facilities and Infrastructure
"Looks very clean and tidy. The prayer atmosphere is pleasant, even though this mosque is semi-indoor and has minimal air conditioning." (Assyafaah Mosque)	Clean; tidy; pleasant prayer atmosphere; open mosque; minimal air conditioning	Comfort and Cleanliness; Religious Activities; Openness and Inclusivity; Facilities and Infrastructure
"The most comfortable mosque in Surabaya, very clean bathrooms, open 24 hours. Free meals Monday to Saturday, MasyaAllah." (Masjid Pemuda Indonesia)	Most comfortable mosque; clean bathrooms; open 24 hours; free meals	Comfort and Cleanliness; Facilities and Infrastructure; Openness and Inclusivity; Social Role and Community
"The caretakers are all friendly. It feels good to pray there." (Masjid Pemuda Indonesia)	Caretakers are friendly	Takmir Service and Management

Source: authors' analysis of Google Place reviews, 2025.

Credibility was addressed through triangulation of techniques, that is, using different collection techniques (observation and documentation) on the same source by comparing the observation of comments with the documented Google Place pages, and through persistent observation of the features relevant to the problem (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness was further supported by an explicit audit trail (Table 2, Figure 2), by reporting counting rules, and by disclosing limitations of the coding procedure in line with recommendations for transparent qualitative research (Pratt et al., 2022). Coding was performed by the research team without a second independent coder, and agreement statistics were not computed; this is acknowledged as a limitation. Thematic saturation was not the criterion for sample size, since the full set of reviews meeting the inclusion criteria was analysed; the corpus size is nevertheless larger than the numbers at which saturation is typically reported in qualitative studies (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

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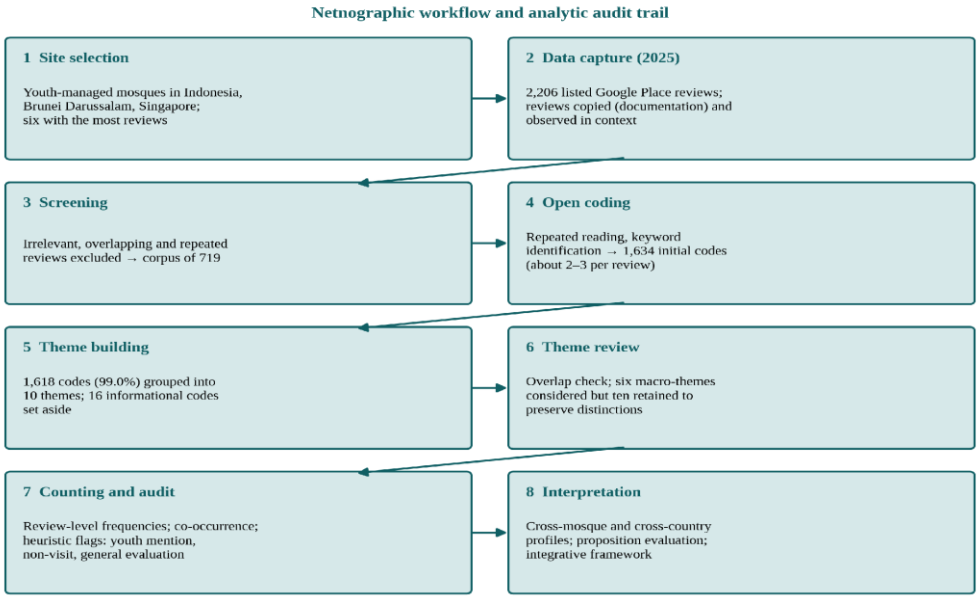
Figure 2
Netnographic Workflow and Analytic Audit Trail



Source: authors' design.

RESULT

Corpus and reviewer characteristics

The corpus comprises 719 reviews, with 591 from the three mosques in Indonesia (82.2%), 110 from Assyafaah Mosque in Singapore (15.3%), and 18 from the two mosques in Brunei Darussalam (2.5%). Reviewer demographics such as age, gender, and residence are not displayed on Google Place and could not be determined; in this study, "informants" are therefore reviews rather than identifiable persons. Of the 1,634 initial codes, 1,618 (99.0%) were grouped into ten themes. Most reviews were focused: 442 reviews (61.5%) contained one theme, 155 (21.6%) two themes, 71 (9.9%) three themes, and 51 (7.1%) four or more. Among the four mosques with the most reviews, a review contained on average 1.43 themes at Masjid Sejuta Pemuda and 2.07 themes at Masjid 17 Purwokerto.

Ten themes of mosque characteristics

Table 3 and Figure 3 summarise the ten themes. Social Role and Community was the most frequent (302 reviews; 42.0%), followed by Comfort and Cleanliness (200; 27.8%) and Design and Architecture (148; 20.6%). Takmir Service and Management (138; 19.2%) and Facilities and Infrastructure (126; 17.5%) formed a second tier, whereas Parking and Security, Religious Activities, Spirituality, Accessibility, and Openness each appeared in 11.0% of reviews or fewer.

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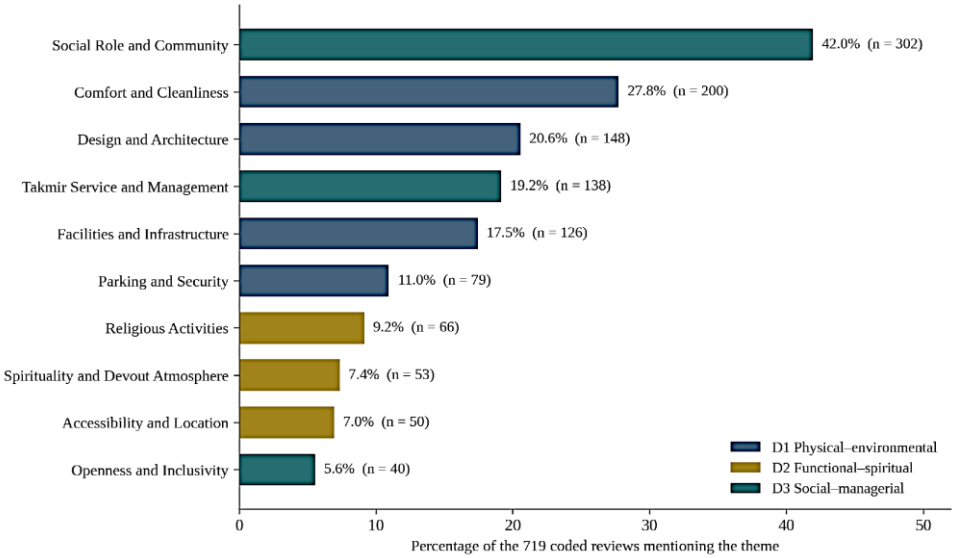
Table 3
Ten Themes, Frequency, and Dominant Codes (n = 719 Reviews)

Theme	Reviews n (%)	Codes	Dominant codes (number of reviews)
Social Role and Community	302 (42.0)	416	Popular mosque (83); inspiring (67); free meals (24); active social media (20); traveller-friendly (18)
Comfort and Cleanliness	200 (27.8)	294	Comfortable (106); clean (72); cool (22)
Design and Architecture	148 (20.6)	191	Good (45); beautiful (22); captivating view (12)
Takmir Service and Management	138 (19.2)	173	Prayers for administrators (23); friendly takmir (15); beneficial mosque (15)
Facilities and Infrastructure	126 (17.5)	203	Spacious (23); large (17); small (16); clean toilets (5); clean ablution area (4)
Parking and Security	79 (11.0)	91	Spacious parking (38); limited parking (8); free parking (6)
Religious Activities	66 (9.2)	85	Religious study sessions (11); imam with a melodious voice (10)
Spirituality and Devout Atmosphere	53 (7.4)	59	Good spiritual atmosphere (14); calming (8); tranquil (8)
Accessibility and Location	50 (7.0)	54	Strategic location: close to home, school, hospital, or main road (each ≤ 2)
Openness and Inclusivity	40 (5.6)	50	Open 24 hours (14); place to rest (4); cat-friendly (3); child-friendly (2); café (2)

Source: authors' analysis of Google Place reviews, 2025. Because a review can contain several themes, percentages do not sum to 100.

Figure 3
Percentage of Reviews Mentioning Each Theme



Source: authors' analysis of Google Place reviews, 2025. Colours show the analytic dimension to which each theme is assigned.

Social Role and Community. This theme is the most frequent, and 94.0% of its reviews come from Masjid Sejuta Pemuda and Masjid Pemuda Indonesia. It is layered. The first layer is reputation: popular (83 reviews), inspiring (67), and favourite (19). The second consists of programmes and services: free meals (24), community empowerment (19), traveller-friendliness (18), permission to stay overnight (8), and an active social media presence (20).

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One reviewer articulated the expectation placed on mosques: “Mosques should not be identified with graveyards: visited only at certain times, then quiet, with no social life” (Masjid Pemuda Indonesia). Another wrote: “An inspiration for other mosques to improve the welfare of the surrounding community from mosque funds and donors” (Masjid Pemuda Indonesia). *Comfort and Cleanliness.* This theme appears at every mosque. Reviewers described the mosque as comfortable (106 reviews), clean (72), cool (22), fragrant, tidy, and well maintained. At Assyafaah Mosque, 13 reviews referred to air, wind, ventilation, or air conditioning, linking comfort to natural ventilation despite minimal air conditioning: “Looks very clean and tidy. The prayer atmosphere is pleasant, even though this mosque is semi-indoor and has minimal air conditioning” (Assyafaah Mosque).

Design and Architecture. Reviewers judged mosques as good (45 reviews), beautiful (22), grand, modern, or unique. Reviews of Assyafaah Mosque highlighted an open, contemporary concept (“A mosque with a very open concept”), and 14 reviews of Masjid Sejuta Pemuda referred to the scenery. A reviewer of Masjid Sejuta Pemuda wrote: “A mosque with a new concept, clean and very comfortable for worship.” *Takmir Service and Management.* Reviews praised the friendliness of the takmir (mosque caretakers), administrators, and staff: “The caretakers are all friendly. It feels good to pray there” (Masjid Pemuda Indonesia); “The mosque staff are excellent, friendly and helpful” (Assyafaah Mosque). At Masjid Sejuta Pemuda, 23 reviews were prayers for the administrators, an appreciation expressed as supplication.

Facilities and Infrastructure. This theme covers size (spacious, 23 reviews; large, 17; small, 16), ablution areas, toilets, air conditioning, lifts, and spaces for women. Limitations included small mosques, insufficient air conditioning or lighting, and the absence of a mirror in the women’s ablution area. “The ablution area is spacious, and so is the mosque yard,” wrote one reviewer of Masjid 17 Purwokerto, while another noted that “there should be a mirror in the women’s ablution area.” *Parking and Security.* Spacious parking was the most frequent code (38 reviews), almost all at Masjid 17 Purwokerto, whereas 16 reviews cited limited parking, 7 of them about Assyafaah Mosque. Security covered guards, parking attendants, and a sense of safety for women worshippers: “Be careful if travelling by car because of the pile-up of cars on the narrow small road” (Assyafaah Mosque).

Religious Activities. This theme was prominent at Masjid 17 Purwokerto (19% of its reviews), with regular study sessions (19 reviews referring to religious study) and imams with a melodious voice: “The mosque is beautiful, the imam’s voice is soulful and adds to the privacy of the prayer” (Masjid 17 Purwokerto). *Spirituality and Devout Atmosphere.* Reviewers described a quiet, peaceful, calming, and blessed atmosphere. The theme was highest at Assyafaah Mosque (16% of its reviews) and frequently stood alone: 25 of 53 reviews (47.2%) contained only this theme. Examples include “A small mosque but very calming” (Masjid Pemuda Indonesia) and “Praying here, the heart becomes calm and at peace” (Masjid 17 Purwokerto).

Accessibility and Location (50 reviews) concerned strategic location and proximity to homes, schools, hospitals, main roads, or public transport. A reviewer of Masjid 17 Purwokerto combined several attributes: “Strategic location. Cleanliness is good, parking is good too and, most importantly, it often holds religious studies.” Reviews of Zainab Mosque mentioned a signalised pedestrian crossing as a landmark. *Openness and Inclusivity.* The smallest theme centres on Masjid Sejuta Pemuda and Masjid Pemuda Indonesia: open 24 hours (14 reviews; 9 of them at Pemuda Indonesia), cat-friendly (3, all at Sejuta Pemuda), child-friendly, places to rest, and café-style drinks (10 reviews of Masjid Sejuta Pemuda mention a café, coffee, or a

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hangout). One reviewer wrote: “A mosque open to the public 24 hours, serving worshippers as guests of Allah. Providing free meals, drinks and café-style coffee” (Masjid Sejuta Pemuda).

Profiles across mosques and countries

Table 4 and Figure 4 show the distribution of themes by mosque, and two profiles stand out. At Masjid Sejuta Pemuda and Masjid Pemuda Indonesia, reviews concentrate on Social Role and Community (71% and 64%) and Takmir Service (24% and 30%), while physical themes are rare (Facilities 4% and 15%; Parking 1% and 5%; Accessibility 2% and 1%). At Masjid 17 Purwokerto the pattern is reversed: Comfort and Cleanliness (67%), Facilities (33%), and Parking (29%) dominate and Social Role accounts for only 6%. Assyafaah Mosque occupies an intermediate, space-oriented position, with Design (45%), Comfort (35%), and the highest share of Spirituality (16%) of the six mosques; its Social Role share is 5%. The two Brunei mosques tend to emphasise Design (50% and 75%) and Facilities (50% and 63%), but with 10 and 8 reviews these figures are indicative only.

Table 4
Number of Reviews (and Percentage) per Theme by Mosque

Theme	Sejuta Pemuda (n = 267)	Pemuda Indonesia (n = 147)	17 Purwokerto (n = 177)	Assyafaah (n = 110)	Zainab (n = 10)	H. Bolkiah (n = 8)
Social Role and Community	190 (71)	94 (64)	11 (6)	5 (5)	1 (10)	1 (13)
Comfort and Cleanliness	28 (10)	10 (7)	118 (67)	39 (35)	2 (20)	3 (38)
Design and Architecture	35 (13)	9 (6)	43 (24)	50 (45)	5 (50)	6 (75)
Takmir Service and Management	65 (24)	44 (30)	13 (7)	16 (15)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Facilities and Infrastructure	10 (4)	22 (15)	59 (33)	25 (23)	5 (50)	5 (63)
Parking and Security	3 (1)	7 (5)	52 (29)	13 (12)	2 (20)	2 (25)
Religious Activities	13 (5)	8 (5)	34 (19)	9 (8)	2 (20)	0 (0)
Spirituality and Devout Atmosphere	15 (6)	13 (9)	6 (3)	18 (16)	1 (10)	0 (0)
Accessibility and Location	5 (2)	2 (1)	28 (16)	13 (12)	1 (10)	1 (13)
Openness and Inclusivity	18 (7)	13 (9)	2 (1)	6 (5)	1 (10)	0 (0)

Source: authors’ analysis of Google Place reviews, 2025. Percentages are shares of the reviews of each mosque and are rounded.

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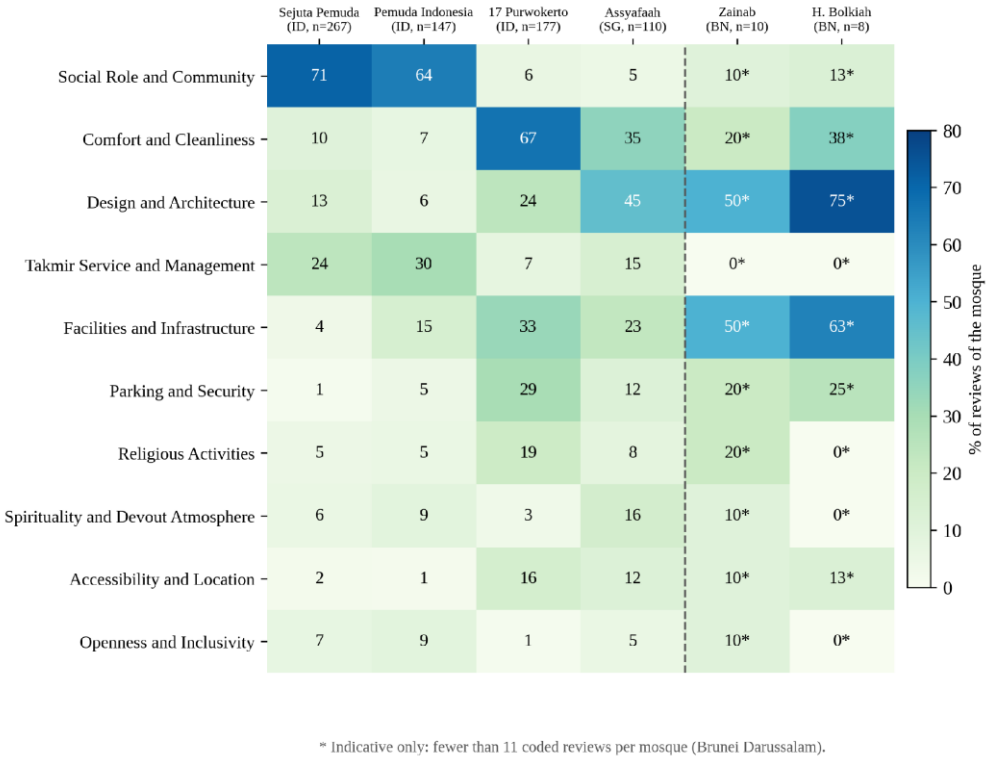
Figure 4
Theme Prevalence by Mosque (Percentage of Each Mosque's Reviews)



* Indicative only: fewer than 11 coded reviews per mosque (Brunei Darussalam).

Source: authors' analysis of Google Place reviews, 2025.

At country level (Table 5), Indonesian reviews (n = 591) are led by Social Role (50%) and Comfort (26%), Singaporean reviews (n = 110) by Design (45%) and Comfort (35%), and Bruneian reviews (n = 18) by Design (61%) and Facilities (56%). These differences largely reflect the composition of the corpus: the Indonesian figures are strongly influenced by two mosques with reputation-type reviews, whereas Masjid 17 Purwokerto resembles the Singapore profile. Differences between countries should therefore not be read as cultural differences without additional data.

Table 5
Percentage of Reviews per Theme by Country

Theme	Indonesia (n = 591)	Singapore (n = 110)	Brunei Darussalam (n = 18)
Social Role and Community	50	5	11
Comfort and Cleanliness	26	35	28
Design and Architecture	15	45	61
Takmir Service and Management	21	15	0
Facilities and Infrastructure	15	23	56
Parking and Security	10	12	22
Religious Activities	9	8	11
Spirituality and Devout Atmosphere	6	16	6
Accessibility and Location	6	12	11
Openness and Inclusivity	6	5	6

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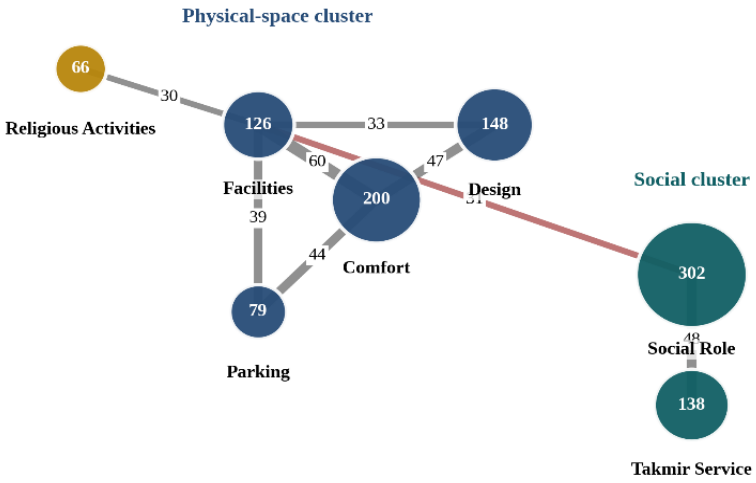
Source: authors' analysis of Google Place reviews, 2025.

Co-occurrence of themes and stated limitations

Reviews containing a single theme were most common for Social Role (204 reviews; 67.5% of the reviews with this theme), Spirituality (25; 47.2%), Takmir Service (57; 41.3%), Design (49; 33.1%), and Comfort (63; 31.5%). By contrast, technical themes were rarely mentioned alone: Parking (7; 8.9%), Facilities (14; 11.1%), Religious Activities (8; 12.1%), Openness (6; 15.0%), and Accessibility (9; 18.0%). Social Role and Spirituality therefore commonly stand as holistic judgements or inner experiences, whereas technical themes are mentioned alongside other themes. Table 6 and Figure 5 show the most frequent pairs. Five of the eight most frequent pairs connect themes of the physical space (Comfort, Facilities, Design, Parking), forming a physical-space cluster; a social cluster links Takmir Service and Social Role (48 reviews). The Facilities–Social Role pair (31 reviews) indicates that the clusters are not fully separate, since some reviews praise facilities and social programmes at once.

Figure 5
Co-occurrence Network of the Most Frequent Theme Pairs



Source: authors' analysis of Google Place reviews, 2025.

Critical comments were rare: 47 of 719 reviews (6.5%) contained a code indicating a limitation, and some of these merely described size (Table 7). The most frequent were a small or narrow mosque or prayer space (22 mentions, 15 of them about Masjid Pemuda Indonesia) and limited or narrow parking (16 mentions, 7 of them about Assyafaah Mosque). Criticism of the attitude of administrators or officers appeared in only three reviews. Since some reviews mentioned more than one limitation, the mentions in Table 7 exceed the number of reviews.

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Table 6
Limitations Mentioned by Reviewers

Limitation	Mentions	Distribution across mosques	Example codes (translated)
Small or narrow mosque or prayer space	22	Pemuda Indonesia 15; Assyafaah 5; Sejuta Pemuda 2	The mosque is small; narrow prayer space; narrow toilet
Limited or narrow parking	16	Assyafaah 7; Purwokerto 3; Pemuda Indonesia 3; Sejuta Pemuda 2; Zainab 1	Limited parking; narrow parking area
Insufficient air conditioning	5	Assyafaah 4; Purwokerto 1	Minimal air conditioning; air conditioning not cold
Other	5	Assyafaah 2; Sejuta Pemuda 2; Purwokerto 1	No mirror for women; lost sandals; slow recitation
Access and location	3	Assyafaah 3	Bus stop far away; narrow access road; remote location
Attitude of officers or administrators	3	Purwokerto 1; Pemuda Indonesia 1; Sejuta Pemuda 1	Administrator rather indifferent; parking attendant impolite
Insufficient lighting	1	Purwokerto 1	Poor lighting

Source: authors' analysis of Google Place reviews, 2025.

Signal quality: youth, non-visitors, and general evaluations

Three characteristics of the data qualify what the reviews can say about young people (Table 8). First, explicit mention of youth is rare: after excluding mosque names, only 39 of 719 reviews (5.4%) mention youth or young people, namely 35 at Masjid Sejuta Pemuda (13.1%), 4 at Masjid Pemuda Indonesia (2.7%), and none at the other four mosques. Examples include "Inspiring for Muslims, especially for young men and women" (Masjid Sejuta Pemuda) and "The young people are quick and capable" (Masjid Pemuda Indonesia). Second, at least 94 reviews (13.1%) contain markers that the reviewer had not visited or knew the mosque through social media: 73 at Masjid Sejuta Pemuda (27.3%), 19 at Masjid Pemuda Indonesia (12.9%), and 2 at Assyafaah Mosque. One reviewer wrote: "Even though I have not been there, just hearing from others moved me; hopefully I can go there, amen," and another, "Saw this mosque's content on TikTok, truly inspiring." Third, many reviews contain only general evaluations: 121 reviews (45.3%) at Masjid Sejuta Pemuda and 39 (26.5%) at Masjid Pemuda Indonesia, but only 3 at the other four mosques combined. The dominance of Social Role at these two mosques is therefore partly a matter of reputation rather than a description of on-site experience.

Table 7
Signal-Quality Indicators of the Review Corpus

Indicator	Sejuta Pemuda (n = 267)	Pemuda Indonesia (n = 147)	Other four mosques (n = 305)	All (n = 719)
Explicit youth mention, n (%)	35 (13.1)	4 (2.7)	0 (0.0)	39 (5.4)
Non-visitor marker, n (%)	73 (27.3)	19 (12.9)	2 (0.7)	94 (13.1)
General-evaluation-only reviews, n (%)	121 (45.3)	39 (26.5)	3 (1.0)	163 (22.7)

Source: authors' analysis of Google Place reviews, 2025. Indicators are heuristic lower bounds. The non-visitor markers outside the two mosques were both found at Assyafaah Mosque.

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DISCUSSION

Mosque characteristics as a combination of physical, functional, and social dimensions

The ten themes show that the characteristics of youth-managed mosques are multidimensional (RQ1). No single attribute, such as architectural grandeur or a long list of facilities, explains how users describe these mosques. We synthesise the themes into three dimensions: physical–environmental (comfort and cleanliness, design, facilities, parking and security), functional–spiritual (accessibility, religious activities, spiritual atmosphere), and social–managerial (social role, takmir service, openness). This grouping is an analytic synthesis of the themes and not a set of categories voiced by reviewers. It is consistent with the servicescape premise that the physical setting matters (Bitner, 1992) and with post-occupancy evidence that technical, functional, and behavioural elements jointly determine satisfaction in mosques (Hassanain et al., 2021). It also parallels the finding that cleanliness, staff, atmosphere, and religion-specific variables coexist in visitors' accounts of sacred sites (Zarkada et al., 2024), and that experiential evaluations of religious places combine tangible and affective elements (Kim & Chen, 2021; Nisar et al., 2022). The prominence of comfort and cleanliness in all six mosques, including Masjid Sejuta Pemuda and Masjid Pemuda Indonesia, suggests that basic environmental quality is a shared baseline on which other characteristics are built. The ten-theme structure, moreover, shows that size does not mechanically lower evaluation: complaints about size at Masjid Pemuda Indonesia were often accompanied by appreciation, as in "small but very calming."

Two profiles of public appreciation

The most striking result for RQ2 is the contrast between space-centred and community-centred profiles (Figure 6). Reviews of Masjid 17 Purwokerto and Assyafaah Mosque describe the place: its comfort, cleanliness, parking, design, and, at Assyafaah, a spiritual atmosphere tied to an open, naturally ventilated setting. Reviews of Masjid Sejuta Pemuda and Masjid Pemuda Indonesia describe a reputation and a service: inspiration, hospitality of the takmir, free meals, 24-hour access, and traveller-friendliness. In social-infrastructure terms (Oldenburg, 1999), the latter group is appreciated as a hospitable gathering place; in da'wah management terms, the mosque acts as a service institution whose management shapes participation (Nudin & Fakhruroji, 2023). The cafés that, according to Kamaluddin (n.d.), compete with mosques for young people's attention are echoed in reviews of Masjid Sejuta Pemuda, where ten reviews mention a café, coffee, or hangout: the mosque borrows the hospitality of cafés rather than competing with them. This pattern suggests that an offer of openness and welcome, rather than facilities alone, is what distinguishes the two mosques from the other four.

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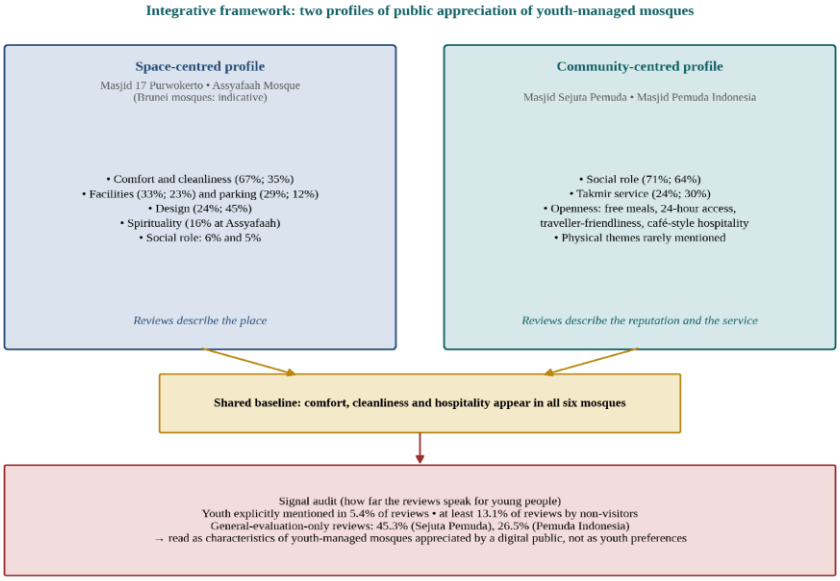
Figure 6
Integrative Framework of Public Appreciation of Youth-Managed Mosques



Source: authors' synthesis of the findings.

The role of youth management in these profiles cannot be established from reviews. Youth involvement is mentioned explicitly in only 39 reviews, but when it is mentioned it appears as part of the experience, for example, a welcome by young people or a mosque run by Gen Z. This is compatible with evidence that youth involvement strengthens a sense of belonging (Bagaskara et al., 2024) and that creative, innovative administrators help programmes keep pace with trends (Ibrahim et al., 2020). Studies of RISMA likewise show the relevance of organised youth structures (Anggara & Ferdiyan, 2022). However, because the age of reviewers is unknown, the reviews cannot show whether youth involvement is what attracts young visitors.

Digital reviews as evidence: experience, reputation, and recommendation

The signal audit (RQ4) shows why the evidence must be read with care. Reputation-type content is concentrated where digital visibility is greatest: more than a quarter of the reviews of Masjid Sejuta Pemuda (27.3%) carry non-visitor markers and 45.3% contain only general evaluations. These reviews express admiration, prayers, and recommendations more than descriptions of the place. Such behaviour is consistent with the way word of mouth and the opinions of co-religionists influence Muslim consumers (Abror et al., 2021; Adel et al., 2021), with the view that the credibility and usefulness of reviews shape their use (Filieri et al., 2021), and with the argument that platforms structure what consumers can say (Kozinets et al., 2021). Engagement dynamics on social pages, which respond to the tone and style of interaction (Dhaoui & Webster, 2021), may also help explain why an active social media presence appears as a distinct code at the two community-centred mosques. Methodologically, the study demonstrates the value of reading reviews as layered texts that blend experience and reputation. Manual coding allowed such distinctions to be made, whereas automated topic modelling and sentiment analysis scale better but may overlook them (Kirilenko et al., 2021; Mehraliyev et al., 2022). Netnographic studies of other contexts, from anime tourism (Liu et al., 2022) to Angkor Wat (Baniya et al., 2021), also highlight how reviewers' positions affect what is said.

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Table 8
Evaluation of the Research Propositions

Proposition	Evidence from the corpus	Assessment
P1 Space-centred profile	Physical themes dominate at Masjid 17 Purwokerto (Comfort 67%, Facilities 33%, Parking 29%) and Assyafaah Mosque (Design 45%, Comfort 35%); Social Role 6% and 5%	Supported
P2 Community-centred profile	Social Role 71% and 64% and Takmir Service 24% and 30% at Sejuta Pemuda and Pemuda Indonesia; physical themes rare	Supported
P3 Stand-alone spiritual evaluation	25 of 53 Spirituality reviews (47.2%) mention no other theme; highest share at Assyafaah (16%)	Supported (descriptively)
P4 Reputation inflation	Non-visitor markers in 27.3% and 12.9% of reviews; general-evaluation-only 45.3% and 26.5% at the two mosques versus 3 reviews elsewhere	Supported
P5 Youth ambiguity	Youth mentioned in 5.4% of reviews; reviewer age unobservable; no mention at four mosques	Supported

Source: authors' analysis. Assessments are descriptive and do not imply statistical testing.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to identify the characteristics of youth-managed mosques from Google Place reviews of six mosques in Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, and Singapore. Ten themes emerged: Social Role and Community (42.0% of reviews), Comfort and Cleanliness (27.8%), Design and Architecture (20.6%), Takmir Service and Management (19.2%), Facilities and Infrastructure (17.5%), Parking and Security (11.0%), Religious Activities (9.2%), Spirituality and Devout Atmosphere (7.4%), Accessibility and Location (7.0%), and Openness and Inclusivity (5.6%). They indicate that mosque characteristics are best understood as a combination of environmental quality, usable facilities, spiritual atmosphere, hospitable management, and social function, and that public appreciation follows two profiles: space-centred (Masjid 17 Purwokerto, Assyafaah Mosque) and community-centred (Masjid Sejuta Pemuda, Masjid Pemuda Indonesia).

The study contributes an integrative framework that adds social–managerial and digital-reputation layers to the religious servicescape, evidence from a multi-country corpus of youth-managed mosques, and a signal audit that makes explicit who is speaking in digital reviews. Because only 5.4% of reviews mention youth and at least 13.1% were written by non-visitors, the results are better described as characteristics of youth-managed mosques appreciated by a digital public than as the preferences of young people. Critical comments were few (6.5%) and mainly concerned size and parking. Academically, the findings support further work that verifies coding with multiple coders, adds comparison mosques and star ratings, and combines digital analysis with interviews and observation. Practically, they suggest that mosque administrators and da'wah managers combine basic comfort and maintenance, hospitable service, meaningful religious and social programmes developed with young people, and responsible management of digital presence. Such an approach can support mosques as spaces of spiritual, social, and cultural growth for young people.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, U.S. and H.M.; methodology, U.S.; formal analysis, U.S.; investigation, U.S.; writing original draft preparation, U.S.; writing review and editing, H.M., C.C., and K.S.; supervision, H.M., C.C., and K.S. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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During the preparation of this work the author(s) used Claude (Anthropic) to restructure the manuscript according to the journal template, draft English text, and prepare figures from the authors' coded data. After using this tool, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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Conflicts of Interest
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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