FWU Journal of Social Sciences, Winter 2025, Vol.19, No.4, 78-87
DOI: http://doi.org/10.51709/19951272/Winter2025/7

From Localization to Globalization: Modern Cultural Hybridization of Centralized Sunni Islamic Indigenous Values

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This study examines how young Muslims negotiate centrally accepted Sunni Islamic traditions while assimilating global modern cultural trends, and how Sunni Muslims respond to these hybrid practices. Young participants' justifications for integrating modern elements into Sunni Islamic traditions reveal personalized interpretations of religious teachings that often diverge from macro-level orthodoxy, generating cultural divisions within society. The data was obtained by conducting semi-structured interviews involving purposively selected university members, organizational members, and senior citizens. The data were analyzed using content analysis that provided two distinct themes which are: i) Youngsters' hybridization practices and justifications for it; and ii) Pakistani society at large disapproves the youngsters' hybridizing tendencies and its justifications. Findings suggest that young participants selectively interpret Islamic principles to legitimize modern adaptations in dress, ritual, and worship, reflecting liberal and global influences on everyday religiosity. Senior citizens and community representatives view these reinterpretations as inconsistent with Sunni orthodoxy and attribute them to the spread of Western cultural norms and insufficient religious instruction among youth. The study offers insight into how globalization, digital exposure, and local orthodoxy interact in shaping contemporary Muslim identities within Pakistan's Sunni Islamic traditions .

***Keywords*:** Young Muslims; globalization; hybridization; indigenous values; Sunni Islamic tradition, orthodoxy.

Pakistani society is deeply rooted in Sunni Islamic traditions, which follows a set of fundamental indigenous values grounded in Sunni Islamic traditions. Sunni Islamic tradition encompasses four major Islamic jurisprudence schools; Hana'afi, Maliki, Hanably, and Shafa'i (Hamid, 2018). More specifically, in Pakistani society Hana'afi doctrine prevails and constitutes Sunni Islamic tradition (Hamid, 2018). The rapid expansion of digital and social media has played a defining role in accelerating this process of cultural hybridization (Rashid, 2019; Hashmi et al., 2022a). Continuous exposure to transnational media content, fashion, entertainment, and digital influencers has reshaped how young Muslims perceive and practice Sunni Islamic traditions (Hashmi et al., 2022b; Rana & Chishti, 2019). Through online interactions, they encounter diverse interpretations of religious and cultural norms, which subtly encourage reinterpretation and adaptation of indigenous values. Consequently, globalization and media convergence operate as intertwined forces that mediate how Pakistani youth negotiate between inherited religious expectations and modern cultural expressions.

Historically, micro-cultures in Pakistan, including Punjabi, Kashmiri, Balochi, Pashtun, Saraiki, Sindhi, and Kalashi, represent smaller societal groups with shared values, beliefs, language, history, ethnic customs, and distinct dress codes within the dominant Sunni Islamic traditions. However, contemporary Muslim youth from all these micro cultures negotiate and challenge orthodox religious views under the influences of modern and liberal globalization trends to relate to societal living codes (Mehmood et al., 2023; Rashid, 2019; Shahzad et al., 2024). They usually enact their freedom of choice while navigating through societal norms and expectation in the macro-Islamic cultural context (Bhat, 2014). In Pakistan, majority of the university students studying in Bachelor and Master degrees are aged between 18 and 28 (Higher Education Commission, [HEC] 2021) therefore, youngsters in this study entail the Pakistani university students aged 18 to 28, studying in BS and MS programs. Like the contemporary Muslim youth Pakistani youngsters are also likely to assimilate liberal and modern trends into the indigenous values of Pakistani society such as related to dress codes, bodily outlook, worship practices and rituals.

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Moreover, their potential cultural assimilations may involve conscious attempts to avoid negative perceptions of them in the immediate community of their interactions and potentially serious threats in a radical Muslim society such as Pakistan (Javed et al., 2025). Recent studies on the cultural assimilations in a radical society report that such individuals or groups may deny the influence of modern and liberal trends through the strategic framing of justifications for their hybridizing practices.

This study endeavors to investigate the negotiations undertaken by youth concerning the integration of globally recognized indigenous values within the framework of the Sunni Islamic tradition, particularly in the context of contemporary cultural trends. For this purpose, two research questions are framed: i) how does the young generation construct justifications for hybridizing indigenous values? and ii) how does the society at large respond to youngsters' justifications for hybridizing indigenous values?

Theoretical Framework

This qualitative research, embarks on *Bhabha's* (1994) *theory of hybridization* and *Bakhtin's* (1981) perspectives of *intentional and unintentional hybridity*. *Bakthin's* (1981) perspectives explain that in *unintentional hybridization*, unconscious assimilation of cultural elements such as language which may have culturally beneficial effects. However, in the context of this study assimilations of technology into cultural practices such as use of speakers and microphones for the call for prayer (adhan) in mosques is considered *unintentional hybridity* because it is not meant to hybridize the cultural practice of' 'adhan'. In *intentional hybridization* two points of view are not mixed but set against each other dialogically. *Intentional hybridization* basis on the conscious contrasts which can be used in aesthetic domain such as adaptation of novel trends for the personalized expression of the self (Bakthin, 1981). Therefore, adoption of global fashion trends and assimilations of liberal views in practicing and defining cultural traditions is viewed as *intentional hybridization.*

Bhabha's (1994) theory suggests that culture is not fixed, but instead evolves through the blending of multiple influences. A central idea in his work is the *third space*, a space of negotiation where people combine elements of various cultures to create new meanings and identities. This space allows individuals to question fixed norms and reinterpret cultural values. It provides a way to understand how Pakistani youth, influenced by global trends, engage with modern lifestyles while still identifying with Islamic traditions.

Bakhtin's (1981) *perspective of hybridity* distinguishes between *intentional hybridity* and *unintentional hybridity. Unintentional hybridity* occurs naturally, such as when modern tools like microphones become part of religious practices without aiming to change their purpose. *Intentional hybridity* involves conscious choices, for example when young Muslims adopt liberal or modern expressions to reshape their appearance, worship, or social participation. These behaviors reflect deliberate efforts to balance religious belonging with the attractions of global modernity. Drawing on *Bhabha's* idea of the *third space* and *Bakhtin's* distinction between *intentional and unintentional hybridity,* this study explores how young Muslims in Pakistan blend Sunni Islamic traditions with global influences, and how these hybrid practices are received by their wider society.

Recent studies on cultural narratives and hybridization in Muslim societies

Cultural hybridization can be understood to be the encounter and blend of various cultural traditions that slowly give way to the emergence of new identities and perspectives of belonging. In every Muslim community, for instance, this encounter can never take place with a level of reflection or discussion. This goes without saying since many members of Muslim society always search for a means of staying true to their moral foundations despite embracing global trends that promise opportunity and change. Al Areqi (2017) tackles the issue of cultural hybridization by employing perspectives from being postcolonial to being Muslim. This particular argument explains that Islam always considers the notion of cultural hybridization with a level of wariness since it can lead to moral ambiguity. On the other hand, flexibility can be promoted by where innovation can be defended by referring to societal good.

Hybridization can be spotted in an educational setting where students found themselves caught between conventional and global values. Rana and Chishti (2019) studied teacher observations of university-going students in Pakistan and found a blend of eagerness and ambivalence. Students found global culture attractive due to its creativity and the confidence it imbued in them but at the same time feared that Western culture could destroy societal discipline or respect for the family. Rana and Chishti found that hybridization does not mean imitation of another culture. Rather, it can be a move towards finding a midpoint between the attractiveness of modernity and the moral strength of religiousbeliefs. Students justified their decisions according to the moderation of Islam to illustrate that cultural hybridization can involve personal reasoning.

Social media technology has altered the dynamics of these negotiations. Social media acts as a new opportunity for visibility and for taking part, which enables users to build a public persona that intertwines religious with modern trends. Juliansyahzen (2021) observed that the online behaviour of young Indonesians facilitates the emergence of a space for the Hybrid Muslim. This area allows young Indonesians to combine their religious beliefs with ideas of fun and creativity, and to represent themselves as both religious and modern. This line of reasoning lets young Indonesians see religion and global culture as two components of their public persona on social media that didn't compete with each other but work well together.

Other research has concentrated on cultural hybridization as a form of performance. Civila and Jaramillo-Dent (2022) conducted a study on multicultural connections as depicted on the web and introduced the notion of performative cultural hybridization. This research illustrates that individuals utilize language, symbols, and shared narratives to facilitate coexistence among diverse cultures. This act of publishing or just being involved creates a space where people can say they are part of the global community while yet being connected to their own culture. This can happen without people openly mixing their cultures.

A comparable investigation by Civila et al., (2020) examinedd the reaction of the Muslim community to online ddiscourse associated with initiatives such as #StopIslam. This study discovered that users responded to hostile representations with positive and instructive content that was aesthetically pleasing. This may be seen to indicate that hybridization can represent a mode of participation rather than a means of ddefence. This study also revealedd that the Muslim community used global media aesthetics to show ides of equality, peace, and ddignity that are part of Islam's moral foundations.

Sayed and Hotait's 2024 study on Muslim women content makers in Germany shed light on the subject. Muslim women were able to create new interpretations of Muslim femininity through modest fashion, spirituality, and an outreach activities. Sayed and Hotait understoodd the adaptability of interpretations of Islam's ethical principle of doing good to include public expressions of good intentions. In ddoing so, the women situated themselves within the global streams of culture while being morally upright.

Through the lens of these six studies, cultural hybridization appears as a perpetual process of negotiation rather than a deprivation of identity. In previous interpretations of cultural hybridization for Muslim society, it was explained by domination or imitation (Al Areqi, 2017; Rana & Chishti, 2019). Through more recent scholarship, the active roles of Muslims are indicated by the utilization of technology for the integration of modernity with religious interpretations (Juliansyahzen, 2021; Civila et al., 2020; Civila & Jaramillo-Dent, 2022; El Sayed & Hotait, 2024). Through visibility, association, and interaction, one can state the effects of belonging that are global and local at the same time. Through this perception of cultural hybridization, it becomes a representation of moral creativity. This means the perpetual attempt to co-exist with religion while adding to the common language of modern culture. Figure 1 illustrates the theoretical framework for this phenomenological study.

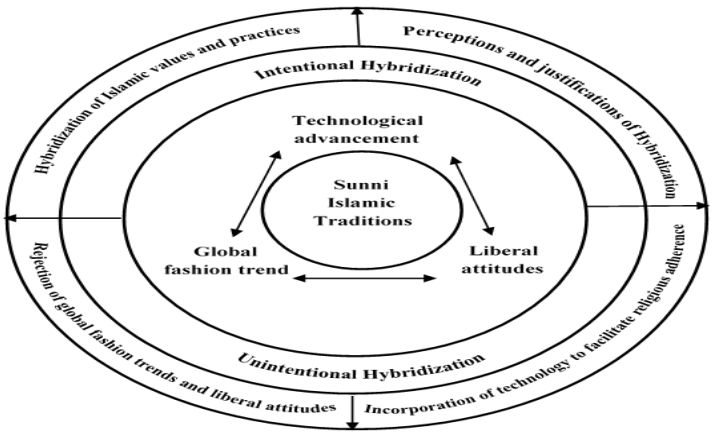

Figure 1: Illustration of Hybridization Theoretical Framework

Method

This qualitative study used purposive sampling to recruit university students, professionals, and senior citizens from Punjab, Pakistan. These three groups were included to capture generational differences in religious understanding and cultural practice. Earlier research (e.g., Hashmi et al., 2024; Driezen et al., 2021) shows that older Muslims often prefer strict adherence to doctrine, whereas younger people are more exposed to global and digital influences. Professionals in this context represent mid-life negotiation of faith within modern work settings. Therefore, these three groups can provide rich data in relation to their respective cultural adherence practices.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focused group observations involving 20 participants. Each interview was conducted face-to-face in Urdu, lasting between one and two hours. Interviews were translated into English by a language expert and transcribed by the researcher.

Analytical Framework

The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis inspired by the frameworks of n Rosendahl et al., (2020) and Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017). The process involved six key phases.

In Phase 1, interviews were transcribed and initial readings identified meaningful units related to the study focus.
In Phase 2, meaning units were highlighted and defined as short phrases capturing the essence of participants' views.
In Phase 3, these units were condensed to summarize ideas while preserving core meanings. In Phase 4, condensed units were coded according to similarities and differences.
In Phase 5, related codes were grouped into subcategories.
In Phase 6, subcategories were abstracted into broader categories that formed the main themes.

This analytical process helped organize complex narratives into clear themes while maintaining a close link to articipants' experiences. The approach ensured interpretive depth, allowing the analysis to capture how young and older Muslims understand, justify, or reject cultural hybridization practices within the Sunni Islamic tradition context of Pakistan.

Analysis and Discussion

The codes were categorized into distinct groups according to their variations and commonalities, identifying ten sub-categories, wherein two distinct themes emerged. The emerging themes were aligned to frame the answers to research questions, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Broader Categories and Themes

	Themes	Research Questions
1.	Youngsters' hybridization practices and justifications for it	1. How does the young generation construct justifications for hybridizing Islamic indigenous values?
2.	Pakistani society at large disapproves the youngsters' hybridizing tendencies and its justifications	2. How does the society at large respond to youngsters' justifications for hybridizing Islamic indigenous values?

Theme 1: Youngsters' hybridization practices and justifications for it

The participants overt expressions of their religio-cultural practices and their stand points on Sunni Islamic traditions provided the insights into their cultural hybridization practices and their justifications for it. The content analysis of the data provided several categories based on code groups which framed this theme. These categories represented the following sub-themes:

- any dress that covers the body is Islamic dress;
- *Quran* and *Sunnah* never taught female Muslims to wear a face covering (Niqab);
- We celebrate Holi because Islam encourages the celebration of rituals whether they are religious or cultural;
- if speakers and microphones are allowed in the mosques, why five times Adhan from the mosque is needed if mobiles fulfil this purpose;
- Online Participation in prayers especially Jumah prayer is convenient for the Muslims;
- Islamic history witnesses male-female gatherings in the mosques and the war field why the society criticizes mutual gatherings now?;

- For mutual harmony in the society, we attend our Christian and Hindu friends' mournings and celebrations;
- Ablution is not needed if a Muslim takes bath daily and adheres to hygienic practices;
- Places are not important rather God's worship is important therefore, performing Hajj online is justified.
- In this era, Muslims' with tough routines such as students during exams, can fast in any other month as convenient and not necessarily in the month of Ramadhan.

The analysis revealed that the participants manipulated Islamic teachings, interpreting them in a manner that aligns with their perspectives and desires. Many participants expressed liberal viewpoints, advocating for modernization, and argued that Islam does not impose any compulsion regarding dress code, mixed-gender gatherings, ritual celebrations, or worship. They argued that certain preachers, referred to as Molvis, who possess limited knowledge of Islamic teachings, have exaggerated these teachings, leading to extreme fear and misunderstandings within society. The participants provided critical reasoning supporting their position, with thirteen out of twenty individuals citing a specific verse from the Quran as evidence.

> *You know our religion is very easy and smooth in every filed of life such as "there is no compulsion in religion" (The Quran, 2:256) this verse of the Quran clearly shows that we can live according to our easiness in this society. But in this contemporary era, Islamic scholars so called 'Molvis' spread a fear regarding the punishment on the day of judgment (R3/Q3)*

The excerpt from R3 represents female university students' lifestyle choices based on their understanding of Islamic teachings. R3 initiates her ddiscourse by invoking a Quranic verse to substantiate the integration of diverse elements in their lifestyles. The participants believe that adopting a modern dress code helps them feel socially integrated, and they see no Islamic restrictions that would hinder their commitment to modern or progressive lifestyles. Most of the participants grounded their perspective in the Quranic principle that there should be no coercion in matters of religion. They tended to interpret Islamic teachings according to their preferred ways of life while expressing dissatisfaction with how religious scholars preach and promote Islamic traditions. Participant R3 critiques traditional religious scholars, referred to as 'Molvis,' for spreading fear and misinterpretations of Islamic teachings. In the contemporary Pakistani society, the word 'Molvi' is considered a negatively connoted term which entails a traditional Muslim who pretends to be a religious scholar but does not have profound knowledge of Islam. Participants managed to discredit traditional interpretations of the Islamic authoritative sources by criticizing traditional religious scholars. Their justification for the assimilations involved personalized interpretations of the Quranic verses and Hadiths. The participant R3 manipulated the interpretation of the Quranic verse such as the Islamic authoritative interpretation of her mentioned Quranic verse clarifies that an individual is free to embrace or not embrace Islam and that no individual can be forced to leave his/her religion (Ibn Kathir, 2003). However, she presented it as a justification to assimilate fashion trends into Islamic dress code, which can be seen as a strategy of hybridizing indigenous values and practices by individuals who favor modernization and liberal interpretations (see Albayrak, 2022; Zulkarnain et al., 2025).

The participants' reflections on their beliefs and practices in relation to Sunni Islamic traditions show that in contemporary Sunni Muslim majority Pakistani society, individuals' attitudes towards religious fundamentals shape their adherence to the indigenous values and practices. Following response by R19 stands unique due to the overt reflective account of personalized worship practices and justifications for it.

> *I believe in Allah and the Prophet (SAW). You know history of Islamic traditions was written and transmitted by certain Muslim scholars and not by the prophet Muhammad (SAW) or his companions. I believe that certain cultural arrangements for the Arabs at that time and were not meant for ever and for all. For example, performing ablution before every prayer was necessary to teach the dessert people about keeping them clean whole day. But, it is not applicable here in this era where we take bath daily and reside in neat and clean houses. Honestly speaking I just offer Jumah prayer but I don't perform ablution because I take bath daily in the morning which fulfills the Islamic spirit of cleanliness.*
>
> *(R19/Q8)*

The participant (R19) grounds his liberal attitude in his self-interpreted Sunni Islamic traditions in the historical context. The participant strategically avoids blame by first affirming his belief in Allah and the Prophet (SAW) before questioning the necessity of ablution (wudu) for prayer according to Sunni Islamic tradition. Through his personalized interpretation against the centrally accepted interpretation of ablution, he engages in hybridization of Juma prayer which

is a significant ritual in Sunni Islamic worship tradition. To justify his tendency of assimilating liberal concept of hygiene into the Islamic worship practices, he differentiates between immutable tenets of Islam and historically contingent Islamic rituals, arguing that practices like ablution were cultural adaptations for 7th-century Arabian desert hygiene rather than perpetual obligation for Muslims living in this modern hygienic atmosphere. He frames 'daily bath' as a fulfillment of Islam's spirit connected to the ritual of ablution. His practice of Juma prayer, based on his own interpretation of Sunni Islamic traditions, reflects a form of cultural hybridization where believers combine Islamic worship with modern lifestyles (see Albayrak, 2022).

Most of the young participants acknowledged their participation in non-Muslims' rituals such as Hindus' Holi and Christians' Christmas. They viewed their participation in these events as justified in the broader frame of cultural festivity and cultural harmony. The following excerpt by R7 presents his reflections on participating in non-Muslims' rituals.

> *In Pakistan, we should respect all ethnicities equally by participating in their rituals like Holi, Christmas, marriages, and funerals to promote harmony and peace. But, religious scholars object to our participation in such cultural event and consider us as lesser Muslims. (R7/Q2)*

The participant (R7) attempted to deconstruct the religious principles in Sunni Islamic tradition which prohibits Muslims' participation in non-Muslims' rituals. He legitimizes participation in non-Muslim rituals by reframing Holi and Christmas as cultural and not religious events, aligning them with Islamic ideals of "harmony and peace." This strategy circumvents Sunni Islamic traditions' interpretation of the Quranic prohibitions stating "and follow not their vain desires, diverging away from the truth that has come to you. "To each among you, we have prescribed a law and a clear way" (Ibn Kathir, 2003). Sunni Islamic traditions related to the permissible festivals are grounded in the centralized interpretation of Quranic verse, "For every nation we have ordained religious ceremonies which they must follow (The Quran, 22:67; Ibn Kathir, 2003). Based on such Islamic authoritative sources, Sunni Islamic tradition prohibits Muslims from adopting practices tied to other faiths' theological tenets. Participant R7 interprets such festivals as opportunities for interethnic engagement that promote social harmony while maintaining an Islamic identity. However, this distinction conflicts with orthodox interpretations, which view participation in rituals rooted in non-Islamic beliefs as violating tawhid (monotheism). Through this selective reinterpretation, R7 hybridizes Sunni values with multiculturalism, portraying cultural assimilation as a form of piety that prioritizes communal harmony over adherence to Sunni Islamic traditions but with an emphasis on having Sunni Muslim identity. This mirrors *Bakhtin's intentional hybridity*, where adaptive practices are rationalized as enhancing and not diluting Islamic authenticity, despite contestations over theological boundaries.

Some participants, particularly those who exhibit greater sociability and draw inspiration from technology, believe that incorporating technology into our worship practices yields advantages in terms of efficiency and cost-effectiveness. The utilization of technology has greatly enhanced and improved our methods of engaging in worship practices. The following excerpt, shared by the R17, represents the collective belief of all study participants that incorporating technology can enhance our worship practices.

> *There are many alternatives approved by the Islam such as if we don't have water for ablution, we can do tayammum (symbolic dry ablution). I believe that Islam does not impose going to mosque in scorching summer to offer prayer. Rather, it is better to offer even group prayer in our AC rooms. We should promote Islam's soft image by adopting flexible ways of worship and focusing more on serving humanity like do the believers of other religions. (R11/Q7)*

The Participant (R11) demonstrates an intentional hybridization of Sunni Islamic prayer traditions, blending Islamic teachings of mandatory prayers with adaptive modern practices. Drawing on *Bhabha's (1994)* notion of the *third space,* understood as a hybrid sphere where meanings are continually negotiated and cultural boundaries become fluid, R11 interprets prayer at air-conditioned homes as comparable to worship in mosques. The emphasis is placed on the intention of the act rather than strict adherence to formal Sunni Islamic traditions which aligns with the concept of the *third space* as a dynamic context where faith, identity, and modernity intersect in practice (see Weerasuriya, 2025; Tatham, 2023; Khu, 2025). Within this view, religious expression is reshaped through everyday adaptation, allowing devotion to coexist with contemporary domestic realities.

He basis his cultural hybridization on the justified alternatives like the flexibility provided in the juristic allowance of "tayammum" (symbolic dry ablution) when water is unavailable. However, no such juristic allowance in Sunni Islamic tradition aligns with the home-centric group prayer rather Islamic authoritative discourse on this topic

discourages offering prayers at homes as Quranic verse states "Certainly, a mosque founded on righteousness from the first day is more worthy of your prayers. In it are men who love to be purified. And Allah loves those who purify themselves" (The Quran, 9:108; Ibn Kathir, 2003). The participant's (R11) view point aligns with *Bakhtin's (1981)* idea of *intentional hybridity,* where traditional mandates (mosque attendance) and contemporary needs (avoiding extreme heat) coexist in a dynamic interlay, creating a reinterpreted devotional practice that aims to maintain theological fidelity while addressing personalized desires of modern lifestyle. R11's call for "flexible ways of worship" hybridizes Sunni communal ideals with privatized piety, framing adaptability as a way to promote Islam's "soft image" and ethical focus on serving humanity. By challenging compulsory mosque attendance in harsh conditions, the participant's standpoint destabilizes the Sunni Islamic tradition's concept of mosque as a central institution of Muslims' life, grounding his reinterpretation of the mandatory prayers in his proposition of "Islam's soft image". His emphasis on serving humanity "like do the believers of other religions" also reflects his tendency of hybridizing Sunni Islamic traditions and norms of collective worship by assimilating individualistic practices inspired by the modern and global influences, a tendency similarly observed in Muslim youth negotiating religious individualism within super-diverse contexts (Driezen et al., 2021).

To conclude, the youngster participants' reflections on their practices and justifications in relation to Sunni Islamic traditions reflect discursive strategies that redefine Sunni Islamic traditions' orthopraxy through a dialogic engagement with lived experiences, blending tradition with modernity in a way that resonates with youngsters' contemporary Muslim identities.

Theme 2: Pakistani society at large disapproves the youngsters' hybridizing tendencies and its justifications

This theme emerged from the feedback from senior citizens and community organization members who expressed disapproval of the religious and cultural justifications for blending indigenous values. This theme encompasses two sub-categories;

- senior citizens in particular, disapprove cultural hybridization if Sunni Islamic traditions based on Pakistani macro culture;
- the prevailing ideological beliefs in Pakistani society generally lead to disapproval of youngsters' justifications for accepting global trends.

The participant (R16) elucidated the detrimental impacts of social media and contemporary technology on the young Muslims' understanding of Islamic values and fully rejected the contemporary fashions and life styles.

> *Now a days, the internet specially social media is spreading all kinds of misinformation about Islam. Liberals select certain Quranic verses and prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) hadiths which they interpret out of the context to show that religion is a personal matter. Their propaganda is moving the young Muslims away from Islam. Secondly, All the time they watch unethical content and follow Western fashion models in their daily lives that is why they adopt western ways and know nothing about Islamic values. (R16/Q11)*

R16 holds liberals responsible for spreading misinformation about Islam. He believes that the extensive misuse of mobile technology and continuous engagement with social media primarily influences the young generation's understanding of Islam. Participant's (R16) standpoint on liberal's misuse of social media to spread misinformation about Islam and cause confusions among the young Muslims, resonate the recent findings from the studies on this topic (e.g., Habib et al., 2024; Hashmi et al., 2022b; Hidayatullah et al., 2023). However, the participant neglected the positive aspects of social media usage such as disseminating Islamic information from reliable Islamic sources through these platforms enables global circulation within seconds which can guide the masses about Islamic culture (Habib et al., 2024; Hashmi et al., 2023). The participant's rejection of self-interpretation of the Islamic authoritative sources aligns with the centrally accepted Sunni Islamic tradition which prohibits individualistic and personalized understanding of Islam rather it emphasizes the Hanafi jurisprudence for practicing Islam in daily lives. Such adherence contrasts with the trend of religious individualism observed among Muslim youth negotiating faith autonomy within plural contexts (Driezen et al., 2021).

R16 views youngsters' assimilations of modern trends into daily life style as the western ways of life which he perceives as against Islamic culture. He staunchly disapproves the global influences that the youngsters accept due to their perceived flexibility in Islam. His concluding remarks "they adopt western ways and know nothing about Islamic values" present a conflicting contrast between Sunni Islamic traditions and the modern and liberal adaptations by the young Muslim generation, leaving no room for the slightest cultural hybridization of Sunni Islamic traditions.

Several participants who rejected youngsters' assimilations of global trends and their justifications for their beliefs, participate in various social organizations within the community, including the mosque committee, municipal committees, *Haqqani Tanzeem* (a local religious activity committee), and *Tanzeem Ilm-o-Adab* (organization of literature and knowledge). The participants asserted that the young generations' detachment from religious practices paved the way for felling a prey to contemporary Western trends, fashions and beliefs. The following excerpt by R10 presents his rejection of contemporary youngsters' life styles and ideas about Islam.

> *I have been the head of Tanzeem Haqqani for the last five years during which we trained youth in different religious activities such as the recitation of the Quran with beautiful reading (Qirat), Naat, and arranged a weekly session of Darood o Salam. Did you believe that we convinced the youth to participate in these activities by giving some kind of lure such as free food at the end, prize money for the winner and etc. Our youth is not serious about religious teachings and values related to lifestyle, they celebrate marriages, ritual of Eids and Meelad un Nabi (Prophet Muhammad's Birth Day in Sunni Islamic tradition) like the non-Islamic celebrations. They invite the Allah's wrath by dancing in the marriages and neglecting the Sunnah of Holy Prophet (PBUH). These liberal trends in religious matters such as marriages, funerals and rituals in Islam are damaging Islam's image. (R14/Q1)*

R14 critiques the cultural hybridization of Sunni Islamic traditions, arguing that modern influences have led young Muslims to adopt practices incompatible with core Islamic values, such as celebratory dancing at weddings and liberalized Eid rituals. The participant's view point aligns with Kirmani (2022) finding of modernization as a key factor in the decline of religious adherence among youth. R14 positions marriages and funerals as sacred rituals rooted in the Sunnah, citing the Quranic injunction “He who obeys the Messenger has indeed obeyed Allah” (The Quran, 4:80; Ibn Kathir, 2003) to emphasize strict adherence to Prophetic traditions. His use of material incentives (e.g., prize money, free food) to engage youth in religious activities like Quran recitation reflects Habib et al., (2024) findings on traditional institutions’ struggles to counter modernization’s appeal. While Hashmi et al. (2021) notes that young Muslims’ assimilation of global trends may create uncertainty about Islamic teachings, R14 strongly disagrees with such adaptations, viewing modernized fashions of marriages and funerals as practices that risk ddiminishing the spiritual essence of Islamic rituals. By equating cultural hybridization with neglect of the Sunnah, he reinforces a binary between “authentic” Sunni practices, governed by Hanafi norms, and assimilated cultural practices, asserting that preserving Islamic identity requires rigid adherence to orthodox rituals. This stance underscores his commitment to countering liberal trends through organizations like Tanzeem Haqqani, which prioritizes doctrinal purity over adaptive reinterpretation.

To conclude, many within society, particularly senior citizens, express reservations about young people’s assimilation of global modern trends into Sunni Islamic traditions, offering religious reasoning to support their stance. They contextualize the normative Sunni Islamic traditions into the Islamic authoritative discourse of the Quran and the Sunnah of prophet Muhammad and thereby offer their justifications to reject young Muslims' cultural hybridization tendencies.

Conclusion

The study explored how young Muslims hybridized Sunni Islamic traditions within the wider Sunni Islamic traditional framework. Findings showed that elements of modern and liberal thought were incorporated into worship, rituals, and dress. Participants often relied on personal interpretations of Islamic sources to justify these practices. Their efforts reflected an attempt to balance traditional Islamic values with ideas of freedom and choices shaped by global influences.

Within Pakistan, where Sunni orthodoxy ddominates religious understanding, even slight variations in worship or appearance are often rejected. The reasoning of youth for such adaptations was frequently described by conservative voices as misinterpretation of religious authority. In broader Muslim contexts, similar debates have appeared. In Indonesia, for instance, the long-standing distinction between traditionalist groups like *Nahdlatul Ulama* and reformist ones such as *Muhammadiyah* demonstrates how differing readings of Islam shape opposing debates.

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how contemporary Muslim youth in Pakistan are negotiating Islamic practices in a globalized world. Future studies may examine comparable patterns of cultural hybridization in other Muslim-majority settings, including Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Afghanistan, and Indonesia, to unfold complexity of such opposing stances and the associated cultural practices.

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