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# Architectural Integration Of Prayer Space In Contemporary Muslim Residences In The Province Of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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## ABSTRACT

Houses are important contributors to society in terms of preserving its socio-cultural and user rituals. Within the house, the users' mutual relationships and faith are protected. The teachings and practices of Islam are initiated immediately with domestic applications. When it comes to spaces, residential spaces are essential for assisting users in meeting their daily needs and lowering their mental, physical, and behavioral challenges. The primary objective of the paper is to present a thorough investigation of the design process of contemporary residential units, chalking out the user needs in terms of the availability of any religious spaces so that users can establish a connection with the faith and be able to perform obligatory prayers within a serene and responsive environment. Research methodology was combined with qualitative and quantitative approaches. An investigation into the availability of religious spaces intended for carrying out daily rituals in contemporary residential designs in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, is carried out once acquiring responses from practicing architects and various users from different parts of the province. The study's findings suggest that to present a design that is harmonious for both user needs and building design, it is essential to consider the users during the design process and conduct thorough research into the issue of documenting the actual needs of users. It also concluded that considering the current COVID-19 situation, the House needs a space specifically designated for religious rituals to assist users in achieving a high level of spirituality within its confines. Future studies can use the study's findings as a springboard to document the various individual spaces that are needed based on the user's overall persona rather than a modular design based on current trends.

KEYWORDS: User needs, Prayer's space, Islamic architecture, Spaces Impacts, Contemporary residential design.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The most significant actors on Earth's surface are people. They differ from the other creatures living on this planet in that they have traits. Traditionally, in Monotheist religions such as Islam, they are instructed to follow the inspiration of their Creator, Allah (SWT), and to work hard to fulfill their purpose in life. It entails building and settling in a location to achieve coexistence, cooperation, and mutual respect to meet their material needs and requirements. To achieve the goal of bringing prosperity to this planet, architecture is a necessity. The meaning and purpose of an architectural structure cannot be understood solely by looking at how it is built or how it is arranged; rather, it has more to do with a civilization.

The way of life of Muslim society in its environment. It is more concerned with the knowledge about the limitations and living styles that are seen as we plan for the placement of different domestic activities in a specific location. In academic literature, there are many ways to conceptualize the home environment. Some authors define a "home" in terms of the profound, interconnected psychological significance it has for those who live in it (Stafford, 2011; Moore, 2000; Sixsmith, 1986).

Other academics contend that a house communicates socially in a symbolic way, defining interpersonal creativity and style while also illustrating the owner's social circle and social class (Heathcote, 2012; Altman, 1984).

According to Heathcote (2012), a home's interior design or the placement of its furniture and artifacts reflects the owner's lifestyle, aspirations, and individual life journey. Doors, windows, and bedrooms are examples of spatial and architectural features that are both functional and have a significant impact on how people interact and behave at home. According to Rybczynski (1987), a home is a place that symbolizes domesticity, comfort, and well-being and offers these concepts through domestic intimacy and privacy. No matter the size, number of rooms, architectural design, or price of the property, every house gives its occupants or owners meanings that meet both their social and personal needs.

There are numerous ways to define a home at the micro level. The home can be broken down into three main categories, according to Sixsmith (1986): personal, social, and physical. The first tier is an extension of one's self-expression, the second tier is a way to meet new people, find entertainment, and share it with others, and the third tier is a physical structure with rooms and a unique architectural design. A small-scale symbolic representation of a house is shown here. Other academics hold that the macro-level actors responsible for the overall perception of home are the climate, culture, socioeconomic factors, and religion. One macro-level factor that necessitates careful consideration is the impact of other cultural traditions on home perception, space utilization, home design, and domestic behaviors (Altman and Chemers, 1984).

A person's home is thought of as a place that provides coziness, well-being, privacy, and comfort. Windows, doors, and bedrooms are examples of spatial and architectural features that have a significant impact on domestic interactions and behavior. Islam is a strong religious tradition, and this tradition is being incorporated into the structure and management of family life. Traditional Muslim homes must adhere to Islamic Shariah law.

Islam has a rich religious heritage that directly affects how life is structured and organized in the home and its surroundings. Muslims believe that a home is a "matchless delight" and a "microcosm of Islamic culture and civilization." (Omer, 2010)

The three main principles that emerged from the writings of (Othman et al., 2014; Omer, 2010; Mortada, 2011) needed to be observed in a traditional Muslim home. First and foremost, it must be decorated with the priority for privacy, a safe and private space for a family. Second, to maintain modesty, a home needed to have room for religious rituals and activities, with design considerations for affordability and sustainability. Finally, to promote social cohesion, it needed to be allowed to show hospitality to its neighbors (Othman et al., 2014).

# 2. ABRAHAM MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Abraham H. Maslow, an American psychologist, founded humanistic psychology and put forth a theory of human motivation in 1943. He contends that there is a hierarchical relationship between the various human needs, extending from the most fundamental physiological requirements to safety, society, respect, and ultimately self-actualization.

Maslow's hierarchy of five levels of needs can be broadly classified into two levels: low motivation, which is defined by the deficiency motive, and high motivation, which is defined by the growth motive. The most fundamental needs are physiological ones. All of these are not necessary, but when some of them are satisfied, the needs for safety and social needs follow. High motivation is a need for human values and growth that is accountable for enhancing the human experience, enhancing life, and realizing one's limitless potential. Then the needs for esteem and self-actualization emerge.

The house design needed to satisfy the various needs of the individual users. There is not a single criterion that is important to be met. A study conducted by Kim (2017) to find out a relationship between housing needs and housing functions suggests that the housing design should be able to accommodate the esteem needs along with the self-actualization needs pointed out by Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs. More specifically it can be termed based on convenience, independence, economy, social character, ease, and relaxing ambiance and expression. Moreover, it also needed to be value added with user values, leisure choices, and a good neighborhood. There should be an opportunity made available to the users to enhance their talent within their private domains (Kim, 2017).

## 3. SIGNIFICANCE OF HOUSES

Needs drive people's feelings, thoughts, and actions, which in turn influence their behavior. In doing so, they utilize and have an impact on the surrounding physical environment. The three most crucial necessities are clothing, food, and a place to live. When a person is active and engaged in daily activities, their shelter serves as their primary living space. When the physical spaces and the functions work flawlessly together, the primary function of shelter is more than adequately served. Additionally, it was important to keep in mind that because of issues with space, social influences, and internal family changes, human needs are constantly changing. As a result, houses are subject to transformation.

One of the places that fulfils human needs like respect, fixation, physical needs, self-actualization, and security is the home. The significance and position of the residential house in achieving mental and spiritual comfort have been particularly emphasized in Islam and Quranic verses. The ability of a home to meet and satisfy a person's spiritual and mental needs, such as thought, presence, and heart comfort, is the most significant outcome of comfort. The true religion of Islam suggests important guidelines and traits that are unique to itself to prevent any extremes in this matter and discourage its adherents from any extremes.

# 4. SPACES AND ARCHITECTURE

The built environment has a significant impact on lives and cultures because of its pervasiveness and complex interactions with humans and the environment. Architecture's function as a cultural artifact that opens up to social, political, economic, and surroundings is a significant feature. The best way to conceptualize architecture is as a communication activity.

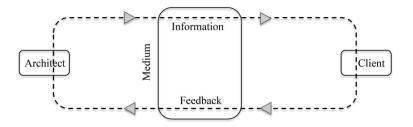
Sacred architecture has historically employed a wide variety of surface and spatial mediums to carry out its communicative functions; the subject matter of these media can range from textural and historical to instructive, exhortatory, and even coercive (Barrie, 2012). Symbolic content was frequently communicated through both internal and external surfaces, and the dynamic serial experience was shaped by spatial relationships and sequences.

Space, like language, is socially constructed and thus directly reflects social constructs like gender, race, and class relations in any society or community (Weisman, 1994). When designing spaces, consideration should be given to the best ways to accommodate the needs of users and support their activities.

## THE CONVENTIONAL PROCESS OF HOUSE DESIGNING

In general, user involvement in the architectural design process is crucial to ensure that it does not solely reflect the values and preferences of the designer. This may be especially true in residential settings, where people spend most of their time, have the closest relationships, and where ideas of identity and territoriality are formed. Architects directly shape homes and residential communities where these are not self-designed.

It is necessary to describe the design process as it happens in architectural practice to map the patterns of client or user involvement. The process is based on the flow of information in both directions from architects to the clients. Although many authors have elaborately modeled the process, the interactions between clients and designers as suggested by (Norouzi, 2015) are abstracted below in Fig. 01.



The client's "preferences" are the client's likes and dislikes among the various ways to meet the client's functional needs, which relate to features of the building, its immediate surroundings, and its components. These are typically specified by the client-user at the beginning of a project, and they form the "Client Brief."

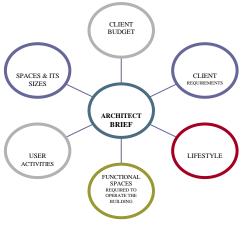


Figure 1: Architect Brief

It is important to keep in mind that designing a house is more than just a product when writing down the needs of the client. Designing itself is more than just a standard response to a program. It serves the residents' private lives while presenting a public face. A home is commonly defined as a physically bounded space where private and family lives develop, regardless of cultural or national traditions (Cazacova, 2021).

The person or people who will occupy it and live within its confines are the most significant characters in this process. Modern trends have a distant relationship between architects and users, which has led to issues with identity crisis, unmet spiritual needs, an increase in anxiety and depression, and a decreased sense of security. If the needs of the users are not considered and tried to satisfy during the housing design, the result will be disastrous.

According to research by Misra (2002), most of the time, clients want to focus on details like roof styles, whether they are sloping or flat, and fittings like door handles, lights, and shelving units, in addition to providing basic information about the size, budget, and aesthetic preferences of the house. Some of the clients take this a step further by taking architectural styles into account. While most of the clients place a great deal of responsibility on the architects' shoulders in terms of framing the design brief, overall planning, forms, spatial composition, material selections, and various detailed designs. It includes several important elements, including shape, space proportions, enclosure or openness, spatial sequence, and organizational choices made by the architect (Misra, 2002).

## 5. ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

The architects in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are fewer in number than in other provinces of Pakistan due to the lack of educational institutions that offer Professional Education Degrees. Most of the senior architects working in the province have acquired their degrees from the Punjab and Sindh Provinces based on the limited quota seats reserved for the students of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. After 2009 the market is provided with the architects from the local universities in the province as can be observed from Table 01 below. Since then, we have now had local architects trained in the province and much in number now.

# 6. PROVISION OF SPACE FOR RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES IN HOUSE DESIGN AS A CASE

Throughout human history, religion has always been a key precursor to civilizations. In recent times, there has been a revival of religious ideas and curiosity about religious aspects, such as in psychological literature. According to the research conducted by Alam et al. (2021) encouragement of religious practices is recommended because religiosity affects all important facets of our lives and has a substantial impact on our quality of life.

To elaborate on the significance of the user needs and their accommodation in contemporary residential designs, we have taken the provision of a designated space for religious activities. Most of the population of the province are Muslims and they are practicing Muslims (Alam, 2021). The important aspect of their lives is the observance of the commandments of Allah (SWT). The researchers have accessed the professional architects actively engaged with the residential design practice with various educational and practical experiences. A mixed type of research instruments including in-person interviews, online questionnaires, and observations was used.

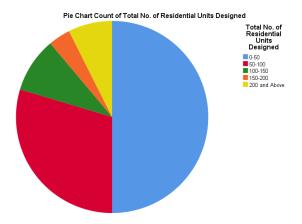
A survey was conducted online with Professional Architects and users from different districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

We have conducted an online survey using Google Forms to record the various responses regarding the specific issue. We have limited our survey responses to the practicing architects working within the geographical limits of our province. Due to a small community of architects in the province, we have received limited responses from the practitioners. Respondents and their Educational Backgrounds are specified in Table 01 below.

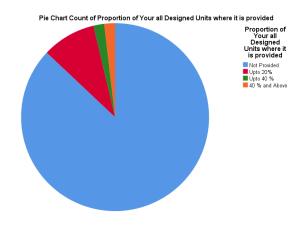
| Table | 1: Show | ving | the | Ex | perience | and | Educ | ation | nal Qualifications of the Respondents |  |
|-------|---------|------|-----|----|----------|-----|------|-------|---------------------------------------|--|
|       |         | -    |     |    |          |     | 10   | 11.0  | •                                     |  |

| Total Years of Professional | Educational Qualifi |         |       |       |       |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|--|--|--|--|
| Experience                  | Bachelors (B. Arch) | Masters | Ph. D | Other | 10121 |  |  |  |  |
| 0-5 Years                   | 19                  | 6       | 0     | 0     | 25    |  |  |  |  |
| 5-10 Years                  | 10                  | 1       | 0     | 0     | 11    |  |  |  |  |
| 10-15 Years                 | 4                   | 6       | 2     | 1     | 13    |  |  |  |  |
| 15-20 Years                 | 1                   | 1       | 0     | 0     | 2     |  |  |  |  |
| 20- Years and above         | 1                   | 2       | 0     | 0     | 3     |  |  |  |  |
| TOTAL RESPONDENTS           |                     |         |       |       |       |  |  |  |  |

The total number of units that are properly designed by all these architects in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is presented below. The architects who took part in the survey were asked to specify the ranges of the residential units that are designed within the geographical limits of the province. Five ranges were used to be selected from the list as shown in Pie Charts.

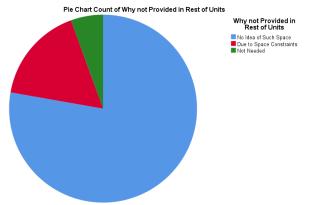


The second most important question that was forwarded to these participants was whether they had provided the designated spaces for the prayers within the house. The Fig.02 below shows their response. If the spaces are provided then what proportions of their design units, this space is taken into consideration.

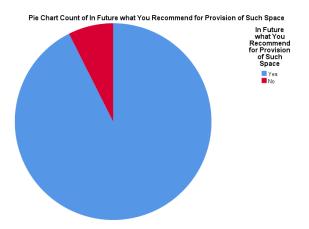


Kurdish Studies

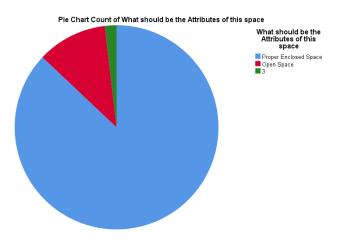
Most of the units are designed without designated spaces for prayers or other religious activities. The next important question is to know why it was not provided. Whether there were space restrictions or not the user need not be taken into consideration as shown in Fig. 03 below.



As most of the units were designed before COVID-19, so the spaces are not provided due to a lack of understanding of such spaces needed by the user to perform the daily rituals. Based on the current scenario, the architects were asked for their professional and expert opinion on what you suggest is the importance of the provision of the designated space in the future design of residential units for Muslim users. The responses are shown in the figure 04 below.



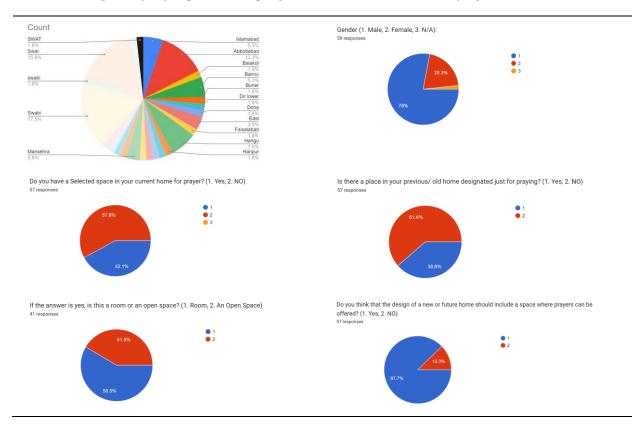
While taking their expert suggestion further into the attributes of the designated spaces, most of them think that it should be provided within the premises of the semiprivate zone, and it needs to be an enclosed space.



#### 7. RESPONSES FROM USERS FROM VARIOUS LOCALITIES

We have compiled the responses from users from various localities in the second phase of our online survey. To get their perspective, we have put some basic questions to them. The recorded answers are shown in the pie charts below. 59 individuals participated in the survey overall, with 78% of them being men and 20.3% being women.

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## 8. DETAILED DESIGN ATTRIBUTES FOR PRAYER SPACE

In Muslim society, the home plays a major role. It serves as the first establishment where people receive training in responsible behavior related to their faith, morals, and social roles from a loving mother who assumes the role of instructor. This is the home that serves as the initial setting for providing the next generation with the care they need. The more this institution's spaces are designed and articulated with religious and social values in mind, the more conscientious citizens it will produce to fill the roles of leaders and legislators, judges and scholars, preachers and teachers, students, and faithful wives and mothers.

#### 8.1. Righteousness of the Muslims

In Islam, the most important foundation for a Muslim home is the righteousness of the wives, who serve as its pillars. As a result, a Muslim's primary duty is to choose a righteous wife who is endowed with religious commitment and good moral character, because she, Allah willing, will be the most important factor in the rectification of the Muslim home, second only to the righteous husband. The Will of Allah establishes a righteous home, just as a righteous husband and wife are bound together by the ties of marriage (Abdulazeez, 2021).

One feature of a Muslim home is that its members are bound together by a common bond of faith, which is founded on both good deeds and faith. To further strengthen their sincerity of intention and serve as excellent role models for the other members of the household, the male members of the household diligently perform the voluntary and Sunnah prayers at home. Indeed, prayers light up homes after they light up the hearts of those who say them regularly.

The dedication of the Muslim home to remembering and obeying Allah, The Magnified, is another characteristic that sets it apart. The houses are protected from devils from among humans and Jinn as well as from all evils by the remembrance of Allah, or Dhikr. Thus, the Islamic Shari'ah mandates that the Muslim remember Allah, The Exalted, and recite Dhikr whenever he enters or leaves his house, eats, drinks, sleeps, wakes up, begins, or ends any activity, uses the restroom, and puts on or takes off clothing. Dhikr is advised in all specified circumstances and conditions.

# 8.2. DESIGN OF PRAYER ROOM

#### 8.2.1. Privacy

To create a private space within a larger space, choose a quiet corner away from traffic and distractions. Alternatively, a folding screen can be used. It can be used to convert an unused living room, bedroom, or basement into a prayer room. According to a study conducted by Hashim (2010), three definitions of privacy are as follows: privacy is the state of being peaceful and quiet within the confines of the house as the boundary and setting for privacy; privacy is the control of access from being seen or observed; and privacy is the control of access from being disturbed. Access control encompasses a variety of sensory channels, including auditory, visual, and informational. Most of the respondents generally defined privacy as not being seen, not being disturbed, and the state of the house used interchangeably. Combinations of various sensory modalities or circumstances were frequently employed to define privacy. Noise and smell are hard to control, in contrast to social interaction and visual access, which are both controllable. According to the study, one of the biggest obstacles to privacy is noise.

### 8.2.2. Peaceful

To achieve Khushu' (humility) throughout prayer, the space where we offer it should be serene and comforting. Calm and peace are evoked by soft lighting (natural light works best), a clutter-free environment, and soft colors like pastel shades.

#### 8.2.3. Cleanness

Many Muslims use prayer rugs for their prayers, even in their homes, to keep the area clean. To keep it tidy, this is typically folded and stored in a drawer or shelf. The designated area for offering prayers needed to be clean.

## 8.2.4. To keep it in Order

Prayer rugs and prayer clothes can be stored in closed storage areas such as drawers, cabinets with doors, and decorative baskets/ottomans. A bookshelf or console table can be used to display religious books and the Quran for easy access. Small decorative bowls can be used to store prayer beads. The ordering should be intact.

### 8.2.5. Keep it Aesthetically Appealing

Adorn the space with objects that promote serenity and tranquillity. Mini water fountains, air fresheners or scented candles, little plants, or vases with fresh flowers, and of course any Islamic design element—like geometric patterns or Islamic calligraphy—can be used.

If there is extra space in the home, it can most likely be used to create a prayer room with additional functions such as reading or entertaining. In this case, floor seating, shelving, wall-to-wall carpeting, area rugs, and easily moved tables are the best options. The goal is to create an open, comfortable, and inviting prayer space (lama, 2020).

### 9. DISCUSSIONS

Overall, the study was the first of its kind to be carried out in the region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study attempted to prioritize the users' actual needs, which must be considered. The residential units mostly designed by architects have no provision for the designated spaces for religious activities outweighs the multiple reasons both on the part of the users and professionals. The following main reasons are observed in this research.

The users don't know what their true needs are. Their focus lies primarily on the material aspects of their requirements, such as the quantity of spaces and appropriate functions. The expert also took a casual approach to determining the users' true needs. The main barrier to determining the true needs of the users is a lack of understanding of Islamic values and principles and a willingness to follow only current trends in one area while adopting styles from other areas and users (Bokhari, 2020). This trend is not only a hindrance in architectural design but also in all walks of life. This tendency is detrimental to all spheres of life, not just architectural design.

The absence of direct user and professional interaction is the second major problem identified in this study, which hinders the creation of a reality-based design brief. First, the number of spaces required is determined during the design process by gathering quantitative input from the user. To determine the numerous problems that need to be sorted out and resolved, communication is also necessary. Thirdly, the dialogue happened when the final design was being finalized. Architects are responsible for the overall design, spatial requirements, organization, and meticulous attention to detail that goes into making these spaces feel right.

Decision-making authority is limited to the head of the family due to a range of social norms and traditions. When documenting the user's needs in the early stages of the design process, the user—who is primarily female—is disregarded. The architects thought that rather than just adhering to a specific area's stylistic trends, users should be educated to think about their own needs. The practitioners discussed how, when a family—particularly housewives—is involved in every step of the design process, from developing the design brief to completing the architectural details, the result is more than just a rehashing of current trends and styles.

Additionally, the architects had to possess in-depth knowledge of the design process and know how to compile these into a functional design. Since designing spaces for users is an architect's primary responsibility, they must have a thorough understanding of users' beliefs and lifestyles to articulate the spaces to best serve their needs.

It is too little to just organize the spaces to satisfy the quantitative requirements; the residences also needed to be revered as sacred places that were integral to the lives of their residents. It's a serious endeavor, though, so it calls for careful consideration to look into real users who will use and experience it for the majority of their lives, in addition to the client as they appear before architects.

In terms of user needs and how to appropriately accommodate them in the design of contemporary houses, this study has only used one component as a test case for residential architecture. Numerous other elements are in peril of the same outcome. Therefore, architects must reconsider this crucial element responsibly.

#### **10. CONCLUSIONS**

The Designated prayer space is a part of the home activities because it helps Muslims become more virtuous and connected to their beliefs. While this is not a novel idea, it is one that was overlooked and found in nearly every one of the traditional homes. This study demonstrates how this crucial element is all but forgotten because of the fast urbanization and heedless adoption of Western and contemporary consumption-driven trends. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought attention to the need for this component again, and both professional architects and users who were chosen from across all regions agree that it should be included in the design of Muslim homes.

This area needed to be designed with the appropriate Islamic details, and depending on the needs of the family, it needed to be enclosed. Inferring the visual principles of Islamic architecture was necessary to portray the mental calmness and purpose of being a Muslim.

A critical reassessment of the professional architect's entire design process, including framing the design brief, initiating the creative process, producing alternate design proposals, and ultimately finalizing the architectural design, can be initiated by using this study as a basis. Throughout each of these steps, the architects had to speak with users, not just clients, to have a comprehensive discussion about their lives, work habits, age groups, ethnic backgrounds, and understanding. The idea of a responsive and responsible design will not be satisfied if architects only follow current trends while sacrificing the actual needs of their clients. This will result in monotonous designs that are infused with their creative lines. Future research studies should investigate the subject further to determine user needs and conduct a more thorough analysis.

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