

The Role of Mosques in Social Sustainability Evaluation and Framework Development

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The Role of Mosques in Social Sustainability: Evaluation and Framework Development

Abstract: This research aims to examine the effects of mosques on the concept of social sustainability. Mosques, one of the places of worship, are important elements that shape the social structure of the society. However, today, from a sustainable development perspective, the role of mosques in terms of social sustainability and how they can be evaluated in this context have not been adequately addressed. This study aims to create a social sustainability measurement framework that includes three main components such as compliance with the needs of society, protection of cultural heritage and social interaction by examining studies on ensuring and measuring social sustainability.

Additionally, part of this study, a survey is being conducted to understand how mosques can be evaluated in terms of social sustainability. This survey aims to reach a wide range of participants, including mosque users and surrounding residents. The data obtained is analyzed using the SPSS program. The results of this data will provide an important resource for understanding the current status of mosques in terms of social sustainability and potential areas for improvement.

Keywords: social sustainability, cultural heritage, mosque

1. Introduction

Sustainability is a concept that should include social justice and human welfare along with economic growth and environmental protection. The pressing global challenges of climate change, environmental pollution, resource depletion, and the need for sustainability in all aspects of life emphasize the importance of adopting renewable energy, recycled materials, and eco-friendly products across diverse fields to ensure a habitable planet, healthy ecosystems, and sufficient resources for future generations, while promoting consumption awareness and reducing waste and pollution caused by construction and resource use, which increasingly concern design disciplines [1]. However, in the past, the social dimension has not been sufficiently emphasized and economic and environmental factors have generally been prioritized. Recent scientific research emphasizes that the importance of social sustainability has increased and that it should include not only economic growth but also social justice and human welfare. In this context, the concept of social sustainability requires a more comprehensive perspective of development policies and practices and human-centered solutions [2].

Although social sustainability is often associated with sociology, it is also closely linked to the discipline of architecture. It involves facilitating people's access to the resources necessary to meet their needs, ensuring a strong connection to their living spaces, and promoting social justice. It aims to strengthen social cohesion, especially by providing solutions to problems such as dense urbanization and structural differentiation. By understanding people's needs and behaviors, socially sustainable architecture can shape the design process and regulate the relationship between people and their environment in a healthy way. Therefore, measuring and implementing social sustainability in urban areas such as neighborhoods is of great importance. Systems that assess social sustainability need to consider the relationship of buildings and neighborhoods with their surroundings, their adaptation to changing social dynamics over time, and the interaction between

different communities. Stender and Walter (2018) state that criteria proposed for social sustainability should encompass not only physical design but also policies that support community participation and social integration [3].

Social sustainability in the built environment aims to improve people's quality of life by taking into account the quality and accessibility of the buildings around them. Thus, it aims to increase social welfare by ensuring that everyone lives in safe, healthy and socially rich spaces. The presence of quality public spaces strengthens people's social interactions and social ties, while pedestrian-friendly settlements promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging mobility. Furthermore, a human-centered design approach ensures the creation of buildings that are in harmony with the environment and respond to human needs. Participation in the design process ensures that planning and design serves the common interests of the community by taking into account the needs and preferences of local people. In this way, the concept of social sustainability in the built environment lays the foundations for people to feel happier, healthier and more connected to the areas they live in.

The mosque, which embodies Islamic culture, is an important place of social interaction as well as a place of worship that addresses material and spiritual integrity. In the Islamic world, these buildings, which are one of the holy places used by Muslims to fulfill their religious responsibilities, generally stand out with their symbolic meanings as well as their architectural richness in form and façade [4].

It becomes a symbol that encourages understanding and tolerance not only among Muslims but also among people of different cultures and beliefs. This shows that the mosque is not only a religious place but also a social gathering place [5]. Many mosques have educational spaces, libraries and places where seminars are organized. These functions mean that the mosque also functions as a center of knowledge and a place of education within the community. Living the basic principles of Islam and strengthening unity and solidarity within the community, mosques represent a rich expression of religion and culture [6]. Beyond the centrality of social and public understanding, mosques are also valuable for their semiotic and semantic dimensions. Mosques provide the opportunity to make sense of the past, by whom, to whom they were built and what period they bear the traces of. The mosque, which can be considered as the dimension where religion is embodied to bring people together and create unity, plays a role in shaping social identity through the interaction of social interaction, cultural symbolism and semiotic diversity [7]. It is seen that traditional mosque architecture is characterized by large and single-volume structures with intensive use and short visits. However, mosque buildings of the modern period struggle with sustainability issues in the discipline of architecture and do not hesitate to undertake a mission in this regard [8].

The preservation of cultural heritage is a profound social and philosophical act, because it means carrying the traces of the past, both tangible and intangible, into the future. The existential experiences of humanity in the past leave traces in the biophysical environment that can be creatively reinterpreted and reshaped from a modern perspective and integrated into the fabric of the present. This emphasizes the potential for these traces from the past to become brand new variations of cultural heritage in the present [9]. In this context, the preservation of the social and cultural characteristics of historic environments and buildings is vital for the sustainability of humanity's identity and memory [10]. From this perspective, the social sustainability of mosques should be considered as a carrier of deep traces in human history. Mosques should be seen as places of social interaction, cultural exchange and spiritual exploration. Therefore, ensuring the social sustainability of mosques is a necessity for the preservation and transmission of the collective consciousness of humanity to future generations. Environmental strategies used in historical Islamic architecture offer significant elements that support not only structural durability

but also social sustainability. For example, the design of the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque incorporates natural ventilation, balanced use of daylight, and the selection of local materials, which have ensured the usability of the space by the community for centuries [11]. Such design decisions contribute not only to the physical preservation of the mosque but also to making it a structure that fosters social interaction, preserves cultural identity, and can respond to societal needs in the long term. Therefore, this historical example demonstrates that the spatial qualities ensuring social sustainability in mosque architecture should be based not only on modern criteria but also on the experiences of the past. Mosque sustainability in urban contexts extends beyond mere physical preservation to encompass their role as dynamic public spaces addressing both ritualistic and non-ritualistic community needs. Spatial flexibility, exemplified by the transformation of sacred areas into profane spaces before and after prayer times, allows mosques to adapt to the evolving functions of the community. This highlights that social sustainability in mosque architecture should harmonize traditional experiential knowledge with contemporary participatory practices, thereby strengthening cultural resilience across generations [12].

2. Materials and Methods

This article is derived from the thesis titled "Examining The Concept of Social Sustainability Through Mosques" prepared at Istanbul B**** University, Institute of Educational Sciences. The survey was conducted with 100 participants. This sample size was determined during the initial phase of the research, which was originally carried out as a master's thesis. While larger sample sizes are often preferred in journal publications for enhanced generalizability, the selected sample was adequate for the thesis objectives. Furthermore, the sample was designed to capture a diversity of mosque users, ensuring relevant insights into social sustainability indicators. For consistency and the integrity of the original data, the current article utilizes the same dataset. The increasing importance of sustainability in the discipline of architecture, as in every field, is directly related to the increasing growth and related problems. However, these discussions have generally focused on the intensity of sustainability and the importance of social sustainability has been observed one after the other. In addition to the effects of sustainable urbanization and architectural practices, social relations, cultural values, freedom and participation should not be ignored. This requires a more comprehensive and holistic approach to the sustainability of architecture. Mosques are part of the urban fabric. As a platform where various social activities are organized and social structures are strengthened by gathering them in the center, mosques participate in sustainability discussions.

Mosques play a critical role in the social sustainability of cities. This is because mosques are not only places of worship, but also centers that host various social functions. Among these functions, elements such as education, cultural activities, social assistance and social solidarity stand out. With these various functions, mosques enrich the social fabric of cities and support urban integration by bringing together different segments of society. At the same time, the architectural structure of mosques and the arrangements around them occupy a prominent place in the urban fabric, encouraging people to spend time in public spaces.

This study aims to investigate the potential and impacts of sustainability on mosques, not only in environmental but also in social terms. It will focus on how to adopt a more sustainable approach in these areas by examining issues such as mosques, strengthening social activities and community relations, preserving cultural values, promoting equality and participation. The aim is to understand and discuss the relationship between cultural heritage mosques and social sustainability in the built environment.

The research is a mixed research that includes both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Grounded theory is a research method used in the qualitative part; it will

be used to understand the perceptions, experiences and meanings of the mosque community about social sustainability. On the other hand, the questionnaire survey is a method that will be used in the quantitative part. The data collected from a wide range of respondents will be used to identify the general trends of mosques in relation to social sustainability. This integration will enable the study to provide a comprehensive perspective and understand the social impact of mosques.

2.1. Study Area and Respondents

This research aims to examine the concept of social sustainability in the context of mosques. The aim of this study is to assess the contribution of mosques to urban life. Understanding the impact of mosques on urban life is an important step towards improving the social well-being and cohesion of society. The proposed measurement framework was tested through a structured survey to determine the contribution of mosques to the city. The questionnaire was designed to enable respondents to assess the impact of mosques on urban life and their role in social sustainability. This study was conducted with the aim of making an overall assessment of individuals aged 18 and over who visit or observe mosques. The population of the study is individuals aged 18 and over who attend or observe mosques in Istanbul, Turkey. The questionnaire was applied to a sample of 100 people selected by simple random sampling method from this large universe. This method is a selection method in which each individual in the population has an equal probability of being selected [13]. Our sample varies in terms of demographic variables such as gender, age and educational status. Since the random sampling method was used, the findings of the study can be extrapolated to the population is assumed to be generalizable. Analyses conducted to assess the representativeness of the sample show that our sample represents the population well. First, in order to increase the reliability and validity of our sample, the survey questions were piloted on a group of 10 people. Then, the data was statistically analyzed and the results were found to be reliable and valid. is determined.

The survey study was prepared using a 5-point Likert scale (1: Strongly Disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: No Idea, 4: Agree, 5: Strongly Agree) in order to evaluate the criteria of the participants regarding the various functions and social roles of mosques. The obtained data were subjected to various analyses in the IBM SPSS Statistics 27 program according to the demographic characteristics of the participants and the total scores given by different participant groups were compared. Thus, it was evaluated which criteria were more effective in the context of the contribution of mosques to the city in terms of social sustainability.

2.2. Factor and Reliability Analysis

"Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)" was applied to determine whether the scale used in the research has construct validity and to reveal its factor structure. For this purpose, principal components and direct oblique rotation methods were used.

Firstly, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was applied to determine whether the sample size was suitable for factor analysis. KMO values should generally be between 0.5 and 1.0. This range indicates the presence of an acceptable sample for factor analysis [13].

As a result of the analysis, the KMO value was found to be 0.896 and it was concluded that the sample size was sufficient for factor analysis. This value is considered adequate by Field (2009) when it is above 0.50, while 0.80-0.90 is in the "excellent" category. The lowest KMO value calculated for each item was found to be 0.881 and it was confirmed that the sample was sufficient.

5 In addition, when Bartlett's Test results were analyzed, $\chi^2(190) = 1341.630$; $p < 0.01$ and this finding showed that the correlations between the items were suitable enough to apply exploratory factor analysis (Table 1).

Table 1. KMO and Bartlett Test Results

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,896
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1341,630
	df	190
	Sig.	,000

2 As a result of EFA, it was determined that the questionnaire scale consisting of 20 questions consisted of a structure with 3 sub-dimensions (factors) and these 3 factors explained 65.04% of the total variance. In multi-factor designs, it is accepted as sufficient that the variance explained is between 40% and 60% [12]. Thus, it was concluded that this study was valid. In addition, the first sub-dimension explained 45.06%, the second 14.51% and the third 5.72% of the variance (Table 2).

Table 2. Factor Explanation Levels

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
		% of Variance	Cumulative %		% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	9,012	45,058	45,058	9,012	45,058	45,058
2	2,902	14,511	59,569	2,902	14,511	59,569
3	1,094	5,472	65,041	1,094	5,472	65,041

18 In the next stage, Cronbach Alpha reliability analysis was conducted to determine the reliability of the research scale and the reliability of the scale was found to be $\alpha = 0.933$ (Table 3). According to the results, the questionnaire was accepted as a reliable measurement tool. Because a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.70 and above is considered sufficient for the reliability of a measurement tool [14].

Table 3. Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,933	,932	20

3. Results

3.1. Characteristics of Respondents

The study analyzes mosque attendance based on gender, age, education level, frequency of visits, and reasons for visiting. The sample consists of 100 participants, equally distributed between males and females (Table 4). The majority (52%) are aged 25-35, and most (53%) have a university degree, with an additional 29% holding postgraduate qualifications. In terms of attendance, 39% visit mosques once or twice a year, while 29% go weekly or more. The primary reason for visiting is worship (70%), followed by historical interest (47%), funerals (42%), and architectural appreciation (22%). These findings highlight that mosques serve not only religious but also cultural and social functions.

Table 4. Demographic characteristics of participants.

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	50
	Male	50
Age Distribution	18-24	18
	25-35	52
	36-45	18
	46-55	10
	56+	2
Education Level	Primary	1
	Middle	1
	High School	16
	University	53
	Postgraduate	29
Mosque Attendance Frequency	Never	17
	1-2 Times a Year	39
	1-2 Times a Month	15
	Weekly or More	29
Reasons for Visiting Mosques	Worship	70
	Historical Value	47
	Funeral	42
	Monumental	27
	Design	22
	Socializing	6
	Education	4

3.2. Independent T-test and One-way ANOVA

To assess the significance of demographic variables on survey responses, an Independent T-test was applied for two-group comparisons, while a One-way ANOVA was used for comparisons involving more than two groups.

The results of the independent samples T-test conducted based on gender are presented in Table 5. The assumption of equal variances was tested, and since the p-value is 0.684 ($p > 0.05$), it was concluded that the variances are equal. In both cases (whether variances were assumed equal or not), the p-value was 0.888. Since this value is greater than 0.05, it indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between genders. The mean difference is -0.460, suggesting that there is no practically significant difference

between the two groups. Therefore, gender does not have a meaningful impact on the evaluated criteria.

Table 5. Independent Sample T-test According to Gender Variable

Variable		N	Mean	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Gender	Female	50	64,40	,166	,684	-,142	98	,888
	Male	50	64,86			-,142	97,993	,888

Social sustainability levels were analyzed by one-way ANOVA test according to different age groups Table 6. First of all, the homogeneity of the data was tested and according to the Levene test results, it was determined that there was no significant difference between the groups with a value of $p = 0.572$ ($p > 0.05$). According to the ANOVA test result, $F = 0.837$, $p = 0.505$ was found, thus revealing that there was no statistically significant difference between the groups. Thus, age groups do not have a significant effect on the criterion evaluated.

Table 6. One-Way ANOVA Test According to Age Variable

Variable		N	Mean	Levene Statistic Sig.	F	Sig.
Age	18-24	18	65,28	,572	,837	,505
	25-35	52	63,15			
	36-45	18	67,89			
	46-55	10	62,10			
	56+	2	80,50			

The results of the one-way ANOVA test according to the frequency of going to mosques are shown in Table 7. First of all, the homogeneity of the data was tested, and according to the Levene test results, it was determined that there was no significant difference between the groups with a value of $p = 0.058$ ($p > 0.05$). According to the ANOVA test result, $F = 3.929$, $p = 0.011$, and a statistically significant difference was found between the groups.

Table 7. One-Way ANOVA Test According to Frequency of Going to Mosques

Variable		N	Mean	Levene Statistic Sig.	F	Sig.
Reasons for Visiting Mosques	Never	17	52,94	,058	3,929	,011
	1-2 times a year	39	67,59			
	1-2 Times a Month	15	66,87			
	Weekly or More	29	64,63			

The frequency of mosque attendance has a significant impact on the evaluated criterion scores, particularly in terms of social sustainability. Individuals who never attend mosques have significantly lower social sustainability scores compared to those who attend once or twice a year. This suggests that regular mosque participation strengthens individuals' perceptions of social sustainability and enhances social bonds.

However, attending once or twice a month or weekly and more does not have a statistically significant effect on social sustainability scores compared to never attending. This finding indicates that while a minimal level of mosque participation makes a notable

difference, increasing attendance beyond a certain level does not provide additional benefits.

3.3. Evaluation of the Social Sustainability Measurement Framework

In the evaluation of the social sustainability assessment framework, three key aspects stand out: the preservation of cultural and historical heritage, alignment with societal needs, and social interaction. This framework prioritizes the preservation of cultural heritage while also ensuring that heritage remains relevant to contemporary societal needs and fosters social interactions. The outline of this measurement framework was determined based on the criteria of researchers in the literature (Table 8).

Table 8. Aggregation of Cultural Heritage Social Sustainability Measures Used by Researchers

Category	Subcategory	[15]	[16]	[17]	[18]	[19]	[20]	[21]	[22]
Cultural Heritage Conservation	Urban Landscape			•					
	Conservation of Historical Environment and Regional Characteristics		•	•				•	
	Sense of Belonging	•			•	•	•	•	
	Identity	•						•	•
	Local Attachment		•	•				•	•
	Conservation of Cultural Features		•	•	•	•	•	•	
	Cultural Diversity						•	•	•
Adaptation to Societal Needs	Infrastructure Services			•	•		•	•	
	Accessibility	•		•	•	•	•	•	
	Employment	•		•					
	Security	•		•		•	•		
	Quality of Life	•		•	•				
	Psychological Health	•		•					
	Welfare and Happiness	•		•		•			
	Personal Experience and Skills	•							•
	Inclusion			•			•		
	Community Participation				•		•	•	•
Social Interaction	Equality	•			•	•	•		•
	Solidarity						•		•
	Design Participation			•					
	Knowledge Sharing		•	•				•	
	Social and Cultural Interaction							•	
	Social Capital	•				•			•
	Sense of Community					•			
	Social Cohesion	•	•			•	•		

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The preservation of cultural heritage aims to sustain the values and structures inherited from the past, whereas alignment with societal needs assesses the capacity of heritage to respond to the requirements of modern society. Social interaction, on the other hand, ensures that heritage serves as a means to strengthen social bonds. These three aspects are considered interconnected and complementary elements in evaluating cultural and historical heritage from a social sustainability perspective.

The arithmetic average scores of the social sustainability criteria for the preservation of cultural heritage have been determined through the evaluation of survey data (Table 9).

Table 9. Cultural Heritage Preservation Social Sustainability Criteria Arithmetic Score Table

Criteria	Score Range	Evaluation
Urban Landscape	3,92	Good
Preservation of Historical Environment and Regional Characteristics	4,43	Very Good
Sense of Belonging	3,24	Good
Local Attachment	3,77	Good
Preservation of Cultural Features	3,48	Good
Cultural Diversity	4,07	Very Good

The average score for these six criteria is 3.82 out of 5. These scores indicate that the overall level of social sustainability is good, but there is potential for further development in some areas. The criteria of urban landscape and protection of historical environment and regional characteristics received the highest scores, 3.92 and 4.43 points, respectively, and were evaluated as good and very good. These high scores indicate that successful steps have been taken in protecting the historical structure and regional characteristics of cities. In particular, the protection of the historical environment is of great importance for the continuity of cultural heritage. The protection of regional characteristics contributes to the maintenance of local identities and cultural diversity. The criterion of belonging received the lowest score, 3.24 points, and was evaluated in the good category. This result reveals that the society's commitment to cultural heritage and sense of belonging should be improved. A weaker sense of belonging may lead to a lack of social participation and support in the protection of cultural heritage. Therefore, various education and awareness programs should be organized to increase social awareness and encourage people to take ownership of their heritage. The criteria of cultural diversity and local commitment and preservation of cultural characteristics were evaluated as good with 4.07 - 3.77 and 3.48 points respectively. These points indicate that a certain level of success has been achieved in the commitment of local communities to cultural heritage and in the preservation of cultural characteristics.

Six subscales, namely infrastructure services, accessibility, employment, security, psychological health, personal experience and skills, have been determined as the basic elements in ensuring social sustainability in terms of suitability for the needs of the society. These areas cover the basic elements that are important in terms of social sustainability. Infrastructure services aim to meet the needs of the physical environment, while accessibility aims to provide individuals with access to various areas of life. Employment increases social participation, while security aims to protect the physical and emotional health of individuals. Psychological health focuses on the mental health of individuals, while personal experience and skills encourage individuals to discover and develop their potential. As a result of the evaluation of the survey data using the arithmetic mean method, the average scores of the social sustainability criteria for compliance with the needs of the society were determined (Table 10).

Table 10. Compliance with the Needs of the Society Social Sustainability Criteria Arithmetic Scoreboard

Criteria	Score Range	Evaluation
Infrastructure Services	2,02	Bad
Accessibility	3,94	Good
Employment	2,51	Very Bad
Security	3,87	Good
Psychological Health	3,84	Good
Personal Experience and Skills	2,03	Bad

The average score for these six criteria is 3.03 out of 5. This overall assessment shows that a moderate level of success has been achieved in meeting social needs, but there are many areas that need improvement. More effort is needed, especially in meeting basic needs such as infrastructure services and employment.

According to the table, the infrastructure services and personal experience and skills criteria received the lowest scores, with 2.02 and 2.03 points, respectively, and were evaluated in the poor category. This situation shows that infrastructure services are not sufficient and that individuals are inadequate in developing their personal experiences and skills. Deficiencies in infrastructure services reduce the general quality of life of the society and negatively affect daily life. Similarly, increasing personal experience and skills will enable individuals to participate more effectively in society and increase employment opportunities. The accessibility, security and psychological health criteria are in the good category with 3.94, 3.87 and 3.84 points, respectively. These high scores indicate that a certain level of success has been achieved in terms of ease of access, community security and protection of psychological health. Employment is in the poor category with a score of 2.51. This indicates that employment opportunities are insufficient and unemployment rates may be high. Increasing employment opportunities is also important for economic sustainability. Unemployment negatively affects individuals' economic independence and social participation. Therefore, creating new job opportunities and preserving existing jobs are critical to building a sustainable society. As a result, meeting social needs is one of the cornerstones of social sustainability. Improvements in areas such as improving infrastructure services, increasing employment opportunities, and developing personal experience and skills will increase the general welfare of society. Successes in areas such as accessibility, security, and psychological health strengthen social integrity and solidarity. Therefore, for a sustainable society, all these criteria must be addressed and developed in a balanced way.

Six sub-scales, including social interaction, inclusion, participation in design, equality, sense of community, social cohesion and solidarity, have been identified as key elements in ensuring social sustainability (Table 11).

Table 11. Social Interaction Social Sustainability Criteria Arithmetic Scoreboard

Criteria	Score Range	Evaluation
Inclusion	2,31	Bad
Participation in Design	2,33	Bad
Equality	3,38	Average
Sense of Community	4,07	Good
Social Cohesion	2,08	Bad
Solidarity	3,62	Good

The average score for these six criteria is 2.97 out of 5. This overall assessment shows that social interaction is moderately successful, but there are significant areas for improvement. More efforts are needed, particularly in areas such as involvement, design participation and social cohesion.

The inclusion and design participation criteria received the lowest scores, with 2.31 and 2.33 points, respectively, and were evaluated in the poor category. These low scores indicate that the participation of the society in decision-making processes and design stages is insufficient. Inclusion and design participation are critical for individuals to feel that they belong to the society and have a say in decision-making processes. The inadequacy in these criteria reveals that more inclusive policies and mechanisms need to be developed to increase social participation. Individuals taking an active role in the design and management of living spaces will strengthen social sustainability.

The equality criterion is in the medium category with 3.38 points. This score shows that a certain level of equality has been achieved in society, but there are still areas that need to be improved. Therefore, policies and programs should be developed especially for disadvantaged groups in order to ensure equality.

The sense of community and solidarity criteria were evaluated in the good category with 4.07 and 3.62 points, respectively. These high scores indicate that the society generally has a strong sense of community and solidarity. The achievements in these areas show that social harmony and solidarity are strengthening.

The social cohesion criterion is in the poor category with a score of 2.08, indicating that sufficient cohesion and integration between different segments of society are not achieved.

As a result, social interaction is one of the fundamental elements of a sustainable society. Improvements in the areas of inclusion, design participation and social cohesion will increase social participation and harmony. Continuing and further developing the achievements in areas such as equality, sense of community and solidarity will contribute to the strengthening of social sustainability. Therefore, comprehensive and inclusive policies aimed at increasing social interaction need to be developed and implemented.

4. Discussion

Social sustainability is recognized as one of the three main components of sustainability, alongside environmental and economic dimensions. In the literature, sustainability has generally focused on preventing environmental degradation and ensuring the continuity of economic development. However, in today's world, social issues such as changes in societal structures, increasing poverty, and inequalities in quality of life highlight the importance of social sustainability as equally significant as the other dimensions. A holistic sustainability approach requires addressing these three dimensions together to enhance societal well-being, support economic growth, and prevent environmental degradation. In this context, concrete steps should be taken in areas such as equity, accessibility, security, and social participation. Academic literature provides significant findings on why social sustainability is necessary and how it can be implemented.

In literature reviews, the key topics emphasized by researchers when defining social sustainability include meeting basic needs, equity and justice, participation and democracy, social interaction, human rights, employment, and diversity. In this regard, when human beings and their living conditions are placed at the center, the concept of social sustainability has a broad scope. Since the quality of the physical environment in which people live directly affects their quality of life, this concept also falls within the interests of disciplines such as urban planning and architecture.

Mosques are considered significant components of urban fabric, serving not only as places of worship but also as venues for education, social aid, and cultural activities. As public spaces, mosques facilitate social interactions among individuals from diverse socioeconomic and demographic backgrounds. Particularly, mosque courtyards should accommodate various needs beyond worship, such as gathering, resting, waiting, participating in socio-cultural activities, and fostering social interactions. In this regard, evaluating and planning mosques from a social sustainability perspective is crucial for enhancing the quality of life in cities and for their inhabitants.

In this study, due to the absence of an existing measurement system for evaluating mosques in terms of social sustainability, a new measurement framework has been proposed. This framework is structured based on sub-concepts provided by researchers and social sustainability criteria found in certification/rating systems. It is divided into three main groups, aligning with the fundamental components of social sustainability: social interaction, meeting societal needs, and cultural heritage preservation.

Social interaction refers to the interactions among individuals within a society and the quality of these interactions. This concept is assessed alongside sub-concepts such as social participation, equity, solidarity, and knowledge sharing.

Meeting societal needs includes the fundamental requirements and living standards of a community. Criteria such as accessibility, employment opportunities, security, and quality of life are evaluated under this concept.

Cultural heritage preservation represents the efforts to protect and sustain a society's historical and cultural values. This concept encompasses sub-concepts such as cultural diversity, urban landscape preservation, and the sustainability of historical heritage.

The validity and reliability of the scale used in the study were found to be high, confirming that the survey is a reliable measurement tool. The results of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) indicated that the survey scale consists of three sub-dimensions, explaining 65.04% of the total variance. This finding demonstrates that the survey is a valid and reliable instrument for measuring social sustainability.

Analysis based on mosque attendance frequency revealed that regular mosque participation strengthens individuals' perceptions of social sustainability and enhances social bonds. However, analyses by gender and age groups indicated no significant effect of these variables on social sustainability. This suggests that while gender and age do not influence perceptions of social sustainability, mosque attendance frequency is a determining factor.

The findings highlight that mosques play a significant social role in urban life and contribute to societal well-being through their various functions. Most participants emphasized that mosques, beyond their religious role, are important centers for historical and monumental values as well as for social and cultural activities. Survey results demonstrate that mosques play a key role in preserving historical and cultural heritage and addressing community needs.

According to the research findings, mosques significantly contribute to the preservation of historical environments and urban landscapes. A large majority of participants stated that mosques enhance the city's landscape and that preserved historical mosques reflect the architectural characteristics of the past. This underscores the vital role of mosques in cultural heritage conservation. Additionally, participants expressed that they feel a sense of history and cultural values in mosques and that cultural activities held in mosques contribute to the preservation of traditions. However, weaknesses such as limited community participation in design processes, inadequate educational and healthcare services have also been identified. Addressing these issues can enable mosques to play a more effective role in social sustainability.

Recommendations for Enhancing the Social Sustainability Role of Mosques:	454
Organizing Various Cultural and Social Activities: Mosques can play a crucial role in fostering dialogue and understanding among different cultures by hosting various cultural events. These activities can encourage community gatherings and strengthen social bonds.	455
Providing Educational and Healthcare Services: Mosques should be transformed into centers that offer essential educational and healthcare services to the community. Health screenings and educational seminars held within or near mosques can facilitate access to these services and address social needs.	456
Ensuring Community Participation: When constructing new mosques or modifying existing ones, community input should be considered to better align with societal needs. This approach can increase community engagement and transform mosques into more effective social hubs.	457
Creating Employment Opportunities: Mosques can contribute to economic sustainability by providing opportunities to enhance employment. Vocational training courses organized within or near mosques can serve as an effective tool in combating unemployment and supporting economic well-being.	458
These recommendations emphasize transforming mosques into centers for education and social services, increasing public participation, diversifying cultural activities, enhancing environmental awareness, and promoting social equity. Implementing these measures can enable mosques to become hubs that meet various societal needs and support social sustainability, thereby strengthening the social fabric of cities.	459
5. Conclusions	460
Mosques have been shown to be key actors in urban social sustainability, incorporating various societal functions and fostering urban integration by bringing together diverse community segments. Therefore, considering the potential of mosques in social sustainability, it is essential to leverage this potential more effectively and transform mosques to meet diverse societal needs. This effort is not only critical for mosques but also for the broader goal of urban social sustainability. The findings of this study provide a valuable resource for understanding the role of mosques in social sustainability and developing relevant policies accordingly.	461
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