

Role of Post-Noon Engagements of Madrassa Students in Radical Orientation



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A PIPS Study

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Preface

Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) would like to thank all those individuals and institutions which were involved in producing this study.

The study was designed to assess the day-to-day activities of the students after their study hours. The purpose was to learn whether those activities, especially after noon when the classes are over, are, in any case, responsible for radicalizing them.

The study would not have been possible without Dr. Qibla Ayaz taking charge of it. Together with PIPS, Dr. Ayaz led this report by selecting seminaries, visiting them, surveying the students, interacting with them and their teachers, and consolidating his findings in this report. In Islamabad, he was assisted by Mr. Sabookh Syed, to whom a special thank is also due.

We are also thankful to the five seminaries that agreed to participate in the survey. They are Jamia Abu Hanafia, Peshawar; Jamia Junaidia, Peshawar; Jamia Asaria, Peshawar; Jamia Naeemia, Islamabad, and Jamia-e-Muhammadia, Islamabad.

Views expressed in this report are those of the author. PIPS or any other institution bears no responsibility for them. PIPS has made every effort to ensure accuracy in the report; any error found is not intentional.

Pak Institute for Peace Studies

About the Contributors

Dr. Qibla Ayaz, author



Dr. Qibla Ayaz was the Dean of Faculty of Islamic and Oriental Studies, University of Peshawar. He has held several top academic positions in the past including as Acting Vice Chancellor, University of Peshawar. He did Ph.D. from Edinburgh University, UK. Dr. Ayaz is also a recipient of the US Gold Star Alumni (2011) and Presidential Award (MA Islamic Studies, 1975).

Muhammad Ismail Khan, editor



Muhammad Ismail Khan works as Project Coordinator at Pak Institute for Peace Studies, where he also edits its research journal *Conflict and Peace Studies*. He has worked with several think-tanks in the past. He did Masters in International Relations from Boston University, U.S.

Sabookh Syed, coordinator



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Director's note

The debate on madrassas in Pakistan is manifold. Many see these institutions of religious education as a critical factor in the prevailing insecurity in the country. Educationists see this sector in academic perspective and raise concerns about the largely stagnant features of madrassa education. Many religious scholars are also not satisfied with the performance of the madrassa sector and advocate reforms.

Yet, madrassas have many unexplored dimensions such as the religious-political context of their education and sociology, and the socio-cultural impact they wield in Pakistani society. Though many studies have been conducted in these areas, but madrassas are still a big challenge for academic researchers. This is interesting to note that the government does not even have an authentic database or account of religious schools in Pakistan. Fully exploiting this gap, the madrassa administrators and clergy are providing an exaggerated account of madrassas in the country. They have recently revised their previous claim of 22,000 to tell us that there are 40,000 madrassas in Pakistan.

Despite all the hype about the increase in their numbers, madrassas face challenges in terms of enrollment. The number of local students is still low even in big madrassas. Madrassa students mainly hail from poverty-stricken or conflict-hit areas of the country. Apart from the distinct features of the madrassa sector in Pakistan, policymakers and academicians remain curious about the thinking patterns of the students and teachers of these religious institutions.

Madrassas deem themselves to be the protectors of Islam or at least their own brand of Islam. They disagree with the notion that they are encouraging extremism in any form. In a survey conducted by the Pak Institute for Peace Studies, 79 percent of madrassa teachers denied any link between madrassas and extremism and emphasized the distinction between militant seminaries and 'normal' madrassas. Of the respondents, only 8 percent believed that some madrassas played a role in promoting extremism but also pointed out that such seminaries were close to the government and even received support from the West. Even those who identified extremism as a real problem refused to acknowledge that madrassas play a role in promoting it.

Whatever the perceptions and views madrassa teachers and students have, this question always fascinates the academic researchers that which factors construct these thinking patterns. Dr. Qibla Ayaz, a prominent religious scholar and former vice-chancellor of Peshawar University viewed that it may not be the curriculum or other external or internal factors that contribute in shaping their views, but it may be the extra-curricular activities. Muhammad Ismail Khan has helped him to evolve the tools to test the hypothesis and both have come with the findings, compiled in this report.

Both contributors have done a marvelous job to conduct this study and compile the report, which I hope will enhance our empirical understanding about a less explored aspect of madrassa sector in Pakistan.

Muhammad Amir Rana

Why this study?

Whenever madrassas are accused of harbouring militants as their students, many of the madrassa authorities respond that those involved in attacks should be apprehended, but their act should not be associated with seminaries. The administrators defend themselves, saying the radicalized individual were not their products.

The question is, what else?

One of the debates that get ignited after a terrorist attack inside the country, tend to single out madrassas, or religious seminaries, for producing the minds, if not the bodies, that carried out the attack. Madrassa authorities, denying any involvement, call for separating individuals from institutions.

This debate has largely been simplistic; in the past, madrassas blamed out rightly for militancy; lately though, issues ranging from registration to regulation of the seminaries or their curriculum have gained prominence. The National Action Plan, announced after the APS attack in 2014, too calls for regulating this sector.¹

Some observers, too, find government's approach as inconsistent and “reactive” in nature.² To madrassa authorities, the state authorities often view all of them from the same lens. Above all, they ask for separating madrassa as an institution from any militant, an individual.

Even if the direct involvement of madrassas in militancy is disputed, what is not disputed is the sectarian line they take on. For sure, madrassas do have sectarian foundations, already, teaching on different sectarian lines. Scholars have also explored links of jihadi outfits to madrassas.³ Moreover, what even madrassa authorities may not tend to dismiss is the possibility of the student getting ‘inspired’ after the study hours.

¹ See: PIPS research journal *Conflict and Peace Studies* (2015) 7(2).

² Mujtaba Rathore, “Madrassa: The Debate,” *Conflict and Peace Studies* (2015) 7(1).

³ Amir Rana, *A to J of Jehadi Organizations in Pakistan* (Lahore: Mashal Books, 2004).

How?

This study specifically tries to capture those activities that are carried out after study hours, to possibly project their linkages with militancy.

To understand the range of activities, PIPS conducted a thorough study with 50 students and 16 teachers of five seminaries in Islamabad and Peshawar. The surveys were conducted in Urdu. *(See Annex A and B for English translation of a survey sample conducted with students and teachers)*

The seminaries and their denominations are as following:

Jamia Abu Hanafia, Peshawar	Deobandi
Jamia Junaidia, Peshawar	Barelvi
Jamia Asaria, Peshawar	Ahl-e-Hadith
Jamia Naeemia, Islamabad	Barelvi
Jamia-e-Muhammadia, Islamabad.	Deobandi

Meanwhile, during the visit for survey, the field researchers also interacted with students and teachers of the seminaries engaging them on a host of issues and learning about their broader intellectual environment. The findings of those observations are discussed in the section about observation, written by Dr. Qibla Ayaz.

Key Findings

- Pashtuns are overwhelmingly represented in the seminaries of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Islamabad. Madrassas provide them much better facilities than many would get back home, especially in conflict-affected KP and FATA.
- Madrassa students largely have a self-complacent and self-satisfactory behaviour in the education they receive. They are satisfied with their curriculum, the pedagogy, the teaching duration, the teaching purpose, among other things. Many of their post-noon activities, like forming circle with madrassa fellows, further take away the onerous task of critically reviewing issues.
- Instead, they deem themselves – the learned ones – superior to others. Moreover, they tend to develop an inward attitude in their lives. One of the topics they do not much discuss is about society and personal lives –reiterating how insular they might be.
- Students have less exposure with outside world. Already, madrassas are raised along sectarian lines, with teaching offered on sectarian lines. The people the students get intellectually inspired from also allude to sectarian undertones.
- Key topics they discuss over and over in several of their interaction are related to education, religion, global situation and politics. They discuss them with classmates, teachers, and social media friends.

For the students, these topics intersect. A madrassa student is by definition receiving education on religion; the survey identifies these two topics – religion and education – separately. Similarly, by discussing topics like politics and religion, it is clear that the students don't see them as separate enough. If for no other reason, the global situation of today, one of the topics they discuss, often touches upon their religion and even their madrassas.

- As much as the students have conformist attitude towards the education they receive, they otherwise form a somewhat diverse group of people, not least with reference to opinions beyond madrassas. The writers they follow or the magazines they read are not entirely uniform. While some read more radical writers, others favour the relatively moderate ones. As much as the thinking style of the students is same, their worldviews may vary, to some extent. Their opinions towards the key topics they discussed might also be diverse in totality.
- That most of the students selected Quran and Hadith as their favourite subjects might be because these subjects would brighten their career goals upon graduation; a reciter of Quran, for instance, easily gets hired as an imam. This way, the basis of their choice isn't much different than a university student, who struggle to enrol for degrees like applied science for its promising career opportunities. Most of the students surveyed are between 18 and 25 years, an age group of a student enrolled in bachelor's or master's program anywhere else.
- Students start their day with morning prayers, after which they study the curriculum, an activity lasting for, according to majority respondents, for eight hours. The studies usually end around *zuhar* (noon) prayers. Much of their extra-curriculum activities start at *asr* (afternoon) prayers, going all the way into *maghrib* (sunset or evening) prayers or *isha* (night-time) prayers.

Given that the time from *asr* onwards might vary from season to season - short hours in winters, for instance - there might be differences in exposure of students to extra-curriculum activities - less time in winter than in summer, for instance.

- Madrassa students have a strong bond with their teachers, reflective from the satisfaction of the students in the curriculum and teaching. The students are such a striking image of their teachers that the both groups have largely chosen same set of answers to the survey. Compared to university students, madrassa students interact more frequently with teachers.
- Because of such a critical role of teachers, it is advisable to engage more and more of them in shaping the minds of the students towards activities full of social harmony. To remind, teachers and administrators of the seminaries argue the madrassas are not involved in militancy; these teachers can ask students not to fall for radical literature even in their free time.

- While madrassa students are often portrayed as acting like somewhat alien from others, that might not be the complete case. For one, their preference for certain subjects show they might even be thinking along the same line as other students outside of seminaries are. Similarly, they too access social media, especially Facebook – as do others in general.
- Their political and ideological orientation also reflects those of Pakistani society in general. Students of the madrassas in the survey, for instance, access three mainstream Urdu newspapers published from Peshawar and Islamabad, suggesting that their sources of information are similar to the others. These students are, therefore, as much part of the society, good or bad. Many students follow those popular but radical writers whom any other Pakistani reader, outside of the seminary, would do, too. Once again, this reiterates that the madrassa students share something with the society in general, which on its own may be inclined to radical writers.

This position is consistent with PIPS earlier work: In 2009, it found that the political attitude of madrassas aligns with the mainstream political behaviour, and that the reconciliation at upper level can positively affect their behaviour, for instance.

- However, a significant number of students within those seminaries fall for radical newspapers and writers. One strong feature evident is how students opt for sect-based writers. Thus, students of Deobandi madrassa admire Deobandi scholars; Barelvi, theirs; so on. Such following comes out of the sectarian make-up of the seminaries.
- Similarly, while students for mainstream papers for day-to-day politics and reporting, when it comes to in-depth understanding of those events, they opt for detailed magazine reports – again, suggesting of sectarian tilts. All in all, there is an intellectual urge in them about contextualizing the events.

Observations from the fields

During the survey of five madrassas of diverse denominations, which ensued a lively discussion with the groups of teachers and students, it has come to surface that there exists a diversity of independent viewpoints on political, religious and sectarian issues within their ranks. This point was found intriguing and striking, because so far general impression has been that the madrassa teachers and students largely think alike.

The teachers and students were largely found satisfied with their curriculum, particularly the reading contents and the method of teaching. This satisfaction can safely be attributed to the fact that they are not exposed to other institutions and curricula, and hence they are deficient in comparative analysis of the curricula. Additionally, the madrassa students are continuously reminded about the special place of the pure religious education for pleasing the Great Lord, Allah and His last Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). The applications of the Quranic verses and sayings of the Prophet of Islam on elevated status of the learned ones (aalim, ulama) is generally restricted to the students and teachers of religious studies and more specifically to those studying in madrassas. This aspect has given rise to a certain level of narcissism in the madrassa environment. In some modern madrassas one can see posters, banners or boards with Quranic verses and sayings of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) in the praise of pure religious education.

It was found that in the menu of subjects, the students mainly opted for Holy Quran and Tafsir (Exegesis) and Hadiths of the Prophet of Islam, while very little interest is shown in Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), Kalam (Polemics), Mantiq and Falsafa (Logic and Philosophy) and subjects related to literature (Maani and Balagha). This is probably because of the peculiar division of the knowledge (ilm, ulum) prevailing within the madrassa system. They consider Quran and Hadith as the highest subjects (ulum-i-aaliya, with ayn), while rest of the disciplines are considered as supportive subject (ulum-i-aaliya, with hamza/maddah). But there can be another interpretation to this trend, which is more related to the prevailing situation on the ground. The learning of Holy Quran and Hadith is helpful in providing graduates (and even before

attaining graduation) with some sort (mostly private) placement/employment as an imam in a mosque or private tutor of the Holy Book. The other subjects are considered redundant for this purpose. But this aspect of finding is alarming. The neglect of the humanistic subjects (polemics, logic and philosophy) leads us to the growing eclipse of critical thinking in the religious circles and jumping on conclusion without challenging or analyzing the issues in the a critical perspective.

It has been also found that there is little attention to the subjects meant for promotion of literary taste. This was also evident from the poetic verses (ashaar) that they shared in the survey. Most of the poetry is on romantic religious themes with no verse on nature, human tender feelings and the agonies, sufferings and plight of the humanity. The deficiency in literary taste can have far reaching negative fallouts on the unfolding future scenarios on the national and global arenas.

The survey also leads to another finding on the lack of interest of the students in Fiqh. This subject is mainly responsible for guiding the Muslims in their general religious and mundane matters of all kinds. This subject is indeed very difficult, complex and time-demanding; nevertheless it is one of the most important subjects. The lack of interest can be explained that Fiqh is a subject requiring in-depth analytical skills and specific aptitude, but is not necessary for enabling the graduates for immediate placement/employment.

During the academic discourse and discussion with the teachers and students, it was revealed that they differ in minute details of diverse issues. However, there was consensus that Islam and Muslims are “under siege” by the West and that a great conspiracy exists to damage Islam and the Muslims. A kind of “West-phobia” is a common feature in the madrassas. This narrative is not part of their syllabus. This, in fact seems outcome of their post-noon engagements including their informal meetings and exchange of messages on social media.

The lack of critical thinking has made it necessary (although difficult) to engage them in a meaningful dialogue on such issues and encourage them for critical scrutiny of their worldview. Teaching of history as a subject does not exist on the menu of their reading contents. This has deprived them of “introspection” and hence it has become difficult for them to admit that mutual divisions, continuous infightings and end of the tradition of generation of new knowledge have been the dominant causes of the decline of the Muslims.

The survey and visits also reveals that the madrassa students have great respect for their teachers. This quality is worthy of praise from the point of view of the regional and eastern traditions; but on the other hand this is contributing to a negative aspect: the demise of independent thinking and self-reliance.

Recommendations

The survey leads us to a number of areas of engagement with the teachers and students of religious institutions:

- Civil society and think tanks should continuously find ways to coordinate with them and help them in getting exposed to the wider environment.
- Coordinate with the managers (*muhtamims/nazims*) of the madrassas and introduce them to different educational systems and educational traditions.
- Bring the teachers and students on board on diverse issues of national and global relevance.
- Arrange seminars/workshops in collaboration with them on wider societal themes.
- Keep them abreast with the prevailing situation in the world and encourage them for critical evaluation of unfolding events.
- Arrange debates for the students on critical issues and award them prizes and other incentives, encouraging them for general study on diverse subjects.
- Introduce them to poetry and poetic gatherings of distinguished poets.
- Arrange for them sport competitions and tournaments.
- Help them in academic discourse on critical issues of history, society and world affairs.
- Introduce to them at least basic themes of Psychology and its impact on human activity.
- Acquaint them with healthy co-curricular and post-noon activities (such as book reading, indoor and outdoor sports, study trips, poetry competitions and essay competitions).
- Focus on teachers of the madrassas as they can tremendously influence their students for an effective and positive societal role.

Image Gallery

















Survey Response

Personal background

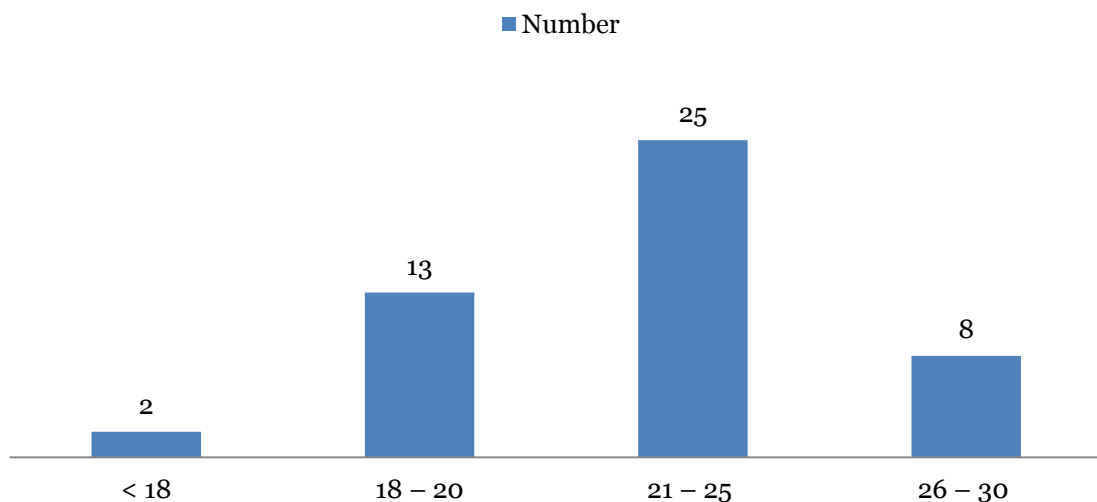
Age group

Most of the students the study approached were in their early adult lives.

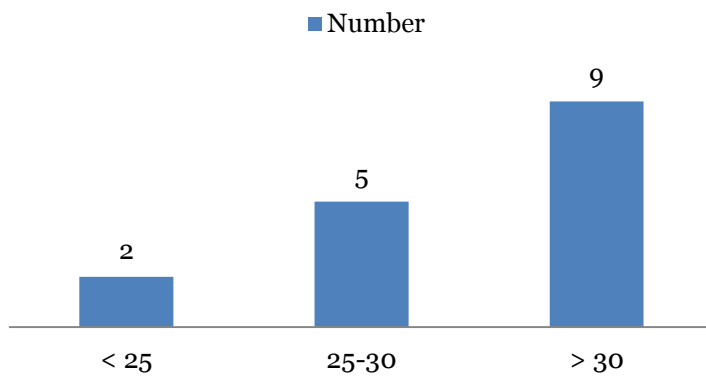
Of the fifty students, twenty-five, half of the total, were between 21 and 25 years, and when added with the age group between 18 to 20 years, the number of students jumps to 38. Only two were below 18 years or above 30 years of age.

Majority of these students are therefore equivalent to the students enrolled in a normal bachelors program anywhere in the world, a four-year undertaking. The world over, these are the students who have just left behind secondary-tier of school for the tertiary one, after which majority will start their professional careers.

Age group of students



Age group of teachers



Most of the teachers are above the age of 30. While most of the students have to start their professional lives, many of the teachers are those who have just started them off.

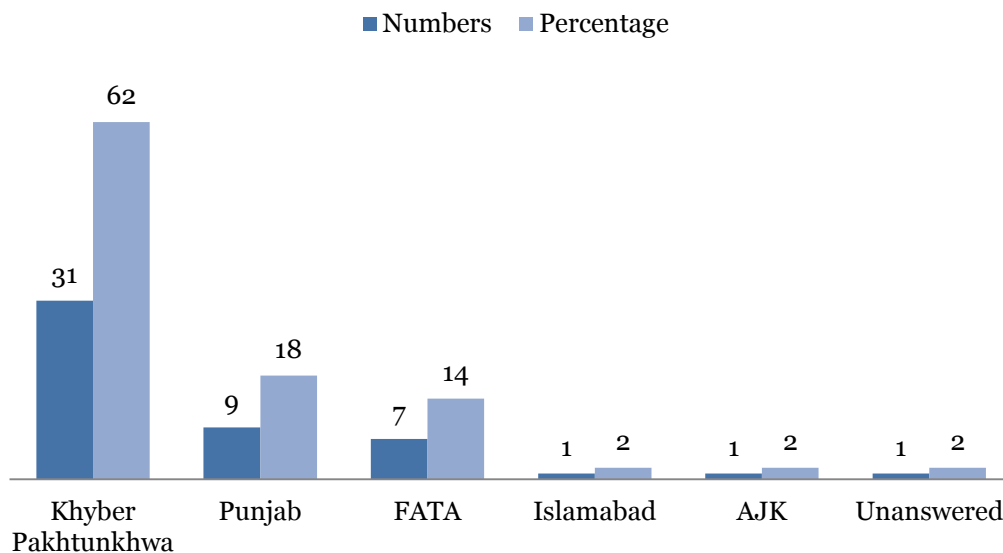
Provincial affiliation

Most of the students in the seminaries surveyed hail from Pashtun areas.

The forms were nearly equally distributed among five seminaries in Peshawar and Islamabad. 27 of the students were surveyed in Peshawar, while 23 study in Islamabad.

Of these 50, Pashtuns are disproportionately enrolled: 38 are from Pashtun-populated Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA, making them around 76 per cent of the total. They are followed by 9 students from Punjab.

Provincial affiliation of students

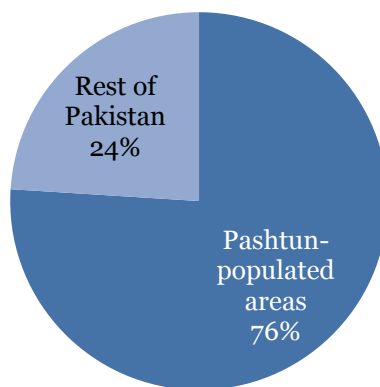


All in all, not only do Pashtun-domiciled students form the largest group in the seminaries of Peshawar, a Pashtun area, they also enjoy significant presence in the seminaries of Islamabad, which otherwise is closer to Punjab.

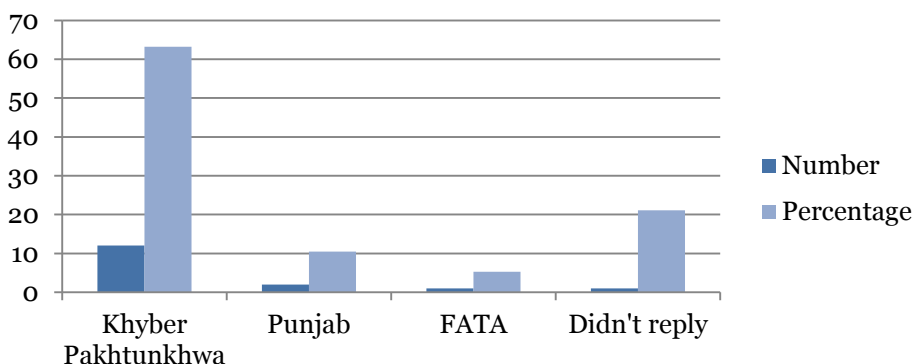
The enrolment of Pashtuns in Islamabad could be indicative of their higher enrolment in seminaries in general across the country. A more thorough study or cross-examination may be required. A more specific reason could be Islamabad’s own changing demographic build-up, to where many Pashtuns, especially from conflict-affected areas, have migrated. For a student from KP or FATA, life is much secure in Islamabad than in their ancestral towns. Madrassas in Islamabad provide the students from KP relatively better facilities than they would have back home.

By comparison, because Punjab is already rich in madrassas, students from that province don’t need to travel all the way to Islamabad.

Students from Pashtun areas vs. rest



Provincial affiliation of teachers



As with students, so with teachers: most of them are from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in this case, because many of the madrassas selected were from KP

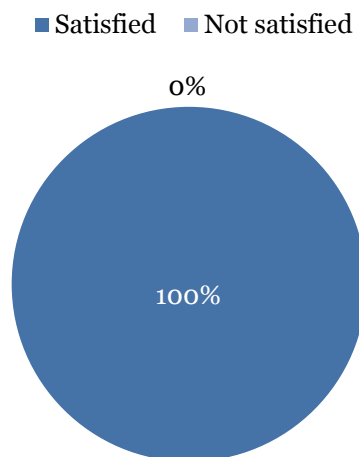
Curriculum

Satisfaction with the subjects

Students were unanimously satisfied with the subjects taught to them at the seminaries. Not a single student, from the 50, marked dissatisfaction.

These students clearly value high their curriculum. One of the reasons could be because the curriculum, to them, offers all the content they would require.

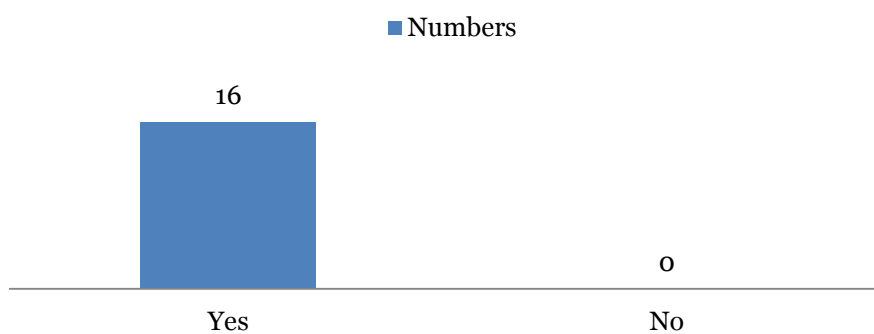
Students' satisfaction with the subjects



But when their answer is assessed in light of answers to other similar questions, to be followed, as well as to expert's visits to the seminaries, it appears that the students' satisfaction from the curriculum is also driven from their self-complacent behaviour. Having little exposure of other content, they are unable to critically review their syllabus and therefore, have little knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in their own curriculum. Instead, as experts found, the students are messaged into believing that they, being the learned ones, are superior to the unlearned ones, implying that they are better than those outside. This messaging feeds into developing a narcissist attitude.

Many of their post-classroom activities reinforce their self-satisfactory thinking: Madrassa students sit regularly together, in a circle, discussing several things. Such engagements bring with them peer pressure as well as in-group thinking. The students of the madrassas end up having a conformist attitude towards their own curriculum.

Are teachers satisfied from the subjects?



All the teachers who responded, like students, are satisfied with the courses they teach. There is not a single answer in the negative.

Favourite subjects

Most of the students selected those subjects as their favourites that could brighten their professional goals, besides being relatively easier to comprehend, opposed to those that beside being complex don't promise career opportunities that easily.

Each student could select more than one subject. Around 26 students, or 52 percent, chose the Quran and the Exegesis (Tafseer) as their favourite subjects. This was followed by 19 students who chose their favourites the subjects of Hadith or Usul-e-Hadith,⁴ related to the sayings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). In total, the two subjects came out as among the favourites of 45 students. (To be sure, many of these 45 students chose others too.)

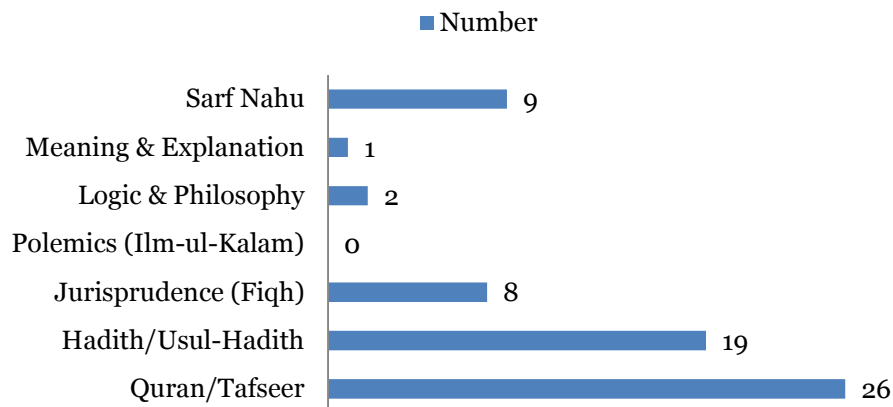
Yet, mere 8 students chose Jurisprudence (Fiqh) as one of their favourites; 2 chose Logic and Philosophy, while not a single one Polemics (Ilm-ul-Kalam).

⁴ The science of authentication and interpretation of the prophetic traditions that usually entails the study of hadith compilation, preservation, classification, terminology and interpretation, etc.

Subjects related to primary sources like Quran enable the students for clerical jobs at the mosques. Memorizing or reciting the Quran increases their chances of being imam, whose duties include leading prayers in the mosques, leading prayers in the month of fasting, or offering *duas* or prayers at different social events like weddings or deaths, besides being able to teach the Holy Book to students of the neighbourhood. All these activities can be performed by someone who had learnt or memorized the Quran.

Subjects related to humanistic studies like philosophy and logic, which could spark critical thinking among them, are shown little interest. Similarly, jurisprudence which should facilitate them in guiding the society, has less students when compared with the top two. These subjects arguably require extra effort in understanding, the expert of this study argues, adding that these subjects may not necessarily help the students in finding immediate workplace; hence, the cumulative interest towards them is little.

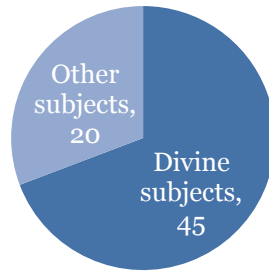
Students' favourite subjects in Dars-e-Nizami



The choice of the students is therefore, by this reasoning, not different than students outside madrassas. They too, often opt for subjects like applied sciences, which are professionally rewarding. Because the madrassa students are mostly in their early 20s, it is reasonable to assume that many of them might be planning after they had graduated from the madrassas.

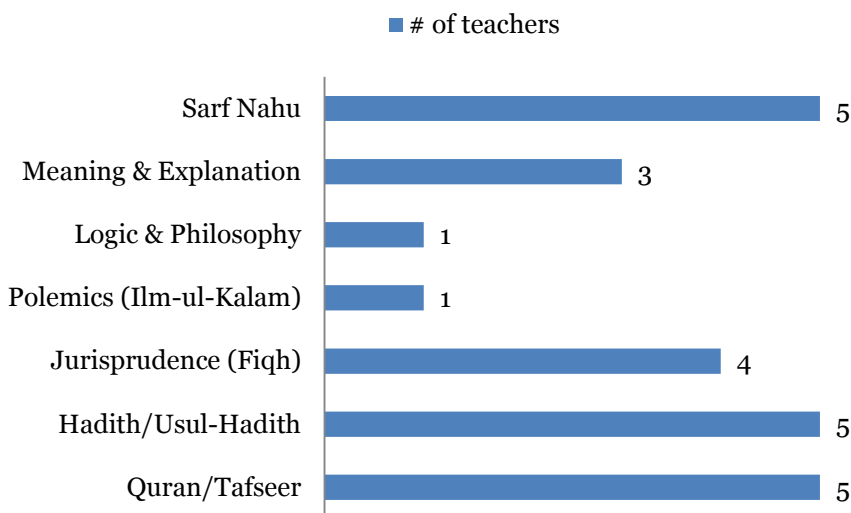
Additionally, experts argue, by focusing more on the subjects meant for their professional advancement, students of the seminaries are more insular in their worldview.

Divine v/s man-made education



Interestingly, while the society relies on the local clerics, like imams, for advice on social choices, it appears not all of those clerics might have much interest about those issues. That dichotomy may well explain how local-level clerics, devoid of understanding nuances taught by jurisprudence, may interpret religion in a narrow manner, sparking controversy. After all, while Quran and Hadith outline the basic principles of social interaction, the details about their modalities are the domain of the Jurisprudence.

Which subjects are favourites of the teachers?



The subjects favoured by the teachers are more or less similar to the students' ones, except that there is one selection of Polemics (Ilm-ul-Kalam) among 19 teachers, especially when you contrast with how none of the 50 chose it.

Intellectual satisfaction

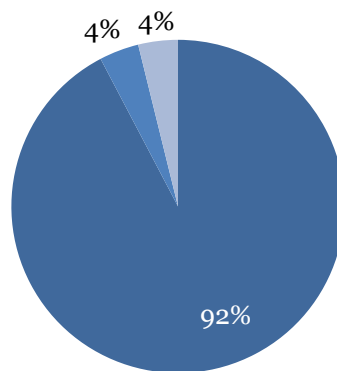
An overwhelming majority were satisfied that the curriculum catered to their mental and intellectual needs.

46 students answered in the affirmative, making them 92percent of the total. Only 2 students didn't find the curriculum helping in their mental needs. 2 others didn't want to respond.

When read in relation to one of the previous questions, about satisfaction with the subjects, clearly, there is broad endorsement of the subjects being taught.

Curriculum befitting mental needs

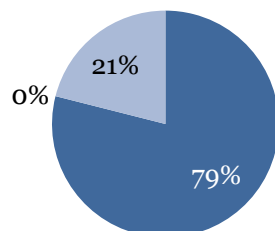
■ Yes ■ No ■ Didn't reply



What about teachers: Are they satisfied?

Courses befitting intellectual needs

■ Yes ■ No ■ Didn't reply



Like their students, teachers too find the subjects addressing their intellectual needs. Unlike 2 dissenting voices among the students, there was none about the teachers.

Course duration

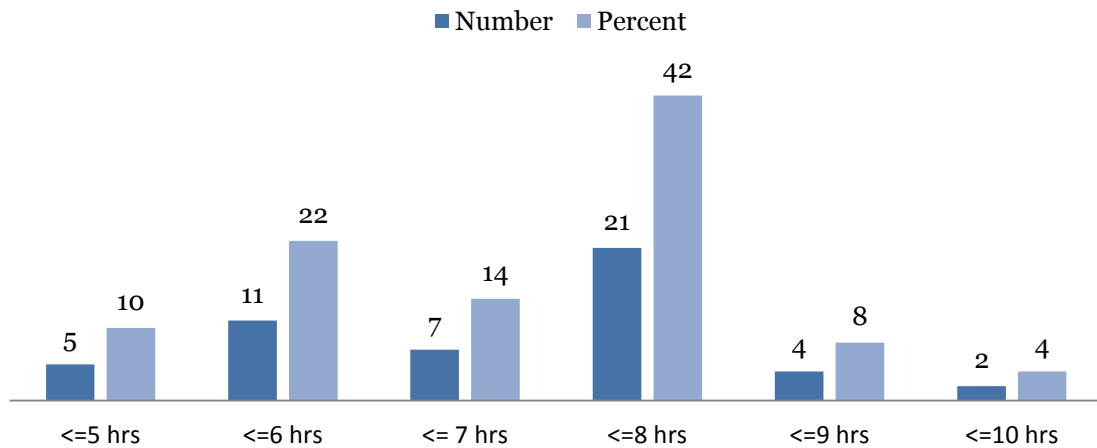
The time allocated for students to study the courses normally touches eight hours a day or one-third of a day.

Around 42percent of the students calculated their study hours at around 8 hours. Others found them at around 5, 6, or 7 hours. Taken together, around 88 percent of

the students, or 44 of the 50 students, think they study for 8 hours or less than that.

Very few students found their studying hours at around 9 hours or 10 hours. The slight variation could be because of different policies at different madrassas.

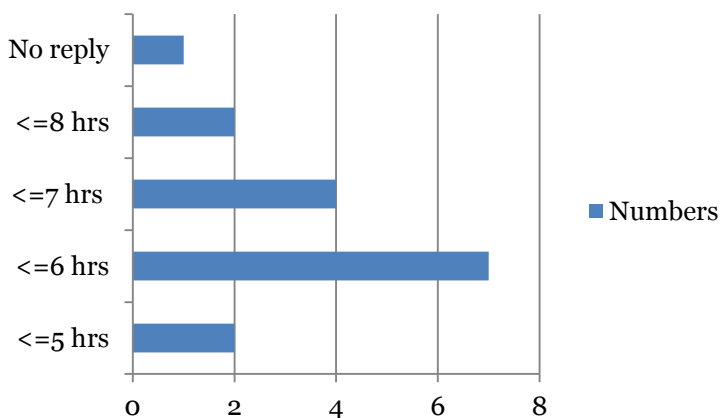
Time allocated for studying/teaching the course



The “eight hour” figure, which the majority chose, shows that most of the students have full-time working day. One-third of their entire day is therefore committed to studying.

Usually, they start studying the courses after morning prayers in the dawn, going all the way to the afternoon prayers. Compared with students of private or public schools, seminary students start early and, therefore, finish early, leaving more than half of the day to engage in non-curriculum activities too.

What do teachers say about teaching duration?



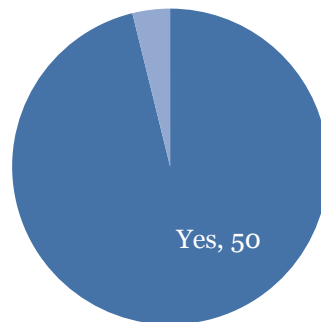
Interestingly, most of the teachers think the teaching duration is largely less than or equal to 6 hours. (Students thought it's around 8 hours, mostly). The difference could be because, as one respondent pointed out, that the teachers took into account the non-educational hours, like recesses, while the students also added the them in the studying hours.

Satisfaction with studying duration

As with other similar questions, in this case too, an overwhelming majority of the students, 48 of 50, are satisfied with the time allocated for studying, making them as 96 per cent of the total. Only 2, or 4 per cent, are dissatisfied.

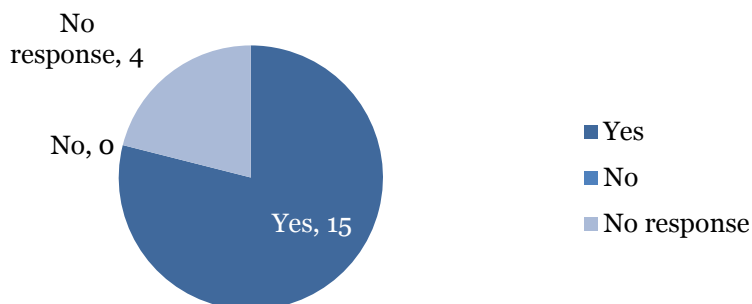
Students in the seminaries have little objection to what is taught and how much is it taught. They either deem everything to be perfect or are unable or unwilling to express reservations about their teachers or what they teach - a point made earlier, too.

Are you satisfied with studying duration?



Broadly stating, this also shows their sense of satisfaction from the teacher and obedience to him. This 'subservient' attitude of the student is considered as a key pillar of their duty as a student. According to the experts looking after this study, the students in the madrassas are continuously taught how to be respectful to their teachers. This respect often takes the form a student massaging head or feet their teachers.

Satisfaction with teaching duration



All the teachers who responded to the question are satisfied with the teaching duration, even more than the students were.

Extra-curricular activities

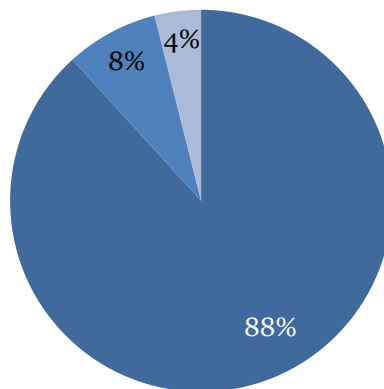
Extra-curricular activities in madrassas

When asked as to whether their madrassas offers co-curricular activities, most responded in the affirmative, with a few suggesting otherwise.

44 students said their madrassas provide co-curricular activities, totalling to 88 per cent. Only a few, 4, said the madrassas don't do so.

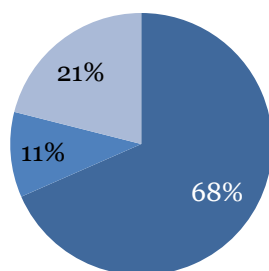
Madrassas offering extra-curricular activities?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Didn't answer



What do teachers say?

■ Yes ■ No ■ No reply



Again, an overwhelming majority, at least in numbers, pointed out that the madrassas do provide for co-curricular activities. Percentage-wise, however, there is a difference of 3% between students who said the madrassas do provide and the teachers who said so.

Type of activities after curricular instructions

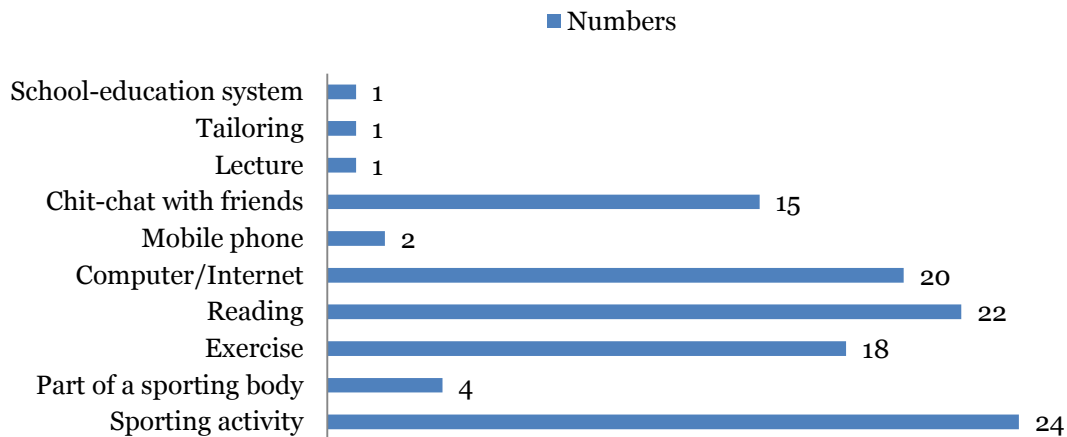
Most of the students are engaged in sporting activity, reading, using computer, or merely chit-chatting with their friends after their curricular activities.

Around 24 chose that they are engaged in sporting activity, though only 4 of them are part of formal sporting body. Many students, around 22, spend their post-classroom time in reading. Pointedly, a single student might have these multiple activities after the classroom.

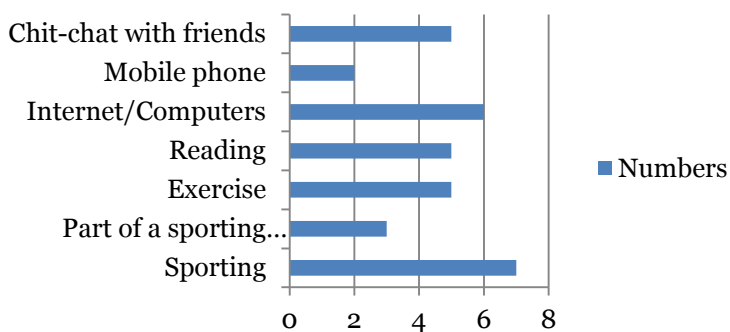
As many as 20 are busy with internet or computers, too, showing their propensity towards modern technology.

Their list of activities are not much dissimilar than students of other schools, except that the seminary students have less inclination towards mobile and probably more towards reading.

Types of activities after studies



What do teachers say?



Again, the findings are similar to the students': majority opt for sporting, followed by different set of activities including internet/computers, reading, exercise.

Duration for extra-curricular activities

The duration for students to engage in extra-curricular activities after curriculum hours, largely is more than 1 hour.

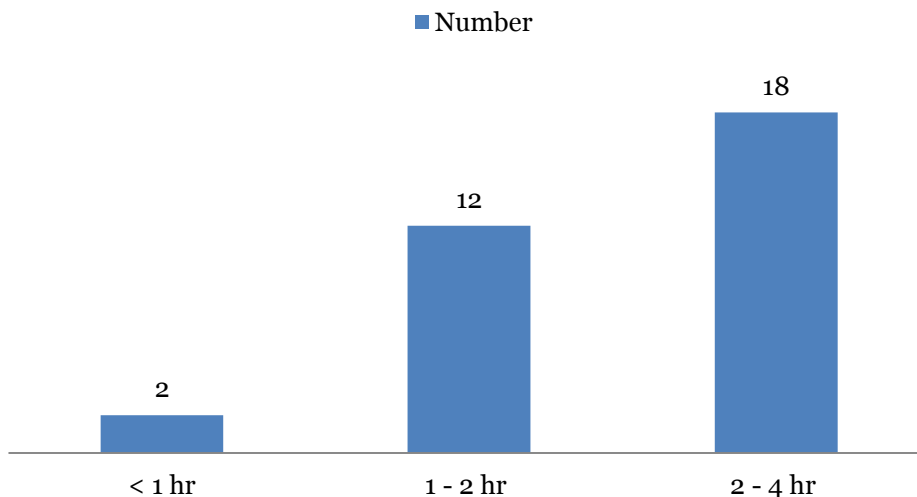
An overwhelming number of students responded that they engaged in such activities after *asr* (afternoon) prayers, leading either to *maghrib* (sunset) or all the way to *isha* (post-evening or night-time) prayers.

Given that the time from *asr* onwards might vary from season to season - short hours in winters, for instance - there might be differences in exposure of students to extra-curriculum activities - less time in winter than in summer, for instance. In winters, for instance, they might be forced to take retreat in their dormitories than in summers.

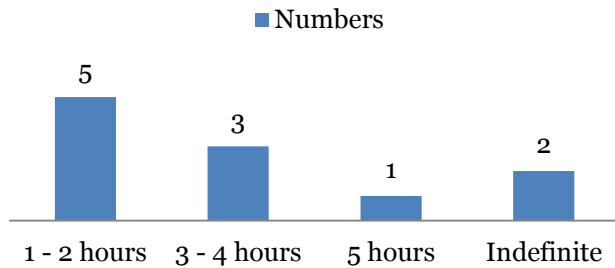
One of the intervention timing is therefore after *asr* prayers, taking into account the seasonal variation. It is during those times that students are mostly engaged in other activities like sports, reading, chit-chat, described above.

The picture that emerges is this: students of the seminaries study from early morning to mostly noon prayers (*zuhar*). After *asr*, they are engaged in extra-curricular activities. Between *zuhr* and *asr*, they are free or taking rest. That could also be explored.

Time for extra-curricular activities



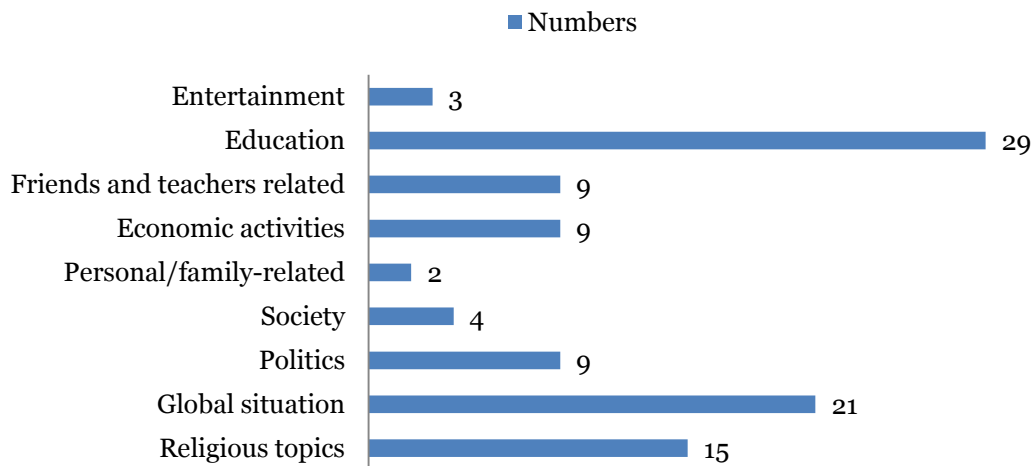
What do teachers say?



There is variation between whether the duration mostly crosses 2 hours, as many students say, or stay less than that, as teachers put it. One of the reason behind the variation is the time left after asr prayers for the students to engage in extra-curricular. This duration fluctuates, if for no other reason, than because of season, with short hours in winter and long in summer.

Topics discussed with friends

Topics discussed with friends



The students mostly discussed issues related to education, global situation, and religion.

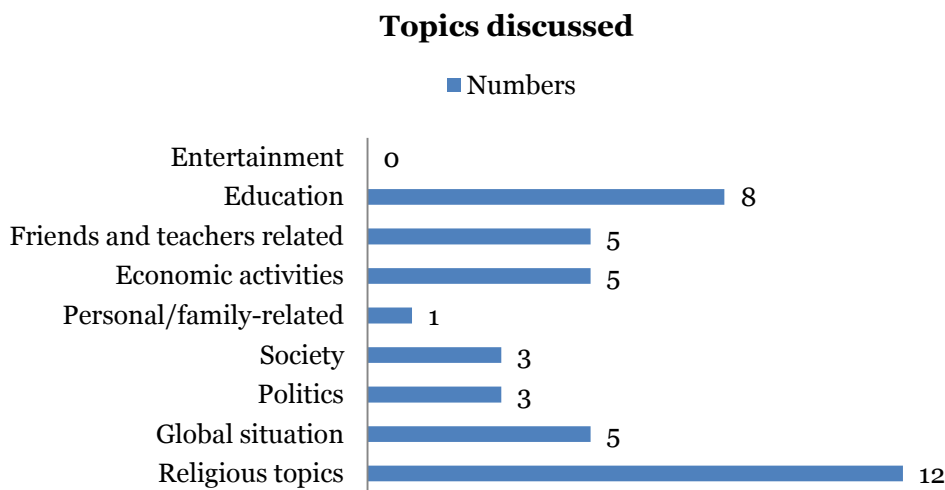
Being students of religious seminaries, it is understandable why they would touch upon education and religious topics. 29 chose education and 15, religious theme. At times, the topics in these broad themes do intersect: to the students of a seminary, education is a religious obligation, and learning about religion is education.

At the same time, they seem actively interested in global situation, partly because of how students think they or their religion has been centre of attention. Around 21 students choose of discussing global situation too, among other topics.

They rarely touch their personal or family issues. Only 2 students thought they do so in their day-to-day conversation. By this reckoning, they touch many issues around them, except themselves. Once again, this reiterates other findings, that the students are introvert, unable to put the situation around them for critical review. Strikingly, even society is discussed in less number, reiterating the earlier findings how insular they are, focusing more on themselves.

Clearly, the areas they chose – religion, education, and global politics – are the ones in which they can be engaged with.

What do teachers say?



As with many others, so with this: teachers discuss same topics as are discussed by students. 12 teachers chose they discuss religious topics in their conversation, among other topics.

Political affiliation

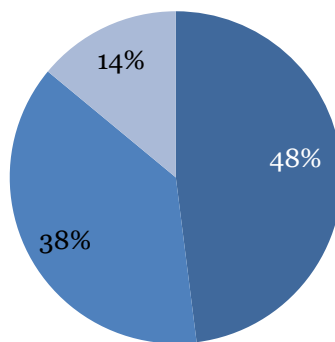
Around 48% of the students, 24 in total, admitted they are affiliated with political, sectarian, or religious party.

This is a high number by Pakistani standards. If anything, voter turnout often stands in the 40%. By one angle, the response of the seminary students is reflection of Pakistani society that their political enthusiasm is along the lines of what normally exists in Pakistan.

However, very few openly spoke about the party they are affiliated with. Several admitted of being affiliated or supportive of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, a Deobandi Islamist party, which participates in mainstream politics. Again, the political choice isn't different than the mainstream Pakistan, although their political preference is largely towards religious party. As to those who are members of the parties, they spend need-based time with time.

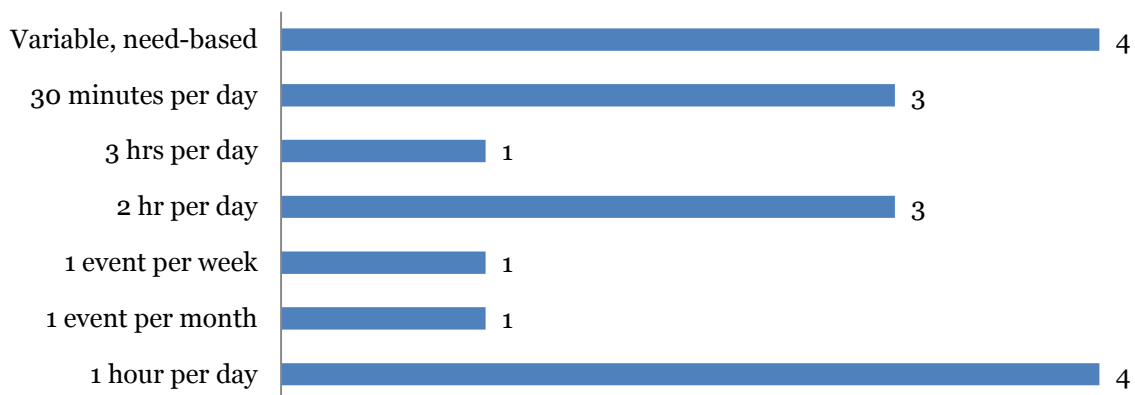
Affiliation with political parties

■ Yes ■ No ■ No response



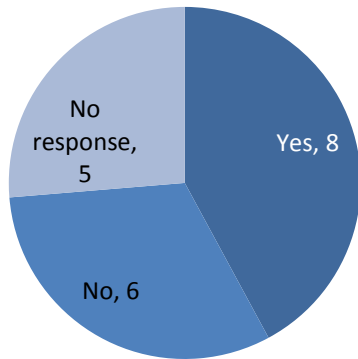
Time spent on political activity

■ Numbers

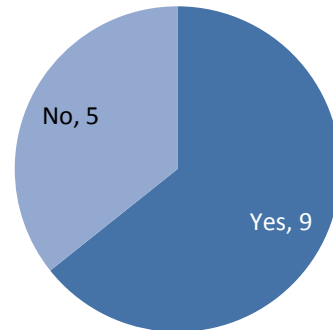


What teachers say about political participation?

Affiliated with political parties



Permission to affiliate with parties



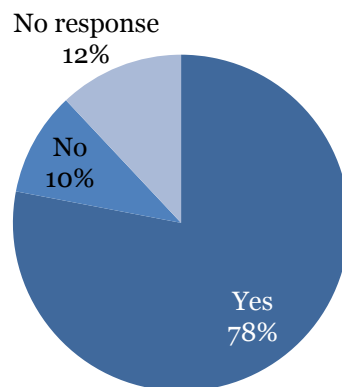
Social media

Usage of social media

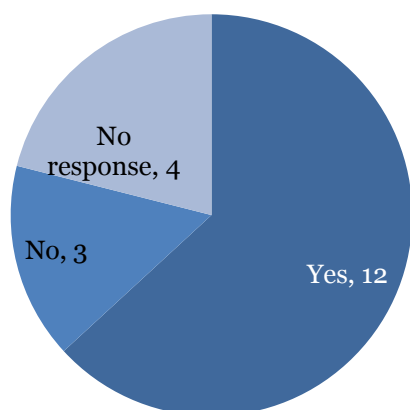
A significant majority, around 78%, use social media. Only 10% don't use them at all.

That the 10% don't use them should be surprising, given that basic social media tools like SMS are popular widely. Those who don't rely therefore might have deliberately cut off from the social media.

Students using social media



How teachers use social media?



Teachers, like students, too overwhelming use social media. Only 4 said they don't - a figure worth exploring, pointing to the presence of teachers who might not be comfortable with the social media.

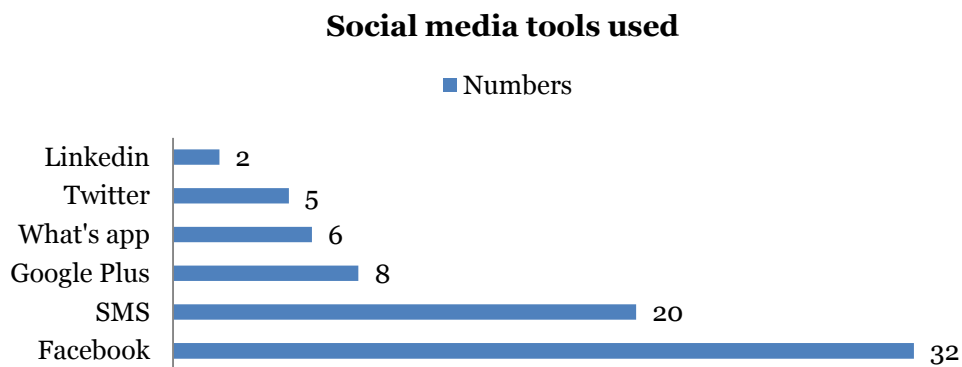
Social media tools - types

Majority of them use Facebook followed by SMS. A significant 32 students use Facebook as one of their social media tools. Other notables include SMS by 20 students.

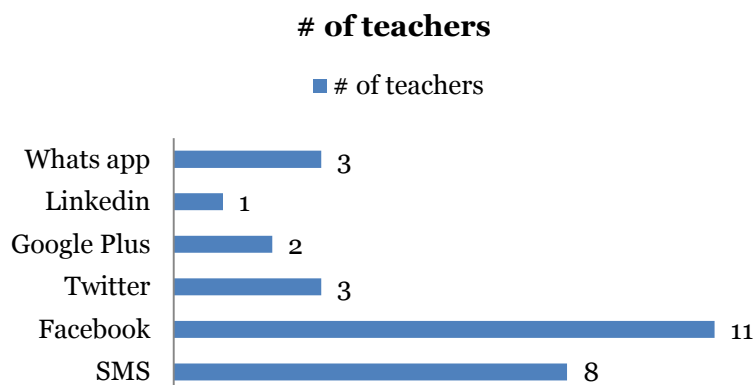
SMS is relatively old and common, accessible to anyone with mobile phone; their usage of that tool is therefore understandable, given that many Pakistanis would be doing so.

But Facebook is newer and accessible through internet connection and computer. That the seminary students use Facebook shows they have options similar to many other Pakistanis.

These two channels could be utilized effectively, engaging with them, after the classroom hours.



What about teachers - which tool they use?

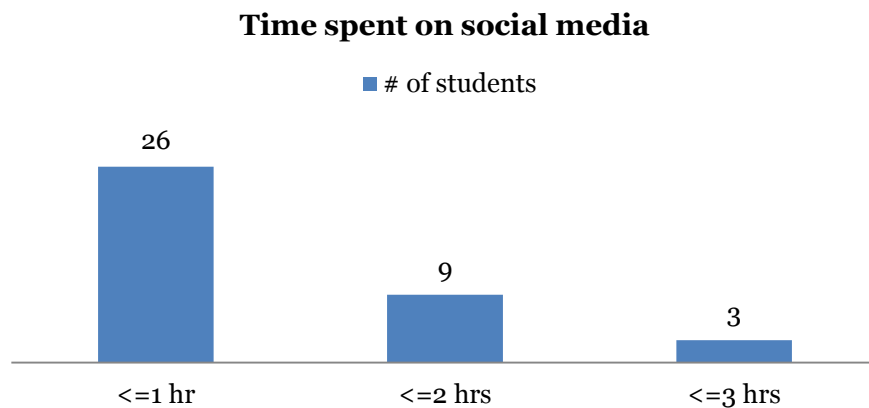


Again, majority of teachers, like students, use Facebook followed by SMS.

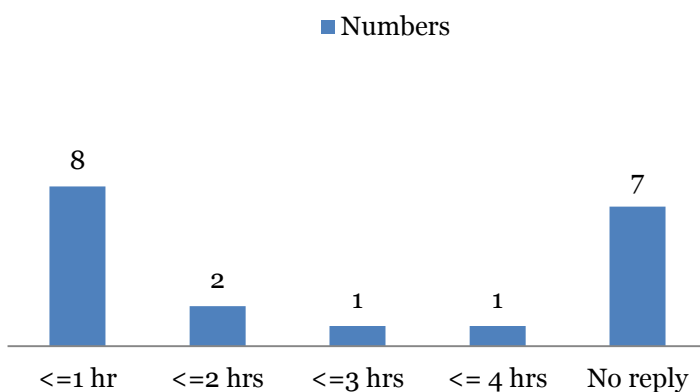
Time spent on social media

Majority of the students, 26, use social media for less than 1 hour. Their consumption is for limited time period, after classrooms, when they get time and have the need.

There are others, around 9 students, who use for around 2 hours and yet others, around 3 students, consuming social media for three years.



How much time do teachers spend on social media?



Majority of teachers, like students, use social media for less than or equal to 1 hour. Similar consumption pattern was observed with students.

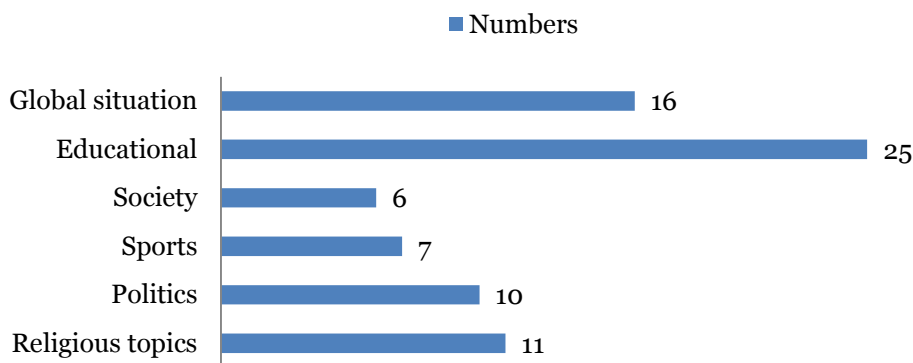
Topics discussed on social media

As with the topics they discussed in extra-curricular activities, so with the topics they discuss on social media. Majority of the students, 25, discuss educational issues, followed by global situation, with 16 students, and religious topics, with 10 students.

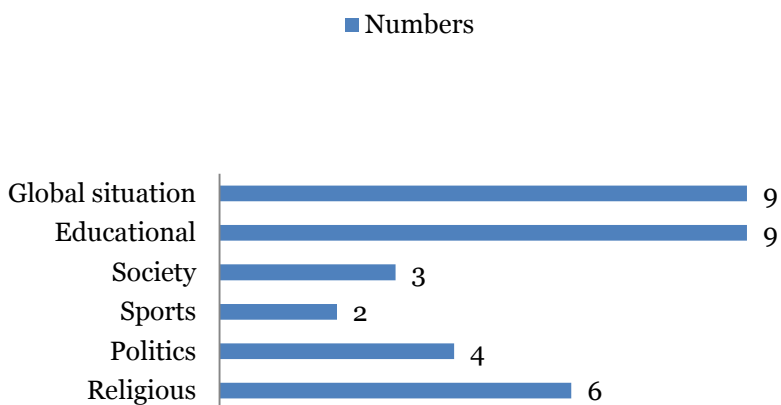
To recall, the issues under educational and religious are often intertwined. If the two are combined, the total number of students discussing such topics is 36. What distinct them are the topics related to global situation, with 16, and politics with 10 students. Collectively, the two are discussed by 26 students who might be discussing other topics too.

Expert of this study argue that the worldview of these students has been shaped by social media. This is where they need to be engaged.

Topics discussed on social media



Which topics do teacher discuss?

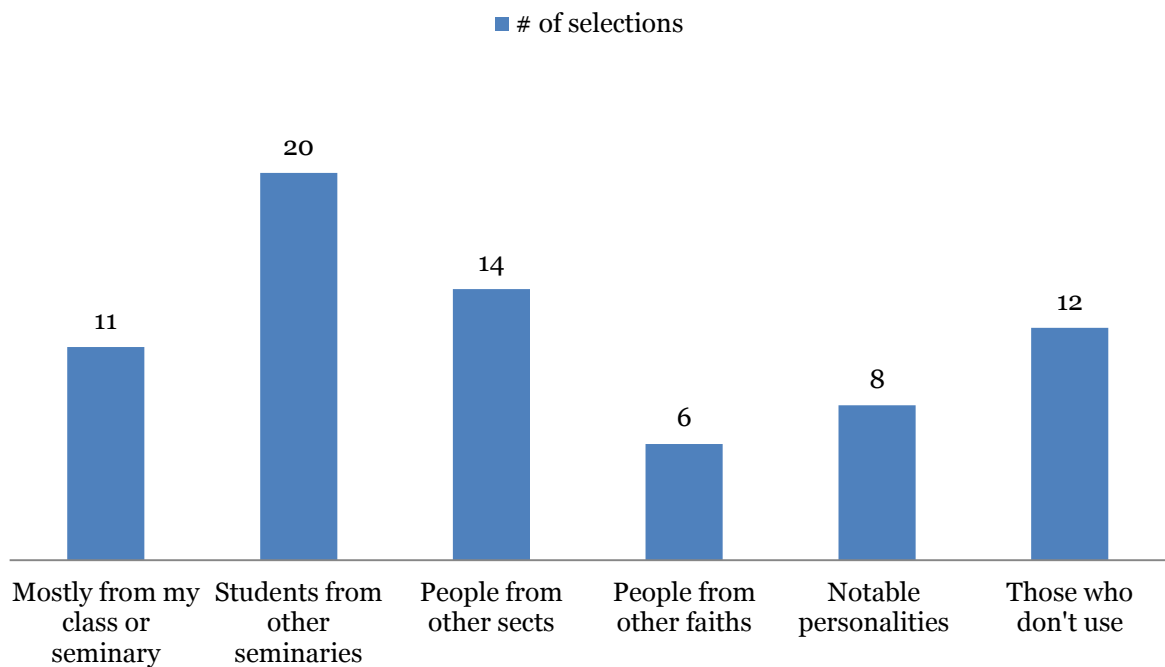


Teachers mostly discuss educational topics as well as global situation, followed by religious ones and politics. These are much along the lines of what students do, too.

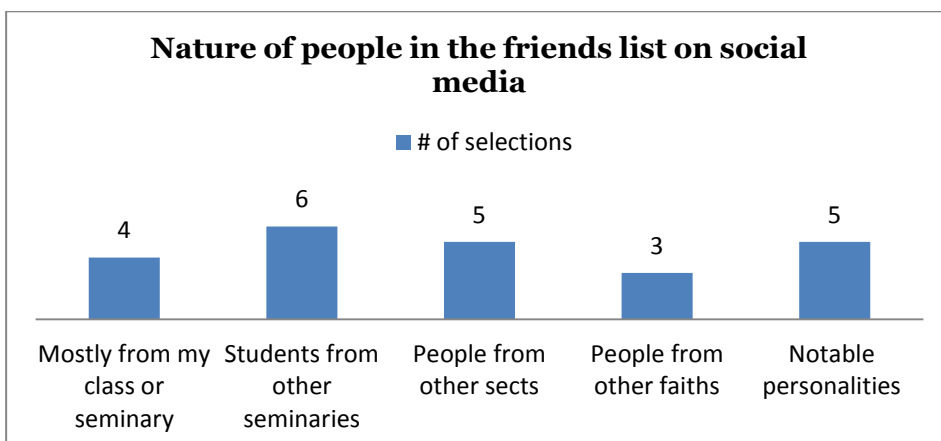
Nature of friends on social media

Students of the madrassas mostly engage with their friends from the same classroom or others in the same seminaries. There are others however who engage with people from other sects or religion, too.

**Nature of friends on social media
(based on selective calculation)**



How about teachers - who is in their friends list?



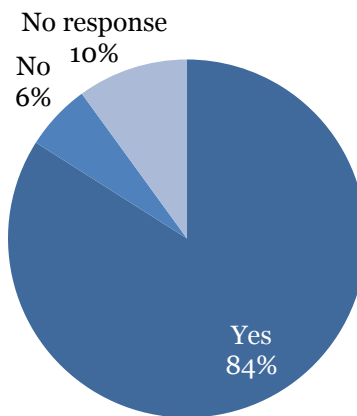
Teachers engage with several people, including members of other sects and other seminaries. However, their engagement with people of other faiths is the least.

Access to media

Newspapers

Around 42 students, or 84 percent, read newspapers on a regular basis. 3 students don't read them at all. 4 didn't reply at all (while 1 was not properly entered.)

Students accessing newspaper



As of those reading the newspapers, majority – around 16 – opt for Daily *Mashriq*, an Urdu newspaper published from Peshawar.

Another 13 Daily *Aaj*, published from Peshawar; followed by 13 selections of *Aaj*, also published from Peshawar. Around 10 student tick-marked *Jang*, an Urdu newspaper published from major cities including Peshawar and Islamabad.

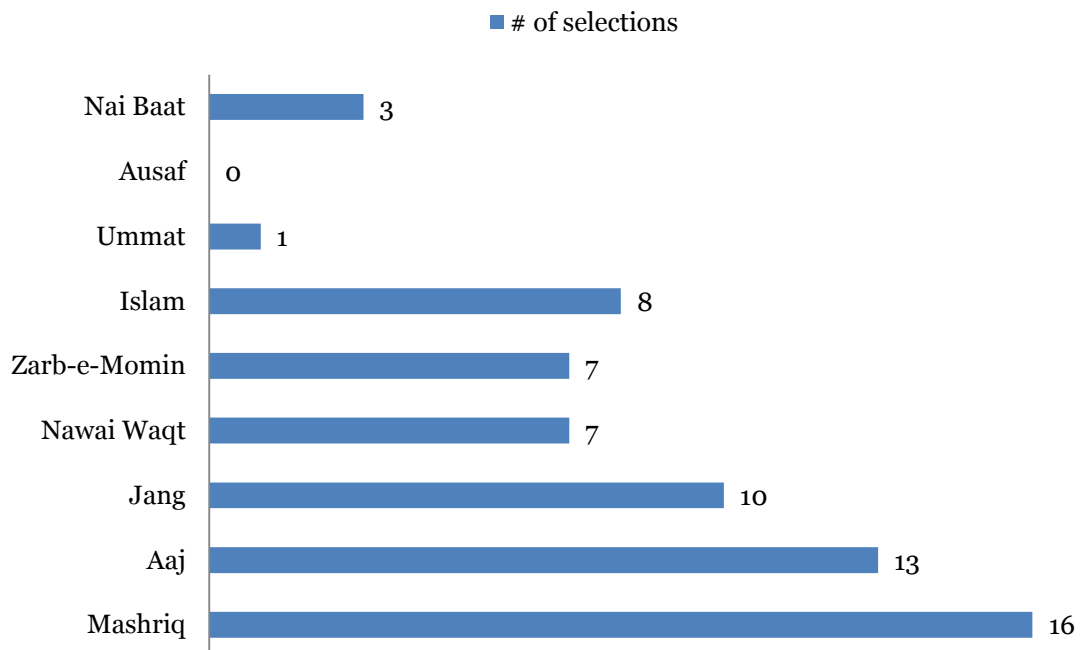
Jang, *Mashriq*, and *Aaj* are all leading and popular newspapers but are not much intellectually stimulating.

That the students access *Mashriq* and *Aaj* speak about the preference priority of society in general; many Pashtuns from Peshawar read *Aaj*. In fact, *Aaj* and *Mashriq* are leading local newspapers. Thus, their choices are those of society in general. Their sources of information are similar to those in the mainstream (similar to their usage of social media.) Arguably, the students are, in a way, part of the mainstream. Seen from this angle, it is rather the mainstream, the society per se, that shares the same views as those of the madrassas, which are often blamed for extremism.

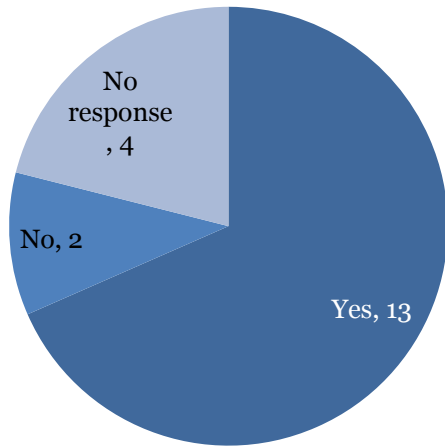
A significant number of students within those seminaries that fall for radical newspapers like *Zarb-e-Momin*, around 7 students. That these students fall for such papers are causes of alarm, which must be taken care of. Newspapers like *Islam* and *Zarb-e-Momin* are not easily accessible. Yet, students in the seminary get hold of those papers.

At the same time, what it also reflects is that there are differing views within the seminary, with some going for mainstream papers - with its own intellectual issues - while others opting for a more direct extreme outlet.

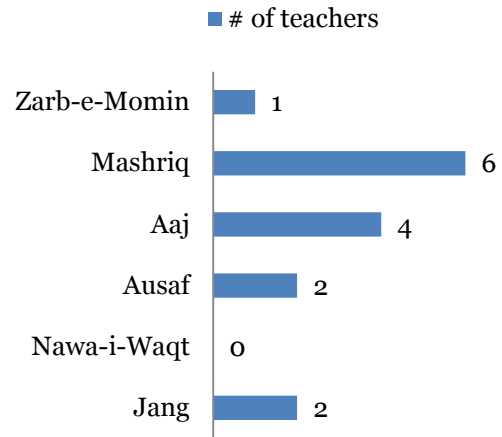
Students choice of newspapers



What teachers read?



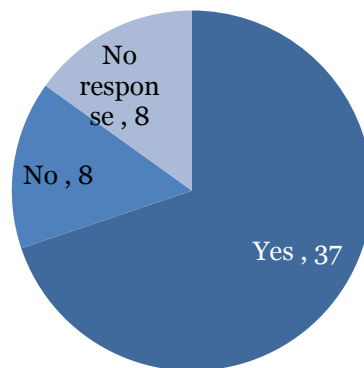
Newspapers of choice



Magazines

AS with newspapers, so with magazines: Majority of the students regularly read them. Around 37 go through them. Only 8 students didn't reply in the affirmative, and 8 didn't reply at all.

Students accessing magazines/journals



The magazines opted by the students are quite diverse in nature. The list of their selection is quite exhaustive, as the table shows.

With 7 students, majority selected of reading *Al-Haq*. This is followed by 6 students who go through *Haq Char Yar*, a radical outlet.

The next to follow is *Al-Sharia* and *Fikr-o-Nazr* with 3 readers; *Saheefa-e-Ahl-e-Hadith*, too, has 3 readers among the respondents.

Many students opt for magazines falling on two different sides. While *Al-Sharia* and *Fikr-o-Nazr* promote rational discussion, *Haq Char Yar* is a radical sectarian publication. That the students go for such different publications show seeds of polarization within the seminaries. At the same time, it shows there is no uniformity in their opinions.

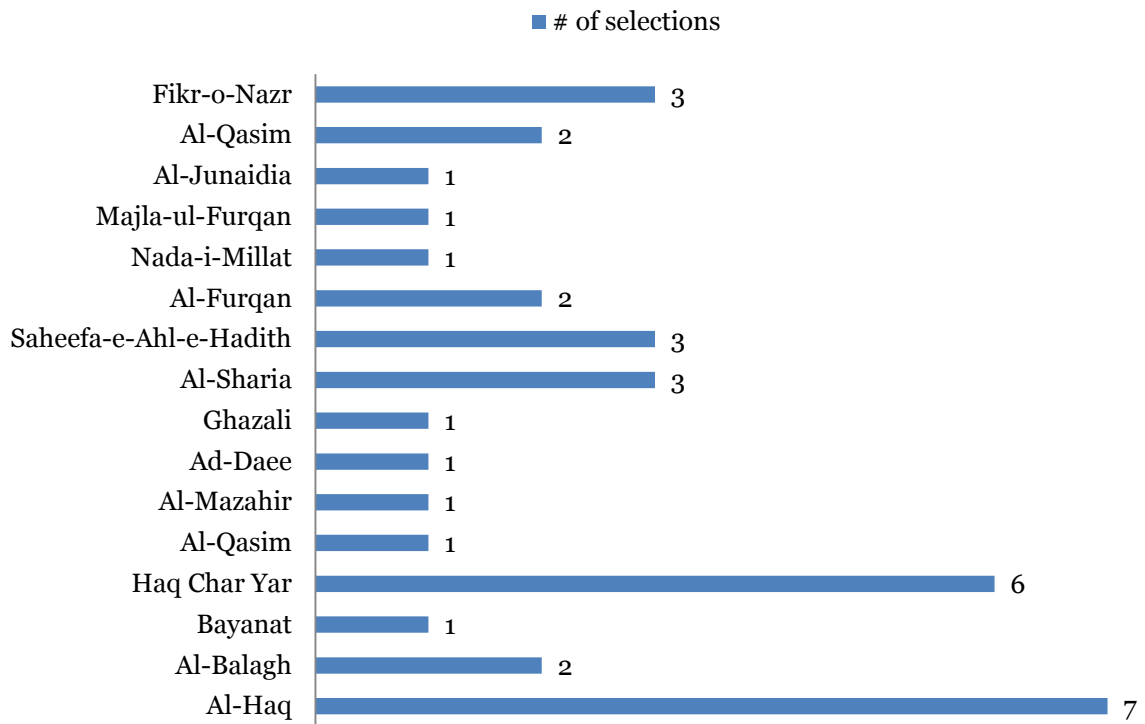
This internal diversity is basically a reflection of diverse political and sectarian affiliation. A reason the magazines' choice list is so exhaustive is because students chose magazines of their sectarian affiliation. *Saheefa-e-Ahl-e-Hadith*, for instance, espouses Ahl-e-Hadith ideology.

When the choice of students for magazine is compared with their choice of newspaper, one thing is clear: while they go for mainstream papers for day-to-day politics and reporting, when it comes to in-depth understanding of those events, they opt for understanding in light of their sectarian or political linkage. For sure, even within them, some falling for moderate journals and others for more radical ones.

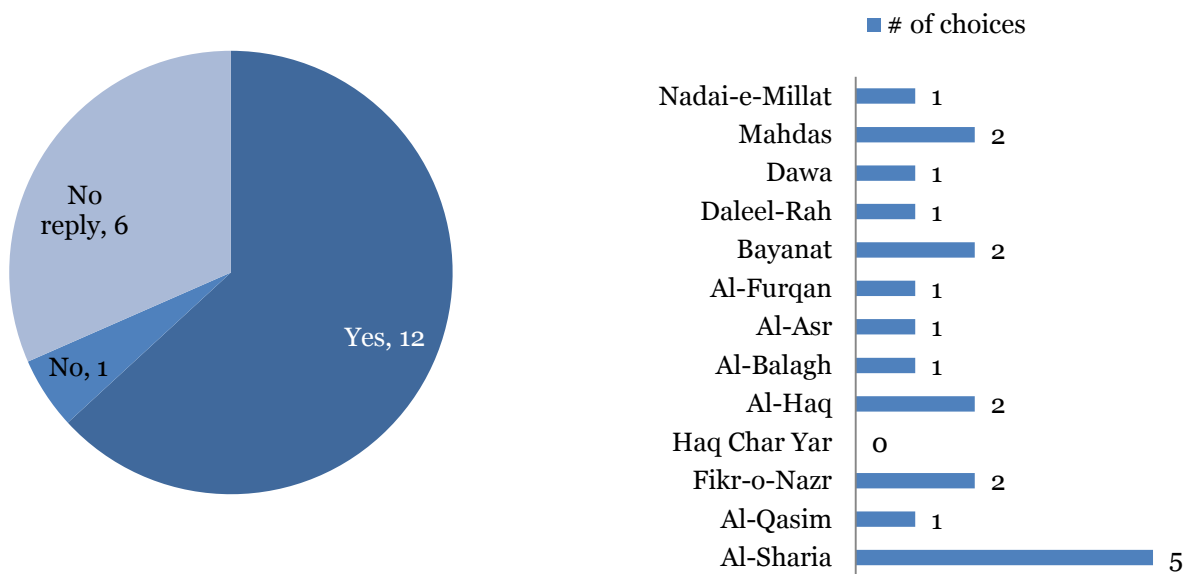
All in all, this shows the appetite for students to understand the context and causes. This appetite can be filled by working with the moderate journals.

Their interest in politics encourages civil society to remain engaged with them in order to develop their critical evaluation of issues.

Students choice of magazine



What teachers read?



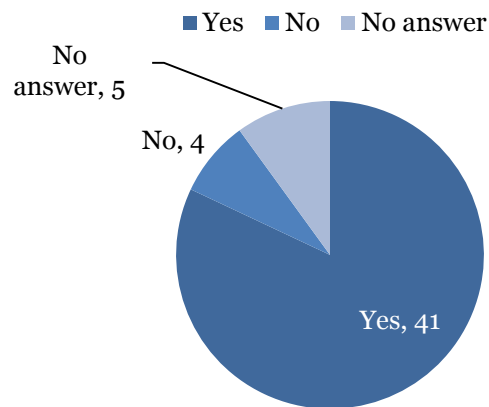
Teacher-student engagement

A significant number of 41 students interact with teachers. Only 4 said they don't, while 5 didn't answer.

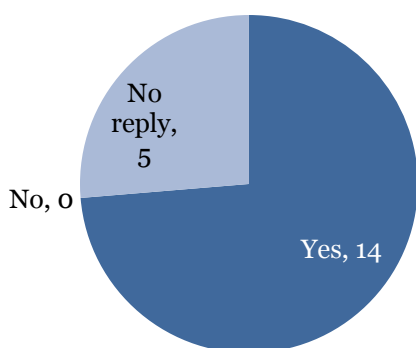
Clearly, a large number of students interact with their teachers. Compared to these students, students in universities have less interaction with the teachers, who themselves are less accessible after office hours. But in madrassas, teachers are accessible, especially after *asr* prayers, as discussed above too.

Their interactions with teachers indicate that the latter have great influence their thoughts and worldview. Civil society should engage increasingly with teachers.

Students interacting with teachers



What teachers said about their interaction with students?



All the teachers who responded acknowledge they interact with their students. Thus, every teacher interacts with at least one student, even if not all students with any teacher. The teacher-student relation is quite strong in madrassa's case, reflective from the satisfaction of the students in the curriculum, teaching as well as the near similarity in their answers to many questions.

Topics discussed under interaction

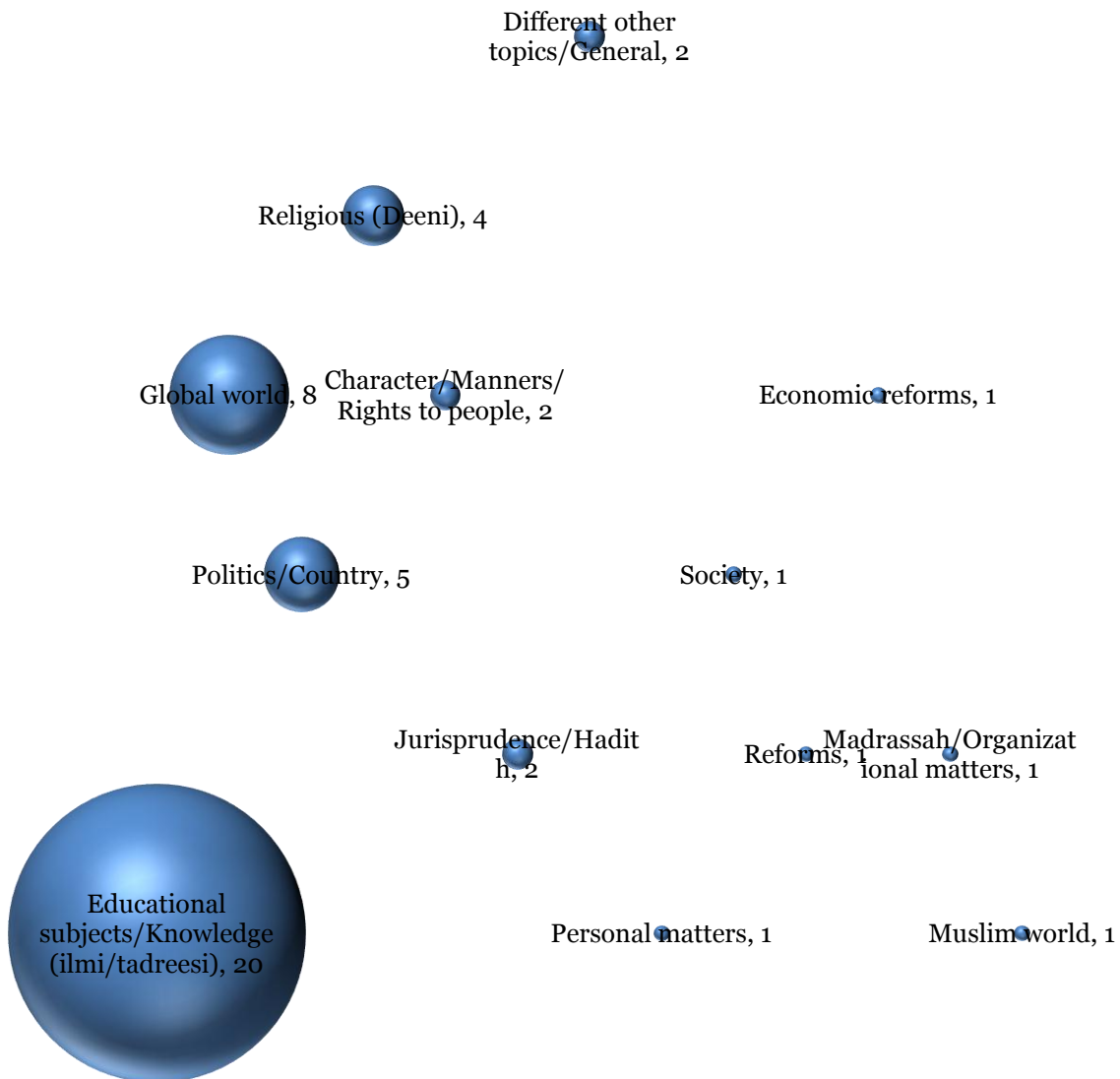
When asked from students as to what do they discuss with teachers, around 20 said that among other things, they discuss education-related issues like about new

knowledge. The findings are similar to the response on what students discuss among each other. As with that question, so with it: besides education, other topics discussed are global politics or politics in general and issues like religion and jurisprudence.

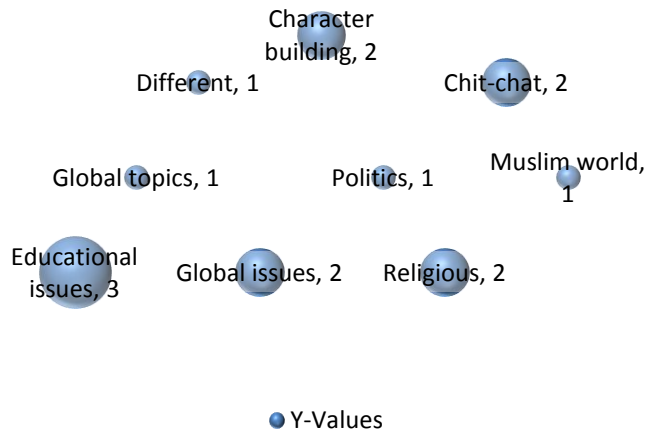
By discussion topics like politics and religion, it is clear that the students don't find any space in them. Any other student of politics, for instance, would have little interest in religious affairs. Not so with seminary students, to whom the two intersect.

Topics discussed by students with teachers

● Size



What teachers said about the topics they discuss?



Teachers agreed with the students in terms of the topic they discuss. However, one of the topics they mentioned was about character-building. 2 teachers said they discuss it.

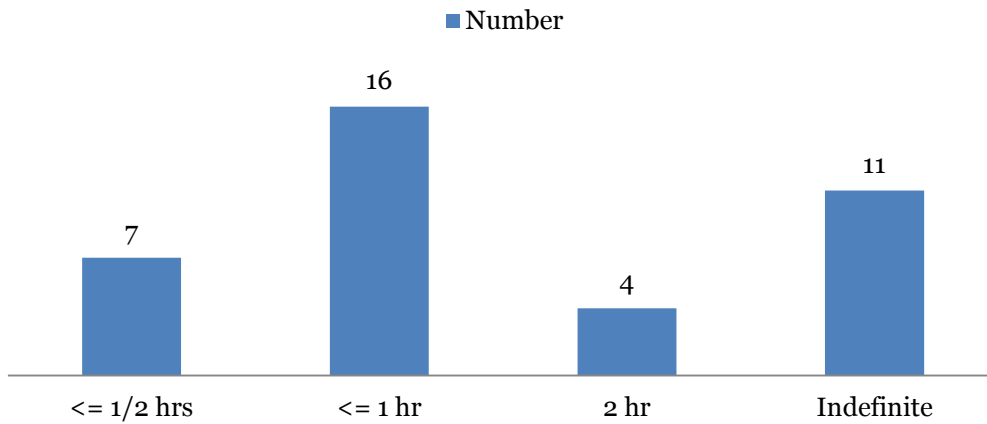
Duration of teacher-student interaction

Most of the students, around 16, said they interact with teachers on a regular basis for around 1 hour. 7 students calculated the duration at 7 hours; 4 students at 2 hours, while 11 argued the duration is need-based.

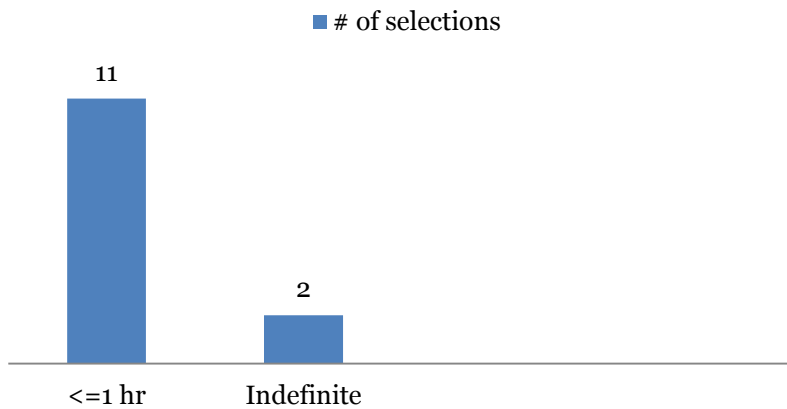
Taken together, it is clear that students interact with teachers on a regular basis for quite a significant duration. Contrast this with students of schools where interaction is minimal.

This student-teacher interaction is something the report would recommend building on. Teachers clearly have a great leeway on the students, to whom they give time even after teaching hours.

Duration of students interacting with teachers



What teachers said about their interaction with students?



A significant 11 teachers stated they interact with students, after teaching hours, for around 1 hour or less than that. That's significant, because of the regular frequency with which they might be interacting. This builds a very strong bond between teacher and student.

Favourite personalities, columnists, opinion-makers

The survey also asked students, and teachers, for their favourite personalities, newspaper columnists and magazine writers. While the respondents were bound to choose only one personality, they could point out multiple opinion-makers.

Students of the seminar follow diverse group of people. While some read more radical writers, others favour the relatively moderate ones. As much as the thinking style of the students is same, their worldviews may vary, to some extent. Diversity within is an encouraging sign, which may be promoted further.

Clearly, there are some radical writers whom the madrassa students follow. These writers either further religion narrowly or promote statehood in a narrow manner.

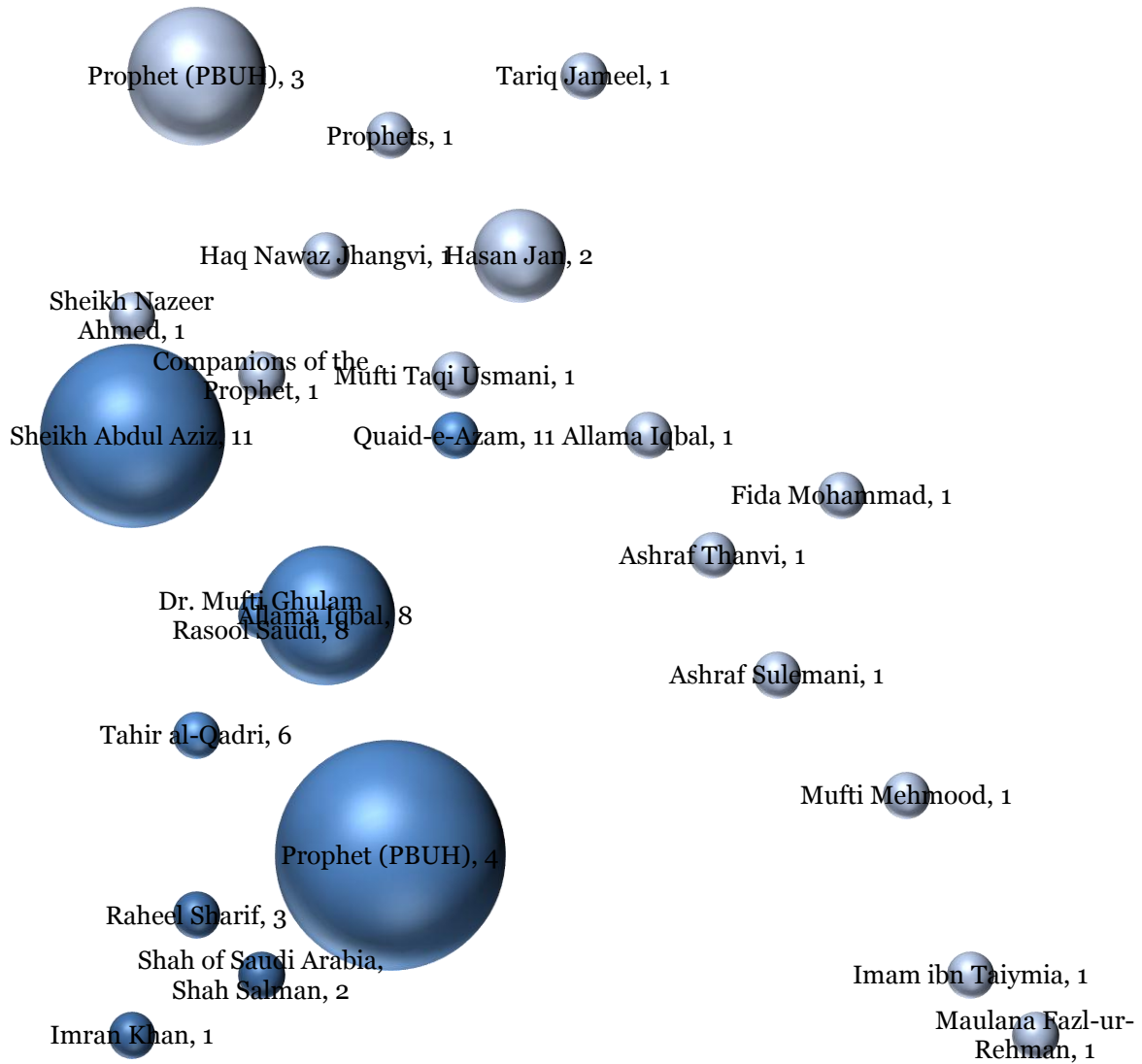
Importantly, many students follow those popular but radical writers whom any other Pakistani reader, outside of the seminary, would do, too. Once again, this reiterates that the madrassa students share something with the society in general, which on its own may be inclined to radical writers.

One strong feature evident is how students opt for sect-based writers. Thus, students of Deobandi madrassa admire Deobandi scholars; Barelvi, theirs; so on. Such following comes out of the sectarian make-up of the seminaries.

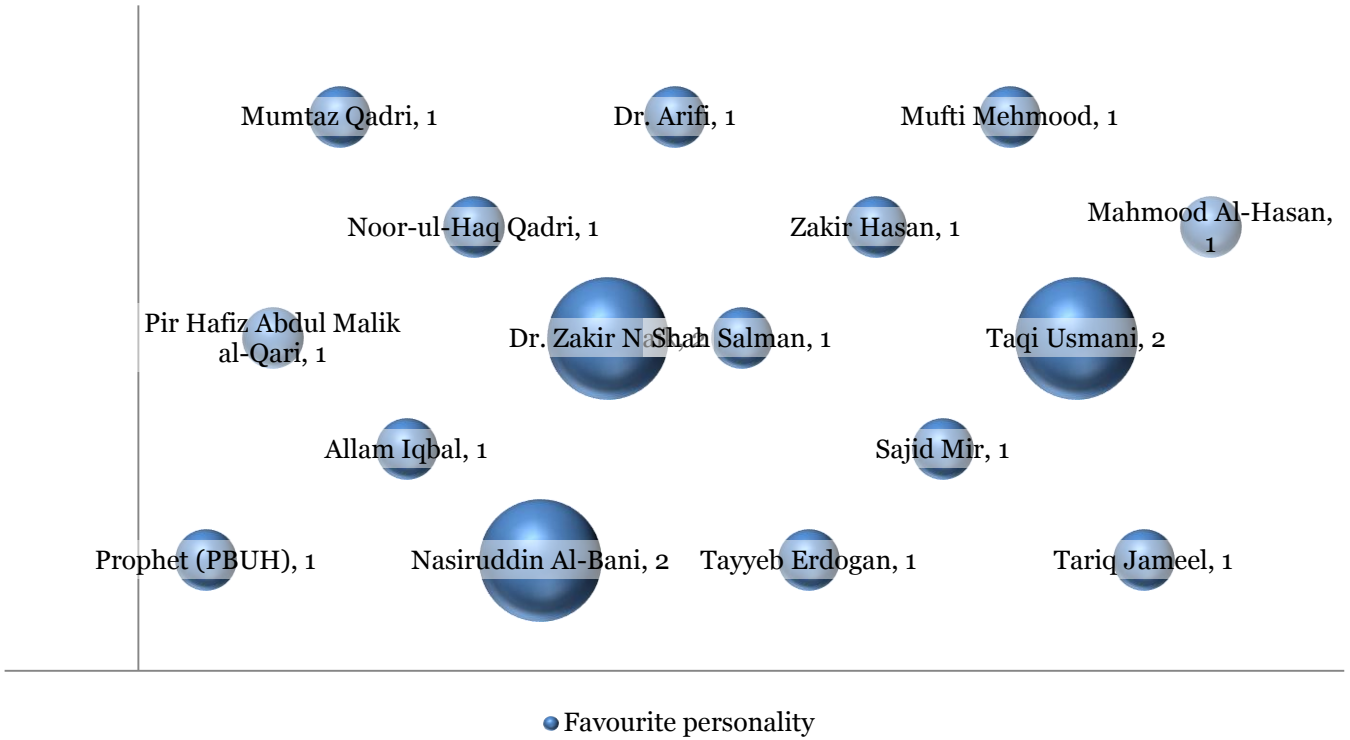
Students' favourite personalities

Students favourite personalities

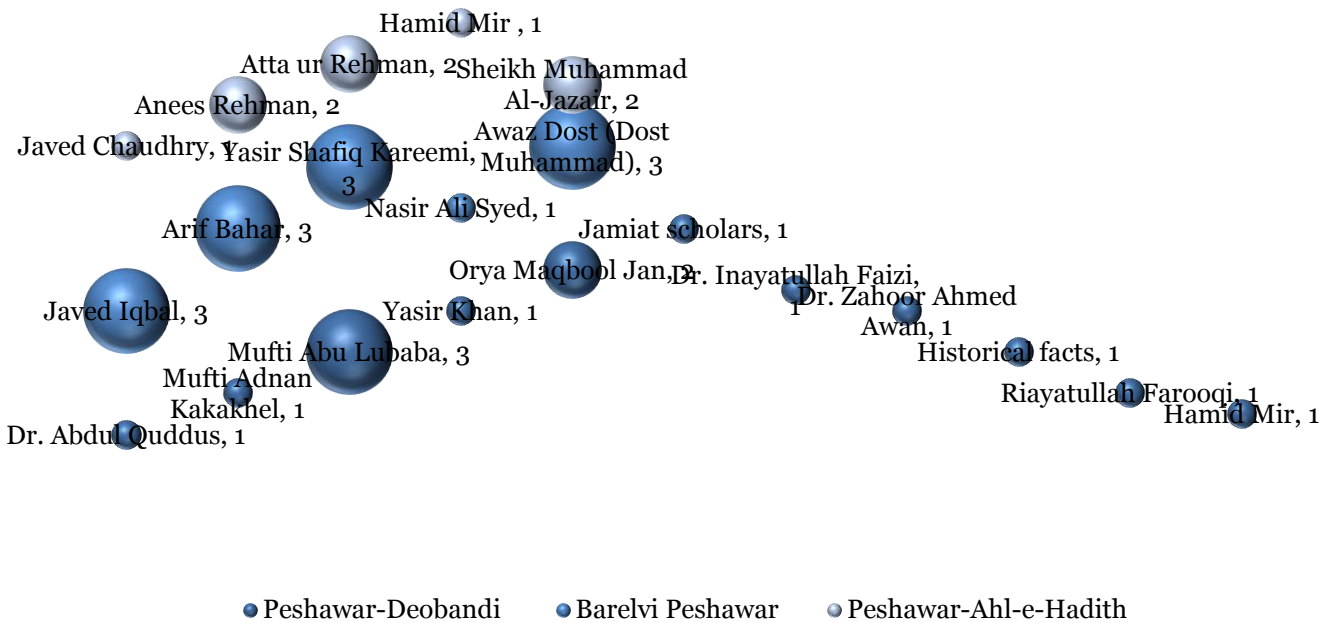
● Ahl-e-Hadith ● Barelvi ● Deoband



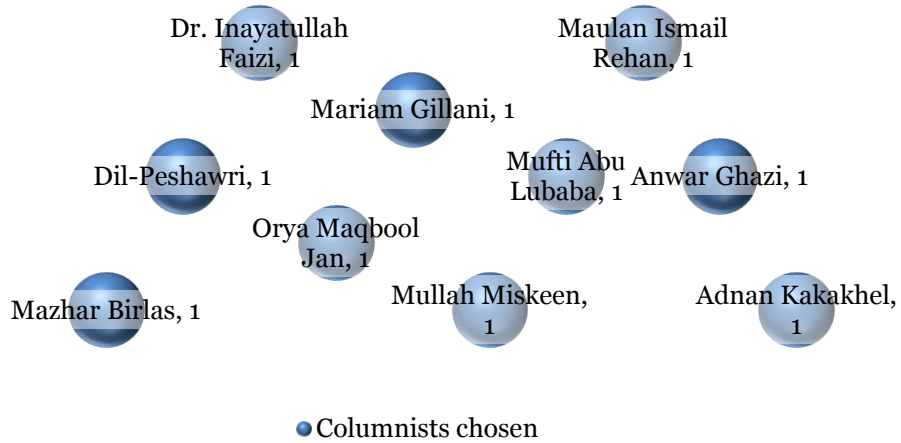
How about teachers - their favourite personalities?



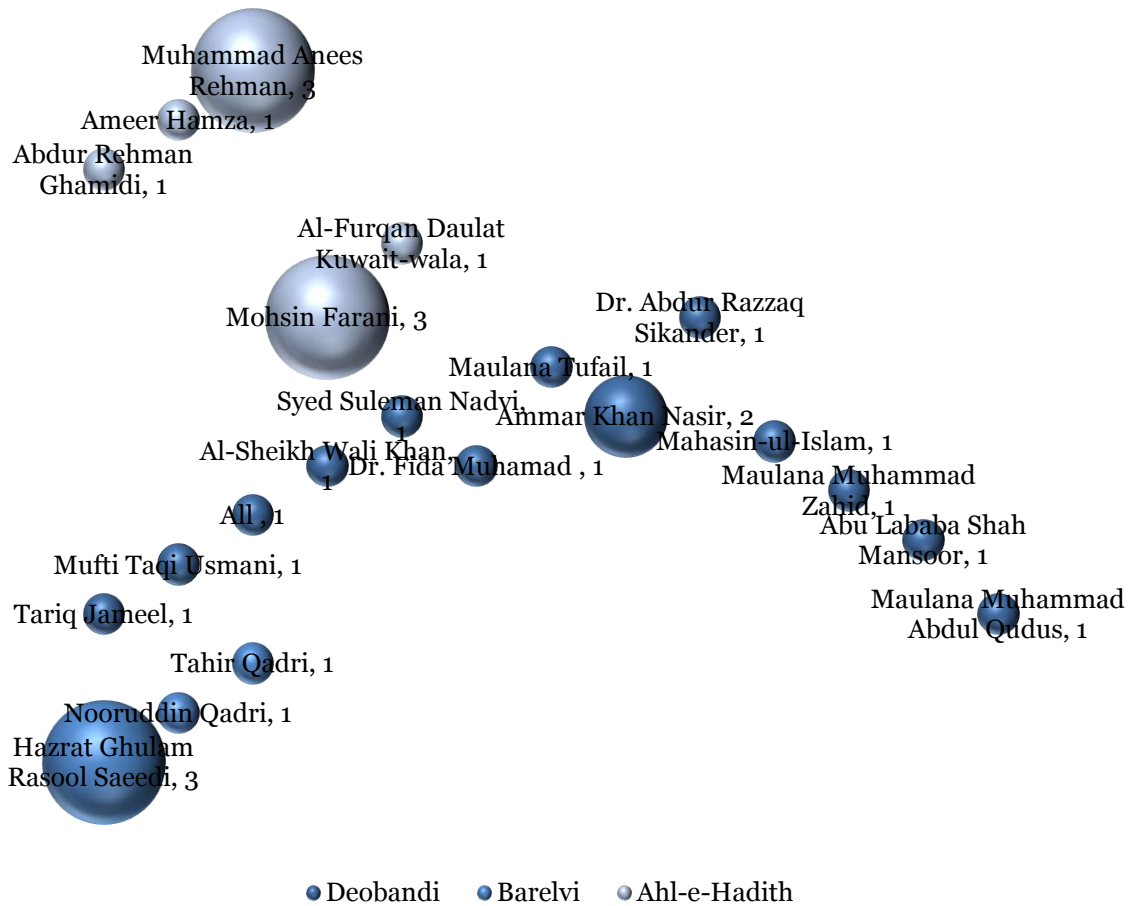
Students' favourite columnists



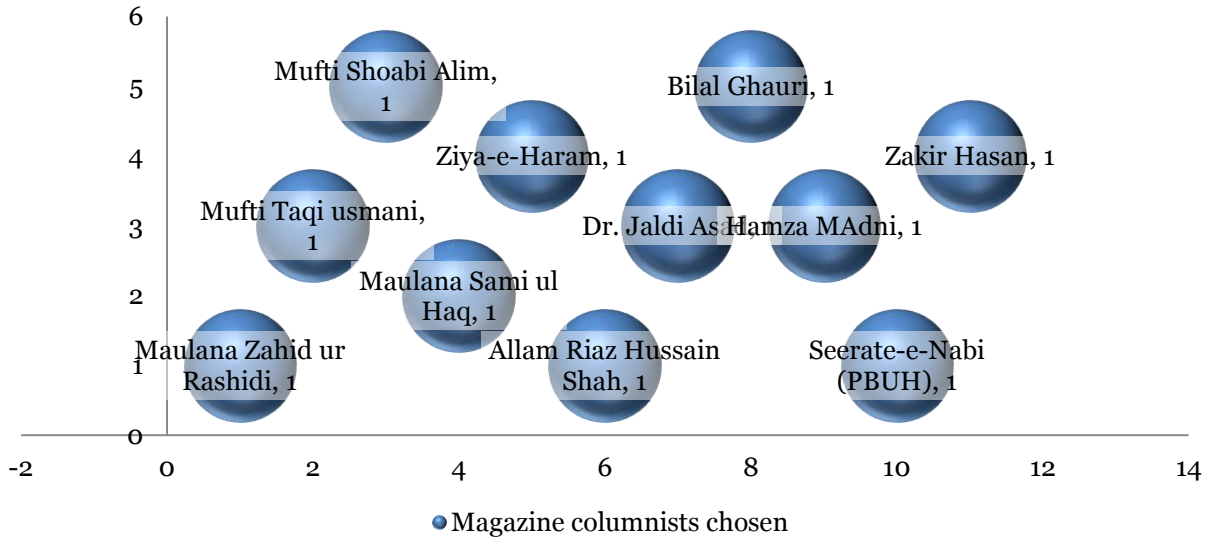
How about teachers - their favourite columnists?



Students' favourite magazine writers



How about teachers and their favourite magazine writers?



Annexures

Annex A: Sample survey form for students (translation from Urdu)

I. About the curriculum

1: Do you find the subjects in the curriculum along the lines of your religious and educational and needs?

Yes	
No	
No response	

2: What is your favourite subject in the Dars-e-Nizami curriculum?

Quran and Exegesis	
Hadith and Usul-e-Hadith	
Jurisprudence	
Ilm-o-Kal (Polemics)	
Logic and Philosophy	
Meaning and Explanation	
Sarf Nahu	
Any other	

3: If you are satisfied with the quality of the subjects, do you find them helpful in increasing your educational and intellectual faculties?

Yes	
No	
No response	

4: What is the duration of the studying material in your seminary?

<= 5 hours	
<= 6 hours	
<= 7 hours	
<= 8 hours	
<= 9 hours	
<= 10 hours	

5: Are you satisfied with the studying material?

Yes	
No	
No response	

5(b): If not, what duration do you suggest?

B: About co-Curricular Activities

6: Does your seminar offer co-curricular activities like sporting, reading, computer, and other physical exercise?

Yes	
-----	--

No	
No response	

6(b): If answer to the question 6 is “yes”, what is their nature?

Sports	
Member of a formal sporting body	
Exercise	
Reading	
Computer/Internet	
Mobile phone	
Chit-chat with friends	
Nothing at all	
Anything else	
No answer	

6(c): If answer to question 6 is yes, what is the duration for co-curricular activities?

7: Which topics do you mostly discuss with your classmates and students at seminars?

Religious topics	
Global situation	
Politics	
Society	
Personal/Family	
Economic activities	
Teachers and students	
Educational issues	
Entertainment activities like TV	
Any thing else	
No reply	

8: Are you member of any political/religious/social/sectarian organization?

Yes	
No	
No response	

8(b): If the answer to question 8 is “yes”, how much time do you give to them?

9: Do you use social media? (Social media: SMS, Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, LinkedIn, Whatsapp, etc.)

Yes	
No	
No response	

10: Which is your favourite medium in social media? (Select any two)

SMS	
Facebook	

Twitter	
Google Plus	
Linkedin	
Whatsapp	
Anything else	

11: How much time do you give on social media?

<= 1 hours	
<= 2 hours	
<= 3 hours	
<= 4 hours	

12: Which topics do you discuss/pay attention to on social media?

Religious topics	
Politics	
Sports	
Society	
Educational issues	
Global situation	
Anything else	
No reply	

13: What are the natures of friends on social media?

Many friends are from same seminary or class	
Friends list includes teachers and students	
Friends list includes people from other sects too	
Members of other religions are also friends	
Social and political personalities are also among the friends	
Anything else	
No reply	

14: Do internet and social media help in increasing your intellectual and educational capabilities?

Yes	
No	
No response	

15: Do you read newspapers and Islamic journals/magazines?

Yes	
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No	
No response	

15(b): If answer to the question 15 is “yes”, which paper do you read normally?

Jang	
Nawai-Waqt	
Ausaf	
Aaj	
Mashriq	
Zarb-e-Momin	
Islam	
Any other paper	

15(c): If answer to question 15 is “yes”, which writer’s essays do you like in the newspapers?

16: Do you read Islamic magazines?

Yes	
No	
No response	

16(b): If answer to question 16 is “yes”, which monthly magazine/journal do you read?

Al-Sharia	
Al-Qasim	
Fikr-o-Nazr	
Haq Char Yar	
Al-Haq	
Any other	

16(c): If answer to question 16 is “yes”, which writer’s essays do you like the most in the Islamic journals?

17: What are your favourite verses/quotes?

C: About interaction with teachers

18: Do you hold interaction with your teachers after the study hours?

Yes	
No	
No response	

19: Which topics do you discuss with your teacher in your gatherings with them?

20: What is the duration of your sittings with teachers?

21: Who has been your favourite personality usually or in recent past ?

21(b): What is the reason behind the personality being your favourite one?

Annex B: Sample survey form for teachers (translation from Urdu)

I. About the curriculum

1: Do you find the subjects in the curriculum along the lines of students' religious and educational and needs?

Yes	
No	
No response	

2: What is your favourite subject in the Dars-e-Nizami curriculum?

Quran and Exegesis	
Hadith and Usul-e-Hadith	
Jurisprudence	
Ilm-o-Kal (Polemics)	
Logic and Philosophy	
Meaning and Explanation	
Sarf Nahu	
Any other	

3: If you are satisfied with the quality of the subjects, do you find them helpful in increasing the educational and intellectual capabilities of the students?

Yes	
No	
No response	

4: What is the duration of the teaching material in your seminary?

<= 5 hours	
<= 6 hours	
<= 7 hours	
<= 8 hours	
<= 9 hours	
<= 10 hours	

5: Are you satisfied with the teaching material?

Yes	
No	
No response	

5(b): If not, what duration do you suggest?

B: About co-Curricular Activities

6: Does your seminar offer co-curricular activities like sporting, reading, computer, and other physical exercise?

Yes	
No	
No response	

6(b): If answer to the question 6 is “yes”, what is their nature?

Sports	
Member of a formal sporting body	
Exercise	
Reading	
Computer/Internet	
Mobile phone	
Chit-chat with friends	
Nothing at all	
Anything else	
No answer	

6(c): If answer to question 6 is yes, what is the duration for co-curricular activities?

7: Which topics do your studentss mostly discuss with their classmates and students at seminaries?

Religious topics	
Global situation	
Politics	
Society	
Personal/Family	
Economic activities	
Teachers and students	
Educational issues	
Entertainment activities like TV	
Any thing else	
No reply	

8: Are you member of any political/religious/social/sectarian organization?

Yes	
No	
No response	

8(b): If the answer to question 8 is “yes”, how much time do you give to them?

8(c): Do your institute allow students to be member of any political/religious/social/sectarian organization?

Yes	
No	
No response	

9: Do you use social media? (Social media: SMS, Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, Linkedin, Whatsapp, etc.)

Yes	
No	
No response	

10: Which is your favourite medium in social media? (Select any two)

SMS	
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Twitter	
Google Plus	
Linkedin	
Whatsapp	

Anything else	
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No reply	

14: Do internet and social media help in increasing your teaching capabilities?

Yes	
No	
No response	

15: Do you read newspapers and Islamic journals/magazines?

Yes	
No	
No response	

15(b): If answer to the question 15 is “yes”, which paper do you read normally?

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Aaj	
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Zarb-e-Momin	
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Any other paper	

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16(c): If answer to question 16 is “yes”, which writer’s essays do you like the most in the Islamic journals?

17: What are your favourite verses/quotes?

C: About interaction with students

18: Do you hold interaction with your students after the studying hours?

Yes	
No	
No response	

19: Which topics do you discuss with your students in your gatherings with them?

20: What is the duration of your sittings with students?

21: Who has been your favourite personality usually or in recent past ?

21(b): What is the reason behind the personality being your favourite one?

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