

Coffee Shop Culture: Urban Lifestyle Transformation in the Perspective of Consumerism

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Abstract

This research departs from the phenomenon of the mushrooming of coffee shops in Makassar, which significantly affects the pattern of activities and social interactions of urban communities. Coffee shops are now an inseparable part of urban life, creating new spaces that are full of symbolic meaning. This research aims to reveal how the transformation of urban people's lifestyles occurs through the existence of coffee shops as public spaces. The approach used in this study is a qualitative method with a descriptive type, which aims to provide an in-depth picture of this phenomenon through case studies on several coffee shops that represent these characteristics. The results of the study show that coffee shops not only function as a place to enjoy drinks, but also as a public space that reflects the social and cultural identity of the community. The existence of coffee shops creates a symbol of prestige for its visitors, which indirectly makes hanging out in coffee shops an indicator of certain social status. This is closely related to the hedonistic lifestyle, where individuals are willing to spend time and money just to hang out in order to strengthen their self-image in front of the public. In addition, this study also found that coffee shops have become an arena for lifestyle expression influenced by advertisements and trends, where visitors feel the need to adjust their appearance, including wearing clothes that are popular in the latest fashion trends, in order to maintain the existence and social credibility in their environment. Thus, coffee shops in Makassar are not only a place of recreation, but also a social phenomenon that reflects changes in the lifestyle of urban people, which are influenced by aspects of prestige, consumerism, and popular culture dynamics. This research contributes to understanding the role of public spaces such as coffee shops in shaping the lifestyle of modern urban communities.

Keywords: Coffee Shop Culture, Transformation, Lifestyle, Consumerism

1. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of the mushrooming of *coffee shops* in various major cities in Indonesia not only reflects the development of the beverage industry, but also reveals a profound transformation in the lifestyle of urban people. *Coffee shops* have evolved from just a place to enjoy drinks to a multifunctional public space that offers a symbolic, social, and aesthetic experience. In the context of urbanization and modernity, *coffee shops* play a role as a social space that supports interpersonal interaction as well as a medium to express social identity. The existence of *coffee shops* that integrate aspects of consumerism and globalization reflects the values of modern society, such as aesthetics, prestige, and global consumption culture trends (Featherstone, 2007).

Consumerism in urban societies encourages a shift in value from utilitarian functions to symbolic functions, as explained by Baudrillard (1998). In this context, coffee consumption in *coffee shops* is not only seen as an activity to meet needs, but also as a form of symbolism that communicates the social status, taste, and lifestyle of individuals. Suyatno (2013) shows that the existence of *coffee shops* in urban areas is often associated with the need of the community to show affiliation to modern culture and global trends. In line with the theory put forward by Featherstone (2007), which highlights the role of symbols in cultural consumption,

where certain products are not only selected based on quality or function, but also because of meaning.

Furthermore, coffee shops are also a symbol of the cultural transformation of public spaces in modern society. As a space that blends consumption needs with social interaction, coffee shops create an arena that allows individuals to build social connections, share ideas, or even work. This is in line with Ritzer's (2015) idea of *McDonaldization*, where this homogenization of *McDonaldization* describes a modern lifestyle.

In the last decade, the culture of coffee consumption in *coffee shops* has become part of the lifestyle practices of urban communities that are closely related to the symbols of status, aesthetics, and social dynamics. For example, in Khoo's (2009) research, coffee shops are often used as a space for individuals to channel their social class and aspirations through lifestyle choices that are displayed in the selection of places and types of coffee they consume. This phenomenon further strengthens the idea that *coffee shops* are not just a place to enjoy coffee, but also a gathering place for culture, social status, and identity expression.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the role of *coffee shops* in the transformation of urban lifestyles, focusing on how cultural consumption creates symbolic meaning and represents modernity in daily life. It is important to understand how *coffee shops* function more than just a place of consumption, but also as a social symbol that reflects cultural, economic, and social dynamics in a rapidly evolving modern society. Featherstone (2007) stated that product consumption in the modern world is not only influenced by utilitarian needs, but also by symbolic factors that reflect identity and status.

The coffee shop, with its various designs, menus, and atmospheres offered, becomes a space where aesthetic and social values meet. As noted by Ritzer (2015), *coffee shops* create a homogeneous experience while still retaining local elements that give different meanings to their visitors. This phenomenon shows that coffee shops are part of a globalization process that blends with the local culture, creating a consumption space that not only sells products but also offers experiences.

In addition, in an urban context, *coffee shops* also function as social spaces that support the formation of social identities. Coffee consumption, with all the accompanying cultural elements, is a way for individuals to express themselves, both in terms of taste, status, and social group that they want to show (Suyatno, 2013). This phenomenon is in line with the concept of consumerism put forward by Baudrillard (1998), where the consumer society is more interested in the "signs" and "symbols" related to the product, rather than its practical use. Therefore, this study has relevance to understand how coffee consumption in *coffee shops* affects social and cultural dynamics in urban communities. More than just a place to enjoy a drink, coffee shops are now an arena where symbols of modernity, social status, and lifestyle meet, creating a deeper meaning behind each cup

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method "Coffee Shop Culture: Urban Lifestyle Transformation in the Perspective of Consumerism". This research method uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. This approach was chosen because it aims to understand social phenomena in depth, especially the transformation of urban people's lifestyles through consumption culture

in *coffee shops*. The qualitative approach allows researchers to explore the symbolic meanings inherent in coffee consumption and the social interactions that occur in coffee shops. This type of research is a case study, which aims to analyze in depth consumption practices and social activities in certain *coffee shops* as a cultural representation of urban communities. This case study provides a specific picture of the social dynamics, symbolic values, and aspects of consumerism involved. This research was conducted in several *coffee shops* in Makassar that have a high level of popularity and represent modern urban culture. The location selection is based on certain criteria, such as the number of visitors, popularity on social media, and the diversity of visitor backgrounds. The subjects of the study are *coffee shop visitors* from various circles, including students, professional workers, and young entrepreneurs. The research informants were selected purposively based on their active involvement in the coffee shop consumption culture. The criteria for informants include: 1. Have a habit of regularly visiting *coffee shops*. 2. Age between 18-35 years old as a representation of the urban generation. 3. Willing to provide in-depth information regarding their experience in the *coffee shop*. Data Collection Techniques: In-depth interviews, interviews are conducted in a semi-structured manner to explore the informants' understanding of the reasons for their visit, perceptions of coffee shops, and the social significance of activities carried out there.

3. DISCUSSION RESULTS

1. Urban Lifestyle Transformation through the Presence of *Coffee Shops*

The phenomenon of the development of *coffee shops* in various big cities, including in Indonesia, has brought significant changes in the lifestyle of urban people. In the past, coffee shops were only a place to enjoy coffee or other hot drinks, but now *coffee shops* have developed into social spaces that have a deeper meaning, encompassing various dimensions such as social interaction, lifestyle, and status symbols. Urban people are now not just visiting coffee shops to enjoy coffee, but also to interact, work, or just to "hang out" in a comfortable and prestigious atmosphere.

Coffee shops are a place that reflects the development of a more consumptive and hedonistic lifestyle. Urban people, especially young people, began to consider *coffee shops* not just as a place to consume coffee, but as a space to show their social identity through the choice of place, the type of coffee ordered, and their behavior in the public space. This illustrates a shift in people's consumption patterns that increasingly prioritize symbolism and social status, as explained by Featherstone (2007) and Ritzer (2015).

2. *Coffee shop* as a Symbolic Space and Consumerism

Coffee shops have evolved into spaces loaded with symbolic meaning. As expressed by Baudrillard (1998), in a consumerist society, consumption is not only related to use value, but also to symbolic value. In coffee shops, consumers are not only buying coffee products, but also buying experiences, social status, and recognition. Every element in a coffee shop, from the aesthetic interior design to the selection of premium coffee brands, becomes a symbol that shows the consumer's self-image.

This phenomenon can be seen in the phenomenon of "*coffee shop culture*" which is growing rapidly among urban communities. Coffee consumption is no longer considered an ordinary habit, but rather has become part of the social identity that distinguishes individuals in society. *Coffee shops* are a space where individuals show their tastes through the choice of place, clothing fashion, and the type of coffee they order. In other words, *coffee shops* function as a place of consumption that is closely related to prestige and a consumptive lifestyle (Barker, 2011; Suyatno, 2013).

3. Hangout Culture and Hedonism

Coffee shops have also become the center of a culture of "hanging out" or gathering that is very popular among urban young people. This phenomenon highlights the hedonistic aspects of urban lifestyles, where social activities often focus on the search for pleasure and entertainment. Hanging out at a coffee shop is not just about enjoying a drink, but more about social activities that involve quality time with friends or co-workers.

Along with that, this hangout culture illustrates the dominance of hedonistic values that prioritize personal pleasure, even though they are often not socially or economically productive. In this case, coffee shops become a place to seek an "escape" from the demanding daily routine, giving individuals the opportunity to enjoy time together without a clear purpose other than recreation and social comfort (Suyatno, 2013). This phenomenon also reflects consumerism in the form of spending not only for basic needs but for social experiences that are considered important.

4. Fashion and Symbolism in Coffee Consumption

Another important aspect of *coffee shop* culture is the relationship between fashion or fashion trends and coffee consumption. Coffee shops are not only a place to consume coffee, but also a place where visitors express their identity through their appearance and fashion choices. In coffee shops, many visitors indirectly show their social status by wearing clothes that follow the latest fashion trends. This shows that coffee consumption is not only related to the fulfillment of physical needs, but also to social and symbolic needs.

This phenomenon is related to the theory of consumption by Simmel (2002) and Giddens (1991), who emphasized that in modern society, consumption is more than just buying goods for practical use, but to express certain social symbols. In *coffee shops*, the clothes worn by visitors become part of the symbol of their social status that they want to show to others, in line with Ritzer's (2015) opinion about the role of consumption in mapping the social position of individuals.

5. Coffee Shops as Public Spaces in Social Context

Coffee shops not only function as a place of private consumption but also as a public space that brings together various social groups. In this context, *coffee shops* play a role as a "third place" or a very important third place in social life, after home and work. As a public space, coffee shops become open spaces for anyone, allowing individuals from different social backgrounds to meet, talk, and interact.

Habermas (1962) in his theory of public space describes public space as a place where people can discuss and engage in freer conversations. In this case, *coffee shops* allow individuals to talk, discuss, or even do professional activities such as working or doing assignments. The presence of *coffee shops* as a social space also shows how coffee shops function as places that facilitate more inclusive social interactions, strengthening social bonds in an increasingly fragmented society (Barker, 2011).

3. CONCLUSION

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that coffee shops not only function as a place to consume coffee, but also as a social space that reflects the transformation of the lifestyle of urban people. Coffee shops play an important role in facilitating changes in people's consumption patterns that increasingly prioritize symbolism, prestige, and social experience. As a symbolic consumption space, coffee shops also reflect the values of consumerism that are rapidly developing in modern society. By being a place to hang out, work, and interact, coffee shops also show how public spaces are becoming increasingly important in the lives of busy and fragmented urban communities.

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