



Contemporary Hangout Culture: A Social Interpretation of Urban Muslim Students in the Social Sphere of Pontianak

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Abstract

This study examines the contemporary phenomenon of *nongkrong* (hanging out) as a form of social interpretation within the social interactions of urban Muslim university students in Pontianak. In a rapidly transforming urban landscape, coffee shops are no longer mere places of leisure; they have evolved into arenas for symbolic exchange, the formation of identity, and the negotiation of faith and modernity. We argue that *nongkrong* for these students is not simply a casual pastime it is a socially meaningful practice that encapsulates the tensions between religiosity, technological engagement, and the construction of symbolic class. Unlike traditional *warung kopi* (coffee stalls), modern cafés offer atmospheres favored by students: high-speed Wi-Fi, plush seating, and warmly lit, Instagram-worthy interiors. In these spaces, students access artificial intelligence to complete academic assignments or even pose religious questions once reserved for campus mosque preachers. These coffee shops are replacing libraries and study circles (*pengajian*) as loci of epistemic authority. Perhaps this is what Tom Nichols (2018) cautioned against in his discourse on *The Death of Expertise* the erosion of authority in the face of digital accessibility. The research adopts a qualitative approach through a sociological lens, employing participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The theoretical framework draws primarily on Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) concepts of *habitus* and *social capital*. Findings indicate that contemporary hangout culture functions as a medium through which urban Muslim students negotiate identity via lifestyle choices, discourse selection, and interactions with digital technologies. The coffee shop, in this context, is not a neutral space, it is a social text where faith, algorithms, and lifestyle intersect and compete. The novelty of this study lies in its interpretive stance: rather than dismissing *nongkrong* as a banal or trivial act, it is analyzed as a site of social hermeneutics rich with values, power structures, and cultural transformation. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how Muslim youth in urban settings experience religiosity not only within sacred spaces but also in casual environments imbued with symbols, signs, and the temptations of modernity.

Keywords: Contemporary Hangout Culture, Urban Muslim Students, *Habitus*, Urban Social Landscape, Social Capital

1. Introduction

In a society that is constantly in motion, social spaces are no longer merely passive backdrops; they actively shape the direction and substance of the dialogues unfolding within them. We live in an age of acceleration, with rhythms dictated by notifications, algorithms, and Wi-Fi connectivity (Geerts, 2022). Within such a context, expectations of social space extend beyond physical comfort. Increasingly, we demand that these spaces also carry values even when such values emerge faintly, or momentarily flicker behind the screens of our devices (Hardiman, 2021). For Muslim university students, social spaces ideally serve as environments where both faith and identity can be nurtured, even as they navigate the harsh realities of urban life. Yet, the reality in cities like Pontianak reveals a more intricate landscape. Contemporary coffee shops, for instance, have emerged as new hubs within the map of social interaction places to gather, discuss, work, and seek meaning. Within these spaces, students do more than sip coffee; they negotiate their Islamic identity sometimes through casual conversations, and at other times through Google search queries. The presence of coffee shops has transcended their recreational function. They have become sites of identity production, symbolic arenas offering both comfort and representational space (Bourdieu, 1977). Equipped with high-speed internet and conducive atmospheres, these cafés have replaced mosque verandas and library corners as places to ask religious questions, complete assignments, or watch sermons delivered by religious influencers on YouTube. We are living in what Hardiman (2021) calls the “click era,” in which the speed of access often supersedes the depth of reflection.

This article is grounded in the argument that hanging out in coffee shops represents a new form of social practice among urban Muslim students one marked by the tension between religious values, technological advancement, and symbolic class positioning. Among the 170 informants we interviewed, a majority admitted to trusting answers found via digital media more than the advice of ustadz at campus mosques. In their narratives, the coffee shop is not merely a



workspace, but also a new setting for religious learning one that takes place between a cup of coffee and an open search tab. Such shifts are not without consequence. They reflect what Tom Nichols terms the “death of expertise” a condition in which religious and scholarly authority is increasingly reduced to something accessible by anyone, at any time, without mediation. This phenomenon blurs the lines between those who truly know and those who merely believe they do, between authoritative knowledge and viral opinion (Nichols, 2019). In this context, the coffee shop becomes an arena of contention between the sacred and the banal, the personal and the digital. This paper aims to connect Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus and social capital with the shifting dynamics of the urban landscape, offering an analytical framework to explain how identity formation among urban Muslim students is shaped by their interaction with social space. A new perspective is also offered to understand how digital technologies and modernity influence the articulation of Islamic identity within non-traditional social arenas. In this light, the coffee shop is not merely a physical site it is a location for articulating faith, expressing lifestyle choices, and signaling symbolic status. Pontianak, with its ever-expanding urban sprawl, provides a fitting stage for observing this transformation. Coffee shops have proliferated throughout the city not merely because of the beverages they offer, but because of the atmospheres they cultivate: relaxed, connected, and visible. Within these settings, Muslim students seek to strike a balance between the demands of the present and the inheritance of faith, between being modern and remaining religiously grounded. It is in these spaces that we witness how identity is shaped not only by belief, but also by interior design, ambient lighting, and stable internet signals.

2. Literature Review

Contemporary *nongkrong* (hanging out) culture among urban Muslim students is far from a trivial routine between lectures. It is a fragment of a larger social mosaic one that reveals how urban social spaces gradually but decisively shape identity, interaction, and community cohesion within an increasingly diverse metropolitan landscape. Within such spaces, identity is not merely preserved but continually negotiated; values are not only inherited but also reconstituted. In the context of Muslim university students, urban social space has emerged as a complex site of integration no longer defined by binary oppositions. It occupies a gray area, where the boundaries between the profane and the sacred are increasingly blurred. As Wang (2019) illustrates in his study on the education of Muslim migrant children in China, social integration in urban spaces is rarely straightforward. Linguistic barriers and cultural dissonance pose significant challenges. Yet within these difficulties lies a broader narrative: that urban spaces carry the potential to become arenas of negotiation places where young urban inhabitants, including Muslim students, engage with their cultural heritage while navigating the complexities of modernity. Similar findings are presented in the study by Yasir and Farooq (2024), which highlights the critical role of social interaction in urban spaces in mitigating the sense of alienation often experienced by minority communities. In this context, the contemporary coffee shop is not merely a site for sipping coffee, it becomes a symbol of connectedness, a venue where new discourses emerge and identities are shaped through conversations that are relaxed yet rich with meaning. When Muslim students choose such spaces as their primary venues for socializing, they are, in effect, participating in a multifaceted social process one that oscillates between the preservation of values and adaptation, between belonging to a community and asserting individuality.

The notion of urban space as *convivial* has also garnered scholarly attention. Shedid and Hefnawy (2021) describe convivial urban spaces as characterized by intense intergroup interaction and shared social experiences that embrace diversity. In this light, the coffee shop offers an inclusive and fluid environment, one that enables Muslim students to articulate their cultural expressions without distancing themselves from the pulse of modernity. This marks a significant transformation: urban spaces are not merely physical locales but also symbolic frameworks where narratives of identity are authored and redefined. For students born and raised as digital natives (Prensky, 2001), coffee shops are far more than comfortable seating areas. According to Aliwijaya and Syahfitri (2023), these spaces are often preferred over campus libraries as sites for study. With fast internet, aesthetic ambiance, and spatial flexibility, coffee shops function as social laboratories where urban Muslim students not only complete academic work but also reframe their religious understandings, often through digital tools and search engine algorithms. Here, social media plays a crucial role. Hardiman (2021) demonstrates how social media actively shapes cultural perspectives and preferences. Echesony (2024) further argues that digital platforms have become the primary mediums for youth self-expression and cultural identity formation. For urban Muslim students, the intersection between social media and *nongkrong* spaces creates a hybrid landscape where online and offline worlds converge. Solidarity is formed not only through shared ideological commitments but also through aesthetic experiences shared in Instagram stories and 15-second reels. Yet, like two sides of the same coin, this development brings challenges. Urban sprawl, as noted by Yasir and Farooq (2024), often disrupts social cohesion and destabilizes cultural identity especially for vulnerable groups. As cities expand rapidly and unevenly, communities with strong cultural legacies are frequently marginalized by market-driven urban planning. Though coffee shops may seem insignificant within the architectural fabric of the city, they can signal broader social transformations gradually eroding spaces where collective identity once thrived.



Urban politics further complicates the landscape of experience for Muslim students. Hoffman (2014) asserts that urban space is never neutral it is continuously shaped and reshaped by the lived experiences of its inhabitants. Thus, the act of hanging out in coffee shops, while seemingly personal, is inherently political: it reflects an attempt to negotiate religious life within a social environment shaped by consumerist logic, media aesthetics, and social pressures. The phenomenon of gentrification adds yet another layer of complexity. As Toro et al. (2020) observe, urban redevelopment often displaces longstanding cultural communities in favor of newer, more “modern” constructions. Urban Muslim students are implicated in this process both as participants enjoying new spaces and as witnesses to the erasure of familiar ones. In this context, preserving cultural heritage and ensuring inclusivity in urban regeneration become crucial imperatives for social justice. Ultimately, the contemporary *nongkrong* culture among urban Muslim students reflects a broader struggle, between the old and the new, the sacred and the profane, tradition and possibility. It marks an intersection between space and identity, technology and faith, community and individuality. By examining this social practice, we gain insight into how urban Muslim students shape their social spaces, build bridges between belief and lived reality, and recompose their identities in a world in flux.

3. Conceptual Framework

In examining the shifting trend of hangout culture among urban Muslim students in Pontianak, this study applies Pierre Bourdieu’s analytical formula ($Habitus \times Capital + Field = Practice$). Habitus is understood as a system of dispositions shaped by past social experiences including family background, religious education, and campus socialization that influences how students perceive, choose, and give meaning to social spaces. This habitus does not operate in isolation but interacts with the forms of capital possessed by individuals: social capital (friendship networks and relationships), cultural capital (knowledge, skills, and cultural literacy), and symbolic capital (social status and lifestyle recognition). The varying forms of capital among students determine the extent to which they can access certain social spaces, such as modern cafés with complete facilities and aesthetic atmospheres that support an urban lifestyle. When habitus and capital intersect within the field in this case, modern cafés as a social arena a distinctive pattern of interaction emerges. The field provides a context in which students not only gather for recreation but also engage in academic activities, discussions, access religious materials digitally, and present their identities before their peers. As such, the field becomes a social stage where religious values and modernity converge. The interaction between habitus, capital, and field produces practice in the form of contemporary hangout culture. This practice goes beyond simply sitting and drinking coffee; it involves negotiating identity between religious commitment and modern lifestyle, using technology to study religion or complete academic tasks, and constructing social images through status symbols. From Bourdieu’s perspective, this practice is a concrete manifestation of evolving social dynamics, in which urban Muslim students navigate the tension between tradition and modernity, between religious values and the need to adapt within an increasingly pluralistic and digitally connected urban social space.

4. Research Questions

Why, then, is it important to examine this phenomenon? Because today’s act of *nongkrong* (hanging out) is no longer a simple social behavior it is a reflection of broader value struggles. Our research questions arise from this concern: Why do urban Muslim students in Pontianak gravitate toward modern coffee shops as their primary social spaces? How do these spaces shape and how are they shaped by the Islamic identities being negotiated within them? And to what extent do *habitus* and *social capital* influence the choice, formation, and interpretation of such spaces?

5. Significance of Study

Ultimately, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the transformation of social spaces among urban Muslim students in Pontianak within the framework of contemporary society. What was once regarded as a light, informal social activity is now shown to contain complex layers of meaning tied to shifts in social identity, religious negotiation, and the role of technology in daily life. In the context of contemporary sociology, this research highlights how spaces traditionally deemed informal such as coffee shops now serve as significant arenas for shaping and reinforcing religious values in urban settings. As such, this study enriches sociological perspectives on the dynamic evolution of social space, where religiosity and lifestyle intersect to shape more inclusive and flexible social structures.

6. Research Methodology

This study was conducted from February to July 2025, employing a qualitative approach framed within a sociological perspective. The objective is straightforward but by no means trivial: to understand contemporary *nongkrong* (hanging out) culture as a social interpretation of urban Muslim students’ interactional spaces in Pontianak. Rather than dismissing *nongkrong* as a marginal or leisure activity, this research treats it as a meaningful social phenomenon a boundary zone between private space and public representation, between religious identity and urban aesthetic taste. The research focuses on students from four universities in Pontianak: IAIN Pontianak, Universitas PGRI Pontianak (UPGRI), Universitas Tanjungpura (UNTAN), and Universitas Muhammadiyah Pontianak. These institutions were



selected not merely for their accessibility, but for the diversity they represent in terms of social background, ideological affiliation, and spatial consumption patterns. From religious-based institutions to the region's largest public university, these campuses comprise students who embody distinct yet intersecting layers of habitus converging in one common arena: the coffee shop. Data were collected through participant observation and semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2014). Observations were conducted at several popular coffee shops in Pontianak, frequented by students not only for leisure but also for studying, discussion, and digital engagement. These semi-private spaces host subtle yet significant dynamics: peer interaction, technological use, and negotiations over Islamic values all unfolding in relaxed yet meaningful ways. To gain deeper insights, we interviewed 170 undergraduate informants who regularly utilize coffee shops as their primary social meeting grounds. All data were analyzed using Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical framework, particularly his concepts of *habitus* and *social capital*. The analysis followed a thematic and interpretative approach, with methodological triangulation applied to ensure validity. *Habitus* is understood as a system of cognitive and affective dispositions shaped by students' past social experiences including family background, religious education, and campus socialization. This habitus is reflected in their choices of dress, language, preferred hangout spots, and the ways they perform Islamic identity within the fluid landscape of urban life. Within this framework, the coffee shop is no longer perceived as a neutral space. It constitutes a field a social arena where students' habitus interacts with larger structural forces, including digital technologies, visual aesthetics, and expectations of a religious-modern lifestyle. In these spaces, choices are never entirely free; they are conditioned by internal dispositions, social pressures, and symbolic strategies through which students construct and project their identities within ever-shifting communities.

As Bourdieu (1977) argues, the interaction between habitus and field generates social praxis practices that emerge from the interplay between internalized dispositions and external social structures. In this praxis, students bring with them various forms of capital cultural, social, and symbolic accumulated through the course of their lives. Social capital is manifested in friendship networks, peer-group formations, and preferences for certain hangout spots that signify symbolic affiliation. Cultural capital, as Bourdieu (1977) defines it, is evident in their religious literacy, technological fluency, and familiarity with urban culture. Symbolic capital surfaces in styles of dress, modes of speech, and public expressions of religiosity signifiers that are legible and legitimate within their peer groups. Through this approach, the research seeks to uncover the latent meanings embedded in what may appear to be banal everyday practices. Among urban Muslim students, hanging out at a coffee shop is far more than sitting and sipping coffee it is a symbolic practice, a space of articulation, even a site of negotiation where faith, algorithms, and class identity simultaneously collide and converge. The coffee shop thus functions as a social mirror a symbolic field in which self-reflection and social representation are continuously contested. It becomes a point of intersection between religiosity and modernity, the sacred and the profane. By applying Bourdieu's theoretical lens, we reinterpret this space as a critical site for understanding the lived experiences and social dynamics of urban Muslim students especially in an era shaped by globalization, digitalization, and increasingly complex urban transformations. In this sense, to understand the culture of *nongkrong* is to grasp the social pulse of today's urban Muslim generation.

7. Findings

The culture of hanging out ("nongkrong") in contemporary coffee shops in Pontianak presents a compelling subject for analysis, especially given the ongoing social shifts reflecting changes in the habits of urban Muslim students. Interviews with students actively engaged in this practice illustrate how they navigate social spaces infused with modern values while maintaining their religious commitments. As Hafizhah Azzahra (21) puts it, the choice of hangout spots centers on comfort and taste: "A comfortable place with the right flavor." This highlights that urban Muslim students prioritize comfort and an ambiance aligned with their personal preferences. This behavior aligns with Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus, which posits that individuals' choices in social spaces are shaped by their environment, culture, and prior social experiences (Bourdieu, 1977). However, physical comfort is not the sole consideration. Kusnul Khotimah (21) elaborates that factors such as ambiance, facilities, and food quality influence her choice of venue: "Ambiance, facilities, and taste," she says. This indicates that students seek more than a gathering place; they prefer spaces equipped with amenities like Wi-Fi and diverse menus that support their activities. Social and cultural capital including lifestyle preferences and access to resources significantly influences students' decisions to frequent modern coffee shops as their primary social arenas. Furthermore, the act of hanging out holds strong social meaning for students. Aulia Putri (19) notes that such gatherings serve as opportunities for both interaction and stress relief from academic routines: "Nongkrong is a space for interaction and a way to unwind." For Aulia, the act extends beyond socialization; it fosters social bonds, provides emotional release, and creates a sense of community. This practice not only fulfills recreational needs but also serves as a platform for strengthening peer connections.

Notably, Islamic values remain influential within these hangout practices. Rara (19) emphasizes that despite their engagement in modern social life, students continue to uphold religious obligations, such as the five daily prayers: "Even when we hang out, we still pray five times a day." This illustrates that many students seek to integrate their faith



into everyday activities, negotiating between habitus and religious values across various social engagements, including those in coffee shops. Anas (26) and Iqbal (25) shared their frustrations with campus religious study groups and libraries, describing them as boring and outdated: "What do we really get from them?" they asked. Most other interviewees echoed these sentiments, criticizing campus mosques and libraries as rigid and overly formal, lacking in comfort and flexibility. Coffee shops, by contrast, offered a more relaxed environment for studying with coffee, free Wi-Fi, and access to a wide range of learning resources. Whether downloading materials, watching educational videos on YouTube, or using tools like ChatGPT for assignments, students reported feeling more comfortable studying in coffee shops than in institutional settings. In these informal spaces, student interactions often extend beyond academic discussions. As Hafizhah Azzahra (21) notes, they frequently engage in light conversations and storytelling: "We talk casually and sometimes share stories." This underscores that while coffee shops offer potential learning spaces, they are primarily used for casual interaction, fostering stronger social bonds. The freedom to interact without the constraints of academic expectations enhances the appeal of such environments. Technology plays a crucial role in shaping these social interactions. Rika Putri (24) explains that she frequently uses her smartphone during hangouts to manage work and academic responsibilities: "I often check my phone for work or study-related matters." This reflects the seamless integration of technology into students' social lives, allowing them to remain digitally connected while reinforcing in-group communication. Platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram are intrinsic to their hangout culture, expanding personal interactions into more dynamic, digital spaces.

Yet, differences in socioeconomic status are evident in students' choice of venues. Rika Putri (24) observes that students with higher economic capital tend to favor more exclusive, modern coffee shops: "Students with greater economic access choose more modern coffee shops." In contrast, Aulia Putri (19) prefers simpler venues yet still feels a sense of belonging. These preferences reflect underlying social distinctions; students from varied economic backgrounds often gravitate toward spaces that align with their social identity and comfort level. The contrast between contemporary coffee shops and traditional "warung kopi" is also noteworthy. Aulia Putri (19) describes the former as stylish and modern, while the latter are more modest and community-oriented: "Contemporary coffee shops are modern and stylish, whereas traditional ones are simpler and more down-to-earth." Rika Putri (24) views these as distinct social realms. The modern coffee shop conveys exclusivity and urban sophistication, while the traditional warung facilitates deeper, informal conversations. Within Bourdieu's framework, these preferences signify differing habitus and class positions. Modern coffee shops represent specific forms of economic and symbolic capital, whereas traditional venues are grounded in social capital. This phenomenon reflects the dominance of student groups with greater access to social and cultural capital. Hafizhah Azzahra (21) remarks, "Many of my friends from wealthier families often hang out in upscale coffee shops." Students from majors such as Communication or Management are more likely to frequent these venues, suggesting that educational background and economic status shape students' social space preferences. Consequently, modern coffee shops become spaces predominantly occupied by those with higher cultural and social capital.

Social positioning within hangout groups is another recurring theme. Kusnul Khotimah (21) shares her sense of marginalization when not keeping up with popular trends: "Sometimes, we feel left out if we don't follow hangout trends." This points to subtle social pressures within peer groups, where conformity to prevailing lifestyles can determine inclusion or exclusion. In Bourdieu's terms, students more adept at navigating cultural and symbolic norms of a particular field are more likely to feel accepted, while those who deviate may find themselves on the margins. Nevertheless, some students maintain their religious identity despite the implicit norms of these social spaces. Rara (19) states that choosing simpler hangout spots does not alienate her: "We can still pray five times a day while hanging out. It's just about managing time and space." Her experience underscores the possibility of harmonizing urban lifestyles with Islamic values, even in socially liberal settings. In sum, the culture of hanging out among urban Muslim students in Pontianak reflects a nuanced interplay of faith, modernity, class, and technology. Coffee shops emerge as complex social fields not neutral spaces where habitus, capital, and symbolic struggle manifest in everyday interactions.



Figure 1. The Trend of Hanging Out at Cafés in Pontianak (Source: Author's Documentation, 2025)

In this context, *nongkrong* the act of hanging out is not merely a social activity but constitutes a significant aspect of social identity formation among university students. As the city of Pontianak continues to urbanize and the number of contemporary coffee shops increases, students have found new spaces to express their identities within the broader framework of urban interaction. However, this transformation also reveals underlying tensions between traditional values and the demands of modern life. Consequently, Muslim students in Pontianak continuously navigate this evolving social space, striving to maintain their religious identity while remaining engaged with a wider, more pluralistic urban culture.

8. Discussion

The culture of hanging out in contemporary coffee shops in Pontianak reflects not only a shift in lifestyle but also a dynamic social phenomenon that blends modernity with traditional values. Amid the rapid urban development of the city, urban Muslim students have transformed coffee shops into social arenas spaces not merely for leisure, but for constructing and projecting their identities. Within Pierre Bourdieu's analytical framework, this phenomenon can be interpreted through the concepts of *habitus* and *social capital*, both of which significantly shape students' choices of social space and patterns of daily interaction. According to Bourdieu (1977), *habitus* is a system of dispositions formed through past social experiences including values instilled by family, religious education, and broader social interactions. This perspective helps explain why students tend to choose hangout spots that align not only with physical comfort but also with personal preferences shaped by their socio-cultural environment. For instance, when students opt for a venue described as having a "cozy atmosphere" or "the right vibe," they are essentially enacting inherited social habits. They are not merely seeking physical relaxation but are also looking for a space where they can authentically express themselves in accordance with the values they uphold. However, physical comfort alone does not suffice. Factors such as ambiance, facilities, and food quality also play key roles in shaping their choices (Aliwijaya & Syahfitri, 2023). Social capital which includes access to modern amenities and lifestyle practices influences students' decisions to frequent more contemporary coffee shops. This capital manifests in social networks formed through exclusive hangout routines, fostering a sense of belonging among students from varied social backgrounds. The choice of hangout venue, then, becomes a symbolic act driven not only by comfort but also by markers of social status and cultural capital. It reflects how *habitus* and social capital guide individuals in navigating social spaces.

Naturally, the practice of *nongkrong* involves more than physical and social dimensions. Students also perceive hanging out as a meaningful opportunity to strengthen peer relationships. In this context, the coffee shop serves not just as a place of relaxation but as a venue for sharing experiences, refreshing the mind, and balancing academic responsibilities with social interaction. They often describe *nongkrong* as a way to decompress from academic stress and foster solidarity among peers. This underscores the integral role of social values in shaping student identity in public spaces. What is particularly notable in this phenomenon is how Muslim students in Pontianak continue to uphold their religious obligations even within socially modern environments. Many explicitly state that they remain committed to daily prayers (*shalat lima waktu*) despite being out socializing. This reflects a negotiation between religious *habitus* and the secular-modern values of urban life. The flexible organization of time and space in such venues allows them to maintain religious practices while engaging in relaxed social contexts.

This balancing act bridging the pragmatism of modernity with the discipline of religious life demonstrates how urban Muslim students strive to integrate both dimensions into their daily routines. Not only do they preserve religious identity, but they also recognize that spaces like coffee shops afford them the freedom to engage openly with peers



from diverse backgrounds. This ongoing negotiation reveals that social spaces function not merely as physical locales for interaction but as arenas where identities are continually shaped and contested. Yet, beneath the surface of this perceived freedom lies a set of social tensions that cannot be ignored. Disparities in socioeconomic status, as reflected in the choice of hangout spots, significantly affect the dynamics of student interaction. Students with greater economic resources tend to frequent more exclusive venues, which signal higher social status, while those from less affluent backgrounds opt for more affordable locations. This phenomenon indicates the presence of social stratification embedded in spatial preferences and interactional patterns. These distinctions also illustrate how social capital including cultural and economic status influences decisions regarding broader social engagement. Trendy, modern cafés become symbols of particular social and economic capital, while traditional coffee stalls continue to serve students with lower social capital. In this regard, differences in *habitus* reflect how social status informs spatial choice and how interactions within these spaces function as mechanisms for maintaining or reinforcing existing social structures. Within this framework, the act of hanging out at coffee shops also becomes a symbolic expression of how students perceive and position themselves socially. Coffee shops are not only spaces for leisure but also arenas for reinforcing social status and identity. This dynamic resonates with Tom Nichols' (2018) concept of the "death of expertise." In an age of accelerated information flows via social media and technology, many students prefer to seek answers to their questions outside the bounds of formal authority. They rely more on the internet accessing information quickly and easily thus challenging the traditional authority of experts, including religious scholars. This presents a unique challenge in integrating religious values with the daily use of technology.

Technology plays a central role in shaping the social dynamics of today's student life. Smartphones are no longer mere communication devices but serve as the command centers of daily routines used to manage tasks, share information, and even practice religion via various applications. Research findings indicate that many students now prefer learning about Islam through digital means: downloading religious materials, watching sermons on YouTube, or when assigned religious topics in class simply relying on search engines or consulting ChatGPT. One respondent from IAIN Pontianak noted that digital references are now the primary source due to their accessibility and convenience. Technology also expands the boundaries of social interaction (Piliang, 2011). Students remain connected with peers both offline and online. Social media amplifies their networks and accelerates information exchange, but it also brings new challenges: the overabundance of information, much of it lacking in credibility. This situation necessitates critical thinking skills and the ability to filter information effectively. In today's digital environment, anyone can present themselves as a knowledge authority without necessarily possessing expertise or qualifications (Geerts, 2022; Hardiman, 2021). More broadly, this phenomenon highlights the ongoing tension between religious values and the pressures of modernity. While many Muslim students remain steadfast in maintaining their religious identity, they face increasing challenges in navigating a complex, technologically saturated, and increasingly secular social landscape. As Tom Nichols (2018) warns, we are witnessing the erosion of epistemic authority, wherein knowledge is democratized to the point that it is no longer tethered to expertise or depth. Thus, the coffee shop originally conceived as a leisure space has evolved into a site rich with social and cultural meaning. Here, urban Muslim students in Pontianak not only engage in interaction but also attempt to maintain a delicate balance between their religious identity and the demands of modern life. In this context, students continuously navigate an increasingly complex social terrain, striving to uphold their religious values while adapting to the broader dynamics of urban culture. The social lives of urban Muslim students in Pontianak underscore the significance of understanding *habitus* and social capital in analyzing social behavior. As Bourdieu emphasizes, individuals are shaped by the social and cultural structures that inform their practices and spatial preferences. Yet, in the context of modernity, they also face new challenges driven by the rapid expansion of technology and access to information. In this regard, urban Muslim students in Pontianak exemplify how individuals negotiate the tension between tradition and modernity, between religious commitment and social necessity, in their daily lives.

9. Conclusion

This study reveals that the contemporary *nongkrong* (social hanging out) culture among urban Muslim university students in Pontianak is far more than a casual social activity. It functions as a new medium for constructing and negotiating both religious and social identities. Coffee shops are no longer merely spaces for gathering; they have become symbolic arenas where Muslim students negotiate their religious values within the framework of modernity. As flexible social spaces, coffee shops offer students opportunities to engage with technology, fulfill religious obligations with greater ease, and display an urban lifestyle that feels authentically their own. In this context, the coffee shop transcends its role as a site of consumption and transforms into a stage for identity performance. In practice, many Muslim students today feel more at ease learning about Islam from non-traditional online sources such as podcasts, YouTube sermons, Instagram da'wah accounts, or digital applications rather than attending lectures by campus *ustadz* or consulting print-based religious references in the library. Coffee shops provide a more fluid and accommodating environment: freedom to smoke, to order food and beverages of their choosing, or to linger for hours



without pressure. In such spaces, religious and social experiences are no longer anchored in institutional authority, but shaped by comfort and lifestyle affinities. Through Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) theoretical lens of *habitus* and *social capital*, it becomes evident that the preference for trendy hangout spots is deeply influenced by social and cultural structures, formed through personal experience and predispositions. Urban Muslim students tend to choose venues that are not only physically comfortable but also symbolically aligned with their social and economic capital reflected in the facilities, ambiance, and perceived quality. This practice embodies an ongoing tension between the desire to maintain religious identity and the demands of adapting to a more open and secular modern life. Technology is also an inseparable component of this *nongkrong* culture. Social media, artificial intelligence, and various digital platforms enable students to remain connected to the broader world while maintaining their social dynamics within peer groups. The declining interest in traditional religious study sessions led by campus *ustadz*, or in printed religious texts, signals a significant shift in learning preferences. Yet this shift is not merely a matter of taste it reflects a deeper phenomenon that Tom Nichols (2018) describes as the "death of expertise," wherein authority across disciplines, including religion, is increasingly undermined by an unfiltered flood of information that lacks personal engagement or critical vetting. While technology opens access to knowledge, it also poses risks: the erosion of scholarly authority and the weakening of intellectual depth. This study argues that *nongkrong* culture in Pontianak constitutes more than a mere social habit. It is a site where religious values, technology, and social status symbols converge. Urban Muslim students in this city do not merely inhabit social spaces to discuss everyday life; they also integrate their religious commitments into settings that are modern, globalized, and technologically advanced. This reflects both harmony and tension between traditional values and modern social dynamics. Ultimately, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the transformation of social spaces among urban Muslim students in Pontianak within the framework of contemporary society. What was once regarded as a light, informal social activity is now shown to contain complex layers of meaning tied to shifts in social identity, religious negotiation, and the role of technology in daily life. In the context of contemporary sociology, this research highlights how spaces traditionally deemed informal such as coffee shops now serve as significant arenas for shaping and reinforcing religious values in urban settings. As such, this study enriches sociological perspectives on the dynamic evolution of social space, where religiosity and lifestyle intersect to shape more inclusive and flexible social structures.

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