

# Coffee Shop as A Third Place for High School Students in Rembang

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**Abstract**— This article aims to find out why high school students in Rembang prefer coffee shops as a place to spend time both at school and outside school time. This study uses an ethnographic approach. The informants in this study are high school students who visited one of the coffee shops in Rembang. The results of this study indicate that coffee shops are part of the routine of high school students in spending their time. Even in school hours, students play truant and go to a coffee shop. There are various activities done in a coffee shop such as interacting with friends, sharing information, drinking coffee and smoking, using facilities such as accessing the internet, watching television, and playing games. A coffee shop is the place go when students feel lonely at home or after school.

**Keywords:** *coffee shop; high school students; Rembang*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Today, coffee shops are becoming a global phenomenon. Coffee shops can be found easily in various countries in the world, including Indonesia. Coffee shops are used as a place for various things. Historically, coffee shops have been known as a place for intellectual discussion, political debate, and freedom of social expression [1]. Many revolutionary ideas from great thinkers were born from coffee shops. Coffee shops have also been transformed into public spaces for the community [2]. Public space can be interpreted as an arena for people to carry out daily activities, by articulating various interests to form discursive opinions and shared desires.

The presence of the coffee shop is also inseparable from the increasing number of coffee consumed. Data from the International Coffee Organization (ICO) states that Indonesia's coffee consumption in the period 2000-2016 experienced an upward trend of more than 174 percent [3]. Coffee shop consumers, ranging from young people to parents, make hanging out at coffee shops as a lifestyle [4][5][6]. Youth who likes to visit coffee shops are closely related to self-actualization behavior that is carried out by following a growing trend [7]. Coffee shops are also part of the public spaces that provides social space or freedom for visitors to have a conversation, hang out, or find sources of information [8][9][10]. The public space embedded in a coffee shop as stated by Habermas [11], is part of the public sphere

that allows citizens to come together to articulate their interests to form opinions and shared desire discursively.

This article will describe the role of coffee shops as part of the public space for rural communities in Rembang, Central Java. Coffee drinking activities in the Rembang community are generally carried out in coffee shops. Drinking coffee in a coffee shop is usually done by many people, young or old, and from various social classes in the community. This activity becomes their habitual pattern before, during or after carrying out various routines. In the morning, usually the parents and young people go to the food stall for breakfast while drinking coffee. During a break from work, they also visit a coffee shop to refresh the body due to fatigue.

Coffee shops in Rembang besides being visited by parents or adults are also visited by teenagers, especially students. High school students in Rembang also make coffee shops as part of their routine. The time spent by high school students in coffee shops is even longer than the time spent at school or at home. Therefore, this article will explore why high school students in rural Rembang prefer coffee shops to spend their time.

To understand the phenomenon of coffee shops and high school students in Rembang, this article uses the third place concept of Ray Oldenburg. Oldenburg [12] explains the concept of the third place as one of three categories of places where people spend their time. The house is the first place, "domestic environment" for relaxation. The second place is intended for "productive or profitable workspaces". The third place is "inclusive as a place to socialize, offering the foundation of the community and its celebration". Third places, is a place where the people own remedy for stress, loneliness, and alienation.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative method. Qualitative research begins with the assumptions of theoretical interpretation that shape or influence the study of problems with the meanings imposed by individuals or groups [13]. The location of the research is in one of the coffee shops named Kopi Djleg. This coffee shop is located in Kragan District, Rembang Regency.

### III. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

#### A. *Rembang People and Coffee Shop*

Coffee drinking activity has become part of the daily life of the Rembang community. The tradition of drinking coffee originated from the existence of *mblandong* workers or looking for wood in the forest and forced planting in the colonial era [14]. Coffee drinking is a remedy for workers, to eliminate fatigue and restore energy. The tradition of drinking coffee in Rembang is not supported by the existence of coffee plantations as the main ingredient of coffee. The coffee beans consumed by the Rembang community come from coffee plantations in East Java. Coffee shop owners buy raw coffee beans to be processed into ready-to-drink coffee.

Coffee shops in Rembang are spread along the edge of the highway and in the middle of residential areas. Coffee shops located in the middle of the residential area generally merge with houses by using part of the house rooms for sale. The customers are the community around the neighborhood. Whereas coffee shops located on the side of the road generally have their own separate rooms of the house. The visitors are not only the surrounding community, but also the people from outside the coffee shop environment. In the coffee shop, visitors sit in chairs or halls and wooden tables. They visit coffee shops not only for coffee, but also meet other people and talk. In coffee shops visitors can chat freely and joke with each other to obscure the boundaries of social status.

It could be said that a coffee shop is a place that has an important position in the daily life of the Rembang community. Various groups use it for various purposes. Parents and youth, for example, every morning before starting the activity always visit a shop that provides food and coffee. Youth and teenagers usually use coffee shops as a space to gather and interact. If they choose to hang out in other places and not in a coffee shop, they still buy a few packs of coffee from a coffee shop as a friend to spend their time. Mothers also run to a coffee shop if they need snacks and coffee for their guests or coolies.

#### B. *Coffee Shops and High School Students*

Kopi Djleg is a coffee shop that is visited by many visitors, especially high school students. Kopi Djleg attracts high school students to come because there are various facilities in this coffee shop, namely the availability of various game facilities, such as chess, cards and carrom. In addition, there is also free internet access using a Wi-Fi network. The shop opening hours is also quite long, from 09.00-24.00. Besides coffee, this shop also sells other food, at prices affordable to high school students. It is located on the edge of the highway, making this shop easily accessible to visitors.

The time of high school students' visit the coffee shop varies. On a regular day school, students are at the school from 07:00 to 14:00 pm. After that, they go home to change clothes and eat. The high school students then go

to Kopi Djleg to continue their activities until the afternoon. During holidays, high school students generally visit Kopi Djleg at 10:00 a.m. Then in the evening, high school students visit again at 8:00 p.m. Generally high school students visit the coffee shop every day on average between 10-12 persons. Most of them spend time in Kopi Djleg up to 2-4 hours.

High school students also appear to be in a coffee shop during school hours. Usually they skip school and chose a coffee shops as a hiding place. There are several reasons behind high school students' playing truant and hiding in coffee shops. One of the reasons is because there is a problem at school. Among other things are because they do not like certain subjects, often scolded by the teacher, do not do assignments, or feel bored being in school. Another reason is that it is too late to attend school so they prefer to skip school rather than being punished. High school students choose coffee shops because for them it is a safe, comfortable and pleasant place to hang out. When ditching in a coffee shop, they usually cover school uniforms with jackets. As loyal customers of the coffee shop, high school students get a warm services from the shop that make them feel comfortable and homy.

High school students visit coffee shops between 5-6 times a week. When they feel lonely at home or after school, they will immediately go to a coffee shop in hopes of meeting their friends. They visit coffee shops not only for coffee, but there are other things that they want to get. There are several reasons that drive high school students choose coffee shops as part of their daily life.

##### 1) *Leisure and Pleasure*

High school students visit coffee shops to get rid of boredom and spend their free time. The loneliness when at home and getting bored after school is a driving factor that makes high school students visit coffee shops. For holidays, high school students are usually looking for friends to play. In coffee shops, they usually get what they are looking for, that is friends to play and spend time. These high school students are basically at the stage of adolescent growth. In the adolescent stage, the development of understanding encourages them to build more intimate social relationships, especially with peers, one of them through friendship [15]. For them, coffee shop is a place for high school students to make friends with peers, even beyond the boundaries of friendship at school.

Entertainment can be obtained by high school students through various activities in coffee shops. The activities they carry out are related to the facilities available in coffee shops, such as accessing free internet, playing carom and chess, playing music and watching shows on television. They smile and laugh. When playing carom and chess, for example, there is something that makes the game more enjoyable, that is the presence of audience. Usually the audience makes noise by

commenting, giving input, shouting or taunting one of the players. The mockery they do is only a spice of excitement to create a more relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere.

Other activities carried out were *njagong*. *Njagong* or chatting with friends is an activity that seems fun for them. *Njagong* is conversation, an activity that makes the atmosphere of the room alive, bright, colorful, and interesting. Such an atmosphere is important and is done in the third place [12]. Conversations will be more fun if one of them is good at joking. Usually the atmosphere can be more alive, when they can laugh to shout pleasure. Often conversations are also filled with more ridicule and jokes. They do not feel hurt with the ridicule and jokes since those just indicate the closeness of their relationship.

For high school students, coffee shops are the right place to get entertainment and get out of school routines. The activities they do in coffee shops are activities that are contrary to school routines. If the school routine is more dominated by obeying school rules and participating in school activities, the activities of high school students in coffee shops run the opposite. They can come to the coffee shop as they wish, dress according to taste, play to their heart's situation, talk about anything and smoke without feeling afraid of being punished. The activities they do in coffee shops have nothing to do with school learning and even become a place to forget about school.

Coffee shops are also a place to escape from pressure at home and school. Houses and schools are institutions that have the authority to regulate and provide norms to their members. These rules or norms also create pressure on high school students. High school students feel bored with routines at school and at home that curb them, so they don't feel free to do what they want to do. Coffee shops are an alternative space for high school students to break the structural relations that exist in schools and homes. Coffee shops provide a different and entertaining atmosphere for high school students. For high school students, home is just a place to live, eat, sleep and gather with family. School is a place to find knowledge and gather with school friends. While the coffee shop is a place to hang out and play with friends, look for fun and escape from the boredom of school and home routines.

## 2) *Coffee Shop As A Comfortable Place*

One of the characteristics of a coffee shop that high school students like is a place with a comfortable atmosphere. Coffee shops have comforts and enjoyable atmosphere which cannot be found at home or school. As a third place, coffee shops must be a place where individuals can come and go as they please, no one acts as host, and all feel at home and comfortable [12]. Comfort and pleasure can come from the form of interaction that takes place in a coffee shop, as well as the menu of dishes provided in coffee shops.

Faisal (17 years), feel comfortable in Kopi Djleg because he does not feel being gossiped by others, as what happens to him when when he is in a coffee shop in his village. Syofauddin (19 years) feels comfortable in Kopi Djleg because this shop serves *Kopi Lelet* which is his favorite. Moreover, the place is not too crowded and he has a close relationship with the coffee shop owner. The closeness of the relationship with the shop owner allows him to owe money when he has no money.

Another thing that makes high school students like coffee shops and feel comfortable in them is because they get the freedom to do self-actualization. High school students are free to do whatever they like, such as playing games, smoking, watching television, playing, or chatting with friends. Third place must be prepared to serve the community's needs for sociability and relaxation at intervals before, between, and after their mandatory appearance elsewhere [12]. Coffee shops are also a space to escape from social hierarchies. Kopi Djleg customers vary, from children, teenagers, and parents with various jobs as well. They can talk and tell stories at one table and joke without feeling awkward with each other. In addition, the relationship that exists is carried out without any social distance, because there is no special treatment or regulation related to class or position. This is consistent with the characteristics of the coffee shop as a third place that provides a neutral place where men find each other apart from the social class that previously divided them. The coffee shop is an egalitarian and inclusive place.

The space of freedom that high school students get in a coffee shop makes them feel comfortable and consider a coffee shop as their own home. When at home or school, high school students cannot freely do what they want to do because they are tied to parents at home or bound by rules at school. It is also what makes a coffee shop can be said to be a safe place to break away from the rules at school or home.

## 3) *Visiting a Coffee Shop as a Habit*

Visiting a coffee shop has become a habit that the Rembang community do since junior high school. Initially visiting coffee shops was an invitation from friends or parents. Until growing up and entering senior high school age, visiting a coffee shop becomes a daily activity to eliminate boredom and spend time. The habit of hanging out at a coffee shop can be understood by referring to Horton and Hunt's explanation, that through trial and error, accidental situations, or some unconscious influence, a group of people arrive at one of these possibilities, repeat it and accept it as a reasonable way to fulfill certain [16].

The habit of drinking coffee by high school students is something that is natural for them. Like Faud (19 years), Makin (19 years), and Faisal (17 years), they visit coffee shops every day. The existence of high school students in coffee shops is the influence of the attitude of conformity possessed by teenagers. In adolescence, it is

developed an attitude of "conformity", namely the tendency to surrender or follow opinions, values, habits, interests of others, especially peers [15]. High school students assume that their age is the age to hang out in a coffee shop and spend time there.

#### 4) Coffee Shop As A Community Gathering Place

Meeting friends in a community is also the reason for high school students visiting to coffee shops. The existence of high school students in a coffee shop indirectly binds them in a community. Among those who frequently visit and meet in coffee shops have mutual awareness as members of the community and interaction [16]. Coffee shops in general are also used by high school students as an arena to gather and play with friends. In the coffee shop community, life is visible. This is in line with the third place role, which is to provide the best service and a place for someone when visiting there will always be a guarantee that acquaintances will be there [12].

When meeting with community members high school students will do various things related to their community. There are two communities that often carry out activities in Kopi Djleg, namely the tambourine community and the online gaming community. For the Tambourine community, coffee shops become base camp or gathering place for members to discuss activity schedules, detail finances, plan equipment purchases, and converse with the intention of getting closer to each other among members.

The second community is the online games community. The games they usually play are Clash of Clans and Mobile Legend. Both games are a type of multiplayer game so that they can be played together. This online game community was formed because students who visit the coffee shops usually also play the game. High school students who visit coffee shops intend to play this game with a community friend. The term they use is *mabar* or playing together. When playing together, the games that are run become more exciting because their physical bodies are close together and easier to communicate for the victory of the game. When doing these activities, they look very expressive. Some scream and laugh when the game is certain to be won by them. Instead, they will curse with a gloomy face when the game is over while the defeat befalls them. The owner of the coffee shop is the chairman of the online game community so the owner is very close with the customers from the game community.

#### CONCLUSION

Coffee shops are places frequently visited by high school students in Rembang to spend time. Coffee shops become a place to escape from their routines at school and at home which are full of rules. In coffee shops, high school students can relax, feel comfortable and

entertained. Therefore, coffee shops become the third room, as an alternative out of home and school.

Coffee shops are the destination when high school students feel bored at home or after school. In coffee shops, high school students get what they want, which they generally don't get at home or school. First, they get entertainment by gathering with friends, chatting and doing various activities to eliminate saturation. For high school students, the entertainment they get in coffee shops is an escape from the routines, rules and pressures of schools and homes. Coffee shops are also the place for high school students to make friends with peers, even beyond the boundaries of friendship at school. Second, they feel comfortable in a coffee shop. The comfort obtained by each high school student is different, but they can get their own freedom for self-actualization. Comfort is also obtained because in coffee shops, high school students can be separated from the social hierarchy and the rules that are in school or home.

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