

Majelis Taklim as the arena of global-style dissemination among Muslim women in Central Java

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Abstract

This study aims to address three questions, namely: what kinds of interaction exist within the scope of women *majelis taklim* in Semarang; what kinds of transaction exist in the interaction within the scope of women *majelis taklim* in Semarang; and

a question about the impact of the kinds of interaction and transaction on the life of the *majelis taklim* members. With these research questions, this research focuses on the process of interaction as cultural transmission, kinds of global style, and the impact of global-style style on *majelis taklim*. Applying qualitative research and analysis of gender and postmodernism, it was found that women in the women's *majelis taklim* used the forum as a channel to obtain the information they needed, so the *majelis taklim* forum was extended, both offline and online. The members of *Majelis Taklim* used the existing forum to express their needs, not only those related to religious study but also other aspects. The impact is that, although *majelis taklim* is a medium for learning religion, it also serves as a venue for knowledge, caring, and buying and selling.

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap tiga hal, yaitu: jenis-jenis interaksi dalam lingkup *majelis taklim* perempuan di Semarang; jenis-jenis transaksi dalam interaksi dalam lingkup *majelis taklim* perempuan di Semarang, dan bagaimana dampak dari jenis-jenis interaksi dan transaksi terhadap kehidupan anggota *majelis taklim*. Dengan pertanyaan penelitian tersebut, penelitian ini berfokus pada proses interaksi sebagai transmisi budaya, jenis-jenis gaya global, dan dampak gaya global terhadap *majelis taklim*. Dengan menerapkan penelitian kualitatif dan analisis gender serta postmodernisme, ditemukan bahwa perempuan di *majelis taklim* perempuan menggunakan forum majelis taklim sebagai media untuk memperoleh informasi yang mereka butuhkan, sehingga ada perluasan forum *majelis taklim*, baik *offline* maupun *online*; anggota *majelis taklim* menggunakan forum yang ada untuk mengekspresikan kebutuhan mereka, tidak hanya yang terkait dengan studi agama tetapi juga hal-hal lainnya; dan dampaknya adalah bahwa meskipun *majelis taklim* adalah media untuk belajar agama, tetapi juga menjadi tempat pengetahuan, kegiatan saling peduli, serta jual beli.

Keywords: *majelis taklim*; women; arena; global style; interaction; transaction

Introduction

Majelis taklim (Islamic religious study gathering) is a common phenomenon in Indonesian society. It can be found in various community contexts. Based on the data of Republika.id, there are about 54.375 *majelis taklim*

in Indonesia, and in Central Java province, there are 5.254.¹ Data in Semarang City showed that, with the assumption that there are 1308 mosques and 1304 musholla (prayer hall) in this city;² the number of *majelis taklim* is about the sum of the numbers of mosques and musholla. What is interesting in this study is that although *Majelis Taklim* is a knowledge and religious forum,³ in which its members gather frequently to study Islam, it is also a forum used by its members to express their lifestyle in the form of fashion expressions, conduct transactions, and hold events where lifestyle becomes a theme discussed and transacted.

The study of *majelis taklim*, in general, can be categorized into three orientations: the first concerns regulation.⁴ This study has found a link between the *majelis taklim* and politics. The connection is that the *majelis taklim*, as a non-formal educational institution in society, is assumed to be an arena for radical movements. Therefore, the government feels the need to provide rules for the *majelis taklim*. Second is related to the position of the *majelis taklim* as a non-formal educational institution.⁵ Third, in relation to the movement base and community development, this study refers both to the general concept of social development, as discussed by Amin et al., Marzuki et al., and Riyadi, and to more specific studies, such as Musaropah et al., who focused on the role of *majelis taklim* in developing entrepreneurship among its members.

¹Febrian Fachri, "Puluhan Ribu Majelis Taklim Tersebar di Seluruh Indonesia," *republika.co.id*, August 7, 2022, <https://republika.co.id/berita/rg7uwz2625000/puluhan-ribu-majelis-taklim-tersebar-di-seluruh-indonesia>.

²Humas BPS, "Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Semarang," *semarangkota.bps.go.id*, 2021, <https://semarangkota.bps.go.id/statictable/2021/05/11/195/jumlah-tempat-peribadatan-menurut-kecamatan-di-kota-semarang-2020.html>.

³Umar Al Faruq, "Politik dan Kebijakan tentang Majelis Taklim di Indonesia: Analisis Kebijakan Peraturan Menteri Agama No. 29 Tahun 2019", *Jurnal Al-Murabbi*, Vol. 5, no. 2 (2020), 41-59.

⁴Faruq, "Politik dan Kebijakan...", 46.

⁵Zaini Dahlan, "Peran dan Kedudukan Majelis Taklim di Indonesia", *Jurnal Al-Fatih*, Vol. 2, no. 2 (2019), 252-278; Faruq, "Politik dan Kebijakan..."

The discussion on global lifestyle refers to developments in the world economy and the media.⁶ The development of the world economy has given rise to a new elite and middle class whose lifestyles are influenced by trends that, in turn, are shaped by the media.⁷ There are at least three trends in the study of global lifestyle. The first concerns global lifestyle segments, as studied by Vyncke, who found that global lifestyles exhibit variable segments depending on the angle used, such as attitude, interest, and opinion.⁸ Aschemann-Witzel et al. found that food consumption is influenced by many factors, including style and waste.⁹ The second is related to global lifestyle consumption patterns, as studied by Reusswig et al., who focused on changing patterns of global lifestyles oriented toward energy-saving and food preferences.¹⁰ Hubacek et al. found that in developing countries with economic growth, people are no longer concerned with food and clothing consumption, but instead prioritize quality of life and welfare.¹¹ The third is on global lifestyle trends as studied by Malik, Lenzen, Łopaciuk, and Łoboda, who found that the lifestyle

⁶Solvay Gerke, "Global Lifestyles under Local Conditions: The New Indonesian Middle Class," in *Consumption in Asia*. Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2000, 24; Emilia Ljungberg, "Global Lifestyles: Constructions of Places and Identities in Travel Journalism," Doctoral Thesis, Department of Communication and Media, Lund University, 2012, 35, 53.

⁷Gerke, "Global Lifestyles under Local Conditions ..."

⁸Patrick Vyncke, "Lifestyle Segmentation: From Attitudes, Interests and Opinions, to Values, Aesthetic Styles, Life Visions and Media Preferences," *European Journal of Communication*, Vol. 17, no. 4 (2002), 445-63.

⁹Jessica Aschemann-Witzel, Ilona E. de Hooge, and Valérie L. Almli, "My Style, My Food, My Waste! Consumer Food Waste-Related Lifestyle Segments," *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 59 (2021), 102353.

¹⁰Fritz Reusswig, Hermann Lotze-Campen, and Katrin Gerlinger, "Changing Global Lifestyle and Consumption Patterns: The Case of Energy and Food," 2003, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/252291500_Changing_Global_Lifestyle_and_Consumption_Patterns_The_Case_of_Energy_and_Food.

¹¹Klaus Hubacek, Dabo Guan, and Anamika Barua, "Changing Lifestyles and Consumption Patterns in Developing Countries: A Scenario Analysis for China and India," *Futures*, Vol. 39, no. 9 (2007), 1084-1096.

trend was focused on the environment and economics.¹² Of the four existing study trends, this study does not align with any of them, but it touches on all four, making it a novelty in global lifestyle studies.

This study uses Bourdieu's perspective on the arena (field), which, according to Bourdieu, is a social space—a competitive space that contains a variety of interactions, transactions, and events. In the social arena, there are positions for social agents (humans or institutions), limitations on what is allowed and what is not, and there are doxa (rules that are no longer questioned because they are considered natural).¹³ In this context, *majelis taklim* is seen as the arena where a variety of interactions, transactions, or events have happened. The interaction and transaction are in the corridor of the regulation held by the community members of *majelis taklim* (doxa).

This research was conducted in Semarang, the capital city of Central Java province, a coastal city with a predominantly Muslim population. In this context, Islam is flourishing. Therefore, Islamic studies can be found in various contexts. One of the groups of Islamic studies was *majelis taklim*. Based on their membership, there are male *majelis taklim*, a mix between male and female *majelis taklim*, and also female *majelis taklim*. Based on location, there are *majelis taklim* located in the city center, sub-urban, and rural areas.

The *majelis taklim* that became the object of study were five, located in mosques in five housing estates in the suburbs of Semarang. The five *majelis taklim* meet weekly. There are three *majelis taklim* held on Friday evening, one on Sunday morning, and two others on Sunday evening. All *majelis taklim* have their own curricula in their program. Therefore, at every meeting, a fixed preacher teaches on a specific topic.

¹²Aleksandra Łopaciuk and Mirosław Łoboda, "Global Beauty Industry Trends in the 21st Century," in *Management, Knowledge, and Learning International Conference 2013*, Croatia, 2013, 1079–1087.

¹³Pierre Bourdieu, *Arena Produksi Kultural: Sebuah Kajian Sosiologis Budaya*, Yogyakarta: Kreasi Wacana, 2010, 26.

They are generally composed of women aged 30 to 70, with the majority between 50 and 70. Within this age range, it can be seen that some members of the taklim assemblies are still actively working, while others have entered retirement. They show great enthusiasm during the *majelis taklim*. What is interesting is that in the *majelis taklim*, not all activities are related to religious studies; other issues include the schedule of meetings outside the *majelis taklim*, buying and selling daily necessities, women's specific needs, and disseminating any information deemed useful by the members. On this basis, it can be said that *majelis taklim* is a forum for developing various social activities for women, including lifestyle expression. Not only is this about religious learning, but this is the novelty of this study.

This study is qualitative and based on field research. As a qualitative research study, the data sources are informants, who were members of the *majelis taklim* and representatives of women members of the *majelis taklim*. There were 10 women members of the *majelis taklim* who served as informants, and they came from 5 women *majelis taklim* in 5 housing estates in the suburban area of Semarang. Data were collected through observation and both structured and in-depth interviews. Based on the above background, the questions that will be answered in this study are: (a) What are the forms of interaction and transactions among members of the *majelis taklim*? (b) Why are these interactions and transactions formed among members of the *majelis taklim*; and (c) What is the impact of the forms of interaction and transactions that take place in the *majelis taklim*?

The basic assumptions of this study concern the diversity of interaction and transactions resulting from patterned meetings. The diversity of interaction and transaction forms is influenced by various social aspects, such as the frequency of the *majelis taklim* meetings, the location of the *majelis taklim*, and the nature of the studies conducted. The diversity of interactions and transactions creates higher opportunities for developing

transactions among women members of the *majelis taklim*. The transactions relate to the diverse needs of members of the women's *majelis taklim*.

Majelis taklim becomes an arena where various forms of interaction and transactions among its members become a routine. The pattern of continuous interaction and communication has a systemic impact on the emergence of the lifestyle construction process in the *majelis taklim*. A healthy lifestyle is one indicator in the life construction process.¹⁴ Learn about healthy lifestyle trends that are represented through food consumption patterns that emphasize quality, comfort, and economic value, as well as patterns of substitute housing that are currently a consumption trend among members of the *majelis taklim*. In addition, promoting a healthy lifestyle is a community of clean, sustainable lifestyles that are pioneered by socio-religious groups, especially various communities in Asian countries, where they have experienced rapid transformations in their environments and lifestyles.¹⁵ Some of these studies confirm that the fundamental changes and lifestyles of contemporary society do not always lead to a sustainable life. Therefore, the environmental movement initiated by the government becomes an effective strategy for environmental conservation. This includes members of the *majelis taklim* who not only share religious knowledge but also disseminate and internalize a healthy lifestyle.

¹⁴Soyeong Kim, Kiwon Lee, and Youngmi Lee, "Selection Attributes of Home Meal Replacement by Food-Related Lifestyles of Single-Person Households in South Korea," *Food Quality and Preference* Vol. 66 (2018), 44-51; Jessica L Thomson et al., "Feasibility of Online Nutrition Education in the Workplace: Working Toward Healthy Lifestyles," *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* 50, no. 9 (2018), 868-875.

¹⁵Ryu Koide et al., "Carbon Footprints and Consumer Lifestyles: An Analysis of Lifestyle Factors and Gap Analysis by Consumer Segment in Japan," *Sustainability*, Vol. 11, no. 21 (2019), 5983; Vandana Mishra et al., "Fast-Changing Life-Styles and Ecotoxicity of Hair Dyes Drive the Emergence of Hidden Toxicants Threatening Environmental Sustainability in Asia," *Environmental Research*, Vol. 184 (2020), 109253; Aina M. Yañez et al., "Implications of Personality and Parental Education on Healthy Lifestyles among Adolescents," *Scientific Reports*, Vol. 10, no. 1 (2020), 7911.

The study of the existence of the *majelis taklim* also yielded new findings, showing that the *majelis taklim* became an arena for transactions to meet daily needs. The interactions built daily serve as the basic capital for presenting goods and service offerings in accordance with the tastes and needs of the members of the *majelis taklim*. This statement is in line with the study of Gazzola et al.,¹⁶ and the study of Kang¹⁷, which emphasize the significant changes that have occurred in the competitive scenario in which fashion companies operate, combined with a deep transformation in the lifestyles of final consumers, translate into the need to redefine the business models/sustainable consumption. Another indicator that underlies the pattern of sustainable shopping is the service process that frames every buying and selling transaction. Studies by Fikri et al.,¹⁸ and Olonade et al.,¹⁹ show that price and service quality have a positive effect on purchase decisions. Likewise, in the context of the *majelis taklim*, members with existing social ties can provide excellent service in every transaction. The *majelis taklim* then becomes an active arena for all members to interact and transact, both in the context of religious knowledge, implementation of social control, and construction of lifestyle through various transactions for the necessities of life.

¹⁶Patrizia Gazzola et al., "Trends in the Fashion Industry. The Perception of Sustainability and Circular Economy: A Gender/Generation Quantitative Approach," *Sustainability*, Vol. 12, no. 7 (2020), 2809.

¹⁷Ju-Young M. Kang, "What Drives Omnichannel Shopping Behaviors?," *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, Vol. 23, no. 2 (2019), 224-238.

¹⁸Miftah El Fikri et al., "Strategy to Enhance Purchase Decisions through Promotions and Shopping Lifestyles to Supermarkets during the Coronavirus Pandemic: A Case Study IJT Mart, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatera," *Saudi Journal of Business and Management Studies*, Vol. 5, no. 11 (2020), 530-538.

¹⁹Olawale Yinusa Olonade et al., "Megamalls and Lifestyles of Urban Dwellers in Selected Cities in Southwest, Nigeria," *African Journal of Reproductive Health* 25, no. 5s (2021), 54.

The forms of interaction among members of the *Majelis Taklim*

Some informants stated how they interact with fellow members of the *majelis taklim*. For example, R1, R2, R3, and R7 stated that although the women’s *majelis taklim* is a means of meeting, it is not only at meetings in the *majelis taklim*. They also keep in touch outside the *majelis taklim*, either directly or through the WhatsApp group managed by the *majelis taklim* management. Other informants, namely R4, R5, R8, and R10, stated that there is no difference in the type of information exchanged among them. For example, this may include sharing recitation materials, including those delivered at the mosque during the recitation forum. *Majelis taklim* women, or in similar *majelis taklim* forums, provide information about the joys and sorrows of local residents, including various goods, from daily necessities, ready-to-eat food, and clothing, to other special needs of women, such as cosmetics, for example.

Other informants, R6, R9, and R10, added that there is almost no difference in the content of conversations held in the *majelis taklim* and outside it, either in person or online through the WhatsApp group. The data above, if mapped, can be made into a table as follows:

Table 1. Forms of Interaction *Majelis Taklim*’s Member

Interaction	Within the forum of majelis aklim	Limited time
		Only on the time of majelis taklim held and they attend
	Outside the forum of majelis taklim	Unlimited time Offline; direct meeting Online; via Whatsapp group Online: personal contact by Whatsapp

It can be explained that *majelis taklim* is used by its members as an arena for interactions and transactions.²⁰ As the arena, *Majelis Taklim* has experienced an expansion. The expansion is possible because of the innovation in communication technology. The broader expansion is the expression of awareness of the isolation from any limitations and restrictions. This is the expression of the postmodern image,²¹ because the expansion of the meeting arena produced new cultural and social capital, making it possible for members of *majelis taklim* to develop themselves and profit from the new arena. As Huang stated, both the social and cultural capital may be formed in the arena.²²

The form of interaction is direct, both during the *majelis taklim* and outside it. Outside the *majelis taklim* forum, interactions are carried out through direct meetings and an online WhatsApp group. The expansion of the arena does not merely create new capital in the form of social and cultural capital, but also has further consequences. The arena gives rise to interactions in which social agents compete to gain other forms of capital, in addition to social and cultural capital. It is also possible to conduct economic competition as found by Savage et al.²³ Various products needed by social agents are offered to one another and received by other social agents. Lifestyle products are also offered, such as health and fashion products.

No doubt, the new arena formed in *majelis taklim* creates a space of interaction that allows the entry of postmodern lifestyles into the lives of *majelis taklim* members in urban areas, which is similar to the reading of the

²⁰Bourdieu, *Arena Produksi Kultural...*, 42.

²¹Bourdieu, *Arena Produksi Kultural...*, 43.

²²Xiaowei Huang, "Understanding Bourdieu - Cultural Capital and Habitus," *Review of European Studies* Vol. 11, no. 3 (2019), 45.

²³Mike Savage et al., "Emerging Cultural Capital in the City: Profiling London and Brussels," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 42, no. 1 (2018), 138-149.

majelis taklim.²⁴ This is as Hashemi et al.,²⁵ and Abel²⁶ found in their study on lifestyle, health, behavior, and social capital within the interaction of young people. In this context, globalization cannot be separated from the encounter between global and local practices. Therefore, globalization is a dialogical process between the global and the local.²⁷

It can be concluded that, as a meeting medium, *majelis taklim* has expanded its arena. All *majelis taklim* have online groups, and now all use WhatsApp groups. The development of information and communication technology has blurred the boundaries of time and space. Locality is no longer the main reference for experience.²⁸ This is because the world has become a global village,²⁹ a world no longer limited by time and space, so diverse world communities are united in a shared experience.

Kinds of transactions among members of the women's *Majelis Taklim*

The informants described the transaction within the context of interaction among members of the women's *majelis taklim*. For example, R1, R3, and R7 stated that although the women's *majelis taklim* is a meeting, there are many activities during the meeting. Knowledge sharing is one of the many activities that may be mentioned. Other informants, namely R4, R5, R8,

²⁴Juliet Blair, "Private Parts in Public Places: The Case of Actresses," in *Women and Space*, Oxford, UK & Cambridge, USA: Routledge, 2021, 200-221.

²⁵N. Hashemi, B. Sebar, and N. Harris, "The Relationship between Cultural Capital and Lifestyle Health Behaviours in Young People: A Systematic Review," *Public Health*, Vol. 164 (2018), 57-67, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2018.07.020>.

²⁶Thomas Abel, "Cultural Capital in Health Promotion," in *Health and Modernity*, New York: Springer, 2007, 43-73.

²⁷William E. Kilbourne, "What Is Globalization?," *Journal of Macromarketing*, Vol. 22, no. 2 (2002), 182-84, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0276146702238221>; Ulrich Beck, *What Is Globalization?* New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2018.

²⁸Mike Featherstone, *Posmodernisme dan Budaya Konsumen*, Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2008, 35.

²⁹Barry Wellman, *Networks in the Global Village: Life in Contemporary Communities*, Oxford, UK & Cambridge, USA: Routledge, 1999, 33.

R10 stated that:

There seems to be no differences between offline and online meetings among the members of the women’s *majelis taklim*. Both in offline and online meetings, there is sharing of knowledge, both religious and other knowledge, activities of buying and selling, as well as sharing neighborhood information, such as the joys and sorrows of local residents.”

Other informants, R5, R6, R9, R10 added that:

“Factually, there is no limitation in the discussion, and activities are shown in the media of the meeting, both directly and online through the WhatsApp group. Everyone can see in the group all the discussions that went on, discussions about religious knowledge, health, social events, selling and buying of whatever items, and also jokes.”

The data above may be mapped into a table as follows:

Table 2. Kinds of Transactions among Members of Women

Majelis Taklim

<i>Majelis Taklim</i>			
Interaction	Within the forum of majelis taklim	Sharing the material of Islamic study	- From the preachers - From other preachers in the <i>majelis taklim</i> - From other preachers in other <i>majelis taklim</i>
		Direct and offline communication	Personal dialog
		Selling and buying of daily needs	- Direct buying and selling - Selling by request
		Exchange neighborhood information	- Sad news - Happy news

	Online communication	- Group communication - Personal communication
Outside the forum of <i>majelis taklim</i>	Selling and buying of daily needs	- Food and beverage - fashion - household appliances
	Exchange neighborhood information	- Sad news - Happy news

There seems to be no difference in the content of interactions or transactions carried out by members of the *majelis taklim*, whether meeting directly in the *majelis taklim* forum or applying online media outside the *majelis taklim* forum. The *majelis taklim*, as a forum, seems to have been widely used for interaction. An arena, in this context, is a wide space where people can interact with others and engage in whatever they choose in their daily activities. Seeing this broader arena, it is relevant what Featherstone stated about the arena unavoidably becoming the medium for interaction in the global context.³⁰ What he meant by global context is that the interaction was mediated by communication media.³¹ In the study of global culture, at least two points must be considered. The first is global culture, like other cultures, an evolving set of practices, forms of knowledge, rules, and lifestyles. The second is local culture, and the third is media.³²

Various economic and social activities are carried out without transaction limits. In economic activities, various needs are offered and

³⁰Featherstone, *Posmodernisme dan Budaya Konsumen...*, 45.

³¹Featherstone, *Posmodernisme dan Budaya Konsumen...*, 48.

³²Featherstone, *Posmodernisme dan Budaya Konsumen...*, 45; Blair, "Private Parts in Public Places: The Case of Actresses" ..., 21.

delivered. The transaction model that utilizes *majelis taklim* media, whether within or outside the *majelis taklim* forum, and involves visual and online transactions, is an expression of the postmodern lifestyle. As Featherstone stated, the awareness of having an arena for broader communication is one of the characteristics of the postmodern lifestyle.³³ Although there is no specific method for offering the activities of selling and buying, the way the seller in the group of *majelis taklim* offers their items is also an expression of advertisement because the seller invites other members to engage in transaction activities.

In order to offer their items for sale, in the social arena too, there are competitions such as football games. Social agents use a variety of strategies to maintain or improve their position, which is related to habitus and capital. According to Bourdieu, the capital that is contested in the social arena consists of: 1) economic capital can be in the form of money; 2) cultural capital, in the form of knowledge, language, sound; 3) social capital in the form of family, religion, cultural heritage, network; and 4) symbolic capital, in the form of life style, habit, and so on.³⁴

The members of the *majelis taklim* interpret this space as a social arena where various social transactions can take place, including those related to buying and selling. In this context, the members of the *majelis taklim* take advantage of the social relations that have been built not only as cultural and social capital, but also as economic capital. In this context, the members of the *majelis taklim* have product or commodity distinctions that are offered in both offline and online meetings via WhatsApp groups.

Like the *doxa* concept developed by Bourdieu,³⁵ members of the *majelis taklim* have norms that frame the buying and selling transaction, a process

³³Featherstone, *Posmodernisme dan Budaya Konsumen...*, 45.

³⁴Bourdieu, *Arena Produksi Kultural...*, 77.

³⁵Bourdieu, *Arena Produksi Kultural...*, 77.

that includes product distinctions, promotional patterns, payment types, and the concept of buying and selling services. Thus, various forms of interaction and transactions can occur simultaneously.

The process of spreading global values into local areas involves new cultural intermediaries. These agents include those engaged in marketing, advertising, human relations, radio and television production, presenters, magazine journalists, fashion writers, and various auxiliary professions (social workers, marriage counselors, sex therapists, dieticians, performance leaders, etc.).³⁶ Bourdieu, cited by Featherstone, calls these professionals “new intellectuals” who express themselves through a “life learning mode.”³⁷ In this context, the members of the *majelis taklim* become part of the new intellectuals in the dialectical process of global values being brought into the local area through the dissemination of lifestyle. Various promotional and product offerings that take place during taklim meetings are a form of sharing knowledge about the dynamics of the development of global values in the realm of lifestyle. Moreover, members of the *majelis taklim* who are responsive and adaptable to new ideas become role models or trendsetters for other members of the *majelis taklim* or the community.

In this mode of life learning, people are invited to admire new identities, presentations, appearances, lifestyles, and experiences.³⁸ In this process, they actively promote and disseminate their lifestyles to a wide audience by conspiring with intellectual groups to legitimize new fields, such as sports, fashion, popular music, and popular culture as valid fields of intellectual analysis.³⁹ Cultural intermediaries work between media and intellectual life. Intellectual groups assist in disseminating programs of new

³⁶Featherstone, *Posmodernisme dan Budaya Konsumen...*, 45.

³⁷Featherstone, *Posmodernisme dan Budaya Konsumen...*, 79.

³⁸Featherstone, *Posmodernisme dan Budaya Konsumen...*, 79.

³⁹Featherstone, *Posmodernisme dan Budaya Konsumen...*, 34–35.

intellectual groups and mass media.⁴⁰ The new symbolic system involves new experiences, feelings, and symbolic objects. This new culture is what scholars call postmodern culture (Featherstone, 2007, 2008). *Majelis taklim* has become a complex arena for shaping the lifestyles of its members and society in general. In the Featherstone scheme,⁴¹ the *majelis taklim* is like the work of cultural intermediaries that frames the whole process of community development, especially in the dialectic between global values and the local context. The role of the *majelis taklim* members as a lifelong learning mode that integrates media use in the dissemination of global values and lifestyle makes the *majelis taklim* an effective arena for constructing a new identity. This identity implies their participation in the global village.

The impact of the forms of interaction and transactions in *Majelis Taklim*

The impact of interactions and transactions in the *majelis taklim* may be traced to the informants' responses to the interview and in the deep-interview processes. All informants said that the *majelis taklim* forum has a broad impact on the lives of *majelis taklim* members, in particular, and on the community in general. Below are the results of the interview.

Informants R1, R2, and R3 mentioned the impact of interactions and transactions in the *majelis taklim* forum with the following statements:

“With the *majelis taklim* forum, our learning process becomes endless, without any time limit. If we are not able to attend the regular *majelis taklim*, we can listen to the recordings shared with members. In addition, with the WhatsApp group, we also get other recitation materials held in our mosque, from our ustadz, or from other ustadz outside our mosque. This is very useful as an opening of our religious insights.”

⁴⁰Featherstone, *Posmodernisme dan Budaya Konsumen...*, 212–13.

⁴¹Featherstone, *Posmodernisme dan Budaya Konsumen...*, 214–17.

Other informants, R9 and R10, made a conclusion that “[b]y now the spirit of studying religion is more blossoming”. Some other informants, R4, R7, R8, said that “[w]e got not only the knowledge of religion, but also the knowledge of health, beauty, and some other knowledge.”

Other informants R5, R7 and R10 stated:

“*Majelis taklim* is very useful for supporting silaturahmi. This is because with the *majelis taklim* forum, both offline and online, if there is happy or sad news conveyed online, we immediately know and take the time to give greetings and visit her house.”

Other informants, R7 and R10, added, “Usually, if there is good or bad news, almost all members send their greetings and prayers. Then the women, together or individually, visit the person’s house.”

Almost all informants stated that the impact of interactions and transactions in the *majelis taklim* forum is the economic empowerment of members. The online forum has opened up economic opportunities without having to open a shop at home. Buying is also facilitated because items can be ordered as needed. This online buying and selling activity has developed since the existence of the WhatsApp group and has grown substantially during the Covid-19 pandemic. With the online buying and selling forum, in the end, goods sold are also not limited to daily necessities, but they also include special consumption items, such as clothing and cosmetics.

All the data on the impact of the broadening arena on some aspects of life are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Impact of the Broadening Arena in Some Aspects of Life

Informants:	Sphere	Impact	Broader Impact
R1, R2, R3	Knowledge of Religion	More intense in general; endless in time Relatively no limit	- Religious studies
R9, R10		Opening wider venue for religious studies	
R4, R7, R8			Got another knowledge than religion
R5, R7, R10	Social Relation	Opening wider venue for social meeting	- Social information inter-change - Food selling and buying
R7, R10		Spirit for visiting	Neighborhood
R1, R2, R3, sR4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10	Economic empowerment	Very useful	Economic empowerment

There are at least five impacts from the expansion of the *majelis taklim* arena, the first is the openness of shared space. The openness of this shared space occurs because of the creation of an online meeting space via the WhatsApp group. The awareness of a new space in social life, in the form of online space, is a new kind of awareness. This kind of awareness is an expression of postmodern consciousness. Postmodern consciousness is the awareness of the importance of means of communication and information technology. It is this awareness that enables the development of various other communication and information systems.

Second is in reference to multi-source religious studies. In contrast to the learning style of the previous period, which relied on a single source of religious information, such as one Qur'anic teacher as the sole provider of religious instruction, members of the women's majelis taklim now have access to religious information from various religious figures and teachers. The figure can come from the mosque where the *majelis taklim* is held, from other mosques, from other groups, or from the media, including social media channels. This marks the openness of the members of the women's *majelis taklim* in facing modern reality.

Third is the closeness of social relations. This closeness is formed by the expansion of meeting space. The openness of social space, due to the expansion of this meeting space, greatly affects the closeness of social relations. The actual world and the virtual world seem to have no boundaries. Even expressions of care become very prevalent in existing social relations. Fourth is the opening of economic businesses. The economic reality that arises from the expansion of the meeting space for the women's *majelis taklim* is a natural reality. Starting from the needs of majelis taklim members, which are fulfilled by other members, these interactions then develop into economic activities involving buying and selling.

Needs are conveyed only in the group and immediately responded to by other agents, thus creating an online market. This is another expression of the postmodern world that appears in the *majelis taklim* group. Fifth is the entry of lifestyle, referred to here as the postmodern lifestyle. It is stimulated by the media, which gives rise to a specific world, which in turn has a specific reference. The tendency towards taste, both appetite and fashion, serves as an expression of postmodernism. The variability of taste shaped by media gives rise to a new identity.⁴²

⁴²Méline Sommier, David Bousquet, and Alexander Frame, "From Ivory Tower to Social Arena: Critical Approaches to Cultural Identity in the Public Sphere," *Language and*

The effect of this change in the symbolic concept of experience and objects is a new view of the benefits of material objects used by the masses. The benefits of objects shift from mere substantive benefits to a level of benefits that refer to fashions and styles directed by the media and served by department stores.⁴³ These fashions and styles are constantly moving and changing, and the masses then follow them as an idealized lifestyle.⁴⁴ In relation to this phenomenon, Featherstone stated that the dynamics of changes in symbolic concepts of experiences and objects are closely related to the dynamics of cultural and social capital in the area mentioned. Their study in New Caledonia showed that the dynamics of cultural and social capital determined the dynamics of economic performance.⁴⁵

Conclusion

Based on the data above, it can be concluded that *majelis taklim* as an arena experiences an expansion of meaning and area, from being a religious learning forum, to an open forum that can be utilized by agents or members of *majelis taklim* as a means of meeting with various consequences. This *majelis taklim* became an open forum, expanded through an online forum via the WhatsApp group formed by the board. Therefore, the meeting space is not limited to the implementation of the *majelis taklim*, but without limits; rather, it extends beyond the limits of time, place, and content in interactions or transactions. Transactions carried out by members of the *majelis taklim* include those in the form of dialogue and communication, dissemination of various information, and offers or buying and selling.

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⁴³Featherstone, *Posmodernisme dan Budaya Konsumen...*, 208–209.

⁴⁴Featherstone, *Posmodernisme dan Budaya Konsumen...*, 197; Prima Ayu Rizqi Mahanani, Irwan Abdullah, Ratna Noviani, “Estetisasi Jilbab Syar’i Jama’ah Salafi: Studi Kasus di Pondok Pesantren Imam Muslim Kota Kediri,” *JSW (Jurnal Sosiologi Walisongo)*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2019), 65-78.

⁴⁵Featherstone, *Posmodernisme dan Budaya Konsumen...*, 199.

Thus, the expansion of the *majelis taklim* arena has a wide impact on the lives of its members, especially through the spread of postmodern lifestyles.

The limitation of this study is its narrow focus, which has prevented it from describing the broader phenomena of the community. With these findings, it can be stated that the *majelis taklim* arena can open up opportunities for further study, serving as a venue for various interests in society. As a social process, this study is important to follow up on as an academic endeavor to examine the various possibilities of social processes in an arena previously considered limited, but that has since become widespread. The social process experienced by women in a limited context will remain an interesting area of study. This is especially interesting when the phenomenon is associated with the media-driven world of postmodernism.

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