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# MODERN MUSLIMAH IN MEDIA: A STUDY OF RECEPTION ANALYSIS IN “SALIHA” PROGRAM ON NET TV

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## ABSTRACT

The study of the relationship between the media and the audience has long becomes a main concern among the media industry and academics. Not only that the media content provides the individual stimuli in indulging the program served, but also acts as a trigger to an interesting discourse when associated with cultural contexts. The audiences are able to construct the meaning according to the text and context. This study discusses about audience reception regarding the meaning for modern Muslim women's identity, in "Saliha" a program aired on Indonesia national television, NET TV. This research uses the qualitative research approach and uses Stuart Hall's Encoding-Decoding as a concept. Reception analysis provides a tool to look into the audience themselves and how they create the meaning based on their experience regarding the message

created by the media. The data was portrayed in television; these findings obtained via in-depth interviews and add to the continuous mediatization of Focus Group Discussion. Findings indicate modern Muslims, especially women. shifting views of Muslim women

## INTRODUCTION

Media has the power to influence their audience. This has been exposed in Hypodermic Needle theory or the magic bullet theory that assumed the media has direct influence on the audiences. In this theory, audiences are considered as passive and that they will act out or believe in what they see. However, the direct influence effects were not widely accepted by scholars. Morley in his research argued that the audience is not passive but they are actively processing the message conveyed by the media and also actively creating the meaning based on the process in consuming the media content (Morley, 1993).

McQuaill argues that audience is part of the interpretative community who is actively precepting the message as well as producing meanings. The media is not an institution that has great power to influence the audience through the message it produced. The audience is seen as an entity that has the power to create the meaning deliberately, as well as to act or to behave according to the meaning they have created based on the consumed media content. The standard tool to measure the media audience is by using the reception analysis method (Aryani, 2006). Haryanti and Sari in their research argued that Youtube as an online medium can be determined as negotiated space where audience generally can express and deliver their opinion with the cyberbullying issue. The research found a specific form of audience who experience traditional and cyberbullying in regard to the code they interpreted (Haryanti & Sari, 2018).

This research tried to give different perspective from previous research above. This research aims to get an in-depth insight of how audience give meaning to the identity of so-called "Modern Muslimah". As previously discussed, that audience are

not passive. Therefore, this research would like to show that media who was previously considered as the agent of change are not the only one who hold the power over the message.

The mediatization of Islamic knowledge, as well as its form and identity, has significantly increased in recent years. They are also modified through cultural forms and spaces. In the digital era, Islamic Modern Literature, such as webtoon, portrays Muslims' modern lifestyle. Conventional media such as newspapers and television contribute more significantly to shifting the meaning of being a modern Muslim. Warren in her study (Warren, 2019) stated that this happened to the typical English Muslim women who had higher education and high mobility, where they acted as cultural creators in the media as well as the fashion industry. The Muslimah is also moving to find a strategy to fight the stereotypes and the exclusion of social economics against them. The media holds an important role in changing the image of Muslimah in Southeast Asian countries, for example, in Indonesia and Malaysia; more soap operas in TV portray the life of Muslims, especially Muslim women or Muslimah in modern times. Other information such as a halal lifestyle and halal tourist destinations around the world also gives new meaning and attributes to being a Muslimah today. According to Oxford Lexico English Dictionary, the term Muslimah refers to a Muslim woman or woman who practices Islamic teaching. The term has become more popularly used in recent media, and has constructed a new identity for Muslims as media commodity. This is a case for a faith being increasingly used in commerce as a business and market positioning strategy. The rapid development of media technology plays an essential role in creating a new way to promote "equality" for Muslimah. Dina Torkio, a British female video blogger on Youtube, was referred to as "Modest fashionista" She became one of the influential Youtubers in creating a media culture among Muslim women in the world (Warren, 2018).

Understanding the culture of Muslimah and using them as a new market for business is now called "The Industry of Islamic Culture." This emerging new market targets Muslim women, where the women can access to a collection of images, practices, knowledge, and commodities related to Islam. In the last two decades, Islam as a faith has become more popular at different levels. In trying to correct the negative image of Islam, a variety of positive images (soft images) of Islam had sprung in the form of a modern lifestyle that depicts the new identity of Muslims who are active consumers, fun-loving and lead pleasant lives in their communities. The media highlighted the Muslim lifestyle, mainly Muslim women. The participation of Muslimah has been very active in this industry, where they served as both consumers and producers (authors, editors, models, designers, and business owners). They contributed to reshaping the media and inventing new identity in predominant Western-liberal societies (Warren, 2018).

In the present business sphere, the Muslim population has become quite a promising market segment. The value of the Muslim women market covers nearly one-tenth of Global media in recreational and entertainment fields. This market share includes digital magazines, digital talk shows, blogs, and the Modest Fashion industry (Reuters, 2018). The word "modest fashion" is a popular term used to describe a clothing fashion style that does not explicitly show the shape of the body. The use of the term primarily exists in the religious context. The clothing includes Hijab (head covers), Burqas (cloth that covers from head to toe usually in black) as well as tops, trousers, outers, and dresses that feature a modest cut (Independent.co.uk, 2019). The market share of Muslim women consumers is known as a similar image of the ideal Muslimah who is full of dreams, beautiful and modest, that serves to flatten the global diversity in Muslim societies (Gökarkısel & McLarney, 2010).

How media contributes in creating the image of women also described by Makarim, Dimiyati and Kurniullah (Makarim et al., 2020) in their research on an Instagram account "*Unpad Geulis*". This research explored how the account construct the idea

of a beauty standard. The account is part of phenomena called "*akun mahasiswa cantik*" (pretty students account) where people can find pictures of beautiful students from universities in Indonesia. This research described how media, be it conventional or new media such as Instagram, disseminate the common idea of women where they are depicted as delicate and look-oriented.

Kusumawardani et al., (2020) in their research affirmed that in several countries, Youtube as a form of new media plays important role in encouraging individuals to showcase their sexual identity, be it women or even transgender, in the social context to be recognized and even accepted.

However, a Muslim woman is no longer underrated. More media garnered their interest in the Muslimah lifestyle. For example, Hijab style of Muslimah become one of the preferred fashions in various parts of the world. Of all the existing communication media, television is one of the most influential media. According to Baksin, the contents of audio-visual messages have enormous power to influence mental, mind-set, and individual actions (Baksin, 2006).

There used to be a stigma that Muslim women who wear head covers will never find employment. However, nowadays, the discussions about Muslim women and their rights took place not only in public space but as well as in the media through their daily programs mainly aimed at women. These also caused the emergence of many Muslimah role models on television where more Muslim women with Hijab are now allowed to work in various fields ranging from the news anchor, reporter, and fashion models to pilots. This study chooses "*Saliha*" a television program that started broadcasting on NET TV in 2017; a TV show which promotes the life of Muslim Women as a research object. The media has been called as the fourth estate, this means that it is understood as part of a political system which wields the indirect social influence (Schäffner & Bassnett, 2010). Castell corroborates that almost in all countries, the media have become the space of politics. To an overwhelming extent people receive their information, on the basis of which they

form their political opinion and structure their behaviour, through the media and particularly television and radio (Castells, 2000). Stuart Hall in his book *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*, stated that Representation is the use of language to convey something meaningful to everyone. Representation is the most important part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between group members in a culture. Representation is to interpret the concept of a concept that exists in our mind using language. Stuart Hall expressly defines representation as a process of production of meaning using language (Hall, 1997). Media has the power to control over the representation in which the effect of such representation is cultural and psychological.

In Indonesia, the growth of television programs that prioritize the latest information on the development of Islam became the content that is favored by the audience. “*Saliha*” become one prominent program because it targeted the young Muslims. A research conducted by Apriyanti, “*Saliha*” aimed the Millenials Muslims in Indonesia by providing various information about traveling, culinary, and lifestyle (Apriyanti, 2019). “*Saliha*” is a type of Soft News in the form of a magazine program. The program was aired during the holy month of Ramadan (fasting month for the Muslim) every Saturday and Sunday at 05. 30 AM WIB (Indonesian Western Standard Time) with a duration of 30 minutes. The program consisted of three segments. A Muslim beauty video blogger, Dian Ayu, described the program as a place of inspiration for Muslim women in fashion as it features combining Muslim clothes in a fashionable way or how to use a modern Hijab style but still following Islamic teachings.

As Hassim noted, the studies of Muslim women are divided into two main topics (Hassim, 2014). The first is the study of the veil (Hijab) as the object of discrimination, and the second is the growth of a consumption culture that is sourced from the massive dispersal imageries of Hijab on print, television, and internet that have stimulated the public's attention on Islamic Modesty. Hassim

stated that the display of Islamic Modesty in media, paved the way for Muslim women to free themselves from the stigma of being backward and as the object of male domination. In her study of the renewed perception of Hijab in Malay-Muslim public, Hassim found that the idea of "cosmopolitan" Muslim women is in the grey area. On one side, the modern idea of Muslim women might give her full rights as modern women and increase her opacity in the eye of the public. On the other side, there is a concern how this new cosmopolitan Muslim women are going protect themselves from the male gaze.

As more media coverage highlights the new soft image of Muslimah, the immediate effect takes place in most major media outlets in the world. A study by Cherribi found that Al-Jazeera, the international news network based in Qatar, crafting a vision of imagined transnational Muslim community with an emphasis on "Islamic chic" among female news anchors that all wore Hijab and produced repetitive Hijab-related content in its programs (Cherribi, 2006). In the study, Cheribi argued that Aljazeera used the issue of the veil ban in France in 2002 to influence the viewers in France and Europe in order to build a global Muslim identity. Aljazeera approach the veil controversy by encouraging the public to share their opinion in form or moral judgments, thus creating an imagined transnational Muslim community. Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population, also saw the significant shift of the identity of modern Muslim women. In the past, Hijab was not only about religion. In the 80s, during Orde Baru (New Order), the Indonesian government guaranteed the freedom to embrace religions however, they prohibit when it comes to mandatory of religious practices such as veiling. At that time, veil was seen as a symbol of resistance. In 1982, Department of Education and Culture of Republic of Indonesia issued Decision Letter (SK) 052/C/Kep/D/82, which regulates the design and the use of school uniforms in public schools. This results in more and more veiled students receiving reprimands and threats from the school (Alatas & Desliyanti, 2001).

The opposing of the so-called *kerudung* (veil) traced back during the 50s. Sullivan in his dissertation described how in the 50s headscarves were not seen as mandatory for Indonesian Women who are Muslim Majority. Sullivan described that in "*Wanita*", a women magazine issued in June 1951, Indonesian women were portrayed celebrating *Hari Raya Lebaran* to mark the end of *Ramadan* without wearing any head covers. Sullivan added that during that time there was a movement of opposing *kerudung*. At that time "*kerudung*" (veil) was seen as a form of oppression, a form of feudalism that didn't give women a proper place. This movement was spread not only in Asia but even lasted in Egypt as well as Turkey where headscarves were reported to be no longer existed. This sparked tensions and debate among the Muslim organizations such as *Persatuan Islam* (Islamic Union, or *PERSIS*) and *Aliran Baroe* (New Stream). Etin Anwar, an Indonesian historian noted that the during the 20s, that colonial officials saw veiling as a retrograde practice. As the western culture penetrates to the majority, some women then, adopted such styles in their daily life. Veil was treated as occasional "costume" that were wore during special event such as religious celebration, wedding ceremony or formal meeting. Just like *Kebaya* and *Sarung*, *Kerudung* was simply a fashion choice (Sullivan, 2020). Thus, hijab is not a mere symbol of piety, but it has multi-dimensional meaning from social to political scope. In the 2000s, another phenomenon of hijab emerged where female perpetrators namely Wa Ode, Nunun Nurbaiti, and Angelina Sondakh who did not wear hijab in their daily life, suddenly put on hijab during their trial period (Yulikhah, 2017).

In western countries, there was also a stigma that Muslim women with veiled found difficulties in seeking job employment. Institute for Public Policy and Research (IPPR) reported that British Pakistani and Bangladeshi are struggling to enter the labour market due to increasing discrimination and daily Islamophobia (Griffith & Malik, 2018). Nowadays, with the Islamic modest fashion surfacing as a global trend, the



Millenials in Indonesia are not concerned by this stigma and are progressively shaping the new face of "Millenial Muslims."

A survey conducted by Alvara Research Center published in 2018 revealed that 42% of millennial Muslim participants in Indonesia were "nationalist religious-oriented," while 39% of participants were "nationalist-oriented" and the rest of 18% were "religious-oriented" (Ali, 2018). The result showed that the young generation considered that religion and the state could complement each other. According to them, Islam is a religion that loves peace and is inclusive, but the application of sharia regulations in Indonesia also needs to be supported.

This "State-hybrid" concept became popular as more modernization in Islamic countries in the Arab soil, also embrace this practice, generating a hybrid offspring of Islamic globalization. In Indonesia, the "Hijabers" community marked the initial shift of Muslim women identity. Baulch in her study of Hijaber in social media (Baulch & Pramiyanti, 2018), revealed that the Hijabers enclosed their Instagram images mainly by playing with how the Hijab borders the face, accentuating its Muslim-ness, offering the Hijabers opportunities to demonstrate that Hijab-wearing conforms to conventional notions of feminine beauty, denoted by the youthful, make-up, and fair-skinned face. The Hijabers also favor self-portraits, which identify them as more than just an object of gaze. These consistent everyday settings enhance the Hijabers' performance of empowerment on social media by identifying them as social being: one who enjoys free access to spaces limited to the well-to-do.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Television audience is often regarded as passive, as seen in the earliest theory of communication, namely the Hypodermic Needle Theory, where the audience is considered unable to shy away from exposure to media content. In the past decades, the study of the audience continues to grow. The study of reception analysis especially considers the audience as active. John Fiske, in his book

"Television Culture," explains the role of television audiences in constructing contemporary pop culture. Fiske argued that the audience is an active social agent in producing meaning around Television (Fiske, 2001). Lang and Lang stated that people learned from the media what the important issues are (Lang & Lang, 1991). Mass media impose specific issues, mass media build public images about political figures (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Severin & Tankard, 1997). Mass media always present objects that show what individuals should consider, know, and feel in society (Toni & Fajariko, 2018). Bland et al. argued that television had changed the way we live (Bland et al., 2005). Television has changed the way we send news and change the process of forming our impressions. Television influences the nature of education and reduces the art of direct conversation. These three studies show the modern active role that television plays in audience lives.

Aminudin in his research in cyberspace movement of hashtag #2019GantiPresiden found that differences in the social affiliation background of the participant gave dissent over the issue. The differences based on a variety of perspectives and complex identities, such as the social background of the participants (Aminudin, 2018). Oubaha and Amzaourou in their study of Audience Reception Analysis of Public Service Television News in Marocco, argued about how gender differences also influence the construction of meaning of the media text. The study found that males constructed more complex interpretations than females. Moreover, the results revealed that there was a weak correlation between age and television news interpretation. The study also suggest that audience's prior knowledge is the most influential factor that affects their interpretation of the news (Oubaha & Amzaourou, 2017).

### **Reception Analysis**

Reception analysis is an in-depth study of the actual process where discourse in the media is assimilated into discourse and practices audience culture. The primary assumption of Reception Analysis is the role of the active audiences. Street stated

that the audience are active in creating and interpreting the meaning of what they read, listen and see according to the cultural context (Street, 2001). The media content is understood as part of a process in which common sense is constructed through readings obtained from images and language text. Meanwhile, the meaning of the text media is not a transparent feature, but a product of interpretation by readers and audience (Hadi, 2008).

John Fiske in *Television Culture* mentions the use of reception analysis theory as a support in the study of the audience is a way to see that audience is not passive. The theory sees the audience as an active cultural agent who possesses power in terms of producing meaning and various discourses offered by the media. The meaning offered by the media can then be openly interpreted and can even be responded to in opposition by the audiences (Fiske, 2001). Jensen & Rosengen, in their writing, "*Five Tradition in search of Audience*", said that the reception analysis could be said to be a new perspective on the discourse and social aspects of communication theory (Jensen & Rosengren, 1990). The combination of the two approaches (social and discursive perspective) gave birth to the concept of social production of meaning. Reception analysis then becomes an approach that tries to examine in depth of how the actual processes are assimilated by various discourses and practices of cultural audiences through media interviews (Jensen, 1988).

In 1980, David Morley published the study of the National wide and became known as an expert who practiced the reception analysis in depth. Morley's central question is how individuals interpret television program content concerning the socio-cultural background of the viewers (Brunsdon & Morley, 2005). Marris, Thornham & Bassett, in their book "*Media Studies: A Reader*" included David Morley's work entitled "*Cultural Transformation: The Politics of Resistance*" which adopted Stuart Hall's categories of meaning (Thornham et al., 2009):

- Dominant or "hegemonic" reading, the audience takes the meaning from the contents produced by the media and decodes it according to the intended

meaning (preferred reading) offered by the media text. In this position, the audience has the same understanding as the producer of the media text. There will be no repetition of messages as both producers and audience shared the same meaning.

- Negotiated reading, the audience is setting certain boundaries towards the codes conveyed and necessarily accepted the meaning profiled by the message creator. The reader modifies it in such a way that it reflects their interest and position.
- Oppositional (counter-hegemonic) reading, the audience is not in line with the discourse given by the code creators and rejects the meaning or profiled readings. Therefore, the audience determines the frame of the alternative itself in interpreting the message or program.

Reception Analysis is an analysis that emphasizes more on the audience's views and how they produce different pursuits than what is offered by the media. The audience experience with mass media every day will depend on social location, age, culture, occupation, gender, and others. Reception analysis finds the cause of why audiences interpret things differently based on psychological and socio-cultural factors (Narottama, 2008).

There were two views which initiated the method. The first is what the media will do to the audience. This view saw the power of the message towards the audience and emphasizes the effects of the media itself. The second view described what the audiences would do to the media. This view focused on the diverse use of media towards the audience with diverse socio-cultural context will create different meanings and interpretations (Hall, 1980). Hall in Storey (2010) described the media as a discourse full of encoded meaning according to the structure of understanding of the mass media production organization and its supporter. The discourse then is decoded according to the structure of understanding and different framework of knowledge that varies in each audience (Storey, 2010). The focus of this reception

analysis is how audiences interpret different perspectives. This analysis also looks at contextual influences in the use of media and the interpretation and meaning of all audience experiences (McQuail, 2010)

Elvinaro and Komala, in their book, define television as a form of mass communication where the sender communicates a message through the mass media to a large number of people. Media communication, including the mass media, namely radio broadcasts, television, and movies known as electronic media; As well as newspapers and magazines that both include print media (Ardianto & Komala, 2007). Burton (2005) in Morissan argues that audiences can be understood based on the following description:

- They are several different individuals who happened to consume one text at a time.
- Social groups that interconnect due to general characteristics outside of their consumption.
- Groups of mass with identities originated from their type of consumption (Morissan, 2016).

The Indonesian Broadcasting Act does not use the word “program” for the event but uses the term "broadcast" that defined message or series of messages presented in various forms. In short, a program displayed to meet the needs of the audience that is transmitted through the broadcasting station, whether it is radio or television. Sastro defines News Magazine as a type of news that is not time-related and does not have to be actual, but the content in presenting the news still has its appeal. In delivering the information, News Magazine tends to be in the form of an in-depth report; therefore, it discusses in more detail (Subroto, 1994).

## Cultural Studies

Cultural Studies is a study of culture based on the practice of signification on representation, by exploring the formation of meaning in a variety of contexts. Representation challenges the status quo, and therefore exposing the control of representation is one of the main concerns of Stuart Hall and Cultural Studies. In recent days, cultural studies are considered to be studies that describe the phenomena of contemporary society, among others in pop culture, media, sub-culture, lifestyle, consumerism, local identity, etc (Luzar & Monica, 2014). Cultural studies were considered as a new paradigm in the study of social sciences. It emerged from the concerns and reactions of the new left intellectuals in western Europe, especially in Germany and England. The cultural studies project aims for social transformation and try to identify the potential forces of domination and resistance to help the process of political struggle for liberation from oppression and domination (Kumbara, 2018).

The root of Cultural studies lies in the idea of Karl Marx, who had the view that capitalism had created an elite group of powers to exploit the power of the power of the power-free and weak. Marxism describes cultural studies in two fundamental ways. First, to understand the meaning of the text or cultural practice, we need to analyse it in the social and historical context of its production and consumption. However, although formed by certain social structures with certain histories, culture is not studied as a reflection of this structure and history. History and culture are not separate entities. Cultural studies confirm that the value of cultural importance stems from the fact that culture helps to build structures and shape history (Rahmawati et al., 2012).

There are four ideas that are central to cultural studies: hegemony, signs and semiotics, representation and discourse, and meaning and struggle. In a post-modern society every image was created for a reason. For example, in a research by Ahmad Mulyana, "The Representation of The Metrosexual lifestyle" shows that the image was constructed to sell a specific kind of life-style that in turn demands the use of

detailed products and other commodities, though all of this is presented simply as “metrosexual men” (Mulyana, 2014).

## METHODOLOGY

This study used the critical paradigm with a qualitative descriptive approach. Constructivism states that individuals interpret and act according to various conceptual categories that exist in their minds. The paradigm consider that reality shows an advanced filtered form based on how the individual sees things instead of a rough form (Morissan & Hamid, 2010). Qualitative research based on the constructive paradigm holds that knowledge is the result constructed by subjective thought. The human social reality recognition centers on the subject and not the object. It means that science is not merely a product of experience but is also the result of the construction of thought (Arifin, 2017). This research used the reception analysis method to focus on the interpretation of the audience about modern Muslimah in media on the “*Saliha*” program in NET TV, Indonesia. Reception analysis views the audience as an active entity in producing meaning based on the message communicated by media. Different use of media will also influence how audiences with different socio-cultural background interpret the message.

This study used two methods for obtaining data. The data collection process took place in February 2019. The first method used the in-depth interview with six participants. Meanwhile, the other six participants acted as an participant in a focus group discussion. Nine participants were students, and the other three are private workers. The students were chosen because the target audience of “*Saliha*” are millennials. In depth interview was conducted in a semi-structured interview, with each interview took around one or two hours. The topics of the interview and FGD were focused on the content of the “*Saliha*” Program on Modern Muslimah. This technique is also used to avoid misinterpretation from researcher towards the research problem. The FGD was held in a meeting room with six participants. The FGD session was recorded and conducted by one moderator. The participant was

selected by using a purposive sampling technique. The selected participants are required to have watch at least three episodes of the “*Saliha*” TV program. The participants were all young Muslim women with an age range between 18 – 30 years old with different social status and educational background.

Table 1. Participant Profile

No	Participant's code	Sex	Age	Social Status	Data Collection
1	Participant 1	Female	19 years	Student	FGD
2	Participant 2	Female	20 years	Student	FGD
3	Participant 3	Female	22 years	Student	FGD
4	Participant 4	Female	27 years	Worker	FGD
5	Participant 5	Female	26 years	Worker	FGD
6	Participant 6	Female	24 years	Worker	FGD
7	Participant 7	Female	24 years	Student	Interview
8	Participant 8	Female	23 years	Student	Interview
9	Participant 9	Female	23 years	Student	Interview
10	Participant 10	Female	21 years	Student	Interview
11	Participant 11	Female	21 years	Student	Interview
12	Participant 12	Female	19 years	Student	Interview

## FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

The in-depth interviews were initiated by delivering questions in a direct face to face communication between the interviewer and the participants. The results of the interviews revealed three ideas of *Muslimah* images in the media.

### The Islamic Contents in the media

Participant 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,12 said that the “*Saliha*” Program helped them to provide insight into the development of Islam specifically about women in the eyes of Islam. Prior to this, information about the development of Islam is considered less attractive, and Muslim women have difficulty getting information about the development of Islam. The program provided information regarding Islamic culture by delivering them in an engaging, modern style.

*“Of course, it really helps change Islamic backwardness, in this program also describes the figure of a gentle Muslim woman, with polite words, soothing the eyes, so that Muslim women out*



*there are interested in following, or even imitate the good side presented in the program” (Participant 1).*

Whereas participants 8 considered that “*Saliha*” is excellent and inspiring, but the delivery of the message was too casual. Participants 10 and 11 argued that the program is interesting; however, for the religious teaching they prefer to learn it directly from a religious teacher than obtain it from the media.

*“There are so many good information in the program but I think the way they deliver the program is too casual despite the content is about religion” (Participant 8).*

*“For someone like who are not into religion, it is great way in presenting the religious values through media, for example about what is allowed and not allowed but for me I prefer to learn it directly from a religious teacher” (Participant 8).*

### **The Shift of Meaning of Muslim Women Identity**

Participant 7 stated that in this modern era, people tend to use different approaches in delivering and receiving message.

*“In my opinion, every era has its own approach. Today everything has changed. We are way too modern. If we take a look at the program, indeed it promotes the image of modern life of Muslim women because the market demand has the same purpose” (Participant 7).*

Participant 1 to 6 said that the program did cause the shifting images of Muslim women because it promotes the life of modern Muslim women through television program. Meanwhile participant 9 said that the program adds more changes as the shifting occurred long time ago.

*“The meaning of Muslim women indeed has been shifted since long ago. For example, we, as muslim women, used to be restricted from go outside the house. We cannot go outside, let alone travelling without our “Mahrom” (a male companion who share the same bloodline, for example father, brother, son). Wearing hijab are also an obligatory. We must covered ourselves from head to toe. “Saliha” is inspirational program, the contents promote how women can also be free, unlike the old days where*

*we are required to stay at home. Now, it showed that women can create things she likes but of course in accordance to the islamic law.”* (Participant 9).

### **Muslimah as Trends of Islamic Modest Culture**

Participant 7 said that it Islam has become part of the trends, many people wear hijab because they look fashionable.

*“In my opinion, the program is a form of market demand, as you can see that now hijab, Muslimah, is part of the fashion industry. Moreover, majority of the society in our country is Muslim.”* (Participant 7).

Meanwhile, participants 1, 2, 3, 9, 10 negotiate that it is common to follow the trends as long as the program did not mislead the Islamic teaching’s values.

*“I think at first they did follow the trends but it doesn't mean that they just commercialize the whole content, there are still a lot of positive information we can obtain from this program. Moreover, there are still many people whose Islamic knowledge are still lack in, So the program did take the chances to educate people as well as gaining profit”* (Participant 10).

*“Yes, they follow the trends but they still promote the Islamic teaching values”* (Participant 1).

However, three participants in opposition said that “*Saliha*” did not follow the trend. They reasoned that this type of program was a concept that had existed in the past; now it is just representing the information in a fresher style to appeal to the target audience who are millennial Muslims.

*“I don't think it's a trend. This program indeed helps Muslimah like us. It serves as place for us to gain knowledge of how to be a good Muslim woman, without have feeling of being judged as "too pious" or "women with hijab are like angels who never commit sin”* (Participant 2).

**Table 2. Analysis Result**

No	Participant’s code	The Islamic Contents in the media	The Shift of Meaning of Muslim Women Identity	Muslimah as Trends of Islamic Modest Culture
1	Participant 1	Dominant	Dominant	Negotiation
2	Participant 2	Dominant	Dominant	Negotiation

3	Participant 3	Dominant	Dominant	Negotiation
4	Participant 4	Dominant	Dominant	Dominant
5	Participant 5	Dominant	Dominant	Dominant
6	Participant 6	Dominant	Dominant	Dominant
7	Participant 7	Dominant	Negotiation	Dominant
8	Participant 8	Negotiation	Negotiation	Oposition
9	Participant 9	Dominant	Dominant	Negotiation
10	Participant 10	Negotiation	Negotiation	Negotiation
11	Participant 11	Negotiation	Negotiation	Oposition
12	Participant 12	Dominant	Negotiation	Oposition

## Dominant

The dominant reading is where the audience interprets the meaning in the same way as desired by the media. For the idea of **Islamic Content in the Media**, nine participants are in the dominant reading category. They see that “*Saliha*” is an excellent program, very inspiring, and aims to help provide broad insights and knowledge about Islam. In a subsequent statement, the participants added that the “*Saliha*” program helped to change the stigma of “underdevelopment” of Islamic knowledge. Their statement explained the situation in the past about how information regarding religion obtained from the media could be very dull due to the less appealing way of message delivery. Today, media has a more exciting way of presenting the information. “*Saliha*” presented the information about religion in a more chic, modern and pop so that it attracted young Muslim women. One participant said that the “*Saliha*” helped broaden insights about the development of Islam, especially about women in the eyes of Islam. In the past, Muslim women admit that it is difficult to get information about the development of Islam. The topic of religion was quite a heavy topic for a daily conversation. “*Saliha*” tried to change the substantial nuance by summing the information into pop and chic language, making them easier to digest and acceptable. The six participants agreed that “*Saliha*” is a type of new forum where Muslim women could gain religious knowledge without being judged. Hassim (2014) in her study about Malaysia Muslim women argued that hijab as form of hybridity where the Malay Muslim community is an assimilation of other major culture and contemporary Islamic world. The

widespread of hijab social phenomenon is in fact, carrying a political identity that allows an individual to develop self-believe and life principles upon embracing it as a positive influence upon her personal development.

Furthermore, about **The Shift of Meaning of Muslim Women**, seven participants are in dominant reading category. They stated that in the past, a Muslim woman was bound with many limitations. Media helped Muslim women to get out of that stigma. However, it goes back to the individuals whether they want to change it or not. Bjoernaas describes Muslim women who are assumed to be passive and reserved, designated as evidence that Islam and its adherents are backward and inferior people. In the West, liberals and feminists consider *Hijab* to be a form of concrete evidence of the oppression of women (Bjoernaas, 2015). Citing Laila Ahmed, Professor of Harvard Divinity School in an interview in *On Being* (Ahmed, 2005) that in the late 19th century, there was a belief that the *Hijab* or veil was a symbol of oppression against Muslim women. There used to be an assumption, and it eventually became a general fact that veiled women find it difficult to get a job. However, now when Islam gets high exposure in the media, both conventional mass media and new media such as social media, the wider community becomes aware, and the acceptance of veiled Muslim women (*Hijab*) began to rise in various sectors of life such as social, economic and cultural.

Nowadays, Muslim women who wear headscarves have the same opportunities in employment in any sector. In television, for example, previously, no news anchors were allowed to wear head covers. In modern television today, more news anchors use headscarves, especially in Indonesia and Malaysia. Another exposure to travel, wherein a conservative view, a Muslim woman, should not be able to travel alone for safety reasons. However, "*Saliha*" had one segment about traveling showing that a Muslim woman is an independent woman. She can travel anywhere both domestically and abroad as long as she knows her limits. The participants said that the way modern Muslim women live today is very different from previous generations. Today Muslim women are free to express themselves and succeed in

getting out of the stigma that the headscarf is a form of male oppression against women. With so many global role models, this shift is inevitable and viewed positively by all participants. However, according to one respondent, this perception is up to the interpretation of each individual. Sometimes some immersed with modernization that they tend to abandon Islamic values. This is referred to as the grey area where the boundaries between modernization and religious teachings are blurred e.g. a Muslim woman was given freedom to express themselves, by taking photos and put them on social media, while in Islamic teachings promote in protecting woman from men's gaze in all form.

Meanwhile the idea of **Muslimah as Trends of Islamic Modest Culture** can be seen based on the report of The State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2018/2019. In 2017, the estimated expenditure of Muslims in the world is around USD 2.1 trillion. The data indicates that the growth of the Islamic economy is getting higher. Some sectors of concern are halal food, halal travel, Islamic finance, to modest fashion. Indonesia is the second-largest country in the Islamic modest fashion industry after Saudi Arabia. In line with these facts, four participants are in dominant readings category. They saw "*Salihah*" is a form of market demand. The trends of Islamic Culture gained recognition worldwide. As the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia helped create a significant market share and the world trendsetter in the scope of Islam. It is understood that television programs also participated in "selling" things that are trending in the market, e.g. the ideal image of modern Muslim women. The participants added that it is evidence that the program was not only to follow modern trends but also shifts values.

### **Negotiation**

The negotiation reading is where the general public accepts the dominant ideology but rejects its application in some cases. The audience is willing to accept the dominant ideology of a general nature, but they will make a few exceptions. Regarding the idea of **The Islamic Contents in the Media**, three participants are in the negotiation reading category. They considered "*Salihah*" is inspiring, but it is

too casual despite that they are delivering religious teachings. Meanwhile, regarding the view of the “*Saliha*” Program, which is considered only follows the present trend, there are five participants in the negotiation category. According to participant 9, “*Saliha*” aired initially to follow the current trend. Then many benefits can be drawn from the “*Saliha*” Program. Participant 10 added that despite that maybe they initially made this program because of trends, this program later realized that many people still lack knowledge about Islam. Meanwhile, according to the three FGD participants, the program indeed followed the trend, but they still promoted the values of Islamic teachings.

While for **the Shifting of Meaning**, five participants are in negotiation reading category with the arguments that indeed that the meaning has shifted however it goes back to the individuals. In the past people tend to go to the mosque, join the short meeting talking about the sharia (Islamic law), whereas now, it is an era where Slama and Barendregt (2018) point out, many young Southeast Asians are opting "to live 'the modern life' religiously and often in ways more orthodox than their parents or grandparents would have done only one or two generations before them" (Slama & Barendregt, 2018).

For the idea of ***Muslimah* as Trends of Islamic Modest Culture**, five participants are in negotiation reading category. As previously discussed on the global economic report, the same report saw that Indonesia has a turnover of about US \$ 20 billion for the modest fashion industry. Hassim (2014) argued that the headscarves are a progressive way to connect women's visibility of the consumer culture. While seeing the increasing number of Muslim fashion trends, it is understood for media to compete in creating programs that promote modern Islam. Five participants argue that they understand that at first the program might be created for the commercial consumption. However, it doesn't neglect the quality of the information delivered through the program. One participant stated that majority of the society is still lacking in Islamic knowledge, therefore this program create

opportunity for the people to gain broader information about women in Islam, while the media obtain profit from the program.

## Opposition

The opposition reading means that the meaning offered by the media is in contrast to the new meaning of the public. Hence, the audience is not in line with the message conveyed by the media through program content, so it rejects the meaning offered and then determines alternative answers according to its thoughts. In the view of Islamic content in media, no participant opposes the idea that the program favors in gaining more knowledge. As discussed before most of agree with the idea. Meanwhile for the idea of the Shifting Meaning, no participant opposes the idea. They saw the media has the big role in constructing the new meaning through the images widely spread across the platform. Regarding the ***Muslimah as Trends of Islamic Modest Culture***, there were three participants in the opposition category. The idea of Muslim as part of trend was denied by three participants agree that “*Saliha*” is not following the trends because the program aims to give information about Islamic teaching, which considered has been the primary goal since decades ago. Participant 8 stated that the program could serve as a reference for Muslim women who wants to gain knowledge about the qualification of a good *Muslimah*. Participant 11 is in opposition reading because she knew that actually, “*Saliha*” was an online platform that existed before being broadcasted through television. She thought of it as a collaboration of new media and conventional media. It is not following the new trends which emerged recently. Meanwhile, participant 12 considers that the program was not all trendy. She observed that “*Saliha*” was different from other similar programs. The format of the program is targeting millennial Muslims. The participants consider that the program is not just following the trends, where trends means it’s only temporary. They see that the television has important role as the agency of socialization. Therefore, media plays

its basic role in changing the image of Islam, especially Muslim women and distributing it to the audience. It is not a mere trend but it will shape the future of Muslim community in the world.

## CONCLUSION

The findings show that the media construct images of Modern Muslim Women based on the content, the shift of image, and the trends. Based on the previous discussion, this research found three categories of meanings. This research concludes that the Islamic contents are well accepted by society and help them have a better view on Muslims. They also agree that the media has an essential role in creating new images of Muslims. However, they also argue that the media to take the opportunity to gain profit due to the trend while educating society. Overall, this research shows that the media market continuously mediatized modern Muslim women as commodities or merchandise. The urgency in consumer capitalism increased, resulting in the complexity of the Muslimah's identity and lifestyle. Muslim women's existence continued to negotiate and redefined through images, narratives, and knowledge constructed in a market, in this case, is the media market.

## LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

This study still lacks in many aspects. It observes the topic only from the audience's side. Further research on the social construction of reality in the media is needed to see how construction of meaning through the text media. Further research can offer a holistic understanding of the media and society.

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