

7 March 2019

Drs. Larry Gross and Arlene Luck
Editors
International Journal of Communication

Dear Drs. Gross and Luck and Members of the Editorial Board,

My name is Nurhaizatul Jamil and I am currently an Assistant Professor in Global South Studies at Pratt Institute, where I also founded and co-direct the Social Media Lab. At its formative stage, the lab aims to propose novel ethnographic and critical visual methodologies for the study of social media practices, bridging the work of faculty, students, and artists. To that end, the lab will organize its first workshop entitled Digital Spatialities in March 2019. Prior to my appointment at Pratt, I held a postdoctoral fellowship at the College of the Holy Cross in Massachusetts from 2016 to 2018. I completed my Ph.D. in Anthropology at Northwestern University in 2016. My research broadly focuses on minoritized Muslim women's participation in Islamic self-help education and social media engagements within a nation-state at the forefront of Asia's economy. I am writing to submit my manuscript for publication review by the *International Journal of Communication*.

My article, “#depression: Singaporean Muslim Women Navigating Mental Health on Social Media” analyzes Muslim women's increased use of Facebook, Instagram, and blogs to advocate for mental health awareness. Relying on diverse modalities of expression, young women utilized digital spatialities to discuss the intersections among mental health, stigma, and religious socialization. Their use of online platforms to reconfigure dominant narratives on Islam and mental health while firmly positioning themselves as minoritized ethnic, religious, and gendered subjects point to the ways that social media facilitate novel possibilities for critiquing normative assumptions, while foreclosing others. Yet, despite these critical discursive transformations, minoritized Muslim women's social media navigations remain relatively understudied. Within a frame whereby both social media platforms and various publics are constantly evolving, how do minoritized Singaporean Muslim women stake a claim for themselves? What are the ways in social media discussions expand the discursive spaces that both consolidate and contest authoritative discourses on mental illness? How do the women's counter narratives contribute to the formation of digital counterpublics? Through an online ethnographic analysis of minoritized Singaporean Muslim women's narratives on three platforms (blogs, Instagram, and online sites), this essay examines the ways that they have discursively expanded mental health discourses.

My article contributes to the scholarly debates on social media, minoritized subjectivities and pious subject-formation by analyzing Muslim women's strategic deployment of Islamic discourses to reclaim mental health narratives in empowering ways. I demonstrate that through the use of selfie narratives and anonymous critiques of structural inequities, these women's online engagements contribute to the formation of digital counterpublics within a context of state discipline and censorship. This article also builds from my dissertation research, book manuscript project, and other peer-reviewed articles on Singaporean Muslim women and Islamic self-help discourses.

I thank you for considering my manuscript for publication. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Jamil', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the left.

Nurhaizatul Jamil, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor in Global South Studies
Co-director Social Media Lab
Pratt Institute