

# Online Networking as Transnational Survival Strategy: Islamic-writing activism of Indonesian Female Domestic Workers in Hong Kong

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**Aim:** The group of Indonesian women who works as migrant domestic workers (MDW) in Hong Kong, called The Pen Circle Forum (PCF), exercises a unique survival strategy through their involvement in Islamic-writing activism. In the previous research, we have discussed that the members of this group navigate their gendered subjectivities vibrantly in a transnational context, by their participation in a set of offline activities. Responding to the growing popularity of online activities amongst the members, we attempt to investigate how online activities affect their states of subject navigation, by focusing on the usage of Facebook.

**Method:** This study employs triangulation methods to analyze the effect of Facebook use of the PCF members to the state of subject navigation. First, a sociometric survey was distributed to the members, and the results were analyzed using social network and statistical analysis. Second, to follow up, semi-structured interviews were carried out with the central members, to further illustrate the members' Facebook usage for subject navigation. Finally, content analyses of the members' Facebook profiles, notes, statuses and comments were conducted.

**Results:** The members' ways of online subject navigation display three aspects. First, the members use Facebook not just for presenting static self-images, but rather to enhance their social relationships both Hong Kong and Indonesia. Second, the members also employ Facebook as the information gathering tool, to find out the opportunities for publication, or for gaining relevant knowledge for their successful survival as a MDW. Third, their online self-representation and networking are indeed not merely oriented to their survival in Hong Kong, but are instead driven by their aspiration to achieve favorable gender images in the Indonesian socio-cultural context.

**Conclusion:** The PCF members strategize their Facebook usage not only for successfully forsaking their marginalized status in their host country, but also for recreating new statuses in their home country, Indonesia. Their active online representation of intellectual and financial prowess was realized by effectively using their limited time and resources for the activism participation. Put another way, the increasing availability of online technology allowed them not only to maintain social ties cheaply and easily, but, arguably, also to provide a medium to showcase their newly-articulated subjectivities. In sum, online-networking features of Facebook enabled them to further affirm the legitimacy of their new status within their own social connections.