

Malay Women's Identity Construction and Engagement with The Sims Social in
Facebook.

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Abstract

This thesis encapsulates how Malay women engage with globalisation and modernity through Western, more specifically American media. Through examining online gaming and platforms, this study demonstrates that these women negotiate the clash of sociocultural values with a variety of strategies. *The Sims Social*, a type of online game played via Facebook is taken as a case study to explore the complexity of identity performance and management that emerges as these two different, but overlapping contexts collide.

The research finds that instead of rejecting the many clashing social-cultural values portrayed in *The Sims Social*, Malay women attain pleasure as they negotiate their way through different aspects of the game. Despite the stark differences between the sociocultural and religious values presented by this game and their own values, Malay women explain how their sociocultural values particularly Islam; grant them the licence to play the game.

Nevertheless, there are circumstances where the values portrayed in the game crossed a line causing players to take a firm stand, mostly on the grounds of their religious beliefs, and play was set aside in favour of Islamic values. These circumstances were brought to the surface and discussed in this research.

Utilising three types of methodology; online participant observation, focus groups, and face-to-face interviews, this study explores the performance and management of identity across the thin boundaries of three different but overlapping contexts within *The Sims Social*, Facebook and offline contexts. Other features examined were the boundaries play breaches along the intersection of gender, sociocultural norms, religion and the values inscribed in the game.

Pargman and Jakobsson's (2008) 'frame metaphor' is used to complement Giddens's and Goffman's theories to explore and explain the experience these Malay women players encounter during play in *The Sims Social* as they weave their identity performance through three overlapping contexts.

Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint award of this degree.

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Acronyms used

ANT	Actor–network theory
API	Application program interfaces
EA	Electronic Arts
GTA	<i>Grant Theft Auto</i>
MMOG	Massively multiplayer online game
MMORPG	Massively multiplayer online role playing game
MUD	Multi-User Dungeons
NEP	New Economic Policy
NPC	Non-player character
OMG	Oh my God
PBUH	Peace be upon Him
RPG	Role playing game
PVR	Personal video recorder
SNG	Social network game
SNS	Social network site
TSS	<i>The Sims Social</i>
UMNO	United Malay National Organisation
US	The United States of America
XP	Experience points