

# EXPLORING TWITTER'S #DARKSIDE: OF PORN, SEX WORK, AND SEX EDUCATION AS HAVEN FOR MALAY MUSLIM WOMEN IN MALAYSIA

## Authors:

Rizal A<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Media & Communication, RMIT University

## Background:

Sex education is lacking in Malaysian educational institutions, leading people to seek information on the Internet and social media. Conversations on sex and sexuality are further problematised by certain ways of being for a Malay Muslim woman, who must follow specific dress codes and conform to societal norms. Conversely, alternative ways of being may cause discrimination and legal punishments. However, a growing number of Malay Muslim women found haven in a controversial online community called #darkside on Twitter. Established in 2018, the #darkside community allows users to express their sexual desires, share explicit content, and promote illegal Telegram channels for sex work while protecting their identities with pseudonyms.

## Methods & Results:

Through interviews and email correspondence, these women discuss their experiences, motivations, and how they learn about sex education within the #darkside community. This online space has shaped their offline and online identities, providing a sense of belonging in a society that strictly regulates women based on religious and moral beliefs.

## Conclusion:

This research explores how online communities and social media platform affordances facilitate sex education. Specifically, the #darkside community on Twitter empowers marginalised groups in revisiting their past lack of sex education and engaging in politicised conversations, thereby shaping their identity and understanding of sex education for the future. Ultimately, this study raises questions about the implications of social media usage for sex education across diverse groups, contexts, and countries, highlighting its significance at the individual, community, and societal levels.

## Disclosure of Interest Statement:

None