

Articulation of Muslim Subjectivity in Search the Ideal Type of Muslim Women: Ayu Momalula's Counseling Da'wah on Instagram

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Abstract

Religious discussions among previous socio-religious scholars used to focus more on authority, righteousness, commodification efforts, and the pursuit of financial gains by religious figures. However, this seems less relevant in today's digital age, where people can access and share religious knowledge from various sources. This article aims to explore this phenomenon by examining the approach of a da'wah influencer, Ayu Momalula. She presents counseling da'wah content as a form of self-expression, creating an ideal Muslim woman figure for her social media followers. Using an exploratory qualitative method and online ethnographic approach, primary data was obtained from interviews via WhatsApp and Zoom, as well as from observation of content on her Instagram accounts and books. The study argues that Ayu Momalula's counseling da'wah activities aim to establish herself as an ideal Muslim woman, supporting her authority as a religious micro-celebrity. The article analyzes her subjectivity as a Muslim women micro-celebrity, highlighting her representation of a pious wife and modern mompreneur through content visualization on social media. This study suggests that Ayu Momalula actively promotes productivity in both work and preaching to her specific target audience.

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INTRODUCTION

This article presents a Muslim influencer and mompreneur named Ayu Momalula, who was initially known through social media because of her simple hijab business and several books in the romantic and motivational genres (Beta, 2020). For her, becoming a home-based businesswoman is an alternative response to still being able to play the role of a woman who earns a living and is a modern, exemplary mother to her children. As a Muslim micro-celebrity, her elegant, gentle, pious, intelligent, and classy personality is an image of herself that is always highlighted when presenting visualizations of da'wah content wrapped in advice and motivation like a counselor on an Instagram account (Nisa, 2018). Quickly, her followers will come as if fascinated by Ayu's character and her advice messages, which are believed to be able to treat their anxiety about living life as a modern Muslim woman.

The selection of Ayu Momalula as a representative of various Muslim influencer figures on social media in this article is based on several reasons. *First*, Ayu Momalula is one of the many Muslim influencers who are pretty active in organizing various paid pre-marriage training classes for Muslims and single Muslim women online, with the acquisition of 249 thousand followers on Instagram (Beta, 2019). The text you provided seems to be discussing the enthusiastic response of the audience as religious consumers to various content, events, and spiritual programs. It also mentions Ayu's transition from having a successful business career to becoming a micro-celebrity figure on social media as a da'wah influencer (Weidhaas, 2020). Additionally, the text highlights Ayu's creativity in effectively combining da'wah with engaging narratives on social media (Beta, 2020).

To become a da'wah influencer, you must convince the audience and followers to create a new identity (Setyaningsih, 2023). Various ways are carried out, from making various da'wah

content about the anxiety of today's people to becoming like an *ustāḥ* or qualified *ustāḥ* who understands various religious laws even though the new identity is far from the previous educational background. Sure enough, their efforts have paid off in just a few decades. The enthusiasm of the audience of connoisseurs of religious content created by da'wah influencers on social media has exceeded that of traditional preachers with a formal religious education background (Azlan et al., 2020). This is also why Bunt admits a new form of spiritual authority exists in the current net-literate era. This online authority, which he refers to as an electronic authority, can influence political networks and activism and mobilize the proximity of the internet to promote a particular worldview and agenda (McClure, 2019).

Starting from the description above, this article examines religion subjectively from the point of view of religious individuals who express and articulate their beliefs through social media. This study is interesting because, so far, most religious discussions have discussed how religion leads to the construction of authority, means of piety, commodification efforts, and commercialization practices for its adherents in general (Aini & Akalili, 2021). In addition, previous studies have also never focused on Muslim actors or figures who play a role in every debate about religion, which needs to be studied more deeply, so the focus of this study is more aimed at figures who can bring Islam to the practice of its adherents who are more subjective. The main argument is that egalitarian social media has now provided opportunities for micro-celebrities such as da'wah influencers to articulate their subjectivity and religious understanding to support their authority as individuals who can convey religious messages on social media (Ridwan, 2019).

Religious encounters and the internet have facilitated religious conversations in the public sphere. Previously, many scholars believed that the more modern society is, the more religion will be abandoned (Berger, 1990). The contemporary situation shows the opposite (Berger, 1999; Casanova, 1994; Feener & Fountain, 2018). Consequently, the increasingly unstoppable development of the internet encourages the separation of religious activities in the public and private spheres so that individuals have greater control over their spiritual identities and practices (Dawson, 2000). On the one hand, this situation is good for opening a more comprehensive discussion of religious practices and discourses that can still be updated to achieve practical relevance. However, the freedom of control over this matter without qualified scientific provisions will be a unique challenge for religious people. This situation is also a concern for Mandeville (Mandaville, 2002). This opportunity makes it more possible for everyone to bring religion into their own hands.

Almost every religion has been present in the digital space (Dawson & Hennebray, 1999; Campbell, 2006; Campbell, 2011). Even the existence of Islam and the internet seems to be a single phenomenon that cannot be separated in this contemporary era. Digital content has become essential to modern Islamic expression in many contexts, such as how faith, commandments, and control are embodied throughout complex Muslim belief systems (McClure, 2019). Significant innovations in communication have been combined with a diverse Islamic agenda to create substantial change through command and control over the relevance of the Muslim context today (McClure, 2019). In other words, the internet does not replace a person's form of Islamic expression but rather as a means to go beyond conventional boundaries that have been an obstacle.

Every Muslim has the same right to vote in cyberspace to disseminate their religious values and views in the information market without any difference in their 'what, who, and as what,' so it is also not wrong to say that "the Internet is a tool of Islam" (Bunt, 2003; Cooke & Lawrence, 2005). Evenly, but putting aside wisdom, the existence of the internet opens up opportunities for anyone without exception to enter the information market, even in areas that should not be, such as religion. Thus, the internet can bring contemporary Islamic issues into sharp focus when individuals can declare themselves qualified to make statements, give advice, and even produce fatwas through various creative means.

Contemporary discussions about religion that have emerged among social science academics are a stepping stone in explaining this new phenomenon. Several socio-religious scholars have

specifically proposed the study of authority in religious discussions (Dawson, 2000; Gaborieau, 2010; Burhanudin, 2010; Howell, 2008; Muzakki, 2012; Bunt, 2022). In addition, the previous opinion about the ability of religion to encourage the side of one's piety has been widely explained by many social researchers through various influential variables (Najib Kailani & Sunarwoto, 2019; Rinaldo, 2013; Hasan, 2009; Hasan, 2015). In the end, it is updated by the subsequent opinion that religion has also undergone a process of commodification, like a product that can be commoditized (Einstein, 2007; Njoto-Feillard, 2018; Kitiarsa, 2008). So far, these opinions have always adorned every debate of religious discussion. They contradict each other by only being aimed at religious people without a continuous conversation about who the bearer actors are behind it. The renewal of every opinion is certainly not without reason. This happens because the discussion and focus of research studies on piety have several areas for improvement (Fadil & Fernando, 2015). That is, the reductionist view that overthrows religion can sacrifice the political, economic, and other structures that have mediated the lives of religious people. In addition, the discussion of piety is not complex because ethical self-development is not a total project, and the outcome is not easily predictable. It is also time to examine religion objectively from how a believer expresses religion and then apply different approaches to each religion anywhere and anytime; it is no longer the time to discuss the essence of religion by following theologians alone (Pals, 1996).

The post-9/11 phenomenon has increased awareness of the use of the internet, especially in the Muslim world, which is characterized by the increasing crowd of Islamic content as part of the routine activities of the media as well as the expression and articulation of the beliefs of today's Muslim society (Bunt, 2003). Underlining these various debates, Islam and the internet also take their respective portions in presenting them from Islam, which is interpreted only in terms of piety, to Islam, which is brought in various forms of profitable commodities. Therefore, it is undeniable that internet access has become an essential element in the propagation and identity of every individual and Muslim society today.

Therefore, to continue the contemporary discussion of existing religions while adding focus to related studies that have never existed before, this article gives explicitly an entire portion of the study of religion used to analyze the understanding, practices, and activities of religious individuals on social media subjectively. By being oriented towards the articulation and self-expression of the spiritual individual figures studied, this article differs from previous religious studies, which tend to be exclusive. Specifically, this article discusses to find out the urgency of Ayu Momalula's role as a micro-celebrity on the audience's construction of the ideal Muslim Women, given that the capitalizing intimacy refers more to the impact experienced by the audiences.

METHODS

This article uses an exploratory qualitative method through an online ethnographic approach (Kozinets, 2010; Mariampolski, 1999). Which combines ethnography and digital technology to see and analyze a social phenomenon. Qualitative data and content analysis are used to discuss in depth the information written or depicted in an online upload, primarily through observation, interviews via Zoom, and documentation of content in the form of photos and posters, including live streaming uploads on Ayu Momalula's Instagram account. The primary material for this research comes from literature and observation of various content and da'wah programs on Ayu Momalula's Instagram account as a selected Muslim influencer. This research is also supported by the results of understanding revealed through statements, acknowledgments, and opinions conveyed by Ayu Momalula in her book, as well as involving other literature studies as a secondary data source. This article is made from uploaded content with the necessary relevant issues in mind. Second, criticism seeks and critically explores the posts or da'wah practices found to find the truth of the problem being researched—third, interpretation, in the form of interpreting data and determining the meaning and relationship between facts. Using capitalizing intimacy (Raun, 2018; Annisa, 2022), where the aspect of intimacy that seeks to be built through the performance of self-content on social media can become a commodity, support social recognition, and as a tool in advocating interaction

between the audience and micro-celebrities. It can analyzing Ayu Momalula's da'wah practices and activities as a micro-celebrity on social media can be understood critically and complexly. Finally, the step of writing the results of interpretation in an understandable social narrative.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Virtual Da'wah Content of Ayu Momalula on Instagram

Ayu's entire content on Instagram involves visual and audiovisual uploads, each containing tips, advice, bits of knowledge, and motivations related to soul mates, marriage, and character (Beta, 2020). According to its visually appealing type, visual uploads are packaged by including images of female characters wearing hijab or sharia clothes as a depiction of the figure of a Muslim woman and a man dressed to cover the *aurat* and sometimes wearing a robe to depict a Muslim male figure, accompanied by an explanation of short narrative content that is easy for the audience from teenagers to understand (Beta, 2019). This type is different from audiovisual uploads, which focus on two critical aspects, namely image and sound, in the process of conveying the message of content (Aronowsky et al., 2012). In audiovisual content, the video is presented using Ayu's face, which explains a theme accompanied by subtitles at the bottom instead of a written narrative on the visual content accompanied by the background sound of certain songs following the content theme (Setyaningsih, 2023). Not only does it show Ayu, but sometimes the video also shows a short snippet of a movie scene or a video of artists showing off their intimacy on social media as an example of the theme of related content. Lately, however, Ayu has also often uploaded her video content through images of printed characters displayed alternately, following a narrative like an actor in a puppet.



Figure 1. One of the Many Uploads of Visual Content Contains Motivation for Women who are Labeled as 'Ngga Laku'

The upload shows how Ayu presents da'wah content wrapped in life messages about soul mates, marriage, and character aimed at women as the majority of her follower audience. The visual content containing knowledge, tips, advice, and motivation is packaged with a visualization of faceless characters of women dressed in Muslim clothes and wearing sharia veils and men covering the *aurat* depicted following the discussion of the content. So, although some of the content does not indicate the elements of da'wah, with the depiction of the characters chosen by Ayu through the figures of men and women in Islam, it is enough to explain that the content of the message is part of her da'wah.

In each of her uploads, Ayu seems to want to show that there are indicators that determine that a person can live an ideal life according to their character, traits, and how their partner treats them (Selge et al., 2008). The indicators in question can come from various aspects, such as what

kind of soul mate or partner, how to choose a soul mate, and how someone needs to prepare themselves before meeting the soul mate. In addition, Ayu also seeks to create a narrative that a person will be considered a good Muslim and successful in life if he carries out advice from the delivery of knowledge, advice, tips, and motivational content. The message contains advice from her 14-year marriage experience, as she often claims when proving her capacity, and from her experience of studying at several Islamic studies places to form a personal understanding of Islam based on her preferences. Thus, without Ayu having to include postulates containing verses from the Qur'an or hadith, the presentation of the content implied by Islamic messages has impressed the specialization of da'wah on the path of character, soul mate, and marriage (Mukarom & Rosyidi, 2020).

Women's Subjectivity: Middle-Class Muslim Women in Responding to Modernity

From the autobiographical novel quote below, Ayu is described as the last of four sisters who grew up in a middle-class family disciplined and strict about religion. The concern of parents in ordinary Muslim families in educating and raising daughters is reflected in the lives of Ayu and her three sisters. They tend to be restrained and wholly guarded to avoid bad influences outside the home that threaten the future. Because of such upbringing, each of his three older brothers grew up to be more and more curious to learn religion; in fact, they all migrated and began to cover their aura by wearing hijab even though their parents had challenged the decision.

My mother is the one who tries to take care of her child. My brothers and I (we are four sisters in all). Mama has to take extra care of her girls. We are forbidden to play close to the opposite sex. We have to be disciplined every day to study. The house is always locked at nap time so the children do not wander. I missed it when my other friends were still playing on the field and enjoying the holidays. I already have to study for the next semester" (Momalila, 2019).

Maybe that's why my children love to learn religion. So that we all hijrah start from covering the *aurat*. Even though the parents themselves are not yet in their religious knowledge, they even oppose their child's decision to wear a hijab" (Momalila, 2019).

After emigrating, the siblings' chatter was no longer about fashion, cosmetics, or vacation destinations like average women their age. The discussion of the four is precisely about the search for Islamic studies that must be visited, which Ustaz whose da'wah inspires, what study themes need to be studied, and even promising each other to come to the study once a week regularly. Unlike her three older brothers who desire to learn more about religion, Ayu seems to be forced just because she has no choice but to accept the influence and invitation of her three brothers. Moreover, the four were married right after graduation at a relatively young age with men from families whom their parents well chose (Momalila, 2019).

On the other hand, Ayu also grew up to be introverted, shy, timid, quiet, obedient, and even did not have a confident attitude due to her family upbringing, which made her rarely interact with other people. Realizing her weaknesses and shortcomings, Ayu decided to try to grow her confidence by optimizing her strengths. His hobby of writing short stories and poetry since childhood ultimately encouraged his potential to further maximize his talent in writing. He also bought public speaking books in an effort to build his confidence as well as a book of tips and tricks on how to make his manuscript acceptable to publishers (Momalula, 2023b). Through efforts to deepen these sciences and also practice self-taught, Ayu's skills gradually began to be honed. The first piece was also received by the editor with a poetry work honorarium of fifty thousand rupiah and one hundred thousand for a short story written work.

The choice to marry young apparently is not just a decision by Ayu's parents as a sign of their final struggle in educating their daughter who has been raised and will be handed over to a responsible young man. Behind that, Ayu also dreamed of getting married at a young age because

she wanted to have close friends without having to be arranged when she returned home and wanted to have a housemate who could accompany and take care of her (Momalila, 2019). She considers marriage to be a way out of his strict life with his family so far. In her shadow after marriage, she is free to do anything that has been impossible to do while still under the responsibility of her parents. This condition seems natural to see Ayu's anxiety and trauma while being a girl in a strict family which makes it quite difficult for her to explore her potential. This reason made Ayu easily agree to marry the young man of her parents' choice at that time without any fear or worry in any way related to how to live married life after that.

Presumably we forgot. Trying to get to know each other more deeply, but neglecting to know God more deeply. It could be that we often fight because of our imperfect prayers. It could be that there are still many sins that surround us that God has not forgiven. We began to learn to know religion more deeply. I listened to a lot of lectures from my favorite ustaz on YouTube, just like him. At that time we seemed to be busy with each other's laptops. Busy listening to lectures individually. Not only through YouTube, we began to get closer to come to the study even though it was far away. Even so, I am always enthusiastic about coming even if the event is at night" (Momalila, 2019).

Our chat started the same. We began to exchange knowledge about religion. Even though it is still shallow, at least they are interested in learning. There is nothing more beautiful than a couple who are willing to humbly know their creator. We who are shy begin to dilute the hardness of our hearts to be even softer in love. We, who often argue with each other, open our ears even more to understand each other. In fact, you don't need glasses to see from the heart, you just need ears to hear more. I began to learn again what marriage was for. I want to be more obedient so that I can enter heaven from any door I want. There was a serenity that I had not encountered before. There is treatment and love that I have never found in the past from someone who already knows why a wife should be glorified, how much responsibility and reward she has. I am like an angel at home. It is really very glorified and cared for, even served when I am bad. There is no one who is as low as me. Now I'm the one who is so low because everything has been arranged" (Momalila, 2019).

Responding to the problems that occurred in Ayu and her husband's household, the above confession quote reflects how happiness and pleasure Ayu felt after she and her husband decided to emigrate and understand each other's positions. In fact, Ayu feels that she has a position as a woman as well as a wife that has never been imagined before. The changes that occurred in the husband in treating Ayu as a wife were obtained after the husband received religious directions on how to treat his wife well. This indicates that the pleasure that Ayu gets thanks to the process of her and her husband becoming pious until the peak of nudges against Ayu's femininity as a woman and wife. This condition seems to agree with Mahmood's statement regarding the change of self of the individual carried out through religious discipline and how a woman, whether in the figure of a wife or a mother, can get pleasure from the process of becoming pious (Mahmood, 2005).

Before becoming an influencer known as a Muslim fashion entrepreneur, Ayu had passed a job call several times and was accepted to work in one of the offices. However, the discomfort of sitting for a long time in front of a computer screen and her reluctance to be told to do something she couldn't do made her not want to go back to that place again. Plus her indecisiveness for her 1.5-year-old daughter who was left at home made her even more traumatized by her mother's dream job all along.

I'm sorry, Ma, maybe Ayu can't be a civil servant. God willing, if you want to find welfare, you can try to use other methods. I'm sorry Ma, God willing, none of the knowledge gained from college will be in vain. Ayu will prove more than that. Knowledge must continue to be pursued, the mind must continue to be sharpened, a heart that is as wide as the ocean, a body that must be strong and healthy. Motherhood must also be: Be Agile (Momalila, 2019).

Ayu chose to stay at home and work according to her passion while still being able to be a 24-hour mother to her child. As a mother of a toddler, Ayu also understands her role to always deepen the knowledge of parenting which is increasingly diverse, learn complementary menus, and pay attention to the growth and development of her baby month by month in the midst of her busy home business. This action implies Ayu's desire to prove to her mother that she can live a prosperous life with her own efforts and way of life, even more than her mother expected. In one of the discussions in her book, Ayu gives a special portion in several pages that tells how the joys and sorrows of being a mother with various demands and judgments from the community around her (Momalila, 2019). This indicates Ayu's disappointment as a modern woman who is educated but still does not have the right to act or make decisions. Women have always been the 'months' of society and suffer the consequences of having to go through difficulties in adjusting their personal desires to the traditional assumption of success as a perfect woman embraced by society in general.

In addition to successfully publishing a number of light teen novels; Among them are entitled *Diary Sally*, *Diary Cinta Sally*, *101 Pesan Cinta*, *Jalan Bareng*, and *Ganti Baju*, Ayu is a sharia Muslim fashion entrepreneur who successfully promoted her merchandise through the creation of the imaginary character "Ukhti Sally" on social media in 2013 (Pengusaha Muda Sukses Berkah, 2017). This moment was also the beginning of his involvement in sales activities as well as da'wah on social media. Via Instagram account @ukhtisally, Ayu uploads Islamic content through the visual display of the character "Ukhti Sally" to invite her followers to migrate by socializing the sharia hijab and educating Muslim women to be interested in wearing the hijab that she also offers. He also specializes in Instagram accounts @hijabsallyheart as a promotional ground for various hijab models that she is producing. Thus, da'wah while Ayu's business on social media is not only understood as creative da'wah that offers interesting visual content to her digital followers, but also related to the use of da'wah in marketing the products she sells.

Being an entrepreneur is the best choice for me. Maybe it's a lineage from a mother who loves Tanah Abang very much. I wasn't interested in selling clothes at first. Just a whim to participate in the bazaar at school events. I'm also good at making various types of drinks with their unique names. Who would have thought that from there I had trained in business and branding. Selling drinks only succeeds at certain times. Selling food also fails more. I tried to sell unique items that turned out to be left in stock. I tried again to sell children's clothes that ended up being lazy to sell. Until I felt suitable for selling Muslim women's fashion which at that time was still very rare selling on Facebook. Through just one product, I was able to reap a decent profit. I bought the stock. I am the model. My husband who took a casual photo on the terrace of the house. I was the one who served the chat. I was the one who packed the goods, and I was still the only one who rode the bicycle to the delivery place. And I am the one who records the receipt, then monitors the package. If there is a delivery that needs to be fast, we go far to the head office, or I leave alone by taking an angkot to immediately process the delivery (Momalila, 2019).

I was looking for inspiration at first because... I'm in a hurry to get married, I'm in a hurry to have children, what else can I do? Because if you work, it's no longer possible. It turns out that with that business by becoming an entrepreneur, it is more free to create.... Everything, the knowledge that I got when I was in college was even more useful when I became an entrepreneur. There must be joys and sorrows, yes, there are so many, especially if Muslim women who have become mothers, must be able to divide the time between houses and businesses as well. Especially if the business is also with a partner, you must often fight like that, right... e... Then the woman is sometimes more baper-baper when it comes to business, that's it. So, there are so many of them, especially if the employees are also women who meet women. It's really dramatic. Hehe.. Especially when discussing production and marketing, sometimes we have to stay on the right track. How to keep marketing, but it stays on track. Sometimes there are many opposites. So those that are in accordance with the sharia must still be carried out (Momalula, 2023a).

Some of the pieces of Ayu's confession story above show that the choice to become an entrepreneur is her best decision as a mother and wife of a Muslim woman today. He feels more free to be creative and do all his potential when he has the opportunity in the business world which can currently be easily run through the use of social media. Although her struggle to overcome the joys and sorrows of a mompreneur is depicted as very extraordinary, this is a form of her subjectivity as a woman to get the freedom to determine the future as well as proof of the judgment of her parents who had regretted that they had glorified her because they did not follow their recommendations to work in the office. The figure of Ayu does not only represent women, the Islamic ethics that Ayu prioritizes in every business movement has represented the initiative of the Muslim middle class in developing innovative interpretations of Islam that can facilitate and encourage their active economic role to support their families.

From there we divided the tasks. Everything I don't like, he will hold onto. Everything he is weak in is my business. If it is in the household, he will be the one to handle the data and neatness matters. It's a matter of solutions, my ideas that will give him the path of enlightenment. Including in the office, based on personality tests he is a person who likes to lead. Initially there were two leaders in our office. He and I can both decide and can have different opinions. Since then, all the leadership that I had held, now I leave it to him (Momalila, 2019).

I won't make a decision before we discuss it and he is the one who conveys it to the team. Communication is no longer from me to employees. But from him who plunged directly into the office. Meeting after meeting, I transferred it to him. My duties are only for product development, marketing, branding, and writing :) After all, I'm a woman, so after all, my position is below a man. No matter how smart, skilled, experienced I was the first to start a business, I still had to follow his decisions and policies which of course we had discussed together before. Special for financial matters, as people who are too neat, we manage this together. Even though the salary is handed over, and I have my own income. I free my wallet, we use both accounts. Sometimes I put money carelessly, the important thing is that all payment obligations have been fulfilled. Often, I also return the money that he has loved, and I return it to him to hold. He can take care of the little things in detail, while I don't like it. We have divided the tasks according to each character and this is very helpful (Momalila, 2019).

The problem between Ayu and her husband in the household ultimately ended with a fair division of duties according to both of them according to their respective passions and interests. Through the quote from Ayu's story above, it can be seen that she actually felt relieved and helped by her decision to give her husband responsibility for the hijab business she founded. Although she has full control over the business, she feels more comfortable if her husband who is in control without any worries no longer has an important role as a woman. Ayu has her own agency and subjectivity regarding her views on Muslim women. If the general opinion shows that women's success is measured by their ability to be equal and even compete with men, Ayu's opinion is the opposite. As a modern Muslim woman, she only needs to be given space and opportunity to be able to express and explore her potential. She just wants to be treated and understood according to her personality without cornering any gender. As a wife, she only needs a husband who is able to support her in joys and sorrows and guide her to goodness. Meanwhile, Ayu's assumption of the figure of her husband as a household imam and her responsibility in leading women even though she is the largest financial earner of the family shows her activeness in negotiating to respond to social changes and modernity by building her subjectivity based on her belief in Islam (Deeb, 2006).

From the description of Ayu's twists and turns, experiences and life choices, it can be understood that as a modern Muslim woman, Ayu has her own subjectivity in viewing and understanding the religious values she adheres to from the teachings and invitations of her three

sisters to study religion by attending various Islamic studies. In addition, Ayu's desire to get married young just so that she can more freely live the life choices she likes safely and without prohibitions has been successfully realized although, in the future she has to be faced with various household problems due to a lack of knowledge about married life. In the concept of Ayu's household, she realizes that the husband has the main authority compared to the wife to lead and direct various things. Ayu is also happy to give her husband the right to head the hijab business that she has been engaged in. She also does not feel worried if her role as the founder and entrepreneur of hijab will automatically decrease because of her husband's position as a director of the company. Ayu was actually very happy that her husband left his main job and decided to lead the company because that way she could always be close to her husband and feel helped in every way. In this case, Ayu describes the figure of a Muslim woman who seeks to negotiate between her religious understanding of married life in general and the concept of the position of husband and wife in the household in particular with personal ideals or desires to have space for self-articulation freely. So, she no longer thinks about how to get an equal position with her husband, but rather how she can have a free articulation space, get security and comfort, and do everything she likes, unlike when she lives with her parents. This is Ayu's effort to take over her "bodily autonomy" (Yuniar, 2021). After being controlled by parents since childhood. In contrast to modern Muslim women in general, who consider that equality between a husband or a man and a woman or wife is important in the concept of a household if you want a lasting marriage.

Ayu's belief as a modern Muslim middle class to keep her husband above her position in everything does not indicate her helplessness or unwillingness to achieve gender equality, but she prefers to strengthen her rights as a woman and wife through the Islamic ethics she adheres to. This can be seen from how Ayu and her husband decided to emigrate and began to understand each other when domestic problems worsened. After undergoing the hijrah process, both of them also felt calm in the family, especially Ayu who felt in the best position as a woman, mother, and wife. This argument is reinforced by González's statement when he finds many paradoxes surrounding the idea of Islamic feminism in today's public debate and discourse (González, 2013).

Ayu's life choices show how the image of today's Muslim women who must be able to be independent by proving their hidden potential and abilities to their surroundings, especially their families, if they want to be considered successful. Ayu's subjectivity as a Muslim woman from a middle-class family who feels that she has hidden talents but does not have the space to explore herself underlies her choice to become a mompreneur. By becoming an entrepreneur as well as a mother and wife, Ayu can be empowered and actively explore her potential as a talented modern woman who works according to her passion. Without having to leave her children or husband to work outside the home, Ayu feels that being a mompreneur is an alternative job that she is able to pursue without coercion or orders from any party. Self-subjectivity is an important thing that plays into her life choices to explain that modern Muslim women must seek opportunities or opportunities to be empowered and actively explore their potential, then prove it to those around them while still holding fast to Islamic ethics. Ayu's self-empowerment efforts do not stop at her career as a mompreneur.

Initially, I was consistent in making content on Instagram and after researching for about two years, the content was crowded about soul mates until finally many confided about their anxiety about not finding a soul mate, failing to get married, etc. From there, the idea of creating a container for them to grow arose. If it is from the internal, thank God there is a support system that fully supports (Momalula, 2023a).

This is Ayu's acknowledgment as an influencer who is required to always be active in creating content on social media. Seeing more and more themes carried by each influencer to make the theme like their distinctive discourse and identity on social media, Ayu also took advantage of her past experience in strict parents upbringing to get married young armed with cliché dreams to create

her distinctive identity and theme on social media. He sees opportunities in the discourse that are being worried by most of his target audience on various social media platforms. With full support from her family, Ayu also has a side role as an influencer who focuses on soul mates, marriage, and character. Ayu's actions show how middle-class Muslim women can respond and create Islamic discourse to support their activities. This condition allows Ayu to develop her hijab business as a Muslim entrepreneur while still supporting and practicing her beliefs.

The author hopes that Ayu's story has effectively conveyed the message that a good Muslim woman, as a wife and mother, requires more than just maintaining a harmonious family. Ayu's efforts to empower herself and share empowering messages online about soul mates, marriage, and gender roles are significant contributions. This strategy is quite effective for negotiating patriarchy within the framework of Islam even though Ayu herself does not express her desire to be equal to her husband. He displays his role as a figure who complies with God's expectations for mankind. This is to support their active role in the family and society. Ayu did not try to change the patriarchy or criticize her husband directly, but instead took the path of Islamic rules to get the behavior of her husband that she wanted. This condition seems to justify a statement, "when the Islamization of the middle class deepens with a lifestyle that is increasingly influenced by the desire to be a good Muslim (Latief, 2017). Indonesian Muslim women are increasingly uncomfortable being labeled as feminists because they are considered part of Western imperialism" (Rinaldo, 2013). Muslim women see that an exemplary approach has the potential to increase opportunities for women's empowerment by assisting their groups in realizing their aspirations (Sakai, 2022).

Capitalizing Intimacy of "Ideal Muslim Women" Among Muslim Female Audiences"

Muslim women act and spread their interpretation of Islam in their daily lives by expanding their role to be considered good Muslim women (Sakai & Fauzia, 2022). Similarly, Ayu, in addition to practicing Islamic ethics in her daily household life, she also displays and spreads her understanding of Islam on social media where anyone can freely access it. Through content in the form of motivational messages and Islamic advice for her target audience, Ayu shows the self-image of Muslim women who are elegant, intelligent, classy, and calm. He also depicts the figure mompreneur is successful, modern, and inspiring. The message conveyed was also very appropriate and closely related to the condition of the audience. Ayu seems to be able to utilize Islamic interpretation innovatively to a certain extent expanding followers' expectations of her role in the public sphere.

As one of the micro-celebrity figures, Ayu must show accessibility, availability, presence, connectedness, and most importantly, authenticity, all of which depend on a form of intimacy. It is this intimacy that then results in the three ultimate goals of the micro-celebrity role; financial acquisition, social recognition, and tools in advocacy work (Raun, 2018). This statement was later developed by Annisa (Annisa, 2022) by explaining how micro-celebrities or internet celebrities portray themselves as pious people, represent the ideal Muslim woman, create and shape public Islam utilizing their intimacy. It can be concluded that intimacy, which entails presence and connection with the audience, is an important indicator in the role of micro-celebrities.



Figure 2. One of PoV's Content Uploads and the Comments

In the *PoV* (Point of View) content, Ayu shares various kinds of depictions of people's perspectives on various conditions surrounding soul mates, marriages and characters presented either through short video footage of Ayu's personal, other people or even artists. *PoV* is made as an alternative way of conveying a message so that it seems more concise and easy to understand because it is immediately demonstrated according to the situation exemplified. Thus, *PoV* must be presented creatively so as not to make the audience think that *PoV* content is the same as normative audiovisual content. In *PoV* Ayu, usually the content is presented by involving the joke aspect but the message is still conveyed. Uniquely, *the PoV* in Ayu's content does not use voice as a means of presenting her message, but is limited to the text that is displayed alternately according to the video footage. Therefore, *the PoV* does not require a long duration as is required for visual content in general.

The comments are proof of Ayu's ability to present content that is very relevant and represents the anxiety of the audience. Ayu's understanding of various things in life that her target audience is worried about and her actions to re-aspire those worries in attractive packaging on social media have succeeded in bringing enthusiasm to the audience who are experiencing similar worries. When these concerns are represented by a popular person on social media, in this case Ayu as a micro-celebrity, then the audience will feel that their positions and problems that were previously considered unimportant because they were considered just personal problems and did not need others to understand, turned out to be a problem for many people who actually had to involve people around them to understand their situation. If you look at the comments above, Ayu's content seems to be an intermediary as well as a liaison in understanding and positioning herself as a public figure according to the conditions that the audience is worried about. So that the attraction created by Ayu's figure is the accuracy and suitability of her content materials with audience problems related to matchmaking, marriage and characters in real life.

Thus, Ayu also succeeded in establishing a connection with the audience through the presentation of da'wah content wrapped in life messages. Although Ayu does not explicitly involve religious messages in the display of her content like religious micro-celebrity figures in general, the content acts to mediate so that the message of da'wah to return to God and become the best servant according to nature can be conveyed through materials about soul mates, marriage and character. In this position, Ayu sees herself as part of the context of today's Muslim women who have experienced a crisis in marriage science. He increasingly identifies himself as part of the narrative and imagines himself in that phase. Therefore, without realizing it, Ayu's figure is believed to be able to guide and inspire Muslim women who are in similar worries. This situation is quite reasonable because the creation of identity will occur when a person puts himself or herself in a narrative (Cheikh, 2015).

The enthusiasm of the audience of followers towards Ayu gradually goes beyond identifying the success of a matchmaker, marriage and character influencer in attracting and convincing his audience through various creative content uploads that are considered to represent their voice. Now, the audience tends to view Ayu as an inspirational and authoritative figure in the field of issues related to soul mates, marriage and character that is strongly presented based on Islamic ethics. This is a da'wah theme that is quite interesting for teenagers to middle age. It is evident that at several moments, a number of audience members told their problems and asked questions as well as asking Ayu for solutions related to the theme. Ayu also diligently responded to their questions by offering solutions or simply giving the best input and views according to her personally. It is not uncommon to find some audiences who ask about normative religious questions such as Islamic law of an action, guidance on certain worship practices, or even the postulates of an opinion that he has expressed in the content even though it always ends with a short response or even without a response from her. Ayu never responded to the audience who asked more deeply about religion because it was not her capacity. In some of his uploaded content, she only involves postulates and religious laws that are indeed related to the theme of her da'wah. This shows how Ayu in her position as a counseling da'wah influencer in matters of matchmaking, marriage and character negotiates her legitimacy in the field of authority which is indeed reasonable for a micro-da'wah celebrity like her. This role signifies the ease of accessibility in establishing a connection with Ayu as a micro-celebrity who is always awaited by her messages and advice by the audience of followers.



Figure 3. Some Questions and Audience Confidants That Ayu Responded to and Uploaded on Her *Instagram* Story

Based on the data above, the connectedness and accessibility contained in one idea of 'intimacy' by Ayu as a micro-celebrity has been successfully achieved through her responsiveness to the audience's requests or questions who expect answers or direct responses from her. The female audience unconsciously explained how 'women's culture' according to Berlant (Berlant, 2008) which can be characterized by the possession of a commonality and the need for conversations or communication that feel familiar, open, and relieving. This conclusion is in line with the argument of some academics who consider the aspect of intimacy important for micro-celebrities through the statement that responsiveness to audiences who expect transparency, openness, authenticity, direct connection is an important indicator to maintain their status (Marwick, 2013; Sant, 2008).

In addition to being known as an influencer of counseling da'wah through the theme of soul mate, marriage and character, the ability to present content in an attractive way, accuracy and appropriateness in providing materials, motivation, messages and life advice implicitly indicating religious messages, Ayu's self-image is also described as an elegant and ideal Muslim woman, even becoming the ideal figure of other Muslim women. The wearing of sharia clothes and hijab on every content that involves her, her tall figure, and beautiful face further support the perfect

impression of Ayu in front of her followers. Not a few of her Muslim audience are inspired to want to be like Ayu with all the advantages displayed on social media. At this stage, in addition to spreading influence and building her authority through various active efforts to attract audiences on social media, micro-celebrities like Ayu also consolidate their authority through their "beauty capital". This capital is a social capital that rests on heteronormative values of femininity and beauty. (Moreno Figueroa, 2008) She embodies authority by presenting herself as the ideal Muslim woman. Some of them he has done such as; dressed in fashionable Muslim Women sharia in a number of contents, uploading herself in certain positions and discourses according to the theme of the content until she succeeded in presenting positive comments from the audience who were captivated by her figure physically.

Once again, the aspect of intimacy plays a role again in Ayu's self-image which is considered to reflect the ideal Muslim woman. Intimacy through the appearance of authenticity of Ayu on her Instagram account means that there is a self-show which in turn creates attention as one of the most valuable commodities in social media celebrations (Jerslev, 2016). It is at this level that the capitalizing intimacy where the aspect of intimacy (Raun, 2018; Annisa, 2022) that seeks to be built through the performance of self-content on social media can become a commodity, support social recognition, and as a tool in advocating interaction between the audience and micro-celebrities. Authenticity and intimacy are strategic elements of their way to reach more followers (Marwick, 2015). This kind of visibility is important for an influencer who needs recognition and legitimacy for everything he does and conveys to his audience of followers on social media. Visibility as the main mode of religious authority (Lövheim & Lundmark, 2019) which means that increased visibility on social media allows counseling da'wah influencers like Ayu to exercise their authority in religious fields that she does not actually have.

In addition, some of the audience comments above also confirmed the shade of Ayu's character when presenting content about soul mates, marriage and characters who are able to touch feelings with the softness of her voice, self-demeanor that exemplifies the ideal Muslim woman. From the impressions displayed by Ayu, she seems to have created and offered a version of piety to the Muslim audience, especially women (Annisa, 2022). Thus, in addition to of course financial gains can be obtained automatically, the capitalizing intimacy that entrusts social recognition of Ayu as a depiction of the ideal Muslim woman figure is also manifested in positive comments and audience praise for Ayu. This is evident from its success in making the da'wah program a success through the implementation of various paid online training classes offered to its audience, some of which are *Kelas Istri Sholehah (KIS)*, *Kelas Menuju Halal (KMH)*, *Kelas Personalitiy Developmentuntil Kelas Calon Imam*.

The efforts to become an authoritative figure and have claims as an authority when talking about the theme of matchmaking, marriage, and character, on May 6, 2018, Ayu took the initiative to establish an online-based community called "*Muslimah Bangkit Academy*" (MBA) as a forum for him and his audience followers to empower each other in various programs in the form of paid counseling classes. At the time of writing, MBA has a team of 6 people who are selected through the employee recruitment process. Initially, the classes were only for women, but due to the demand from the male audience to hold classes for men, recently she began to open a special class for men, namely *Kelas Calon Imam (KCI)*. In women's classes, Ayu empowers herself by being the main resource person who will guide and guide the course of each material during the class as well as offer solutions to participants' problems like a counselor at the end of the class meeting. In contrast to KCI which was presented by an experienced male team from MBA. Besides, MBA also offers matchmaking partner to help those who are ready to get married but do not yet have a potential partner (Momalula, 2023a).

In social recognition, through her new identity as a Muslim influencer, Ayu has also begun to be invited to various Islamic events as the main speaker in talk show programs, sharing experiences and knowledge, as well as studies for women who are students, housewives, or entrepreneurs. This further emphasizes Ayu's exemplary nature among Muslim women, especially her audience of

followers on social media by indicating an expression of female agency in constructing her femininity that reflects the complexity of what it means to be a Muslim. This shows that there are various ways for Muslims to express and negotiate to be good Muslims amid political and economic uncertainty as they are increasingly exposed to increased global connectivity (Soares & Osella, 2009). Like Ayu who builds and strengthens her perfect identity on social media and plays an active role by contributing to her audience of followers. In the end, the entrepreneurship pioneered by Ayu is not only a way to generate income, but also a way to make itself viable in the local context (Freeman, 2007).



Figure 4. Several Online Posters of Online and Offline Events that Invited Ayu as the Main Speaker.

Finally, the capitalizing intimacy as an advocacy work tool, which in this case Ayu uses to reach a wider audience. The authenticity and intimacy in every upload that depicts her figure, her daily experiences ranging from household appliances to skincare products used at home are supporting indicators for an influencer like herself. This is also what Marwick emphasized (Marwick, 2015). In his argument that authenticity and intimacy are strategic elements of their strategy to reach followers. In everyday uploads, micro-celebrities such as influencers need to reveal their lives, personal experiences, and daily journeys as part of self-commodification (Annisa, 2022). This can ultimately allow the target audience to accept the contagion of mobility, even to the point of being interested in and following it regularly through the upload (Molz, 2006; O' Regan, 2009).

From the above description, it can be concluded that Ayu Momalula's counseling da'wah utilizes intimacy and authenticity that is capitalized in such a way through the creation of self-character as an ideal Muslim woman on social media. The peak of the success of this utilization is the acquisition of financial capital, social recognition, and an increasingly wide audience of enthusiasts. Thus, capitalizing intimacy is important in creating an emotional connection between micro-celebrities and their followers on social media. This is because intimacy, which is a potential aspect of the influencer, is something that followers need, whether for their purpose in dealing with life problems or simply to vent their emotions. As one of the micro-celebrity figures, this method for Ayu Momalula is considered important in addition to strengthening the role of influential actors on social media related to matchmaking, marriage, and character issues, as well as supporting informal authorities as conveyors of religious messages through specific ways and different from preachers generally using a certain discourse according to their expertise. Thus, in addition to being

a working and actively empowered Muslim woman, Ayu can also preach according to her skills and experience to a certain target audience.

This study was inspired by Firly Annisa's dissertation work which also used the concept of capitalizing intimacy by reviewing how Instagram internet celebrities in Indonesia represent the contestation of piety on social media through various specific religious expressions. Previously, this concept was also brought by Tobias Raun who attempted to investigate new forms of transgender vlogs that embrace self-commodification. He proposed that intimacy as a genre as well as capital embedded in the strategies, dynamics, and affective work of micro-celebrities. These studies differ from the discussion in this article even though they both use the concept of capitalizing intimacy in their analysis. This study further shows that this concept can lead to how someone as a follower of a micro-celebrity obtains a construction related to the ideal type of Muslim Women figure only through the physical depiction displayed by the micro-celebrity they follow on social media.

CONCLUSION

The decision to become an entrepreneur is not just about pursuing material profits, but also about one's aspirations and perspective on the surrounding social and cultural environment. Ayu's choice to become a mompreneur offers a new perspective on why people choose careers as entrepreneurs. It's not only a way for her to pursue her career goals as a devoted mother and wife, but also a way to assert her freedom and right to make her own choices, especially in the face of doubts from her parents about her future as a woman in the modern world. This decision also reflects her life after marriage, allowing Ayu to challenge the traditional structure of patriarchal families through her role as a mompreneur without having to overtly demand her husband's approval. Capitalizing on intimacy is a key aspect of establishing a micro-celebrity presence on social media, particularly for influencers. By leveraging the intimacy and authenticity of an influencer's personal life, one can easily gain financial income, social recognition, and attract a diverse audience. When considering Ayu Momalula, her subjectivity as a Muslim woman, and her adherence to religious views and understandings in her role as a mompreneur and micro-celebrity, she exemplifies the representation of an ideal Muslim woman based on common subjective criteria among Muslim women's audiences. Through this representation, Ayu highlights the role of a devout wife and a modern mompreneur who remains actively productive in her work and advocacy, catering to a specific target audience.

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