

# THE REPRESENTATION OF THE NURULS AS SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF HIJAB-WEARING WOMEN IN SOCIAL MEDIA

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## Abstract

This study aims to understand how representation of *The Nurul* as a social construction that reflects the dynamics between religious identity, gender and modernity in Indonesian society. The term *the Nurul* was first introduced by content creator Halda Rianta in the *PodHub* podcast in January 2024, and went viral on social media. The Nurul is often associated with behaviors such as dancing in cafes, enjoying fast food such as seblak, riding motorbikes and wearing casual clothes such as knitted sweaters and Korean-style wire glasses. This study uses a qualitative approach with content analysis and the theory of representation of Stuart Hall reveals how this stereotype influences public perception of women who wear the hijab and how they associate their identities in the digital space. The result, this study is a representation of the complexity of the identity of women who wear the hijab who try to balance religious values and the demands of a modern lifestyle. This study also investigates the impact of social media on views and behavioral judgments, specifically in cultural and religious settings.

**Keywords:** Representation, Social Media, The Nuruls

## INTRODUCTION

Some groups become focal focuses of interest in the ever-changing social media landscape because they represent narratives, trends, and ideologies that have a strong emotional connection to their community. The dynamic group "The Nuruls," which has amassed enormous fame and influence on social media platforms, is one example of such a phenomenon. The numerous dimensions of The Nuruls' existence are investigated in this study, how social media can affect perceptions and judgments of a person's behavior, especially in the context of culture and religion. The representation of Muslim women, particularly those who wear the hijab, has become a topic of interest and debate in the digital age. This study focuses on the term "The Nuruls", which refers to Muslim women who wear the hijab as an important element of their identity and religious expression. The Nuruls have become increasingly famous on social media for sharing their daily lives,

their fashion tips, signature hijab tutorials, and advocating for issues relevant to Muslim women on a local and global level.

Understanding stereotypes of Muslim women on social media is important, as these platforms are powerful tools for shaping public perceptions and cultural narratives. The Nuruls' online portrayals, according to Munir and Sholihin (2024), not only reflect their personal and religious identities, but also influence wider societal attitudes towards Muslim women. By studying these portrayals, we can understand how digital media sustains or challenges stereotypes. The purpose of this study is to look at how The Nuruls create and navigate Muslim stereotypes through cultural circuits, a framework that examines how cultural phenomena are produced, consumed, and regulated. By exploring The Nuruls' online activities, we seek to understand their impact on cultural and fashion trends, as well as their role in challenging gender stereotypes and promoting more inclusive representations of Muslim women. The new and modern is always emerging from social media platforms like X and TikTok. It is undeniable that these particular principles offer value and guidance to any object, regardless of who owns it. The new story of "The Nuruls" has gone viral and become the talk of social media. What exactly are the nuruls?

Today, the term "The Nuruls" is very popular and is mainly aimed at women on social media. The Nuruls are aimed at youngsters who dress too tightly. For example, she wears a headscarf but her clothes are tight and revealing. It may also be aimed at those who have an underdressed fashion style. In addition, netizens on Twitter use the term "The Nuruls" to describe women whose lifestyles are considered off the mark. This term is also often used by Generation Z to scold someone who is acting up on social media. According to F. Zahra (2020) Mass media has a big role as the main source of information, where mass media is able to provide any information and is able to bring something new to the surrounding environment. Just as the media serves as the main tool for spreading popular culture around the world, mass media serves as a tool for spreading popular culture to the general public.

Public perception and opinion are heavily influenced by the power of social media in the digital age. This is especially noticeable when religious and cultural identities are

portrayed, where stereotypes are often spread and reinforced quickly. Previous studies have shown that social media can challenge and perpetuate stereotypes, impacting the way society perceives different groups. . For example, research by Shaheen (2003) has highlighted how media representations contribute to the social construction of stereotypes, particularly focusing on ethnic and religious minorities.

The rise of social media has revolutionized the way we consume and interact with popular culture. Among the many groups and communities that have gained significant traction online, "The Nuruls" have emerged as an attention-grabbing phenomenon for their unique portrayal of femininity, identity and social roles. According to comedian Halda Rianti, "The Nuruls are women who hang out at Kopi Bajawa, Depok, who wear hijab but like to dance." In Deddy Corbuzier's podcast, Halda explained, "The Nuruls are not alcohol drinkers, we drinkAmericano there." Stuart Hall's theory of identity is crucial to understanding how stereotypes are created and resisted. According to Hall, identities are not fixed, but are constantly being created within specific historical and cultural narratives. The media plays an important role in this process by providing a framework through which identities are constructed and understood.

Muslim women are often portrayed with stereotypes that impact their social status and self-identity. According to research conducted by Abu-Lughod (2013) and Bullock (2002), Muslim women are often portrayed in a limited and negative way by the media, leading to misunderstanding and bias. This paper aims to explore the main idea of stereotyping Muslim women, specifically focusing on the case of The Nuruls, and to illustrate how social media influences the perception and judgment of Muslim women's behavior. We want to understand how social media plays a role in constructing and spreading stereotypes about Muslim women and emphasizing them to society and their lives as a whole by examining content and interactions on these platforms.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The researchers use qualitative research to understand human being's experience in a humanistic, interpretive approach. it can also be called requiring data and information in the form of descriptions or descriptions of informants (sugiyono, 2012).

To investigate stereotypes about Muslim women, this study uses Stuart Hall's cultural circuit as a qualitative analytical framework, with a particular emphasis on a social media case known as "The Nuruls." Representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation make up Hall's cultural circuit. This research aims to enhance our understanding of how stereotypes are formed, maintained, and accentuated in the digital world by using this comprehensive framework.

Data collection for this study included sources namely, interviews, social media posts, comments and interactions and relevant literature and previous studies. In cultural studies, the "cultural circuit" developed by Stuart Hall (1997) is a conceptual framework used to understand how popular culture is produced, consumed and reproduced in society. This conceptual framework has five interrelated components: representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The name "Nurul" has a profound and aesthetically pleasing etymology, originating from the Arabic word "Nuur" (نور), which translates to light or radiance. Presently, the term "nurul" has emerged as a novel cultural trend on social media, particularly among Muslim women. On social media, the term "Nurul" is employed to classify a specific group known as "The Nuruls". The origin of the phrase "The Nuruls" remains uncertain, including the individuals involved, the timing, and the specific manner in which it emerged. However, it has been seen on app x, a social media platform, that the nickname "The Nuruls" is being used to identify Muslim women on Twitter. It is important to remember that this nickname carries no negative connotations or associations. However, around the beginning of 2022, a fresh interpretation of the nickname "The Nuruls" surfaced on the social media platform X. The majority of members were avid K-Pop enthusiasts who engaged in roleplaying and fangirling by means of Korean avatar accounts. During that period, the term "The Nuruls" was employed to mock the self-righteous RP account administrators who hypocritically engaged in sexual activities whenever they came across pictures of their idols. Furthermore, these individuals often express racist and homophobic viewpoints.

Afterwards, in 2023, this nickname gained significant traction as a means of

criticizing someone in a derogatory manner on social media, particularly on the x-app. Amanda Zahra, a woman with a substantial following of 300,000 people on the X application, recently shared her experience of enduring body shaming since she reached puberty. She expressed her frustration with being constantly sexualized and objectified, stating that it remains the most distressing event in her life. Amanda's remarks were made on her personal Twitter account on Sunday (2/3/2023). Subsequently, a multitude of affirmative remarks served to uplift and motivate her, while a number of adverse comments sought to assign blame. Notably, a woman wearing a hijab made a comment stating that the incident occurred as a result of her behavior and that she deserved it. She also drew a comparison between harassment and robbery. Consequently, numerous individuals responded by tweeting with the quote from "The Nuruls".



Figure 1: tweeting with the quote "The Nuruls"  
source from:www.X.com

Some individuals believe that the thoughts of certain people involve blaming the victim and are influenced by sexism and misogynistic attitudes that are firmly ingrained in society. It is disheartening to witness such reactions. On the other hand, female peers who should empathize with the challenges survivors face in sharing their experiences, decide to criticize and belittle them instead. Currently, "The Nuruls" has gained a reputation on social media for being associated with bad stereotypes. The portrayal of "The Nuruls" depicts women who wear hijabs and exhibit contradictory behavior, deviating from their cultural and religious norms.

Nurul is not the first term employed as a means of derision within specific social circles. Cleveland Evans, a retired professor specializing in onomastics (the study of name origins) at the University of Bellevue, Nebraska, has uncovered evidence of satire originating from commercial names dating back to the 19th century. During that period, the nickname "Mick" was frequently employed as an insult targeting anyone of Irish descent. "The term 'Karen' is a recent linguistic tool that is linked to a specific group due to the overall perception of that group," stated Evans, as quoted by the Vox online news platform. According to Dr. I. M. Nick, a former president of the American Name Society, the practice of categorizing individuals based on their names has been observed for millennia, transcending cultural boundaries. "The terminology, implications, and individuals linked to specific names exhibit significant diversity," he informed Vox.

Presently, "The Nuruls" has begun to show a reputation including unfavorable generalizations on several social media platforms. The portrayal of "The Nuruls" depicts them as ladies who wear hijabs yet exhibit contradictory behavior and deviate from their cultural and religious norms. The nickname "The Nuruls" has increasingly acquired a prejudiced connotation, with individuals readily using it as a means of taunting or abusing others. Furthermore, the group known as "The Nuruls" is becoming increasingly unrestrained, not just in terms of their behavior, but also in regards to their choices in food, dress, living arrangements, and even their economic status.



Figure 2: Starter Pack "The Nuruls"  
Source: [www.sediksi.com](http://www.sediksi.com)



Figure 3: the choices food of :The Nuruls”  
Source: [www.instagram/ruangevent.com](http://www.instagram/ruangevent.com)

From these images, it can be seen that there are certain clothes, food, places and even vehicles to be categorized as "The Nuruls". The Nuruls are classified in the middle to lower class group where they are called "district girls" who are "hicks"

### Analythical Framework of Circuit Culture IN The Nuruls

#### 1. Representation

The role of representation is crucial in examining "The Nuruls" as a portrayal of stereotypes of Muslim women on social media. At first, "The Nuruls" are often portrayed using a blend of visual and verbal components that strengthen prevalent prejudices of Muslim women. They are frequently depicted as exemplars of humility and devotion. They frequently appear dressed in traditional Islamic attire, such as the jilbab, niqab, skirt, aurat-covering dress, or abaya, indicating their commitment to modesty and loyalty to the Islamic dress cod.



Figure 3: Islamic dress

Source: [www.asadiyahpusat.com](http://www.asadiyahpusat.com)

This portrayal implies that the central or exclusive aspect of Muslim women's identity is centered on their religious practices and modesty. Additionally, Muslim women are sometimes stereotypically depicted as passive and submissive. The portrayal of "The Nuruls" often emphasizes their compliance and submission, whether towards masculine individuals or religious doctrines. This evidence supports the notion that Muslim women experience a lack of autonomy and are primarily characterized by their conformity to traditional gender norms. By consistently showcasing "The Nuruls" in this manner, social media influencers and content creators establish a restricted and frequently reductive portrait of Muslim women. Not only do these representations oversimplify the diverse experiences and identities of Muslim women, but they also affect the perspectives of audiences on Muslimah identif. .

However, the current portrayal of "The Nuruls" is distinct. The public's perceptions and evaluations of "The Nuruls" have been altered as a result of the numerous controversial events that has occurred on social media, which were carried out by a number of Muslim women with personalities that are perceived as contradictory in terms of visual and textual aspects. The term "The Nuruls" is employed as a term of derision and carries a negative connotation.



Figure 4: Dress the Nuruls

Source: [www.celebrithink.com](http://www.celebrithink.com)

Extremely unconventional attire that contravenes Islamic culture, regulations, and ethnicity. This further strengthens the changing in public perceptions of Muslim women, known as "The Nuruls," as a result of the alteration in their habits, speech style, etiquette and attire that are classified inappropriate. As more content creator influencers join the conversation about this phenomenon, the use and view of "The nuruls" is increasingly biased. It can be concluded that, Repeated use of stereotypes can perpetuate cultural misunderstandings and reinforce existing biases, thus highlighting the importance of more nuanced and varied portrayals in social media content.

## 2. Identity

"The Nuruls" represent their Muslim identity in several ways, including a style of dress that is in line with Islamic law for young women wearing the hijab. The nuruls have their own characteristics regarding their clothing. They wear headscarves, plain t-shirts with cardigans or outers, and jeans with converse. Most Hijabers view nuruls as a way to express women's religious and cultural identity. Not only that, "The Nuruls" identity can also be explained through their habits that are considered unique. The social and religious activities they participate in, as well as the material they share on public platforms such as social media. They often present themselves as pious, educated and active in society while maintaining their religious principles.

Audience perceptions of "The Nuruls" are diverse and complex. Audiences first perceived "The Nuruls" as an example or role model of a modern Muslim woman who can balance her personal, professional and religious life. Considered a positive representation, they encourage many Muslim women to become more confident in showing their religious identity without compromising their personal desires or dreams. However, the current depiction of "The Nuruls" is different. Today, "The Nuruls" is used to describe hijab-wearing women who are in a conservative Islamic environment, but whose behavior often contradicts conservative values. Public perception and judgment of "The Nuruls" has changed as a result of the controversial events that took place on social media. The term "The Nuruls" is now used as a term of derision and has a negative connotation. The portrayal of "The Nuruls" has an impact on the self-identity of Muslim women who are profiled or who identify with "the Nuruls".

Today, "The Nuruls" are also considered as misogynistic since its association

with a feminine name that is commonly perceived to possess negative traits such as being tasteless, spiteful, and hypocritical. Members of the queer community also use the term "The Nuruls" to describe those whom they perceive as hypocritical and resistant to advancement. Emergence of Stereotypes and Social Judgment: In social media, the term "The Nuruls" became a symbol of stereotypes and social judgment. Women who are referred to as "The Nuruls" are usually described as people who dance, like certain foods, and have attention-grabbing behaviors. Since their behavior contradicts what they say or see, they may be hypocrites.

### 3. Production

Brands and influencers are collaborating to produce content featuring "The Nuruls". Actually, the term "The Nuruls" has been around for a long time, but the term is being talked about again because an influencer, Halda Rianta, a content creator, is known as the person who first introduced the term "The Nuruls" on a podcast hosted by Deddy Corbuzier and Vidi Aldiano. Halda explained that "The Nuruls" is a term for hijab-wearing women who often hang out at Kopi Bajawa Flores, a cafe that offers live music that can be used to sway.

In addition, the content featuring "The Nuruls" aims to portray a more inclusive Muslimah identity and culture. They showcase a modern lifestyle that differs from traditional stereotypes of Muslim women. Womenswear and other brands are using "The Nuruls" as a more inclusive and relevant marketing strategy on TikTok. They work with hijab-wearing content creators to incorporate "The Nuruls" lifestyle and clothing into their campaigns, and "The Nuruls" online activities aim to increase interaction and participation on social media. They share fashion inspiration, tutorials, experiences, and various other content with a wide audience.

### 4. Consumption

The level of audience engagement with content portraying "The Nuruls" differs greatly among various groups, such as geographical locations and socio-economic backgrounds. Individuals from many ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds engage with the content of "The Nuruls" with different degrees of involvement. It is observed even in regions where there is widespread availability of social media. This content primarily attracts teenagers and lower middle-class families because of its cultural

associations and resonance. They frequently derive inspiration from the lifestyle, dress preferences, and cultural depictions of "The Nuruls" that may deviate from the portrayals commonly portrayed in mainstream media.

The approaches of interpreting and responding to the content of "The Nuruls" range from supportive to critical. Support is often provided by audiences that identify with or are eager to emulate the representational qualities of "The Nuruls". They derive resilience from examining diverse and genuine stories and valuing the favorable portrayal of Muslim women. Conversely, critical responses may arise due to misunderstandings, biases, or cultural disparities. Viewers may scrutinize the veracity and pertinence of the content in "The Nuruls," given its reflection of the broader societal discourse on identity and representation.

The perception and dissemination of content about "The Nuruls" are influenced by the algorithm's role and user participation in propagating significant preconceptions. Social media networks employ algorithms that prioritize content depending on user interaction data, including likes, shares, and comments. Algorithmic amplification might inadvertently perpetuate preconceptions when sensational material or polarization leads to increased engagement. The visibility and reach of a certain image are influenced by the way people engage with the content of "The Nuruls". This, in turn, impacts the extent to which the image is viewed and received by a wider audience. This dynamic highlights the importance of maintaining a balanced and responsible approach while interacting with media information. It is crucial in order to minimize the negative impact of stereotypes and to promote truthful portrayals of varied identities.

## 5. Regulation

Social media content concerning "The Nuruls" is subject to the influence of cultural representation policies, community guidelines, and enforcement mechanisms. Policies implemented by social media platforms to promote diversity and mitigate hate speech are frequently scrutinized. Although these guidelines theoretically safeguard against cultural misrepresentation and discrimination, their implementation is inconsistent. The cultural knowledge required to make equitable judgments may not be present in human moderators, and the algorithms that are used to flag inappropriate content may overlook subtle biases. The platform's objective of fostering an inclusive

community is compromised by the persistence of negative stereotypes and harmful content as a result of this inconsistency in enforcement.

The online discourse regarding "The Nuruls" is significantly influenced by the enforcement of community guidelines. The objective of these guidelines is to establish a secure environment in which individuals can disclose their identities without fear of discrimination or harassment. Nevertheless, their enforcement is frequently criticized for its arbitrary and ambiguous nature. The individuals who are impacted are frequently exposed to danger as a result of the inadequate handling of reports of cultural harassment or insensitivity. Furthermore, the widespread dissemination of objectionable content prior to any action being taken is facilitated by the reliance on user reports for moderation. This discrepancy between policy and practice underscores the necessity of more robust, culturally appropriate enforcement mechanisms.

Although the image of "The Nuruls" is significantly influenced by social media policies, community guidelines, and the legal system, there are some vulnerabilities. The low success rate of these regulations indicates that continuous refinement is necessary, despite their stated objective of eradicating unfavorable stereotypes. Although certain initiatives have been effective in challenging and altering these stereotypes through regulations, they are frequently more reactive than proactive. Advocates and activists continue to encounter challenges in their efforts to ensure that platforms are held accountable and to advocate for more comprehensive protections. The persistence of negative stereotypes implies that regulations must be established to resolve the intricacies of cultural representation and to provide more robust protections against bias and discrimination, despite these endeavors.

### **The Impact on Perceptions and Identity**

The controversial "The Nuruls" have had a significant impact on individuals and societies as a whole in terms of religion and culture, as evidenced by the acceleration and evolving judgment of the group on social media. These modifications have the potential to influence the public's perception of Muslims in general, both favorably and unfavorably. Self-identity and self-confidence are influenced by these changes for individuals, whereas criticism and appreciation can enhance self-esteem and fortify their

Muslim identity. Self-esteem and Muslim identity can be enhanced through support and appreciation, whereas tension and social stress can result from criticism and controversy.



Figure 6:  
Source: [www.instagram/contextdoid.com](https://www.instagram.com/contextdoid.com)

This shift in the way people view "The Nuruls" also results in misogynistic behavior. Additionally, the extensive nature of social media allows for the effortless classification of individuals as nuruls based on their shared preferences for cuisine, clothing, hues, or vehicles. It also interferes with the comfort of Muslim women and makes it difficult for them to express themselves. Subsequently, it also generates a substantial social division due to the fact that the "Nuruls" are district women and the lower middle-class economists.

The widespread perception of Muslim women can be influenced by the perceptions of "The Nuruls" in broader society. Constructive discussions can improve comprehension and tolerance of the diversity of Muslim identities, while controversies that generate negative stereotypes can exacerbate prejudice and discrimination. This shift in perception is significantly influenced by social media. The impact of controversy can be amplified by algorithms and user engagement, resulting in the increased dissemination and attention of controversial content. It underscores the significance of media literacy and responsibility in content consumption to limit the adverse effects of

the shift in the public's perception of "The Nuruls" and guarantee fair and accurate representation.

## CONCLUSIONS

The portrayal of "The Nuruls" on social media significantly influences the perspective and identity of Muslim women. The research emphasizes the dual effects of social media: it provides a platform for positive portrayal and empowerment, while simultaneously subjecting people to negative preconceptions and misconceptions. The extensive worldwide reach and varied audience of social media may strengthen this impact, hence emphasizing the significance of media literacy and conscientious content consumption more than ever. Although social media has the capacity to foster comprehension and admiration for cultural variety, it is essential to actively combat and reduce the dissemination of detrimental preconceptions. To create a more inclusive and equitable depiction, it is necessary to consistently improve social media policy, actively promote and support, and prioritize presenting a balanced and honest portrayal of Muslim women.

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