

Interview with Muniba Saleem Ph.D.



Dr. Muniba Saleem is currently an assistant professor of Communication Studies at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor. Saleem began her studies at Ohio State University, graduating with a degree in Psychology, and went on to earn a M.S. and Ph.D in

Psychology at Iowa State University. Upon completion of her Ph.D, Saleem completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Carnegie Mellon University. Throughout her research, Dr. Saleem has been investigating how Media and Psychology intermingle with each other. Current topics within her lab discuss the role of media in influencing U.S. immigrants' perceptions concerning their ethnic and national identity along with the ways these perceptions influence how they adopt other groups' cultural traits, their own interest in governmental affairs, and their relationship with the majority group members.

Ruchica Chandnani (hereafter Ruchica): Hi, Dr. Saleem.

Thanks for letting me interview you. So, I'll just get started right away with asking the questions; where did you grow up and what was it like there?

Dr. Muniba Saleem (hereafter Dr. Saleem): Toledo, Ohio. It was a nice Midwestern town.

Ruchica: Alright. How and when did you decide to become a researcher?

Dr. Saleem: I became interested in research as an undergraduate research assistant while I worked in a professor's lab at Iowa.

Ruchica: Where did you do your training and how did you decide to attend the institutions you went to?

Dr. Saleem: I received my B.A in Psychology and Arabic at Ohio State University, then my Ph.D in Social Psychology at Iowa State University, and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Carnegie Mellon University. These institutions were chosen for their excellence in the areas I was interested in pursuing.

Ruchica: How did you decide on your disciplinary/research area? Have you done work in any other areas? If so, which?

Dr. Saleem: I did all of my research in Psychology but different areas of Psychology. I decided to pursue social psychology as it reflected how individuals change as a result of social situations.

Ruchica: What does collaboration look like in your research area? To you as an individual researcher?

Dr. Saleem: We collaborate by talking with other labs, writing papers based on previous research with a critical eye on each paper, and presenting our findings in conferences worldwide and in the classes we teach. Media and Intergroup Conflict is my favorite [class] as it discusses the importance of media in making intergroup tensions high, which is what a lot of my research is on.

Ruchica: What can undergraduates contribute to research/the research process?

Dr. Saleem: Well, they can start by not being afraid to reach out to any professors that they think are doing interesting research they can get into. Once they get experience as a research assistant, they can work with their mentors to decide what they truly want to do in their time at the lab they're at and decide if that's right for them.

Ruchica: What hobbies or activities do you enjoy doing outside of research?

Dr. Saleem: Reading, traveling, and biking.

Ruchica: Do you have a personal connection to what you're researching?

Dr. Saleem: Yes, as a minority female I constantly face tense intergroup situations which is why I love this research.

Ruchica: Do you travel out anywhere besides Ann Arbor to present your research? If so, where to and what did you do to prepare for it?

Dr. Saleem: Many conferences around the U.S and some in U.K. I prepared by creating a presentation of my research and making it as clear as possible for an audience who may not be an expert on these topics.

Ruchica: Alright; I think that's all I have in terms of questions for you. Thank you for your time!

Dr. Saleem: No problem!