

# MEDIA ROLES IN ISLAMIC CONVERSION: A STUDY IN SABAH, SARAWAK AND BRUNEI

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22452/brj.vol12no1.1>

## Abstract

This paper examines the roles of media in the conversion of the Muslim converts in Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei. The media involved are traditional media and social media. The data was collected through one-on-one interviews with the Muslim converts who resided in Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei. The data was then analysed using descriptive and interpretive approaches. The findings were categorised into two major themes which represented the overall responses of the informants towards the roles of media in Islamic conversion, the media roles in the time of conversion, and the types of media used in the conversion. The findings reveal that the media played roles in the conversions of all the informants in the study. The roles of media and their uses in the time of conversion are quite similar in the Sabah and Sarawak findings, whereas there is a significant difference in the Brunei finding. As for the types of media, traditional media have more important roles in Islamic conversion in Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei.

*Keywords: traditional media, social media, Muslim converts, Islam, conversion*

## Introduction

Islam, unlike Christianity, was rarely discussed by the mainstream media until several decades ago. After the violent event of September 11, 2001, Islam has been a contested subject in the mass media all over the world. The search on Islam since then has increased because people are trying to understand the religion and the motives behind the purported Muslim plane hijackers' actions. However, as a result of the attack, the fear of Islam or also known as *Islamophobia* has alarmingly increased, specifically in the West and other non-Muslim countries. Even though *Islamophobia* has a long historical root, the tragedy of the 9/11 attack has triggered