

## Legal Literacy for Muslim Converts in Malaysia

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### ABSTRACT

Many Muslim converts in Malaysia are not well-informed of their rights and the legal implications of conversion to Islam. Implementing legal pluralism, particularly the different sets of personal laws that apply to Muslims and non-Muslims, sends the converts, their non-Muslim families, and the religious authorities into bitter legal battles whenever an individual converts to Islam. Furthermore, as religious institutions currently offer no legal literacy program, some Muslim converts are unclear regarding the course of action they should take whenever legal issues are involved, especially from the aspects of identity change; civil marriage dissolution; matrimonial properties distribution; child custody and guardianship; determination of child's and the deceased's religion; and inheritance and derivative pension distribution. Therefore, this research explores Muslim converts' perspectives on the need for and development of legal literacy regarding rights and legal implications of conversion to Islam. This study employed in-depth semi-structured interviews with 9 participants who were all Muslim converts. Each interview was transcribed verbatim, and the data were analysed with NVIVO software based on a thematic approach. The research found that all participants unanimously agreed to empower Muslim converts with legal literacy,

considering many are not well-informed of the legal implications of conversion to Islam, despite it directly affecting their personal lives, family dynamic, and the multicultural society in Malaysia.

*Keywords:* Civil law, conversion Islam, freedom of religion, human rights, Islamic law, legal empowerment, legal literacy, Muslim convert, religious conversion

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## INTRODUCTION

In the Malaysian context, when a person converts to Islam, some legal effects or implications involve Muslim converts, their families, and the Islamic administrative institutions (Khan & Samuri, 2018). However, not many Muslim converts have sufficient information and understand their conversion to Islam's rights and legal implications. To date, the legal literacy program for Muslim converts conducted in any religious institutions on the rights and legal implications of Muslim conversion has yet to be developed. Consequently, some of the Muslim converts are not clear on the course of action that has to be taken when involved in legal issues, especially on the aspect of identity change; civil marriage dissolution and matrimonial properties distribution; child custody and guardianship; determination of child's religious status; determination of the deceased's religion; as well as inheritance and derivative pension distribution (Adil, 2013, 2014; Kusrin 2006; Kusrin & Muda, 2009; Kuek & Tay, 2012; Samuri & Quraishi 2014). More gravely, some Muslim converts do not inform their families or spouses of their conversion, thus causing problems when they pass away, especially concerning the rights to manage the deceased's body and estate and the determination of the converts' religion (Husin & Samuri 2014).

It becomes even more complicated when the majority of the Muslim converts who do not have a legal background or are mere laymen have no clear understanding of the pluralistic legal system in Malaysia.

As a result, they are often confused with the conflict of the jurisdiction of civil and Sharia courts in hearing cases related to converts, especially when initiating appropriate legal action or course of action in courts. Though Article 121(1A) of the Federal Constitution has been amended to ensure that civil courts do not interfere with the jurisdiction of Sharia courts, issues relating to Muslim converts often involve non-Muslims who cannot file their cases in Sharia courts (Wan Muhammad, 2010; Shuaib, 2008). As a result, the conflict of court jurisdictions has resulted in some Muslim converts and non-Muslim families not resolving their cases and claims. On the other hand, if they receive good exposure to the related legislation, their cases and claims can be resolved well in courts with the appropriate jurisdiction and according to the correct legal channels.

Such issues have sparked criticism and dissatisfaction among Malaysian people of various ethnicities and religions (Abdullah, 2007). Moreover, it can potentially spark friction among religious groups, especially when involving sensitive issues such as determining children and the deceased's religion (Guan, 2005). On the other hand, it shows that the understanding and readiness of Muslim converts to manage the legal implications of their conversion to Islam are closely linked to ensuring the peace and stability of the country. When Muslim converts understand the legal rights and implications, they choose the best approach to resolve their case.

It implies that Muslim converts need to be well-exposed and well-informed about legal literacy regarding the rights and implications of their conversion to Islam. Khan and Samuri (2018) argue that this matter can be solved by empowering the converts with legal literacy, particularly on the legal rights and implications of conversion to Islam. However, given the unique context of conversion to Islam in Malaysia, there is still no study that explores the need for Muslim converts to obtain information on the legal implications of their conversion to Islam. Therefore, this article aims to discuss the perspective of Muslim converts in Malaysia regarding the need for legal literacy among converts on their rights, responsibilities, and impacts of conversion to Islam in Malaysia.

#### **THE LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF CONVERTING TO ISLAM AND THE NEED FOR LEGAL LITERACY**

Although there are studies relating to the legal implication of conversion to Islam as carried out by Abdullah (2004), Adil (1994, 1998, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017a, 2017b), Adil and Saidon (2017), Husin et al. (2016), Kusrin and Hashim (2016), Ibrahim (1990, 1993, 1996, 2000a, 2000b), Mohamed (2010), Rahman (2007), Wan Muhammad (2010), and Yussof (2014), their research focused on the legal implications and conflicts that arose from conversion to Islam as well as the conflict of court jurisdiction, particularly on the aspect of civil marital status, non-Muslim spouses alimony, matrimonial property division, child custody

and guardianship, and determination of child's religion. However, none of these academic writings, explored the perspective of converts on the legal implications and the need to educate the converts to be legal literate as they are designed to discuss legal issues only.

The discussion regarding conversion to Islam in Malaysia is closely related to the provision of Article 11 in the Federal Constitution, which states that each individual is granted the right to freely profess and practise his or her religion, respectively. This provision also indirectly allows each individual to freely convert or embrace other religions, including conversion to Islam if the conversion meets the conditions set out in the Constitution, Federal law, or State law (Husin et al., 2016). However, though each individual is free to convert and practice his or her religion, Article 11(4) of the Federal Constitution restricts the spread of doctrines of other religions to Muslims.

Henceforth, in the context of conversion to a new religion in Malaysia, the conversion usually involves conversion to one religion other than Islam to another religion other than Islam or conversion from a religion other than Islam to Islam. For instance, an individual can convert from Hinduism to Christian, from Buddhism to Hinduism, or from any religion other than Islam to Islam. Nonetheless, it should be emphasised that the freedom to convert to another religion is not given absolutely by the Federal Constitution. Due to the restrictions imposed under Article 12(4) to individuals below

18 years old to convert to a religion other than their parents' religion. Conversion of religion for individuals below 18 years old can only be done with the consent of their parents.

Suppose we delve into the aspect of legal implication. In that case, conversion from a religion other than Islam to another religion other than Islam does not induce complication as all believers of other religions than Islam in Malaysia are subject to the same law, namely civil law. Instead, the legal implications arise when an individual converts from a religion other than Islam to Islam. For example, if the conversion to Islam is done by a Muslim convert who has a civil marriage under Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act 1976 (Act 164), but his or her spouse does not convert to Islam, the husband or wife who converts to Islam is still responsible for fulfilling all obligations of the civil marriage sealed before converting to Islam (Abdullah, 2004).

Before the amendment of Act 164 in 2017, such converts faced confusion in searching for platforms to dissolve, obtain rights and claim ancillary reliefs of their civil marriage. According to the provisions of Act 164, those who convert to Islam are restricted to file for divorce in civil courts. Sharia courts, on the other hand, do not have the jurisdiction to hear claims from non-Muslims. Therefore, some Muslim converts took action by dissolving their civil marriage in Sharia courts. In reality, this does not officially dissolve the marriage under civil law in Malaysia. The problem will become more complicated if the couple

has children below 18 years old and wishes also to convert the children's religion and obtain child custody and guardianship. The legal implications following the conversion to Islam are not limited to the dissolution of civil marriages as discussed above. Nevertheless, it also involve issues of identity change, matrimonial property division, child custody and guardianship, determination of child's religion, determination of deceased's religion, and funeral arrangements, and inheritance and derivative pension claims (Khan & Samuri, 2018).

Therefore, there is a grave necessity to explore the perspectives of Muslim converts regarding the need for legal literacy that can educate them to make good decisions in the matters mentioned above to avoid going into a prolonged legal battle and wasting resources. Legal literacy is vital in community empowerment and as a means of challenging social injustice (Barter, 2020; Vissandjée et al., 2017). According to Grimes (2003), legal literacy can promote a clearer understanding of the rights and responsibilities to the public to obtain better information, access their rights, and fulfil their responsibilities more effectively. It is also known as 'legal empowerment', and people's increased knowledge is the most common positive impact when the government or civil society organisations advance legal empowerment in the community (Goodwin & Maru, 2017). The evidence also suggests that legal empowerment programs can lead to the acquisition of legal remedies and effective conflict resolution.

Previous literature emphasises that legal literacy is suitable for two groups; the first is marginalised and discriminated members of society (Macaulay, 2002). The other group includes teachers and medical practitioners exposed to legal issues (Perry-Hazan, & Tal-Weibel, 2020; Schimmel & Militello, 2007). In this study, Muslim converts in Malaysia may be included in the latter group since they are not marginalised or denied rights. In addition, the legal issues related to them are more personal law-based, including marriage and child custody, rather than involving criminal law or tort liabilities that impact disputing parties. Therefore, when Muslim converts are not exposed to proper legal knowledge, their non-Muslim family members may not receive the rights they deserve or fulfil their legal responsibilities accordingly. In a multicultural society such as Malaysia, such things should be avoided, leading to controversy and conflict. Additionally, this study provides insight into the needs of religious-based groups regarding legal literacy, something that has never been examined in any previous studies.

## METHODS

Generally, this article is part of a broader study that revolves around the legal implication of conversion to Islam, which may develop a legal literacy for converts in Malaysia. Data for this study were obtained through in-depth semi-structured interviews, which according to Daymon and Holloway (2002), will assist researchers in obtaining the same type of data from

all interview participants. In addition, interviewing several participants on a common issue or phenomena will provide various, and engaging narratives for the researchers (Darlington & Scott 2002). This method also provides more space for researchers to explore the narratives of research participants regarding their behaviour, experiences, and perspectives towards some issues compared to the focus group interview method (Hansen, 2006).

As suggested by Murray and Sergeant (2012), through in-depth semi-structured interviews, researchers have explored the participants' perspectives through personal stories, styles of language used, continuity of experiences, forms of changes experienced as well as participants' interactions with outsiders in regards to the legal implications of conversion to Islam. The perspectives of each participant also differ according to the social context that is influenced by personal, family, racial, education, and employment background (Daymon & Holloway, 2002). This method assumes, that the participants are experts in their experiences and present their perspectives on specific issues or phenomena being studied (Darlington & Scott 2002). In this research, in-depth semi-structured interviews have been conducted with 10 participants from Malay, Chinese, Indian, and Bumiputera Sabah ethnicities. This group of participants can be divided into two categories. The first category is participants who are active in managing the welfare of Muslim converts, and the second category is newly converted Muslims with cases in courts.

**Interview Questions**

In conducting the in-depth semi-structured interviews, the researchers have followed the suggestion by Hansen (2006) to use a list of open-ended questions and not to be rigid in following the sequence of the questions in the list. Researchers were already prepared to omit any questions that do not fit certain characters or situations of the participants.

Also, researchers limit the number of questions posed to encourage participants to recount their experiences and perspectives in detail on particular issues or phenomena (Daymon & Holloway 2002).

For the purpose of publishing this article, only 4 out of 10 sets of questions regarding the need and development of legal literacy are stated in Table 1.

Table 1  
*List of questions*

Questions	Justification
Did the participant know or was informed about the legal implications before converting to Islam?	To identify the level of legal literacy of the participants regarding the legal implications of conversion to Islam.
What is the perspective of the participant towards the need for legal literacy before & after converting to Islam?	To identify the participants' perspective on the need for legal literacy for Muslim converts regarding the legal implications of conversion to Islam.
What is the information that must be included in the legal literacy according to the participant's views?	To get suggestions from the participants regarding the contents that needs to be included in the module that will be produced.
What impact does the participant hope for from the construction of legal literacy?	To identify the expected impact by the participants after this is produced and applied.

**Profile of Participants**

The study participants were selected from various backgrounds to obtain a broader range of perspectives, as suggested by Darlington and Scott (2002, p. 48). For confidentiality purposes, the names of each interview participant are not stated in this study. However, the profiles of the participants are as follows in Table 2.

The snowball method was used to get 9 participants starting by interviewing Participant 1, a Muslim convert with more than 16 years of experience handling the welfare of newly-converted Muslim converts. Another two participants, 4 and 6, are acquaintances of the researcher who had been contacted directly without being referred by other participants. The

researchers had contacted every participant through phone calls to set the date, time, and place agreed by both researcher and participant so to conduct the interview face-to-face.

Table 2

*Background of the participants*

No	Participant	Race	Former Religion	Category	Year of Conversion to Islam
1.	Participant 1	Indian	Hindu	Muslim Convert, Da'wah activist	1991
2.	Participant 2	Indian	Hindu	Muslim Convert	1991
3.	Participant 3	Indian	Hindu	Muslim Convert, Da'wah activist	1975
4.	Participant 4	Chinese	Buddhist	Muslim Convert, Da'wah activist	2005
5.	Participant 5	Indian	Hindu	Muslim Convert, Da'wah activist	2000
6.	Participant 6	Indian	Hindu	Muslim Convert, Da'wah activist	1986
7.	Participant 7	Bumiputera Sabah	Christian	Muslim Convert, Da'wah activist	1985
8.	Participant 8	Indian	Hindu	Muslim Convert	2012
9.	Participant 9	Indian	Hindu	Muslim Convert	2015

**Procedure and Ethics of Interview**

Before the interview began, researchers first took the time to get to know the participant to ensure that both parties felt comfortable and trusted each other. Prior to participating in interviews, participants were provided with an overview of the ongoing research and allowed to ask any questions they might have regarding the research, as suggested by Hansen (2006). All participants were assured that they would be treated fairly and be heard without stigma or prejudice towards them. Throughout the interview,

researchers respected the participants' privacy and personal limitations, especially when discussing personal or traumatic experiences (Darlington & Scott, 2002).

In line with the recommendation by Hansen (2006), after explaining the terms of the research confidentiality, the researcher requested the participants to fill out a consent form before the interview session began. This consent form is intended to ensure the confidentiality of the subject's identity. At the same time, the audio recording was carried out for transcription purposes.

Researchers permitted participants to withdraw from the interview at any time without objecting or questioning them. Each participant in this study had given their written consent for the interview session to be audio recorded.

Most interview sessions were conducted either in an office room or in a mosque, which others could not interrupt. A reasonable duration of one hour was taken per interview session in this study compared to the number of questions posed to participants. Because some participants had experienced prolonged legal conflicts in the past, the researchers took precautionary measures by using tender language and giving participants more time to respond and reflect, as suggested by Murray and Sergeant (2012). During this study, some interviewees answered spontaneously, whereas others took their time to answer thoughtfully.

## RESULTS

### The Need for Legal Literacy

All participants in this study agree that providing legal literacy for Muslim converts, particularly on legal rights and implications of conversion to Islam, is a necessity as it is currently not available in the country. The reason is that the legal literacy model focuses on increasing people's awareness of their rights, particularly vulnerable individuals (Hasan, 1994). For example, Participant 1 stated, "Must have a legal literacy so that they understand what is happening." When being asked about the need for legal literacy for converts, Participant 5 responded as:

*"This one I agree! No need to talk about other converts, I myself had no one to inform me. But we must also need to have general knowledge because we at least know, how about some people... because we know that not all Muslim converts are educated people....".*  
(Participant 5)

The need for legal literacy for converts is further strengthened when several participants, such as Participants 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, who actively handle the welfare of converts through Islamic organisations, admitted that they are obfuscated and confused when facing legal issues that the converts are dealing with. For example, Participant 3, with more than 26 years of experience in managing the converts' affairs, stated: "since during my time until now, there have been a lot of changes happening, we also don't even know about this law". Participant 7, a president of an Islamic organisation admitted: "even before this issue, we also don't [clear]. Hazy. This matter [legal issues] is not clear. We only then understand this issue. And we can advise our new brothers and sisters [on what should be done]."

According to some participants, legal literacy is vital to provide legal knowledge and awareness for converts that can guide them to choose the correct cause of action, as purported by Participant 1. According to him, if the converts face legal issues after their conversion to Islam, they have to engage directly with lawyers, which would cost them expensive legal fees. These



converts voiced a view similar to that of Schimmel and Militello (2007) and Tie (2014), in that legal literacy tends to avoid litigation when possible since litigation can be expensive, distracting, polarising, and time-consuming. In addition, legal literacy enables individuals to avoid unconstitutional actions and bring violations of the law to the attention of the relevant authorities. Due to insufficient information about the legal rights and implications after conversion to Islam, some converts were dissatisfied with the Islamic authorities. Therefore, they did not inform them about the legal implications of their conversion. It is described by Participant 5 as follows:

*“...he said, ‘why before I converted to Islam you did not say... why are you not clear to us that I cannot revert to my former faith’ ...”*. (Participant 5)

### **The Approach of Legal Literacy**

The participants in this study suggested that the approach for the legal literacy for Muslim converts emphasises the aspects of legal remedies and rights and responsibilities of the converts. Thus, it matches claims made by Zariski (2014), who asserted that legal literacy empowers people to make critical judgments about the content of the law and its processes and take appropriate actions in response to issues related to it. In this study, Participants 1, 3, 6, and 7 suggested that legal literacy focuses on legal remedies for issues related to converts, as asserted by Participant 1:

*“...if this legal literacy exists, I believe there are many things that can be solved well, if the converts have a legal understanding, it will be easy for us to teach them. You may separate with your wife, but you still need to pay alimony, you still need to take care of your child, right? For inheritance, even if cannot be inherited or bequeathed, you can give as hibah or present, you can donate, but not given as inheritance”*. (Participant 1)

In addition, according to Participants 6 and 7, the rights of the converts and their responsibilities towards their non-Muslim families must also be given attention to so that the rights of their non-Muslim families are not neglected after the conversion to Islam. By doing this, Hak (2012) contends that Shariah principles are not violated if, after a divorce, the ex-wife is facing hardship and is unable to support herself. As an example, Participant 7 stated:

*“We have to make sure, that our new brothers and sisters know their rights, and that they can balance between claiming the rights with the Maqasid al-Shariah (the objective of Sharia), means the well-being of the spouses or with their initial family and community...”*. (Participant 7)

Moreover, Participant 7 emphasised that in addition to discussing the aspect of legal remedies, this legal literacy must also highlight the compassion and benevolence

of Islam. The problematic situation in Malaysia could be solved by building trust, respect, and compassion between the two parties, as argued by Rahman and Khambali@Hambali (2013). For example, Participant 7 expressed the suggestion as below:

*“...there are many more things, a lot of aspects that must be understood by our new brothers and sisters when they convert to Islam.... The beauty of Islam is seen when he or she converted, the meanings that Islam does not oppress people, does not abuse spouse and does not cause disorder among the community, right? That aspect must be included, the aspect of the compassion of Islam”.* (Participant 7)

### **Expected Impacts of the Legal Literacy**

The participants in this study expect that the implementation of legal literacy will strengthen the management of the converts' affairs, produce legally literate converts, reduce legal disputes due to conversion to Islam, and improve the perception of the multicultural community towards Islam. There is no doubt that the complex legal issues related to Muslim converts affect Malaysian multicultural society, as Samuri and Khan (2020) argue, and how these issues are handled could significantly affect society. The positive impact that Participants 1 and 4 from the legal literacy to converts is that the management of the converts' affairs will be strengthened. It is depicted by Participant 4 as follows:

*“It is hoped that this legal literacy will be able to strengthen the management of converts' affairs at various levels. Not only in NGOs, but also at the individual level, and mosque level. Also, Participant 6 argued that legal literacy would assist the parties involved in managing the legal issues of the converts by regulating the conflict resolution approach. According to him, we can regulate, these problems can be solved easily, as there is a reference to refer to, what is the step, with a measuring stick, and parameters, very helpful”.* (Participant 4)

Participants 1 and 9, on the other hand, were of the view that the converts will be more legally literate, more prepared with the legal implications due to their conversion to Islam, and more responsible with the decisions they make. Khan & Samuri (2018) and Baharudin & Said (2017) discussed that a convert aware of the law could choose a legal avenue that is beneficial to himself or his non-Muslim family. For example, Participant 1 mentioned:

*“...the converts actually also know what they are doing, the decision they make. The implications faced and no room for any conflict. They know, the law of cause and effect, right? The damage and advantage to be gained or the loss to be faced in order for us to choose this religion”.* (Participant 1)

Similar to Participant 1, Participant 9, who has experience in facing legal issues involving dissolution of civil marriage, division of matrimonial property, claims of child custody and guardianship, as well as determination of the child's religion, asserted, "They [converts] will be more aware and more knowledgeable, and whatever that is coming, they will be well-prepared."

According to Participants 1, 2, 3, and 9, providing legal literacy to converts will help to reduce the legal issues arising from conversion to Islam. For example, Participant 1 said, "can reduce unnecessary tension." While Participant 9 briefly responded, "not to be like me", in referring to himself that was affected by the legal implications that arose between him and his family members, as well as the society after his conversion to Islam.

## DISCUSSION

Although several previous studies have discussed the legal implications of conversion to Islam in Malaysia (Abdullah, 2004; Adil, 1994, 1998, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017a, 2017b; Adil & Saidon, 2017; Ibrahim, 1990, 1993, 1996, 2000a, 2000b; Husin et al., 2016; Kusrin & Hashim 2016; Mohamed, 2010; Rahman, 2007; Wan Muhammad, 2010; Yusof 2014), those studies did not explore the need for legal empowerment or legal literacy for those affected in religious conversion. In addition, previous research regarding the Muslim converts' learning experience focused on learning the foundations of Islam

(Alkouatli, 2018; Challet, 2015; Speelman, 2018), but not on legal issues that arise due to conversion to Islam. Moreover, the implications of embracing Islam only occur in Malaysia. They are not experienced in other countries, given legal conflicts between Islamic and civil laws, affecting Muslim converts (Samuri et al., 2018). Therefore, this study can fill the research gap on the perspectives of the converts regarding the need for legal literacy to help the converts easily understand the complex legal implications due to conversion to Islam and guide them in choosing the proper legal remedies.

Moreover, the study found that the converts were not clearly and systematically informed of the legal implications of conversion to Islam by the Islamic religious authorities in Malaysia. The previous studies that were conducted on Islamic authorities' management of Muslim converts mainly discussed the teaching of converts, dealing with converts' welfare, *dakwah* activism, and administration tasks (Abu Bakar & Ismail, 2018; Ibrahim et al., 2019; Shahrudin & Muhamat-Kawangit, 2014; Samuri & Quraishi, 2014). It appears that the religious authorities do not give Muslim converts enough information before or after they convert to Islam. It has caused the converts to be unclear about the cause of action that needs to be taken, which has resulted in them facing lengthy legal battles. Consequently, it affects not only the lives of the converts and their non-Muslim families and can potentially spark tension among the multicultural society in

Malaysia. Henceforth, as supported by all the participants in this study, there is a need to empower the converts with legal literacy regarding the legal rights, responsibilities, and implications of conversion to Islam.

As in the context of this study, through the provision of legal literacy, it can assist the converts in resolving legal conflicts that they are facing by proposing the right remedy in the proper court. Legal literacy for Muslim converts should be uniformly implemented in all states' religious departments throughout Malaysia or privately initiated by Islamic organisations. In addition, religious authorities can develop a particular module to train officers to provide information to Muslim converts on topics related to legal implications of conversion to Islam such as change of identity; dissolution of civil marriage; division of matrimonial property; child custody and guardianship; determination of child's religion; determination of deceased's religion; as well as distribution of inheritance and derivative pension (Samuri & Khan, 2020). A framework for this module should be based on civil and Islamic law in Malaysia, with a practical action plan. It can be implemented by the converts or by government agencies. Even though religious officers do not possess formal legal training, these training modules can help to give them the knowledge they need to perform their duties better and thus benefit the converts and society at large.

## CONCLUSION

In Malaysia, there are six identified legal implications as a result of converting to Islam which are change of identity; dissolution of civil marriage; division of matrimonial property; child custody and guardianship; determination of child's religion; determination of the deceased's religion; and distribution of inheritance and derivative pension. This study found a need for legal literacy for converts regarding legal rights, responsibilities, and implications arising from their religious conversion. Legal literacy is an important initiative to respond to the need to educate and guide converts to understand the legal implications caused by conversion to Islam. This study proposed that converts might avoid any possible legal dispute by equipping themselves with legal knowledge and resolving the family conflict effectively. This legal empowerment is benefitting Muslim converts and people of other faiths in Malaysia by upholding justice through out-of-court settlements such as mediation.

On the other hand, legal literacy will also assist the Malaysian religious authorities and the Islamic organisations in understanding the legal implications of conversion to Islam before advising any interested individual before his/her religious conversion. Thus, well-informed individuals may convert to Islam with an understanding and primary level of legal knowledge that may avoid any possible issues that might trigger the sensitivity of the multicultural

society in the future. Beyond Malaysia, this study illustrates how legal literacy can empower individuals and communities to understand their rights and responsibilities due to his/her religious conversion.

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