

The journey of my PIP began with the difficult task of selecting an appropriate topic that coincided with my micro world and personal experiences. I first selected 10 broad topics that interested me, and then conducted brief secondary research to narrow down my choices. By the end of that process I reduced my list down to two topics; the westernisation of Islam and Muslim women living in the west. After much contemplation on which topic to further pursue I decided to combine the two and make my broad research topic the westernisation of Muslim women. In the following weeks I conducted thorough secondary research on my topic, looking through a range of books, articles, journals and websites. While conducting my research I observed that many sources linked Muslim women living in the west to the media indicating it played a critical role in their micro and macro worlds. This influenced me to narrow my topic down to how the Australian media has influenced the westernisation of Muslim women and how this in turn impacts their ability to practice Islam.

After finalising my topic I began selecting and conducting my primary methodologies. Since I needed quantitative data from a wide population of Muslims I decided to conduct a structured questionnaire. My questions focused on the views of Muslim women towards how the Australian media portrays Muslim women and whether or not that is influencing them to westernise. Initially I handed out a few pilot questionnaires to see if I was obtaining the data I needed. However there were complications with participants having difficulty understanding the terminology in my questions. After amending the wording of my questionnaire I handed out 80 questionnaires in total to Muslim women of different ages and from different Islamic sects, however since I only handed out questionnaires within the western Sydney regions my data may have been subject to some bias.

For my second methodology I selected an open-ended interview which I conducted with an Imam. After conducting this, I thought it would be beneficial if I conducted a second interview with a female Islamic scholar to gain further perspective on my topic. Due to time constraints I conducted this interview through email, which limited my ability to follow up on any responses. These interviews were focused on how becoming westernised influences the ability of Muslim women to practice Islamic rituals and follow Islamic law.

My third methodology was a content analysis focused on the portrayal of Muslim women in Australia's media in 8 newspaper articles. I analysed aspects such as the connotations of words used to describe Muslim women, issues being discussed, images used, the ethnicity

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and gender of the authors and the amount of input that Muslim women had into the articles themselves.

After conducting my primary research I began to collate and analyse my data. However I realised that I did not have enough information regarding the ways in which Muslim women are becoming westernised. Therefore I decided to conduct two focus groups; one included Muslim women who had lived in Australia their entire lives, and the other was based around women who have only been in Australia for a few year.

After gaining further primary data from my focus group I collated it with the rest of my research. I then analysed my primary data, organising it into tables and graphs and drawing out relevant quotes. Following this I compiled my chapters under the headings of Islamic culture, power and society by synthesising my primary and secondary data together to answer my hypothesis.

Conducting my PIP was both a stressful and rewarding process. It required me to cross new boundaries and gain a deeper understanding of how living in Australia has impacted Muslim women. Through the completion of my PIP I have achieved a greater sense of social and cultural literacy and have been better able to understand my own identity as a Muslim women living in Australia.