

The Trend of Hidden-Content Bundle Clothing Sales in Live Streaming Platforms: Brunei Darussalam Consumers' Perceptions from A Shariah Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Due to the growth of live streaming, e-commerce businesses have introduced innovative marketing strategies, including hidden-content bundle sales, in which consumers purchase products without prior knowledge of the exact contents. While such practices are widely accepted on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Live, its raise important concerns regarding shariah compliance, particularly in relation to the principle of *gharar* (uncertainty). Limited research has examined public awareness of the shariah compliance, particularly within the context of Brunei Darussalam, where commercial activities are guided by the philosophy of Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB). This study is among the first to investigate Bruneian consumers' awareness and acceptance of hidden-content bundle sales from the perspective of the Islamic principle of *gharar*, thereby addressing an important gap in the literature on Shariah-compliant digital commerce. This study examines public awareness and acceptance of hidden-content bundle sales from a shariah perspective. Quantitative research was employed using an online survey questionnaire through Google Forms. Data from this study were analysed using IBM SPSS version 29. The findings revealed that most respondents were aware of the concept of *gharar* and recognized its connection to hidden content bundles. Consequently, results showed that individuals tend to accept hidden content bundles when qualities such as transparency, honesty, and buyer protection are ensured. It is expected that this study contributes to the literature and offer helpful insights in improving awareness of the practice of hidden-content bundle practices.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The e-commerce industry has experienced remarkable growth in recent years, primarily due to increasing consumer preference for online shopping and digital business transactions. The proliferation of the internet has fundamentally transformed traditional retail models (Wahab & Abdulmajeed, 2025). Platforms such as Amazon and eBay grew strong on this shift by using user-friendly interfaces, established customer bases, and integrated transaction and shipping systems (Moaiaad, 2023). Social media networks, including Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, now occupy a similar strategic position to e-commerce brands in the competitive marketing landscape. In addition to offering various advertising formats that facilitate user interaction and encourage consumer participation, these platforms play a critical role in shaping online purchasing behaviour (Uddin, 2024).

Building on this trend, live-broadcast shopping sites have a big role in online commerce, letting companies connect instantly with customers through real-time interaction. Live-streaming strengthens customer-brand relationships, which play a crucial role in shaping consumer purchasing decisions (Widodo et al., 2023). Within this interactive environment, some businesses have introduced new sales tactics to further attract and engage audiences. One emerging trend is the sale of hidden goods. The concept of hidden content bundles refers to a strategy where buyers do not know exactly what they purchase until after the sale. This approach is similar to blind or mystery boxes, where the contents remain unknown until they are opened. (Zhan, H., 2024). Implementing this concept has prompted concerns about its compliance, particularly within the principle of *gharar* (uncertainty) context.

In the context of *muamalah*, particularly within economic transactions, Islamic teachings emphasize the principle of justice. This principle requires that business interactions between sellers and buyers are conducted equitably and result in mutual benefit, thereby preventing harm to any party (Farikhin & Mulyasari, 2022). The principle of *gharar* refers to a practice that may lead to the exploitation or harm of one party, and according to Islamic law, *gharar* is considered an unlawful means of generating profit, as it involves deceptive element or uncertain transfer of rights.

Entrepreneurial endeavours have grown significantly in Brunei Darussalam in recent years, largely due to the government's significant investment in strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Suprem et al., 202). As Brunei continues to support innovation and entrepreneurship, the nation has gained prominence and diversified its economic landscape. These efforts align with Brunei's Vision 2035, which aims to build a dynamic and sustainable economy. Cultivating a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem is regarded as an essential component of this vision (Ministry of Finance and Economy Brunei Darussalam, 2020).

The integration of technology and communication has reshaped business operations, particularly in marketing and growth strategies. A key feature contributing to this shift is the escalation of social media platforms. Social media has empowered youth entrepreneurs to access resources that were otherwise not within their reach and enabled them to market, advertise and promote their businesses through channels like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube (Sanni et al., 2023) on contemporary business practices, with particular emphasis on its role to empower young entrepreneurs, reshape marketing strategies, and expanding the access to essential business resources (Sudha et al., 2024).

Mobile phones serve as the main device for online shopping, but the rising adoption of technology suggests a growing acceptance of the online marketplace in Brunei (Sani, 2018). Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, many businesses across the world were heavily affected, leading many to turn to

Social Media Marketing (SMM) as an economical approach to connect with customers, enhance their brand recognition, and further engagement. The perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) of social media marketing have been pivotal factors influencing its adoption, particularly among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Research, including findings from Brunei, indicates that SMM is more effective and cost-efficient compared to traditional marketing methods, aiding businesses in their recovery and growth during and after the pandemic. Although there are constraints concerning sample size and data collection techniques, studies affirm the beneficial influence of SMM on brand image and overall business success (Khan et al., 2024). Considering this, it is evident that the use of social media for business marketing purposes has become increasingly common in Brunei, with more entrepreneurs taking advantage of digital platforms to grow and maintain their businesses.

Brunei Darussalam is well-known for its national philosophy, Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB) which serves as the official ideology adopted by the Kingdom of Brunei Darussalam. Rooted in Malay culture, Islamic values, and the monarchy, MIB has been pivotal in shaping the governance and lifestyle of the nation (Kalya et al., 2025). Since the era of Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, the establishment and enforcement of Islamic law have been a primary focus. Numerous Shariah-based laws and regulations have been instituted to direct not just governmental affairs but also social and communal interactions. This ideological framework aims to realize the vision of '*Baldatun Tayyibatun wa Rabbun Ghafur*' which means a flourishing nation blessed by God, in both this life and the hereafter (Haqqi, 2017). Considering Brunei's stronghold on religious aspects and its cultural lifestyle, the trend of hidden content bundles as a marketing strategy has prompted examination, especially concerning its adherence to recognized ethical and religious standards.

According to Anshari (2025), due to demand and supply dynamics, Brunei is witnessing steady progress in its digital transformation efforts. Recent statistics from Data Reportal's Digital 2025 Brunei report show that approximately 299,000 social media user identities, predominantly under 35, exist in the country, representing 64.4% of the population (Aqilah Site, 2025).

Despite the growing use of social media for commercial activities in Brunei, limited empirical evidence has been documented on the presence and extent of such practices within the local digital marketplace as previous studies have primarily focused on consumer purchasing behaviour, online marketing strategies, and the general application of *gharar* in e-commerce. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by investigating the level of awareness among Bruneians regarding the concept of *gharar* and examining their perceptions on the permissibility and acceptability of hidden content bundles in online commerce. Hence, the aim of this research is to examine the level of awareness among Bruneians about the shariah compliance of hidden content bundles conducted through live streaming platforms. Not to mention, addressing this gap is essential for informing the policymakers, Islamic regulatory authorities, e-commerce platforms, and online sellers in promoting transparent and Shariah-compliant digital marketplace practices.

The focus of this research is confined to Brunei Darussalam, specifically looking at live streaming platforms including TikTok and Instagram that are often employed for e-commerce within the nation. The investigation primarily concentrates on the perceptions of the general populace concerning sales of hidden content bundles, regardless of whether individuals have direct purchasing experience with such bundles. The aim of the study is not to provide an explicit shariah ruling but to examine how the public views the compatibility of hidden content bundles with Islamic principles. Moreover, several limitations are to be acknowledged. Data was collected through an online survey; whereby sampling bias may have been

introduced. Other than that, responses were obtained through self-reporting, which may have been influenced by social desirability bias or limited personal knowledge of Shariah concepts.

This research addresses the growing phenomenon of hidden-content bundle sales within live stream platforms. While such practices may appear innovative and engaging from a marketing perspective, the study raise important questions regarding transparency and adherence to shariah principles. Given these concerns, local e-commerce sellers will be benefited by this study's findings, as it allows for the confirmation of whether their marketing practices align with Islamic principles and consumer protection laws, especially on making business activities more ethical and transparent. Meanwhile, key areas for improvement and existing limitations may be further identified and addressed, should this research study be accessed by relevant organizations and policymakers. By utilizing the findings of this study, these parties may also be enabled to formulate informed recommendations to strengthen Brunei's halal e-commerce regulations to ensure both ethical standards and consumer rights are upheld.

The conceptual framework for this research, as illustrated in Figure 1, outlines the relationship between familiarity on Islamic principle of Trading (*gharar*), perception of *gharar* in hidden content bundles and acceptance and general opinion on hidden content bundles as the independent variables and the consumers' perception as Dependent variable. The framework assumes that greater awareness of *gharar* shapes consumers' evaluation of uncertainty in hidden-content bundles, which in turn influences their acceptance of these marketing practices and their overall judgement of whether such transactions comply with Islamic commercial principles.

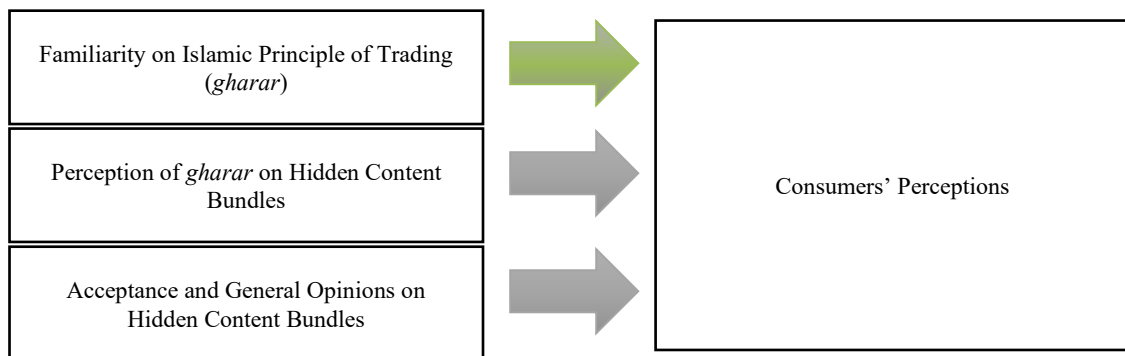


Fig.1. Conceptual Framework

Source: Developed by the Author

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The growth of e-commerce has become a critical component of the global economy, amending the way businesses and consumers interact. Driven by technological innovation, widespread internet access, and advancements in information and communication technologies, e-commerce has established itself as a dominant force in the business landscape (Bala, 2024). Businesses often use social media to promote their products. Social networking not only supports product development but also serves as a tool to engage customers and remind them about various promotions (Sharma et al., 2023). As a result, it allows SMEs to

sell products beyond their local markets. These digital ecosystems equip businesses with essential tools to enable smoother cross-border transactions. Consequently, small enterprises that once struggled with challenges related to geographic limitations, high operational costs, and limited market reach are now able to compete internationally (Ashrapova & Yakshiboyev, 2025). In recent years, a prominent global growth has been observed in live-streaming commerce that has further transformed the digital commerce landscape where its development significantly accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Ariffin et al., 2024). Live streaming is the process of simultaneously recording and broadcasting video content over the internet (Maulidya et al., 2023), serving as a method in which producers sell their products to consumers via an e-commerce platform (Widodo et al., 2023). It is now evident that sellers offering bundled products are increasingly capitalizing live streaming platforms to present the contents of their bundles in real time, thereby strengthen trust and transparency among potential buyers. Platforms such as TikTok rank among the most frequently used social media platforms for shopping, with a 14.9 % usage rate (Fathurohman et al., 2023). Live streaming on TikTok provides interactive benefits such as clarifications regarding product details that can be sought by potential customers through questions directed to the streamer via the comment section. Additionally, live demonstrations can be requested from audience, allowing them to evaluate and assess products' attributes such as texture, quality, and functionality (Ariffin et al., 2024).

2.1 Hidden bundle content sales in e-commerce

The term hidden content bundle lacks a standardized definition; it resembles the concept of mystery boxing, which originated in Japan as Fukubukuro (or lucky bags), a marketing scheme where consumers purchase sealed packages without knowing their exact contents. This unique marketing model has gained popularity across various industries by offering curated but undisclosed items at a fixed price, leveraging consumer curiosity (Luo, 2025). Interestingly, this modern form of mystery-based selling intersects with a more traditional practice in the clothing industry. According to Hassan et al. (2022), the word bundle is originally derived from English, which means a tie or a package. It is used within industry to describe the method of packaging garments in burlap sacks, typically comprising assorted items such as jeans, shirts, shorts, or blouses of varying grades, which are offered at affordable prices. These garments are sold in bulk by overseas suppliers and purchased by local distributors for the domestic market.

2.2 Understanding consumer attraction to hidden bundles amid *gharar* concerns

Besides traditional retail outlets, various online second-hand and consignment businesses allow consumers to purchase pre-owned clothes through social media platforms or dedicated websites (Zuraidah et al., 2024). The incorporation of live streaming into these platforms represents a significant innovation, substantially influencing the business landscape. Given that bundle clothing is commonly associated with second-hand apparel, this perception is not entirely accurate, as noted by Hassan et al. (2022), the category of bundle clothing may also include new garments, rejected items, unsold inventory, or products originally produced for specific events or occasions. Despite this distinction, consumer motivations for purchasing bundle clothing are largely consistent with those identified in second-hand consumption literature, particularly affordability, sustainability and the pursuit of unique fashion items.

Firstly, according to Chen et al. (2024), the relatively low price of second-hand clothing is widely recognized as a key factor influencing consumer behaviour across various demographic groups, as individuals frequently prioritize financial savings and cost-effective fashion alternatives. For instance, a study conducted in Japan revealed that financial benefits were the primary motivation for second-hand

purchases, surpassing environmental considerations. Moreover, as reported by Zahid et al. (2023), buying second-hand is often considered an environmentally friendly option and a practice of mindful consumption. Where production is highly resource-intensive and environmentally impactful, including high water and energy consumption and significant greenhouse emissions. Although second-hand shopping has a positive impact and aligns with Islamic principles that discourage wastefulness, it may also contribute to the emergence of new consumption behaviours. According to Robert et al. (2025), many consumers are drawn to second-hand shops by the opportunity to acquire unique items. It is often perceived as a 'treasure hunt', offering vintage or distinctive styles that are typically unavailable in mainstream retail outlets. The attraction is rooted not only in the functional utility of these items but also in their symbolic significance. The trend of purchasing bundle clothing is primarily aimed at meeting the needs of low-income consumers but has since developed into a profitable industry. Despite potential advantages that appeal to consumers, this practice raises concerns regarding its permissibility in Islamic jurisprudence due to the uncertainty involved. In accordance with Sumarliah (2021), element of ambiguity may conflict with Islamic commercial ethics, if specific contents of bundles are unknown at the time of purchase, as Islamic commercial principles emphasize transparency and fairness in transactions.

2.3 Dalil on the prohibition of *gharar*

This study is guided by the Islamic principle of *gharar* in Islamic transactions, which derives from Islamic jurisprudence and highlights the prohibition of excessive uncertainty in commercial dealings. The Principle of *Gharar* serves as an analytical lens for evaluating the Shariah compliance of hidden-content bundle sales conducted through live-streaming platforms. From this perspective, commercial transactions should provide sufficient transparency regarding the subject matter, price, and conditions of sale to ensure fairness and protect the rights of both buyers and sellers. Accordingly, the principle provides the theoretical basis for assessing whether the characteristics of hidden-content bundle sales are compatible with Islamic commercial ethics.

According to Imam al-Nawawi as cited by Azuan, (2025), to protect the benefits of human well-being, the application of *gharar* in all instances is not allowed. However, the engagement in practices involving *gharar* and deception is prohibited in the Qur'an. In Surah al-Baqarah (2:188), Allah SWT highlights the prohibition of transactions that contain elements of *gharar*; "*Do not consume one another's wealth unjustly, nor deliberately bribe authorities in order to devour a portion of others' property, knowing that it is a sin.* *Gharar* is prohibited by Quran 2:188 because hiding contract details leads to the unjust consumption of another's wealth, which the verse directly forbids.

Furthermore, in a hadith cited from Azuan, (2025) which narrated by Abu Hurairah: The Prophet SAW has prevented (us) from (doing) a sale (by means of a small stone throw and sale of goods in a *gharar*. This prohibition seeks to safeguard buyers in sales transactions by prohibiting the sale of non-existent goods, preventing price manipulation and ensuring mutual consent between contracting parties. Furthermore, it preserves property and wealth among individuals, aligning with the objectives of Maqasid al-shariah. In this context, Islamic jurists emphasize when the subject matter of a transaction is unclear to the buyer, the contract is deemed either invalid or, at minimum, legally defective. This principle is supported by the legal maxim *al-Gharar yufsid al-'uqūd*, which holds that uncertainty can nullify a contract.

2.4 Contemporary scholars' view

Contemporary scholars have conducted extensive analyses of the application of *gharar* in modern commercial transactions. According to Zamharir (2024), Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, in *Fiqh al-Islāmī wa Adillatuhu*, explains that online transactions are particularly prone to elements of *gharar* due to the absence of face-to-face interaction and the difficulty in verifying the authenticity of products. He emphasizes that contracts conducted through digital platforms must include clear and comprehensive information regarding product specifications, pricing and return policies in cases where the item received does not align with the description. Other than that, it has been stated by Yusuf al-Qaradawi as cited in Risnawati et al. (2024) that elements of fraud, ambiguity and injustice must be avoided in online transactions, in accordance with the general principle of Islamic jurisprudence, '*al-gharar mufsidu li al-'uqūd*' (*gharar* invalidates the contract). It was asserted that, to maintain public confidence and prevent actions that may potentially harm consumers, transparency and accountability must be upheld by the seller.

2.5 Classification and types of *gharar*

Islamic jurists from various schools of thought including Imam Malik, Imam al-Shafie, Imam Abu Hanifah, and Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal are in consensus that *gharar* (excessive uncertainty) in commercial transactions is prohibited (Muthia Azzahra et al., 2024). While there are differences of opinion among the schools regarding the degree of *gharar* that may be tolerated, there is unanimous agreement that substantial or excessive *gharar* (*gharar fāḥish*) must be avoided. Minor or insignificant *gharar* (*gharar yasīr*), however, may be permitted provided it does not lead to any considerable harm or injustice within the contractual agreement.

According to Al-Saati (2003), the degree of permissibility of *gharar* can be classified into four types; firstly, the prohibited *gharar* (excessive uncertainty). This form of *gharar* closely resembles gambling, involving considerable risk, deception, and an imbalance of fairness, which often results in conflicts and animosity. Traditional scholars such as Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim compare excessive *gharar* to *maysir* (gambling). Examples of this typical *gharar* including pebble, touch, and toss sales, have been explicitly prohibited in authentic hadiths. Most scholars concur that the primary reason for banning all these sales is due to their excessive *gharar*. Secondly, permissible *gharar*, according to scholars such as Al-Shatibi, not every instance of *gharar* is prohibited. Minor or unavoidable *gharar* is accepted, particularly when it does not result in conflicts or is necessary for the public good. Examples of this type of *gharar* include two sales in one, the option sale, condition (*muallaq* sale), *gharar* in the kind/type of the object, *gharar* in the species of the object, *gharar* in the attributes of the object and *gharar* in the quantity of the object. Although there is some flexibility, there is disagreement among scholars on what constitutes permissible *gharar*. While certain schools of thought commonly accept specific forms, others continue to be a topic of discussion and may even be dismissed by different groups. Thirdly, the acceptable *gharar*. In Islamic finance, not all variations of *gharar* (risk or uncertainty) are considered forbidden. While certain scholars view all types of risk as *gharar*, scholars like Ibn Taymiyyah argue that only excessive or gambling like *gharar* is forbidden, not the general uncertainty found in trade. For instance, economic activities naturally involve risk, such as changes in market demand, technology, or weather, and uncertainties about product quality or business partners. These types of *gharar* are accepted since they are part of ordinary business practices and do not involve deception or exploitative gain. Fourth, the mandatory *gharar*, where *gharar* must be avoided for a contract to be valid. This is a well-accepted rule for contracts such as

maharajah, ijarah, and *mudarabah*. This is based on the legal maxim “damage and benefit go together”. For example, in *mudarabah*, the profits generated are shared between two parties based on agreed ratios. If any losses occur, the financier bears the risk and cannot expect a guaranteed profit whereas the working partner only risks their time and effort (Muneem et al., 2024).

2.6 Islamic consumerism and ethical finance

Islam offers a comprehensive guide on how individuals should conduct their lives. It includes regulations for all aspects of human existence, covering areas such as business, economics, and legal issues. Consequently, in Islam, its followers are expected to follow the established principles in all their endeavours (Haque et al., 2017). The concept of *Halalan Thayyiban* based on the Quran and Sunnah, form the basis of Islamic Consumerism. In addition to confirming that a product is permissible (halal), the importance of quality, safety, and ethical factors in consumption is emphasized by *thayyiban*. The terms Halal and “*Thayyiban*” are repeatedly found together in various verses of the Quran. For instance, in Surah al-Baqarah verse 168, “*O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] halal (lawful) and thayyiban (good) and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy*”.

Thus, a product might be technically halal, but if it is sold in a way that creates uncertainty, it falls short of fulfilling the *thayyiban* standard. For example, clothing may be halal in nature, but if the items in the package are concealed and the customer is unaware of what they are purchasing, this ambiguity introduces *gharar* (uncertainty), which is prohibited in Islam. According to Jie et al. (2023) the foundations of Islamic business ethics are based on several essential principles that encourage justice, transparency, and social responsibility in commercial transactions. Fundamental principles such as the prohibition of involvement in dishonesty from sellers, underlining that honesty, integrity and trust are not just moral concepts but crucial necessities in business. Islam prioritizes the principles of fairness and openness in every transaction (Irmawati, 2021). This requires sellers to provide honest information about the products they offer. If the seller hides defects in goods or provides descriptions that do not correspond to reality, then this action constitutes fraud (*tadlis*) and is strictly prohibited in Islam.

Admonitions have also been raised by scholars such as Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Baz regarding the rise of fraud in unclear transactions, whether conducted physically or online. The importance of honesty, transparency and moral accountability in all forms of transactions, including those in the digital realm, has been strongly emphasized. According to him, as explained by (Juliana et al., 2022) sellers have a moral and legal obligation to accurately explain the condition of goods to prospective buyers. This perspective is aligned with ethical deliberations as a pathway to barakah. According to research done by Ujjiyanto (2025), participants highlighted that avoiding *riba*, deception and exploitative behaviour are considered to seek Allah’s pleasures and His blessings. The pursuit of barakah guided them to reject practices deemed unethical, even when such decisions resulted in financial disadvantage. Other than that, the importance of mutual trust, a core value in both Islamic teachings and modern financial systems, is further highlighted through the emphasis placed on honesty and clarity in trade. Mutual trust is based on respect for individual and collective rights. Cultivating trust is essential not only for personal transactions but also for the sustainability of financial markets (Vujnović-Gligorić et al., 2018). This is consistent with the principle of *halalan thayyiban*, which emphasises lawful and wholesome business practices that uphold ethical values and contribute to societal well-being.

2.7 Challenges to Upholding Traditional Islamic Business Ethics on Modern Live Sales Platform

Despite the clear foundations and ethical guidelines established in Islamic teachings, applying these principles on digital platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Live remains challenging, reflecting the broader struggle to uphold Islamic business ethics in a highly globalized economy. According to (Sikki et al., 2025), the dominance of secular economic system where profit maximations is prioritized over ethical considerations is one of the significant issues. In global markets, to remain competitive, muslims entrepreneurs are often pressured in yielding on certain principles especially those that operate under different ethical frameworks.

Other than that, challenges such as regulatory diversity across countries, where some nations have established sharia compliant business laws and regulations and others do not acknowledge Islamic commercial principles, resulting in inconsistencies in enforcement and compliance. Not to mention, the perception gap between non-Muslim stakeholders and Islamic business ethics may lead to misunderstandings and stereotypes which can cause disinclination from potential customers. In some cases, even though Islamic ethical are adaptable and progressive, they are viewed as inflexible and incompatible in some modern business trends. Lastly, inadequacy of knowledge in Islamic commercial jurisprudence, lack of transparency and corruption within Muslims entrepreneurs disrupt the complete implementation of ethical business practices. Hence, legal reforms as well as cultural transformation and ethical education are required to address these issues.

In addition to these challenges, a researcher has been done to identify related issues in digital marketing environments. Azwan (2025) concluded that addressing these shortcomings requires greater efforts to raise public awareness about strengthening Shariah compliance so these values can be passed on to future generations particularly the concept of *gharar*. To minimize the risk of fraud in the second-hand (“bundle”) clothing business, several precautionary measures should be observed. Individuals are advised to carefully inspect the condition and grade of the clothing and to seek relevant information from suppliers regarding the items offered. For online transactions, it is essential to request additional photographs and verify the credibility of the seller. The use of reputable platforms with established buyer-protection mechanisms, as well as a clear understanding of return and exchange policies, further enhances transaction security. Employing secure payment methods, such as PayPal or credit cards, can also reduce the likelihood of fraudulent activity. Moreover, awareness of potential warning signs such as unusually low prices or sellers lacking a verifiable history is crucial.

Adhering to these measures increases the likelihood of a safe and reliable buying or selling experience within the second-hand clothing market. Moreover, the public plays a crucial role in supporting and reinforcing ethical practices in trading. Islam establishes fundamental principles that govern commercial transactions, emphasizing fairness, honesty, and cleanliness. In the context of the second-hand clothing trade, sellers are obliged to ensure that items are fit for use, appropriately priced, accurately described, and thoroughly cleaned prior to resale. The provision of truthful information serves to prevent harm and foster trust between buyers and sellers, while deliberately misleading customers for financial gain contravenes Islamic ethical standards. Therefore, by adhering to shariah guidelines, second-hand clothing enterprises can conduct their operations ethically and in full compliance with Islamic teachings. Social media plays a crucial role in promoting Shariah-compliant trading practices in the digital era. Responsible users should ensure that transactions and promotions adhere to Islamic principles, including prohibitions on *riba*, *gharar*,

and *maysir*, and emphasize fairness, honesty, and transparency. Educating followers, providing clear product information, and complying with local business laws further strengthens trust and ethical practices. Additionally, social media can support inclusivity by enabling wider participation in commerce. Prompt and knowledgeable responses to inquiries, criticisms, and suggestions help build lasting customer relationships. By following these guidelines, social media users can foster a more ethical, responsible, and Shariah-compliant business environment. Lastly, the government plays a critical role in promoting Shariah-compliant practices, particularly among small and medium enterprises (SMEs). This includes providing guidance, training, and support to ensure transactions are honest, fair, and free from prohibited elements such as *riba*. Incentives, such as tax exemptions, training subsidies, and financial assistance, can encourage compliance. Additionally, adequate infrastructure and Shariah-compliant financial services facilitate efficient and ethical business operations. These measures help enhance awareness and adherence to Shariah principles, contributing to an economy grounded in Islamic values while promoting fairness and blessings in trade.

3. METHODOLOGY

The author has employed a quantitative study by distributing questionnaire survey through various social media platforms allowing open participation from Bruneian individuals between the ages of 18 and 45 years old and above of both male and female to gather insights into their perceptions. The intended sample size was 384 respondents. However, only 234 respondents from the public were obtained. Despite this, according to the Raosoft calculator, the sample size is still adequate in terms of statistical precision, as indicated by the approximate 95% confidence level and margin of error. However, as convenience and voluntary online sampling were employed, these estimates reflect numerical precision rather than population representativeness. To ensure content validity, a pilot study was conducted with a small group of 27 respondents to test the clarity, relevance, and structure of the questionnaire, and necessary refinements were made. The reliability of the Likert-scale items was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha to determine the internal consistency of the measurement items. To analyse quantitative data, IBM SPSS version 29 was utilized to evaluate descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and means to interpret the responses. Whereas for open-ended questions, data was analysed by identifying the recurring themes and insights related to respondents' perceptions.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Respondents' Gender

Gender	N	%
Male	104	44.4
Female	130	55.6

Based on table 1 the data showed that there were more female respondents than males. Out of the 23 respondents, 130 (55.6%) were female and 104 (44.4%) were male, which concludes that there are more female respondents than males with the highest percentage.

Table 2. Respondents' Age

Age	N	%
18-30	166	70.9
31-44	52	22.2
45 and above	16	6.8

Table 2 shows that most of the respondents are from the age of 18 – 30 years old with 166 (70.9%), followed by respondents within the age of 31 – 44 years old with 52 (22.2%). Lastly, the lowest respondents are from the age of 45 and above with only 16 (6.8%).

Table 3. Respondents' Educational Level

Age	N	%
Bachelors' Degree	108	46.2
Diploma	67	28.6
Masters' Degree	33	14.1
PhD	21	9.0
Other	5	2.1

Table 3 shows that the highest educational level among respondents was a bachelor's degree, with 108 respondents (46.2%), followed by a diploma qualification with 67 respondents (28.6%). The third most common educational level was a master's degree, reported by 33 respondents (14.1%). This was followed by "other" qualifications (i.e., levels not specified in the survey), accounting for 21 respondents (9.0%). Finally, the lowest proportion of respondents is PhD holders, with only 5 respondents (2.1%).

4.1 Respondents' awareness and familiarity with the concept of ambiguity (*gharar*)

Table 4. Familiarity with the concept of *gharar*

Likert-Scale	N	%	Mean±SD
Strongly Disagree	14	6.0	3.70±1.14
Disagree	16	6.8	
Neutral	64	27.4	
Agree	72	30.8	
Strongly Agree	68	29.1	

Table 4 showed the familiarity of the concept of *gharar* with an average mean score of 3.70 and standard deviation of 1.14. A total number of 64 respondents were neutral about their familiarity with the concept of *gharar*, followed by 140 respondents (59.9%) which agreed that they were familiar with the concept whereas 30 respondents (12.8%) disagreed with the familiarity with the concept.

Table 5. I understand that *gharar* refers to elements of ambiguity or hiddenness

Likert-Scale	N	%	Mean±SD
Strongly Disagree	9	3.8	3.94±1.04
Disagree	10	4.3	
Neutral	53	22.6	
Agree	77	32.9	
Strongly Agree	85	36.3	

Table 5 showed data based on respondents' understanding of the concept of *gharar* refers to ambiguity or hiddenness, yielding a mean score of 3.94 and standard deviation of 1.04. The findings indicate that 53 respondents (22.6%) expressed a neutral level of understanding. Most of the respondents, totalling 162 (69.2%), agreed that they understood the concept of *gharar*, while only 19 respondents (8.1%) strongly disagreed with understanding the concept.

Table 6. I am aware that *gharar* is prohibited in Islamic

Likert-Scale	N	%	Mean±SD
Strongly Disagree	6	2.6	4.06±1.01
Disagree	13	5.6	
Neutral	38	16.2	
Agree	82	35.0	
Strongly Agree	95	40.6	

Table 6 showed results based on the respondents' awareness on the prohibition of *gharar* in Islamic commercial practices resulting a mean score of 4.06. The results showed that 38 respondents (16.3%) were neutral on their awareness. Followed by majority of respondents with a total of 177 respondents (75.6%) were aware of the prohibition of such an element, whereas only 19 respondents (8.2%) were not aware.

Table 7. I have previously learned about *gharar* from religious education, seminars, or online courses

Likert-Scale	N	%	Mean±SD
Strongly Disagree	18	7.7	3.65±1.20
Disagree	18	7.7	
Neutral	59	25.2	
Agree	71	30.3	
Strongly Agree	68	29.1	

Table 7 showed results whether respondents had previously learned about *gharar* from religious education, seminars or online courses, which resulted in the average mean score of 3.65 with a standard deviation of 1.20. The results indicated that 59 respondents (25.2%) were neutral that they had previously learned about *gharar*, followed by 139 respondents (59.4%) agreed that they had learned about *gharar*, while only 36 respondents (15.4%) strongly disagreed that they haven't learned about the concept of *gharar*.

Table 8. I am confident that I can identify examples of *gharar* in daily consumer transactions

Likert-Scale	N	%	Mean±SD
Strongly Disagree	9	3.8	3.40±0.97
Disagree	23	9.8	
Neutral	100	42.7	
Agree	70	29.9	
Strongly Agree	32	13.7	

Table 8 shows an average mean score of 3.40 and standard deviation of 0.97 was generated that respondents were confident that they could identify examples of *gharar* in daily consumer transactions. A total of 100 respondents (42.7%) were neutral in identifying such examples, followed by 32 respondents (13.6%) strongly disagree that they could identify examples of *gharar*, whereas 102 (43.6%) agreed that they could identify such examples.

4.2 Respondents' perception and attitudes towards hidden content bundles

Table 9. Hidden content bundles involve uncertainty in products/service value

Likert-Scale	N	%	Mean±SD
Strongly Disagree	1	0.4	3.97±0.79
Disagree	7	3.0	
Neutral	49	20.9	
Agree	117	50.0	
Strongly Agree	60	25.6	

Table 9 shows respondents' perceptions of whether hidden content bundles involve uncertainty in the value of the product or service, with an average mean score of 4.0 with a standard deviation of 0.79. A total number of 49 respondents (20.9%) were neutral, followed by highest number of respondents agreed which is 177 (75.6%), whereas only 8 respondents disagreed (3.4%).

Table 10. Hidden content bundles are similar to gambling

Likert-Scale	N	%	Mean±SD
Strongly Disagree	4	1.7	3.97±0.79
Disagree	9	3.8	
Neutral	73	30.8	
Agree	104	44.4	
Strongly Agree	44	18.8	

Table 10 shows results on respondents' perceptions of whether hidden content bundles are similar to gambling with an average score of 3.75 with a standard deviation of 0.86. Based on the results, 73 respondents (30.8%) were neutral on such similarity. Subsequently, 148 respondents (63.2%) agreed that hidden content bundles are similar to gambling whereas 13 respondents (5.5%) disagreed with the statement.

Table 11. I believe that sellers benefit more than buyers in hidden content bundle sales

Likert-Scale	N	%	Mean±SD
Strongly Disagree	1	0.4	3.78±0.87
Disagree	8	3.4	
Neutral	90	38.5	
Agree	78	33.3	
Strongly Agree	57	24.4	

Table 11 highlighted respondents' attitudes towards the belief that sellers benefit more than buyers in hidden content bundles with an average score of 3.78 with a standard deviation of 0.87. The findings indicate that 90 respondents (38.5%) were neutral on such belief, whereas 135 respondents (57.7%) agreed that sellers do benefit more than buyers. Whereby, 9 respondents (3.8%) disagreed with the idea.

Table 12. I believe hidden content bundles contradict Islamic Business ethics

Likert-Scale	N	%	Mean±SD
Strongly Disagree	2	0.8	4.03±0.86
Disagree	6	2.6	
Neutral	53	22.6	
Agree	95	40.6	
Strongly Agree	78	33.3	

Table 12 assessed on respondents' attitudes towards the belief that hidden content bundles contradict with Islamic business ethics with an average score of 4.03 with a standard deviation of 0.68. A total number of 53 respondents (22.6%) were neutral with such belief, followed by the highest number of respondents agreed that hidden content bundles practices contradict with Islamic business ethics which is 173 (73.9%). Whereas only 8 respondents (3.4%) disagreed.

Table 13. I personally feel uncomfortable purchasing the hidden content bundle

Likert-Scale	N	%	Mean±SD
Strongly Disagree	1	0.4	3.40±0.85
Disagree	9	3.8	
Neutral	86	36.8	
Agree	87	37.2	
Strongly Agree	51	21.8	

Table 13 shows a statement indicating discomfort with purchasing hidden content bundles recorded with an average mean score of 3.40 with a standard deviation of 0.85. A total number of 86 respondents (36.8%) were neutral in purchasing hidden content bundles, followed by 138 respondents (59%) agreed that they would be uncomfortable in purchasing hidden content bundles, whereas 10 respondents (4.2%) disagreed with the statement.

4.3 Respondents' acceptance and general opinions towards hidden content bundles

Table 14. I would consider purchasing the hidden content bundle if the prices are reasonable

Likert-Scale	N	%	Mean±SD
Strongly Disagree	16	6.8	3.20±0.96
Disagree	22	9.4	
Neutral	115	49.1	
Agree	62	26.5	
Strongly Agree	19	8.1	

Table 14 shows respondents' acceptance on whether purchasing hidden content bundles could be considered if the prices are reasonable with an average mean score of 3.20 and standard deviation of 0.96. A total number of 115 respondents (49.1%) were neutral on purchasing, followed by a total number of 81 respondents (34.6%) agreed whereas 38 respondents (16.2%) strongly disagreed they would consider purchasing.

Table 15. I would avoid hidden content bundles because of religious concerns

Likert-Scale	N	%	Mean±SD
Strongly Disagree	1	0.4	4.02±0.79
Disagree	5	2.1	
Neutral	49	20.9	
Agree	112	47.9	
Strongly Agree	67	28.6	

Table 15 shows respondents' acceptance of avoiding hidden content bundles due to religious concerns with an average score of 4.02 with a standard deviation of 0.79. Based on the results, a total of 49 respondents (20.9%) were neutral in avoiding such practices, followed by highest number of respondents which is 179 (76.5%) agreed that they would avoid hidden content bundles, whereas only 6 respondents (2.5%) disagreed.

Table 16. I would accept hidden content bundles if their content are partially disclosed

Likert-Scale	N	%	Mean±SD
Strongly Disagree	8	3.4	3.80±0.98
Disagree	10	4.3	
Neutral	61	26.1	
Agree	97	41.5	
Strongly Agree	58	24.8	

Table 16 focused on respondents' acceptance on whether they would endorse hidden content bundles if the contents were partially disclosed. This question has an average mean score of 3.80 with a standard deviation of 0.98. A total number of 61 respondents (26.1%) were neutral in accepting, followed by 155 respondents (66.3%) agreed in accepting if the contents were partially disclosed. Whereas only 18 respondents (7.7%) disagreed.

Table 17. I think hidden content bundle sales are a form of marketing

Likert-Scale	N	%	Mean±SD
Strongly Disagree	3	1.3	3.68±0.87
Disagree	5	2.1	
Neutral	74	31.6	
Agree	91	38.9	
Strongly Agree	61	26.1	

Table 17 shows an average mean score of 3.86 with a standard deviation of 0.87, examined respondents' perceptions of whether hidden content bundles constitute a form of marketing. A total of 74 respondents (31.6%) were neutral, followed by 152 respondents (65%) agreed on such an idea, and 8 respondents (3.4%) disagreed.

Table 18. Themes and examples of aspects related to its acceptability

Themes/Patterns	Examples of aspects related to its acceptability
1. Gambling elements	<i>"It is a form of gambling in which customers are uncertain about the quality or value of the product, which is prohibited in Islam."</i> <i>"If the bundle is based on luck or chance, where some people receive better items while others incur losses, it becomes unfair and resembles gambling"</i> <i>"Gambling"</i>
2. Influence of prevailing trends and fear of missing out (FOMO)	<i>"...customers purchase it mainly due to trends or fear of missing out (FOMO)."</i> <i>"It is commonly perceived as a trend and is often engaged in for entertainment purposes."</i> <i>"Popular mainly because of the excitement and anticipation"</i> <i>"Lack of awareness..."</i> <i>"Given Brunei's high unemployment rate, should be accepted..."</i>
3. Price value and quality	<i>"It is unacceptable because it may lead to losses and waste."</i> <i>"Acceptable if intentions are clear, the content is transparent, and buyers are not financially harmed."</i> <i>"Acceptable if the price paid is proportional to the value of the purchase"</i> <i>"Items sold must be clear and match the buyer's expectations so that both the seller and buyer are mutually satisfied."</i>
4. Perceived fairness between buyer and seller interactions	<i>"It is not acceptable because there will be parties who incur losses and others who gain benefits."</i> <i>"...tend to benefit sellers more, particularly in relation to the pursuit of limited-edition items."</i> <i>"It can mislead consumers, conceal the true cost..."</i> <i>"...deception..."</i> <i>"It has the potential to deceive or mislead buyers. Buyers may believe they are receiving high value, whereas the goods or services received do not correspond to the price paid"</i>
5. Transparency and disclosure	<i>"It is considered acceptable when the goods offered for sale are clearly explained, whereas it is not acceptable when the goods are not clearly specified."</i> <i>"The item is clearly specified and identifiable."</i> <i>"We should have full disclosure what we are purchasing"</i>
6. Religious concerns	<i>"Some people may already be aware of the Islamic rulings and conditions regarding hidden bundles, so they try to avoid them."</i> <i>"It creates uncertainty regarding its halal status."</i> <i>"Hidden bundles are accepted due to limited public awareness of halal trade principles, such as Gharar (uncertainty)"</i>

Table 18 shows an analysis of the open-ended responses to the question: "In your opinion, what makes hidden content acceptable or unacceptable?" Six key themes were extracted from the analysis; transparency

and disclosure, religious concerns, price value and quality, perceived fairness between buyer and seller interactions, gambling elements, and influence of prevailing trends and fear of missing out (FOMO). It was observed that certain responses addressed multiple themes within a single statement in which these layered responses were assigned to all applicable themes to capture the full context of their opinions.

As shown in table 18, results indicated that some respondents associated hidden content bundles with gambling due to uncertainty regarding the quality and value of the product. Not to mention, respondents highlighted that outcomes based on luck or chance, where some buyers benefit while others incur losses, were perceived as unfair and inconsistent with Islamic principles. Hence, the practice of hidden content bundles was considered unacceptable due to its similarity to gambling.

Other than that, some respondents reported that hidden content bundles are considered unacceptable if it leads to financial loss for buyers or if the included content is of low quality. However, if the price paid corresponds to the value received and buyers do not suffer financial harm, it is acceptable. Moreover, certain respondents indicated that hidden content bundles are considered unacceptable when sellers act dishonestly, particularly in situations where sellers benefit more than buyers, placing buyers at a disadvantage. For instance, when buyers believe they are receiving high value, but the goods received do not reflect the price valued. Hence, such practices resemble deception, contradicting the ethical foundations of Islamic trade.

Other than that, most respondents mentioned that the practice of hidden content bundles is accepted when the products are clearly displayed and distinct to customers. Respondents also stated that they have the right to know and must provide full disclosure on what they are purchasing. Furthermore, some respondents avoid hidden bundles content due to religious concerns related to Islamic principle of trade which is *gharar*. Respondents reported refraining from such practices because of doubts regarding their permissibility. Some respondents indicated that the practice of hidden content bundles is more likely to be accepted due to prevailing trends and fear of missing out. Respondents also highlighted their similarity to blind boxes, which motivates buyers to make purchases prompted by excitement and anticipation.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Close-ended responses

(i) Respondents' awareness and familiarity with the concept of *Gharar*

Based on the results from the close-ended questions, in the context of respondents' familiarity with the concept of *gharar*, most respondents recognize and familiar with the concept likely due to foundational understanding and prior exposure. Not to mention, most respondents understand that *gharar* refers to elements of ambiguity and aware its prohibition. Other than that, one of the questions under this section examined whether respondents had learned about the concept of *gharar* through any sources. Most respondents indicated agreement, suggesting that the concept is widely recognized among the respondents. Moreover, most respondents are also confident that they could identify examples of *gharar* in their daily consumer transactions. These findings differ from those reported by Sikki et al., (2025), who identified inadequate knowledge of Islamic commercial jurisprudence as a challenge in upholding traditional Islamic business practices. However, their study specifically focused on Muslim entrepreneurs. Therefore, this limitation may not be applicable to general consumers.

(ii) Respondents' perception and attitudes towards hidden content bundles

In the context of respondents' perception and attitudes towards hidden content bundles, as shown by the results, most respondents agreed with all the questions. Most respondents agreed that hidden content bundles involve uncertainty in products or service value, indicating the presence of *gharar*. Moreover, most respondents agreed that hidden content bundles are similar to gambling and believed that sellers are deemed to gain more benefits than buyers and such practices are contradict Islamic business ethics. This finding aligns with existing literature, which highlights that Islam emphasizes fairness and transparency in transactions, requiring sellers to provide truthful and accurate product information (Irmawati, 2021). Consequently, most respondents agreed in expressing discomfort with purchasing hidden content bundles. Since, the survey targeted Muslim respondents, these findings suggest that hidden content bundles are considered non-compliant with Shariah principles.

(iii) Respondents' Acceptance and General opinions towards Hidden Content Bundles

Under section based on the respondents' acceptance and general opinions towards hidden content bundle, most respondents were neutral regarding their willingness to purchase hidden content bundles, even if conditions such as reasonable pricing were met. In addition, most respondents agreed that they would avoid hidden content bundles stemming from religious concerns. However, when bundles were partially disclosed, the majority expressed an inclination to purchase. This finding is consistent with previous studies that highlight the importance of mutual trust in trade (Vujnovic-Gligoric et al., 2018). In this context, partial disclosure enhances consumers' trust and assurance regarding the authenticity of the goods. Furthermore, most respondents agreed that hidden content bundles represent a form of marketing, which may explain the reason many people continue to purchase them despite the associated issues.

5.2 Open-ended responses

Analysis of the open-ended responses suggests that, although many respondents did not comment on what makes hidden content bundles acceptable or not, most indicated that hidden content bundles can be acceptable or unacceptable depending on specific conditions. Nonetheless, respondents considered it acceptable more than unacceptable.

(i) Price Value and Quality

Some respondents mentioned that due to the price value and quality of a product, hidden content bundles are considered unacceptable. Many respondents indicate that receiving content that does not meet their expectations could lead to waste. This finding aligns with Yusuf al-Qaradawi's views (Archiria et al., 2022) on Islamic consumption ethics, particularly the principle of avoiding wastefulness. Anything that is excessive or wasteful in nature where it leads to and becomes useless is defined as waste. In Islam, Muslims are commended to spend their wealth whether for personal or family needs in the way that pleases Allah SWT as wasteful behaviour is contrary to His commands.

(ii) Religious concerns and resemblance to gambling

In addition, the most frequently mentioned factors based on respondents' answers were due to religious concerns. Most respondents expressed that hidden content bundles practices are not compliant with shariah due to its ambiguity. Consequently, many respondents perceived hidden content bundles as unacceptable due to features resembling gambling. According to Abdullah (2017), most scholars view *gharar* as being

related to gambling. However, Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Al-Qayyim expressed that gambling is a broader concept than *gharar*. According to them, *gharar* occurs only in business contracts where there is uncertainty in any part of the agreement, while gambling can happen in any type of transaction or activity where the outcome is uncertain. In contrast, Abdullah (2017) considers gambling to be more specific than *gharar*: while gambling always involves *gharar*, not every business contract with elements of *gharar* considered gambling. For instance, a sale contract with certain uncertainties is a *gharar* contract but is not gambling. Therefore, hidden content bundles may be observed as gambling only if the uncertainty in the transaction imitates features of gambling. Otherwise, when *gharar* is present in such practices, it is prohibited in Islam but not equivalent to gambling.

(iii) Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

Furthermore, few respondents expressed, influenced by trends and the fear of missing out (FOMO), many buyers are likely to purchase such bundles. As a result, some respondents perceive it as acceptable because it is widely practiced. According to Gunawan (2024), FOMO is a strategy used in digital marketing to create a sense of urgency and emotional motivation to attract customers. It is aimed at causing the feeling of FOMO on limited-time products or offers, driving customers to act immediately.

Therefore, it is most likely that sellers who practice hidden content bundles utilize this method to attract customers. Other than that, in accordance with Nikčević & Gordana (2023), monitoring contemporary trends and effectively incorporating them into business strategies can provide significant benefits and positively impact an organization's overall performance, thereby improving business outcomes. Hence, based on the findings, which suggests that sellers may be influenced by trends, in this case, in selling hidden content bundles.

(iv) Gaining disproportionate benefits and dishonesty

Several respondents showed that hidden content bundles are unacceptable when sellers gain disproportionate benefits or are dishonest in their presentation. In Islam, based on principles business ethics in Islam, honesty is a fundamental principle in sustaining trust between businesspeople (Arum & Azzaki; 2024). This principle aims to prevent any party in transactions from being harmed. Therefore, respondents believe it is essential to uphold it in selling practices, such as hidden content bundles. This concern is closely associated with the principles of transparency and disclosure, which further strengthen ethical practices in business transactions.

v) Transparency and disclosure

Based on respondents' responses, transparency and disclosure are important elements in ensuring the acceptability of hidden content bundles. In a rapidly transforming digital marketplace, purchasing decisions are influenced by the establishment of trust between consumers and brands (Shakir Ali et al., 2025). Morsink (2024) mentioned that the risk of making wrong decisions during purchasing process can be minimized by transparency. Furthermore, according to Alsayed & Kayadibi (2025), Islamic contract law is deeply rooted in ethical principles, especially in the context of sales contracts, thereby provide a moral framework for interactions between parties. These findings align with existing author, where fundamental principles including prevention of dishonesty, trust and integrity are crucial necessities in business and not only a moral concept (Jie et al., 2023). Hence, truthfulness and transparent disclosure of information is one of the ethical obligations placed between parties. Therefore, transparency is essential when practicing hidden content bundles to ensure fairness and informed decision-making.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study aimed to examine the level of awareness among Bruneians about the shariah compliance of hidden content bundles conducted through live streaming platforms. The results provide insight into several areas related to respondents' knowledge, attitudes, and general opinions about the concept of hidden content bundles. Referring to the first of the research objectives which is investigating the level of awareness among Bruneians regarding the concept of *gharar*. Results show proof through survey that most respondents possess awareness of *gharar* and recognize its connection to hidden content bundles. As regards to the consumers' perspective on the permissibility of such sales. Based on the findings, most respondents are willing to accept the hidden content bundles practices if they adhere to shariah compliance, ensure fairness to buyers and maintain honesty between the sellers and buyers. Despite this awareness, the findings further reveal that knowledge of *gharar* does not necessarily prevent acceptance of such practices. This suggests a gap between theoretical understanding and actual consumer behaviour in the context of digital commerce, where acceptance is influenced not only by religious knowledge but also by perceived fairness and ethical conduct within the transaction. However, this gap should be interpreted with caution, as the study employed a non-probability sampling method and relied on voluntary online participation, which may limit the representativeness of the sample.

Furthermore, the practice of hidden content bundles is generally viewed as debatable and subject to conditional acceptability within the Islamic context. Most respondents are familiar with the concept of *gharar* and acknowledge its presence in hidden content bundles. However, the findings indicate that such practices are generally viewed as non-compliant with Shariah due to elements of uncertainty, dispute with business ethics, and their resemblance to gambling. Consequently, such practice is not entirely rejected, as respondents emphasized that transparency, disclosure, reasonable pricing, and fair value can reduce these concerns. Overall, the study concludes that hidden content bundles can only be deemed permissible when conducted in accordance with Islamic business ethics, such as honesty, transparency, avoidance of waste, and the prevention of harm to ensure fairness. Therefore, despite conditional acceptance, such practices are more appropriately viewed as generally non-compliant in their current form.

Moreover, the findings provide practical implications for stakeholders involved in the digital marketplace. For online sellers, the study highlights the importance of transparency, honesty and adequate disclosure of product information to reduce uncertainty and maintain consumer trust. Although hidden-content bundle sales may serve as an innovative marketing strategy, sellers should ensure that such practices do not involve excessive uncertainty or unfair advantages between buyers and sellers. For policymakers and relevant Islamic authorities, this study provides insight into the need for greater awareness and potential guidance regarding emerging digital commerce practices to ensure alignment with Shariah principles and consumer protection. Furthermore, the study encourages consumers to evaluate online purchasing practices based on ethical considerations rather than solely on trends, promotions, or emotional motivations such as FOMO.

This study contributes to the understanding of halal e-commerce in Brunei by highlighting the limitations of existing consumer protection frameworks in addressing Shariah-specific concerns, particularly regarding uncertainty and ethical transparency in online transactions. Consequently, these implications reflect Brunei's existing consumer protection framework as established by the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Order, 2011 (CPFTA) which safeguards consumers against unfair practices such as misleading claims, false representations, and pressure tactics. Nevertheless, hidden content bundle

practices should be approached with caution and are best avoided unless they can be restructured to fully eliminate elements of *gharar* and uphold fairness, transparency, and consumer protection in accordance with Shariah principles.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, hidden-content bundle sales represent a relatively recent digital marketing phenomenon that has only recently gained attention, particularly regarding their permissibility from shariah perspective. Consequently, limited academic research has been conducted on this specific practice, which may restrict the availability of comparative literature and theoretical discussions. Second, due to time constraints, this study obtained responses from only 234 participants, although the recommended minimum sample size based on the Raosoft calculator was 384 respondents. While the collected sample provided useful insights, the smaller sample size may affect the generalisability of the findings. Furthermore, as the questionnaire was distributed online through social media platforms, younger respondents were overrepresented compared to older age groups. This demographic imbalance may limit the extent to which the findings reflect the perspectives of older consumers who may have different experiences and perceptions of hidden-content bundle sales. Lastly, the study relied on voluntary participation, meaning that individuals who received the survey invitation may have chosen not to participate, potentially affecting the representativeness of the findings.

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8. CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors agree that this research was conducted in the absence of any self-benefits, commercial or financial conflicts and declare the absence of conflicting interests with the funders.

9. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Nuradlina conducted the research and wrote the article, conceptualised the main research idea, and developed the theoretical framework.

10. Declaration of generative ai in the writing process

During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used Grammarly to improve the grammar, clarity, and readability of the manuscript. After using this service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication

11. DATA AVAILABILITY/SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

All data generated or analysed during this study are included in this published article.

12. ETHICS STATEMENT

I testify that our submitted article followed ethical principle and obtained Research ethic approval from the Research Ethics Committee.

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