Journal Halal Science, Industry, and Business, Vol. 3 No. 1 (2025)https://doi.org/10.31098/jhasib.v3i1.3178

Check for updates

Research Paper

Muslim Consumer Attitudes in Brunei Darussalam toward Current Trends in Cosmetics Products from Non-Muslim Countries Acquired by Personal Shoppers

Siti Majidah Rahim[1*], Nor Surilawana Sulaiman[2], Zulfah Syauqina Muhamad[3], Latifah Hannani Md Jini[4]

[1,2,3,4] Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali, Brunei Darussalam

Received: February 27, 2025	Revised: April 8, 2025	Accepted: May 23, 2025	Online: May 31, 2025

Abstract

Using personal shoppers (PS) to acquire personal care and cosmetic products from non-Muslim countries is becoming increasingly popular in Brunei Darussalam. Given the widespread use of social media platforms and live selling applications, consumers in Brunei can easily access global brands and products that may not be readily available in the local market. However, this trend raises critical concerns because many imported products lack halal certifications and PS does not rigorously assess ingredients to ensure compliance with halal standards. Therefore, this study explores the attitudes and factors driving Bruneian consumers toward non-halal-certified cosmetics acquired from non-Muslim countries through PS using the Theory of Consumption Values (TCV). A mixed-methods approach was used. The quantitative survey gathers information on customers' purchasing behaviors. Additionally, qualitative interviews with the PS shed light on their knowledge of and procedures for halal standards and ingredient verification. The findings reveal a strong preference among Bruneian youth for aesthetics and brand reputation regarding cosmetics. This preference is partly driven by the limited availability of locally halal-certified cosmetic products, compelling consumers to seek international brands via PS. Additionally, PS lacked adequate knowledge and often focused on popular demand without checking ingredient suitability under halal standards. The findings highlight the critical need to enhance consumer and PS awareness while reinforcing halal certification policies to build trust and ensure compliance. As key intermediaries, PS should take responsibility for improving their halal verification practices by sourcing from credible suppliers or cross-checking certification authenticity. A collaborative effort among all stakeholders is essential for strengthening the integrity of the halal market.

Keywords: *consumer trends; halal certification; personal shopper; Brunei Darussalam; cosmetic products*

INTRODUCTION

The cosmetics and personal care industry has experienced significant growth over the past decade, offering easy accessibility to international brands and products. The personal care and beauty industry's development reached over USD 557 Billion in 2023 and is expected to grow by 7% from 2024 to 2030 (Grand View Research, 2023). In Brunei Darussalam, accessibility is limited, in part due to its status as a small Southeast Asian country with a majority Muslim population. According to Statista (2024), Brunei's beauty and personal care market is expected to grow to USD 47 million in 2024, representing an annual growth rate of 3%. Thus, personal shoppers (PS) have become a popular alternative for Bruneian customers seeking personal care and cosmetic products in non-Muslim countries. PS usually goes online on social media platforms and nowadays goes on live selling applications to communicate with people from home and offer them products not sold in Brunei. These situations reflect the increasing consumer demand for foreign products and highlight Brunei's broader culture and economy.

Although this has been a positive outcome for fulfilling consumers' demands, these services have raised complex ethical and religious issues, particularly regarding fulfilling halal certification

Corresponding author's email: Jidahrahim@gmail.com

and compliance. Islam is the dominant religion in Brunei. As stated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2018), Bruneians' lifestyle guidelines stipulate that Muslims must impose dietary and extended cosmetic and personal care products. With a population of 80% of Brunei adhering to Islam, the nation has a robust halal ecosystem and has increased stringent and reliable certification (Borneo Bulletin, 2024). This halal certification ensures that products meet specific Islamic requirements, from ingredient selection to manufacturing processes. However, with PS availability, it is challenging to maintain imported products because most of them lack such certifications. This has given little to no assurance that the products they will use will not align with their religious beliefs.

Halal certification is vital for Muslim consumers and ensures that products comply with Islamic principles. Although halal-certified cosmetics are available in the market, the variety and availability in Brunei are limited. Previous research has emphasized the importance of halal certification in the global market. Ali et al. (2016) demonstrated that Muslim consumers prioritize halal logos as a key indicator that a product is safe and halal. However, this study has limitations, such as the lack of awareness by many consumers of the halal certification processes, particularly for non-food items such as cosmetics. Globalization has increased PS's reliance on the convenience of accessing international brands, especially personal care and cosmetics. Bruneians, mostly youth, are drawn to the prestige and aesthetics of international brands and often choose qualities over halal compliance. This is primarily due to international brands' marketing skills, such as using an influencer or a beauty icon to convince people to buy the same product mentioned in the social media marketing strategy (Social Media Marketing for Businesses, n.d.).

The lack of awareness and rigorous halal assessments by the PS represents a significant challenge to the government because they often prioritize consumer demand and trends over ingredients and halal verification. Furthermore, there is a need to assess how social media influences consumer attitudes and PS decisions when importing products, particularly among the younger generation in Brunei, who are more exposed to international beauty trends. Thus, this study's objectives:

1. To explore the attitudes of Muslim consumers in Brunei toward personal care and cosmetic products acquired from non-Muslim countries through PS.
2. To assess PS's knowledge and practices in ensuring halal compliance with imported products.

This study aims to deepen understanding of Brunei's dynamic beauty and personal care industry by bridging the gap between consumer behavior, intermediary practices, and halal certification standards, thereby offering insights to policymakers, industry stakeholders, and consumers for enhancing halal awareness and practices within the sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of the Halal Cosmetics Industry

A report issued by Grand View Research (2023) mentions that in 2020, global revenue for halal cosmetics stood at USD 30.89 billion and is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12.6% between 2021 and 2028. Such growth is driven by a growing consciousness among the Muslim community and increased accessibility to halal-certified goods throughout the globe. Key markets include Vietnam, the Arab World, and Northern Africa, with Malaysia, Indonesia, and the UAE becoming significant halal product development and certification centers.

According to research, the halal cosmetics market is rising because consumers are more willing to purchase products that do not violate Sharia laws. Halal cosmetics manufacturers strive to exclude all ingredients in their cosmetics that are prohibited in the Islamic religion, which are alcohol, derivatives from pork, and any other animal by-products prohibited in Islam (Shahid et al., 2023). Non-animal tested, cruelty-free products also make them more marketable to green and ethical consumers. Improvements in the halal requirements certification process further augment the industry's growth. The certification of halal, such as that by the JAKIM in Malaysia, is gaining acceptance and is becoming important in areas where Muslims form the majority (Ministry of Health Malaysia, n.d.). However, market challenges emerge, especially in countries that do not have these halal trademarks. Consumers in these countries have no choice but to buy non-halal products or go through informal means like personal shoppers.

Nonetheless, beyond these constraints, halal cosmetics have increasingly moved beyond niche markets, with major global brands like L'Oréal and Estée Lauder developing halal-compliant product lines to cater to the growing Islamic market segment (India Today, 2016). This development illustrates the broader scope of the possibilities of halal beautifying agents, a combination of faith and a growing consumer culture that calls for ethics, sourcing, and diversity in the cosmetics industry. Addressing supply gaps and raising awareness are crucial for this sector to prosper.

Contemporary Issues in The Importation of Halal Cosmetics and Personal Care Products

The cosmetics and personal care industries have faced various contemporary challenges recently, particularly in Islamic nations such as Brunei Darussalam. These challenges are driven by several factors, including the increasing demand for such products because of the global distribution of Muslim populations, which amplifies consumer needs. Additionally, the substantial revenue potential of these industries raises concerns about adherence to halal standards because they cater to markets in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries.

In Brunei, cosmetic products are regulated by the Medicines (Cosmetics Products) Regulations, which are in line with the ASEAN Cosmetics Directive (ACD). Hence, the importer or manufacturer must obtain an upfront declaration of compliance before placing the cosmetic product in the local market, and it can only be marketed after receiving the notification acknowledgement letter from the Authority. The importation of subhash cosmetic and personal care is becoming more of a concern with each passing year, particularly with the usage of products that are not yet halal certified, restricted, or forbidden from sale due to the presence of prohibited elements that can be damaging to health (Haji Muhidin, 2023). This issue encompasses every facet of the offence from the initial stages of importation and marketing without a Product Notification Declaration issued by the Authority under the Ministry of Health. If found guilty, punishment will be accorded by the Medicines Order 2007 and the Brunei Darussalam Constitution (Order under Article 83(3). Several cases have been reported in Brunei. For the past three years, some reported cases of fraudulent activities in Brunei Darussalam are presented in Table 1.

Recently, the distribution of cosmetic and personal care products has changed considerably. While some physical stores remain, new options, such as PS services, have been introduced. Such services have become popular, especially among younger and Muslim populations, who readily buy products sold through these channels. Nevertheless, this raises some important questions: How are these products halal? Can these products, to some users' health and well-being, be deemed as containing harmful or even banned ingredients?

Table 1. List of Reported Cases Involving Imported Personal Care and Cosmetics in Brunei Darussalam (2021-2024)

No.	Date	Facts to be Brief	Sources
1.	3.4.2024	MS Glow- Dark Spot Serum: contaminated	(Sim, 2024)

No.	Date	Facts to be Brief	Sources
		with Hydroquinone and Tretinoin	
2.	28.9.2023	Qu Puteh Cosmetics (Whitening Pro & Whitening UV Block): contain banned substances such as mercury and spironolactone.	(Sim & Kasharan, 2023)
		SCI Beauty Night Cream Pelicin Containing Tretinoin and Hydroquinone	
		Karisma Cosmetic Set Freckles containing the Karisma Aqua Bird Nest, which is contaminated with tretinoin	
		Karisma Brightening Day Cream and Karisma Golden Tumeric Cream, which is contaminated with mercury	
3.	7.7.2022	Sifu Kunyit Day Cream: contains hydroquinone, tretinoin, and betamethasone.	(National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, 2024)
4.	9.6.2022	Glow Skin White–Brightening Cream contains mercury	(U.S Food & Drug Administration, 2023)
5.	6.7.2021	NV Nouvelles Visages Nourishment Skin Renewal Treatment contaminated with hydroquinone	(Saman, 2021)
6.	23.4.2021	Erat Kasih sines are manufactured in Japan and are contaminated with chlorpheniramine, dexamethasone, and betamethasone.	(Sim, 2021)
		Skin Magical Rejuvenating Set No.3-Rejuvenating Cream No.3 is contaminated with hydroquinone.	

The Rise of Personal Shopper (PS) in Facilitating Global Trade

PS has become relevant recently, especially regarding global marketing and consumer movement. Hapsari and Saudi (2018) claimed that PS is becoming especially important for meeting consumers' needs, reaching international markets, and improving the shopping experience. As people everywhere are becoming more mobile and globalized, there has been a surge in demand for effective and personalized shopping endeavours and corresponding PS services. By serving as a bridge between customers and markets that might otherwise be inaccessible, PS is essential for facilitating international trade. They help customers overcome financial, logistical, and cultural obstacles to purchasing abroad. For instance, a customer in one nation might like to buy luxury products from a faraway market. However, they might not know the local languages, cultures, or purchasing habits. With the correct information and tools, a PS can help close these gaps by assisting the customer in making informed decisions, ensuring the transaction goes smoothly, and handling shipping and customs procedures.

The emergence of PS contributes significantly to facilitating global trade by giving customers access to other markets, offering customized buying experiences and removing obstacles like logistical, language and cultural differences. According to Hapsari and Saudi (2018), PS plays a critical role in promoting consumer mobility, improving the international buying experience, and propelling the expansion of cross-border e-commerce. Their services will remain crucial in a society that is becoming more networked and providing convenience.

Theory of Consumption Values (TCV)

The TCV was developed by Sheth et al. (1991). It identifies five distinct values that shape purchasing decisions. These factors independently motivate consumers to determine why they buy, avoid, or prefer one product or service over another. By examining these values, marketers and businesses can gain deeper insights into the motivations behind consumer choices and adapt their strategies to meet these needs effectively.

According to Boztepe (2007), functional value is central to practical decision-making, focusing on a product or service's tangible benefits. It emphasizes utility, quality, and performance, especially for essential purchases in which effectiveness and reliability are key. Convenience, dependability, and long-term advantages are frequently the driving forces behind these choices rather than sentimental appeal or social standing.

On the other hand, social value captures the degree to which societal conditions, such as social norms, peer expectations, and cultural conditions, influence buying decisions. It is acknowledged that individuals' purchasing and consumption behaviors, using products and services, reflect their social identity, promote acceptance and denote their status to peers and the community. Pardede and Kovač (2023) differentiate between the need to belong, which drives individuals to seek social acceptance, and the sense of belongingness, which reflects the fulfilment of this need based on personal appraisals and contextual conditions. Marketers can harness social value by linking their products to aspirational lifestyles or shared ideals that appeal to their target audience. For instance, campaigns with celebrities or influencers might raise a product's perceived social standing.

In addition, emotional value plays a central role in shaping consumer behavior by emphasizing the feelings and personal experiences associated with products or services. It goes beyond tangible benefits to create connections that evoke happiness, nostalgia, comfort, or excitement. These emotional responses significantly influence how consumers perceive and interact with brands, transforming their purchasing decisions into deeply personal experiences. Richins (1997) emphasized the significance of emotions in consuming experiences. Her research emphasizes that feelings are an essential part of the entire consumption process and are not only responses to the product itself but also products associated with treasured memories. These results support the notion that emotional worth is a potent motivator that can influence loyalty and preferences.

Furthermore, conditional value, as outlined by Sheth et al. (1991), refers to the value a product or service holds based on specific circumstances, making it highly context dependent. This contextual relevance significantly influences purchasing decisions by aligning products with consumers' immediate needs and desires shaped by their environment. Marketers can capitalize on conditional value by adjusting their tactics to emphasize the products' or services' current relevance. Offering seasonal promotions, temporary discounts, or event-specific products can increase consumer attention. Sheth et al. (1991) stressed the significance of timing in marketing initiatives. Brands can increase the perceived worth of their products and make them seem more necessary by matching their offerings with circumstances in which customers most likely need them.

Epistemic value, as outlined by Davis and Hodges (2012), stems from a consumer's curiosity and desire for novelty or new experiences. This value appeals to those who seek to explore the unknown, experiment with new products, services, or trends, and thrive on the excitement of discovery. They emphasized the significance of epistemic value. Customers in these industries frequently seek novel, distinctive, or exclusive goods and experiences. Those searching for the next great thing are drawn to the sensation of novelty that a new fashion trend or innovative technological device gives. Businesses frequently prioritize exclusivity, inventiveness and innovation to satisfy customers who seek epistemic value.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to comprehensively explore Muslim consumer attitudes toward personal care and cosmetic products acquired through personal shoppers from non-Muslim countries. For the qualitative component, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five personal shoppers to gather in-depth insights into their practices and consumer preferences. This study employs snowball and random sampling methods for the quantitative component to ensure a diverse and representative dataset. A survey targeting 200 respondents was designed to assess consumer attitudes using the TCV. The snowball sampling approach was used to reach participants who actively purchased products through PS by leveraging social networks to identify suitable respondents. Random sampling was implemented to capture a broader consumer perspective, minimizing bias and enhancing the generalizability of the findings. Upon reaching the target, statistical tools are used for the survey.

In addition, the survey employed a 5-point Likert scale to measure consumer responses across the five dimensions of TCV: functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional values. Finally, data analysis was conducted using distinct methods for each research component. Qualitative data from interviews with personal shoppers were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes, offering rich contextual insights into the phenomenon under study. The quantitative data collected via surveys were analyzed using the TCV framework to quantify consumer values and their influence on purchasing behavior.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Interviewee Background

Table 2 provides an overview of the background of five informants among PS (PS A to PS E), focusing on their foundation year, items purchased, social commerce platforms used, and source countries. Established in 2017, PS A focuses on cosmetic products and utilizes messaging apps and Instagram posts/stories to promote items sourced from diverse countries, including South Korea, Thailand, Australia and the United Kingdom. PS B and PS E, catering to personal care products, rely heavily on TikTok Live for live selling, with Vietnam being their primary source country. PS C, founded in 2024, specializes in personal care and cosmetic products. It also leverages TikTok Live for live selling, with South Korea and Japan as the source countries. Similarly, PS D, founded in 2022, also focuses on personal care and cosmetics but uses Instagram posts and Telegram messaging as its primary platforms, with South Korea as its source country.

Table 2. Interviewee Background

	Informant	Foundation Year	Items purchased by PS	Social Commerce Platform	Source Countries
1.	PS A	2017	Cosmetic	Messaging apps, and Instagram posts and stories	South Korea, Thailand, Australia, United Kingdom (UK)
2.	PS B	2024	Personal Care	Live Selling (TikTok Live)	Vietnam
3.	PS C	2024	Personal Care	Live Selling (TikTok	South Korea and

	Informant	Foundation Year	Items purchased by PS	Social Commerce Platform	Source Countries
			and Cosmetics	Live)	Japan
4.	PS D	2022	Personal Care and Cosmetics	Instagram Posts and Telegram Messaging	South Korea
5.	PS E	2023	Personal Care	Live Selling (TikTok Live)	Vietnam

These data reveal that TikTok Live is a dominant platform for newer PS (PS B, PS C, and PS E), particularly for live selling, while older players like PS A and PS D diversify their strategies by incorporating messaging apps, Instagram posts, and Telegram. The selection of five PSs for this study was based on their availability and willingness to participate in the interview. Additionally, these PS were chosen due to their experience in the field and the frequent use of their services by Bruneian consumers, as indicated by their follower count and presence across various social media platforms. Table 3 also lists the self-structured questions developed by the authors.

Table 3. Interview Questions for Personal Shoppers

	Interview Questions
1.	Can you describe your role as a personal shopper and how long have you been in this business?
2.	What motivated you to offer personal shopper services for personal care and cosmetic products?
3.	How can you ensure the quality and authenticity of the products that you rely on?
4.	Are there specific brands or types of products that your customers most commonly request? Why do you think they prefer these?
5.	Do your customers inquire about certifications (e.g., halal)? How do you verify such certifications?
6.	Have you noticed specific trends in your customers' preferences that are influenced by social media or celebrity endorsements?
7.	What challenges do you face when sourcing products from non-Muslim countries for Muslim consumers?
8.	How should you handle situations where a product's halal status is ambiguous or unavailable?
9.	Do you have any insights or observations about Muslim consumer attitudes that you would like to share?

Source: Authors

The interview responses comprehensively reflect PS's motivations, processes, challenges, and insights. The primary motivation for these shoppers stems from an increasing demand for international brands that are otherwise inaccessible in specific markets. Respondents (e.g., PS A and PS D) highlighted the role of social media in identifying untapped markets and driving trends. At the same time, PS B shares how personal experiences, such as friends' requests, inspired them to turn this into a business. Authenticity and quality assurance are critical for building trust with customers. Shoppers rely on product reviews, seller ratings, and unboxing products in front of customers to confirm legitimacy. Popular products, particularly Korean skincare brands like Skintific Aqua, CosRx, and Laneige, are highly requested due to their proven effectiveness and quality.

Certifications, such as halal compliance, present another key concern. PS A mentions verification through official websites, while PS C highlights scenarios where ambiguous or absent logos require customer consultation. Social media and celebrity endorsements are significant influencers in demand. For instance, PS A and PS E point to viral TikTok challenges and beauty trends like "glass skin," which lead to sudden surges in product requests. However, PS faces challenges such as language barriers in product descriptions (PS D), making it challenging to confirm ingredients or certifications. Shortages or ambiguities regarding certain products further increase the complexity, with shoppers often communicating openly with customers about stock issues or concerns. Insights from these interviews also emphasize how deeply social media impacts buying decisions, as trends, reviews, and advertising shape consumer preferences. Finally, customers' growing concerns about product authenticity and legitimacy (PS E) reflect a broader need for transparency and trust in this niche market. Overall, the responses underscore how PS navigates a dynamic environment shaped by trends, quality assurance, and customer trust while managing logistical and verification challenges, which were summarized in Table 4, and the data analyses using thematic analysis (Figure 1).

Table 4. Interview Responses

No.	Interview Questions	Responses/Answer
1.	What motivated you to offer personal shopper services for personal care and cosmetic products?	**PS A:** *I saw a growing demand for international brands not available locally, and I wanted to provide access to those products.* **PS B:** *I started this service because my friends often asked me to buy products for them when I traveled, so I turned it into a business.* **PS D:** *Social media trends have made me realize there is an untapped market for popular, high-quality cosmetics.*
2.	How can you ensure the quality and authenticity of the products that you rely on?	**PS B:** *I check product reviews and ratings before deciding to source from a particular seller.* **PS D:** *I unbox the products in front of the customers during delivery to confirm that they are genuine.*
3.	Are there specific brands or types of products that your customers most commonly request? Why do you think they prefer these?	**PS B:** *Korean skincare brands like Skintific, Anua, CosRx, and Laneige are in demand because of their perceived quality and effectiveness.*
4.	Do your customers inquire about certifications (e.g., halal)? How do you verify such certifications?	**PS A:** *Yes, especially for halal products. I cross-check with official websites.* **PS C:** *If there is no halal logo, I inform the customers so they can decide whether to proceed with the purchase.*
5.	Have you noticed any specific trends in your customers' preferences that are influenced by social media or celebrity endorsements?	**PS A:** *Yes, when a product goes viral on TikTok, I get a flood of requests for it almost immediately.* **PS E:** *Social media challenges and trends, like the glass skin trend, lead to a spike in demand for specific products.*
6.	What challenges do you face when sourcing products from non-Muslim countries for Muslim consumers?	**PS D:** *Language barriers in product descriptions make it difficult to confirm ingredients and certifications.*
7.	How should you handle	**PS A:** *I inform the customers about the ambiguity and let*

No.	Interview Questions	Responses/Answer
	situations where a product's halal status is ambiguous or unavailable?	*them decide if they still want to proceed with the purchase.*
8.	Do you have any insights or observations about Muslim consumer attitudes that you would like to share?	**PS B:** *Social media has a huge influence on buying decisions, even more than traditional advertising.* **PS E:** *Many are curious about trying new products but hesitant if there is a lack of clear halal certification.*

Source: Data analysis.

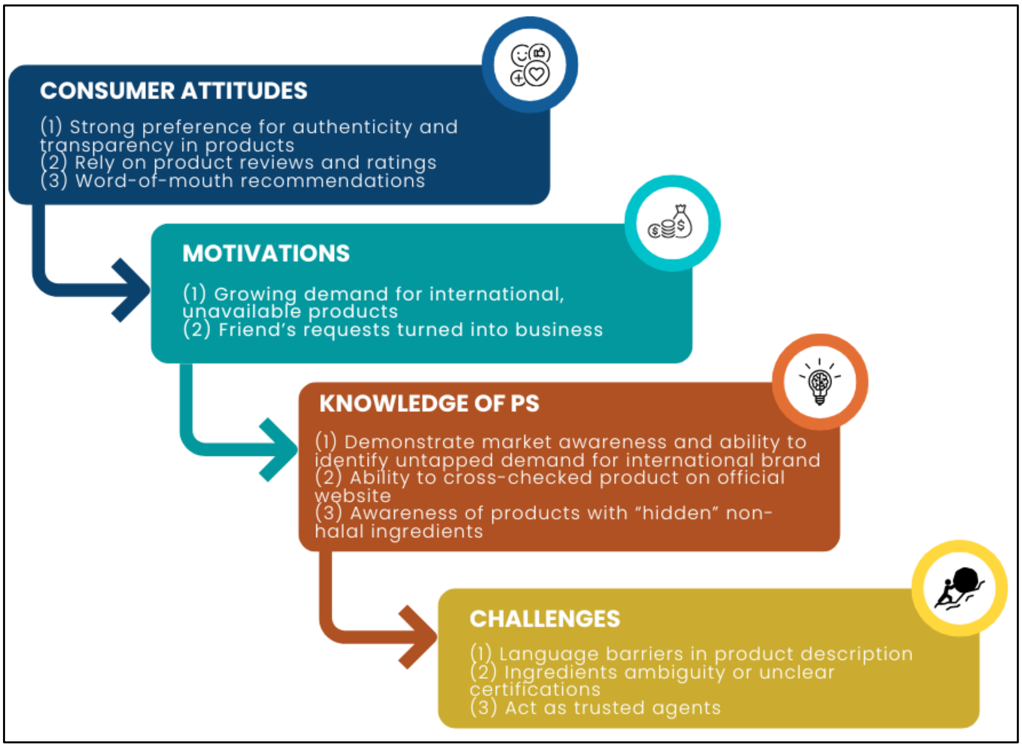

Figure 1. Thematic Analysis

Quantitative Respondents' Sociodemographic Results

The sociodemographic data in Table 5 reveal critical insights into the sample's composition. The age distribution is skewed toward younger respondents, with the majority falling within the 25-34 age group (44.0%), followed closely by 18-24 years (31.5%), while older age categories, particularly those aged 55 and above, are significantly underrepresented at only 5.0%. This raises concerns about the inclusivity of perspectives from older demographics, which could limit the generalizability of the findings if the study aims to capture insights across all age groups. The gender disparity is also striking, with females comprising 69.5% of the sample compared to only 30.5% of males.

Regarding educational level, the data reflect a relatively well-educated sample, with 39.5% holding Bachelor's degrees and 26.5% possessing Diplomas. However, advanced degrees, such as Master's and Doctorates, are limited to 2.5% and 1.0%, respectively. This indicates a concentration of respondents with mid-level tertiary education, whereas higher academic qualifications remain underrepresented. On the other hand, respondents' employment status further underscores critical patterns. Notably, 52.0% of the sample are students. The unemployment rate of 19.5% highlights a worrying trend, potentially signaling challenges within the job market or respondents' career progression. Moreover, only 13.5% of respondents were employed full-time, with minimal representation from part-time employees (3.0%) and self-employed individuals (6.5%). Retirees accounted for a modest 5.5%, highlighting the underrepresentation of older, experienced perspectives. The sample is predominantly young, female, and student-focused, with a strong representation of mid-level educational qualifications.

Table 5. Respondents Sociodemographic Result

Variable	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-24	63	31.5
	25-34	88	44.0
	35-44	27	13.5
	45-54	12	6.0
	55 and above	10	5.0
Gender	Male	61	30.5
	Female	139	69.5
Educational Level	Primary School	14	7.0
	Secondary School	29	14.5
	Diploma	53	26.5
	Bachelor's Degree	79	39.5
	Master's Degree	5	2.5
	Doctorate	2	1.0
	Other	18	9.0
Employment Status	Student	104	52.0
	Employed Full-Time	27	13.5
	Employed part-time	6	3.0
	Self- Employed	13	6.5
	Unemployed	39	19.5
	Retired	11	5.5

Source: Data analysis.

Attitudes on the Use of Personal Shopper (PS)

Table 6 discusses respondents' attitudes, motivations, and trust levels regarding using PS in purchasing personal care and cosmetics. A significant proportion of respondents (63.0%) reported not purchasing products through PS, whereas only 37.0% had. Communication channels play a pivotal role in PS's engagement with consumers. The data show that TikTok Live is the dominant communication platform respondents use, followed by the Instagram group with DM (34.0%). Facebook accounts for only 10.5% of the total, while other platforms account for a mere 5.0%. This trend underscores the growing popularity of new, interactive social media platforms like TikTok for online commerce and suggests a generational preference for dynamic, real-time communication.

Respondents' motivations for purchasing personal care or cosmetics via PS are diverse, with 41.5% citing access to international brands or products as the primary driver. This reflects the demand for products unavailable locally. Better pricing motivates 18.5% of respondents, while convenience (16.5%) and perceived authenticity or exclusivity (10.5%) influence decisions. Interestingly, only 9.5% are motivated by unique or rare products, suggesting that affordability and accessibility outweigh niche product demands.

When examining PS's trust in sourcing halal-compliant products, the results reveal a notable lack of confidence. Only 14.0% of respondents considered PS trustworthy, whereas 39.5% did not trust them. A moderate 46.5% expressed partial trust, reflecting general uncertainty regarding the halal status of products sourced through intermediaries. This indicates a critical gap in trust that a lack of transparency or certification may drive. Respondent's awareness and attitudes regarding halal compliance demonstrate mixed attitudes. Although 16.0% admitted to stopping product use after discovering it was not halal-compliant, 37.0% continued using such products. However, 47.0% fall into the "Other" category, which may include respondents who are unsure of the product's halal status or indifferent to compliance. This highlights the need for excellent consumer education and stricter verification systems to address the gaps in halal compliance awareness.

The data highlight critical issues regarding reliance on PS, trust in halal compliance, attitudes, and motivations for purchase. While social media platforms like TikTok Live are central to communication, trust deficits remain a significant barrier, particularly concerning halal-compliant products. Additionally, the preference for access to international brands and better pricing underscores consumers' growing expectations for affordability and variety, further emphasizing the need for transparent, trustworthy sourcing mechanisms.

Table 6. Consumer Purchasing Behavior

Variable	Description	*n*	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Have you ever purchased personal care or cosmetics through a personal shopper?	Yes	74	37.0	37.0	37.0
	No	126	63.0	63.0	100.0
	Total	**200**			
How do you usually communicate with personal shoppers?	Instagram group with DM	68	34.0	34.0	34.0
	TikTok Live	101	50.5	50.5	84.5
	Facebook	21	10.5	10.5	95.0
	Other	10	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	**200**			
What motivates you to purchase personal care or cosmetics through personal shoppers?	Access to international brands/product s	83	41.5	41.5	41.5
	Perceived authenticity or exclusivity	21	10.5	10.5	52.0
	Better pricing	37	18.5	18.5	70.5
	Convenience	33	16.5	16.5	87.0
	Unique or rare products	19	9.5	9.5	96.5
	Other	7	3.5	3.5	100.0
	Total	**200**			
How much do you trust personal shoppers to source halal-compliant	Very trustworthy	28	14.0	14.0	14.0
	Somewhat trustworthy	93	46.5	46.5	60.5

Variable	Description	*n*	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
products?	Not trustworthy	79	39.5	39.5	100.0
	Total	**200**			
Have you ever stopped using a product after discovering it was not halal-compliant?	Yes	32	16.0	16.0	16.0
	No	74	37.0	37.0	53.0
	Other	94	47.0	47.0	100.0
	Total	**200**			

Source: Data analysis.

Analysis of the TCV in Terms of Its Functional Value

Table 7 reveals significant findings on consumers' perceptions of PS-sourced products and their attitudes toward functional value. The table examines three core aspects: product quality, variety access, and pricing. On the product quality side, most respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed (61.5%) that products purchased through PS are better quality than those available locally. Only a tiny fraction (18.5%) agreed or strongly agreed, while 20.0% remained neutral. The mean score of 2.35 (SD = 1.15) indicates a generally negative perception of product quality. This suggests that consumers may not see significant functional value in products sourced through personal shoppers compared with local alternatives. This negative perception likely influences their attitudes, potentially discouraging reliance on PS.

Furthermore, the role of PS in providing access to a broader range of personal care and cosmetic products yielded more favourable responses. A majority (39.5%) remained neutral, but a significant portion (40.5%) agreed or strongly agreed, suggesting that consumers acknowledge the functional benefits of variety. The mean score of 3.33 (SD = 1.01) indicates a moderately positive perception, highlighting that access to international or rare products remains a functional driver. This perceived value may enhance attitudes toward PS, particularly among consumers seeking diverse or exclusive product options.

Moreover, perceptions about price reasonableness relative to product quality show a mixed response. A considerable proportion (51.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that PS prices are reasonable, while only 42.5% agreed or strongly agreed. The mean score of 2.85 (SD = 1.57) reflects a divided opinion, with some consumers questioning the balance between price and quality. This ambivalence suggests that perceived high prices may diminish the functional value of products purchased through PS, leading to less favorable attitudes.

Table 7. Functional Values

Variable	Frequency					Mean	SD
	SD	D	N	A	SA		
The products I purchase through personal shoppers are of better quality than those	65 (32.5)	58 (29.0)	40 (20.0)	15 (7.5)	22 (11.0)	2.35	1.15

Variable	Frequency					Mean	SD
	SD	D	N	A	SA		
available locally.							
Personal shoppers provide access to a wide range of personal care and cosmetic products.	5 (2.5)	35 (17.5)	79 (39.5)	50 (25.0)	31 (15.5)	3.33	1.01
I believe that the price of products offered by personal shoppers is reasonable for their quality.	58 (29.0)	45 (22.5)	12 (6.0)	39 (19.5)	46 (23.0)	2.85	1.57

Source: Data analysis.

Analysis of TCV in Terms of Social Value

Table 8 highlights consumers' attitudes toward the social benefits of purchasing personal care or cosmetics through PS. This research evaluates social value through social connection, image improvement, and trust within social networks, providing insights into how these factors influence consumer attitudes. First, concerning social connection, most respondents (52.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that purchasing through PS helps them feel more socially connected. Only 19.0% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while 28.5% remained neutral. The mean score of 2.41 (SD = 1.16) suggests that social connections are not perceived as a significant value when engaging with PS. This result implies that the process does not enhance consumers' sense of belonging or interaction within their social circles, potentially limiting its appeal to consumers who prioritize social engagement.

In contrast, the perception of social image improvement is more positive. A substantial proportion of respondents (40.0%) agreed or strongly agreed that using international brands sourced by PS improves their social image. While 39.5% remained neutral, only 20.5% disagreed. The mean score of 3.20 (SD = 0.86) indicates a generally favorable perception of social image enhancement, suggesting that access to exclusive or international products positively influences how consumers perceive others' products. This aligns with the idea that social value plays a role in consumer attitudes, particularly among individuals prioritising social status and brand associations.

Finally, trust in PS, as one's social circle recommends, emerges as a key factor in driving social value. Most respondents (62.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that they trust PS endorsed by their friends or family. Only a small portion (20.5%) expressed disagreement, with 16.5% remaining neutral. The mean score of 3.50 (SD = 1.34) highlights that recommendations from a trusted social network enhance social value, leading to more positive attitudes and higher confidence among personal shoppers. This finding underscores the importance of word-of-mouth and social trust in shaping consumer purchasing behavior.

Table 8. Social Value

Variable	Frequency					Mean	SD
	SD	D	N	A	SA		
Purchasing personal care or cosmetics through personal shoppers helps me feel more socially connected.	62 (31.0)	43 (21.5)	57 (28.5)	29 (14.5)	9 (4.5)	2.41	1.16
I feel that using international brands sourced by personal shoppers improves my social image.	8 (4.0)	33 (16.5)	79 (39.5)	71 (35.5)	9 (4.5)	3.20	0.864
I trust personal shoppers recommended by my social circle	31 (15.5)	10 (5.0)	33 (16.5)	79 (39.5)	47 (23.5)	3.50	1.34

Analysis of TCV in terms of Emotional Value

Table 9 reveals the impact of emotional experiences on consumers' attitudes toward purchasing personal care or cosmetic products through PS. Emotional value encompasses excitement, disappointment, and satisfaction, shaping consumer attitudes and purchasing behavior. The data indicate that many respondents feel excited when purchasing unique personal care or cosmetic products through PS. 57.0% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, while only 30.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The mean score of 3.42 (SD = 1.36) highlights the novelty and uniqueness of products obtained through PS, which evoke positive emotional responses. This excitement may lead to favorable attitudes, as consumers associate the experience with enjoyment and exclusivity, encouraging repeat purchases.

In contrast, the statement about disappointment when one cannot purchase preferred products through PS reveals a less significant emotional impact. 62.5% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this sentiment, whereas only 11.0% expressed agreement. The mean score of 2.18 (SD = 0.92) suggests that most consumers do not experience intense disappointment, indicating a relatively low dependence on PS for emotional satisfaction when specific products are unavailable. This finding implies that although PS add value, their absence does not strongly disrupt consumer attitudes.

Finally, the satisfaction derived from purchasing through PS shows moderate results. While 31.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the experience gave them a sense of satisfaction, 39.0% strongly disagreed. The mean score of 2.65 (SD = 1.51) reflects mixed perceptions, with some consumers finding satisfaction in the process while others remain indifferent or dissatisfied. This result suggests that emotional satisfaction may not be universal and may depend on product quality, pricing, or the overall purchasing experience.

Table 9. Emotional Value

Variable	Frequency					Mean	SD
	SD	D	N	A	SA		
I feel excited when I purchase unique personal care or cosmetic products through personal shoppers.	27 (13.5)	33 (16.5)	25 (12.5)	59 (29.5)	56 (28.0)	3.42	1.36
I feel disappointed if I cannot purchase my preferred personal care or cosmetic products through personal shoppers.	66 (33.0)	59 (29.5)	53 (26.5)	18 (9.0)	4 (2.0)	2.18	0.921
Buying products through personal shoppers gives me a sense of satisfaction.	76 (38.0)	2 (1.0)	59 (29.5)	42 (21.0)	21 (10.5)	2.65	1.51

Source: Data analysis

Analysis of TCV in terms of Epistemic Value

Table 10 shows that although epistemic value drives curiosity and enjoyment for some consumers, the absence of clear halal certification often suppresses these attitudes, leading to anxiety or disinterest. This relationship suggests that halal assurance is a dominant factor influencing attitudes in the presence of TCV. The first variable shows a mixed response, with 39 respondents strongly disagreeing (SD) and 14 disagreeing (D), indicating that a notable proportion of consumers are not mainly motivated by novelty. However, a more significant segment, 65 respondents, remains neutral (N), whereas 42 agree (A) and 40 strongly agree (SA). This suggests that while some value discovery for unique products—reflecting epistemic curiosity—others are less inclined, potentially prioritizing other values, such as assurance of halal certification.

The second variable, "I feel anxious when there is no clear halal certification for products I buy through PS", shows a strong alignment with concerns about halal assurance. A significant number of respondents, 97 (A) and 36, strongly agree (SA), indicating high levels of anxiety when products lack clear halal certification. Only four respondents strongly disagree (SD), 19 disagree

(D), and 44 remain neutral (N). This reflects that halal certification holds greater importance and may overshadow the appeal of epistemic value (e.g., discovering unique products) because the lack of halal clarity generates significant anxiety. The third variable suggests that while curiosity (a reflection of epistemic value) exists for some, most appear cautious and disinterested when unclear about halal certification. This highlights the tension between epistemic value and halal assurance, where the latter takes precedence.

Table 10. Epistemic Value

Variable	Frequency					Mean	SD
	SD	D	N	A	SA		
I enjoy discovering new and unique personal care or cosmetics through personal shoppers.	39 (19.5)	14 (7.0)	65 (32.5)	42 (21.0)	40 (20.0)	3.16	1.29
I feel anxious when there is no clear halal certification for products I buy through personal shoppers.	4 (2.0)	19 (9.5)	44 (22.0)	97 (48.5)	36 (18.0)	3.71	0.879
I am curious about the latest trends in personal care or cosmetics sourced by personal shoppers, even though there is no clear indication of halal	68 (34.0)	22 (11.0)	39 (19.5)	53 (26.5)	18 (9.0)	2.65	1.42

Source: Data analysis.

Analysis of the TCV in Terms of Conditional Values

Table 11 reveals how situational factors, such as product availability and halal certification, influence consumer attitudes toward purchasing personal care or cosmetic products through PS. The first statement, "I am more likely to purchase personal care or cosmetics through PS if they confirm the halal status of the products," indicates a strong positive influence of confirmed halal status on purchasing decisions. A significant proportion of respondents (46.0% (59 A, 50 SA) agreed or strongly agreed, with only 7.0% (14 D) disagreeing, while 38.5% (77) remained neutral. The high mean score of 3.73 (SD = 0.841) suggests that halal confirmation is a crucial conditional factor that drives positive attitudes and purchase behavior. This highlights that consumers are more inclined to trust and choose PS when the halal status of a product is explicitly verified, which aligns with their religious and ethical priorities.

In the second statement, "I choose PS when local options for halal-certified personal care or cosmetics are limited," the data further reinforces the significance of conditional value. A substantial 72.0% (88 A, 56 SA) of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, whereas only 16.0% (21 SD, 11 D) disagreed, and 35.5% (43) remained neutral. The mean score of 3.92 (SD = 0.894) indicates a strong tendency among consumers to turn to PS when halal-certified options are scarce locally. This result emphasizes that PS provides a critical solution to situational constraints, offering consumers access to halal-compliant products that may not be readily available in their immediate surroundings.

Hence, conditional value is pivotal in shaping consumer attitudes toward PS. Consumers are more likely to purchase from PS when the halal status of products is confirmed, demonstrating the importance of trust and religious compliance. Additionally, situational limitations, such as the unavailability of local halal-certified products, further increase the reliance on PS. These findings suggest that PS can strengthen consumer confidence and satisfaction by addressing conditional needs, such as ensuring halal verification and providing access to products that meet specific religious and ethical requirements.

Table 11. Conditional Value

Variable	Frequency					Mean	SD
	SD	D	N	A	SA		
I am more likely to purchase personal care or cosmetics through personal shoppers if they confirm the halal status of the products.	0 (0.0)	14 (7.0)	77 (38.5)	59 (29.5)	50 (25.0)	3.73	0.841
I choose personal shoppers when local options for Halal certified personal care or cosmetics are limited.	21 (1.0)	11 (5.5)	43 (21.5)	88 (44.0)	56 (28.0)	3.92	0.894

Source: Data analysis.

Relations Between Consumer Attitudes and TCV

Based on the analysis of the five values: functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional—in the context of the TCV and consumer attitudes toward purchasing through PS, conditional value emerges as the most critical value. This conclusion is drawn from its strong influence on consumer purchasing decisions and attitudes, as demonstrated by the results. Consistently high levels of agreement in the conditional value statements recorded the highest mean score, highlighting the importance of halal verification in purchasing decisions. These results indicate that situational factors strongly drive consumers' reliance on PS, particularly confirmation of halal status and unavailability of local halal-certified options.

The significance of conditional value lies in its alignment with consumers' religious and ethical priorities. For Muslim consumers, the halal status of personal care or cosmetic products is not merely a preference but an obligation. PSs are viewed as intermediaries that address these situational challenges and provide solutions for limited or uncertain local options. This illustrates the practical nature of conditional value because immediate requirements and a specific context can define buying behavior. Other values like functional (quality of the product), emotional (underlying excitement and satisfaction), social (trust and social image), and epistemic (curiosity and desire for adventure) can affect attitudes. However, most of the time, they work as secondary values to conditional values. Conditional value is thus the most important as it addresses situational needs and builds trust. This deep situational dependency generates a favorable disposition toward PS, defining them as dependable means for satisfying religious and practical requirements. Thus, the most important element is identified, and how the TCV model captures the complexity within consumer attitudes is explained. PS purchasing decisions based on the framework of TCV are astounding.

The findings highlight the critical need to enhance consumer and PS awareness while reinforcing halal certification policies to build trust and ensure compliance with halal principles. Consumers must adopt a more proactive role by verifying the halal status of products and demanding greater transparency from PS. As key intermediaries, PS should take responsibility for improving their halal verification practices by sourcing from credible suppliers, cross-checking certification authenticity, and engaging with recognized halal authorities. Meanwhile, policymakers should implement stricter regulations and monitoring mechanisms to standardize halal verification in cross-border trade. A collaborative effort among all stakeholders is essential to strengthening the integrity of the halal market, ensuring that Muslim consumers can make informed, confident choices.

CONCLUSIONS

To summarize, through qualitative and quantitative data analysis, Bruneian Muslims can access international products because PS services have made such an effort, especially given the scarcity of local halal-certified products, especially in personal care and cosmetics. However, some unresolved issues remain, such as transparency regarding halal compliance and ingredient uncertainty. While PS services demonstrate an acute awareness of market trends and consumer needs, language barriers and the risk of hidden non-halal ingredients remain significant. Enhancing consumer and PS awareness is essential while implementing stricter halal certification policies to build trust and ensure adherence to halal principles. In addition, PS roles should be enhanced to ensure more rigorous halal verification practices. PS plays a crucial role in sourcing and recommending products as intermediary between consumers and international markets. Therefore, they should take proactive measures, such as verifying halal certifications through recognized authorities, cross-checking product ingredients, and staying updated on halal regulatory changes. Establishing clear standard operating procedures (SOPs) for halal verification, collaborating with certified halal bodies, and increasing transparency in the sourcing process can further strengthen consumer trust. By improving its halal verification practices, PS can contribute to a more reliable and ethical supply chain, ensuring Muslim consumers receive products that align with their religious beliefs.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

Despite the valuable insights provided, this study has a few limitations. First, the sample primarily focuses on a specific demographic of Muslim consumers reliant on PS for halal-certified personal care and cosmetics. This narrow focus may limit the generalizability of the findings to other consumer groups, such as non-Muslims, who may also seek ethical or halal-compliant products or to other product categories beyond cosmetics and personal care. Future research could adopt a comparative approach by examining the role of PS in halal verification across different Southeast Asian countries, such as Malaysia and Indonesia, where halal regulations and consumer awareness levels may differ significantly. This would offer a broader perspective on best practices and regulatory gaps in the halal marketplace.

Additionally, incorporating qualitative research methods, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups, would provide richer insights into both consumers' and PS' motivations, challenges, and decision-making processes. Understanding these aspects in greater detail will help refine the application of TCV in consumer behavior research. Furthermore, there is a need to explore consumer education programs specifically designed to enhance the awareness of halal cosmetics. Governments, halal certification bodies, and industry stakeholders can collaborate to develop targeted educational initiatives that equip consumers with the knowledge to assess product authenticity, verify halal claims, and make informed purchasing decisions. These programs could be implemented through workshops, digital campaigns, and collaborations with influencers to reach a wider audience and strengthen consumer confidence in the halal cosmetic industry.

REFERENCES

Ali, S., Halim, F., & Ahmad, N. (2016). The state of halal cosmetic research on consumer behavior: A systematic review of the literature and future research directions. *Journal of Marketing Management and Consumer Behavior, 1*(4), 40–51.

Borneo Bulletin. (2024, April). Halal industry. https://borneobulletinyearbook.com.bn/halal/

Boztepe, S. (2007). User Value: Competing Theories and Models. *International Journal of Design*. 1. 55-63.

Davis, L., & Hodges, N. (2012). Consumer shopping value: An investigation of shopping trip, in-store shopping value and retail format. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 19*(2), 229–239. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2012.01.004

Grand View Research. (2023). *Beauty and personal care products market report, 2030*. https://www.grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/beauty-personal-care-products-market

Haji Muhidin, A. A. (2023). *Isu pengimport produk kecantikkan dan kesihatan halal mengikut undang-undang Negara Brunei Darussalam* [Master's thesis, Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University].

Hapsari, A. Y., & Mohd Saudi, M. H. (2019). The importance of personal shopper's services to support consumer mobility. *International Journal of Engineering and Technology*, *7*(4). https://doi.org/10.14419/ijet.v7i4.34.25305

India Today. (2016). Consumer giants woo Muslims with halal face creams and shampoos.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2018). https://www.mfa.gov.bn/

Ministry of Health Malaysia. (n.d.). *Are cosmetics in Malaysia certified as Halal*. Pharmaceutical Services Program. https://pharmacy.moh.gov.my/en/faq/are-cosmetics-malaysia-certified-halal.html

National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (Ed.). (2024, February 14). *Public alert No. 007/2020: Alert on ban on distribution of three cosmetics products by Malaysian Ministry of Health*. NAFDAC. https://nafdac.gov.ng/public-alert-no-007-2020-alert-on-ban-on-distribution-of-three-cosmetics-products-by-malaysian-ministry-of-health/

Pardede, S., & Kovač, V. B. (2023). Distinguishing the Need to Belong and Sense of Belongingness: The Relation between Need to Belong and Personal Appraisals under Two Different Belongingness–Conditions. *European Journal of Investigation in Health, Psychology and Education, 13*(2), 331–344. https://doi.org/10.3390/ejihpe13020025

Richins, M. L. (1997). Measuring emotions in the consumption experience. *Journal of Consumer Research, 24*(2), 127–146.

Saman, S. Z. M. (2021, July 6). *KKM Brunei kesan produk kosmetik dari Malaysia, mengandungi racun akibatkan risiko kanser kulit*. Rapi. https://rapi.com.my/kecantikan/kkm-brunei-kesan-produk-kosmetik-dari-malaysia-mengandungi-racun-akibatkan-risiko-kanser-kulit/

Shahid, S., Parray, M. A., Thomas, G., Farooqi, R., & Islam, J. U. (2023). Determinants of Muslim consumers' intention to repurchase halal cosmetics: An emerging market's perspective. *Journal of Islamic Marketing, 14*(3), 826–850.

Sheth, J. N., Newman, B. I., & Gross, B. L. (1991). Why we buy what we buy: A theory of consumption values. *Journal of Business Research, 22*(2), 159–170.

Sim, Y. H. (2021). *3 produk kosmetik kandungi bahan terlarang*. Media Permata*.*

Sim, Y. H. (2024). *Produk kosmetik dicemari bahan terlarang*. Media Permata*.*

Sim, Y. H., & Kasharan, Z. (2023). *Empat produk kosmetik dicemari bahan terlarang.* Media Permata*.*

Social Media Marketing for Businesses. (n.d.). *WordStream*. https://www.wordstream.com/social-media-marketing

Statista. (2024). Beauty and personal care – Brunei Darussalam. https://www.statista.com/outlook/cmo/beauty-personal-care/brunei-darussalam

U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (2023, February 2). *Skin products containing mercury and hydroquinone*. https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/mercury-poisoning-linked-skin-products