

Religiously Deviant or a Cult? A Corpus-based Collocational Analysis of the Representation of GISBH in Malaysian English and Malay News Reports

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ABSTRACT

Global Ikhwan Services and Business Holdings (GISBH), a Malaysian conglomerate known for operating a wide range of businesses in accordance with Islamic principles, came under intense media scrutiny in September 2024 following a police operation that uncovered allegations of child abuse in care homes under its management. The incident reignited public discourse surrounding GISBH's historical links to the banned Al-Arqam sect, which has been widely described by Malaysian Muslim scholars and organisations as religiously deviant or cult-like. Given this and the central role of Islam in Malay cultural identity in Malaysia, the current study examined how GISBH is represented in Malay-language media in comparison to its portrayal in English-language outlets in Malaysia. Drawing on West and Langone's (1986) conceptualisation of cults and Langone's (2015) framework of cult characteristics and using corpus linguistics techniques, namely collocational analysis, this study analyses the representation of GISBH in a corpus of Malay and English news reports published between September and November 2024. The analysis involved identifying collocates of the term "GISBH" in each language, categorising concordance lines according to Langone's cult characteristics, and thematically evaluating them based on West and Langone's core elements of cultic groups. The findings show that religious themes were minimal. While the data suggest GISBH is portrayed as non-conformist and cult-like, neither sub-corpus explicitly used the term, and overall representations were similar across both languages.

Keywords: GISBH; representation; cult; Malaysian media; corpus-based semantic analysis

INTRODUCTION

Global Ikhwan Services and Business Holdings (GISBH) is a Malaysian-based business conglomerate established in 2008, emerging from the remnants of Al-Arqam, an Islamic movement banned by the Malaysian government in 1994 (Abdul Hamid, 2015). Under the leadership of the late Ashaari Muhammad, widely known as Abuya, Al-Arqam fused Sufism with socio-economic activism, creating self-sustaining communities and halal business networks grounded in Islamic principles (Abdul Hamid, 2015). Although officially disbanded and labelled as religiously deviant and cult-like, former Al-Arqam members have continued to support GISBH's international expansion by embedding Sufi values into its business ethos.

As a conglomerate with a historical link to the Al-Arqam, GISBH could be considered a second-generation new religious movement (NRMs). According to Barker (2015, p. 235), NRMs are inclined to exhibit shifts in certain characteristics in subsequent generations, which may be "due to demographic changes or disappointed expectations, and some of the changes brought about through the economic, political, technological, legal and cultural influences from the wider

society”. Publicly, GISBH has been recognised as a reputable Malaysian company known for its halal business ventures and promotion of an Islamic lifestyle. However, this image was severely damaged in September 2024 following a major controversy involving allegations of child abuse in several GISBH-operated care homes across Malaysia. A police operation uncovered serious abuses, prompting intervention from high-level authorities, including the Inspector-General of Police and the Department of Islamic Development. The case also drew significant responses from Muslim scholars and organisations, such as the Muzakarah Committee of the National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs Malaysia (MKI), which labelled GISBH’s beliefs and practices as religiously deviant (Malaysian Islamic Council, 2024). Similarly, the Selangor Islamic Religious Department (JAIS) (Nizam, 2024) and Abdul Hamid (2015) described GISBH as exhibiting cult-like characteristics.

The term ‘cult’ is commonly used to refer to groups with unorthodox beliefs, charismatic leadership, and high levels of behavioural control, often involving psychological manipulation (Langone, 1999). When academic interest in NRMs emerged in the 1960s, however, scholars were hesitant to adopt the term due to its association with sensationalist media and the concerns of parents whose children had left behind their education, careers, Christianity, and family ties to join such groups (Cusack, 2023). While scholarly perceptions began to shift in the 2010s, some still contend that there are “no true ‘cults’, just religions that are delegitimised and found wanting compared to the established World Religions” (Cusack, 2023, p. 1). This point brings the discussion to the GISBH case, which, as explained earlier, has been labelled as religiously deviant and cult-like by Malaysian Islamic councils and scholars when the case was exposed by the media in September 2024.

Media coverage of the case by local and international platforms from its initial exposure through to late 2024 suggests a different stance on GISBH between national and international media. International media platforms, such as *CNN*, characterised GISBH as an ostensibly reputable conglomerate that, behind closed doors, operates as a cult-like organisation engaged in severe child abuse and exploitation (Rebane et al., 2025). *Channel News Asia* likewise describes the group as a controversial entity masquerading as legitimate while engaging in systemic abuse and cult-like behaviour (Bedi, 2024). *The Economic Times* emphasises the gravity of the allegations, portraying GISBH as a clandestine group exploiting religious faith to conceal systemic abuse and financial misconduct (AFP, 2024). While international media make reference to cult and cult-like behaviour in their reports of the case, the literature suggests that Malaysian news reports by English and Malay mainstream dailies such as *The Star* and *Utusan Malaysia* highlight the organisation’s alleged deviant teachings and unlawful practices, reporting that the government is undertaking legal action, rehabilitation efforts, and protective measures for affected individuals, particularly vulnerable children (Ismail, 2024; Murali & Nordin, 2024). Another mainstream Malaysian English daily, the *New Straits Times*, echoes this local stance, reporting JAIS’s declaration of GISBH’s teachings as deviant and calling on the public to avoid the group and for its followers to repent (Nizam, 2024). These views suggest that Malaysian local media seem cautious about using the term ‘cult’. This assumption is the motivation behind the current study on the representation of GISBH in Malaysian media.

While the Malaysian media operates in multiple languages, Malay and English newspapers account for about 75% of national readership (Ding et al., 2013; Fong & Ishak, 2014). Malay is the national and official language of Malaysia and is deeply intertwined with the identity of the Malay community and the practice of Islam. According to Article 160 of the Federal Constitution, a Malay is defined as someone who speaks the Malay language, adheres to Malay customs, and

professes the religion of Islam (Siti Zubaidah & Hajar, 2016). Given this strong cultural and religious connection, it is reasonable to assume that Malay-language news reports may frame GISBH differently than English-language reports. Since the media shapes both what is talked about and how it is framed through specific criteria of newsworthiness (Habibah et al., 2020), news reports are worth investigating. Therefore, the objective of this study is to compare news reports in Malay and English to reveal similarities and/or differences in how GISBH is represented across linguistic and cultural contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

REPRESENTATION OF ISLAM AND/OR MUSLIMS IN THE MEDIA

Extensive research has examined how Islam and Muslims are represented in Western media. Baker et al. (2013), analysing a 143-million-word corpus of British press articles (1998–2009), found Muslims were frequently depicted as a homogenous group associated with conflict, alienation from the West, and oversensitivity, thus reinforcing processes of othering. Similar patterns emerged in Poorebrahim and Zarei's (2013) study of *The Times* (UK) and *The New York Times* (U.S.), which, drawing on van Dijk's Ideological Square and Said's Orientalism, showed Islam framed as a threat and Muslims as irrational. Tornberg and Tornberg (2016) likewise observed that a large Swedish web forum portrayed Muslims as a conflict-ridden outgroup, while Samaie and Malmir (2017) found U.S. news stories routinely linking Islam with violence, radicalism, and extremism. Diverging narratives were reported by Ghauri and Umber (2019): *The Age* offered more favourable representations, whereas *The Australian* foregrounded negative portrayals. Li and Zhang's (2021) corpus-based CDA of *The New York Times* (2000–2016) further highlighted persistent negative stereotypes constructed through binary oppositions, sweeping generalisations, and the exclusion of Muslim voices. Extending beyond single outlets, Sufi and Yasmin's (2022) systematic review of media in Canada and New Zealand (2000–2022) revealed recurring Islamophobic discourses, where Muslims were consistently constructed as outsiders through us-versus-them binaries, racialisation, and underrepresentation.

Research on the representation of Islam and Muslims in non-Western and Muslim-majority contexts remains relatively underexplored. Siti Zubaidah and Hajar's (2016) study on the cultural connotations of the word *Islam* in Malaysian newspaper reports shows that it is generally portrayed in a positive or neutral light, reflecting the religion's central role in Malaysian culture and institutions. By contrast, NRMs such as Al-Arqam, Abdul Kahar (the self-proclaimed Malay Prophet), and Kerajaan Langit (the Sky Kingdom) have been reported unfavourably and labelled deviant. In the 2000s, media coverage of the Sky Kingdom and Rufaqa (a company owned by the Al-Arqam leader) in outlets such as Al Jazeera illustrates how alternative interpretations of Islam are framed as threats to orthodoxy, thereby reinforcing boundaries of acceptable belief and practice. Such portrayals highlight the dual role of the media in affirming Islam's centrality to Malaysian identity while marginalising dissenting voices. Similar patterns are evident in Indonesia. Haryanti and Rakhmawati's (2024) critical discourse analysis of Indonesian online news portals' coverage of alleged deviations at the Al Zaytun Islamic Boarding School found that reports consistently framed Al Zaytun and its leader, Panji Gumilang, as straying from Islamic teachings, portraying the institution negatively and casting doubt on its religious legitimacy.

Research on Islam and Muslims has largely concentrated on mass media, particularly news outlets, given their influence in shaping public perceptions (Ghauri & Umber, 2019; Li & Zhang, 2021). Much of this scholarship employs critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine how narratives are constructed across different cultural and political contexts (Ghauri & Umber, 2019; Haryanti & Rakhmawati, 2024; Li & Zhang, 2021; Poorebrahim & Zarei, 2013). Other studies apply content analysis, including topical analysis, to explore framing and recurring themes in media portrayals (cf. Tornberg & Tornberg, 2016). A further strand adopts corpus-based approaches, using collocational analysis to systematically trace lexical patterns and surrounding contexts. Collocations are formulaic expressions which have been at the centre of corpus linguistics. Employing language corpora, “a source of information about the regularity, frequency, and distribution of formulaic patterns in language”, corpus linguistics techniques facilitate the identification of patterns of co-occurrence of linguistic items and the description of formulaic units as found in natural language data (Gablasova et al., 2017, p. 156). These techniques, followed by a concordance analysis, can uncover the evaluative prosodies of the lexical item under study (Baker et al., 2013). The present study adopts the corpus-based collocational analysis approach, as it combines quantitative identification of recurrent associations with qualitative interpretation of their meanings. In doing so, it shows subtle cultural connotations embedded in language use (Siti Zubaidah & Hajar, 2016), revealing the breadth and depth of the semantics of GISBH and its representation in Malaysian Malay and English media.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of cults and their defining characteristics has received considerable attention in the academic literature. One of the earliest and most influential conceptualisations was offered by West and Langone (1986), who defined a cult as a group or movement that demonstrates excessive devotion to a person, idea, or object, and employs unethically manipulative techniques of persuasion and control. They identified three core features of cults: (i) excessive and unquestioning commitment to the group’s identity and leadership; (ii) exploitative treatment of members; and (iii) the presence or potential for harm. This framework provides a comprehensive basis for identifying and analysing groups that may pose psychological, social, and ethical risks to individuals and society. Manipulative techniques commonly employed by such groups include social isolation, physical and psychological debilitation, methods designed to increase vulnerability, intense group pressure, information control, suppression of individuality and critical thinking, and the promotion of dependency and fear of departure. These tactics serve the interests of the group’s leadership and often result in harm to members, their families, and broader communities (Hadding et al., 2023).

Building on this foundational work, Langone (2015) further categorised cultic characteristics into three domains: social-structural, social-psychological, and interpersonal behavioural patterns, which contribute to potential psychological and social harm. These include: (i) blind loyalty (members show unquestioning devotion to the leader and their beliefs); (ii) no dissent allowed (questioning or doubting the group is discouraged or punished); (iii) mind control (practices like chanting and meditation are overused to suppress doubt); (iv) strict control (leaders dictate personal choices, including relationships, jobs, and family life); (v) elitism (the group sees itself as superior, often claiming a divine or world-saving mission); (vi) us vs. them (the group promotes division and conflict with outsiders); (vii) leader above the law (the leader is not accountable to any external authority); (viii) ends justify means (unethical actions such as lying,

deception are justified for the group's goals); ix) guilt & shame tactics (members are controlled through emotional manipulation); (x) isolation (members must cut ties with family and old friends); (xi) recruitment focus (the group prioritizes attracting new members); (xii) money-driven (financial gain is a major focus of the group); (xiii) total commitment (members must dedicate excessive time to the group); (xiv) exclusive social circles (members are encouraged to interact only with fellow believers); (xv) fear of leaving (members believe life outside the group is impossible or dangerous) (Langone, 2015). Complementing this approach, Crockford (2018) explores the cultural representations of cults, identifying three dominant symbols commonly associated with them: (i) charismatic leadership; (ii) isolation from external influence; and (iii) submission or destruction, often symbolised by poison. She argues that in popular culture, cults are not defined by consistent empirical traits but rather constructed through recurring imagery and narratives that portray minority religious movements as inherently dangerous.

While both frameworks highlight themes of control, isolation, and harm, they diverge in focus. Crockford approaches cults as sociocultural constructs shaped by collective imagination, whereas West and Langone emphasise observable behaviours and their psychological consequences. West and Langone's framework is particularly relevant for empirically assessing whether a group exhibits cultic traits by analysing its structure, leadership dynamics, influence strategies, and impact on members. This emphasis on concrete psychological mechanisms underpins the present analysis of how GISBH is portrayed in Malaysian media.

METHODS

To examine whether GISBH is portrayed as a cult in Malaysian media, this study employed a mixed-methods design grounded in corpus linguistics methodology. The qualitative component involved identifying indicators of cultism based on Langone's (2015) list of cult characteristics, with subsequent thematic categorisation guided by West and Langone's (1986) conceptualisation of cults. The quantitative component focused on determining the frequency of each identified characteristic by analysing significant collocates using the *AntConc* software (Anthony, 2024), which includes built-in statistical tools for corpus analysis.

DATA

The data for this study consist of news coverage of GISBH from English and Malay newspapers in Malaysia, published between September and November 2024. This timeframe was deliberately chosen as it coincides with the initial public disclosure of GISBH's alleged misconduct, thereby capturing reporting at the peak of the controversy. To reflect the breadth of readership, both mainstream outlets (e.g., *The Star*, *New Straits Times*) and alternative platforms (e.g., *Malaysiakini*, *Free Malaysia Today*) were included (SCImago Media Rankings, 2024). As shown in Table 1, coverage volume was highest in September before declining sharply in the following months.

TABLE 1. Data source and sub-corpora size

Malaysian newspapers	No. of news reports				No. of words
	Sept 2024	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Total	
English sub-corpus					
<i>The Star</i>	208	122	22	352	120,217
<i>New Straits Times</i>	111	60	22	193	62,670
<i>Free Malaysia Today</i>	77	56	12	145	50,699
<i>The Sun</i>	102	69	22	193	61,808
<i>Malay Mail</i>	121	70	15	206	80,965
<i>Malaysia Kini</i>	81	55	10	146	62,357
Total					438,716
Malay sub-corpus					
<i>Harian Metro</i>	109	64	25	198	63,906
<i>Kosmo!</i>	138	87	22	247	62,040
<i>Utusan Malaysia</i>	213	138	40	391	125,011
<i>Free Malaysia Today</i>	75	62	11	148	43,332
<i>The Sun</i>	74	46	19	139	42,239
<i>Berita Harian</i>	110	46	14	170	58,525
<i>Sinar Harian</i>	255	129	34	418	121,222
Total					516,275

News articles were systematically extracted from the respective online news portals using the Web Scraper extension tool. All newspapers listed in Table 1 have both print and digital editions, except for *Malaysia Kini* and *Free Malaysia Today*, which operate exclusively online. However, no distinction was made between print and digital versions, as both serve the core journalistic function of news dissemination (de Waal et al., 2005; Fortunati et al., 2015). The digital format was specifically chosen for this study due to its facilitation of targeted information retrieval (de Waal et al., 2005) and the ease with which data could be extracted, particularly by searching for the term *GISBH*.

The collected reports were organised into two distinct sub-corpora, i.e. English and Malay, to enable comparative analysis. Although the Malay sub-corpus is 17.8% larger than the English one, the dataset as a whole meets the criteria for a well-constructed comparable corpus, as defined by Rayson and Garside (2000). Specifically, the corpus is: (i) representative, incorporating content from multiple English and Malay newspapers to reflect a range of editorial perspectives; (ii) homogeneous, as it focuses exclusively on *GISBH*-related reports within a uniform time frame; and (iii) comparable, with both sub-corpora sampled and balanced in a similar manner to support meaningful lexical comparisons. Normalisation procedures were applied to ensure analytical accuracy despite the size disparity between the sub-corpora.

DATA ANALYSIS

The two sub-corpora were analysed independently using *AntConc* version 4.3.1 (Anthony, 2024). To address the research objective, both collocational and concordance analyses were employed. Collocates for the node word *GISBH* were generated from each sub-corpus using the collocation tool, with the default window span set to five words to the left and right of the node.

To ensure the relevance of lexical items included in the study, a two-step filtering process was applied. First, function words and proper nouns (e.g., Kulim, Nasiruddin) were excluded, as these typically do not offer meaningful collocational insights. In the second step, potential collocates were evaluated using a combination of log-likelihood (LL) and mutual information (MI) values, in accordance with established practices outlined by Anthony (2022). Although an MI

score of ≥ 3 is generally indicative of strong collocational association, this study adopted a lower threshold of $MI \geq 1.0$, supplemented by an LL score of ≥ 50 . This approach aligns with Ballance (2022), who contends that lower MI values can still yield meaningful results in smaller or domain-specific corpora when supported by contextual analysis. Accordingly, content words with negative MI scores, MI values below 1.0, or LL values ≤ 49 were excluded from further analysis.

To explore whether GISBH is represented as a cult, the concordance lines of all selected collocates were examined qualitatively. This analysis was guided by West and Langone's (1986) conceptualisation of a cult, focusing on the three core elements previously outlined. The collocates were categorised by word class (i.e., nouns, verbs, adjectives) and analysed in context, with reference to Langone's (2015) list of cult characteristics (i.e. member loyalty, no doubting by members, mind control through excessive practices by the leaders, strict control by the leaders, religious elitism, us vs. them, leader above the law, unethical actions justified for the group's goal, members are emotionally manipulated, members must cut ties with family & friends, attracting new members, money-making, commitment by members, members live/socialise with members only, members show fear of leaving). An independent annotator was engaged to tag the concordance lines according to the fifteen characteristics, and the researchers subsequently verified the tags to ensure consistency and reliability. The results were then thematically categorised and evaluated against West and Langone's (1986) framework to assess whether the representations of GISBH aligned with cult-like portrayals.

FINDINGS

COLLOCATES OF GISBH IN MALAYSIAN ENGLISH AND MALAY NEWS REPORTS

The word *GISBH* appears 4,017 times in the English sub-corpus and 7,865 times in the Malay sub-corpus, corresponding to normalised frequencies of 9.15 and 15.23 per 1,000 words, respectively. These frequencies formed the basis for identifying collocates for further analysis. In this study, collocates are defined as recurring content words that co-occur with the node word *GISBH* and meet the previously established thresholds for statistical significance (LL value) and effect size (MI score).

Table 2 presents the number of collocates identified in each sub-corpus, grouped by lexical category. A total of 19 collocates were found in the English sub-corpus and 34 in the Malay sub-corpus.

TABLE 2. Number of GISBH collocates by lexical category

Lexical categories	No. of collocates in the English sub-corpus	No. of collocates in the Malay sub-corpus
Noun	9	17
Verb	7	14
Adjectives	3	3
TOTAL	19	34

Although the larger number of collocates in the Malay sub-corpus is partly due to its greater size, the distribution across lexical categories is consistent: nouns are slightly more prevalent than verbs, while adjectives are the least common. The prominence of noun collocates aligns with prior

research on the representation of Islam, such as studies by Baker et al. (2013) and Poorebrahim and Zarei (2013), which also report strong noun associations. However, the relatively high number of verb collocates in the current dataset merits further examination.

Table 3 lists the collocates of *GISBH* that meet the required LL and MI thresholds, along with their raw and normalised frequencies. Several overlaps are evident across the two sub-corpora. Notably, the collocates *members/followers* and their Malay equivalents *ahli/pengikut* appear among the top three in both corpora. Similarly, the adjectives *deviant* and *sesat*, which share a similar semantic meaning, are prominent in their respective sub-corpus. Additionally, semantically equivalent verbs such as *related* and *berkaitan/dikaitkan* rank among the five most frequent collocates. The equivalents of most of the English collocates also appear in the Malay list, with the exceptions of *premises*, *denied*, *senior*, *operated*, and *scandal*.

TABLE 3. Collocates of GISBH in the English and Malay sub-corpora

English collocates	Freq. RF (ppW)	LL value	MI score	Malay collocates	Freq. RF (ppW)	LL value	MI score
members	320 (0.7)	337.5	1.8	<i>ahli</i> (member)	960 (1.9)	1132.8	1.9
including	244 (0.56)	149.9	1.3	<i>pengikut</i> (follower)	568 (1.1)	801.6	2.1
followers	196 (0.4)	288.2	2.2	<i>berkaitan</i> (related to)	493 (0.95)	255.5	1.2
deviant	177 (0.4)	104.4	1.3	<i>dikaitkan</i> (linked to)	417 (1.1)	557.1	2.0
related	146 (0.33)	135.4	1.6	<i>isu</i> (issue)	405 (0.78)	230.7	1.2
top	141 (0.32)	224.1	2.3	<i>sesat</i> (deviant)	327 (0.6)	157.6	1.1
premises	138 (0.31)	95.0	1.4	<i>pemimpin</i> (leader)	281 (0.3)	196.3	1.4
management	123 (0.28)	185.8	2.2	<i>ditahan</i> (arrested)	276 (0.53)	112.0	1.0
activities	104 (0.24)	68.3	1.3	<i>milik</i> (belong to)	223 (0.43)	296.1	2.0
ceo	91 (0.2)	147.8	2.3	<i>dipercayai</i> (believed to be)	204 (0.4)	90.3	1.1
associated	85 (0.19)	127.3	2.2	<i>tertinggi</i> (highest)	199 (0.39)	311.0	2.2
suspected	84 (0.19)	74.8	1.6	<i>ceo</i>	181 (0.35)	319.4	2.4
denied	76 (0.17)	94.9	2.0	<i>kegiatan</i> (activity)	181 (0.3)	177.0	1.7
beliefs	75 (0.17)	56.5	1.5	<i>disyaki</i> (suspected)	169 (0.3)	74.2	1.1
network	71 (0.16)	130.2	2.5	<i>bekas</i> (former)	166 (0.32)	120.4	1.4
senior	52 (0.12)	62.0	1.9	<i>kaitan</i> (connection)	161 (0.35)	161.7	1.7
operated	47 (0.11)	69.6	2.2	<i>pengurusan</i> (management)	160 (0.54)	193.8	1.9
scandal	34 (0.08)	61.9	2.5	<i>rangkaian</i> (its network)	157 (0.3)	316.2	2.6
connected	32 (0.07)	52.0	2.3	<i>pegawai</i> (officer)	152 (0.3)	75.1	1.1
				<i>fahaman</i> (ideology)	136 (0.26)	76.3	1.2
				<i>akaun</i> (account)	125 (0.24)	79.7	1.3
				<i>isteri</i> (wife)	123 (0.29)	74.2	1.3
				<i>kepercayaan</i> (belief)	118 (0.23)	92.8	1.5
				<i>menyeleweng</i> (deviate)	110 (0.33)	71.2	1.3
				<i>berkait</i> (connected to)	107 (0.21)	158.1	2.2
				<i>direman</i> (detained)	90 (0.17)	53.5	1.3
				<i>mengamalkan</i> (practising)	80 (0.15)	66.1	1.5
				<i>aset</i> (asset)	77 (0.15)	51.9	1.4
				<i>disambung</i> (continued)	68 (0.13)	88.7	2.0
				<i>membayar</i> (to pay)	68 (0.13)	68.9	1.7
				<i>rangkaian</i> (network)	58 (0.11)	53.3	1.6
				<i>kendalian</i> (operated)	51 (0.1)	53.1	1.7
				<i>dibekukan</i> (frozen)	42 (0.08)	53.1	2.0
				<i>pantau</i> (monitor)	37 (0.07)	61.3	2.3

Note: RF = raw frequency; ppW = per 1000 words

Notably, 10 out of Langone's (2015) 15 cult characteristics are reflected in the collocates of the comparable corpus. Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of these characteristics, by lexical category and percentage, for the English sub-corpus. It is apparent that a majority (66%) of English collocates do not exhibit cult-like traits. Instead, they predominantly reflect actions taken by

Malaysian authorities, such as investigations and arrests (examples 1–4), as well as government-led rehabilitation efforts targeting GISBH members (examples 5–6).

1. ...collaboration with the Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM) has initiated investigations into the **activities** and movements of GISBH in Johor. (MalayMail_Sept24.txt)
2. Last week, Bukit Aman CID raided 20 charity homes **associated** with GISBH in Selangor and Negeri Sembilan, rescuing 392 children and adolescents (MalayMail_Sept24.txt)
3. ... Criminal Investigation Department (CID) director Shuhaily Zain said 58 individuals linked to GISBH, **including** its CEO, have been arrested under Sosma to facilitate ongoing investigations. (FMT_Oct24.txt)
4. More than 300 people associated with GISBH, including its top **management**, were detained in recent operations to clamp down on the company... (FMT_Oct24.txt)
5. “The government is fully committed to helping GISBH **members** recover from issues related to faith and their livelihoods (TSun_Oct24.txt)
6. Finalising seven modules to rehab GISBH **followers’** faith, minister says (MKini_Nov24.txt)

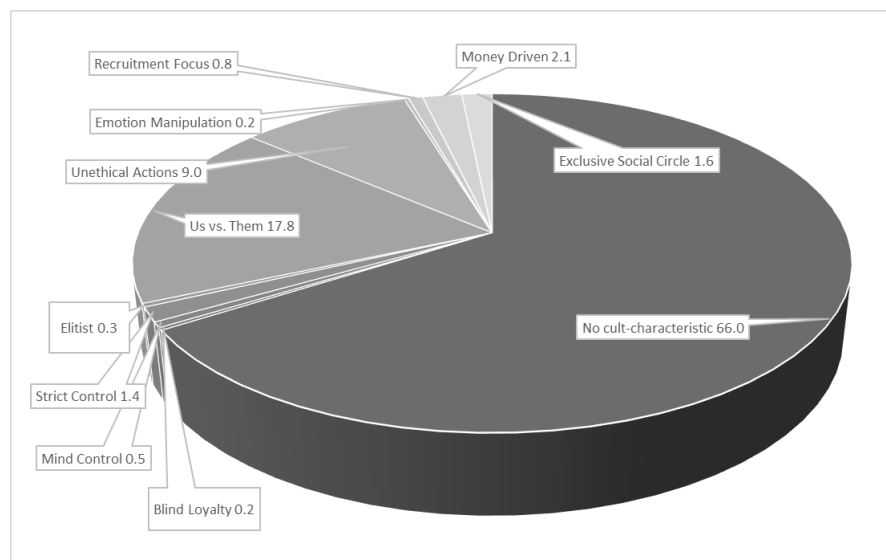


FIGURE 1. Distribution of Cult Characteristics Identified through English Collocates of GISBH

An analysis of the English collocates associated with cult characteristics reveals that the most frequently represented feature is the promotion of a polarising us-versus-them mentality (17.8%). This is followed by indications of unethical behaviour (9%) and financial exploitation (2.1%). Two characteristics, i.e. exclusive social circle and strict control by leaders, appear less frequently, each accounting for between 1% and 2% of the collocates. Other cult-related traits, including blind loyalty, mind control through excessive practices, elitism, emotional manipulation, and a recruitment-oriented focus, occur only sporadically in the English sub-corpus.

Figure 2 presents the percentage of Malay collocates that reflect cult characteristics in the Malay sub-corpus. As with the English sub-corpus, the majority of collocates (70.5%) do not exhibit cult-like features. These primarily concern police operations, including arrests and rescues (examples 7 and 8). Additionally, many collocates highlight the involvement of Islamic

organisations, members of royalty, and both federal and state-level authorities in efforts to support or rehabilitate GISBH members, as illustrated in examples 9 to 12.

7. *Penahanan terbaharu itu menjadikan keseluruhan 31 individu ditahan termasuk **CEO** GISBH, Datuk Nasiruddin Mohd. Ali. Ia dilakukan Jabatan Siasatan Jenayah (JSJ)...* (UtusanM_Oct24.txt)
8. *...polis melalui Op Global menyelamatkan 402 kanak-kanak dan remaja daripada 20 rumah amal yang **dikaitkan** dengan GISBH di Selangor dan Negeri Sembilan* (BeritaH_Sept24.txt)
9. *Sultan Nazrin titah **isu** GISBH ditangani hingga akar umbi* (UtusanM_Oct24.txt)
10. *Mohd Asri berkata Jawatankuasa mencadangkan masyarakat Islam membantu pemulihan ahli-**ahli** GISBH yang ingin keluar dari kesesatan* (SinarH_Sept24.txt)
11. *Menteri di Jabatan Perdana Menteri (Hal Ehwal Agama), Datuk Dr Mohd Na'im Mokhtar, berkata keputusan berkaitan doktrin **fahaman** GISBH bakal diketahui selepas mendapat perkenan daripada Majlis Raja-Raja* (HMetro_Sept24.txt)
12. *Anwar juga menggesa **ahli** dan penyokong GISB yang berada di dalam dan luar negara, yang tidak dalam siasatan untuk menghubungi pihak berkuasa.* (BeritaH_Sept24.txt)

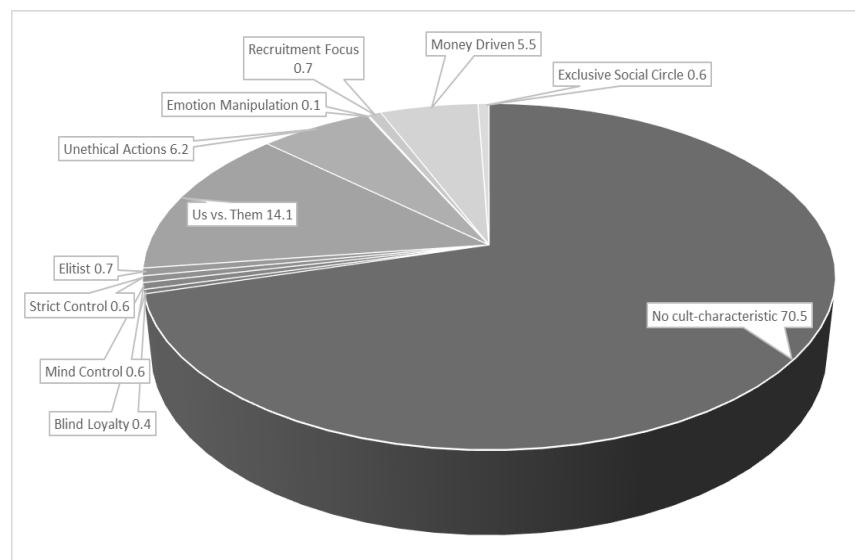


FIGURE 2. Distribution of Cult Characteristics in Malay Collocates of GISBH

In the Malay sub-corpus, the most prominent cult-like characteristic is the promotion of a polarising us-versus-them mentality, which accounts for 14.1% of relevant collocates. This is followed by indicators of unethical actions (6.2%) and money-driven motives (5.5%). These rankings are consistent with those observed in the English sub-corpus, although the overall percentages are generally lower, except for the money-driven characteristic, which appears nearly three times more frequently in the Malay data. The remaining seven cult-like characteristics each occur at a rate below 1%. Despite their lower frequency, two features, i.e. unquestioning commitment to the leader and elitist attitudes, are twice as prevalent in the Malay sub-corpus compared to the English one.

This limited set of collocates offers primary insights into the dominant themes associated with the use of *GISBH* as a noun. A total of 53 collocates, spanning 716 English and 1,487 Malay concordances, were examined and categorised thematically through manual concordance analysis. Descriptive clauses and phrases used in reference to the collocates were grouped into thematically similar categories. The identified cult characteristics in the comparable corpus were ultimately organised into four overarching themes, namely authoritarian leadership and control, elitism and isolation, exploitation and crime, and recruitment and expansion, as discussed below.

AUTHORITARIAN LEADERSHIP AND CONTROL

There are six English and eight Malay collocates, mainly nouns accompanied by their descriptive phrases, that depict *GISBH* as exercising authoritarian leadership and control. These amount to 50 instances in the English sub-corpus and 86 in the Malay sub-corpus. The commonly used collocates within this theme are *followers* and *members*, with their Malay equivalents *pengikut* and *ahli*. Tables 4a and 4b present examples of these collocates alongside their descriptive phrases from both sub-corpora, illustrating this theme. Terms suggesting authoritarian leadership and control frequently co-occur with the said noun collocates.

TABLE 4a. Selected English collocates of *GISBH* reflecting authoritarian leadership and control

further review," he said. Yesterday, Razarudin in a statement revealed that the	beliefs	carried by <i>GISBH</i> followers are too fanatical and deify their leaders
further verification," he was quoted as saying. Yesterday, Razarudin revealed that the	beliefs	held by <i>GISBH</i> followers are excessively fanatic and deify their leaders,
continuation of Al-Arqam teachings, which were banned nationwide. "GISBH	members	venerate their leaders and religious figures to the extent
He said the quarantine centers are believed to be used for indoctrination	activities	and mental abuse against <i>GISBH</i> members who have problems. Meanwhile, Minister
and practices as deviant and contrary to Islam. Former <i>GISBH</i>	members	had alleged that they were brainwashed to believe the
on Friday (Sept 13). He explained that the indoctrination of <i>GISBH</i>	members	did not just happen overnight but for a long
work selling goods. — Bernama 'Everyone has become obsessed': Former <i>GISBH</i>	members	reveal claims of brainwashing, indoctrination and education neglect Saturday, 21
media reports citing police officials alleging massive brainwashing among <i>GISBH</i>	members	into believing they were a select group to be
of sexually assaulting two boys, both aged 11, in 2023. Ex- <i>GISBH</i>	members	tell of brainwashing efforts Bernama 20 Sep 2024, 10:23 PM Two men
and the rescue of 572 victims. — Bernama Police investigation into <i>GISBH</i> 'organised crime'	network	unearth coercion, rampant brainwashing to ensure loyalty, and multiple brides as
actions conflict with the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. "	Followers	of <i>GISBH</i> blindly follow their leaders' instructions, even when these go
Fanaticism towards <i>GISBH</i> leadership trapped	followers	in abuse and financial control, says IGP Thursday, 26 Sep 2024 9:28 AM MYT
like Thailand. Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Razarudin Husain said the	followers'	finances were controlled by <i>GISBH</i> leaders, who were recently arrested and
The top leadership of <i>GISBH</i> has been arrested, so those underneath (<i>GISBH</i>	followers)	have no ability to flee (to the border). The followers are
The top leadership of <i>GISBH</i> has been arrested, so those below them (followers)	cannot flee. <i>GISBH</i> followers are hiding (in the country) because they
practise of Islam, as well as the welfare and future of <i>GISBH</i>	followers,	who are entirely dependent on their leaders," he said. Razarudin elaborated
like Thailand. Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Razarudin Husain said the	followers'	finances were controlled by <i>GISBH</i> leaders, who were recently arrested and
be used for indoctrination activities and mental abuse against <i>GISBH</i>	members	who have problems. Meanwhile, Minister in the Prime Minister'
in Malaysia and abroad are believed to be where <i>GISBH</i>	members	deemed problematic underwent indoctrination and mental abuse.

TABLE 4b. Selected Malay collocates of *GISBH* reflecting authoritarian leadership and control

sebenar Islam di negara ini, kebajikan serta masa depan pengikut kumpulan itu. "	Ahli	kumpulan <i>GISBH</i> bergantung sepenuhnya kepada pemimpin-pemimpin mereka sahaja," ujarnya. Jangan
sebagai Ahmad, 36, mendakwa pendidikan di sekolah kendalian <i>GISBH</i> menjadi platform menanam ketaasuban	ahli,	terutama dalam kalangan kanak-kanak terhadap pemimpin mereka. Menurutny, silibus dicipta
Bellau yang hanya mahu dikenali sebagai Ahmad, 36, mendakwa pendidikan di sekolah-sekolah	kendalian	<i>GISBH</i> menjadi platform untuk menanam ketaasuban ahli terutama dalam kalangan kanak-
sangat mengejutkan dan mempersoalkan adakah ia disebabkan sikap pengikutnya yang taat kepada	pemimpin	secara membuta tuli. "Dakwa <i>GISBH</i> sebagai syarikat yang menjalankan pelbagai kegiatan
JKM dan agensi yang berkaitan bagi menyelaras tindakan terhadap <i>GISBH</i> dan rangkaiannya.	Pengikut	<i>GISBH</i> terlalu taksab, 'agungan' pemimpin Oleh MASZUREEN HADZMAN 25 September 2024, 7:21 PM PETALING
Ketaasuban melampau kepada kepimpinan <i>GISB</i> Holdings Sdn Bhd (<i>GISBH</i>) dikatakan menjadi punca	pengikut	kumpulan itu sanggup 'menggadaikan' kehidupan mereka dan ahli keluarga demi organisasi
lanjut. "Pusat kuarantin ini dipercayai menjadi tempat indoktrinasi dan penderaan mental terhadap	ahli-	ahli <i>GISBH</i> yang bermasalah," katanya menerusi kenyataan pada Sabtu. Dalam perkembangan
sudah didoktrin untuk menipu. Ketua Polis Negara, Tan Sri Razarudin Husain berkata,	ahli	<i>GISBH</i> dilatih atau didoktrin untuk tidak bercakap benar mengenai anak hasil
Jawatankuasa Fatwa Pulau Pinang," katanya. 12 pusat kuarantin <i>GISBH</i> lokasi mengindoktrinasi, penderaan mental	ahli	bermasalah MOHAMAD HISYAMUDDIN AYUB 03 Oktober 2024 06:12pm SHAH ALAM - Polis Diraja Malaysia (
indoktrinasi yang menjadi nilai kehidupan dan dipercayai serta dianuti sepenuh hati oleh	pengikut-	pengikut <i>GISBH</i> . "Doktrin ini sangat berbahaya kepada keselamatan negara khususnya ajaran
masa depan pengikut kumpulan itu. "Ahli kumpulan <i>GISBH</i> bergantung sepenuhnya kepada pemimpin-	pemimpin	merekah sahaja," ujarnya. Jangan terpedaya individu kumpul dana bantu anak-anak
Mohd Shahzihan berkata, siasatan turut mendapati perkahwinan dan perceraian dalam <i>GISBH</i> diatur	pemimpin	kumpulan dan menjalankan akad perkahwinan dengan cara ditentukan oleh pemimpin. Katanya,
baru ini. "Kepimpinan tertinggi <i>GISBH</i> telah ditangkap, jadi yang ada di bawah (pengikut	<i>GISBH</i>) tidak ada kemampuan untuk lari (ke sempadan negara). "Justeru pengikut
Razarudin Husain mengesahkan penahanan kesemua suspek dalam serbuan di sekitar Lembah Klang.	Pengikut	<i>GISBH</i> masih dalam negara, tak mampu lari ke negara jiran - KPN 25
bergantung kepada kepimpinan tertinggi organisasi itu terutama dalam hal kewangan. Bellau berkata,	pengikut	<i>GISBH</i> tiada kemampuan untuk melarikan diri ke sempadan Malaysia-Thailand khususnya
Razarudin berkata agak mustahil juga untuk mereka melarikan diri ke Thailand kerana	pengikut	<i>GISBH</i> tiada tempat hendak dituju di negara berkenaan. "Jika mereka melarikan
Ketua Polis Negara, Tan Sri Razarudin Husain, berkata ini kerana ahli dan	pengikut	<i>GISBH</i> terlalu bergantung kepada kepimpinan tertinggi organisasi itu terutama dalam hal
yang diselamatkan daripada rumah amal kendalian <i>GISB</i> Holdings Sdn. Bhd. (<i>GISBH</i>) berdepan	isu	kesihatan mental dipercayai akibat trauma dihadapi. Menurut Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan, Lukanisman

Excessive devotion to the leader is evident in English phrases such as *members venerate their leaders* and *beliefs... are too fanatical*. In the Malay data, the collocates *pengikut* (follower) and *ahli* (member) frequently appear with expressions like *bergantung sepenuhnya* (entirely dependent) and *menanam ketaasuban* (cultivating blind devotion), portraying GISBH members as displaying unquestioning loyalty. However, this characteristic is less prominent compared to other cult-like traits. Mind-altering practices aimed at suppressing doubt are reflected in English through terms like *brainwashing* and *indoctrination*. Similarly, the Malay terms *didoktrin* and *indoktrinisasi* (from the root word meaning *to indoctrinate*) suggest deliberate and systematic efforts to influence and control members' beliefs. Leadership control over members' personal lives is another recurring characteristic. English data include references such as *followers blindly following their leaders' instructions*, and *followers are entirely dependent on their leaders*, implying a loss of personal autonomy. This characteristic is even more pronounced in the Malay data, with expressions like *pengikut GISBH tiada kemampuan untuk melarikan diri* (GISBH followers lack the ability to escape) and *pengikut GISBH tiada tempat hendak dituju* (GISBH followers have nowhere to go), indicating a strong sense of entrapment. Among the characteristics analysed under this theme, intrusive leadership control emerges as the most frequently represented. The use of shame and guilt is less common but still present. In the English corpus, this is observed in descriptions of members as *having problems* or *being deemed problematic*. The Malay phrase *berdepan isu kesihatan mental* (facing mental health issues) carries a similar connotation, collectively suggesting that emotional manipulation may be used as a means of maintaining control within the group.

Overall, this thematic category presents GISBH as a religious group that systematically controls, manipulates, and psychologically subjugates its members. These representations closely align with West and Langone's (1986) three core features of a cult: excessive commitment by members, exploitative manipulation, and the presence of harm or risk.

ELITISM AND ISOLATION

Elitism and isolation constitute the most prominent theme, comprising 416 concordances in the English sub-corpus and 776 in the Malay sub-corpus. Table 5a presents various English verbs, nouns, and adjectives collocates of GISBH that reflect this theme. Claims of elevated or dignified status are particularly notable in the Malay data, where the collocate *pemimpin* (leader) frequently appears in contexts describing followers using water previously used by their leaders to wash their hands, soak their hair or beard, or clean their dentures (see Table 5b). While similar depictions are found in the English data, they occur less frequently. Instead, English collocates such as *followers* and *members* are more often associated with excessive fanaticism and the deification of leaders, suggesting a deviation from authentic Islamic teachings. This portrayal of leader worship elevates the group's leaders and doctrines above mainstream religious norms, reinforcing the theme of elitism and isolation.

TABLE 5a. Selected English collocates of GISBH reflecting elitism and isolation

of Heresy (PUKAS) through its official Facebook page revealed the alleged heresy	activities	in GISBH. Sept 6	Perlis Mufti Datuk Dr Mohd Asri Zainul Abidin
Police intensify crackdown on GISBH	activities,	seizing books, pamphlets	linked to Al-Arqam BERNAMA 22-09- 2024 08:23 AM KUALA LUMPUR:
He said the teachings and practices of GISBH exhibit similarities to elements	associated	with Al-Arqam,	declared deviant in 1994, and Syarikat Ruffaqa' Corporation Sdn
of teachings that deviate from Islam. Elaborating, Abdul Aziz said GISBH is	associated	with the teachings	and beliefs of the Al-Arqam group, which
Fatwa Committee was the first state Islamic authority to declare that the	beliefs	and teachings of	GISBH contained elements of deviant teachings. — Bernama Selangor
Last month, Perlis mufti Asri Zainul Abidin declared that GISBH promoted deviant	beliefs	and operated its	businesses in an unIslamic manner. Perlis religious council
the national Islamic council said the beliefs and teachings spread by GISBH	CEO	Nasiruddin Ali deviated	from the true teachings of Islam. The muzakarah
Kayu Hitam border which were heading towards Thailand have been seized. GISBH	CEO,	wife and son	of former Al-Arqam leader among 19 individuals arrested
Bernama that MAIK would intensify operations to raid GISBH premises, including those	connected	to the founder	of the banned Al-Arqam, the late Ashaari
the teachings and beliefs espoused by GISB Holdings Sdn Bhd (GISBH) as	deviant	and a continuation	of the banned al-Arqam movement. The committee
to declare the teachings, ideology, and practices of GISB Holding (GISBH) as	deviant	and contradictory	to Islamic principles. Johor Mufti Datuk Yahya Ahmad said
(MKI) had ruled that the teachings, beliefs, and practices of GISBH were	deviant	and misleading.	Regarding the payment of zakat by GISBH, Mohd Fared
Religious Affairs's (MKI) muzakarah committee, which declared GISBH's teachings as	deviant	and straying from	Islamic teachings, Bernama reported. He said MAINI, through
has declared that the beliefs and teachings of GISB Holdings (GISBH) are	deviant	and unIslamic.	This makes Perlis the first state to declare the
the authorities) unable to monitor their activities. "They (GISBH) also confined their	activities	to within their	own group, thus making it difficult for us
venturing into businesses and this made (the authorities) unable to monitor their	activities. "	They (GISBH) also	confined their activities to within their own group,
The homes are believed to have been used by various GISBH	members	over the years.	Earlier, Inspector-General of Police Tan
collect DNA samples because we know that their fathers are	members	of GISBH itself,"	he was quoted saying by the
she added. Police investigate claims of abuse, confinement by GISBH	members -	IGP BERNAMA 19-10- 2024 10:38 PM	KUALA LUMPUR: The police are currently

One of the most frequently occurring adjective collocates in the English sub-corpus is *deviant*, which, along with its Malay counterparts, i.e. the verb *menyeleweng* (to deviate) and the noun *sesat* (deviant), is commonly used to promote a polarising us-versus-them narrative in representations of GISBH's teachings and practices. The banned Islamic movement Al-Arqam also frequently appears with several English noun collocates (e.g., *activities*, *beliefs*, *CEO*) and verb collocates (e.g., *associated*, *connected*). A similar pattern emerges in the Malay data, where *Al-Arqam*, together with references to *Abuya* (the movement's founder) and *Aurad Muhammadiyah* (its teachings), co-occurs with noun collocates such as *fahaman* (ideology), *isu* (issue), *kegiatan* (activity), and *kepercayaan* (beliefs), as well as verb collocates like *dipercayai* (believed) and *mengamalkan* (practised). These collocational patterns suggest that speculation about the revival of the Al-Arqam movement may hold some credibility. This language positions GISBH in contrast to mainstream Islam, reinforcing an insular group identity that distinguishes its members from the broader Muslim community. Social isolation is further reflected in collocates such as *confined* in the English data and *mengurung* (to confine) in the Malay data. These terms tend to appear alongside noun collocates like *members*, *activities*, and *pengikut* (followers), implying that GISBH members' movements and interactions are restricted within the group. Such patterns suggest that contact with outsiders is either discouraged or tightly controlled.

TABLE 5b. Selected Malay collocates of GISBH reflecting elitism and isolation

yang bercanggah dengan syarak. "Seperti bertabarruk dengan apa-apa yang digunakan oleh	pemimpin	GISBH antaranya makan	dan minum air basuhan tangan, rendaman gigi, janggut
serta guru mursyid dari alam ghaib. Seorang bekas anggota GISBH mendedahkan bahawa	pemimpin	mereka juga mendakwa	mampu berhubung dengan Rasulullah melalui yaqazah (dalam keadaan
air basuhan anggota badan pemimpin dan air rendaman seperti rambut dan janggut	pemimpin	mempunyai berkat.	"GISBH juga mengamalkan ekonomi ma'ash yang mempunyai unsur
menyakinkan orang dan ini sangat sedih," katanya. UTUSAN Tuduhan minum 'air kaki'	pemimpin	tuduhan pelik – GISBH	Oleh AHMAD FADHLULLAH ADNAN 14 September 2024, 10:44 AM
kata KPN FMT Reporters 25 Sep 2024, 8:35 PM Razarudin Husain berkata, pegangan GISBH 'mendewakan'	pemimpin	sehingga memutarbelitkan	ajaran Islam sebenar. PETALING JAYA: Ketua Polis Negara, Razarudin
Jawatankuasa Fatwa Selangor berpuas hati dan meyakini bahawa pemimpin, pengikut, pekerja atau	ahli	GISBH dan rangkaian	nya telah dan masih mengamalkan Aurad Muhammadiyah atau zikir
mesyuarat kali ke-125 pada 24 hingga 26 September lalu memutuskan ajaran, fahaman dan pegangan	ahli	GISBH adalah sesat	dan menyeleweng daripada ajaran agama Islam. Pengerusinya, Datuk
Harian Metro. Terdahulu, akhbar ini melaporkan siasatan PDRM mendapati GISBH	dipercayai	masih mengamalkan Aurad	Muhammadiyah yang diharamkan pada 1994. Razarudin dilaporkan
Pulapal, di sini, hari ini. 280 premis sudah GISBH diserbu GISBH	dipercayai	masih amal ajaran	Abuya - KPN GISBH: Polis sita 153 akuan
yang mempunyai persamaan dengan al-Arqam," tulis khutbah itu. Khutbah itu memaklumkan,	fahaman	dan ajaran antara	GISBH dan al-Arqam merupakan sebuah kumpulan ajaran
Kebangsaan Bagi Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Malaysia (MKI) memutuskan ajaran, pegangan dan	fahaman	GISBH adalah sesat	dan menyeleweng daripada ajaran Islam. - Bernama Bukan aniaya
Aga-ma Islam Selangor (MAIS) membuat pemantauan terhadap pergerakan GISBH susulan wujud	isu	ajaran sesat dikaitkan	dengan syariat itu. Exco Agama Islam dan Pembudayaan
syarikat GISBH menjadi tular baru-baru ini. "Hasil kajian tersebut turut merangkumi	isu	penglibatan GISBH	dalam ajaran Kumpulan Al-Arqam dan rangkaian
yang diwartakan sesat pada 1994. "Kita melihat ada amalan dalam GISBH menyamai dengan	kegiatan	Al-Arqam pimpinan	Allahyarham Ashaari Muhamad yang mempunyai kefahaman, amalan dan
GISBH) baru-baru ini. Pada 20 Sept lalu, Jawatankuasa Fatwa Negeri Perlis memutuskan	kepercayaan	dan ajaran dalam	GISBH mengandungi unsur ajaran sesat khususnya batiniah. Dalam
Terdahulu, akhbar ini melaporkan siasatan PDRM mendapati GISBH dipercayai masih	mengamalkan	Aurad Muhammadiyah	yang diharamkan pada 1994. Razarudin dilaporkan berkata, ini
pada itu, Razarudin berkata, pemimpin dan pengikut GISBH dipercayai masih	mengamalkan	dan berpegang	kepada ajaran Tarekad Aurad Muhammadiyah yang pernah
pengikut Global Ikhwah Services and Business Holdings (GISBH) masih lagi	mengamalkan	kepercayaan Aurad	Muhammadiyah yang diwarisi sejak era Al-Arqam.
ajaran, pegangan dan fahaman yang dibawa GISBH sebagai sesat serta	menyeleweng	dari pada ajaran	Islam. Menteri Besar, Datuk Seri Saarani Mohamad
Negeri Selangor meneliti seterusnya memutuskan persoalan sama ada amalan GISBH	menyeleweng	atau bercanggah	ajaran Islam sebenar. Rangkaian perniagaan GISBH di
Perlis, Selangor dan Pahang mengisytiharkan ajaran dan kepercayaan GISBH adalah	menyeleweng	dan sesat.	Jawatankuasa fatwa ketiga-tiga negeri itu berpendapat

ini enam negeri telah mengisytiharkan ajaran dan amalan GISBH sebagai	sesat	dan bercanggah dengan Islam iaitu Perlis, Selangor, Pahang, Melaka,
Muzakarah MKI Datuk Dr Nooh Gadut mengesahkan GISBH diisytihar sebagai	sesat	dan telah diputuskan dalam mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Muzakarah MKI ke-125
Al-Arqam yang dikaitkan dengan GISBH, yang didakwa wujud ajaran	sesat	dan menanam ketaasuban dalam kalangan pengikutnya. Susulan itu, Polis
Melaka adalah negeri keempat yang memfatwakan ajaran dalam GISBH sebagai	sesat	dan menyimpang daripada pegangan Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah. Sebelum
Melaka memutuskan ajaran dan kepercayaan dalam GISB Holdings (GISBH) adalah	sesat	dan tersasar daripada ajaran Islam sebenar serta Ahli Sunnah
Nasiruddin Mohd Ali dan syarikat GISB Holdings Sdn Bhd (GISBH)	sesat	serta menyeleweng daripada ajaran Islam. Pengerusinya Datuk Dr Nooh
penghuni lain. "Pengadu menyatakan dia cuba melarikan diri kerana tidak tahan perbuatan	pengikut	GISBH yang mengurung dan memisahkannya dengan anaknya," katanya. Razarudin turut mengesah
ke Perkampungan Maahad Sayuti Batu Hampar, Perak untuk menunjukkan rumah digunakan oleh	pengikut	GISBH untuk mengurungnya sebelum dihantar kepada neneknya di Kedah. "Pengecaman lokasi
berkata, wanita berusia 41 tahun itu telah menunjukkan rumah yang telah digunakan oleh	pengikut	GISBH untuk mengurungnya. Katanya, ini susulan hasil keterangan yang diambil terhadap
pegawai penyiasat dan jurugambar polis. "Pengadu menunjukkan rumah yang telah digunakan oleh	pengikut	GISB Holdings (GISBH) untuk mengurungnya sebelum pengadu dihantar kepada neneknya ke
pada: Oktober 4, 2024 @ 2:44pm "Saya nak jumpa anak sendiri pun tak boleh" - bekas	pengikut	GISBH Oleh: Aizat Sharif Kangar: "Sudahlah saya dipisahkan dengan anak saya
turut memisahkan suami, isteri dan anak-anak yang seawal usia dua tahun. "	Pengikut	yang keluar daripada GISBH tidak dibenarkan untuk berjumpa dengan isteri, anak,
GISBH di Batu Hampar. – UTUSAN Anak 'Abuya' selesai tunjuk lokasi rumah dikurung	pengikut	GISBH – KPN Oleh NURAINA HANIS ABD. HALIM 20 Oktober 2024, 6:17 pm PETALING JAYA:

This thematic category illustrates that GISBH is portrayed as a religiously deviant group, engaging in practices that deviate from established religious norms and may jeopardise the spiritual and social well-being of its members. This aligns with two core cult characteristics identified by West and Langone (1986): an excessive and unquestioning commitment by members to the group's beliefs and leadership, and the presence or potential for harm, particularly through mechanisms of isolation and control exerted over followers.

EXPLOITATION AND CRIME

The theme of exploitation and crime, primarily reflected through noun and verb collocates, emerges as the second most prominent theme, with 225 concordance lines in the English sub-corpus and 588 in the Malay sub-corpus. As shown in Table 6a, English noun collocates such as *activities*, *network*, and *premises* usually appear alongside references to illegal operations, including unregistered businesses and child exploitation. The verb *including* often occurs in contexts detailing specific criminal acts, such as sexual assault and sodomy. Similarly, in the Malay sub-corpus, noun collocates such as *pemimpin* (leader), *ahli* (member), *CEO*, and *kegiatan* (activity), along with verb collocates like *mengamalkan* (practised) and *berkait* (linked), are associated with a range of criminal activities, comprising human trafficking, child exploitation, and polygamy, as illustrated in Table 6b. The collocate *pemimpin* (leader) is frequently portrayed as a perpetrator involved in abuse, rape, or coercive marriages targeting female victims.

TABLE 6a. Selected English collocates of GISBH reflecting exploitation and crime

Sharafuddin expressed his dismay over reports of police investigations into the criminal	activities	of GISBH and its affiliates. He ordered that all charity homes
criteria, under Section 130V of the Penal Code, to classify GISBH's	activities	as an organised crime group. "Firstly, the group involves more than
GISBH that are suspected of being involved in child and religious exploitation	activities.	A total of 359 GISBH followers were also arrested including the top
care were sodomised or forced to sexually assault others. On Saturday, GISBH	CEO	Nasiruddin Ali admitted that cases of sodomy had occurred within the
for the police force to take any necessary action against any criminal,	including	the alleged GISBH offenders, but the police don't have to
victims were told to have experienced various forms of exploitation and abuse,	including	sexual assault, but GISBH has since denied these allegations. Three individuals
Police said the victims had endured various forms of exploitation and abuse,	including	being sodomised. GISBH has since denied the allegations of child exploitation
once or twice a month. On Thursday, 16 individuals including GISBH's top	management	linked to child exploitation activities and alleged doctrine of religious fanaticism
Global Ikhwani Services and Business Holdings (GISBH) Remaja Pembela Ummah	members	have been arrested in connection with alleged human trafficking
was taken to Türkiye and subjected to abuse by GISBH	members	under her husband's orders. She eventually fled to
closure of all charitable homes and Islamic schools under GISBH and its	network,	which are unregistered or suspected of involvement in criminal activities. Children
Sultan Sharafuddin expressed his disappointment regarding the issues surrounding GISBH and its	network,	which are linked to criminal activities and are currently under police
immediate closure of all unregistered welfare homes and Islamic schools in Selangor	operated	by GISBH and its network. In response, executive councillor Fahmi Ngah,
Highness also expressed his regret and disappointment upon learning that several GISBH	premises	in the state had been operating without proper registration for an
post by the Selangor Royal Office, Sultan Sharafuddin decreed that all GISBH	premises	in Selangor which are unregistered and suspected of committing criminal activities
Act (ATIPSOM) 2007. With regard to the 10 police reports alleging that workers at	premises	related to GISBH were not paid their wages, he said an
police raids, Razarudin confirmed that this is indeed happening. "Yes, many GISBH	premises	have changed their signboards. We have identified them and are conducting

ceasing operations. This could be seen when several businesses believed to be	associated	with GISBH such as restaurants, bakeries, grocery stores and laundromat face
is not fiction - it is the testimony from one of the detainees	connected	to GISBH, a so-called "Muslim business" that has been at
employees of the company. Commenting on his Sept 25 statement regarding the GISBH	network	having never paid business-related taxes, the IGP clarified that this
police and the Inland Revenue Board, it was discovered that the GISBH	network	has never paid any business taxes. Razarudin noted that this corroborates
and victims," he said. On Sept 23, Razarudin said a total of 138 accounts	related	to GISBH had been frozen, involving a sum of more than
SSM registration. "At the same time, a review of data and websites	related	to GISBH or 'Ikhwan' has found that 201 businesses could be linked
It has been reported that the police have so far frozen 153 accounts	related	to GISBH, amounting to RM882,795.94. Thirty-eight vehicles worth an estimated
talks on tithe collection at GISBH premises. "There are more than 20 GISBH-	related	companies on our list but none have made zakat payments to

The depiction of GISBH's involvement in organised crime is further strengthened by verb collocates such as *associated* and *related*, which frequently appear near references to frozen bank accounts. In the Malay data, the verb *membayar* (to pay), often in its negated form (*tidak membayar*), commonly precedes terms like *cukai* (tax), *zakat*, and *sewa* (rental), indicating widespread financial non-compliance and labour violations. Additionally, the prominence of Malay noun collocates such as *akaun* (account) and *aset* (asset) underscores the financially driven nature of GISBH's operations, reinforcing its portrayal as a network engaged in complex financial misconduct.

TABLE 6b. Selected Malay collocates of GISBH reflecting exploitation and crime

rendaman seperti rambut dan janggut pemimpin mempunyai berkat. "GISBH juga	mengamalkan	ekonomi ma'ash yang mempunyai unsur perhambaan yang mana
dikaitkan dengan fahaman kumpulan Al-Arqam selepas pembongkaran kegiatan GISBH	berkait	dakwaan eksploitasi manusia dan penderaan terhadap kanak-kanak. LHDN
sosial dibanjiri lagu-lagu dikaitkan dengan fahaman kumpulan Al-Arqam selepas pembongkaran	kegiatan	GISBH berhubung dakwaan eksploitasi manusia dan penderaan terhadap kanak-kanak.-UTUSAN
dan ajaran tersebut dengan segera," menurutnya. Anak sulung Asaari dakwa dipaksa kahwin	pemimpin	GISBH Chia Wan Rou 18 Oct 2024, 5:11 PM Ummu Attiyah mendakwa dipaksa menjadi
sini, hari ini. Dalam pada itu, Razarudin berkata, siasatan juga mendapati ada	ahli	GISBH yang berpoligami dengan beristeri empat mempunyai 34 anak. "Ada berkahwin empat
tersebut," katanya. Semalam, Ketua Polis Negara, Tan Sri Razarudin Husain mendedahkan terdapat	ahli	GISBH yang mempunyai 34 anak namun hanya dua anak yang tinggal bersamanya.
dengan Abdullah dan ibu bapa tidak mengetahui status mereka kerana ada perkahwinan	ahli	GISBH yang disyaki tidak didaftarkan. Dalam pada itu, Mohd Na'im
undang sedia ada bagi memastikan keamanan dan ketenteraman masyarakat terus terpelihara," katanya.	Ahli	GISBH dera kanak-kanak di rumah amal dituduh esok Oleh MASZUREEN
GISBH), namun merasa aneh kerana diperlakukan serta didakwa atas pertuduhan sama seperti	ahli	GISBH lain iaitu pengabaian kanak-kanak. Tambahnya, ketika serbuan dibuat, dia
dan ahlinya ada kaitan dengan GISBH yang sedang disiasat, termasuk	berkait	isu eksploitasi kanak-kanak. Setakat ini, Perlis, Selangor dan
untuk ke Thailand. Pada 17 September lalu, siasatan polis terhadap GISBH	berkait	eksploitasi kanak-kanak dilaporkan mungkin mula men-jurus kepada
dan Antipenyeludupan Migran 2007, Kanun Keseksaan (574) dan undang-undang lain yang berkuat kuasa.	CEO	GISBH akui ada kejadian liwat FMT Reporters 14 Sep 2024, 12:22 PM Nasiruddin Mohd
eksploitasi kanak-kanak, Global Ikhwan Service and Business Holdings (GISBH)	dibekukan	dianggarkan bernilai lebih setengah juta ringgit. Razarudin berkata kesemua
perkara itu," katanya. Semalam, 16 individu termasuk pengurusan tertinggi GISBH yang dikaitkan dengan	kegiatan	eksploitasi kanak-kanak dan dakwaan doktrin ketaasuban agama ditahan semula di
di Selangor dan Negeri Sembilan yang dikaitkan dengan GISBH kerana didakwa terlibat	kegiatan	eksploitasi kanak-kanak dan penyalahgunaan agama. Saifuddin Nasution berkata, pihaknya ingin
yang dikaitkan dengan GISB Holdings Sdn Bhd (GISBH) yang didakwa terlibat dalam	kegiatan	eksploitasi kanak-kanak dan dakwaan doktrin ketaasuban. Susulan serbuan itu, seramai 402
Marzuki Hassan. Tambah beliau, daripada sudut muamalah ekonomi pula, GISBH	mengamalkan	ekonomi yang mempunyai unsur perhambaan dan penindasan terhadap mereka
Atiyah sudah membuat laporan polis mendakwa dirinya dipaksa berkahwin dengan seorang daripada	pemimpin	GISBH di Turkiye, sebelum dibawa pulang ke negara ini dan dikurung
itu, wanita berusia 41 tahun itu mendakwa dia menjadi mangsa rogol kepada seorang	pemimpin	GISBH yang ingin menikahnya secara paksa. Ummu Atiyah turut mendakwa dikurung
dengan anaknya dan dilarikan ke Turkiye serta didera kerana enggan memenuhi kehendak	pemimpin	GISBH itu untuk bersama sehinggalah dirogol. Wanita itu juga mendakwa dia
direkodkan diterima daripada GISBH dan anak syarikatnya. "Terdapat lebih 20 syarikat	berkaitan	GISBH yang ada dalam senarai kami, yang kami semak
Lembaga Zakat Selangor (LZS) hari ini memaklumkan terdapat lebih 20 syarikat	berkaitan	GISBH tidak pernah membayar zakat manakala agensi itu pula
dirampas selain 455 risalah dan logo berkaitan ajaran Al-Arqam. Setakat ini, sebanyak 138	akaun	berkaitan GISBH telah dibekukan membabitkan wang berjumlah RM882,795.94 dan 15 lagi akaun
pemantauan ke atas aktiviti-aktiviti yang me-langgar fatwa pengharaman Aurad Muhammadih. 69	aset	GISBH bernilai RM52.4 juta di 15 negara Oleh NURAINA HANIS ABD HALIM 16
Al-Arqam yang dipimpin Asaari Muhammad pada 30 tahun lalu. - UTUSAN GISBH ada 23	aset	bernilai RM52.4 juta di 10 negara Oleh NURAINA HANIS ABD. HALIM 11 Oktober 2024, 6:30
ajaran Al-Arqam. Setakat ini, sebanyak 138 akaun berkaitan GISBH telah	dibekukan	membabitkan wang berjumlah RM882,795.94 dan 15 lagi akaun telah ditutup
sekurang-kurangnya 13 daripada kanak-kanak terbabit didakwa dilwat. Pihak berkuasa turut membekukan 138	akaun	bank milik GISBH, merampas dana lebih RM800,000, 22 kenderaan bernilai kira-kira
apabila anak-kanak terbabit melakukan kesilapan. Eksploitasi kanak-kanak: Bukit Aman beku 96	ahli	GISBH bernilai RM581,000 Oleh Nor Azizah Mokhtar - September 17, 2024 @ 10:33am bhnews@bh.
material, kewangan, kuasa atau pengaruh. Saifuddin Nasution turut mendedahkan wang hasil kutipan	ahli	GISBH dimasukkan ke dalam akaun peribadi lembaga pengarah syarikat itu yang
ahli-ahli GISBH dan mangsa mereka. Terdahulu, media melaporkan PDRM membekukan keseluruhan 153	akaun	bank berkait GISBH bernilai lebih RM880,000 membabitkan 138 akaun bank aktif manakala
ini, katanya, sebanyak 153 akaun yang disyaki mempunyai kaitan dengan GISBH dibekukan antaranya 138	akaun	bank membabitkan dana berjumlah RM882,795.94 manakala 15 akaun lagi ditutup. CEO GISBH,
Datuk Seri Mohd. Shuhaili Mohd. Zain berkata, pihaknya mempunyai maklumat GISBH memiliki	aset-	aset tersebut di 10 negara melibatkan Asia Tenggara, Asia Barat dan Eropah. "
akan bemarkan sesiapa akan ambil sebegitu mudah," katanya.- UTUSAN GISBH dipercayai ada 23	aset	bernilai RM52.4 juta di 10 negara Oleh NURAINA HANIS ABD. HALIM 10 Oktober 2024, 5:12
bulan lalu. Global Ikhwan Service and Business Holding (GISBH) yang mempunyai pemilihan	aset	bernilai jutaan ringgit di serata negara, malah dunia, didapati tidak pernah
siasatan bersama Lembaga Hasil Dalam Negeri mendapati GISBH tidak pernah	membayar	cukai yang sepatutnya, dan ini selari dengan siasatan pihak
Razarudin Husain memberitahu, siasatan PDRM mendapati rangkaian GISBH tidak pernah	membayar	cukai berkaitan perniagaan mereka. Menurut LHDN, kerjasama pihaknya dengan
LZS) mengesahkan Global Ikhwan Service Business Holdings (GISBH) tidak pernah	membayar	zakat kepada agensi itu sejak penubuhannya. Ketua Divisyen Kutipan
kepada ZPP. "Mengikut maklumat yang kita terima GISBH tidak pernah	membayar	zakat kepada ZPP. Mungkin ada yang bayar secara individu

This theme portrays GISBH as an organisation involved in various forms of exploitation, abuse, and illegal activities, implicating not only its leaders but also its members and the group as a whole. While not always explicitly stated, the data suggest that members themselves participated in child exploitation and financial abuse, likely influenced by manipulation from the leadership to advance the group's interests. These findings correspond to two of West and Langone's (1986) cult dimensions: exploitative manipulation of members and the presence or risk of harm. The widespread freezing of bank accounts further accentuates a real risk of financial loss for members, indicating the personal consequences of their involvement in the organisation.

RECRUITMENT AND EXPANSION

Tables 7a and 7b highlight the prominence of the words *members* and their Malay equivalent, *ahli*, as frequent noun collocates of GISBH, reflecting the theme of recruitment and expansion. A common pattern observed in both sub-corpora is the use of pre-modifying quantifiers to describe the group's size, typically as rough estimates. Examples include phrases like *about 10,000 GISBH members*, *an estimated 10,500 GISBH members*, and in the Malay data, *dianggarkan seramai 10,500 ahli GISBH* (estimated to be 10,500 members). Similar constructions also appear in verb phrases such as *dianggar cecah 10,000 orang* (estimated to reach 10,000 people), often following noun collocates like *ahli* (member) and *pengikut* (follower). The frequent use of these expressions suggests that GISBH is an influential organisation with a large membership base.

TABLE 7a. Selected English collocates of GISBH reflecting recruitment and expansion

to put together the identities and profiles of about 10,000 GISBH	members	nationwide. This is because the information garnered so far
to investigate who these individuals are, how they registered as	members	of GISBH, and whether the registration is legally valid,"
Na'im said it is estimated that there are currently 10,500	members	of GISBH, with approximately 9,000 believed to be within Malaysia. "
Hasan said the allowance would not be granted to GISBH	members	who had been detained after being suspected of being
still needs to examine and identify the backgrounds of approximately 10,000	members	who have joined GISBH. He noted that this number
offenders but rather as victims of GISBH, he said. Interested	members	can register online via the link http://form.jotform .
General of Police Tan Sri Razarudin Husain said about 10,000 GISBH	members,	including children, are believed to still be practising teachings
who these people are, how they registered to become GISBH	members,	and whether the registrations were legal (and so on)."
being placed. Razarudin said it was common for some GISBH	members,	which had been estimated to number around 10,000, to have
Mohd Na'im said that there were an estimated 10,500 GISBH	members,	with 9,000 believed to be in the country. He said
see who these people are, how they registered as GISBH	members.	Is this registration based on the law ? , " he explained.
stayed there have fled," he said, adding that GISBH had 10,000	members. "	We believe their support system has been destroyed following

TABLE 7b. Selected Malay collocates of GISBH reflecting recruitment and expansion

telah dijalankan. "Tiada tangkapan dan hanya siasatan dijalankan. Bagaimanapun, terdapat 200 anak ahli-	ahli	GISBH dari Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Perak dan negeri ini telah diselamatkan
kemungkinan diketahui dalam bulan ini. Seramai 200 kanak-kanak dan remaja dipercayai anak	ahli	GISBH dari Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Perak dan Pulau Pinang berusia antara
dan rancangan untuk pengurusan, Mohd Na'im berkata sehingga kini dianggarkan terdapat 10,500	ahli	GISBH dan 9,000 daripadanya dipercayai berada dalam negara. Beliau berkata, kerajaan telah
selepas pengharaman Al-Arqam pada 1994. Na'im berkata sehingga kini dianggarkan seramai 10,500	ahli	GISBH dan 9,000 orang daripadanya dipercayai berada dalam negara. Menurutnnya, kerajaan
mengesan suspek yang menghantar ugutan jenayah itu kepada mufti," ujarnya. -KOSMO! ONLINE	Pengikut	GISBH dianggar cecah 10,000 orang – KPN Oleh NUR ALWANI ZAFIRAH KHAIRUL 23 September 2024
antaranya Australia dan New York, Amerika Syarikat," katanya. Difahamkan, ketika ini terdapat 10,500	ahli	GISBH di seluruh negara. Justeru, beliau merayu semua ahli GISBH di
anak pun mungkin dia tidak tahu nama," katanya. Disiarkan pada: September 23, 2024 @ 5:51pm	Ahli	GISBH dianggar cecah 10,000 orang Kuala Lumpur: Jumlah ahli Global Ikhwān & Services
mendapati jumlah tersebut melibatkan keseluruhan ahli termasuk kanak-kanak. "Kita anggarkan jumlah	ahli	GISBH kira-kira 10,000 ahli termasuk kanak-kanak," katanya. Justeru, beliau menasihatkan
Op Global yang dilancarkan bulan ini. Sehingga kini dianggarkan GISBH disertai sebanyak 10,000	ahli	termasuk kanak-kanak yang direkrut untuk dijadikan hamba abdi, didera dan
dijalankan. Ketua Polis Negara, Tan Sri Razarudin Husain berkata, GISBH dianggarkan mempunyai	ahli	sekitar 10,000 orang termasuk kanak-kanak di seluruh negara. Beliau berkata, sehingga
hari ini. Foto oleh FARIZ RUSADIO/ KOSMO! KUALA LUMPUR – Dianggarkan seramai 10,000 orang	pengikut	GISB Holding Sdn Bhd (GISBH) meliputi individu yang berada di dalam

This emphasis on substantial membership figures reinforces the portrayal of GISBH as a highly influential group and aligns with one of the cult characteristics identified by Langone (2015), i.e., an intense preoccupation with recruiting new members. This theme corresponds to West and Langone's (1986) conceptualisation of cults, particularly their focus on the presence or risk of harm. While recruitment itself is not harmful, the aggressive recruitment strategies implied by repeated references to large numbers can expose individuals to indoctrination once they join. The data suggest that GISBH's large membership may not merely reflect organic growth but could indicate a systematic and possibly manipulative effort to expand its influence, often at the expense of both new and existing members' well-being.

DISCUSSION

The keyword *GISBH* accounts for approximately 0.92% of the English sub-corpus and 1.52% of the Malay sub-corpus, showing a higher relative frequency in the latter. Fewer than 40% of its collocates are linked to cult characteristics; the majority, around 66% in the English sub-corpus and 70% in the Malay sub-corpus, are unrelated to cultism. These patterns suggest that both English and Malay newspapers in Malaysia emphasise state-led law enforcement and rehabilitation efforts when representing GISBH. Such portrayals align with broader strategic narratives by the media and government, aimed at restoring public trust and reframing GISBH within a corrective and rehabilitative context. This relatively neutral framing also echoes Siti Zubaidah and Hajar's (2016) findings, which underline Islam's centrality to Malaysian culture and institutions. In contrast to studies in Muslim-minority contexts (Baker et al., 2013; Li & Zhang, 2021; Poorebrahim & Zarei, 2013; Samaie & Malmir, 2017; Sufi & Yasmin, 2022; Tornberg & Tornberg, 2016), which consistently link Islam with conflict, radicalism, or othering, the present findings highlight more restrained and culturally sensitive representations in a Muslim-majority setting.

In total, 19 collocates in the English sub-corpus and 34 in the Malay sub-corpus are linked to cult characteristics. Despite the numerical disparity, both sets converge in terms of the dominant cult themes they represent. The most frequently occurring characteristics are the promotion of a polarising *us-versus-them* mentality (17.8% in English and 14.1% in Malay), unethical behaviour (9% and 6.2%), and financial exploitation (2.1% and 5.5%). Collocates corresponding to the remaining six characteristics are particularly scarce. These findings indicate that while the media in both languages reference cult-related traits, the three most prevalent characteristics consistently frame GISBH as socially deviant.

Despite the strong association between the Malay language and Islam in the Malaysian sociocultural context, religiously themed collocates were absent from the analysis. It may be argued that the collocates and their patterns in both English and Malay news reports subtly embed cult-like attributes without explicitly labelling GISBH as a cult. To elaborate on this point, it is necessary to align the observed linguistic patterns and collocational themes with West and Langone's (1986) three essential criteria for defining a cult. Supporting the first criterion, *excessive devotion to a person or group* is reflected in collocates such as *followers*, *members*, *ahli*, and *pengikut*, which appear in both sub-corpora and highlight a centralised group identity anchored in leadership and membership. Phrases like "members venerate their leaders" and *menanam ketaasuban* (cultivating blind devotion) convey a strong sense of unquestioning loyalty. A particularly striking example from the Malay data describes followers using water previously used by leaders, implying ritualistic reverence bordering on deification. These collocational patterns suggest that GISBH's internal dynamics are portrayed, or at least implied, as fostering extreme reverence for its leadership and teachings, thus fulfilling the first criterion.

The second criterion, *manipulative and coercive practices to control members*, is reflected in the presence of collocates such as *indoctrination*, *brainwashing*, *didoktrin*, and *indoktrinasi*, which point to psychological manipulation. Social isolation is represented through terms like *confined* and *mengurung*, as well as phrases indicating a lack of viable alternatives for members (e.g., *pengikut GISBH tiada tempat hendak dituju*, "GISBH followers had nowhere to turn"). Emotional control is further implied through references to mental health concerns and problematic behaviour, hinting at the use of guilt, shame, or fear to maintain group cohesion and obedience.

Together, these elements support the second criterion by illustrating how media representations suggest both psychological coercion and physical or social containment of members.

Collocates such as *exploitation*, *activities*, *network*, *scandal*, *membayar*, and *kegiatan*, along with references to financial misconduct, unlicensed premises, and sexual abuse, collectively portray GISBH as engaging in harmful or criminal behaviour. The involvement of national and religious authorities, such as the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (MRR), and the use of *zakat* allocations for rehabilitation, signals official recognition of the group as a source of potential harm. This further reinforces the perception of GISBH as a threat to both individuals and the wider community.

The theme of exploitation and criminality, which yields 588 concordance lines in the Malay sub-corpus and 225 in the English sub-corpus, is especially consistent with West and Langone's (1986) third criterion: the infliction of harm through exploitative leadership. Media coverage frequently highlights systematic abuse, coercion, and illegal activities, often involving vulnerable populations such as women and children. These portrayals align strongly with the notion of leaders acting in self-interest at the expense of their followers' well-being.

Overall, the thematic analysis offers a more nuanced understanding of GISBH's representation in Malaysian news discourse. The recurring themes identified in both the English and Malay corpora broadly correspond with the core dimensions of cultism outlined by West and Langone (1986), indicating that although the label "cult" is not explicitly applied, its defining characteristics are implicitly communicated.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show that the representation of GISBH in both Malay and English newspapers in Malaysia is broadly similar. Although the collocates and emerging themes tend to frame the organisation and its activities as non-conformist and cult-like, neither Malay nor English reports explicitly use the term *cult* or cult-like to describe GISBH.

Interestingly, despite the close cultural and religious link between the Malay language and Islam in Malaysia, religious concerns were neither prominent in the collocational data nor evident in the thematic analysis. Overall, GISBH is not portrayed in markedly different ways across the two linguistic corpora examined. This aligns with Ding et al. (2013), who observed that Malaysian English- and Malay-language newspapers are generally similar in both content and style. The findings also suggest that Malaysian media adopt a cautious approach when reporting on controversial Islamic organisations.

Future research should extend the scope to other media forms, particularly social media platforms, where representations of GISBH are more dynamic and participatory. Examining user-generated content would enable the triangulation of perspectives and provide deeper insights into how employees, victims, and other stakeholders construct their experiences with GISBH, offering a more comprehensive view of its public image.

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