

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**MUSLIM-FRIENDLY HOSPITALS
IN MALAYSIA:
CURRENT PRACTICES AND
SUSTAINABILITY IN
MEDICAL TOURISM**

**NUR FATHIN NABILAH
MOHD IDRUS**

Thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Contemporary Islamic Studies

Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies

October 2025

ABSTRACT

Malaysia has become a leading hub for medical tourism, with Muslim-friendly healthcare positioned as a niche market that combines medical treatment with Shariah-compliant services to meet the needs of Muslim patients. While standards such as MS1900:2025 *Shariah*-based quality management systems - Requirements with guidance (First revision) and MS2610:2015 Muslim-friendly hospitality services - Requirements exist, no comprehensive framework has been specifically designed for hospitals, resulting in inconsistent practices and uneven adoption between public and private institutions. This study examines the current practices of Muslim-friendly hospitals in Malaysia, identifies the requirements for sustaining medical tourism, and proposes a structured framework for implementation. Using a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews with authorities, industry players, and scholars, the study found that current practices include prayer facilities, gender-sensitive wards, halal-certified food, and the formation of internal Shariah or Ibadah committees. However, challenges remain, such as limited staff competency, a lack of standardised SOPs, and inconsistent regulatory enforcement. Key requirements include developing hospital SOPs that incorporate Muslim-friendly services, establishing Shariah Advisory and Ibadah-friendly Committees, and implementing structured awareness programs. Recommendations target policymakers such as MOH, JAKIM, MOTAC, and MHTC to strengthen regulatory frameworks, encourage hospitals to institutionalise Muslim-friendly services, and promote collaboration between travel agencies and hospitals to offer integrated Muslim-friendly tourism packages. Using the Viable System Model (VSM), the study suggests a holistic framework to integrate these services into hospital operations and medical tourism, enhancing Malaysia's competitive edge in sustainable Muslim-friendly medical tourism.

Keywords: Muslim-friendly Medical Tourism, MS1900, MS2610, Muslim-friendly Hospitals, Viable System Model, Malaysia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Alhamdulillah, all praises and gratitude to Allah SWT, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful, for granting me the strength, stability, patience, and perseverance to embark upon and complete this Master's journey. Without His endless guidance, blessings, and mercy, none of this would have been possible.

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Nur Farhani Binti Zamani, whose invaluable support, encouragement, and academic guidance have been crucial throughout this study. Her dedication, constructive criticism, and thoughtful advice have not only shaped this thesis but also helped me grow both academically and personally. I am truly fortunate to have had the privilege of being mentored by such a committed and inspiring supervisor. Her patience and wisdom will continue to inspire me in my future pursuits. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to my co-supervisor, Dr Rafidah Mohd Azli, for her invaluable insights and encouragement throughout the preparation of this thesis. Her thoughtful feedback has motivated me to keep going even during the most difficult moments.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to Universiti Teknologi MARA and the faculty, Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies (ACIS), for providing me with the opportunity, resources, and an environment to conduct this research. The administrative and academic staff who assisted me throughout this journey deserve special thanks for their dedication and support. I am also grateful to my peers and fellow postgraduate students for their constructive discussions, encouragement, and for making this journey more meaningful.

I am deeply grateful to my beloved husband, whose unconditional love, patience, and encouragement have been my greatest pillars of support throughout this challenging journey. Thank you for believing in me when I doubted myself, for your sacrifices in helping me handle the demands of study and family life, and for constantly reminding me that this journey was worth pursuing. To my beautiful daughter and my newborn son, your presence has brought endless joy and strength. Balancing motherhood with academic responsibilities has not been easy, but your smiles and love have given me the motivation to keep going. This achievement is as much yours as it is mine.

To my beloved parents, my father and mother, I dedicate this work to you with all my heart. Your sacrifices, prayers, and unwavering determination to give me the best education have been the foundation of this success. Thank you for instilling in me the values of perseverance, faith, and hard work. Your vision for my future and your constant encouragement have guided me throughout this journey. This achievement belongs to you as much as it belongs to me.

Finally, to everyone who has contributed directly or indirectly to this journey, whether through academic guidance, emotional support, or simply by offering encouragement at the right moments, I express my sincere appreciation. May Allah reward each of you generously. This thesis represents not only the culmination of years of hard work but also the collective support, love, and sacrifices of the many people who have walked alongside me. For all of this, Alhamdulillah.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS	ii
AUTHOR'S DECLARATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xi
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Research Background	4
1.3 Problem Statement	6
1.4 Research Objectives	15
1.5 Research Question	15
1.6 Significance of Research	15
1.6.1 Authority Bodies	15
1.6.2 Industry Players	15
1.7 Scope of Research	16
1.7.1 Phase of Halal Medical Tourism Supply Chain	16
1.7.2 Type of Medical Treatment	16
1.7.3 Planned Medical Treatment	16
1.7.4 Geographical Scope: Muslim-friendly Hospitals in Klang Valley	17
1.8 Summary	17
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	19
2.1 Introduction	19
2.2 Medical Tourism	19
2.3 Medical Tourism from The Perspective of Islamic Law	26

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

There are many subcategories of tourism, including medical tourism, military tourism, sports tourism, leisure tourism, and tourism for religious purposes. In addition, there are many different types of tourism, but one of the most significant is medical tourism (Ramazani et al., 2014). Medical tourism refers to patients seeking care abroad. Other meanings of medical tourism include acquiring health services, travelling for indigenous and alternative medical remedies, and any other type of travel aimed at alleviating a health condition, often to save money (Salmon, 2008). In Islam, seeking medical treatment is not only permitted but encouraged. From Abu Hurairah RA, The Prophet Muhammad SAW said:

مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ دَاءً إِلَّا أَنْزَلَ لَهُ شِفَاءً

“There is no disease that Allah has created, except that He also has created its treatment.”

(Sahih al-Bukhari, 5678)

Also, from Anas bin Malik RA, the Prophet Muhammad SAW said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ حَيْثُ خَلَقَ الدَّاءَ، خَلَقَ الدَّوَاءَ، فَتَدَاوُوا

“Indeed, Allah created disease and also its cure. Hence, seek medication.”

(Musnad Ahmad, 12596)

Reviewing both Hadiths, it is evident that the knowledge of diseases and their cures is granted by Allah. In relation to medical tourism, these teachings underscore that travelling to seek healthcare is permissible and even encouraged in Islam, provided that the treatments, facilities, and practices comply with Shariah principles. Therefore,