Halal Medical Tourism: A Sentiment Analysis

Syahdatul Maulida[1], Lina Marlina[2]
[1]Tazkia Islamic University College, Indonesia
[2]Siliwangi University

This study aims to look at sentiments related to developments *halal medical tourism* in scientific publications published on the theme. This study uses a qualitative method with a sentiment analysis approach. The data used is secondary data with the theme *"halal medical tourism"* obtained from the Scopus database of 100 scientific publications. Data is processed using *software* SentiStrength for extracting and classifying sentiments. The results of the study found that positive sentiment was the highest with a percentage of 47%, followed by neutral sentiment with 36% and positive sentiment with a percentage of 17%. The increasing demand for halal trends, positive Muslim-friendly innovations and large business potential are reasons for positive sentiment. Meanwhile, there is no international sharia standard for providers *medical tourism* and related community literacy *halal medical tourism* still very low to be a negative issue.

Keyword: Halal Medical Tourism; Sentiment Analysis; SentiStrength

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*Correspondence:
Shahdatul Maulida
syahdatulmaulida3@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

International travel for medical purposes is becoming increasingly common due to the ease and affordability of global travel (Dalen & Alpert, 2019). In addition, global growth in the healthcare sector has enabled medical tourists to have a larger and higher quality healthcare offer (Lunt et al., 2013; Tapia et al., 2022). There are many challenges in trying to meet the expectations of medical tourists with the services provided to medical tourism service providers. Even more challenging is having the ability to understand which aspects influence the expectations of medical tourists (Overby et al., 2005). In recent times, Halal-friendly healthcare has emerged as an important sector of the entire healthcare delivery system. Halal-friendly health services have gained global popularity (Naserirad et al., 2022), in line with the development of halal tourism in general (Al-Qital et al., 2022).

Muslim tourists are a significant and growing market segment for Halal-friendly healthcare. In recent years, there has been a steady wave of frequency of international Muslim patients traveling to Iran for various health services (Kamassi et al., 2021). A large body of literature states that the expectations of medical tourists are influenced by cultural (Kim et al., 2014), socio-demographic (Wang et al., 2016) factors, as well as by past experiences, advertising, social media, and word of mouth communication. mouth about a service (de Lima et al., 2020). Meanwhile, Muslim medical expectations are influenced by personal, social and cultural disparities as well as their belief in Islam (Naserirad et al., 2022). There are complexities and differences in the understanding, interpretation and practice of sharia principles. These complexities and differences are also exacerbated by the culture of these countries.

Understanding and raising the expectations of international medical tourists is seen as a prerequisite for delivering superior services which ultimately helps healthcare providers and hospital managers to implement their healthcare strategies. Medical tourism providers need to have a medical system that is in line with Islamic principles. This system should be based on practices and principles derived from the Quran and Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW (Jais, 2017). Muslims may see it as an option to satisfy their needs and desires while inside or outside the hospital (Kamassi et al., 2020). As a result, many medical tourism providers have begun to expand their capacity by promoting the practice of halal medical tourism (Mahjom et al., 2011).

Based on the conceptualization of halal tourism by Nassar et al. (2015), halal medical tourism can be conceptualized from three points of view. First, from an economic perspective, the expansion of the capacity of medical tourism providers is assisted by the practice of halal medical tourism to take advantage of industry growth. Second, from a cultural perspective, the practice of halal medical tourism must have medical tourism programs, services and facilities. Third, from a conservative religious perspective, it must be ensured that medical tourism providers who follow the Islamic religion carry out their practices properly. Therefore, it is imperative to establish Islamic standards that are anchored in Islamic law to ensure that all medical tourism practices meet the requirements, needs and expectations of Muslim medical tourists.

In addition, other dimensions and factors must also be considered, for example, Padela et al. (2011) have recommended that Muslim medical tourists wish to receive treatment in a friendly environment, gender-based services, halal medicines, and prayer rooms. Attum et al. (2018) also suggested that other issues be considered when serving Muslim patients such as halal food, clothing and privacy, and culture. Therefore, there are clear ethical guidelines and moral responsibilities that medical tourism providers must follow in order to offer the best service to every medical tourist.

To see the extent of developments and related sentiments *halal medical tourism*, this study tries to examine the literature review *halal medical tourism* thoroughly by identifying the pros and cons in research. By using the sentiment analysis method with the help of *software* SentiStrength of this study aims to determine how much positive, negative, and neutral sentiment from scientific publications has on development and implementation *halal medical tourism* in this world.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Travel for health is mentioned in a number of literature under different names, such as health tourism, health travel, international medical travel, spa and wellness, medical tourism, *outsourcing* Muslim-friendly medical and health services (Hutchinson, 2005; Carrera & Bridges, 2006; Connell, 2006; Jones & Keith, 2006; Millstein & Smith, 2006; Bookman & Bookman, 2007; Horowitz & Rosensweig, 2007; Fedorov et al. , 2009; Cormany & Baloglu, 2010; Crozier & Baylis, 2010; Hopkins et al., 2010; Lunt et al., 2010; Yasin & Ozen, 2011; Medhekar & Ali, 2012; Medhekar & Haq, 2018; Kamassi et al ., 2020; Naserirad et al., 2022). Carrera & Bridges (2006) has conceptualized and defined the terms

health tourism and medical tourism, in his research it is stated that medical tourism is part of health tourism. There is also Medheka & Haq (2018) defines *medical tourism* as a phenomenon in which a patient travels with or without a companion outside his country of residence, to another country for treatment.

In Islamic studies, the concept of halal medical tourism arises because of Islamic travel or religious tourism. There are three types of travel in Islam, namely haj/umrah, rihlah, and pilgrimage (Bhardwaj, 1998; Timothy & Iverson, 2008). As time goes by, human needs also increase, such as the development of halal medical tourism, which is part of halal tourism. The explanation of Halal medical tourism leads to the emergence of Islamic marketing practices. Wilson (2012) defines Islamic marketing as recognition of a God-conscious marketing approach, from the perspective of marketers and/or consumers, which describes Islam.

Several studies were conducted to assess development *halal medical tourism*, like Izadi et al., (2013) in their research shows that the application of Islamic practices in medical tourism hospitals increases the satisfaction of Muslim medical tourists. A study by Zailani et al. (2016), they tested the factors that influence the satisfaction of Muslim medical tourists in Malaysian Islamic-friendly hospitals. The authors found that Muslim-friendly service practices by doctors and hospitals have a positive direct effect on consumer satisfaction.

Furthermore, Rahman & Zailani (2016) found that sharia compliance, health service ethics and patient safety had a positive impact on the attitudes and satisfaction of Muslim medical tourists. Kamassi et al. (2020) revealed that several medical tourism destinations such as in Malaysia have started promoting halal medical tourism to attract Muslim medical tourists from various countries in the world. However, the practice of halal medical tourism is not fully implemented because there is no international sharia standard for Muslim-friendly medical tourism. Halal medical tourism practices have also begun to be implemented in India, such as the research object of Medhekar & Haq (2018), in this study also proposed a typology of cultural sensitivity of Muslim medical tourists and recommended branding and certification of halal medical tourism hospitals, health facilities, medicines, products and services to attract Muslim medical tourists.

This research contributes to a better level of knowledge and understanding of the development of the study *halal medical tourism*. See how far the sentiments contained in scientific publications are towards halal medical tourism practices and services in various countries. This research is also the only one that examines the positive and negative issues of *halal medical tourism*.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative sentiment analysis research method using secondary data sourced from various scientific publications during the period 2012 to 2023 with the theme *"halal medical tourism"*. The sampling technique used in this research is method *purposive sampling,* which aims to fulfill certain information in accordance with the desired research objectives. Data collection was carried out by searching journals indexed by the Scopus database by typing keywords *"halal medical tourism"*. After that, articles or scientific journals that are relevant to the research theme will be selected based on the publication data that has been collected. There are 100 scientific publications on research themes *"halal medical tourism"*. As for to see the sentiment on each journal related to *"halal medical tourism"* the author uses *software SentiStrenght.*

SentiStrenght is an algorithm for *opinion mining* which uses a dictionary or lexicon-based approach that works by detecting each word or phrase from an abstract text by checking *terms* which contains sentiments and then *output* the result is the weight of the word or phrase that was successfully detected. By making use of lexical with system *dual scale, SentiStrength* want to show that humans can feel *positive emotion* and *negative emotion* simultaneously, to some extent independently (Norman et al., 2011; Sianipar & Setiawan, 2015).

The sentiment class consists of sentiments *high positive, positive, neutral, negative* and *high negative.* Each sentiment class has a different score interval, *high positive* has a score of 3-5, *positive* has a score of 1-2,*neutral* score 0,*negative*score -1 to -2 and *high negative* has a score of -3 to -5. The sentiment score is then calculated by adding up the sentiment score of each sentence conveyed by the researcher in *software SentiStrength.* Good sentiment *(positive)* is the opinion of researchers who are positive and tend to be optimistic in response to the theme raised. While bad sentiment *(negative)* is the opinion of researchers who are negative and tend to express criticism in studying the theme.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

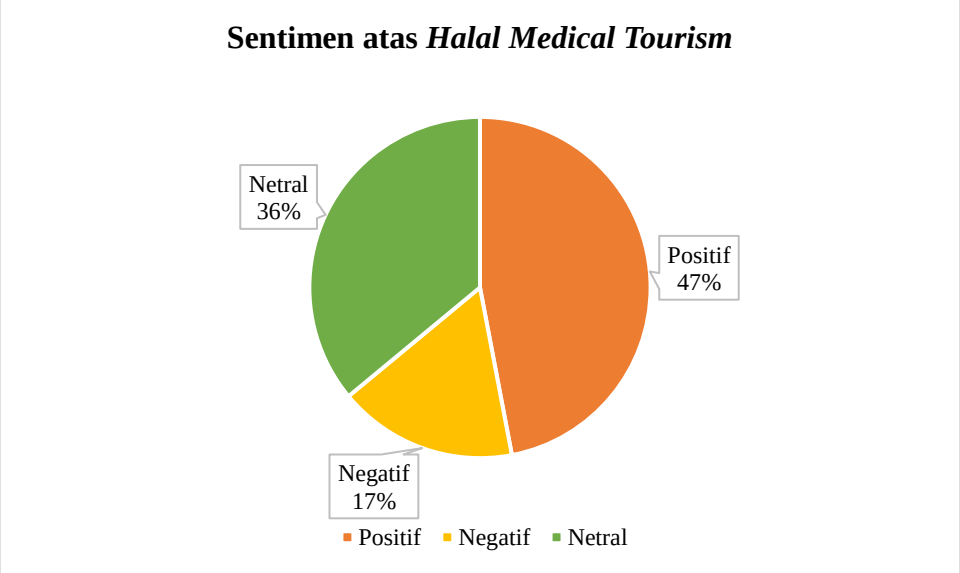
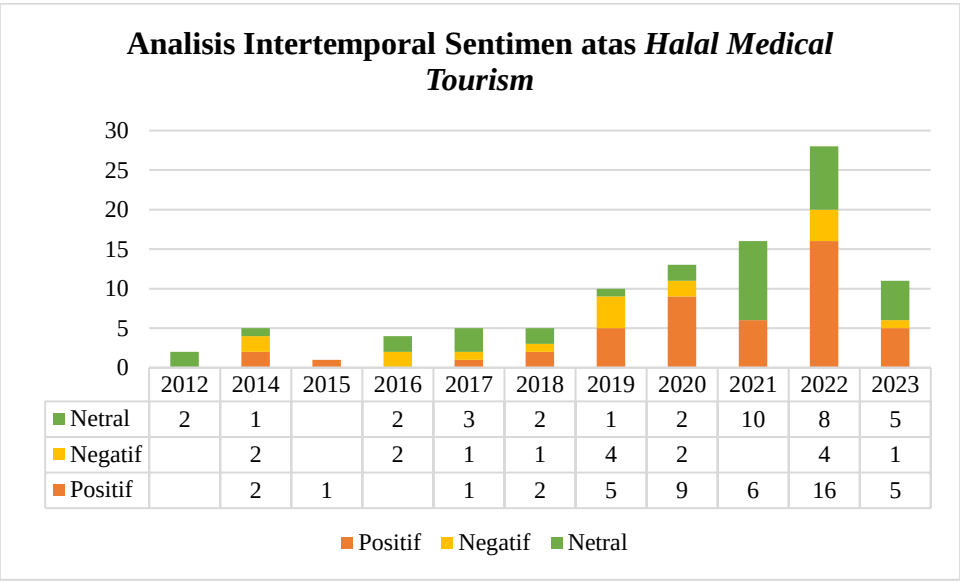


Figure 1: Top Sentiment of *Halal Medical Tourism*

The picture above shows the polarity of sentiment in related literature data *"Halal Medical Tourism"*. It is known that positive sentiment is the highest sentiment with a percentage of 47%, followed by neutral sentiment of 36% and negative sentiment of 17%. This indicates that the dominant sentence expressions in the processed data indicate agree and tend to support *Halal Medical Tourism.*



	2012	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Netral	2	1		2	3	2	1	2	10	8	5
Negatif		2		2	1	1	4	2		4	1
Positif		2	1		1	2	5	9	6	16	5

Figure 2: Analysis Upper Intertemporal *Halal Medical Tourism*

Based on the picture above shows the number of sentiments during the observation period. The graph shows sentiment trends *Halal Medical Tourism* which tends to increase, where 2022 is the year with the highest number of sentiments, namely 28 sentiments, which are dominated by positive sentiments of 16 sentiments. The most neutral sentiment occurred in 2021, namely 10 sentiments. Meanwhile, the most negative sentiments occurred in 2019 and 2022, namely 4 sentiments.

Although positive sentiment dominates the sentiment on the topic *Halal Medical Tourism,* there are still pros and cons related to its development. Below is a

summary of negative and positive sentiments on the theme *Halal Medical Tourism*.

Table 1: Positive and Negative Sentiment

Positive Sentiment	Negative Sentiment
Increasing demand for halal trend	Market *medical tourism* very competitive
Muslim-friendly positive innovation	There is no international sharia standard for providers yet *medical tourism*
Business opportunities	Community perception and literacy related *halal medical tourism* still very low

Medical tourism is a complex global phenomenon and involves the interaction of international trade between two service sectors of the economy (Hutchinson, 2005; Bookman & Bookman, 2007; Herrick, 2007; Smith & Forgione, 2007; Hopkins et al., 2010), where consumers seek treatment quality world health at affordable prices (Medhekar & Haq, 2018). In the last two decades, halal has increasingly become an important issue for international medical tourism (Wilson, 2014; Naserirad et al., 2022). The growth of the Muslim population worldwide has the greatest impact on the development of halal medical tourism. It is estimated that the world's Muslim population will reach 2.2 billion in 2030 or around 26.4% of the total projected world population (The Economist, 2013). The increasing number of the world's Muslim population and their preference for Islamic medical services has the potential to develop the halal medical tourism market (Rahman et al., 2017). In addition, Muslim consumers' expectations of Muslim-friendly medical tourism, Islamic medical services, halal food, halal transportation, and halal finance (Wilson, 2014) are also important factors that have contributed to driving the growth of the halal market.

Therefore, it is very important for the medical and tourism industries to understand Islamic culture and health literacy from an Islamic perspective, both from the demand side (Muslim tourists/medical patients) and from the halal supply chain side (halal certification). Management of medical tourism from the supply and demand side enables halal hospitals to provide halal-certified health goods and services *"value for money"* or "value for money" to Muslim medical tourists based on the purpose of their trip to improve their health (Medhekar & Ferdous, 2012). Sensitive to Islamic culture including providing prayer rooms, ablution facilities, halal standards regarding food and nutrition, clinical practice and care, dress codes, maternity care, funeral practices according to Shari'a, use of medicines and medical care and surgery according to the halal certified code of practice (Haq & Wong, 2011; Rahman et al., 2017).

Halal Medical Tourism basically a sub category of tourism and part of the marketing strategy of hospitals where sharia rules are followed to attract medical tourists especially from Islamic countries (Medhekar & Haq, 2018). Thus there is a relationship between religion and tourism (Cohen, 1992; Rinschede, 1992; Haq & Wong, 2011; Tajzadeh, 2013). Halal tourism has recently been known to be more oriented towards *"Halal Islamic Brand"* and *"Halal Tourism Facilities"* which is becoming a trend among Muslim tourists of all categories (Alserhan, 2010; Tajzadeh, 2013). Thus, halal branding of health services and medical tourism is a process by which a company or business tries to differentiate and identify its products and services from other sellers or a group of sellers by using a name, sign, symbol, design, or a combination of these to bring awareness to potential consumers. due to competition in the market.

Although there is enormous potential for the halal medical tourism business sector to develop, promoting Muslim-friendly medical tourism service marketing mechanisms or products is not easy, due to the different needs of Muslim medical tourists. This situation limits medical care service providers to investigate halal features and attributes that can assist them in designing products and services that are tailored to market needs. In addition, the involvement of non-Muslim professional medical personnel is a challenge for them to focus on practicing Islamic values in hospitals (Rahman et al., 2017).

In an effort to develop the health system and competition as well as the impact of health globalization, it is possible for intense competition to occur between providers of medical tourism facilities (Kusumawati, 2019). Likewise, halal-certified medical tourism does not guarantee making a superior hospital just by adding a "halal" essence. As the results of Kusumawati's study (2019) stated that what attracts foreign patients to come for treatment is quality service and superior service products provided by medical tourism providers. This is also in line with the research of Rahman et al. (2017) that better quality Islamic medical care performed by

specialist doctors in halal medical tourism can also affect medical tourists

In addition, until now there is no international sharia standard for medical tourism providers. This is a challenge for countries that provide halal-certified medical tourism facilities. There is a great need for an international Islamic accreditation body in response to the increasing number of Muslim-friendly hospitals and practicing sharia in medical tourism providers around the world (Kamassi et al., 2020). Therefore, it is imperative to establish Islamic standards to ensure that all medical tourism practices meet the requirements, needs and wants of Muslim medical tourists. In addition, the most important benefit of having international sharia standards is the provision of uniform standards for the practice of halal medical tourism that combines health services and tourism services together.

The government's role in regulating regulations and funding investment in halal medical tourism providers is very important, because developing a hospital requires substantial funding. The expansion of cooperation between industry players can also encourage mechanical progress for Muslim-friendly medical treatment tourism. In this regard, strong coordination and association must be created between Islamic practitioners and researchers to bridge the gap. Emphasis should be placed on the relationship between administrative quality and customer needs.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, using 100 Scopus indexed scientific publications processed using SentiStrength Software, positive sentiment is the highest with a percentage of 47%, followed by neutral sentiment with 36% and positive sentiment with a percentage of 17%. Related research *halal medical tourism* experienced fluctuations in the number of sentiments throughout the observation period, namely 2012 to 2023. The highest number of sentiments occurred in 2022 with a total of 28 scientific publications, which were dominated by positive sentiment of 16 sentiments. The increasing demand for halal trends, positive Muslim-friendly innovations and large business potential are reasons for positive sentiment. Meanwhile, there is no international sharia standard for providers *medical tourism* and related community literacy *halal medical tourism*s till very low to be a negative issue.

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