

# Mediating Role of Social Media in Medical Tourism Visit Decision: A Behavioural Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

Social media (SM) has become the main communication medium for both personal and professional communication on a global scale. Despite its many benefits, it is challenging to persuade consumers to accept and use SM as a platform for exchanging health-related information. In contrast to other businesses where individuals utilise social media to freely share their real-life experiences, marketing medical tourism through interactive communication creates several hurdles owing to sensitive matters such as patient health and underlying risk. Healthcare providers' advertising activities and medical tourists' choices to visit are becoming increasingly reliant on social media platforms. Potential medical tourists should use this technology to benefit from SM and learn more about health care. The goal of this research was to see if SM impacts a person's decision to travel to a medical tourism destination. The researcher's major focus was on social media platforms as a mediator element for medical tourists, as well as their effect on decision-making. To better understand how new technologies are adopted and utilised, the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) and Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) were used to research new technology adoption and user behaviour, respectively. These will serve as the study's fundamental hypotheses. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) - Partial Least Squares (PLS) will be utilised for data analysis. This study's participants will be medical tourists seeking treatment in Malaysian private hospitals.

**Keywords:** Social media, Medical tourism, Consumer behaviour

