

Original Article

COVID-19 Pandemic and Dynamics of Worship Fatwas between States in Malaysia: A Preliminary Comparative Review

 Wan Aina Balqis Wan Noor Azli ^{1*}, Wan Mohd Yusof Wan Chik ¹, Roslan Umar ¹
¹ Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Kuala Nerus - Malaysia

 *Corresponding author: sl4745@putra.unisza.edu.my

Abstract

*The COVID-19 pandemic that struck globally has led to a sharp increase in mortality rates and significantly impacted various aspects of life in Malaysia. To curb the spread of the virus, the Malaysian government implemented the Movement Control Order (MCO), which altered many dimensions of daily living, including religious practices. This situation also influenced changes and variations in the fatwas issued by different fatwa institutions across Malaysia. This study examines the dynamics of change and divergence in fatwas related to acts of worship across Malaysian states during the pandemic, particularly regarding Friday and congregational prayers, row distancing in congregational prayers (saf), and the practice of face mask use. Employing a qualitative approach, the research draws on secondary data from official documents, literature reviews, and the official websites of religious authorities. The findings reveal that variations in fatwas across states were influenced by social and demographic factors, as well as differences in the administrative jurisdictions of religious institutions. These changes, however, were made in accordance with Islamic legal principles to uphold the maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, particularly the preservation of life. This aligns with key legal maxims such as *la ḍarar wa la ḍār* and *al-maṣyaqqah tajlibu al-taṣīr*. The study concludes that fatwa adaptations issued during the COVID-19 pandemic were prudent and reflect the flexibility and wisdom of Islamic law in addressing contemporary emergencies. Therefore, it is recommended that Malaysia's experiences during the pandemic be systematically documented and analyzed as a foundation for developing comprehensive guidelines and frameworks for future fatwa and ijtihad responses to potential public health crises.*

Keywords: COVID-19; Dynamics; Fatwas; Malaysia;

Introduction

In late 2019, the world was contended with a severe health crisis that caused infected individuals to suffer respiratory system failure, which frequently caused death among patients.¹ The outbreak, first reported in Wuhan, China, spread rapidly across almost all countries, including Malaysia. By 2020, this will result in a sharp rise in mortality rates within a short period. This worldwide public health disaster, identified as *novel coronavirus pneumonia*, was officially declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March 2020. The disease was caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which was transmitted through respiratory droplets and through exposure to body fluids.²

After the virus entered Malaysia in January 2020 through 22 imported cases from China, the country had a serious public health crisis from 2020 to 2022. Although all afflicted patients totally recovered after the initial outbreak was effectively contained, cumulative confirmed cases reached

¹ Waryani Fajar Riyanto, Saefudin and Harsya Denny Suryo, 'Transdisciplinary Policy in Handling COVID-19 in Indonesia: A Comparative Study on the Thought of Kuntowijoyo, M. Amin Abdullah and Yudian Wahyudi', *Afkar: Jurnal Akidah Dan Pemikiran Islam*, 2022, 173–220 <<https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.sp2022no1.6>>.

² M Z Ramlé and others, 'Pengurusan Fatwa Dalam Krisis Di Malaysia: Strategi Dan Cabaran Semasa Pandemik COVID-19', *Journal of Fatwa Management and Research*, 30.3 (2025) <<https://doi.org/10.33102/jfatwa.vol.30no3.720>>.



about 5.02 million between January 2020 and December 2022, according to official data from the Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH) and PubMed Central (NCBI), but the case fatality rate (CFR) stayed under control at 0.7%-0.8%. Despite a total of over 35,900 deaths, the high recovery rate of almost 4.96 million patients demonstrated the efficacy of the country's healthcare system.³

Subsequently, the COVID-19 pandemic brought profound transformations to social life, particularly in aspects of religious practice within the Muslim community.⁴ In response to the escalating health emergency, the Government of Malaysia, in collaboration with the National Security Council (MKN), had implemented the Movement Control Order (MCO). The MCO was enforced in several phases, with the level of restriction varying according to infection rates across districts and states. Moreover, the government introduced a series of preventive measures, including the mandatory wearing of face masks, enforcement of social distancing, and implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).⁵

During this period, the fatwa institution played a crucial role in issuing Islamic decrees that altered the practical application of Islamic law, diverging from the customary religious practices observed prior to the MCO. The Fatwa institution in Malaysia is distinctive, comprising two authoritative bodies empowered to issue religious rulings. The first is *Muzakarah Jawatankuasa Fatwa* (MJFK), which serves as the highest authority within Malaysia's fatwa administration. The second consists of the respective state fatwa councils, which operate under the jurisdiction of the Sultan of their state. This framework aligns with the Federal Constitution, Ninth Schedule, list two, which stipulates that the matters pertaining to Islamic affairs fall under state jurisdiction.⁶

The implementation of new social norms during the COVID-19 pandemic had direct implications for the social structure and religious observances of Muslims in Malaysia. The enforcement of SOPs necessitated adjustments to religious practices, including suspending congregational and Friday prayers in mosques and *surau*s, introducing one-meter physical distancing between prayer rows (*saf*), and requiring face masks during prayers. Variations in fatwa rulings across states emerged largely due to differing infection rates and contextual factors.⁷

Considering this phenomenon, this study aims to examine the dynamics of fatwa issuance in emergency situations involving acts of worship, as promulgated by fatwa institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁸ Specifically, it seeks to analyze the approaches and justifications adopted by selected states, which are Terengganu, Wilayah Persekutuan, and Perlis, resulting in variations in fatwa decisions among these jurisdictions.⁹

Method

This study adopts a qualitative research design with a library-based data collection method. The design aligns with the study's goal of exploring the application of *shari'ah* principles to contemporary religious issues during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data are gathered through document analysis, drawing on scholarly discussions of variations in Islamic rulings on worship during the

³ Wan Mohd Khairul Firdaus Wan Khairuldin, *Pengurusan Fatwa Di Malaysia* (Kuala Nerus, Terengganu: Penerbit Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, 2020).

⁴ Alexander Yendell, Oliver Hidalgo and Carolin Hillenbrand, *The Role of Religious Actors in the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Theory-Based Empirical Analysis with Policy Recommendations for Action*, Ifa-Edition Kultur Und Außenpolitik (Stuttgart: ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen), 2021) <<https://doi.org/10.17901/akbp1.10.2021>>.

⁵ V J Jayaraj and others, 'Estimating Excess Mortalities Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Malaysia between January 2020 and September 2021', *Scientific Reports*, 13.1 (2023), 86 <<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-26927-z>>.

⁶ A Manan Ismail and Ahmad Syukran Baharuddin, 'Prinsip Keanjalan Fatwa Menurut Perspektif Syarak (The Principle of Flexibility of Fatwa According to Syarak's Perspective)', *Journal of Fatwa Management and Research*, 28.3 (2023) <<https://doi.org/10.33102/jfatwa.vol.28no3.558>>.

⁷ All-Mu'izz Abas and others, 'Analysis of Religious Decrees (Fatwas) on Worship Practices Amidst Covid-19 Pandemic in Selangor State', *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 13.10 (2023), 346–60 <<https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v13-i10/18780>>.

⁸ Poppi Damayanti, Ihsan Rahmat and Vira Oktavia, 'Elderly Muslims, Mosques and Restrictions on Worship: Cognitive Responses in the Covid-19 Red Zone', *Journal of Islamic Management*, 4.2 (2024), 94–112 <<https://doi.org/10.15642/jim.v4i2.1649>>.

⁹ M.M.A. Abdullah and S.M.M. Mazahir, 'Issuing Fatwa during Covid-19 Pandemic: An Analysis', *Sprinj Journal of Arabic-English Studies*, 1.April (2022), 72–81 <<https://doi.org/10.55559/sjaes.v1i02.10>>.



pandemic.¹⁰ The research covers fatwas and religious guidelines regarding congregational and Friday prayers, physical distancing, and mask use during prayer in Terengganu, Wilayah Persekutuan, and Perlis, states selected for their diverse religious administrations, socio-religious orientations, and fatwa formulation methods. The data comes from authoritative sources, including classical legal texts, official fatwa institutions, and religious department websites, as well as secondary sources such as academic books and journal articles. The analysis proceeds in several clear steps: First, semantic analysis is conducted to interpret legal terms from both linguistic and *maqasid al-shari'ah* perspectives. Next, content analysis is used to categorize and interpret the data, focusing on the identification of *shari'ah* principles, *fiqh* maxims, and the reasoning employed by religious authorities. Finally, comparative analysis examines the similarities and differences in religious decrees across the three states, taking into account their specific contexts and structures of religious authority.¹¹

Results and Discussions

The term fatwa originates from the Arabic root word *fatā*, which literally means "young man". Linguistically, the word of fatwa carries several meanings, such as to provide an answer or to offer a clarification regarding issues related to religion, particularly those requiring legal explanation by a learned scholar. The linguistic relationship between fatwa and *fatā* symbolically reflects the intellectual vigor, alertness, and diligence required of a mufti in the process of issuing a fatwa. A mufti must possess a high level of intelligence and exert sincere effort when addressing an Islamic decree for which no explicit rulings exist in the established sources of Islamic law. From a terminological perspective, fatwa refers to a formal explanation or legal clarification that expresses the ruling of Allah on a specific issue based on the evidence of *shari'ah*. This definition indicates that a fatwa is not merely the personal opinion of a mufti but functions as a critical mechanism that bridges the divine texts of Islamic law with the contemporary realities faced by the Muslim community.¹²

In Malaysia, the concepts and operations of fatwa differ from those of classical jurisprudence.¹³ Here, fatwas mainly explain modern legal rulings given by state muftis via the State Fatwa Committee. These committees result in variations between states because each has its own religious authority and governs itself. Thus, a fatwa gazetted in any state is legally binding on Muslims in that state. Section 49(1) of the Administration of the Religion of Islam (State of Selangor) Enactment 2003 explicitly states:

"(1) Upon publication in the Gazette, a fatwa shall be binding on every Muslim residing in the State of Selangor as a religious doctrine, and it shall be his or her religious duty under Islam to adhere to and abide by the fatwa except where he or she is permitted under Islamic law not to follow the fatwa in matters of personal practice."

Lā ḍarar wa lā ḍirār. The original root words of *ḍara* and *ḍirār* are *al-ḍarru* and *al-ḍurru*. Both denote harm, detriment, or disadvantage. The opposite of these words is benefit or usefulness. Linguistically, these terms suggest limitation, injury, or impairment, which causes harm and loss. Terminologically, Dr. Ahmad al-Muwafi defines *ḍarar* as an act harming a legitimate public interest recognised by the *shari'ah*. Such harm may affect one's own or others' property, and may occur through intrusion, boundary transgression, or neglect of responsibility.¹⁴

If harm cannot be completely eliminated, and there are two conflicting forms of harm with different degrees of significance, the principle of *fiqh* instructs that the greater harm should be

¹⁰ Ismail and Baharuddin.

¹¹ Min Min Tan, Ahmad Farouk Musa and Tin Tin Su, 'The Role of Religion in Mitigating the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Malaysian Multi-Faith Perspectives', *Health Promotion International*, 37.1 (2022) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daab041>>.

¹² Ahmad Tarmizi Abdul Rahman, Nor-Ina Kanyo and Nurul A'fifah Muarifin Sufianto, 'INTERPRETATION OF FATWA DURING COVID-19 IN SABAH (2019-2021)', *NeuroQuantology: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Neuroscience and Quantum Physics*, 20 (2022), 9253+ <<https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A720271599/HRCA?u=anon~32799a79&am>>.

¹³ Ramle and others.

¹⁴ Abdurrahman Hendek and others, "Overwhelmed by the Pandemic": The COVID-19 Pandemic's Effect on Students' Questions in Religious Education in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Türkiye', *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 0.0 (2024), 1–18 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2024.2404767>>.



avoided or minimized.¹⁵ This is done by prioritizing the lesser or more specific harm. The juristic maxim reflects this idea: when faced with two detrimental outcomes, avoid the one with the more severe consequences. This principle is based on the main objective of Islamic law, which prioritizes protecting public interest over individual or specific interests.¹⁶

Al-Mashaqqah tajlibu al-taisir. The legal maxim *Al-Mashaqqah tajlibu al-taisir* is one of the *al-kuliyāt al-kubrā* in Islamic jurisprudence.¹⁷ This maxim has been extensively applied by jurists to address a wide range of complex legal and practical issues within *fiqh*. From this principle arises the concept of *rukhsah*, which provides leniency and relief for the *mukallaf* when faced with difficulty or constraint. Islam is a religion characterized by balance and moderation, neither imposing excessive hardship nor granting its followers unrestricted ease. The al-Quran provides several textual foundations for this maxim, among which is the following verse:

﴿١١٥﴾ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ... ﴿١١٥﴾

“Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for your hardship.”

[al-Baqarah: 185]

﴿٧٨﴾ هُوَ أَجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ... ﴿٧٨﴾

He has chosen you and has not placed upon you in the religion any difficulty.”

[al-Hajj: 78]

﴿١٧٣﴾ فَمَنْ أَضْطُرُّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ... ﴿١٧٣﴾

But whoever is forced (by necessity), neither desiring (it) nor transgressing (its limit), there is no sin upon him. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”

[al-Baqarah:173]

Based on the similarities among these verses, it can be inferred that Islam does not burden its adherents beyond their capacity. Exceptions to the original legal obligations apply only in situations of necessity or emergency.¹⁸ In such cases, the original ruling (*hukm al-'azimah*) is suspended. A legal concession (*rukhsah*) is then granted to alleviate hardship. Conversely, if an individual can no longer fulfill an obligation in its original form, that obligation is waived.¹⁹

Maqasid Shariah, in *Shariah* terminology, refers to the objectives, purposes, and underlying wisdoms behind Islamic legal rulings for the *mukallaf*. These objectives aim to realize *maslahah* and prevent *mafsadah* in all aspects of life.²⁰ They also seek to ensure ultimate well-being in the hereafter. This principle affirms that divine legislation, with both commands and prohibitions ordained by Allah SWT, guides humankind toward harmony, security, and prosperity in both the worldly and spiritual realms.²¹

¹⁵ Siti Aisha Joharry, ‘Faith in the Time of Coronavirus: A Corpus-Driven Analysis’, *Intellectual Discourse*, 31.1 (2023) <<https://doi.org/10.31436/id.v31i1.1819>>.

¹⁶ AINAN HUSNAA BINTI MUHAMMAD SAIFULLAH, *PRACTICE AND APPROACH OF MEDIATORS UNDER THE SHARIAH JURISDICTION IN RESOLVING FAMILY CONFLICTS IN MALAYSIA*, *ACADEMY OF ISLAMIC STUDIES UNIVERSITI MALAYA KUALA LUMPUR*, 2023 <<https://www.proquest.com/openview/21ff9c134fb14a264ffad9afe386d6fa/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2026366&diss=y>>.

¹⁷ Joharry.

¹⁸ SAIFULLAH.

¹⁹ Muhammad Mahsun and others, ‘The Strategic Role of Religious Authority in Supporting State Policy on Non-Natural Disaster Management in Indonesia’, *Jurnal Theologia*, 36.1 (2024), 51–70 <<https://doi.org/10.21580/teo.2025.36.1.25436>>.

²⁰ Hendek and others.

²¹ Nick Towner, ‘How to Manage the Perfect Wave: Surfing Tourism Management in the Mentawai Islands, Indonesia’, *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 119 (2016), 217–26 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2015.10.016>>.



When a fatwa considers the objectives of the *shari'ah*, especially the preservation of life, it covers all medical and safety measures. These measures are intended to protect society from the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic.²²

There are interstate variations in worship-related fatwas. This conclusion is based on an analysis of official documents from religious institutions and guidelines on worship practices during the COVID-19 pandemic in Terengganu, Wilayah Persekutuan, and Perlis.²³ This study identifies distinct differences among these states in determining legal rulings and procedures for practices in mosques and *suraus*. These differences are clear in the guidelines for Friday and congregational prayers as well as in the use of face masks during *solat*. Table 1 shows the approaches taken by each state during the Movement Control Order (MCO), the Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO), and the Recovery Movement Control Order (RMCO).²⁴

Table 1: The differences of guidelines and SOPs in the mosque and suraus at states of Terengganu, Wilayah Persekutuan and Perlis

Aspects of Worship	Terengganu (MAIDAM)	Wilayah Persekutuan (JAWI)	Perlis (JAIPs)
Friday prayers	Replaced by <i>Zohor</i> during the MCO, later allowed with distancing under CMCO and RMCO.	Replaced by <i>Zohor</i> during the MCO, latter permitted with a maximum of 30 persons including the imam, <i>khatib</i> , <i>muazzin</i> and <i>mousque</i> official with one-meter distancing under CMCO and RMCO.	Replaced by <i>Zohor</i> during the MCO, later permitted with a maximum of 40 persons, subject to mosque capacity during the CMCO and RMCO.
Congregational Prayers	Permitted with a maximum of 12 persons.	Restricted to only five mosque committee members.	Permitted with social distancing observed according to the size of the prayer area.
Face mask Usage	Mandatory and supervised by the mosque committee.	Mandatory including the imam and <i>khatib</i> .	Mandatory for all congregants throughout their presence in the mosque.
Duration of the Friday Prayer	Limited to 30 minutes.	Limited to 30 minutes from first azan until the end.	No limitation of time but advised to short the sermon.

The study found both changes and variations in fatwa rulings during the COVID-19 pandemic. Demographic profiles or population density influenced these differences. In larger states, such as Wilayah Persekutuan, authorities limited the number of congregants.²⁵ In smaller states, such as Perlis, there were no capacity restrictions. Instead, congregants had to comply with the SOPs issued by the National Security Council (MKN). Administrative structures of state religious authorities also shaped these differences. For example, in Terengganu, mosque committee members were appointed as official monitors to enforce the use of face masks.²⁶ These examples illustrate how social sensitivity and local context influence the administrative implementation of religious directives at the state level, setting the stage for understanding the underlying legal principles that guide these decisions.²⁷

²² Rahman, Kanyo and Sufianto.

²³ Abdullah and Mazahir.

²⁴ Ery Atmodjo, Machiel Lamers and Arthur Mol, 'Financing Marine Conservation Tourism: Governing Entrance Fees in Raja Ampat, Indonesia', *Marine Policy*, 78 (2017), 181–88 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2017.01.023>>.

²⁵ Abbas and others.

²⁶ Tan, Musa and Su.

²⁷ Ganghua Chen and others, 'Identifying and Measuring Destination Attributes Contributing to Cultural Tourism Experience', *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 60 (2026), 101444 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2025.101444>>.



Building on these contextual factors, all fatwa decisions followed clear *shari'ah* principles. These decisions aimed to protect the public interest and preserve human life. Authorities applied *fiqh* principles such as *la ḍarar wa la ḍirar* and *al-masyaqqab tajlibu al-taisir* to develop practical guidelines.²⁸

In conclusion, despite dynamic variations in fatwa across Malaysian states, fatwa institutions consistently demonstrate a moderate approach and flexible *ijtihad* in addressing extraordinary situations facing society. This affirms the resilience and capacity of Islamic legal institutions.²⁹ These bodies balance adherence to religious law with pragmatic considerations, thereby effectively safeguarding the community's welfare and safety. The variations in fatwas during the COVID-19 pandemic highlight the flexibility of Islamic legal rulings and illustrate how Islamic law can respond to a global health crisis and adapt to evolving circumstances. Recognizing this adaptability, Malaysia's experience during the pandemic should be systematically compiled and documented holistically. These guidelines can then provide a reference and framework for similar emergencies in the future.³⁰

To ensure further progress, authoritative bodies need to establish a coherent, harmonized reference framework for state and national use.³¹ This harmonization does not mean standardizing every ruling. Instead, it ensures the law's principles and objectives remain consistent and accepted by the wider community. Building on earlier recommendations, religious administrations and fatwa institutions should improve management and governance structures. This will help muftis and fatwa committees address emergent *Shariah* issues in unforeseen situations. The public should also deepen religious knowledge. Doing so can prevent misunderstandings and disputes over differing legal rulings. Ultimately, variations in fatwa reflect Allah's mercy. They give *mukallaf* flexibility to worship according to individual capacities. This supports the ease of fulfilling religious obligations.³²

Conclusion

This study emphasizes that the COVID-19 pandemic, which spread across Malaysia, tested the methodology and implementation of fatwa in the country. Numerous disputes arose within society concerning the variations in fatwas issued by different states. The situation was further exacerbated when some individuals claimed that fatwa institutions were issuing rulings arbitrarily, thereby challenging the authority of these institutions and the inherent flexibility and adaptability of fatwa in considering reference for future preparedness in addressing pandemics or similar crises. Accordingly, the researcher recommends that the highest authority within the fatwa institutions, the National Fatwa Committee (MJFK), should compile and consolidate the fatwas issued at both state and national levels during the COVID-19 pandemic to establish a "pandemic fatwa repository". Furthermore, this issue warrants further study using a quantitative approach to examine public acceptance of variations in fatwa and their compliance with SOPs for religious activities. In addition, to strengthen the preparedness of muftis and fatwa committees to respond to future emergencies, it is recommended that Islamic educational institutions introduce structured training modules focused on public health crises and *ijtihad* in issuing fatwas during extraordinary situations. The implementation of such training should be coordinated by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), in collaboration with fatwa institutions and the Ministry of Health Malaysia (KKM), to ensure consistency and effectiveness in the harmonization of fatwa at both state and national levels.

²⁸ Irfan Sabarilah Hasim and others, 'The Birth and Demise of a Village within the Vernacular Community of Baduy in Banten, Indonesia', *Frontiers of Architectural Research*, 14.1 (2025), 127–44 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foar.2024.07.011>>.

²⁹ Yendell, Hidalgo and Hillenbrand.

³⁰ Mohd Hafiz Hanafiah and others, 'Reframing Indigenous Tourism Entrepreneurial Personality, Experience, Sense of Community and Challenges in Community-Based Tourism-Related Business', *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*, 18.2 (2023), 327–46 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1108/JEC-09-2022-0131>>.

³¹ Riyanto, Saefudin and Suryo.

³² Damayanti, Rahmat and Oktavia.



Acknowledgment

Alhamdulillah by the grace of Allah SWT, the researcher has been able to complete this article. Firstly, the researcher would like to express heartfelt gratitude to the organizers of the 1st International Conference in Civilizations and Human Rights (ICCHR) for providing a platform for researchers to share their studies at the international level. Next, the researcher wishes to extend sincere thanks to supervisor, Assoc.Prof.Dr. Wan Mohd Yusof Wan Chik, for his invaluable guidance throughout the researcher's postgraduate journey and mentoring the researcher in preparing to participate in this international conference. Only words of gratitude and prayers can convey the depth of appreciation for his support and encouragement. The researcher is also deeply grateful to the authoritative bodies in Malaysia, including the Ministry of Health (KKM), the National Security Council (MKN), the National Fatwa Committee (MJFK) and the various state mufti departments for providing official documents related to the COVID-19 pandemic which facilitated the data collection for this study. Finally, the researcher wishes to express profound thanks to their parents for their unwavering support, both directly and indirectly throughout the preparation of this paper. Their sacrifices and assistance are immeasurable that the researcher can only offer gratitude and prayers in return. To the readers, it is hoped that this paper will spark interest and enhance understanding regarding the scope and authority of fatwa institutions in Malaysia. The researcher acknowledges that this article was originally written in Malay. All ideas, analyses and arguments presented are entirely the researcher's own original work. ChatGPT was solely used to translate and refine the text into English while maintaining the original meaning and academic integrity of the content.

References

- Abas, All-Mu'izz, Mohammad Zaini Yahaya, Muhammad Afifi Azahar and Mohd Firdaus Mohammad, 'Analysis of Religious Decrees (Fatwas) on Worship Practices Amidst Covid-19 Pandemic in Selangor State', *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 13 (2023), 346–60 <<https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v13-i10/18780>>
- Abdullah, MMA and SMM Mazahir, 'Issuing Fatwa during Covid-19 Pandemic: An Analysis', *Spring Journal of Arabic-English Studies*, 1 (2022), 72–81 <<https://doi.org/10.55559/sjaes.v1i02.10>>
- Atmodjo, Ery, Machiel Lamers and Arthur Mol, 'Financing Marine Conservation Tourism: Governing Entrance Fees in Raja Ampat, Indonesia', *Marine Policy*, 78 (2017), 181–88 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2017.01.023>>
- Chen, Ganghua, Shengdong Hong, Zongkun Guo and Songshan Huang, 'Identifying and Measuring Destination Attributes Contributing to Cultural Tourism Experience', *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 60 (2026), 101444 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2025.101444>>
- Damayanti, Poppi, Ihsan Rahmat and Vira Oktavia, 'Elderly Muslims, Mosques and Restrictions on Worship: Cognitive Responses in the Covid-19 Red Zone', *Journal of Islamic Management*, 4 (2024), 94–112 <<https://doi.org/10.15642/jim.v4i2.1649>>
- Hanafiah, Mohd Hafiz, Norol Hamiza Zamzuri, Tengku Intan Suzila Tengku Sharif and Bung-on Chartrungrang, 'Reframing Indigenous Tourism Entrepreneurial Personality, Experience, Sense of Community and Challenges in Community-Based Tourism-Related Business', *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*, 18 (2023), 327–46 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1108/JEC-09-2022-0131>>
- Hasim, Irfan Sabarilah, Indah Widiastuti, Budi Faisal and Iwan Sudradjat, 'The Birth and Demise of a Village within the Vernacular Community of Baduy in Banten, Indonesia', *Frontiers of Architectural Research*, 14 (2025), 127–44 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foar.2024.07.011>>
- Hendek, Abdurrahman, Asyraf Isyraqi Bin Jamil, Nurwanto Nurwanto and Ahmet Çakmak, "'Overwhelmed by the Pandemic": The COVID-19 Pandemic's Effect on Students' Questions in Religious Education in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Türkiye', *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 0 (2024), 1–18 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2024.2404767>>
- Ismail, A Manan and Ahmad Syukran Baharuddin, 'Prinsip Keanjalan Fatwa Menurut Perspektif Syarak (The Principle of Flexibility of Fatwa According to Syarak's Perspective)', *Journal of Fatwa Management and Research*, 28 (2023) <<https://doi.org/10.33102/jfatwa.vol.28no3.558>>



- Jayaraj, VJ and others, 'Estimating Excess Mortalities Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Malaysia between January 2020 and September 2021', *Scientific Reports*, 13 (2023), 86 <<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-26927-z>>
- Joharry, Siti Aeisha, 'Faith in the Time of Coronavirus: A Corpus-Driven Analysis', *Intellectual Discourse*, 31 (2023) <<https://doi.org/10.31436/id.v31i1.1819>>
- Mahsun, Muhammad, Tholkhatul Khoir, Solkhah Mufrikhah, Masrohatun and Shahrin Hashim, 'The Strategic Role of Religious Authority in Supporting State Policy on Non-Natural Disaster Management in Indonesia', *Jurnal Theologia*, 36 (2024), 51–70 <<https://doi.org/10.21580/teo.2025.36.1.25436>>
- Rahman, Ahmad Tarmizi Abdul, Nor-Ina Kanyo and Nurul A'fifah Muarifin Sufianto, 'INTERPRETATION OF FATWA DURING COVID-19 IN SABAH (2019-2021)', *NeuroQuantology: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Neuroscience and Quantum Physics*, 20 (2022), 9253+ <<https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A720271599/HRCA?u=anon~32799a79&>>
- Ramle, MZ, MA Ramli, N Fahimah, M Razif, Mohd and H Rosidi, 'Pengurusan Fatwa Dalam Krisis Di Malaysia: Strategi Dan Cabaran Semasa Pandemik COVID-19', *Journal of Fatwa Management and Research*, 30 (2025) <<https://doi.org/10.33102/jfatwa.vol.30no3.720>>
- Riyanto, Waryani Fajar, Saefudin and Harsya Denny Suryo, 'Transdisciplinary Policy in Handling COVID-19 in Indonesia: A Comparative Study on the Thought of Kuntowijoyo, M. Amin Abdullah and Yudian Wahyudi', *Afkar: Jurnal Akidah Dan Pemikiran Islam*, 2022, 173–220 <<https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.sp2022no1.6>>
- SAIFULLAH, AINAN HUSNAA BINTI MUHAMMAD, *PRACTICE AND APPROACH OF MEDIATORS UNDER THE SHARIAH JURISDICTION IN RESOLVING FAMILY CONFLICTS IN MALAYSIA*, *ACADEMY OF ISLAMIC STUDIES UNIVERSITI MALAYA KUALA LUMPUR*, 2023 <<https://www.proquest.com/openview/21ff9c134fb14a264ffad9afe386d6fa/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2026366&diss=y>>
- Tan, Min Min, Ahmad Farouk Musa and Tin Tin Su, 'The Role of Religion in Mitigating the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Malaysian Multi-Faith Perspectives', *Health Promotion International*, 37 (2022) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daab041>>
- Towner, Nick, 'How to Manage the Perfect Wave: Surfing Tourism Management in the Mentawai Islands, Indonesia', *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 119 (2016), 217–26 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2015.10.016>>
- Wan Khairuldin, Wan Mohd Khairul Firdaus, *Pengurusan Fatwa Di Malaysia* (Kuala Nerus, Terengganu: Penerbit Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, 2020)
- Yendell, Alexander, Oliver Hidalgo, Carolin Hillenbrand, *The Role of Religious Actors in the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Theory-Based Empirical Analysis with Policy Recommendations for Action*, Ifa-Edition Kultur Und Außenpolitik (Stuttgart: ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen), 2021) <<https://doi.org/10.17901/akbp1.10.2021>>

