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Exploring the Potential of Halal Tourism Through Institutional Analysis of Halal Certifiers in the Philippines

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This study analyses various institutions' halal certification and standards in the Philippines and their potential for halal tourism. The demand for halal services and products has been increasing in the Philippines, however, the major halal certifiers in the country uphold different standards, leading to confusion and abuse in halal accreditation and certification. The unification of halal standards is a complex process due to varying interpretations and thus, this research utilised case study methods to analyse the similarities and differences of the three major halal certifiers in the country within the lenses of the *Work System Elements Framework* and the *Institutional Analysis and Development Framework* which examine the participants, processes, information needs, and environment. Results show that halal certifiers do not have a common standard in their certification practices. Additionally, there is no national certification scheme or a standard scheme that certifiers can follow. Therefore, each certifying body has its own standard, scheme, and policy regarding halal certification, resulting in a fragmented development of certification schemes. An appropriate halal standard in the Philippines is essential to attract Muslim visitors, as the country initiated a halal programme that aims to increase the arrival of international Muslim travellers. The findings provide implications for developing and managing halal tourism and for diversifying tourism products in the Philippines. Further, this study makes a valuable contribution to the understudied phenomenon of halal certification in a Muslim-minority country that could benefit from incorporating halal tourism in their destinations.

Key Words: halal tourism; Philippines; halal certification; halal policy making; institutional analysis

Introduction

Food is an essential component of local and/or regional tourism development. A better understanding of the benefits of integrating food tourism strategies may lead to broader national development and destination management (Rachão *et al.*, 2019), particularly in Muslim-minority countries such as the Philippines. Globally, Muslim travellers make up an important segment of the population; the number of Muslim travellers was projected to grow to 168 million in 2020, and travel expenses incurred in this market are expected to exceed US\$300 billion in 2026 (CrescentRating, 2018). Various reports

show that the Muslims who travel the world (Mehr News Agency, 2016) represent approximately 10% of the entire travel economy (Youssef, 2016). The particular services that these Muslim travellers seek at their destination are known as the six faith-based needs¹ (CrescentRating, 2016), halal food being the most essential one.

¹ Crescent Rating, the world's leading authority on halal travel have identified six faith-based needs of Muslim travellers: (1) halal food; (2) prayer facilities; (3) water-usage friendly washrooms; (4) Ramadan services; (5) no non-halal activities and; (6) recreational facilities and services with privacy.

The definition of halal is any food that undergoes a strict procedure and has met the standards of the Qur'an, and is suitable for consumption by Muslims (Gagne, 2016; Wong & Millie, 2015). The standards include but are not limited to, the process from production to consumption. The distribution, storage, handling, and procurement of halal products must all follow Sharia² law to be considered halal (Zulfakar *et al.*, 2014). Having a designated process for certified halal products would make it easier for any destination to increase the potential for halal tourism.

Exploring halal tourism in Muslim-minority countries shows the need to understand the current practices of halal tourism that are critical to improving the tourism industry. For instance, Said *et al.*'s (2020) study in Muslim-minority countries of Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea suggested the need for authorities to provide accessible information through websites or mobile applications for Muslim visitors. Although there is no concrete data as to the number of halal-friendly providers in the Philippines, the huge economic promise of halal creates a great opportunity even for non-Muslim dominated countries to meet the needs of Muslims. Thus, this research contributes by exploring halal tourism from a supply-perspective, particularly in Muslim-minority countries, as most such studies are conducted from a demand-side.

This study analyses institutions and their halal certification and standards, as well as their potential for halal tourism in the Philippines. Presently, the demand for halal services and products has been increasing in the Philippines. The Department of Tourism (DOT) pioneered its *Philippine Halal Tourism Project* in 2015 to raise halal awareness among the Filipino people and establish a halal travel market in the country (Andrade, 2016). The project coordinated with other agencies such as the Department of Agriculture (DA) to promote the halal food industry in places like the Cordillera province through orientation and workshops. Such initiatives were carried out to help people become appreciative and supportive of the halal programmes and foster a better understanding of the needs of diverse travellers in the country. In 2019, the Philippine government took further steps, such as participation in the Arabian Travel Market, to increase the Muslim market share and to achieve

2 Sharia (or Shariah/Shari'a) is an Islamic religious law that governs not only religious rituals but also aspects of day-to-day life in Islam. Sharia, literally translated, means 'the way.' Sharia law is the foundation of Islam's legal system.

growth in terms of arrivals from the Middle East and other Muslim nations (Arnaldo, 2019a).

Two national policies have been implemented to facilitate the development of the halal industry in the Philippines. The first is *Republic Act (R.A.) 9997*, which created the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF), a government agency responsible for all matters related to Muslims including halal food certification. The second is *R.A. 10817* or the *Philippine Halal Export Development and Promotion Act of 2016*, signed by former President Benigno C. Aquino III, which further recognised the potential of halal food and exports. Relevant to halal certification, this Act eventually transferred the mandate of NCMF to the Philippine Accreditation Board (PAB).

Currently, there are nine halal certifying bodies in the Philippines (*Table 1*). However, the different standards in the Philippines have led to misunderstandings, confusion, and even abuse in halal accreditation and certification, as the unification of halal standards is a complex process due to varying interpretations (Wan-Hassan, 2007). The Philippine tourism industry was relatively new in the halal food market when *R.A. 10817* was passed in 2016. Thus, there should now be an emphasis on unifying the accreditation and certification standards to improve understanding and enhance the image of the Philippines in the global market, particularly for Muslim travellers from overseas.

Table 1. List of Halal Certifying Bodies in the Philippines.

1. Halal International Chamber of Commerce and Industries of the Philippines (HICCIP)
2. Mindanao Halal Authority (MINHA)
3. Muslim Mindanao Halal Certification Board Inc. (MMHCBI)
4. Islamic Da'wah Council of the Philippines (IDCP)
5. Halal Development Institute of the Philippines (HDIP)
6. Alliance for Halal Integrity in the Philippines, Inc. (AHIP)
7. Islamic Advocate on Halal and Development (IAHD)
8. Philippine Ulama Congress Organization (PUCO)
9. Prime Certification and Inspection Asia Pacific (Prime Asia Pacific)

From a practical perspective, the Philippines, being the third largest Catholic country in the world after Brazil and Mexico, faces challenge in addressing the need for halal food among its Muslim population. Although the country is predominantly Catholic, 5.6% of the 108.9 million Filipinos are Muslims who are mainly based in the southwest area (World Population Review, 2021). This study aims to contribute to the existing literature on halal certification in a Muslim-minority nation and a developing country. This should benefit other countries that are exploring the incorporation of halal tourism in their destination. The study explores the different institutions involved in halal certification and standards in the Philippines to provide insights regarding a Muslim-minority country's potential to venture into halal tourism.

Literature Review

Halal is defined as

that which is permitted, with respect to which no restriction exists, and the doing of which the lawgiver, Allah, is allowed (REF).

This definition is consistent with those in other scholarly works. The word '*halal*' can also mean permitted, allowed, and authorised (Wong & Millie, 2015). *Haram*, on the other hand, means not allowed, impermissible, unsanctioned, or illegal (El-Mouelhy, 1997). *Halal* is one of the five actions that categorise the morality of human actions in the Islamic religion. *Halal* is not just a religious process but also a scientific and analytical one (Nakyinsige *et al.*, 2012). The basis for halal certification is the Holy *Qur'an*, the central religious text of Islam, and the *Hadith*, the record of words and actions of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The main idea is that halal ingredients should not mix with *haram* (unpermitted substances and ingredients) during preparation and production.

The succeeding subsections of the literature review will discuss: (1) the demand for halal food; (2) halal certification and accreditation; (3) halal and Islamic tourism; (4) halal programme and certification in the Philippines; and (5) the conceptual frameworks used for this study. The first three subsections provide a macro-level or global perspective on the halal food industry and its link to Islamic tourism. The next subsection discusses the halal programme certification in the Philippines, which provides a micro-level perspective on halal initiatives at the country level. The last subsection presents critical lenses to examine the halal certification process as a

system as applied in the Philippines, a predominantly non-Islamic and developing country seeking to grow its Muslim travel market, with Islam being a major religion in the world.

Demand for Halal Food

Internationally, the demand for halal food is rapidly increasing. Previously, Muslim countries sourced their food domestically or from nearby Muslim countries. However, countries like Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa have become major players in halal food exportation (Marzuki, 2012). Economically, there is a need to focus on studying the demand for halal food as its potential shows that the Muslim market size is valued at approximately US\$ 2.2 trillion and has the potential to grow to about US\$ 3.2 trillion by 2024 – where the largest market for Muslim consumers is the halal food and beverage sector (Statista, 2021). Thus, there is a huge potential for industries to adapt their production to meet this demand. Additionally, Wilkins *et al.* (2019) noted that halal should not be viewed only from the perspective of Muslims because an increase in the demand for halal food is also emerging from non-Muslims. People choose halal food not just for the religious aspect involved, but also for its health benefits, as halal food standards are said to be higher than traditional production (Park, 2015). Alternatively, Gutmann (1999) suggests that consumers buy products based on their personal ethical views and beliefs and not primarily based on the health benefits. Al-Harran and Low (2008) note that the existence and demand for halal food will continue to develop as long as there are Muslims, especially those whose guiding principles are based on halal rules when it comes to food preferences.

In France, there are 5.7 million Muslims, comprising 8.8% of the country's total population (Pew Research Center, 2017). They consume 300,000 tons of meat, which costs €3 billion (Marzuki, 2012). In Australia, the demand for halal food is increasing because the Muslim population is growing faster than any other religion in the country, rising to more than 600,000 (excluding students and Muslim travellers) in 2017 (Tolj, 2017). In Singapore, multiculturalism greatly influences people's preference, especially when it comes to food (Marzuki, 2012). Furthermore, the urbanisation and diversity of Singapore, where Islam is one of the major religions, easily influences choices, especially when it comes to food demand and supply (Nasir & Pereira, 2008). For Singaporeans and other people who live in the

country, halal certified establishments are becoming an attraction even to non-Muslims. Its neighbour country, Malaysia, was a pioneer in establishing halal laws in the early 1980s and remains a force in matters relating to halal certification globally (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). However, even predominantly Muslim countries such as Indonesia have not found stability in contextualising halal tourism as its stakeholders are still in confusion over its implementation (Vargas-Sánchez *et al.*, 2020).

A novel approach of this study is that it contributes to the literature by understanding academic discourse on halal tourism in a non-Muslim country such as the Philippines. Halal certification in this country, aside from religious and health benefits, is also an attractive part of marketing, particularly as halal is becoming recognised as a benchmark for quality and superior products.

Halal Certification and Accreditation

Certification is defined as a verification given if an entity or a product follows certain disciplines and requirements that are imposed by a system. System, in this case, refers to a certifying body. Meanwhile, accreditation is the verification that the certifying body has the appropriate quality management system (National Institute of Standards and Technology, 2017). Additionally, the Swiss Accreditation Service (SAS) defined accreditation as the confirmation and recognition of technical competence (ISO/IEC 17000 5.6) and certification as the confirmation that prescribed requirements are fulfilled (ISO/IEC 17000 5.6).

Halal certification is the process of certifying products or services that follow the Sharia law of the Islamic teachings (Khan & Haleem, 2016). There are two purposes for halal certification: to ensure that the products are halal and healthy in accordance with Sharia and to attract Muslim travellers. Halal certification ensures the consumers that food products are in line with Good Manufacturing Practices³ (GMP) and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point⁴ (HACCP) protocols. The same can be said for

3 Good manufacturing practice (GMP) is a system for ensuring that products are consistently produced and controlled according to quality standards set by the World Health Organisation.

4 Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) is a management system in which food safety is addressed through the analysis and control of biological, chemical, and physical hazards from raw material production, procurement and handling, to manufacturing, distribution

exporters, who are increasing their profits due to Muslim consumers.

Halal certified establishments can use the halal logo as proof that they are halal certified. Halal certification is carried out by halal certification bodies which are either established by the government or an Islamic association. Malaysia is an example of a country with a government certification body that handles anything related to applications, conditions, and the enforcement of halal certificates (Ahmad & Salleh, 2019). Under the Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM), the prime minister facilitates the certification process. Certification is carried out by Islamic organisations in Indonesia and the Philippines, which are the Indonesian Ulama⁵ Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia - MUI) and the Islamic Da'wah Council of the Philippines (IDCP), respectively.

Halal accreditation and halal certification are related but have different meanings. To simplify and standardise the meaning of accreditation, the Department of Standards Malaysia (2004; 2009) states on its official website that

as a national accreditation body, we provide credible accreditation services to laboratories, inspection & certification bodies for greater market access and global recognition for technical competence and quality assurance.

Halal certification is a process whereby a credible organisation, which is a certifier, examines a product, kitchen, or a place. To further elaborate:

accreditation of halal certification bodies is a formal declaration that the body is competent to certify halal products or services (Halal Research Council 2016).

With a specified halal standard, the certifier inspects and scrutinises every stage that the product undergoes from harvest to produce, ensuring that it follows and meets the said standard. Halal certificates are given to companies that meet the criteria, and they can then use a halal logo mark on their products.

and consumption of the finished product.

5 Ulama are considered the guardians, transmitters, and interpreters of religious knowledge in Islam, including Islamic doctrine and law.

Halal Tourism and Islamic Tourism

Battour & Ismail (2016) sought to differentiate halal tourism and Islamic tourism as they consider interchanging both concepts questionable. Islamic tourism is defined by them as

tourism in accordance with Islam, involving people of the Muslim faith who are interested in keeping with their personal religious habits whilst travelling (Carboni *et al.*, 2014).

This encourages tourists who have an interest in Islamic culture (Javed, 2007), and it is focused on Muslim countries. Islamic tourism caters to both Muslim and non-Muslim travellers as it is more about faith, culture, and Islamic attractions (Steiner, 2010). It also involves travelling to Mecca for pilgrimage practices (Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010). Meanwhile, halal tourism provides service to Muslim travellers. The purpose of travel may not be religious in halal tourism, but the market will always be focused on Muslim travellers, regardless of whether they are travelling in a non-Muslim country or not (El-Gohary, 2016). Therefore, the difference lies in their target customers, location of activity, and purpose of travel.

To attract the Muslim market, there is a need to create more Muslim-friendly destinations (Battour & Ismail, 2016), considering that 'halalness' is an essential aspect of the tourists' decision to visit a destination (Sudigdo & Khalifa, 2020). Currently, the market for halal tourism mainly includes travellers from Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei, as well as Muslims from South Asia, Europe, the United States (US), and the United Kingdom (UK) (CrescentRating, 2018; Moshin *et al.*, 2020).

From a demand perspective, a country like Thailand shows that Muslims comprise only 4.29% of the total population. Yet in 2018, Thailand ranked as the second 'most Muslim-friendly travel destination' country in the world among Non-Organisation of Islamic Cooperation markets (CrescentRating, 2018). Historically, the support of the Thai government makes the country a successful Muslim-friendly destination. As early as 1997, Thailand already had a leader of Islamic affairs, and since 2003, the Thai government has provided financial support for halal developments in the country. An example is the establishment of Halal – HACCP and The Halal Standard Institute of Thailand.

This study aims to deal with the existing research gap on the needs of Muslim tourists in non-Muslim countries and to enhance the understanding of the needs of destination stakeholders in non-Muslim countries in order to better serve this market. From a supply perspective, understanding the attributes of the host in halal tourism may assist in improving tourists' satisfaction (Dabphet, 2021). However, reviewing the literature, illustrates that the number of theoretical studies on halal tourism outweighs empirical studies, and most studies are conducted in an Islamic context with only a few considering the non-Islamic (or Islamic minority) context (Jia & Chaozhi, 2020). On the other hand, previous empirical studies on halal tourism of non-Islamic countries found a shift from western countries (Halkias *et al.*, 2014; Razzaq *et al.*, 2016) to eastern countries (Dabphet, 2021; Jia & Chaozhi, 2020; Yousaf & Xiucheng, 2018). This research paper theoretically positions itself where academic discourse on halal tourism specific to the Philippines, a Muslim-minority country, remains scant.

Halal Programme and Certification in the Philippines

The Philippines is still in its early stage as a halal tourism destination. This is particularly the case when compared to its Southeast Asian neighbours, Malaysia and Singapore, which operate relatively advanced regulatory schemes for halal food (Henderson, 2016). Halal certification in the Philippines was previously handled by the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF), an agency under the Office of the President of the Republic of the Philippines, whose role is to initiate campaigns, develop halal certification, and accredit establishments that require their products to be halal certified. NCMF was established in 2010 through *Republic Act (R.A.) 9997*, with the primary role of handling different Muslim market matters in the country.

In 2003, *Executive Order 46* was passed under the administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, thereby establishing the Office on Muslim Affairs (OMA) to handle the affairs of Muslims in the country, and manage the halal certification scheme. However, a statement by OMA telling consumers not to trust other halal certifiers except them sparked conflict with the IDCP, a non-governmental organisation established in 1982. The IDCP is

the stand-alone Muslim organisation, which is responsible for issuing halal certificates, training and facilitation of any company wanting to apply [for a] halal certificate (Othman et al., 2016).

Registered under the Philippine Securities and Exchange Commission in 1982, the IDCP was established by nine-member organisations, and is comprised of 98 Muslim organisations throughout the Philippines. It is the first Da'wah organisation in the Philippines and is the oldest certifier in the country.⁶ Most of the IDCP founder members were members of the Converts to Islam Society of the Philippines or CONVISLAM. In 2003, the IDCP filed a case against the OMA and eventually won, thereby making *Executive Order 46* null and void. OMA was relieved of its powers and IDCP was again one of the more powerful certifying bodies in the country. The NCMF has recognised the IDCP but has not accredited it.

In 2016, *Republic Act 10817* was passed, creating the Philippine Halal Board which would oversee the halal development process in the country. There was also a transfer of power which resulted in the Philippine Accreditation Board (PAB) overseeing the accreditation of halal certifiers. However, there is a lack of information as to what the PAB's specific accreditation standards are and what the Halal Board is currently doing to improve the halal industry locally.

Food as a cultural product is vital in any tourism development plan (Bessiere & Tibere, 2013). Therefore, policy makers should now 'take a serious look' at this matter to assess Muslim travellers' behavioural perspectives on food choices and constraints (Linh & Bouchon, 2013). Due to changes and complexities in the Philippine halal industry, some of the key issues that have arisen and need to be addressed include: 1) the process of certification and accreditation; 2) the creation of a legalised and unified halal certification scheme; and 3) the promotion of a unified certification scheme.

The Philippines currently lacks a standardised system in halal tourism as reflected in different certifications and logos from government and non-government organisations (Battour & Ismail, 2016). There is also the question of what the national halal certification standard is since the NCMF does not have it stated within their

⁶ Da'wah is an Arabic word that means to invite or to share (Huda, 2018)

website. The Department of Agriculture does have its own standard, but, the standard for other halal products is still unclear in the local setting.

To further enhance the Department of Tourism's halal programme, the Philippine Halal Tourism Project was launched to get a share of the billion-dollar halal industry by creating new halal facilities, improving the existing ones, and making them easily available to tourists (Simeon, 2016). The project aimed to increase the arrivals of Muslim travellers from other countries up to 13% from the 600,000 arrivals in 2015.

In 2019, the DOT aimed to attract more Muslim tourists through stronger projects and programmes. The department is currently consulting with halal certifiers. It plans to build on previous initiatives for halal tourism development in a proposed pilot area and to outline strategies in encouraging tourism establishments to pursue halal tourism certification (Arnaldo, 2019b). Participating in the 2019 Arabian Travel Market (ATM) also provided an understanding of the real needs of this segment to help create possibilities for a more halal-friendly Philippines. Developing 'halal-consciousness' has become part of the DOT's programme to increase international arrivals. Establishments like hotels are encouraged not just to offer halal food, but also other services such as providing copies of the Qu'ran, setting marker points to Mecca, and lending prayer mats to Muslim guests (Arnaldo, 2019b). The need for Arabic-speaking guides is also being considered.

While Muslims in the Philippines constitute the largest ethnic minority (Magdalena, 2018), understanding the needs of this community can create a competitive advantage for halal tourism, which can be strengthened if relatively robust and trusted certification schemes are in place (Henderson, 2016). As halal tourism is a field of study that is still in a very early stage (Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2019), this study adds knowledge to existing studies related to halal certification in Asian countries (Henderson, 2016; Samori et al., 2016), and particularly in the Philippines, where the phenomenon is still understudied.

Conceptual Framework

This study applies the *Work System Elements Framework* by Alter (2011) to analyse the organisations involved in the halal certification and accreditation process. This framework is deemed appropriate as it was previously

used to understand both the demand and supply sides of halal and to create a halal ecosystem, which detailed the process of halal certification in Malaysia (Noordin *et al.*, 2014). A '**Work System**' is a system where people or machines perform processes or activities using information and technology to create products for their customers. The **Work System** is typically used for IT-reliant systems but it can still be applied to other uses since the goal of the **Work System** is to provide value for the customers. Nine elements are used to identify how organisations work. These are: customers; products and services; process and activities; participants; information; technologies; environment; infrastructure and; strategies.

In this study, the framework was used to identify the process of halal certification. For the conceptual framework, only four out of the nine elements were used: participants, environment, process, and information. These four elements were assessed across the halal certifiers to identify their similarities and differences and to formulate recommendations for a halal tourism policy. Unlike the Islamic country of Malaysia, whose halal certification process and system are well-developed (Noordin *et al.*, 2014), in the Philippines, halal tourism is still in its early stage. Hence, these four elements were specifically chosen because they can be initially applied in understanding the halal certification process.

Participants refer to the involvement of people in the halal accreditation and certification process, leading to the products offered to the consumers. **Environment** refers to the cultural aspects of the halal accreditors and certifiers, as well as their current position in the halal industry. **Process** refers to how the halal certification and accreditation are being done since the end product is the certification or accreditation. Lastly, **Information** refers to the essential entities like orders, invoices, warrants, reservations, medical documents, laws, and others. For halal accreditors and certifiers, the basis for certification as well as current regulations would be essential in performing their duties.

Underpinning the **Work System Elements Framework**, the **Institutional Analysis and Development** (IAD) model (Ostrom 1990, 2011) was also used to bolster the analysis of different halal certifiers. The IAD framework is useful as it identifies the major elements that exist in each certifier acting as an individual institution. It provides prescriptive inquiry based on problems in order for it to be solved. This is beneficial to determine the

differences in institutional variables and problems for analysis and action. **Institutional Analysis** involves an examination of the institutional arrangements including existing processes and regulations in managing resources, to determine how stakeholders can participate in decision making. At the micro-level, Adler's framework was utilised to examine each certifier's four elements as the basis for the certification process; while at the macro-level, the IAD framework was utilised to explore the bigger picture on the role of these halal certifiers as an actively engaged catalyst towards fulfilling halal tourism.

Methodology

This study used case study research methods and exploratory research design to explore the similarities and differences of the halal certifiers. A case study research method is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2009). This exploratory study was used to obtain relevant information on both the halal certifiers and halal accreditors regarding the halal certification process. A detailed qualitative approach was employed to obtain the data.

The study involves collecting both primary and secondary data. In gathering the primary data, key informant interviews were conducted based on a prepared semi-structured interview questionnaire underpinned by the **Work System Elements Framework**, to explore the halal certification and standards of each halal certifier. The research used purposive sampling in choosing the halal certifiers who became the subjects of the study. The proximity of the halal certifiers (mostly in Metro Manila) was also considered in selecting the institutions. After the selection process, the researchers coordinated with the halal certifiers and sought their permission to be part of the study. The respondents agreed to an interview, which was scheduled at their most convenient time. For ethical reasons, informed consent was obtained from the participants such that the halal certifiers involved in the study were anonymised as Certifiers A, B, and C.

The interview protocols were prepared both in English and Tagalog (the main language spoken in the Philippines), but the majority of the participants preferred to speak in English as answering the questions entailed explaining technical terms involving operations and procedures in halal certification. The researchers who conducted the interviews were also aware that the majority of the

Table 2: List of Key Informant Interviewees

Institutional Affiliation	Position	Number of Participants
Certifier A (Total number of employees = 18)	Site Inspectors	4
	Auditors	2
Certifier B (Total number of employees = 13)	President of the Organisation	1
	Head, Auditor	1
	Technical Auditor	1
Certifier C (Total number of employees = 12)	Managing Director	1
	Technical Auditor 1	1
	Technical Auditor 2	1
Department of Trade and Industry (Government representative)	Assistant Chief of Food and Agri-Marine Division / Export Marketing Bureau	1
	Technical Staff in charge of Implementing Rules and Regulations	2
Total number of key informants		15

participants came from southern Philippines, a region where the residents are more comfortable speaking in English and/or other Philippine dialects instead of Tagalog.

The key informant interviews involved fifteen representatives from four institutions - three halal certifiers and the Department of Trade and Industry (Table 2). For each institution, the key informant interview commenced with individual interviews followed by a group interview. Overall, 15 individual interviews and 4 group interviews were conducted. This allowed for clarification and validation of the interview data. The interviews of the key informants were conducted at the comfort of their respective offices between January and April 2017. The key informant interviews lasted between 90 and 120 minutes. On certain occasions, the different institutions accommodated the research team by sharing technical documents or by answering email correspondence.

Key informant interviews are considered a vital part of qualitative studies specifically in the field of policy research. Furthermore, this approach was chosen as key informants are essential in providing knowledge. The status of the key informant provides more than what might be contributed by interviews with 'ordinary people' (Lokot, 2021; Marshall, 1996; Matarrita-Cascante *et al.*, 2010; Taylor & Blake, 2015). As a qualitative approach, the value of key informant interviews must be treated

with care because of who the participants are: their power, status, and influence in a particular context may lead to their knowledge being over-emphasised. However, the very fact that these participants are not 'ordinary' means that they may be viewed as holding more essential or objective knowledge than 'ordinary' community members (Lokot, 2021).

Underpinning the *Work System Elements Framework*, the *Institutional Analysis and Development* model was considered in analysing the different halal certifiers (Ostrom 1990, 2011). *Institutional Analysis* involves an examination of the institutional arrangements, including existing processes and regulations in managing resources, in order to determine the ways in which stakeholders can participate. In strengthening the results of this qualitative study, *investigator triangulation* was also employed, with a number of researchers interpreting the same body of data (Decrop, 1999). As each investigator comes from a different discipline, they are influenced by their subjective understanding of the phenomenon. In order to corroborate the findings from interviews with halal certifiers, key informant interviews with the Department of Trade and Industry were undertaken as this institution is essential in creating and implementing rules and regulations in the halal industry in the Philippines.

Meanwhile, secondary data were collected from available materials online, such as journal articles, literature, websites, and other published documents with

Table 3: Philippine Halal Certifiers - Evaluation of 'Process'

Subcategories	Halal Certifier A	Halal Certifier B	Halal Certifier C
Certification Procedures*	<input type="checkbox"/> Qur'an <input type="checkbox"/> Sharia <input type="checkbox"/> Hadith <input type="checkbox"/> Four I's <input type="checkbox"/> International Organisation Guidelines	<input type="checkbox"/> Qur'an <input type="checkbox"/> Sharia <input type="checkbox"/> Department of Agriculture (DA) guidelines on slaughtering <input type="checkbox"/> DA guidelines on rudiments <input type="checkbox"/> Oivas (analogical deductions) <input type="checkbox"/> Al-Ijma (consensus of Ulama)	<input type="checkbox"/> Qur'an <input type="checkbox"/> Sharia <input type="checkbox"/> ASEAN Standards
	All three halal certifiers use Qur'an and Sharia in their certification procedures. Only Halal Certifier B follows the DA guidelines in slaughtering and rudiments. Halal Certifier B uses analogical deduction and considers the consensus opinion of Ulama. Halal Certifier C follows ASEAN standards while Halal Certifier A uses Hadith, Four I's and International Organisation Guidelines in their certification process.		
	*(Note - procedures listed for each certifier are in no particular order)		
Scope	<input type="checkbox"/> Food <input type="checkbox"/> Cosmetics <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmaceutical <input type="checkbox"/> Abattoir	<input type="checkbox"/> Food <input type="checkbox"/> Cosmetics <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmaceutical <input type="checkbox"/> Abattoir	<input type="checkbox"/> Food <input type="checkbox"/> Cosmetics <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmaceutical <input type="checkbox"/> Abattoir
	There are no differences in terms of the scope of the three Certifiers.		
Application Submission	<input type="checkbox"/> Online and Manual	<input type="checkbox"/> Online and Manual	<input type="checkbox"/> Online and Manual
	There are no differences in terms of the submission of application for the three Certifiers.		
Pre-inspection Procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter of intent for application <input type="checkbox"/> Submission of documents and regulatory permits <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule given by the office <input type="checkbox"/> Halal Assurance System Seminar	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter of intent for application <input type="checkbox"/> Submission of documents and regulatory permits <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule given by the office <input type="checkbox"/> Halal Assurance System Seminar	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter of intent for application <input type="checkbox"/> Submission of documents and regulatory permits <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule given by the office <input type="checkbox"/> Halal Assurance System Seminar
	There are no differences in terms of the pre-inspection procedures of the three Certifiers.		
Inspection Procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> Background check on employees <input type="checkbox"/> 1-4 groups with 2-3 members depending on the size of the company <input type="checkbox"/> Normally one group is allocated to one company <input type="checkbox"/> Each plant and warehouse of the company is thoroughly checked.	<input type="checkbox"/> Background check on employees <input type="checkbox"/> Minimum of 3 and maximum of 6 members depending on the size of the company <input type="checkbox"/> Each should at least have 1 Ulama member. <input type="checkbox"/> Inspected based on the checklist of the audit group	<input type="checkbox"/> Background check on employees <input type="checkbox"/> A group of 5 people is sent for inspection. <input type="checkbox"/> Normally 3 are from technical while 2 are from the fatwa (religious groups).
	All three halal certifiers include background checks on employees in their inspection procedures. These halal certifiers send a group of people to the company requesting certification, but the number of people they send for inspection differs depending on the size of the company.		
Post-inspection Procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> Surprise random audits <input type="checkbox"/> Halal Assurance Officer checks once a week <input type="checkbox"/> Annual audit validation <input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly checks	<input type="checkbox"/> Surprise random audits <input type="checkbox"/> Halal Assurance Officer checks once a week <input type="checkbox"/> Annual audit validation <input type="checkbox"/> Corrective measures are suggested	<input type="checkbox"/> Surprise random audits <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly checks
	All the halal certifiers conduct surprise random audits. Halal Certifiers A and B perform weekly and annual audits, with Halal Certifier A having additional quarterly checks. Halal Certifier C does monthly checks.		
Certification Validity	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> Certification per branch per plant and per product	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> Certification per branch per plant and per product	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> Certification of per branch per plant and per product
	There are no differences in terms of the certification validity of the three Certifiers.		

Table 3 (cont.): Philippine Halal Certifiers - Evaluation of 'Processes'

Subcategories	Halal Certifier A	Halal Certifier B	Halal Certifier C
Problems Encountered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Misconception on halal leading to haram materials and procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Usage of their logo without undergoing proper process <input type="checkbox"/> 'Dual' citizenship or companies go to two different certifiers <input type="checkbox"/> Companies go to the faster certifiers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Misconception on halal leading to haram materials and procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Using halal certificate for marketing purposes only <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign halal certifiers want their certified products to be automatically certified in the Philippines without undergoing process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Misconception on halal leading to haram materials and procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Halal contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Change of employees every 5-6 months forces the company to repeat halal seminars.
	All three halal certifiers agreed that misconceptions regarding halal is leading to haram materials and procedures; this is the most common problem they encounter. Each halal certifier identified various problems which are unique to them.		
Decision-making process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Technical team only audits and sets prices. <input type="checkbox"/> Fatwa are the deciding group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Technical team only audits and sets prices depending on the size of the organisation. <input type="checkbox"/> Ulama Council gives the final decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Technical team only audits. <input type="checkbox"/> Fatwa gives the final decision and is also the decider for the audit price.
	All three halal certifiers use technical teams for audits. Halal Certifiers A and B admit that the technical team also sets the prices, while Halal Certifier C says the fatwa sets the audit price. Halal Certifiers A and C rely on fatwa for final decisions while Halal Certifier B relies on Ulama Council for final decisions.		

the participants' permission. The study recognises that the selected halal certifiers are not representative of all the certifying bodies and organisations in the Philippines and acknowledges that there may be small-scale halal certifiers in other areas, particularly in the southern region (i.e., in cities such as Cebu and Davao). Nonetheless, the study captures the major institutions involved in halal certification that are based in Manila, the centre of trade and commerce in the country. Hence, this research provides a cognitive schema of the phenomenon being studied in relation to halal certification and standards.

Results and Discussion

Currently, each individual certifier has its own policies regarding halal certification. Their sources for crafting these policies are seen in the summary of the various practices by halal certifiers that emerged from the interviews. These results are presented in cross-case tables of the *Work System's* four elements and their subcategories. However, the elements listed are not perfectly equivalent to each category vis-à-vis each certifier.

In the context of *Processes* (Table 3), the results identified the following nine subcategories: certification procedures; scope; application submission; pre-inspection; inspection procedures; post-inspection procedures; certification

validity; problems encountered; and decision-making process. Of the nine subcategories, the scope, application submission, pre-inspection procedures, and certification validity of the participants are matches. The other subcategories have major similarities and minor differences in certification procedures, inspection procedures, post-inspection procedures, problems encountered, and decision-making processes of the three halal certifiers.

All the halal certifiers use the Qur'an and Sharia guidelines in their certification procedures. Halal Certifiers A and B admit that the technical team also sets the prices, while Certifier C says the *fatwa* (religious group who provide interpretation in relation to legal opinion or decree handed down by Islamic religious leaders) sets the audit price. Halal Certifiers A and C rely on the *fatwa* for final decisions while Certifier B relies on the Ulama Council for their final decisions. Each certifier has their own set of problems that are different from the other certifiers except for one: misconception on halal leading to haram materials and procedures.

The findings show that the three halal certifiers have similarities and differences in terms of their *Work System Elements*. There is no standardised process among the halal certifiers of the country. In terms of similarities, the validity of the certification for one (1) year and

Table 4: Philippine Halal Certifiers - Evaluation of 'Participants'

Subcategories	Halal Certifier A	Halal Certifier B	Halal Certifier C
Technical Members	<input type="checkbox"/> Trained in the Halal Assurance System <input type="checkbox"/> Holders of science-related degrees <input type="checkbox"/> Exam takers <input type="checkbox"/> Sent to other countries for seminar	<input type="checkbox"/> Trained in the Halal Assurance System <input type="checkbox"/> Holders of science-related degrees <input type="checkbox"/> Chamber members who are briefed <input type="checkbox"/> Time-trained	<input type="checkbox"/> Trained in the Halal Assurance System <input type="checkbox"/> Holders of science-related degrees <input type="checkbox"/> Sent to Thailand, Singapore, and Indonesia for seminars
	The technical members of all three halal certifiers were trained in the Halal Assurance System, and all are holders of science-related degrees. The certifiers send their technical teams to different countries abroad for seminars.		
Religious Group	<input type="checkbox"/> Fatwa Group <input type="checkbox"/> Composed of academics, Islamic scholars, and professionals	<input type="checkbox"/> Ulama Council composed of academics, Islamic scholars, and professionals who deeply practice Islam (Shariah, Da'wah, Qur'an, Hadith)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fatwa Group <input type="checkbox"/> Composed of religious scholars
	Halal Certifiers A and C have fatwa in their religious group while Halal Certifier B has an Ulama Council.		

the certification per branch, per plant, and per product is standard for the three certifiers. This is the same for their application process, scope (i.e., food, cosmetics, pharmaceutical and abattoir), and their guiding principles, derived from the Qur'an and Sharia.

The processes of each certifier present similarities and differences of elements used. The certification procedure category alone already shows that the basis for certifying products is different. Although all the certifiers use the Qur'an and Sharia, which offer the core and general guiding principles of Islam, they differ in all the other elements. This variation stems from different interpretations due to having different religious leaders on whom they base their core values. The Philippines does not have an established sole Muslim leader, organisation, law, or concrete support from government that can establish the base principles in halal certification unlike other countries such as Thailand, which is also a non-Muslim country.

The inspection process is different among the halal certifiers. Only the pre-inspection procedures are identical. The technical members are all trained outside the Philippines, and they are all degree holders of science-related courses. However, the religious participants are distinct. Some certifiers have *Fatwa*, while others have Ulama Councils composed of religious scholars and professionals. The information required by these halal certifiers is the same in terms of the products, laboratory analysis and sample products, and plant requirements, although additional documents are required such as those for plant requirements (i.e., equipment used). Moreover, the recognition and affiliation of these halal

certifiers differ in some respects. However, all of them are recognised by several ASEAN⁷ institutions and all are associated with various chambers of commerce.

In the context of *Participants*, the halal certifiers were examined in terms of the technical members and religious group. Table 4 shows the participants involved in each of the halal certifiers. The technical members of all three halal certifiers were trained in the Halal Assurance System, and all of them have science-related degrees. They send the technical team to different countries abroad for seminars. Halal Certifiers A and C have *Fatwa* in their religious group, while Halal Certifier B has an Ulama Council. There is only a slight difference among the three.

Table 5 provides the *Information* needed and the *Environment* that exists for the halal certifiers. For the information needed, four subcategories were examined: products, company documents, plant requirement, and other details. Under the environment category, only recognition and affiliation were identified. In terms of information and its subcategories, the three halal certifiers require different information in the certification process. They all ask for the company profile but demand different regulatory documents. Additionally, all three halal certifiers require laboratory analysis and product samples. All certifiers need data on machines (and no slaughtering by machine), equipment, and Muslim

⁷ ASEAN stands for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, a regional intergovernmental organisation comprising ten countries in Southeast Asia that promotes intergovernmental cooperation and facilitates economic, political, security, military, education, and sociocultural integration among its members and other countries in Asia.

Table 5: Philippine Halal Certifiers - Evaluation of 'Information' and 'Environment'

Category	Subcategory	Halal Certifier A	Halal Certifier B	Halal Certifier C	
Information Needed	Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> List of all raw materials used in the plant <input type="checkbox"/> List of products being produced in the company <input type="checkbox"/> Itemised ingredients used in each product applied for halal certification <input type="checkbox"/> Production Process Flow <input type="checkbox"/> Halal certificates of the raw materials or components used in the products (if available) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The product source should be well explained <input type="checkbox"/> Type of products produced should be stated. <input type="checkbox"/> Workflow of production from suppliers to finished product <input type="checkbox"/> All documents regarding raw materials and pre-mixes. <input type="checkbox"/> The plant should be well documented in terms of safety, cleanliness, and security regarding the requirements of halal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> List of all raw materials used <input type="checkbox"/> Halal certificate of raw materials <input type="checkbox"/> Name of product and ingredients used <input type="checkbox"/> Process flowchart <input type="checkbox"/> Specification of ingredients used 	
	The three halal certifiers require different information in the certification process.				
	Company Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Company profile <input type="checkbox"/> Business registration <input type="checkbox"/> License or permit to operate (FDA, DENR) <input type="checkbox"/> FDA letter of notification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Company profile <input type="checkbox"/> BIR <input type="checkbox"/> SEC <input type="checkbox"/> Sanitary permit <input type="checkbox"/> DTI permit <input type="checkbox"/> Mayor's permit <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Company profile <input type="checkbox"/> SEC <input type="checkbox"/> DTI permit <input type="checkbox"/> Mayor's permit <input type="checkbox"/> Product permit <input type="checkbox"/> GMP - HACCP 	
	The three halal certifiers require the company profile but demand different regulatory documents in certification.				
	Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Laboratory analysis results of each finished product, raw materials, if any <input type="checkbox"/> Sample of the finished products (not less than 200 grams in quantity, if necessary) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Laboratory analysis <input type="checkbox"/> Product sample 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Laboratory analysis <input type="checkbox"/> Product sample 	
All three halal certifiers need laboratory analysis and product sample.					
Plant Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Machines can be used with exception to the slaughtering process <input type="checkbox"/> Muslim employees <input type="checkbox"/> Separation of halal equipment <input type="checkbox"/> No pork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Machines can be used with exception to the slaughtering process <input type="checkbox"/> Muslim employees <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment that has not been used with haram <input type="checkbox"/> Documents for slaughtering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Machines can be used with exception to the slaughtering process <input type="checkbox"/> Muslim employees <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment that has not been used with haram <input type="checkbox"/> Documents for slaughtering <input type="checkbox"/> No pork <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer room 		
All three halal certifiers allow the company to use machines except during the slaughtering process. They also require detail ib equipment and Muslim employees in their plant. However, they also have other plant requirements such as documents for slaughtering and equipment that have not been used with haram for Halal Certifiers B and C, no pork for Halal Certifiers A and C, and prayer room for Halal Certifier C.					
Environment	Recognition and Affiliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Recognised by several international and ASEAN institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Recognised by ASEAN institutions <input type="checkbox"/> Recognised by various chambers of commerce and NCMF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Recognised by several international and ASEAN institutions 	
	All three halal certifiers are recognised by several ASEAN institutions. Only Halal Certifier B is recognised by various chambers of commerce and NCMF.				

employees in their plant. However, they vary in other plant requirements, such as documents for slaughtering and equipment that have not been used with haram for Certifiers B and C, no pork for Certifiers A and C, and prayer room for Certifier C. In summary, the three halal certifiers have many similarities but there are also a few differences in the information needed.

Regarding the environment, all three halal certifiers are recognised by several ASEAN institutions and only Certifier B is recognised by various chambers of commerce and NCMF. Certifier A has a set of manuals that are not available for public viewing. These manuals deal with all kinds of materials from animals (both ruminants and poultry) to vegetables, fish, and even pharmaceuticals. This is also the case for Certifier B.

Setting Standards

The three certifiers vary in their basis for creating their standards. Certifier A based its standards on the Four I's or *Imams*⁸ (school of thought), World Halal Council Guidelines, Hadith, Qur'an, and Sharia. Certifier B uses the ASEAN Standards, Qur'an, and Sharia. While the Qur'an and Sharia are always the certifiers' basis for creating their policies and procedures for all the products, because of subjectivity and differences in understanding, their procedures vary.

Certifier C uses the Philippine National Standard that was issued by the NCMF in 2011. This document contains the different haram materials, procedures of harvesting materials, slaughtering procedures, code of halal slaughtering, methods, figures, and the scope of halal that was created by the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards. They have various manuals like the manual for ruminants and for poultry. Apart from these, they also consult Al-Ijma (consensus of Ulama), Qiyas (analogical deductions), in addition to guidelines from the Qur'an and Sharia.

Overall, the study reflects that the three certifiers have created their own standards and policies and that there is no existing unified standard for certification. Different

problems have been identified in relation to crafting a unified and standard scheme for accreditation and certification. The first problem involves the delay and turnover of administration. A representative from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said that one of the reasons the drafting took so long was because of the delay in the appointment of the new Secretary by the Office of the Philippine President, before the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) could be drafted. This also means there will be new decisions, perspectives, ideas, and understanding regarding halal. The challenge of formulating the IRR also stems from the different representatives being presented by each member whenever a meeting is held. Hence, continuous revisions are needed to be made.

The IRR is tasked with developing a unified standard scheme for halal certification and accreditation, and in 2017, they began to draft a unified set of guidelines. This was undertaken in collaboration with the nine members of the Halal Board, which includes representatives from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF), the Mindanao Development Authority (MINDA), the Department of Tourism (DOT), the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), the Department of Health (DOH), and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). With a common set of guidelines, all the certifying bodies should be able to follow a single standard, to minimise confusion not just for the certifiers but also among the different establishments. However, the crafting of the said guidelines has taken much longer than expected because of personal motivations, biases, and interests of the stakeholders.

The second problem involved in the crafting and implementing a unified halal certification system is the separation of Church and State, which can be problematic in the context of the Islamic religion. Constitutionally, the Philippines, being a predominantly Catholic nation, follows this provision. However, within the Muslim faith, there is no separation of Church and State because all acts of Muslims are considered an act of worship in themselves. Therefore, this can be seen as a barrier since the Philippines, as a democratic country, does not always have to follow what the Church directs. This is evident in the contradicting beliefs about slaughtering. Furthermore, the absence of a single Muslim religious leader in the Philippines also makes it difficult to unite

⁸ The four I's or Imam (schools of thought) are the four major influential scholars: Abu Hanifa, Malik, al-Sharfi I, and Ibn Hanbal, credited with shaping the development of fundamental systems of Islamic jurisprudence (human understanding and practices of the Sharia) that have emerged over the centuries with their own interpretation and application of the Sharia.

the consumer and supply sides, unlike countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia. All of this in addition to the absence of a national certification scheme or a standard scheme that certifiers can follow means that each certifying body creates its own standard, scheme, and policy regarding halal certification. This leads to the fragmented development of certification schemes.

The third problem is that the responsibilities of every certifier are large and vague in scope. In other countries, certifiers specialise only in specific industries, but in the Philippines, the majority of the certifiers can certify a wide range of sectors (i.e., food, cosmetics, restaurants, establishments, etc.). This can become problematic when it comes to the acceptance of export products in the international market and the credibility of halal certified products in the country. As mentioned earlier, there are many ways of understanding the Qur'an. The Qur'an itself encompasses the whole teachings of Islam, and is seen to be perfect. However, because the certifiers come from diverse backgrounds, the teachings are subject to subjectivity, leading some to require additional references such as Tafsir (exegesis of Qur'an) and Hadith so they can interpret the laws and teachings (Abd Rahman *et al.*, 2017).

Lastly, there is no uniform body for accreditation. Prior to the creation of the Philippine Accreditation Board (PAB) in 2016, the NCMF oversaw halal accreditation. Under the *Republic Act of 9997*, the role of the NCMF is to

preserve and develop the culture, tradition, institutions and well-being of Muslim Filipinos in conformity with the country's laws.

The NCMF also has a mandate to

promote and develop the Philippine halal industry and accredit halal-certifying entities / bodies for the utmost benefit of Muslim Filipinos and in partnership or cooperation with appropriate agencies, individuals and institutions here and abroad.

However, with the *Republic Act 10817* of 2016, the Philippine Accreditation Board (PAB) was given authority over the halal certification and accreditation scheme. The halal scheme is currently being developed and is to be known as 'The National Halal Certification' scheme. This will lay down the guiding principles in accrediting halal certifiers. It is also expected to have Philippine products accepted in the global halal market. The scheme has yet to be completed or released by DTI.

Conclusion

This paper is the first study to explore halal tourism in the context of halal certifiers in the Philippines. Future studies may examine institutions, including halal certifiers and standards, that are currently exploring the potential of halal tourism in a destination. The study's results contribute to existing literature on halal tourism by providing a deeper understanding of how to prepare destinations to become 'halal-ready' by studying one specific institution: the halal certifiers.

Muslim-minority countries like the Philippines may consider halal food at airports and hotels as a means of attracting the Muslim population, which is the fastest developing market segment in the world. However, there is a lack of awareness of the tourism potential of halal food and therefore, it is not promoted as a tourism attraction. Given the complexity of halal certification and standards in the Philippines, the use of the *Institutional Analysis and Development* model enabled the examination of the different halal certifiers in the country. With the differences currently present, these will assist the institutions in preparing stronger and well-founded policies in certification to address problems such as misconceptions on halal which can lead to haram materials and procedures, pricing standards, documentation, and auditing procedures, among others. To institute a 'halal-ready' Philippines, a coherent halal standard should be established.

Currently, DTI has already established its Halal - Export Marketing Bureau that produces projects focused on the exportation of halal meat products. Localising and institutionalising the halal industry through the IRR will create standards that can guide certifiers, sectors, and establishments, such as restaurants, suppliers, and the public (both for halal and non-halal consumers). As part of the six faith-based needs, halal food can be the start of the services that the Philippine tourism industry can provide. Producers can use a unified halal system as a marketing tool in promoting healthy and safe products for both Islamic and non-Islamic visitors. These standards can bring more competitiveness to the Philippine halal product in terms of branding and quality assurance not just locally but internationally as well. For the certifying bodies, a unified standard could eliminate those that may abuse fees, do not truly value the concept of halal, and do not conduct proper auditing.

As this study reveals that certifiers do not have a common standard, the IRR will create a network that can help certifiers and various stakeholders with a standardised system to understand the importance, value, and benefits of halal standards. A unified accrediting body must also be finalised and established. It must be an accrediting body formed by the Philippine government which is free of bias from stakeholders. A government formed standard of halal certification in the Philippines should follow a high quality of standards and processes based on the ASEAN standards and those of other recognised chambers of commerce. The certification process should likewise be of international quality. The Department of Tourism, as the marketing arm to promote the Philippines, should properly disseminate information and curate local partnerships and projects to make visitor establishments and tourism destinations more halal friendly.

Practical Contributions

In practice, this study proposes that certifiers reduce and unify their scopes, as they certify way too many industries. These certifiers do not need to be regulated because of their recognition in the international market. Rather, the government should work alongside the future halal certifiers under the new halal certification scheme. This would ensure that the halal certifiers would be of international quality which would help garner recognition that the Philippines has its own halal industry. Future studies should examine the current accreditation body as the regulatory framework in assessing each scope of the halal certification process. It is also recommended to provide updates and share new information by tracking the status of the IRR, its programs, and future implications for the halal foods and tourism industry.

With the ongoing coordination of various government agencies such as the PAB, DTI, and NCMF, and future projects that the DOT will be launching, more information on the development of the Philippine halal industry will be available. However, the implementation and imposition

of halal standards, halal law, and the corresponding implementing rules and regulations in the Philippines are not going to be easy where diplomacy will be needed to coordinate and reach consensus with the different stakeholders. The execution, for example, of the IRR in the food and manufacturing industry will definitely create conflict among Catholics, Muslims, and other religious groups. It will be harder to implement a halal law in a predominantly Catholic country, as the concept and idea of halal is embedded in the belief and religion of Muslims. Moreover, the government cannot fully pledge to offer halal certification for all of its processes, as doing so will violate the separation of the Church and State laws. Alternatively, having the government and different stakeholders collaborate under the facilitation and supervision of an Ulama Council and different Muslim scholars may jumpstart the establishment of a halal-friendly Philippine tourism industry.

Theoretical Contributions

In terms of theoretical contribution, this study analysed halal tourism as a market from a supply-side by holistically exploring institutions, particularly halal certifiers and their implication for halal tourism. This study contributes knowledge by exploring the halal certification process through the lenses of the *Work System Elements* and the *Institutional Analysis and Development* framework in relation to the current situation of the halal industry and tourism in the Philippines. In the context of a non-Islamic destination in a Muslim-minority country, this may be the first research investigating halal tourism by exploring halal certifiers as an institution which facilitates halal tourism in a destination. Further, this study enriched the extant literature with empirical research on halal tourism, while specifically focusing on a non-western setting. Considering the complexity of halal tourism as a phenomenon, the growing literature on consumption of halal tourism should therefore be complemented by further exploring its production in Muslim-minority countries.

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