

Factors affecting the Muslim tourists' choice of Halal concept hotel

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the factors affecting Muslim tourists' choice of Halal-concept hotel in the Philippines. Availability of Muslim-friendly hotels is considered one of the most important attributes that attract Muslim travelers and encourage them to visit destination. In this regard, it is essential to identify the hotel characteristics that Muslim travelers prioritize and consider in choosing such hotels. The respondents of the study were Muslim tourists who have traveled to the Philippines whether for education and training, leisure and recreation, and work and employment. These respondents were from mainly Muslim countries in the world: Malaysia, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, and Turkey. The study used quantitative and qualitative research methods of descriptive research design to determine the factors affects the Muslim tourists' choice of Halal-concept hotel. Results showed that availability and convenience of Halal foods, prayer facilities, Islamic morality, Muslim-friendly holiday packages, and religious affiliated sites. These factors supported the findings of previous study, however significant due to the conduct of the study in a non-Muslim country such as the Philippines. Moreover, results revealed that age and occupation did not have a significant difference with the identified factors. Gender, on the other hand, showed significant differences with the factors using analysis of variance (ANOVA) and independent sample T-test to test the difference. The study concluded and recommended that appraisal system must be provided to recognize those tourism-related establishments who have high compliance with the Halal tourism standards including the establishment of Hotel Management Information System by the Department of Tourism for convenience in finding hotel accommodation that fit the Muslim Tourists' needs and expectations following the Islamic ethical standards.

Keywords: Muslim, Halal, tourism management, hotel innovation, Philippines

Factors affecting the Muslim tourists' choice of Halal concept hotel

1. Introduction

In the advent of globalization and cultural exchange across the world, tourism has become a growing industry nowadays. Tourism is indeed a contributor to the economic index in the country (Amutha, 2011). In fact, many countries which are known for their distinctive landscape, crystal clear beaches, and architectural design and historical structures generate additional employments for its people due to the large number of tourists who visit the country. Aside from its economic function, tourism also promotes understanding and trust among people from different cultures (Caspo, 2012). Through tourism industry, people can see and appreciate different places, different people, different cultures and different traditions. In effect, these make people realize the essence and significance of human differences which greatly helps them embrace their own humanity. Therefore, tourism is an industry which recognizes, promotes, and supports the goal of a tourist to embark on a peaceful and meaningful travel or journey going to the tourist destination he/she wants to (UNWTO, 2018).

Given this fact, the development of tourism management plan plays a significant role in the realization of the new tourism perspectives and to concretize the new avenue for the emerging markets in hospitality management including hotels and resorts (Kapiki, 2012). These competitive markets of tourism have encouraged large number of tourism migrants, making the country a Salad bowl, which premised on various nationalities who visited a specific country of destination. In this sense, Dinu (2016) stated that travel and tourism industry is considered the world's most dynamic sector and at the same time, the most important generator of income and jobs. Because of that, she also argued that in the next years to come, tourism will become one of the main engines of growth locally, regionally, and globally. Internationally, tourism sector is seen as an important factor that affect the growth of economic income, leading to a public welfare. Indeed, tourism industry stimulates economic growth is represented by the increase in the number of available jobs in that tourist destination, both directly and indirectly, within the companies which provide services necessary for tourists. The process of serving tourists appeals to a large and diversified workforce, with a varied skill profile (Bunghez, 2016). Similarly, Katha (2017) explained that tourism helps ease the strain of a suffering industry and stops it from having a massive effect on the country's economy. This is almost a safety net for countries and is of massive economic benefit, especially for new and developing economies.

Based on the recent data of Lock (2020), the direct contribution of travel and tourism to global GDP amounted to just under 2,893 billion U.S. dollars in 2019. In contrast, the total contribution to GDP worldwide in 2019 was just over 9,258 billion U.S. dollars. Supporting this, WTTC's (2020) latest annual research, in conjunction with Oxford Economics, shows the Travel & Tourism sector experienced 3.5% growth in 2019, outpacing the global economy growth of 2.5% for the ninth consecutive year. Over the past five years, one in four new jobs were created by the sector, making Travel & Tourism the best partner for governments to generate employment. Indeed, the significant effect of tourism industry is undeniably positive, leading to more improvement and development to a specific country of destination. This is the reason why a lot of countries have transformed their landforms and structures into touristic attractions.

In the Philippines, tourism is also seen as a growing avenue to increase international arrivals. Because of the country's geographical locations and natural beauty, many tourists from different countries have traveled to the Philippines to experience natural attractions that country has offered. Based on the recent data provided by the Department of Tourism (DOT), from January to September 2019, a total of 6,161,503 people visited the country, compared to 5,387,458 in 2018. Even lean months for the tourism industry in the Philippines such as September helped the country received a total of 606,553 visitors, which is 17.09 percent more than last year.

Most of the country's visitors came from Korea, China, USA, Japan, and Taiwan. Korea has consistently

topped the list for the four quarters of the year with a total of 1,989,322 visitors, followed by China with 1,743,309. Meanwhile, 1,064,440 people came from the USA, 682,788 from Japan, and 327,273 from Taiwan as shown in the figure above. The year-end visitor arrival report said that the record-breaking foreign tourist arrival was a 15.24-percent increase from 2018's 7.16 million international arrivals. The DOT reported that there was double-digit growth in most months except for January. The largest growth rate recorded was at 27.54% in August while December recorded the highest volume at 776,798 arrivals. However, even the Philippines is popular destination for tourists, there was a low rate of tourist arrivals from Muslim countries. Although Philippines is a Muslim-friendly country, there is still a need for the intense promotion of tourism that aligns to Muslim tourists' religious motivation. To respond to that growing need, the Philippines, through the DOT, has exerted efforts in making Halal tourism development plan. Arnaldo (2019) reported that DOT is crafting a Halal Tourism Roadmap to further develop and expand the arrivals from the Middle East and other Muslim nations.

As reported by DOT, arrivals from the Middle East fell by 11.34 percent to 82,251 in 2018, ostensibly due to a region-wide "silent recession" and their respective governments subsidizing inter-region travel. In the first quarter of 2019, visitor arrivals from the region decreased by 16.32 percent to 18,485. The region is composed of Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia accounted for the largest source of the region's tourists to the Philippines. Concerning this, the DOT has started to craft a Halal tourism develop plan to attract more Muslim tourists' arrivals in the country.

Given this motivation, there is a need to study the Muslim tourists' preference in a halal-concept hotel, for it serves as a guide for the possible investors in building up Halal-concept hotels or hoteliers to redesign their hotels, making Muslim-friendly. Equal importance is given to the geographical setting of the country. Philippines is blessed with natural beauty, considering its unique bodies of water, rock formation, and forests that attract tourists from different parts of the world. Venturing into the Halal-concept hotels could be a gateway to increase Muslim tourists' arrivals in the country since they love to be with nature and travel while doing their religious practices.

1.1 Background of the Study

Muslim travel market is one of the fastest growing markets still relatively untapped (Arnaldo, 2019). In fact, it is postulated that the Halal travel sector would rise 35% by year 2026 amounting to USD 300 billion and up to USD 220 billion by 2020 which translates to 220 million Muslim tourists traveling all over the world or 10% of the total world tourist population. The increasing trend of international visitors from Islamic countries benefit mostly the Muslim country like Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Turkey, and other Muslim countries that cater their needs. Taking advantage on this emerging tourism trend, DOT has initiated the creation of Halal Tourism Roadmap to further develop and expand the arrivals from the Middle East and other Muslim nations. Such policy seems to be a proactive response of the national government to the tourism needs in coming years. That policy also allows the country to follow and engage in the growing trend of Halal tourism. This initiative could be worth millions of dollars to the tourism industry in the country as predicted by travel experts. Therefore, the Philippine Department of Tourism (PDOT) has started its efforts to create a long-term infrastructure across the country to diversify its visitor arrivals by attracting Muslim visitors, especially from the neighboring ASEAN region and the Middle East.

Mufti (2017) argued that despite the geographical proximity between Philippines and Indonesia, which can be covered by a four-hour flight, the number of Indonesian tourists visiting the Philippines remains relatively low compared to that of other countries such as China, South Korea, the United States and other ASEAN countries, according to the PDOT. The Philippines' close proximity to the large Muslim populations of Malaysia and Indonesia, coupled with its rich diverse culture, makes the country an attractive destination for family tourists keen to explore one of the most unique places in Asia (Crescent Rating Staff Writers, 2016). Halal tourism adheres the laws of Islam and known as "Islamic tourism" or "Sharia tourism". Halal tourism is defined as "tourism in accordance with Islam, involving people of the Muslim faith who are interested in keeping with their personal religious habits while traveling". The word "halal" is an Arabic word for permissible and is used to refer to everything that is permissible for a practicing Muslim. Muslims must live their lives in accordance with the

instructions that are set by the Quran. Muslims that choose to obey the teachings of their religion while travelling, particularly in non-Muslim countries has created a market for Muslim-friendly tourist services (Muslim Travelers, 2016). These Islamic ethical standards guide the daily life of a every Muslim. These principles must govern the actions of every Muslim, especially in decision making.

Traveling is a leisure and exploring activity which people would like to embark on whether for the cause of leisure and recreation, work and employment, or education and training (Muslim Travelers, 2016). Just like other, Muslims also put importance on traveling because as all Muslims know, traveling is one of the best times to make Dua because a traveler's Dua is never rejected. The benefits of acquiring Dua may include: individual's request is granted; individual's request is not granted but she/he is protected from future harm; or individual's request is not granted but rather she/he gets something even better than what she/he requested (Muslim Travelers, 2016). When embarking on a journey for a specific purpose, Muslim travelers need to find out hotel accommodation providers that offer halal-friendly services. Hotel accommodation must adhere to the Islamic ethical standards. As the number of Muslim travelers grows, the need for good accommodation also grows. Therefore, hotel providers should take its role in creating a whole Halal ecosystem from food, travel, lifestyle, and finances. Such Halal ecosystem requires to instigate Halal-consciousness to all individual choices in food, travel, lifestyle, and finances.

As reported by Arnaldo (2019), "DOT officials have pointed out that "halal-consciousness" does not just mean offering halal food, but also raising the awareness of hotels to Muslim practices and providing for instance, a Quran in the rooms, a marker that points to Mecca, and lending a prayer mat to the Muslim guest if needed." This is a part of crafting a Halal tourism roadmap, which is the fruit of labor from the series of consultation meeting with halal certifiers to outline strategies in encouraging tourism establishments to pursue halal tourism certification. Since Halal tourism has contributed a lot of income to other countries, the Philippines has strengthened its vision to promote Halal tourism in the country. In April 2016, the DOT launched an initial strategy to encourage more Muslim travelers to the Philippines, by promoting the certification of halal restaurants. "Halal" foods are those permitted to be eaten by Muslims, as these had been prepared in adherence to the Islamic Shari'ah law. Indeed, as explained by Tourism Philippines (2015), this new drive to attract inbound Muslim tourists formed a key strand on its long-term strategy to maximize its economic growth in the Halal tourism industry.

In hospitality industry, aside from foods, hotel accommodation is an important factor when choosing a country of destination. To provide a good Halal tourism experience, tourism sector in the country must not only provide Halal food certification, but also provide a Halal-concept hotel certification to attract many Muslim tourists in the country. Because in Malaysia, hotels customize their products and services to Muslim market. They also provide some guidelines to aid tourism professionals in implementing and developing the niche strategy of Islamic tourism for the advancement of the tourism industry and to give the Muslim tourists satisfaction. Hotel industry is important contributor to the tourism competitive. Muslim tourists usually look for a good hotel accommodation before visiting the country of destination for various purposes. They select hotels that align to their preferences and unique needs. Attila (2016) argued that hotels and the hotel industry belong to the most important super structural elements of a tourism destination, without these, no destination could be competitive. Baniya and Thapa (2017), in their study, found out that there were hotel attributes influencing international tourists' satisfaction and loyalty. Results showed that hotel attributes, service quality and room & front desks plays significant role in satisfaction of international tourists. Other attributes like security, business facility, value, food and recreation and security were found to be significant. Furthermore, satisfaction was found to be significant predictor of both attitudinal loyalty such as intentional loyalty and behavioral loyalty.

Delving into the country of origin, in the Philippines, it has been a challenge to increase the number of tourists coming from Islamic nations worldwide since the taxes and consumptions and productions of products and services brought about by increased tourism rate play significant roles in country's economic growth. In the recent data of DOT, tourism provided 12.7 percent growth in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) due to visitor receipts and tourist arrivals in the country. According to the DOT (2015) in Presentation at the 1st Regional Seminar on the Contribution of Islamic Culture and its Impact on the Asian Tourism Market held in Brunei, "the Philippine Market

situation states that 348,970 Muslim tourists' arrivals in January-December 2014, where ASEAN tourist is 195,679. Middle East with 83,363. Indian tourist with 61,152 and Israel with 8,776. A total of 348,970 Halal base market.”

Responding to the challenges, the DOT launched a Philippine Halal Tourism project which was presented at National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF) Inter-Agency Meeting on Philippine Halal Industry. The objective of the project was to make the Philippines a Muslim-friendly place. The project timeline for was originally from 2015-2017 with the help of 20 establishments in Metro Manila, 10 establishments in Cebu, 10 establishments in Boracay, and 10 establishments in Davao as the pilot areas and targets. The establishments comprise of hotels, restaurants, tourist destinations and resorts. Based on the evaluation of DOT, only 35 establishments are hotels that cater the accommodation of the Muslim tourists out of 50 establishments and the remaining 15 establishments are restaurants that provide halal foods only. Each hotel can provide 150 rooms for Muslim. The total capacity of hotel industry to provide accommodation is only 5,250 rooms for Halal base markets. This is not enough to accommodate the large numbers of Muslim tourists in the country. The project also aimed to improve halal facilities across the country and make halal services available in tourist destination and increase the number of halal certified hotels, resorts, restaurants, and other facilities such as those involved in MICE and tour operations.

Consequently, there is a need to revisit the hotel accommodation in the country to determine if other hotels in the country respond to the Halal-concept. However, in order to do that, there must be specific criteria that must be formulated based on the choices of Halal-concept hotels of the Muslim tourists who have visited the Philippines, because they have adequate experiences to determine what was lacking with the hotels in the country in relation to Halal tourism and their religious motivations. With the end of creating a strong and religious-friendly environment for increased touristic consumption, the Philippines has embarked itself on accelerating the Halal tourism in the country. Such is driven by the strategic location of the country and the number of tourists from neighboring countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia, which are largely Islamic countries. Unlike other neighboring countries that involve Halal tourism in their tourism management plan, the Philippines ranked lowest in terms of Muslim tourism. While there are current practices in the Philippines that merely focus on Halal foods certification, other aspects of Islamic hospitality industry like Halal concept hotel remains unexplored. Therefore, the main objective of the study was to determine the factors that affect the Muslim Tourists choice of Halal Concept hotels. The study also aimed at proposing enhancement strategies that could help the DOT in Halal-concept hotel promotion to increase Muslim arrivals to the Philippines.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Tourism migration is one of the major determinants of globalization. The volume and complexity of migration often increases with development. This is because improved access to education and information, social capital, and financial resources increases people's aspirations and capabilities to migrate, while improved transport and communication also facilitate movement. Because of the recent developments in transportation and communication, tourism migration has become easier for the traveler, thus making tourism migration as an important manifestation of globalization. United National World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2010) stated that the growth in migration and tourism are two of the most significant manifestations of globalization. Migration makes important social and economic contributions to destination countries, culturally enriching their society, enhancing the tourism product, and providing labor for the travel, tourism, hospitality, and catering sectors.

In migration, one of the theories that support tourism migration is the Functionalist social theory which tends to see society as a system, a collection of interdependent parts (individuals, actors) somehow analogous to the functioning of an organism, in which an inherent tendency towards equilibrium. Generally, treats migration as a positive phenomenon serving the interests of most people and contributing to greater equality within and between societies. Specifically, one of the functionalist social theories that explains tourism movement is the push-pull theory. This push -pull theory in Tourism migration explains that migration decision is determined by “plus” and “minus” factors in the areas of origin and destination, intervening obstacles, and personal factors. It identifies

economic, environmental, and demographic factors which are assumed to push people out of places of origin and pull them to country of destination. Push and pull factors for tourist arrivals are driven by work/employment, businesses and official engagement, education and training, and leisure and recreation. According to Lee (1979), the one who conceptualized the push-pull theory of migration, “each place possesses a set of positive and negative factors. While positive factors are the circumstances that act to hold people within it, or attract people from other areas, negative factors tend to repel them (Lee, 1979).” This push-pull theory was used for the conceptual and analytical frameworks.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The main objective of the study was to determine the factors that affect the Muslim Tourists choice of Halal Concept hotels with the goal in proposing enhancement strategies that could help the DOT in Halal-concept hotel promotion to increase Muslim arrivals to the Philippines. The study sought to answer the following research questions:

- What is the socio-demographic profile of the respondents in terms of what age, gender, occupation, and nationality?
- What are the factors that affect the Muslim tourist choice for a hotel accommodation in the Philippines in terms of *convenience and availability of food, prayer facilities, Islamic morality, Muslim-friendly holiday packages, and religious affiliated sites*?
- Is there a significant difference between the demographic factors of Muslim tourists and their choice of halal concept hotel?
- What are the challenges encountered by for the local government to increase the Muslim tourist’s arrivals from a Muslim country?
- Based on the findings, what is the proposed Halal Development Plan?

1.4 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study was conducted to determine the factors that affect the Muslim tourists’ choice of Halal-concept hotels in the Philippines. The study was only limited to the following factors identified using the general interview question where responses were subjected to factor analysis. Other factors not identified in the quantitative analysis were not covered in the study. For the analysis of the challenges confronting the local government in increase Muslim tourists’ arrivals, the study was only limited to emergent themes generated from the analysis of the collective responses of the three DOT officers in the local government. There were three respondents only on the analysis of the challenges due to their availability and restrictions posed by the pandemic situation. Although the researcher had conducted several prospective interviewees for this portion, only three of them conveyed their intention to become part of the study. As much as the researcher wanted to increase the number of samples, there were only fifteen Muslim tourists, who have visited the Philippines within 5 years, replied in the email sent to them. Only 100 respondents, though purposive sampling, were surveyed using the questionnaire generated from the first fifteen Muslim tourists. The following Muslim tourists were nationals of the following Muslim countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey, and United Arab Emirates. There were identified through the assistance provided to the researcher by DOT, international organization, and partner educational institutions. Surprisingly, these countries have shown little interests to visit the Philippines except Malaysia that placed on the Top 10 tourists’ arrivals, which probably because of lack of Halal tourism plan exhibited in the country. This is the reason why the study is beneficial to the tourism perspective in the country.

1.5 Significance of the Study

In the Philippines, tourism is an important contributor to overall economic performance. Blessed with natural

resources and distinctive geographical landscape and climate, Philippines has become one of the major choices as countries of destination for many travelers and tourists who wanted to relax away from the hustle and bustle of the city life. In effect, tourism creates job opportunities for the Filipinos, impacts the country's economic performance, and gain additional source of national income. Based on the recent studies and journals, the present study that deals with the factors affecting the Muslim tourist choices of Halal concept hotel is the first study to delve into that field as far as the Philippine setting is concern. Also, the present study is largely beneficial to the Department of Tourism's plans to accelerate the Halal tourism in the country, which was initiated in 2015. Thus, the study would be beneficial to the following:

Department of Tourism. The department is tasked to encourage, promote, and develop tourism as a major socio-economic activity to generate foreign currency and employment and to spread the benefits of tourism to both the private and public sector. Therefore, the results of the study would help the DOT strategize the considerations they must look into when providing Halal certification to the following hotels in the country. Also, the results would provide them additional information on how the challenges confronting them to increase Muslim tourist arrivals through the proposed enhancement strategies.

Philippine Commission on Muslim Affairs. As the agency that primarily concerns with protection, promotion, and recognition of Muslim rights, the results of the study may be utilized by them as they engage in the policy-making and decision-making process to ensure that the Muslim's unique culture and religious practices are consistently protected and recognized by countries of destination.

Philippine Association of Hotel Industry. The results of the study will be highly beneficial to the organization as they make plan and programs for the development of the status of hotel industry. Also, they may create plans and strategies to respond to the growing needs for Halal tourism. The organization may also utilize the study in making Halal-concept hotel guidelines to help Crescent Rating, DOT, and HICCIP in providing Halal certifications to tourism-related establishments.

Tourism Guide. As professionals who are tasked to familiarize people with the history, functions, and customs of a region or establishment, the study results would benefit them as they suggest hotel accommodations to their customers who Muslim tourists. Also, the results would make them Halal conscious, which is beneficial to their job as a tour guide. They may utilize the results as the basis for recommending hotel accommodation, planning travel itineraries, and familiarizing customers with the locality relevant to the Muslim tourists' religious motivation.

Tourism Professionals. They are people who have adequate knowledge and expertise on the tourism industry. Therefore, the results of the study may find useful for them as they look for another perspective that can boost tourism performance in the country. Since the study is recorded as the first to delve into Halal-concept hotel, this would give them information about the possibility of paradigm shifting to Halal tourism, especially in Muslim areas in Mindanao. In this way, a competitive Halal tourism development plan would be developed for inclusive growth in the country, specifically the ARMM Region. With the study results, they may help the local government to craft a competitive Halal tourism roadmap to lay down important considerations when creating Muslim-friendly environment premised on Halal consciousness.

Academe. As a knowledge-based sector, the results of the study could help them as they engage in community workshops and symposium concerning tourism development in the country. The results would provide them additional information in which they could make suggestions to increase Muslim tourists' arrivals in the country.

Local Hotels. Since the focus of the study was on hotels, the results would directly benefit them as they restructure their operational plan and design their architectural setting and interiors. Local hotel may also use the study as a basis for enhancing their services when dealing with Muslim tourists, since there is a growing demand for Halal tourism in the coming years. They may consider prayer facilities, tourists' packages, and service that reflects Islamic background when planning for their hotel development plan.

Local Government. The proposed enhancement strategies and the identified factors that affect Muslim tourists' choice of Halal-concept hotel would be beneficial to the local government as they craft the tourism development plan. It is true that tourism helps not only the national government but also the local government to gain additional income and generate employment opportunities, so the study results would provide substantial information as to what they need to consider when dealing with Muslim tourists, especially in places where a large number of Muslim tourists would normally visit. They may also find the results useful for encouraging hotels to value and put equal importance to the Muslim tourists, since there is a growing Halal tourism demand in the world.

Muslim Tourists. As the main sources of the information, Muslim tourists would benefit from the results of the study as they try to figure out other related factors essential to their religious motivation. The results would help them be acquainted other associated consideration they might look into when choosing a hotel accommodation whenever they visit the Philippines whether for business, work or employment, education and training, or just leisure and recreation.

Researcher. As the main driver of the study, the researcher greatly benefits from the study results as she answers her research objectives raised in the introductory chapter. Also, the results provide her another perspective she may find useful for the development of a more improved Halal tourism development plan. The enhancement strategies that the researcher would recommend to the national and local agencies would be her most fulfilling part as a researcher.

Future Researchers. Since the Halal tourism in the new perspective in the tourism industry of the Philippines, the study results may serve as a baseline study for the researchers who wanted to push through Halal tourism-related studies. The study results also provide an avenue for the future researcher to delve into other factors affecting the Muslim tourists' choice of hotel accommodation or may study other aspects of hospitality industry aside from hotels.

2. Review of related literatures and studies

Overview of Halal Tourism - Halal tourism is one of the phenomena in tourism industry worldwide. As the demand for Halal tourism increases, many Muslim and non-Muslim countries are trying to capture and cater the Muslim tourist's market by providing them the products, facilities, services, and infrastructure relevant to the needs of Muslim tourists. The concept of Halal, meaning permissible in Arabic, is not being concern with foods, but includes any Shariah compliant products like cosmetics, vaccine, medicine and in tourism. Halal tourism means offering services in destinations that are particularly designed to cater the Muslim tourists. Halal tourism integrates more religious conservative motivations, trying to execute the Islamic lifestyle they believed in. The demand for Halal resorts, hotels or transportation reveals that reluctance of religious conservative tourists to travel in a destination which is Non-Muslim. The hotels in a destination offering products and facilities in accordance with the Muslim religious beliefs.

Halal Tourism in International Context - Halal tourism has a good place in the international migration. A lot of countries not only in Asia but other parts of the world have started to show paradigm shifting of their tourism decisions. The growing number of Muslim tourists has become the motivation why a lot of countries, both Muslim and non-Muslim, have placed special consideration in providing Halal-concept services and accommodation. In fact, Muslim Travel Index Europe (2017) reported that Muslim travelers from Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, and U.A.E preferred countries that cater to Halal lifestyle. Therefore, accommodation should provide a high degree of freedom, while respecting religious principles. In Slovenia, Šuligoj and Maruško (2017) mentioned that Muslim tourists play a significant role in tourism industry. They represent a big percentage in tourism market around the world. In their paper, they identified the key aspects of halal tourism in connection with the hotel industry in Slovenia. Results showed that the managers of the hotels are familiar with halal tourism because it can affect the managers' decision-making process to adjust the standard of hotel to a halal certified hotel. Halal is important for the Muslim tourist because it provides products and services that is permissible or allowed to Muslim for a satisfied vacation

experience.

Similarly, in Indonesia, Suradin (2018) stated that Halal tourism has become a popular form of tourism which attracting many countries to capitalize on the Muslim market. He suggested to his studies that enable to influence Muslim tourism destination choice, the tourism destination organizations should use Islamic Attributes of Destination in their promotion campaigns. Supporting this, Muhamad et al. (2019) studied the knowledge gap that being neglected in the past literature review because of the high demand of halal tourism now a days. Due to the complexity of the Muslim markets needs the implementation of Halal tourism by other countries is the most pressing issue due to the need to ensure that the process and the service offered by any industries related to tourism is strictly comply with the requirements of Islamic teaching. Chandra (2014) underscored that Muslims around the world are bound to travel because of their religious believed. They travel annually to pilgrimages to Mecca and other religious places. This niche market offers a great prospective for halal tourism because the numbers of Muslim travelers are growing swiftly across the world. The tourism industry needs to develop customizes halal tourism products and services to cater to the new market. That is why knowing the factors affecting the Muslim tourist choice for a hotel is a must to give them want they need in an accommodation. Muslim tourists contribute much to the tourism receipts of a destination. Muslim standard and halal certification are one of the solutions to cater the Muslim market in a non-Islamic destination. This study proves that entertaining a new market for tourism industry can increase the tourist arrivals of one destination.

Aside from that, Battour (2016) discussed the importance of getting the terminologies right in the field of Muslim-friendly or Halal tourism to fully understand the needs of a Muslim traveler and to satisfy his/her needs especially in Halal tourism industry. He further explained that knowing the specific needs of a Muslim traveler can be adopted and implemented to the destinations they choose to visit to satisfy their stay. In Thailand, Chookaew (2015) investigated the increasing halal tourism potential at Andaman Gulf in Thailand for Muslim country. They argued that developing a potential halal tourism in Andaman Gulf in Thailand is the primary purpose of this research. To provides a service to cater the Muslim tourist from Muslim countries. To measure the standard of Halal tourism it is divided into eight factors. 1.) Service to the tourists should match up with the Muslim principles. 2.) Staffs should have discipline and respect to Muslim. 3.) All activities in a hotel industry should not against Muslim principles. 4.) Accommodations should conform to the principles of Muslim. 5.) Restaurants should serve halal foods. 6.) Transportation service should have security protection system. 7.) Place to perform religious activity for Muslim and 8.) traveling to places where against the religion of Muslim is prohibited.

In New Zealand, Abdul-Razzaq (2016) explored the halal-friendliness of accommodation providers in New Zealand, specifically in Auckland and Rotorua. He determined the status of halal food preparation training to accommodate a Muslim tourist in a hotel. The study found that very few hotels know about halal tourism. Many hotels were able to provide halal friendly tourism rather than halal tourism. Based on the findings, he concluded that the hospitality of New Zealand could be improved by being aware of the halal tourism in their country. While in Indonesia, Saparwadi (2016) explored the tourism in Lombok under perspective of maqashid al-Shariah and local regulation of West Nusa Tenggara. She explained that Halal tourism is a phenomenon trend in Indonesia. Lombok is one of the halal destinations in Indonesia that need to developed facilities and services based on shariah principles of Muslim tourist. The halal tourism in Lombok is based under perspective of local regulation of West Nusa Tenggara, the purpose of this is to guide the tourism managers in giving halal tourism services in Muslim tourist.

Moreover, still in Indonesia, Asih and Asih (2015) studied the marketing strategy implementation developing sharia tourism in Indonesia". Implementing STP (Segmenting, Targeting and Positioning) as marketing tools in the field of tourism in Indonesia is another study to implement the Halal tourism. Sharia Tourism is a recreational activity with Islamic value. This system which is known as "Sharia Tourism" is believed as a new world trends as it eliminates dangerous factor for humanity and environment from the products or services, to make sure that it is beneficial for all segmentation. STP (Segmenting, Targeting and Positioning) are the most important initial steps in identifying not only customer value but also the four types of tourism business components hotel, restaurant,

tourism agency, and spa. To develop Sharia tourism is by coordinating government and business stake holder to create Indonesia as world Sharia tourism destination. Furthermore, this system teaches human to live in harmony, safe, healthy and can contribute in economic growth. Similarly, Binti and Musa (2017) studied the travel decision making of Islamic religiosity for us to understand its influence towards Maqasid sharia which is the Islamic value dimensions and tourists. They were concerned on how to satisfy the needs and wants of the consumer, for them to know, they come up with this questionnaire and online surveys. Results affirmed that facilitating and conducting (MCPV) Muslim Customer Perceived Values and Tourist gives comfort and provides moderate relationship with Islamic religiosity towards Maqasid sharia.

Halal Tourism in Philippine Context - To respond to the growing needs of Halal market, the Philippines has started to flourish its ground in promoting Halal tourism in the country. Travel experts in the country predicted that this would be an avenue for the country to take advantage as early as possible the emerging trends in the markets, because it would make high income in the coming years. Liba et al. (2018) measured the awareness among non-Halal restaurant owners on the twelve standards of Halal certification and their willingness to be certified as Halal restaurants in Binondo, Ermita, and Malate, located within the area of Manila City. Results showed the restaurant owners are generally 'Aware' of all 12 standards of Halal certification, and the majority are 'Willing' to be Halal certified. Pearson's r-analysis also showed there is a weak positive relationship between their awareness of Halal standards and their willingness to be Halal certified. Based on the results of the study, they recommended that Halal certification must be strengthened through the implementation of law even though the Philippines is a predominantly Catholic and multi-cultural country. This Halal program must include encouragement for the non-Halal restaurant owners to acquire Halal certification. In that way, it would attract Muslim consumers including tourists because Halal food industry has some potential to be developed in the Philippines to cater for a wider market, including Muslims in the country and around the world.

Another study related to the Halal restaurant was conducted by Liba (2015). He examined the issues, challenges and prospects of halal food industry focusing on halal restaurants in three key cities in the Metro Manila which serves as basis for a proposed competitive marketing strategy. This study focused on the issues in terms of halal logo and certification, challenges in terms of product strategy, pricing strategy, place strategy and promotion strategy encountered by halal restaurant owners and prospects in terms of future expansion and customer patronage. Using the descriptive research design, the study found out that halal restaurant owners strongly agreed on the significance of uniform halal logo. Moreover, the restaurant owners agreed that they encounter challenges related to the marketing mix. They experienced problem in hiring well-qualified chef, providing sufficient training for the chef, preparing the menu, verifying the halal ingredients, and finding credible supplier, finding strategic place, and paying for the high rental cost and promoting halal food. Halal restaurant owners want to open a company owned branch within and outside Metro Manila and opening a new company owned halal restaurant with new concept. They strongly agreed that there is a greater patronage of Muslim and non-Muslim customers for halal restaurants.

Hotel Industry in the Halal Tourism Context - The fundamental of Halal tourism business includes the components such as Halal hotel, Halal transportation, Halal food premises, Halal logistics, Islamic finance, Islamic travel packages, Halal spa etc. Halal hotel is a specific hotel which provides the Halal services to the Muslim tourists from other countries. They provide services according to their principles. This type of hotel is not limited to serve Halal food and beverages but the operation throughout the hotel would also be managed based on Islamic principles like Halal food premises, food and beverage products served in a restaurant have to be Halal, respect for Muslim tourists and animals such as chicken and cow must be slaughtered according to Shariah principles. According to HalalBooking.com (2018), Halal hotels refrain from serving alcohol on the premised that food is prepared according to Halal principles. As recommended, there are separate pool and spa for men and women, and the staff are dressed appropriately and trained to respect Muslim tourists. Halal hotels should have prayer facilities. True enough, Halal tourism is now a growing industry that generates high income and high employment due to the number of Muslim tourists visting the country of destination.

Factors Affecting the Muslim Tourists' Choice of Halal-Concept Hotels - Rahman (2014) studied that

motivating factors of Islamic tourist's destination loyalty. He revealed that Islamic attributes and quality of service have significant relationship to Islamic tourist's satisfaction and destination loyalty, while the destination attributes have not significant impact on it. This study contributed to a better understanding of Islamic tourist satisfaction toward Malaysia as their preferred and recommended Islamic tourism destination in the different facets. Malaysia is an Islamic destination in Southeast Asia that provide products and services to Muslim tourists. They increased their tourist's arrivals because they can cater the needs of Muslim travelers from halal transportation to halal hotels. Malaysia is also concerned on the tourist's perception and on destination loyalty of the tourist.

Guiding the selection for hotel accommodation, Rujiman and Lubis (2014) investigated the influence of the implementation of the Islamic shariah on tourism potential in Banda Aceh". Banda Aceh opened its door in accepting and implementing the Islamic Laws (Islamic Sharia) in its community. This is to increase the tourism rate by accommodating the Laws of Islam in all aspects Islamic clothing's provided by agents or hotels in the area. They also offer Halal certified foods to ensure the comfort and satisfaction of the tourists who come to visit Banda Aceh. They presented what to be given importance and what aspects should be taken into consideration to achieve a Muslim-Friendly Tourism Industry. In Malaysia, Rasit et al. (2016) investigated the provision of Shariah-compliant hotel services towards Muslim tourism in Malaysia". Results showed millions of hotels practice the Shariah-compliant for both domestic and international tourists. They proved that the provision of Shariah-compliant in a hotel will increase the Muslim tourists. The study analyzed the three aspects of providing Shariah-compliant for a better service, which are halal food preparation, Islamic physical design of the hotel and Islamic modest dressing of hospitality staff. These aspects are essentials to the Muslim tourist choice of Halal concept hotel because it is under Shariah compliant.

Aside from physical design, Hassan (2015) examined the factors that influence Muslim Tourist choice and how it influenced their satisfaction. In his study, he found factors that will affect the Muslim tourist choice of halal concept hotels include available halal food, prayer facilities, Muslim friendly package tour and religious affiliated sites and religious devotedness. Talib and Zhengyi (2014) ventured into other Halal businesses such as Halal Pharmaceutical and Halal tourism. Although Halal is booming and on an upward trend, there are various issues faced by Halal logistics, they were categorized into five categories namely General Halal issues (Barrier 1), Integration issues among logistics service provider (Barrier 2), Integration issues between Halal authorities and logistics service provider (Barrier 3), Financial issues and perception of implementing Halal logistics (Barrier 4), Issues pertaining to government's support and promotion (Barrier 5). Even though this study managed to uncover the critical issues in Halal logistics still, there are several limitations need to be addressed.

Halal Hotel in the Philippines - The Philippines is the third most Catholic country in the world, with 96 million of the population identified as Catholic. But the Philippines is dedicated to attracting tourists from different parts of the globe, including those from the Islamic faith. The Philippines is on the way to becoming the next Muslim-friendly destination (Modern Muslim Lifestyle Portal, 2016). This is the project of Department of Tourism and the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF). They jointly implementing "The Philippine Halal Tourism Project". The purpose of this project is to make the tourism establishments halal-certified that provide products and services to cater the Muslim tourists. Based on the market factors, the DOT statistics showed that 7% or 348,970 tourists from Arab and Muslim countries visited the Philippines that require halal-certified hotels, foods, drinks and attractions to satisfy the Muslim travelers who will visit the Philippines. This kind of market needs halal services based on the religious beliefs of Muslim. The main objective of the DOT is to make the Philippines a Muslim Ready Destination. By making this objective possible, we need to work on standard principles on how to make a hotel in the Philippines more Muslim friendly hotel or Halal hotel.

This project of DOT and the NCMF aims to get a share in the global Halal industry and by creating awareness to tourism establishment about Halal tourism. Because of this project the Philippines will be able to accommodate more Muslim tourists who has specific needs because of their religion for a Muslim friendly environment. The hotel industry in the Philippines must established the concept of the halal hotel that is fully operational in accordance with Islamic principles and the halal-friendly hotel, which, in addition to its existing range of services,

also offers services tailored to Islamic principles. This is for the Philippines to get the Muslim market. The halal hotel is not restricted to supplying only halal food and drinks, since all hotel services/activities are carried out in accordance with Islamic principles (Sureerat et al., 2015). In the Philippines, there are already Halal hotels that cater Muslim travelers. Those hotels are in Metro Manila in Luzon, Cebu in Visayas and Davao City in Mindanao. Because of the limited Halal hotels in the Philippine, the Muslim tourists are only bound to travel in these places, because of insufficiency of Halal products and services. If the hotel industry is all halal certified or aware of the needs of Muslim travelers, they can travel around the Philippines without worrisome and hesitation knowing that they can easily consume Halal-certified products and acquire Halal-related services.

3. Methodology

Research Design - The researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative analysis to determine the factors that affect the Muslim tourists' choice of Halal-concept hotel. These two general designs were employed in the study because of the procedures to be undertaken to surface the factors being researched about. For qualitative part, the researcher used the semi-structured interview to determine the preferences and choices of Muslim tourists when selecting hotels whenever they go the specific country of destination whether for work, education, and for leisure. Semi-structured interview is tailor fit data-collection tool to use since tourists have limited time to answer the questions. According Quinney et al. (2016), semi-structured interviews are conducted with an open framework which allow for focused, conversational, two-way communication. They can be used both to give and receive information. Keller and Coradin (2019) also stated that one of the advantages of semi-structured interviews is that it allows informants the freedom to express their views in their own terms. Given this consideration, this is significant to enumerate the factors they usually consider when selecting Halal- concept hotel. Aside from qualitative part, the researcher also made use of quantitative research design. The research utilized descriptive survey to analyze the relationship between the factors that affect the Muslim tourists' choice of Halal-concept hotel and the tourists' demographic profile. Also, descriptive survey plays a significant role in the study to determine the which factor they would highly consider when selecting Halal-concept hotel.

Population Frame and Sampling Technique - The researcher employed two non-probability sampling procedures in the study. The selection of respondents was carefully done to ensure that the data generated would represent the population under study. First, the researcher selected the fifteen respondents to answer the open-ended question using convenience sampling technique. Etikan et al. (2016) stated that convenience sampling is a type of nonprobability or nonrandom sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the purpose of the study. Convenience sampling was also used to identify the DOT officers who could give insights about the challenges for the local government to increase the Muslim tourist's arrivals.

The second set of respondents were selected based on the purposive sampling technique. The 100 respondents were selected based on the following criteria: 1.) must be a Muslim tourist, 2.) must have traveled in the Philippines in the past five years, 3.) must be active travelers who personally choose hotel accommodation. The following respondents were homogenously selected to process to a precise similarity. Purposive-homogenous sampling, as defined by Etikan et al. (2016), is used when the research is looking for respondents who share similar traits or specific characteristics. Purpose sampling is a nonrandom technique where the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience, as stated by Bernard (2002).

Respondents - The respondents of the study were Muslim tourists who had visited the Philippines whether for travel, education, employment, or leisure purposes. There were two kinds of respondents in this study: 1.) those who were interviewed to determine their preference in Halal-hotel concept and 2.) those were asked to rate the listed factors affecting their selection of Halal-hotel concept. The first set of respondents was identified with the help of partner travel agencies and hotels of the educational institution where the researcher was working with.

The second set of the respondents, on the other hand, was surveyed with the assistance provided by the DOT and City Tourism Officers (COT). To be included in the study, the researcher considered the travel history of the respondents. Respondents, both domestic and international travelers, must have travelled for five years in the Philippines. Both respondents were mainly travelers from Malaysia, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, Turkey, and Philippines. These travelers were identified through the assistance given to partners educational institutions, international organization, and DOT/ COT. To determine the challenges confronting the local government to increase the Muslim tourist's arrival, the researcher interviewed three DOT/COT officers through phone interview due to the restrictions posed by pandemic situation. These officers were come from Manila, Davao, and Cebu, places when the Philippine Halal Tourism Project was initially implemented. Below is the distribution of the respondents.

Type of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Student (Muslim Tourists)	41
Professional (Muslim Tourists)	54
Self-Employed/ Travelers (Muslim Tourists)	5
Department of Tourism/ City Tourism Officers	3
Total	103

Instrumentation and Data-Gathering Tools - Since the study employed both qualitative and quantitative research designs, the researcher utilized three data-gathering tools to determine the factors affecting the Muslim tourist choice for a hotel accommodation in the Philippines. The following data-gathering tools below were used:

Questionnaire #1 - was an open response questionnaire about the things Muslim tourists consider or looking for when they choose hotel accommodation in the Philippines. They were asked to enumerate the following considerations as many as possible. The purpose of this questionnaire was to generate the probable factors affect their choices in hotel accommodation. The main objective for asking the participants to report on what they observed, experienced, and preferred rather than through conducting interview so as not to limit their answers. Also, since the researcher cannot go directly to the respondents due to geographical distance, the respondents preferred to email them the question because it was more convenient for them to answer. Thus, it likely elicited more comprehensive responses since they felt more comfortable than asking them directly. There were fifteen respondents included in this phase. The question was: *When you visit the Philippines whether for leisure, employment, or education, what things/factors have you considered when selecting hotel accommodation in relation to your religious preference/ devotedness?*

Questionnaire #2 - was a likert-type instrument where the determined categories generated from Questionnaire #1 were listed as the probable factors that affect Muslim tourist choice for a hotel accommodation in the Philippines. The respondents were asked to rate statement as they generally related to them by checking: 1- Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Moderately Agree, 4- Agree, and 5- Strongly Agree. The ratings were subjected to factor analysis to further reduce the items into independent factors. These factors were patterned on the study of Hassan (2015).

Semi-structured interview questionnaire - was composed of five questions that were formulated to determine the challenges confronting the local government to increase the Muslim tourist's arrivals. Phone interview was done due to the geographical location of the interviewees. Time constraint was also considered in the conduct of the interview.

Reliability and Validity of Data - The research instrument was validated in two ways: 1.) content analysis and face validation and 2.) reliability test. First, content analysis and face validation of the research instrument, interview questions, and open-ended questionnaire was undertaken to examine if it would elicit the needed responses to determine the factors that affect the selection for hotel accommodation. These indicators were carefully reviewed and validated by the Department of Tourism officers and subject experts. All suggestions were incorporated into the final research instrument. Second, to determine the reliability of research instrument, Alpha Cronbach was used to test the survey instrument. The research instrument was pilot tested to a group of individuals

to examine its reliability. The Alpha Cronbach generated 0.815 value which describes the research instrument “good or acceptable”. All indicators that are considered unreliable were revised or removed from the final research instrument.

Data Collection - The following procedures were undertaken to collect the needed information from the respondents:

- The researcher asked permission and endorsement from the DOT/ COT to conduct the study. After getting the approval of DOT, the researcher asked assistance to educational institutions and international organization to identify the prospective respondents.
- The researcher emailed the 38 prospective respondents to answer the open-ended questionnaire. The following respondents were recommended by DOT, partner educational institutions, and international organization, who were mainly Muslim tourists from Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, and Turkey. Only fifteen set of responses were retrieved from the distribution of question.
- The generated responses from the 15 respondents were subjected to manual reduction analysis to generate Questionnaire #2. This Likert-type questionnaire was distributed among 100 Muslim travelers that were also identified and suggested by partner organizations.
- To determine the challenges confronting the local government to increase the Muslim tourist’s arrivals, the researcher interviewed three available DOT officers/ employees during their convenient time. No face-to-face interview was done due the restrictions posed by pandemic situation.

Data Analysis - After the data-gathering procedures, the following procedures were undertaken to analyze the gather information:

- The researcher selected the 38 Muslim tourists based on the recommendations of DOT, partner educational institutions, and international organization. Only fifteen respondents replied on the email sent to them by the researcher, asking them to accomplish the open-ended question. After the retrieval, the researcher generated more than 200 hundred considers they looked into when selecting their Halal-concept hotel accommodation in the Philippines.
- The following responses were subjected to manual reduction data analysis. With the help of Tourism experts and language experts, the researcher manually reduced the responses to avoid redundancy and eventually generated 21 generated probable considerations. These considerations were trimmed down to five independent factors using factor analysis. The following factors were labeled by the researcher with the assistance of three tourism management experts, two Muslim tourist guides, and two language experts and were verified by the related researchers and previous studies related to it.
- Then, the generated questionnaire from open-ended question was used to survey the “degree of agreement” on the following listed considerations among 100 Muslim tourists (*the first fifteen respondents were not included in the second phase*) who were identified based on the recommendation of DOT, partner educational institutions, and international organization as well. Since the geographical distance was main constraints, the researcher just emailed the 38 respondents for convenience. It took some time before the researcher got all the questionnaires being surveyed.
- The rate provided by the 100 Muslim tourists was then compared to their demographic profile using the ANOVA and T-test to determine if their personal variable would greatly affect their choice of Halal-concept hotels.
- Problem Analysis was done to determine the representation of the challenges for the local government to increase the Muslim tourist’s arrivals. Responses were short due to the limited time provided by the

interviewees.

Ethical Considerations - As for ethical considerations, the researcher followed the approach detailed by Creswell (2014) for the systematic steps in the data analysis and procedures guidelines for coming up with the textual and structural description. Ethical standards generally accepted by all the researchers and academic institutions were carefully observed through the process of completing and after completing the study.

Respect for persons. The respondents were given the right to practice self-determination, the right for full disclosure, and that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time if they feel uncomfortable with the situation. The researcher personally sought the permission of the concerned individuals and institutions to conduct the study and to explain and obtain the informed consent to and from the participants of the study. The researcher also included employees who were readily available and who preferred to be part of the study without any means of coercion.

Beneficence and non-maleficence. The study aimed to do good and to do no harm. Thus, the researcher fairly exposed the participants to the most minimum amount of harm. In case that the harm was inevitable, the researcher explained the possible irregularities during the conduct of the study to the respondents.

Justice. The researcher treated the participants with fairness and equitably before, during, and after the research process. This was employed through giving the respondents an equal chance to be included in the study. The researcher also allowed the respondents to answer the written interview and survey instrument at the same equal time. All respondents were given one (1) hour to finish answering the questionnaire before retrieval.

Veracity. The researcher informed and explained to the employees, as respondents, the true objectives of the study. The researcher gave the participants an overview about the study objectives and processes through conducting a simple discussion with the permission of the DOT Head. Moreover, to ensure the reliability and significance of the study, there was no deception about its implications as to the reasons of the conduct of the study was undertaken.

Fidelity. The researcher protected and treasured the trust given to her by the DOT Officers, educational institution head, and president of community organization. By disclosing all information as to how the study would be conducted and how the students would benefit from it, the researcher maintained his integrity throughout the research process.

Confidentiality. The researcher disclosed some important information as regard to the factors they considered when selecting Halal-concept hotel to the researcher. The following information could be valuable for the over-all objectives of the study. In return, the researcher protected and kept all the personal information of the employees that they did always not give permission to be disclosed, unless for public interest and safety.

4. Analysis, presentation, and interpretation of the data

4.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1
The Respondents of the Study (N=100)

Demographic variables	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	58	58%
Female	42	42%
Age		
< 20	21	21%
21-30	38	38%
31-40	34	34%
41-50	7	7%

Occupation		
Student	41	41%
Professional	54	54%
Self-Employed	5	5%
Origin		
ASEAN	72	72%
Middle East	20	20%
Others	8	8%

Based on the study results, a total of 100 respondents were included in this study. Socio-demographic information of the study sample is presented in Table 1. There were 58 males and 42 female respondents. In this respondent composition, 38 of them aged 21-30; 34 of them aged 31-40; 21 of them ranged 20 and below; and only 7 of them aged 41-50 years old. As for occupation, half of them were professionals, comprising of 54 respondents. Also, some of them were students with the total of 41 and only 5 were self-employed. Most the respondents were from ASEAN countries such Malaysia and Indonesia with the total of 72 respondents; 20 of them were from Middle East, specifically United Arab Emirates. Furthermore, only 8 of them were from Turkey.

4.2 Factors Affecting the Muslim Tourists' Choice for a Hotel Accommodation in the Philippines

Halal tourism plays a significant role in the booming of tourism industry in other countries. The high rate of tourism migration in different parts of the world has shown the growing demands for Halal-concept hotels. In fact, some countries in Asia have conveyed their intention to fully restructure their tourism management plan, with special consideration to putting enough attention to Halal Tourism. In Southeast Asia specifically, **First is the availability and Convenience to Halal foods.** This is the first identified factor that affect the selection of Muslim tourists in Halal-concept hotels. Food is the necessity of life and important factor to sustain the energy and maintain the sound body and mind for work, education, or leisure (FAO, 2018). The convenience and availability of Halal food is the most important consideration they looked into whenever they surfed the internet to find out the hotels that offer best food services (Hassan, 2015). Aside from the availability and convenience, the proximity of the hotels to the convenience stores and restaurants that serve Halal foods also matters to their choice. The implication of the identified factor was shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Factor that Affect Muslim Tourists' Choice of Halal-Concept Hotels in terms of Availability and Convenience of Halal Foods

Factor 1. Availability and Convenience of Halal Foods	Mean
I consider a hotel that is closer to the convenience store where I can Halal foods if not available in the hotel.	3.79
I want a hotel that offers certified Halal foods including pastry, pies, viands, and appetizers.	3.54
I want a hotel that serves foods that have Halal certification to ensure that I eat foods regulated by my religious affiliation.	3.58
I look for a hotel that is closer to food parks, fast-foods, and eateries that serve Halal foods.	3.44
I consider a hotel that serves special foods, breads, and pastries during Islamic holidays.	3.45
Total Weighted Mean	3.56

As shown in the table, Muslim tourists provide consideration to the availability and convenience of Halal foods when choosing hotel accommodation (Mannaa,2019). Such consideration is important to them as food is a main necessity whenever they are hungry or celebrating Islamic holidays (Vargas & Moral, 2018). On the average, Muslim tourists agreed with availability and convenience of Halal foods as a determinant in the selection of Halal-concept hotel with the mean range of 3.44 to 3.79. The following written responses divulged the Muslim tourists' choice related to availability and convenience of Halal foods. One Muslim tourist mentioned that "*whenever he visits a country, he looks for a hotel that has strategic location, especially this must be closer to stores that offer Halal foods.*" "*When celebrating Islamic holidays in other country, he sees to it that his hotel is closer to food parks, bakeshops, and fast food that offer Halal foods*" another Muslim tourist stated. Also, one Muslim tourist mentioned that "*before eating, he always asks if the foods are certified Halal foods. This has been his practice every time he is in the Philippines, because of the cultural differences.*"

In relation, Shafaei and Mohammed (2013) stated that the availability and access to Halal foods is the most

important factor that influences Muslim tourist to choose a destination or a hotel accommodation. This factor directly associates with satisfaction and a repeat guest and it is compulsory for more religious devoted Muslim tourists (Weidenfield and Ron, 2008; Kamaruddin and Ismail 2012) which influences satisfaction. Since Halal food is considered as one factor of quality of services provided by the hotels for the Muslims, service quality was found to have direct influence on tourists' choice. Halal food availability and accessibility is one of the key Islamic attributes of Islamic tourist destination in any countries.

Second are the prayer facilities. This is the second identified factor that affect the selection of Muslim tourists in Halal-concept hotels (Hassan 2015). Praying five times every day is important to Muslim tourists as a part of their Islamic commitment to 5 Pillars of Islam (Battour, 2017). This must be consistently regulated. Prayer facilities include architectural design of the prayer facility that mainly separates male from female, availability of Quran, closer to the mosque to hear Azan pronouncement, enough quiet space to cater many Muslim tourists, and shows Qiblah direction and indicates prayer time (Tichaawa1 & Mhlanga, 2018).

Table 3

Factor that Affect Muslim Tourists' Choice of Halal-Concept Hotels in terms of Prayer Facilities

Factor 2. Prayer Facilities	Mean
I consider a hotel that separates the prayer facilities for female and male as a requirement for Islamic conduct.	4.23
I want a hotel that has enough space and quiet ambiance for prayers.	4.21
I want a hotel that is closer to the mosque and where Azan pronouncement can easily be heard.	3.47
I look for a hotel that has available Quran and has prayer time indication	3.38
I consider a hotel that shows Qiblah direction	3.37
Total Weighted Mean	3.73

Based on the results, Muslim tourists never neglect their commitment to practice praying five times a day even they are on tour. They always see to it that whenever they choose a hotel accommodation, there must be a special room for praying (Bangsawan et al., 2019). They also put importance the architectural design of the prayer facilities, especially with the separate prayer facilities for female and male as a part of Islamic conduct. On the average, Muslim tourists agreed with prayer facilities as a determinant in the selection of Halal-concept hotel with the mean range of 3.37 to 4.23. Below are the transcriptions showing the actual responses of the respondents: Most Muslim tourists disclosed that *"they always look for a hotel that has designated place for prayer. They also choose hotel closer to the mosque so they can easily hear the Azan pronouncement."* Some of them stated that *"when booking for a hotel, they always make sure that there are complete prayers facilities where they can do worshipping, praying, and Quran reciting so as not disturb other tourists."* They also mentioned that that *"they always check the hotel accommodation if that is closer to mosque. In case that there is no mosque located nearby, they always ask for Qiblah direction for praying."*

As stated, prayer is one of the sacred religious practices that every Muslim should perform. In this sense, Shafaei, and Mohammed (2013) stated that availability of prayer facilities in tourist spots and public premises are important factors that influence Muslim tourists' choice of country or destination and a hotel. Some Muslim tourists prefer to have prayer facilities at room and at tourist sites. Other hotels provide prayer room as hotel facilities. They also found out that some hotels provide Koran or prayer mat inside the guest room. Prayer time indication and respect those times during the trip and in the Mochktar (2009) argued practicing Muslims pray five times a day (*with dawn, midday, afternoon, sunset and night prayer times*). Each prayer has a time window for its performance and for this reason may occur when a practicing Muslim is at work, shopping, visiting a museum or using any other public building.

Third is Islamic Morality. This is the third factor that affects the selection of Muslim tourists in Halal-concept hotels (Hassan, 2015). Islamic morality commands the conduct of life of every Muslim tourist. Guided by Quran, Muslim tourists act in accordance with their prescribed concept of righteousness, good character, and the body of moral qualities and virtues. The religious devotedness of the Muslim tourists is measured by how they follow ethical standards that deal with the relationship between man and God, man and his fellow men, men and other

creatures of the universe, and man with his innermost self (Rahim, 2013). Also, Islamic ethics reflects individual's safety about his life, property, and honor, thus, any threat to these three entities is severely punished by Islamic law (Ogunbado & Ahmed, 2019). In relation, Muslim tourists were always conscious of following these ethical standards in all forms. When choosing for hotel accommodation, they visited the website showing the interior design and amenities of the hotels. They checked the dress codes, paintings, and the overall aesthetics of the hotels' interiors (Tichaawa1 & Mhlanga, 2018). On the average, Muslim tourists agreed with Islamic Morality as a determinant in the selection of Halal-concept hotel with the mean range of 3.47 to 4.68.

Table 4

Factor that Affect Muslim Tourists' Choice of Halal-Concept Hotels in terms of Islamic Morality

Factor 3. Islamic Morality	Mean
I check through visiting the interior designs of the hotels to see if there are prohibited pictures and paintings displayed on the wall.	4.45
I request for the dress code details when booking for a hotel.	4.68
I check if the room levels for male and female are appropriately separated.	3.47
I check the amenities and indoor activities offered by the hotel management to see there are mini-bars, gambling, and other related activities that are prohibited to Islamic ethical standards.	3.56
I consider a hotel that consistently follows the virtue of cleanliness and orderliness, reflecting the pure and right Islamic conduct of living.	3.67
Total Weighted Mean	3.97

Based on the transcriptions presented above, Muslim tourists also consider Islamic ethical standards when choosing a Halal-concept hotel aside from foods and facilities. They put important on the indoor activities and entertainment offered by the hotels (Tichaawa1 & Mhlanga, 2018). These must reflect Islamic right conduct of living. Therefore, they checked the dress codes, separated room levels for male and female, and the cleanliness inside and outside the room (Tichaawa1 & Mhlanga, 2018). Moreover, Muslim tourists also refrain for booking in a hotel that usually conducts night party activities and allows vices including gambling, drinking alcohol, and smoking. These are strictly prohibited in the Islamic religion (Wilson and Hollensen, 2013). Some Muslim tourists mentioned that *"they really like a hotel that is clean. They prefer to check the visitor's lounge and the room before lodging in the hotel because cleanliness is an Islamic virtue."* Few of them stated that *"when booking for a hotel, they always check the amenities and activities in the hotel. They do not like hotels that conduct gambling activities and night life party. Those things are prohibited in their religion and they only prefer Islamic entertainment."* All of them considered *"a hotel that has separated service for male and female. Of course, if possible, they like hotels that separates room levels for male and female."*

Relative to the results, Battour et al. (2010), in their study, found out that Islamic morality is very much needed in every accommodation they wish to stay, and part of Islamic morality is entertainment. Islamic entertainments are considered as one of the important keys prioritized tangible attributes that influences Muslim tourists' choice of hotels or Sharia Compliant hotels in Malaysia. They also found out that moral value of Muslims that must stressed in hotel accommodation such as segregation of service provided by hotel to male and female, Islamic dress code, no prostitutions, and no displaying affection. Also, rooms in a hotel must not have paintings that portrait any human or animal body parts. Only married Muslim couple can share a room.

Fourth is Muslim-Friendly Holiday Packages. This is another identified factor that affect the selection of Muslim tourists in Halal-concept hotels. There are Muslim tourists who prefer to travel during Islamic holidays, because they know that a lot of travel packages are being offered as a part of Islamic feast, celebration, and holidays (Hassan, 2015). Muslim families prefer to visit places not only because of its beauty and religious significance but also for its inexpensiveness and complete tour packages that the hotel has offered. Tour providers also make tailor made holidays with Islamic principles in mind to attract Muslim tourists to avail their products and services (Battour, 2017). On the average, Muslim tourists agreed with Muslim-friendly holiday packages as a determinant in the selection of Halal-concept hotel with the mean range of 3.40 to 3.55.

Table 5*Factor that Affect Muslim Tourists' Choice of Halal-Concept Hotels in terms of Muslim-Friendly Holiday Packages*

Factor 4. Muslim-Friendly Holiday Packages	Mean
I prefer a hotel that offers a tour package that suits my needs from options such as type of holiday,	3.55
I like a hotel that offers special holiday discounts and freebies.	3.55
I consider a hotel that includes a complete holiday packages such as tours, food, and accommodation at a lower price.	3.40
Total Weighted Mean	3.50

As discussed in the transcriptions below, Muslim tourists prefer a hotel that offers a complete tour package including food, tour, and accommodation. For them, it is more convenient that a hotel offers other tour packages aside from accommodation than to avail tour and accommodation from different agencies or tour providers. Another preference they highlighted is to avail these tour packages at a lower price. Before conveying their final deal with the tour providers, Muslim tourists compared first the prices offered to products services, and tour packages and additional perks of the different tour agencies. In this sense, they would spend their Islamic holidays with much relaxation at a cheaper price. *"It is more convenient for them to look for a hotel that offers a complete tour package aside from accommodation at a lower price. They really want to spend my holidays with no things to worry about for a sound relaxation"* stated by some Muslim tourists. Some Few of them disclosed that *"before spending my holidays on tour, they always consider the freebies and additional packages offered by the hotel and compared those with other hotels."* Also, they *"consider a hotel that offers special discounts during Islamic holidays. They like if that hotel also offers a distinctive Islamic retreat."*

In relation to the results, Shafaei and Mohammed, (2013) found out that holiday packages that favor for the Muslim beliefs is another factor for the Muslim to choose a specific destination. It was also found out that Muslim friendly holiday packages are significant on the choice of hotels among the Muslim tourists. Muslim friendly holiday packages include high quality services that increase Muslim tourists' satisfaction and promote positive word of mouth or revisit intension, and also travel tips and guidance given to them before and after they reach hotel are considered as important factors when making a decision where to stay.

Fifth is Religious Affiliated Sites. This is the last identified factor that affects the selection of Muslim tourists in Halal-concept hotels. Proximity of the hotels' location to other religious affiliated sites is another important consideration Muslim tourist look into when choosing a hotel (Hassan, 2015). On the average, Muslim tourists agreed with religious affiliated sites as a determinant in the selection of Halal-concept hotel with a mean range of 3.35 to 4.39.

Table 6*Factor that Affect Muslim Tourists' Choice of Halal-Concept Hotels in terms of Religious Affiliated Sites*

Factor 5. Religious Affiliated Sites	Mean
I check the location of the hotel and other nearby places to see if there are mosques located.	4.39
I request for the location details from the hotel service provider to check if there are other Islamic religious sites aside from that I can visit.	3.38
I consider a hotel that is closer to any Islamic pilgrimage site.	3.35
Total Weighted Mean	3.71

As shown in the interview transcriptions, Muslim tourists refer to the strategic location of the hotel. Aside from convenience stores where they can purchase Halal foods, Muslim tourists also put consideration to the religious affiliated sites located nearby such as mosques and pilgrimage sites. Being accommodated to a hotel that is closer to the mosques is an advantage (Nurdiansyah, 2016). They do not need to travel far just to be involved in group prayers, feasts, and gatherings in mosques. Also, they divulged that the proximity of the hotel to the mosques allows them to easily hear the Azan announcement and prayer time indication. Muslim tourists preferred *"a hotel that has mosques located nearby so that they will be able to go to that place easily when needed like during group prayers, gatherings, and feast."* They also disclosed that *"when they do traveling in other countries especially if the time is different from what they used to, being accommodated in the hotel that is closer to the mosque is a great*

advantage. They can get reminded of the prayer time and Azan pronouncement, special case during Ramadan, of course.” Moreover, for some Muslim tourists, *“they like a hotel that is located near pilgrimage sites for convenience. Also, they want a hotel that has mosque nearby.”* Hotel that is located closer to the religious affiliated sites like mosque or any related Muslim destinations has a significant impact on Muslim tourist choice of travel destination and hotel (Shafaei, 2013; A.M.T, 2015; COMCEC, 2016). Traveling to religious affiliated sites aside from mosques follows the reminder of Allah, the God of Muslim, stated in the Koran that they need to explore the creation of Him (Kamarudin & Ismail, 2012; 2016).

4.3 *The Significant Relationship between the Demographic Factors of Muslim Tourists and their Choice of Halal-Concept Hotel*

The results of Chi-square test indicate that some of the selected socio-demographic variables of the Muslim tourists have significant relationship with factors that affect their choice of Halal-concept hotels. The socio-demographic variables that were chosen in this study were gender, age, and occupation.

Table 7

Significant Difference between Factors of Muslim Tourists and their Choice of Halal-Concept Hotel and Muslim Tourists' Age

Identified Factors	F	P-value	Decision
Availability and Convenience of Halal Foods	0.438	0.656	Not Significant
Prayer Facilities	0.683	0.501	Not Significant
Islamic morality	0.175	0.780	Not Significant
Muslim-Friendly Holiday Packages	0.085	0.661	Not Significant
Religious Affiliated Sites	1.179	0.308	Not Significant

Table 7 shows the comparison of factors of Muslim Tourists' choice of Halal-concept hotels and their age. The ANOVA yielded no significant difference ($p > 0.05$) in the assessments of the respondents. This indicates that age is not an indicative of the factors of Muslim Tourists' choice of Halal-concept hotels. As shown in the table, older and younger people do not show different views when choosing a Halal-concept hotel in terms of availability and convenience of Halal, prayer facilities, Islamic morality, Muslim-Friendly holiday packages, and religious affiliated sites. This is because their needs are synonymous with one another, considering the fact that they only believe in the same religion that require people, whether old or young, to act according what is prescribe by the Islamic ethical standards. Supporting the result, Sporten et al. (2018) found out that age did not influence the choice behavior of people.

Table 8

Significant Difference between Factors of Muslim Tourists & their Choice of Halal-Concept Hotel & Muslim Tourists' Gender

Identified Factors	t	P-value	Decision
Availability and Convenience of Halal Foods	2.187*	0.029	Significant
Prayer Facilities	0.254	0.801	Not Significant
Islamic morality	2.522*	0.012	Significant
Muslim-Friendly Holiday Packages	1.935	0.054	Not Significant
Religious Affiliated Sites	2.255	0.025	Not Significant

Table 8 shows the comparison of factors of Muslim Tourists' choice of Halal-concept hotels and their gender. The t-test yielded significant differences ($p > 0.05$) in the assessments of the respondents. Based on the results, male have significantly higher considerations to availability and convenience of Halal foods and Islamic Morality compared to the female Muslim tourists. Although they believe in the same religion, female and male Muslim tourists differ when choosing a Halal-concept hotel. This may because of the prescribed actions and physical appearance that must be exhibited to female and male Muslim tourists as defined by Islamic right conduct of life. At some points, the differences in dress codes, manner of greetings and dealing with people, and other gender roles that matter to their daily lives. In relation, Chlesche and Haupt (2007) found out that gender influences the decision-making of the individuals.

Table 9*Significant difference between factors of Muslim Tourists & their choice of Halal-Concept Hotel & Muslim Tourists' Occupation*

Identified Factors	F	P-value	Decision
Availability and Convenience of Halal Foods	0.594	0.553	Not Significant
Prayer Facilities	-0.808	0.430	Not Significant
Islamic morality	-0.234	0.811	Not Significant
Muslim-Friendly Holiday Packages	-0.290	0.772	Not Significant
Religious Affiliated Sites	-0.816	0.415	Not Significant

Table 9 shows the comparison of factors of Muslim Tourists' choice of Halal-concept hotels and their age. The t-test yielded no significant difference ($p > 0.05$) in the assessments of the respondents. This indicates that occupation is not an indicative of the factors of Muslim Tourists' choice of Halal-concept hotels. Whether student, professionals, or self-employed, Muslim tourists do not manifest different perspectives and considerations when choosing a Halal-concept hotel in terms of availability and convenience of Halal, prayer facilities, Islamic morality, Muslim-Friendly holiday packages, and religious affiliated sites. This is mainly because Islamic religion highly adheres to the virtue of equality. In fact, Islamic law imposes a set tax, zakat, on the rich and middle classes and exempts the poor. This would thus give them an equal status with the wealthy who were able to pay zakat. This demonstrates that zakat is a devotional act and the ultimate goal of any devotional act is to draw closer to God the Almighty.

4.4 The Challenges for the Local Government to Increase the Muslim Tourist's Arrivals in the Philippines

These were the identified challenges generated from the consolidated interview transcriptions of the three local government officers in the City/Municipality Tourism Department. These three officers were the ones who replied from the email sent to them by the research to convey their intention to participate in the study. During the interview, they provided some insights regarding the challenges they have faced to increase Muslim tourist's arrivals in the country. They also provided the researcher some enhancement strategies they would think effective to respond to the challenges.

The first identified challenge for local government to increase the Muslim tourists' arrival was the insufficient Halal tourism-related programs (Khoiriati et al, 2018). Although the DOT has initiated initial steps towards the intensification of Halal tourism in the country through crafting Halal tourism guidelines, still the Philippines government has no specific regulations governing the implementation of Halal tourism (Khoiriati et al, 2018). The department has mandated businessmen, companies, and retailers to establish niche markets where Muslim tourists can easily access Halal foods. However, the Philippines seems not yet ready to serve Muslim travelers because of the insufficient Halal tourism-related programs. Despite the growing demands for Halal tourism in the country, DOT is still lacking recommended guidelines for the establishment of Halal-certified restaurants, theme and amusement parks, hotels, and other tourism-related infrastructure (Khoiriati et al, 2018). This resulted in lack of Halal awareness among hoteliers. Suhaiza (2011), as cited by Yusuf (2015), in Malaysia, lack of awareness on the importance of Halal implementation among the hoteliers was due to the low rate of Halal certification application among hotels in this country.

As disclosed by one City Tourism Officer, it is important for the DOT to solidify the Halal tourism programs supporting the implementation of Philippine Halal Tourism Project. Clear directions of Halal tourism plans must be communicated well to the LGU to determine the path of the project is heading to. In that way, it would be easier for the LGU to prioritize the Halal tourism plans to increase the Muslim tourists' arrivals. In connection, The Halal Times (2015) stated that Philippines must develop more facilities, activities, and services to attract Muslim tourists. Also reported, while the Philippines has well-established festivities for Christmas and Chinese New Year, it lacks a major festival to attract Muslim tourists. Even though tourism plays an important role in the Philippine economy, celebrating Eid'l Fitr has not been utilized as a revenue generating or tourism activity. Given its income generating and tourism potentials, the Philippines should be moving forward to prioritize programs towards the utilization the economic potentials of Eid'l Fitr just like its neighboring Southeast Asian countries.

Second identified challenge was the provision, monitoring, and evaluation of Halal certification. Monitoring and Evaluation system is an important part of any planned activity. It helps to determine the extent of achievement or level of effectiveness of the plans upon its implementation. Dubé et al. (2016), as cited by Matsunawa & Tarca (2019), added that Halal certification in the Philippines is “decentralized, scattered, and lacks coherence.” In relation, the need for the consistent monitoring and evaluation for certification system assists the DOT to examine the Halal-requirements compliance of the tourism establishment in the country. Without a national certification scheme for Halal products, the Philippines is not yet ready to meet the demands of the Muslim (Capistrano, 2017). It also allows the DOT to determine as to what extent the Halal-tourism providers have achieved so far. DOT has exerted efforts to actualize the Philippine Halal Tourism Project which aimed at helping tourism establishments secure halal certification. Halal refers to food allowed under the Islamic Sharia Law. Despite the foregoing efforts of the national agency, there is a poor monitoring and evaluation system for certification as divulged by the LGU officer from Tourism department. This is consistent with report posted in the The Mindanao Bureau (2017).

Such incoherent monitoring and evaluation system is the result of poor understanding on Halal tourism benefits. Nurdiansyah (2016) argued that Muslim travelers remain relatively underserved due to factors such as lack of awareness amongst tourism authorities and service providers of the market’s significant growth potential, as well as poor understanding of this demographic’s specific needs and preferences. This has manifested in a lack of facilities and experiences that meet the needs of Muslim travelers, as well as scarce or inconsistent information on existing Muslim-friendly amenities. The tourism officer stated that aside from the certified “halal-friendly” certification provided by Halal International Chamber of Commerce and Industries of the Philippines (HICCIP) to recognize the adherence of tourism-oriented establishments including hotels, restaurants and resorts to international halal standards, there must be a consistent monitoring and evaluation system to determine the success of the implementation. There must also be appraisal system to these establishments that consistently and highly complied with the Halal-standard products and services. Through this, not only these above-mentioned tourism-oriented establishments would comply, but other related services and establishment would possibly start venturing into Halal-conscious services to increase the Muslim tourists’ arrivals in the country.

Presently, these organizations: Crescent Rating, a Singapore-based halal accreditation body, HICCIP, and DOT are tasked to assess the tourism-related establishment on how “halal-friendly” their businesses are based on the suitability of an establishment as holiday destination, family friendliness, safety with combined percent weight of 40 percent, Muslim friendly services and facilities availability (40 percent) and halal awareness and reach out to Muslims (20 percent). Third identified challenge was geographical location of mosques and worship infrastructures. Bazazo et al (2017), as cited by Yuliviona et al. (2019), identified worship infrastructures, halal meal, alcohol and gambling free, and Islamic morality. As Islamic religious attributes significant for the Muslim tourists. Similarly, Battour et al (2010) also identified that worship facilities, halal-meal availability, alcohol consumption and gambling restriction, and sexual tolerance provided significant impacts on Muslim tourists’ choice in Malaysia.

Prayer facilities are important to Muslim tourists since they need to pray five time a day as prescribed by their Islamic belief. They usually check the available mosques in the country before they would embark on a journey going to the country of destination. Destinations where Mosques are hard to find make it almost impossible for Muslim travelers to offer their prayers on time. They might have to go back to the hotel to pray when there is no adequate prayer facility. Most of the picturesque mosques in the Philippines are mainly located in Mindanao, one of the main three islands in the country. Proximity of the mosques to other tourism-related establishments adds encouragement to the travelers. The number of mosques located in the country also matters to the choice of destination, since prayer is a significant part of their daily routine. It might cause them to choose destinations that provide easier access to prayer facilities and other Muslim-friendly facilities. However, in the Philippines, Muslim tourists can barely see mosques in the capital city that has unique architectural Islamic designs worth to be visited and to be shared to other prospective Muslim tourists. Two LGU tourism officers disclosed that the DOT must start building beautiful large mosques in the different places for tourism consumption aside from its religious significance. The cooperation among stakeholders would really a great help to actualize these efforts.

The Philippine Halal Tourism Project was originally implemented to four areas namely Manila, Boracay, Cebu and Davao. But with the intensified efforts of the DOT to attract more Muslim travelers, the implementation of the program was expanding to Zamboanga, Koronadal, Gensan, Caraga, Bohol and Siargao as there is a big demand in these areas for Halal (Citrinot, 2016). The tourism-oriented establishments there including hotels, restaurants and resorts are encouraged to welcome the halal project and embrace it in managing their establishment. Although Philippine Halal Tourism project has been successful in generating awareness and creating a Halal consciousness among the Filipino people, it still needs to build beautiful mosques and other related Islamic infrastructures aside from Halal-certified services and product, to fully embrace the Halal-consciousness and be a truly Muslim-friendly country.

Human resources and Halal tourism experts are vital for the actualization of the planned efforts of the Philippine Halal Tourism project. And this was identified as another challenges. Therefore, Battour & Ismail (2015) suggested that education syllabus and training programs are needed in hospitality to understand Halal issues and this could be an opportunity to universities and training centers to offer such programs. MuslimInk (2017) reported that industry players are also looking to incorporate halal tourism studies into the nation's hospitality curricula, with the aim of boosting awareness and training professionals to work in the industry. They would be the professionals who invest time, effort, and knowledge to achieve the overall objective of increasing Muslim tourists' arrivals while ensuring the religious significance of the Islamic religious affiliated sites. Although Crescent Rating, HICCIP and the DOT keep on ensuring the Halal consciousness and Muslim-friendliness of the tourism establishment, there is still a lack of human resources and Halal-tourism experts in the LGU Tourism Officer who could assist them in planning, implementing and evaluating the program.

To implement the project down to the LGU, there must be an assign Halal-tourism expert who could supervise and monitor the compliance of the Halal- certified establishments in reflection with Islamic ethical standards and religious requirements. Moreover, these Halal tourism experts could suggest to the LGU on how to improve the implementation of Halal-tourism development plan in the locality. This is consonance with the recommendation provided by one LGU Tourism officer during the interview. He was concerned with the correct implementation of the Philippine Halal Tourism project. He argued that the lack of knowledge group who would supervise the plan execution could implement the plan unsuccessfully. Having someone who has adequate knowledge on Halal tourism could help the LGU make alteration on the tourism development plan. It is also an advantage for it would help them train and conduct relation symposium, workshops, and training to the groups of persons involved with hospitality industry to increase Muslim arrivals in the country.

5. Summary, conclusions, and recommendations

Summary - This study aimed to determine the factors affecting Muslim travelers on choosing accommodation during travel. This was conducted as an extended study of Hassan (2015); however, conducted in the Philippine setting. Halal tourism has grown popular in the recent years, hence, many service providers around the world aim to benefit from this trend. Accommodation providers are among the service providers that are drawn to cash in the Halal tourist segment. This is also the same case in the Philippines, which has been making efforts to attract Muslim travelers to its shores. Accordingly, this study explored the factors that affect a Muslim tourist in choosing hotel accommodation during their travel. Availability of Muslim-friendly hotels is considered one of the most important attributes that attract Muslim travelers and encourage them to visit destination. In this regard, it is essential to identify the hotel characteristics that Muslim travelers prioritize and consider in choosing such hotels. The respondents of the study were Muslim tourists who have traveled to the Philippines whether for education and training, leisure and recreation, and work and employment. These respondents were from mainly Muslim countries in the world: Malaysia, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, and Turkey.

Using quantitative and qualitative designs analysis, the researcher was able to determine the factors affects the Muslim tourists' choice of Halal-concept hotel, examine the significant differences between the identified factors and tourists' personal variables, and analyze the challenges confronting the LGU in increasing tourists'

arrivals. To answer the research objectives, the researcher utilized factor analysis, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and independent sample T-test. Results showed that availability and convenience of Halal foods, prayer facilities, Islamic morality, Muslim-friendly holiday packages, and religious affiliated sites. These factors, even though conducted in Philippine setting, were same in the following factors identified by Hassan (2015). Aside from factors, the researcher also dared to analyze the challenges confronting the LGU in increasing Muslim tourists' arrivals. With the assistance of LGU tourism officers, these challenges that include lack of prioritization of Halal tourism programs, lack of monitoring and evaluation system, geographical location of mosques, and lack of Halal tourism experts in LGU. These emergent themes were generated from the transcriptions during the semi-structured interview with LGU tourism officers.

To examine the significant differences between identified factors and personal variable of the respondents, the researcher used the statistical tools such as analysis of variance (ANOVA) and independent sample T-test. Results revealed that age and occupation did not have a significant difference with the identified factors. Gender, on the other hand, showed significant differences with the factors. Generally, the study may help to have an effective and efficient way of promoting Islamic tourism in the Philippines. This study offers a better understanding on the important factors to consider in pursuing a more Muslim-friendly destination. Basic services in hotel accommodations were identified to understand Muslim tourists' behavior, destination marketers need to understand the demand side, the needs of Muslim travelers in the context of Halal tourism. Muslim-friendly attributes which are applied in some destinations could be a benchmark for other destinations that target Muslim tourists and/or to market the destination as "Muslim-friendly destination" with the end goal of increasing Muslim tourists' arrivals in the country.

Summary of findings

- Muslim tourists generally agreed with the indicators in the following identified factors: *convenience and availability of food, prayer facilities, Islamic morality, Muslim-friendly holiday packages, and religious affiliated sites.*
- Age and occupation did not affect the selection of Halal-concept hotels in terms of *convenience and availability of food, prayer facilities, Islamic morality, Muslim-friendly holiday packages, and religious affiliated sites.* However, gender could indicate a slight difference in terms of *convenience and availability of food and Islamic morality.*
- Based on the interviews, the following identified challenges in pursuing Halal tourism were 1.) Insufficient Halal tourism-related Programs; 2.) Incoherent monitoring and evaluation system for Halal certification; 3.) geographical location of mosques; and 4.) lack of human resources and Halal tourism experts

Conclusions - Given the findings above, the following conclusions have been made: As member of the ASEAN, which has the highest concentration of Muslim population in the world, the Philippines has many potentials in developing Islam tourism sectors to enhance foreign revenue. The Philippines can collaborate with other ASEAN countries, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei, who had already been successful in promoting Islamic tourism. Given culturally diverse and geographical setting, Philippines has a huge potential for the destination to position itself and inspire Muslim visitors to choose Philippines for their next holiday and leisure, or even for education and training, and work and employment. Responding the growing need of Halal tourism, the national government, through DOT, has implemented the Philippine Halal Tourism project to attract more Muslim tourists to visit the country. This project is complementary to current tourism development goals since the Philippines receives approximately 566,000 visitors from the Middle East, parts of ASEAN, as well as India and Israel annually. Through this project, Halal-tourism establishment, especially hotels, is given a certification indicating Halal-certified establishment upon its compliance to the set standards by Crescent Rating, DOT, and HICCIP. Also, it is important for the hotel management to consider availability and convenience of Halal foods, prayer facilities, Islamic morality, Muslim-friendly holiday packages, and religious affiliated sites when planning

for management plan to encourage more tourist arrivals. Implementing the Philippine Halal Tourism project poses many challenges especially with the LGU. These must be addressed so as to successfully actualize the national efforts to attract more Muslim tourists given the fact that Philippines has a close proximity to the large Muslim populations of Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore coupled with its rich diverse culture make the country. These challenges include insufficient Halal tourism-related programs, provision and evaluation of Halal Certification system, geographical location of mosques and worship infrastructures, and lack of Halal tourism experts in LGU. If responded properly, Philippine will be an authentic Halal-conscious and Muslim-friendly country.

Recommendations - In light with the findings, the following recommendations are offered:

- To overcome the challenges encountered by the LGU in increasing Muslim tourist's arrivals, it is essential for them to hire a Halal- tourism expert who could supervise and monitor the implementation of the Philippine Halal Tourism project.
- Appraisal system aside from Halal certification must be provided to recognize those tourism-related establishments who have high compliance with the Halal tourism standards.
- Hotel Management Information System must be created by the DOT so that it would become easier for the Muslim tourists to find out a hotel accommodation that suit to his/her needs. That management system must also feature the location of the hotels, nearby places, and amenities to ensure that the chosen hotel of the Muslim tourists is guaranteed by services, following the Islamic ethical standards.
- Workshops and symposium must be conducted with the hotel providers to communicate the value of Halal consciousness and Muslim friendliness in the hospitality industry. In this way, hotel providers would be acquainted with the areas or aspects of hotel management that Muslim tourists always consider when choosing for a hotel accommodation. Staff development must also feature the right way dealing with Muslim tourists, reflecting the Islamic ethics.
- Conduct consultation meeting with halal certifiers from other countries that are successfully integrate Halal tourism in the services and products provided to outline strategies in encouraging tourism establishments to pursue halal tourism certification, and the Halal Tourism Consultation Workshop in preparation for the Halal Tourism Roadmap in the Philippines to increase Muslim tourists' arrivals.

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