



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***READINESS, CHALLENGES AND MOTIVATION FOR CERTIFICATION  
AMONG HALAL RESTAURANTS IN NORTHEASTERN THAILAND***

**WANNASIRI WANNASUPCHUE**

**FSTM 2021 5**



**READINESS, CHALLENGES AND MOTIVATION FOR CERTIFICATION  
AMONG HALAL RESTAURANTS IN NORTHEASTERN THAILAND**

By

**WANNASIRI WANNASUPCHUE**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**September 2020**

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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**September 2020**

**Chairman : Siti Fatimah Mohamad, PhD**  
**Faculty : Food Science and Technology**

In 2018, 38.3 million international tourists arrived in Thailand. The tourism industry generated USD54 billion of revenue for the country. Besides, the number of tourist arrival is expected to increase by 10 percent annually, which lead to the revenue increase in the food and beverage sector. This sector was identified as one of the top five sectors that contributed 12.3% to the national gross domestic product (GDP) in 2018. The northeastern area in Thailand is becoming popular among Muslim travelers and there is a high demand for halal food. There were 19,615 of Muslim tourists who chose this region as their travel destination in 2017. Nevertheless, there were only 11 halal certified restaurants to accommodate the influx of Muslim tourists in that area. Halal food is not only intended for Muslim customers; it is also preferred by non-Muslims. Thus, it is critical to promote halal certification among restaurant owners in northeastern Thailand. The main objective of this study was to explore the readiness, challenges and motivation for certification among halal restaurants in the northeastern Thailand. Semi-structured interviews and observation were conducted with informants comprising three stakeholders: restaurant operators of halal certified restaurants (HCRs) and non-certified halal restaurants (NCHRs), halal authority, and customers. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis with computer software (ATLAS.ti. 8.4). Six themes emerged as the readiness dimensions, in answering the first objective: appropriateness, management support, effort, restriction, personal benefit and restaurant benefit. This study also mapped the restaurants into six readiness stages, where NCHRs were identified at the pre-contemplation and contemplation stages, and HCRs were at the maintenance and termination stages. The second research objective revealed seven themes of the motivation factors and four themes of benefits in having halal certification. In the third objective, there were six themes of motivation factors perceived by customers in choosing halal restaurants. The challenges of having halal certification were obtained from three different perspectives; HCRs, NCHRs and halal authority. Three categories of challenges emerged from the fourth objective: namely before, in applying, and after

getting halal certification. The final objective of this study identified that the halal authority implemented halal training and provided hard copy documents in the past. Currently, all the halal related documents can be downloaded and submitted online. In the future, the authority strategized to develop applications to facilitate the halal activities. The findings of this study are anticipated to give insights on how restaurant owners should strategize their business towards acquiring a halal certification, help to better understand the current situations and efforts that should be carried out by the authorized bodies for halal certification in Thailand. In addition, the readiness themes and the definition of the readiness stages developed by this study can be applied to the halal restaurants in other regions, particularly in Thailand.

Keywords: Halal restaurants, halal certification, Thailand, readiness stages, challenge, motivation



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**KESEDIAAN, CABARAN DAN MOTIVASI UNTUK PENSIJILAN DI  
KALANGAN RESTORAN HALAL DI TIMUR LAUT THAILAND**

Oleh

**WANNASIRI WANNASUPCHUE**

**September 2020**

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Pada tahun 2018, sejumlah 38.8 juta pelancong antarabangsa tiba di Thailand dan industri pelancongan ketika itu mencatatkan pendapatan sebanyak USD54 billion kepada negara tersebut. Bilangan pelancong yang bakal berkunjung ke Thailand juga dijangka meningkat setiap tahun dan ini menjurus kepada peningkatan pendapatan sektor tersebut. Sektor pelancongan telah dikenalpasti sebagai salah satu daripada lima sektor teratas yang menyumbang 12.3% kepada keluaran dalam negara kasar (KDNK) pada tahun 2018. Kawasan timur laut Thailand khususnya telah menjadi terkenal di kalangan pengunjung beragama Islam dan terdapat permintaan tinggi untuk makanan halal di kawasan tersebut. Pada tahun 2017, sejumlah 19,615 pengunjung Muslim telah memilih kawasan ini sebagai destinasi pelancongan. Walaubagaimanapun, hanya terdapat 11 restoran yang disahkan halal untuk menampung permintaan pelancong Muslim ke kawasan tersebut. Tambahan pula, pengunjung bukan Islam juga turut menggemari makanan halal. Justeru, adalah penting untuk pensijilan halal dipromosikan di kalangan pemilik restoran di kawasan timur laut Thailand. Objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk meneroka kesediaan, cabaran dan motivasi untuk pensijilan di kalangan restoran halal di timur laut Thailand. Temubual separa berstruktur telah dilaksanakan dengan pemberi maklumat yang terdiri daripada tiga pihak berkepentingan: pengendali restoran disahkan halal (HCRs) dan tidak disahkan halal (NCHRs), pihak berkuasa perihal halal, dan para pengguna. Data yang diperolehi telah dianalisis menerusi analisis tematik dengan menggunakan perisian ATLAS.ti 8.4. Enam tema telah dikenal pasti sebagai dimensi kesediaan dalam menjawab objektif kajian pertama: kesesuaian, sokongan pengurusan, usaha, sekatan, kepentingan peribadi, dan kepentingan restoran. Kajian ini juga telah memetakan restoran tersebut kepada enam tahap kesediaan; restoran NCHR telah dikenal pasti berada di tahap pra-pertimbangan dan pertimbangan, dan restoran HCR berada di tahap penyenggaraan dan penamatan. Objektif kedua menemukan tujuh tema faktor motivasi dan empat tema faktor faedah dalam perolehan pensijilan halal. Bagi objektif ketiga, lima tema telah didapati bagi

faktor motivasi menurut pandangan para pengguna dalam memilih sesebuah restoran halal. Cabaran dalam mendapatkan pensijilan restoran halal telah diperoleh daripada tiga pandangan berbeza: restoran HCR, restoran NCHR, dan pihak berkuasa perihal halal. Tiga kategori cabaran muncul daripada objektif keempat: iaitu sebelum, dalam mengajukan permohonan, dan setelah mendapat sijil halal. Objektif terakhir mensasarkan pengenalan pihak berkuasa perihal halal yang telah melaksanakan latihan dan menyediakan salinan dokumen bercetak pada masa lalu. Pada masa kini, kesemua dokumen berkenaan boleh dimuat turun dan diserahkan secara dalam talian. Pada masa hadapan, pihak berkuasa menstrategikan pembangunan aplikasi bagi memudahkan aktiviti perolehan sijil halal. Dapatan kajian dijangka mampu memberikan pandangan dari segi bagaimana pemilik restoran boleh menstrategikan perniagaan mereka ke arah perolehan sijil halal dan membantu mereka memahami situasi kini dan usaha yang patut dilaksanakan oleh pihak berkuasa bagi memperoleh sijil halal di Thailand. Selain itu, tema kesediaan dan definisi tahap kesediaan yang dikembangkan oleh kajian ini akan lebih sesuai diterapkan bagi konteks tempatan restoran halal di Thailand.

Kata kunci: Restoran halal, pensijilan halal, Thailand, tahap kesediaan, cabaran, motivasi

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Date: 08 April 2021

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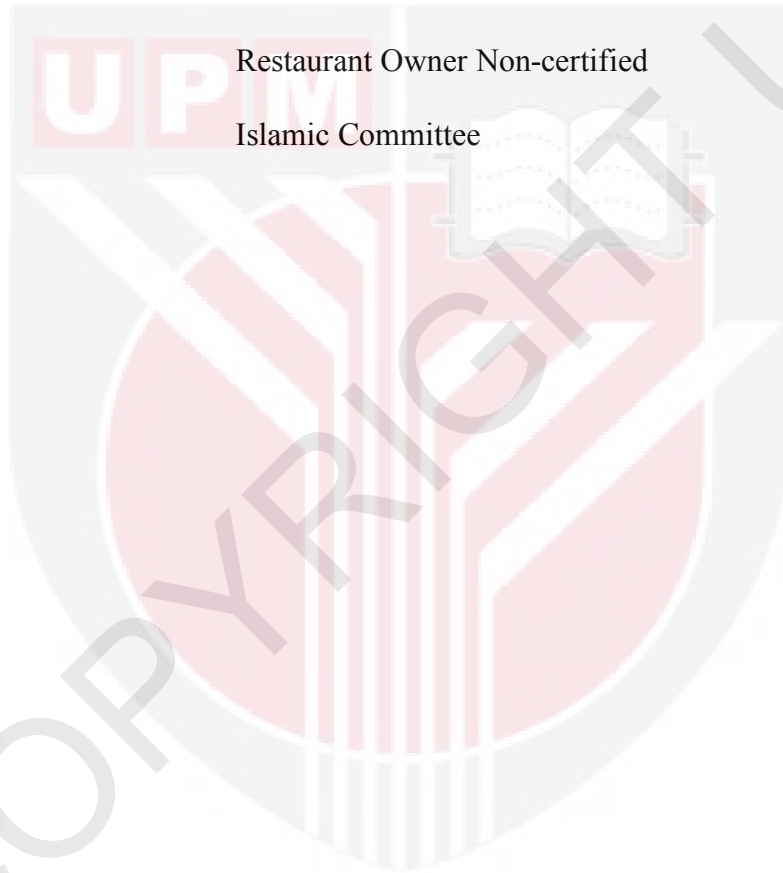
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HCR	Halal Certified Restaurant
NCHR	Non-Certified Halal Restaurant
PICKK	The Provincial Islamic Committee
CICOT	The Central Islamic Committee of Thailand
RO-C	Restaurant Owner Certified
RO-N	Restaurant Owner Non-certified
IC	Islamic Committee



# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

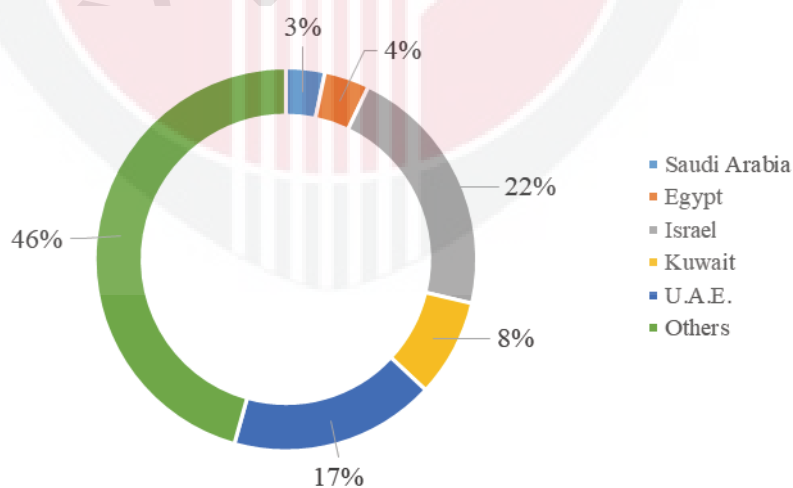
### 1.1 Background

#### 1.1.1 Tourism in Thailand

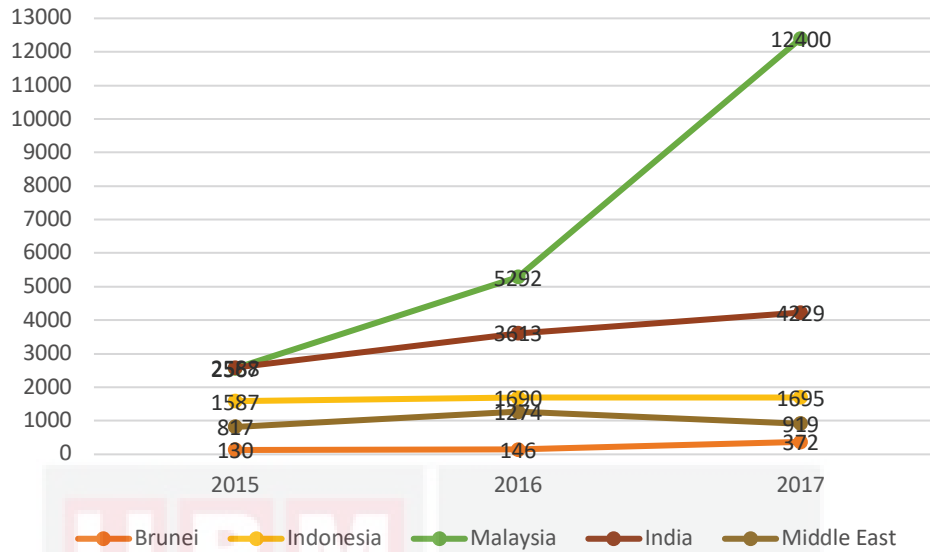
Thai people are proud of their country, culture and history. Thailand has many great places for tourism, especially in landscape, weather, natural resources and forests. Nowadays, domestic and international tourists visit many regions in Thailand as the tourism industry in Thailand is one of the world's largest and fastest-growing economic sectors (World Bank Group, 2017). The tourism industry that comprises of the food service sector is the main contributor to the Thai economy. The good economy in Thailand improves local businesses where local people can find jobs that will reduce population migration to the capital city. However, the tourism industry needs to follow quality standards as offered by big hotels, restaurants and transportation to retain customers' trust. The restaurant is one of the most important parts of the food service sector, which significantly impacts the tourism industry. By having quality standards, restaurants will serve food quality that will guarantee a hygienic condition through halal certification, Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP). Tailanga et al. (2016) studied tourists' satisfaction before and after travelling to Thailand and the study found that the level of tourists' satisfaction with Thai food was 3.59 out of 5.00 scores. Therefore, if restaurants in Thailand can offer food based on standard certification quality, they can contribute to a higher income in the tourism industry. Most visitors who are satisfied with the food quality are willing to spend more on the establishments, which would lead to a higher number of restaurants (Chanin et al., 2010; Ongkunaruk & Kessuvan, 2013; Peiwang, Mekkamola & Unitachaia, 2013; Saraithong & Chanchaenchai, 2010).

The World Bank Group (2017) stated that Thailand was one of the most popular tourist destinations globally, receiving almost 30 million visitors throughout the year. The majority of the international tourists enjoy new experiences related to its magnificent tourist attractions (79.6%), Thai foods (66.8%), shopping and souvenirs (52.0%), friendly people (49.8%) and sales promotion (36.0%) (Ministry of Tourism and Sport, 2016a). Furthermore, Thailand has developed the tourism industry into seven categories: medical and wellness, sports tourism, wedding and romance, religious and spiritual tourism, ASEAN connect, maritime tourism, and gastronomic tourism. Food tourism has generated around USD150 billion globally, with USD15.2 billion going to Thailand (Ministry of Tourism and Sport, 2016b). Therefore, the tourism industry brings a new phenomenon that occurs from the increasing demand for tourist activities and food business, such as food service establishments which could be expanded.

Travellers arriving in Thailand come from different regions worldwide, including East Asia, Europe, South Asia, Middle East and Africa. Nowadays, the world's Muslim population is large and may continuously increase to approximately 2.2 billion by 2030 (Henderson, 2017). According to the Ministry of Tourism and Sport (2018), the number of Muslim tourists arriving in Thailand was 658,278 in 2016 and 744,826 in 2017. The number of Muslim countries' arrival included 3% from Saudi Arabia, 4% from Egypt, 22% from Israel, 8% from Kuwait, 17% from U.A.E. and 46% from other Muslim countries (Figure 1.1). The number of Muslim tourist that arrived in the northeastern region shows in Figure 1.2. The highest number of Muslim tourists who chose this region for traveling was Malaysian, and Muslim tourists arriving in the area expanded from 2015 to 2017. The number of Muslim tourists continues increasing to 56% and 63% in 2016 and 2017, respectively (Figure 1.2). Therefore, it can be expected that the increment will continue in the coming years. This region needs to provide facilities such as mosques, hotels and halal restaurants to support Muslim tourists. These facilities are needed by the Muslim tourists, which will contribute to the positive word-of-mouth for halal tourism in this region. The number of Muslim arrivals in Thailand according to the region; 50% in central, 18% in south, 15% in north, 15% in northeast and 2% in east (The Ministry of Tourism and Sport, 2018). The northeast region has the potential to attract more Muslim tourists. Although the number of halal restaurants in the northeastern region was significantly less than in other regions, the percentage of tourist arrival in this region was almost similar to the southern and the northern region. Therefore, halal tourism is a new phenomenon that is occurring from the growing number of the Muslim population and Thailand has an impressive ability to attract this new group of tourists by preparing facilities such as mosques, transportation, accommodation and restaurants for Muslim tourists, as these facilities create value in the tourism industry.



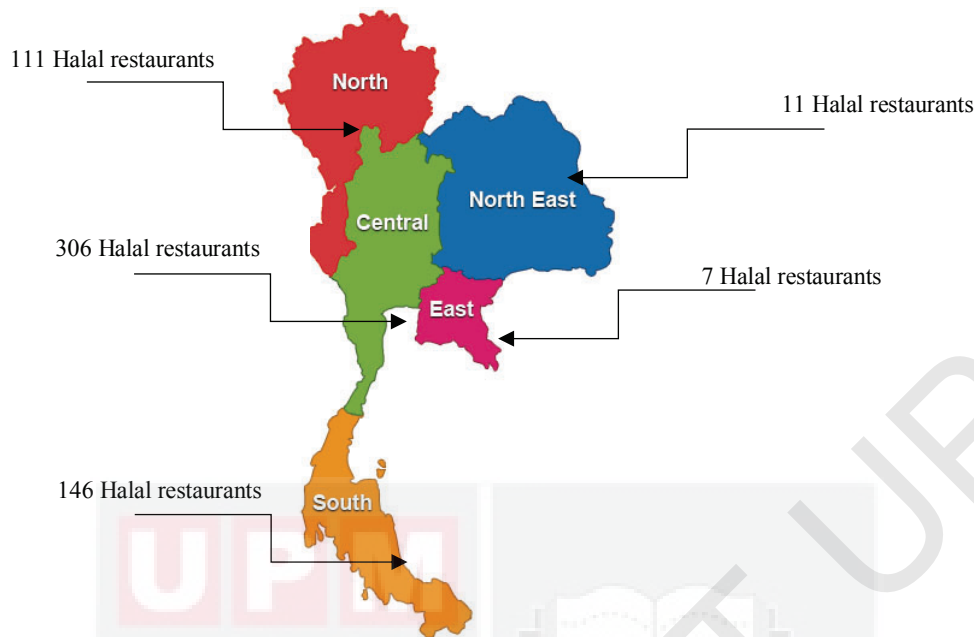
**Figure 1.1 : Number of Muslim Tourists Origin in Thailand (2018)**  
 (Source : Ministry of Tourism and Sport, 2018)



**Figure 1.2 : Number of Muslim Tourists Arrived in the Northeastern Region (2015-2017)** (Source : Ministry of Tourism and Sport, 2018)

### 1.1.2 Halal Restaurants in Thailand

Halal food plays a significant role in the global market due to its growing demand (Rajagopal et al., 2011). Halal food catering such as halal restaurants labelled "Halal", not only abide by Islamic law but also healthy for human consumption. Moreover, food prepared by these restaurants is safe for consumption. Although halal food previously targeted Muslim customers, the markets have now been expanded to non-Muslims. The halal industry includes halal food, cosmetics, pharmacy and logistics, and tourism, comprising the food service, which has become popular among many countries. The significance is the halal logo or label that communicates to Muslim customers that the products have been prepared by following the Islamic requirements. Additionally, the halal logo reflects that the food items are prepared in hygienic conditions and are safe for customer consumption (Ismoyowati, 2015; Mathew et al., 2014; Salman & Shiddiqui, 2011; Samori & Sabtu., 2014).



**Figure 1.3 : The Number of Halal Certified Restaurants in Thailand**  
 (Source : The Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2015)

The report by The Tourism Authority of Thailand (2015) indicated a total of 518 halal certified restaurants in Thailand, which are distributed through 306 establishments in central Thailand, 146 establishments in the southern area, 111 establishments in the northern area, 11 establishments in the northeastern area and seven establishments in the eastern area (Figure 1.3). The information represents that in some regions, especially the northeast and the east, halal restaurants comprise less than 30 establishments.

Looking at the number of halal restaurants in Thailand, most halal restaurants are located at the central, the north and the south because the central and the north are the capital cities and most tourists travel to beautiful places around these areas. The south is closer to Muslim countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia, but also 80% of the population are Muslims. Therefore, the number of halal restaurants in these areas is higher than in other regions. In line with the tourist quest for new tourism sites, new sites were made available in northeastern Thailand, which seems popular among tourists (The Tourism Council of Thailand, 2016). It is estimated that 26% of the tourists who came to the northeast consisted of 18% non-Muslim and 8% Muslims. The tourists chose to visit this region because of its convenience, colorful local culture and richness of its unique food services. It is expected that the tourism activity will keep growing in the northeastern region.

Thai cuisine is famous around the world. Thailand's government tries to promote Thai cuisine to tourists around the world. Moreover, the variety of food such as Thai food, Western food, Asian food and Muslim food is prepared for visitors to choose whatever they want to try. Due to the expansion of the tourism market, Thailand has

to attract new tourist groups, whereby Muslim tourists comprise one target group. Food quality standards such as Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) and halal certification not only guarantees good hygiene; the taste should also be full-flavored with a suitable price. Popular menus at halal restaurants in Thailand sold by Muslim food operators (Figure 1.4) include oxtail soup, chicken biryani, and yellow curry with chicken and roti (The Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2015). Therefore, the Tourism Council of Thailand can promote the prominent points of both halal certification guarantee and these popular dishes to Muslim tourists.



**Figure 1.4 : Some of the Popular Halal Menus Sold by Muslim Food Operators in Thailand**

### 1.1.3 Food Service Quality

Food service is part of the tourism industry that drives the Thai economy (Ongkunaruk & Kessuvan, 2013). Thus, the demand for restaurant establishments is high as most people prefer to dine outside their homes with various food choices. In 2010, the tourism industry in Thailand received about USD23,407 million from tourism activity. Additionally, the food and beverage sector was one of the top five nation sectors contributing 448 billion baht to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2015 (Technology Promotion Association, 2010; World bank, 2015). Although Supitchayangkool (2012) mentioned that some international tourists (23.25%) were dissatisfied with the food service quality in Pattaya, McDowall (2010) stated that



international tourists impressed with beautiful smiles and the hospitality in Bangkok. Therefore, some tourism attractions would need to improve food service quality to increase the level of tourism satisfaction. Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1988) established the measuring service quality named SERVQUAL, which included five dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance and tangible. Later, Omar et al. (2016) used the SERVQUAL instrument to study the relationship between service quality and customers' satisfaction in Arabic restaurants.

However, it is well known that food service quality is a crucial component of restaurants' success. The knowledge of the measurement of service quality of restaurants are enormous and therefore needed. Additionally, a positive level of quality will lead to customer satisfaction, and the restaurants' employees could receive a high tip (Wilcock et al., 2011; Yusof, 2011).

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

### **1.2.1 Theoretical**

Studies on halal certification are famously published in Muslim countries such as Malaysia, Turkey, and Indonesia. The majority of the studies concentrate on motivational factors, challenges, customer behaviors and management perception on halal certification (Abdul et al., 2009; Ahmad et al., 2017; Battour & Ismail, 2016; Basir et al., 2018). However, this is not common in non-Muslims majority countries, like northeastern Thailand despite the inflow of large Muslim tourists in the region and the importance of halal certification to win Muslim tourists' minds in halal restaurants. The region would need to explore the readiness of restaurants before achieving halal status. Nonetheless, previous studies related to the readiness of halal implementation are still limited. The vast majority of the studies conducted on the readiness are centred on large scale industries, such as Tarmizi et al. (2014) who studied the readiness towards halal logistics and Rahman et al. (2017) who reported the readiness of food industries. The readiness dimension for small-scale businesses like halal restaurants is not available even though restaurants are an essential facility that supports human living. People need to take meals at least three times a day. Therefore, food quality should not be compromised.

Previous studies have mentioned the readiness stage to identify the stages of a halal company, but most of them used the transtheoretical model to conduct their research question. The theoretical model comprises five readiness stages, but the definition of each stage is not specific to identify the readiness of having halal certification. Identifying readiness would contribute to planning and increasing the readiness level of halal businesses for halal certification. The study focused on the problems mentioned above and designed the research to gather the data and findings. The outcome would highlight the readiness dimensions and define the readiness stages of halal restaurants. The study's readiness theme development would provide important information for the restaurant owners who want to identify their stage of

restaurant readiness. Moreover, the study will help the halal authority plan the halal strategy and encourage non-certified halal restaurants to go for halal certification.

### 1.2.2 Practical

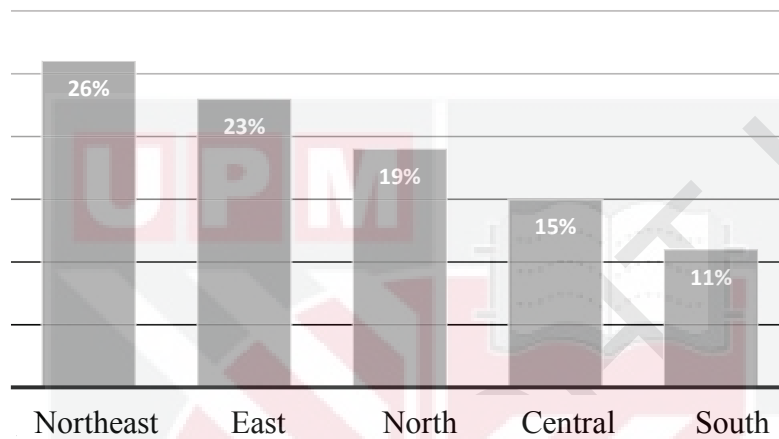
The tourism industry is the main factor that motivates the Thailand economy. The tourism industry sectors such as restaurants, hotels, tourism agencies, transportation and souvenir shops are blooming and increasing yearly (World Bank, 2013). The statistics point out the level of tourists' satisfaction as 3.69 for tourist attraction, 3.59 for Thai food and 3.55 for spa and massage, out of a maximum score of 5.00. This indicates that tourists preferred Thai food as the second-ranking; hence, Thailand would bring this point to gain tourism industry opportunity through food quality improvement.

By having the food quality improvement, halal certification is one of the categories for the quality standard that is set out by Quran whereby food is prepared and processed under Islamic dietary rules, from farm to fork (Brewater, 2015; Marzuki et al., 2011; Sumaedi & Yarmen, 2015). By interviewing 33 restaurant managers, Marzuki et al. (2012) found that halal certification could influence and maintain customer trust. Therefore, halal certification is a vital influential factor. It could give companies competitive expediency and generate higher revenue since the demand for halal establishments is increasing.

The Tourism Council of Thailand (2017) reported that the northeastern region had the highest percentage of tourist arrivals (Figure 1.5) in 2017. Nevertheless, the number of halal certified restaurants were less than 30 restaurants (The Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2015). In 2017, approximately 16,000 Muslim tourists arrived in this area (Ministry of Tourism and Sport, 2018) while the number of halal certified restaurants was only 11 establishments. Nonetheless, this region had 15% of Muslim tourists as in the north region. However, the north region had 111 halal certified restaurants that offer a variety of halal menus compared to the northeast. The high number of halal restaurants would support visitors' demand and encourage them to visit the area. On the other hand, the central obtained the highest number of Muslim tourist arrival because the main international airport is located in the central region and it is the capital city of Thailand. The convenient and modern city in the central region would attract more tourists than other regions in Thailand. In contrast, the southern region has the majority of the Muslim population and there were 146 halal certified restaurants in this region. Thus, it is not surprising that it had the second largest number of Muslim tourists arrival.

Although the northeast region has 20 provinces and 15% of Muslim tourist arrival, this area lacks information regarding the current status of Thailand halal food outlets, particularly to the motivation and challenges of halal certification achievement. This points out to an insufficient number of halal restaurants that cannot maintain the large flow of Muslim tourists whose interest is vested on halal cuisine. The findings of the readiness, challenges, and motivation to get halal certification would contribute to

halal tourism improvement and could earn a higher income to the area. Besides, some of halal restaurants are not certified by the halal authority in Thailand. Hence, this could reduce customers' trust. At the same time, this region is becoming more attractive and popular amongst the travellers (The Tourism Council of Thailand, 2017); hence, food operators have to prepare halal foods according to Islamic dietary rules to attract new tourist groups. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the readiness, challenges, and motivation to obtain halal certification among halal certified and non-certified halal restaurants in the northeastern region of Thailand.



**Figure 1.5 : Percentage of Tourists Destination in each Region in Thailand**  
(Source : Tourism Council of Thailand, 2017)

### 1.3 Research Objectives

This study's general purpose is to explore the readiness, challenges, and motivation for halal certification among certified and non-certified halal restaurants in northeastern Thailand. This study is divided into five specific objectives:

RO1: To understand the readiness of halal certification from the perspectives of certified and non-certified halal restaurant owners in the northeastern Thailand.

RO2: To interpret the motivation factors and the benefits of having halal certification from the perspectives of halal certified restaurant owners in the northeastern Thailand.

RO3: To elucidate the decision factors of choosing halal restaurants from the perspectives of customers in the northeastern Thailand.

RO4: To describe the challenges of having halal certification from the perspectives of halal certified restaurant owners, non-certified halal restaurant owners and the halal authority in the northeastern Thailand.

RO5: To identify the past, current and future activities in establishing halal certification strategies implemented by the halal authority in the northeastern Thailand.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

This study consists of five research questions that reflect the above research objectives:

RQ1: What are the readiness dimensions and readiness stages of halal certification from the perspectives of certified and non-certified halal restaurant owners in the northeastern Thailand?

RQ2: What are the motivation factors and the benefits of having halal certification from the perspectives of halal certified restaurant owners in the northeastern Thailand?

RQ3: What are the decision factors of choosing halal restaurants from the perspectives of customers in the northeastern Thailand?

RQ4: What are the challenges of having halal certification from the perspectives of halal certified restaurant owners, non-certified halal restaurant owners and the halal authority in the northeastern Thailand?

RQ5: What are the past, current and future activities in establishing halal certification strategies implemented by the halal authority in the northeastern Thailand?

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

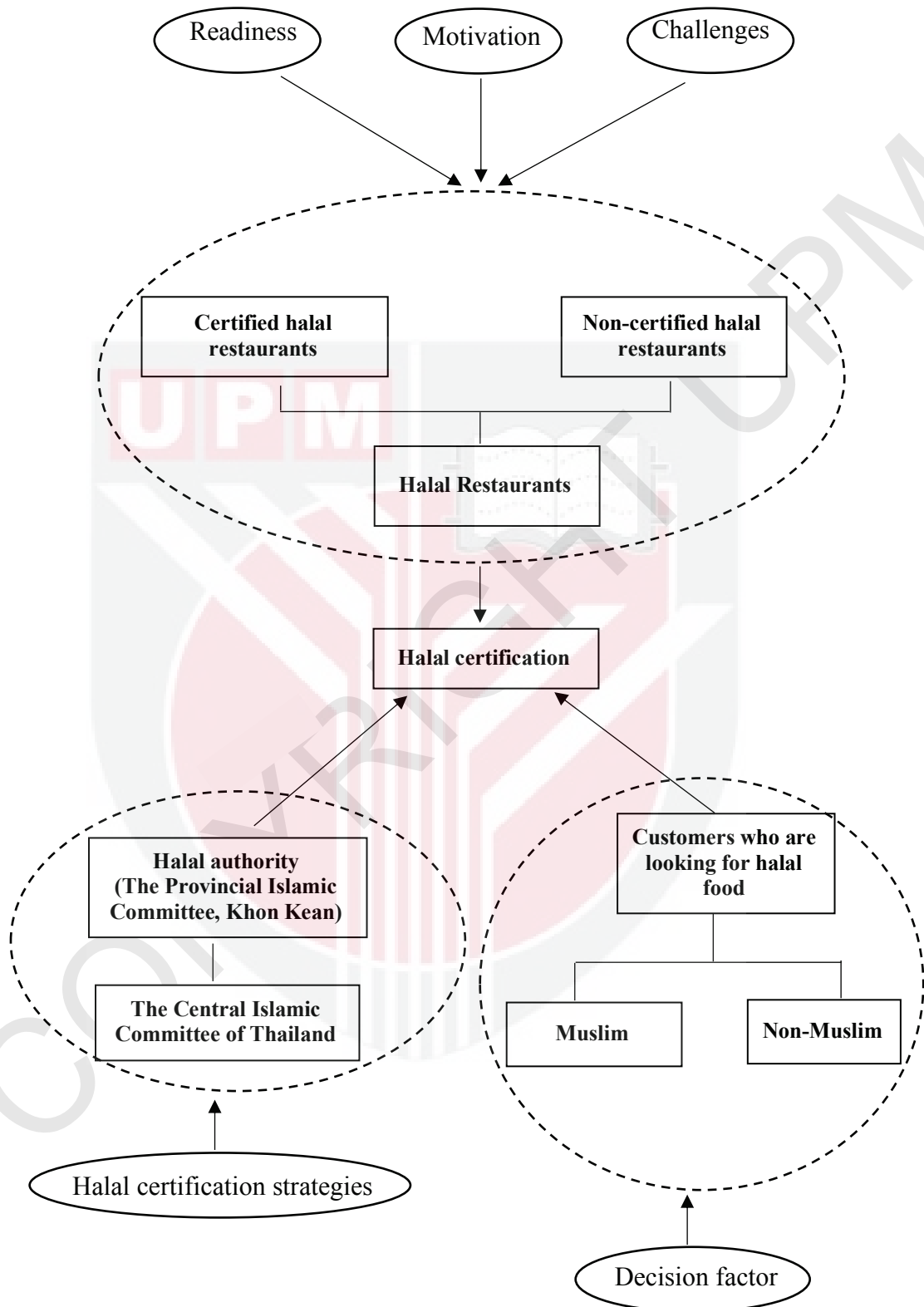
This research is expected to have theoretical and practical significance. In terms of theoretical significance, this study found that the literature reviews related to halal certification readiness were limited and the majority of the readiness from the previous study completed for businesses related to food manufacturing and halal logistic. There are no literature reviews on readiness within halal restaurant context. Thus, the study would like to extract the readiness theme that was more specific to a small business, like halal restaurants. The study could also define readiness stages that will be specific and applicable to identify readiness for a halal restaurant before planning to apply for halal certification. Furthermore, the motivation factors and

benefits of getting halal certification could contribute to the halal strategies planning to increase the number of halal certified restaurants in the northeastern region to attract more Muslim tourists.

To continue with the practical significance, the study also focused on the opportunities for developing halal certification in the northeastern Thailand. Based on previous studies, high demand of halal food from tourists but the number of halal certified restaurants were insufficient to support visitors (Supitchayangkool, 2012; Uansa-ard & Binprathan, 2018). Hence, this study would provide the findings on the motivation, the challenges and the benefits of acquiring halal certification. In terms of practicality, the study would help understand the current situation of halal restaurants in the northeastern region. These findings would present different perspectives, including restaurant owner (certified and non-certified halal restaurants) and halal authority on halal certification. They would bring the data to plan a halal strategy to attract non-certified restaurants to apply for the halal certification. A high number of halal certified restaurants would lead to the advantages of halal tourism industry to attract Muslim tourists to the region and effort should be carried out by tourism promotion bodies to promote Muslim friendly locations to tourists around the world.

#### **1.6 Research Framework of the Study**

The research framework of the study gives an overview of the overall research objectives of this study (Figure 1.6).



**Figure 1.6 : Research Frameworks of the Study**

The study obtained valuable information in constructing the study's research framework from the provincial halal director, Patan Sunan. Mr. Patan, also known as Imam Patan, has more than five years in halal certification in the northeastern region from The provincial Islamic Committee, Khon Kean. His responsibilities are halal certification information providing, halal consulting, halal certification endorsement and all halal issues must report to him to find a solution or forward to The Central Islamic Committee of Thailand (CICOT). He mentioned that some halal restaurants have been managing food production by Muslim owners. Most restaurants are familiar with halal food production, but some do not understand the halal certification system (Patan, S, personal interview, August 18, 2018). This contributed to what are the readiness dimensions to encourage the restaurants to apply for halal certification. Two categories which are halal certified restaurants and non-certified halal restaurants. Both businesses are owned by Muslim owners who run the food production under Islamic dietary rules, but the first category has the halal certification to guarantee their food quality. The different experience on halal certification achievement between them leads to the motivation factor, the challenges and the benefits of having halal certification. The next point is that the customer's decision factors also need to be explored. Before deciding to walk into a restaurant, the customer's reasons are crucial to be studied because restaurants cannot survive if they are without customer demand. The restaurants have to attract a higher number of customers by presenting food quality guarantee through halal certification. Apart from that, the halal authority takes the key role to encourage non-certified halal restaurants to apply for halal certification. Therefore, this study would examine how they planned to increase the level of halal awareness for restaurant owners to improve food quality by using the halal logo to communicate with Muslim tourists. This certification would provide a marketing advantage for restaurants. Therefore, the study would cover three perspectives and five research objectives following this research framework.

## **1.7 Terminologies used in the Study**

Four common terminologies used as in the study are defined as follow;

### **1.7.1 Halal Certification**

Halal certification is the certification to guarantee halal food production that follows the religious dietary rules and approved by The Central Islamic Committee of Thailand (CICOT). (Courtesy of Halal Standard Institute of Thailand, 2016; Mohd, 2004).

### **1.7.2 Halal Certified Restaurant in Thailand**

Halal certified restaurant is a halal restaurant that certified by the halal authority, Thailand. The restaurant has to show the official halal logo in a visible place (Battour and Ismail, 2016; EUROHALAL, 2015; Henderson, 2016).

### **1.7.3 Non-Certified Halal Restaurant in Thailand**

Non-certified halal is a halal restaurant that never certified by the halal authority and the restaurant cannot display the official halal logo (Courtesy of Halal Standard Institute of Thailand, 2016; Battour and Ismail, 2016).

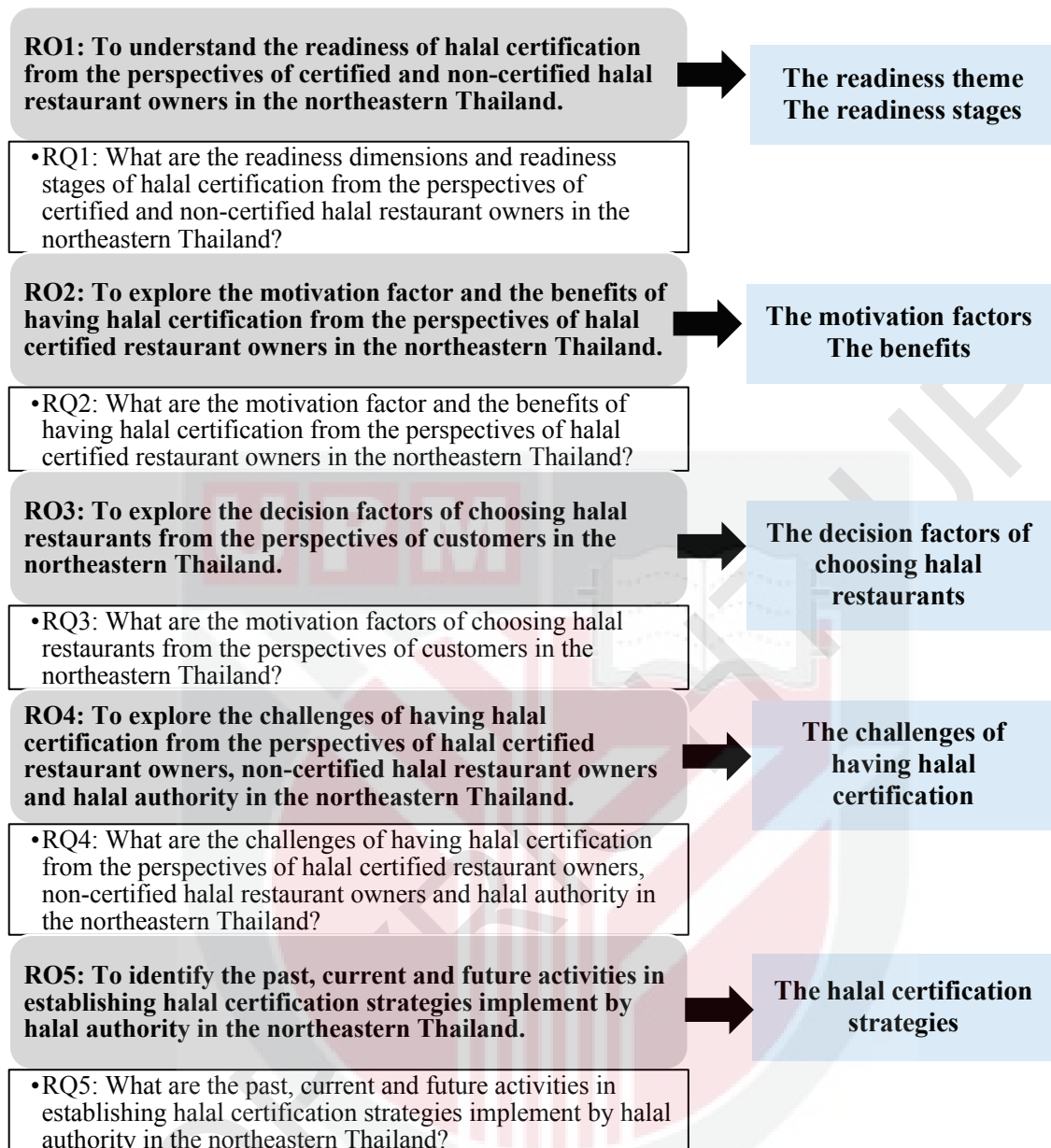
### **1.7.4 The Provincial Islamic Committee**

The Provincial Islamic committee is the halal authority that was assigned to responsible in the particular area from The Central Islamic Committee of Thailand (CICOT) (Courtesy of Halal Standard Institute of Thailand, 2016).

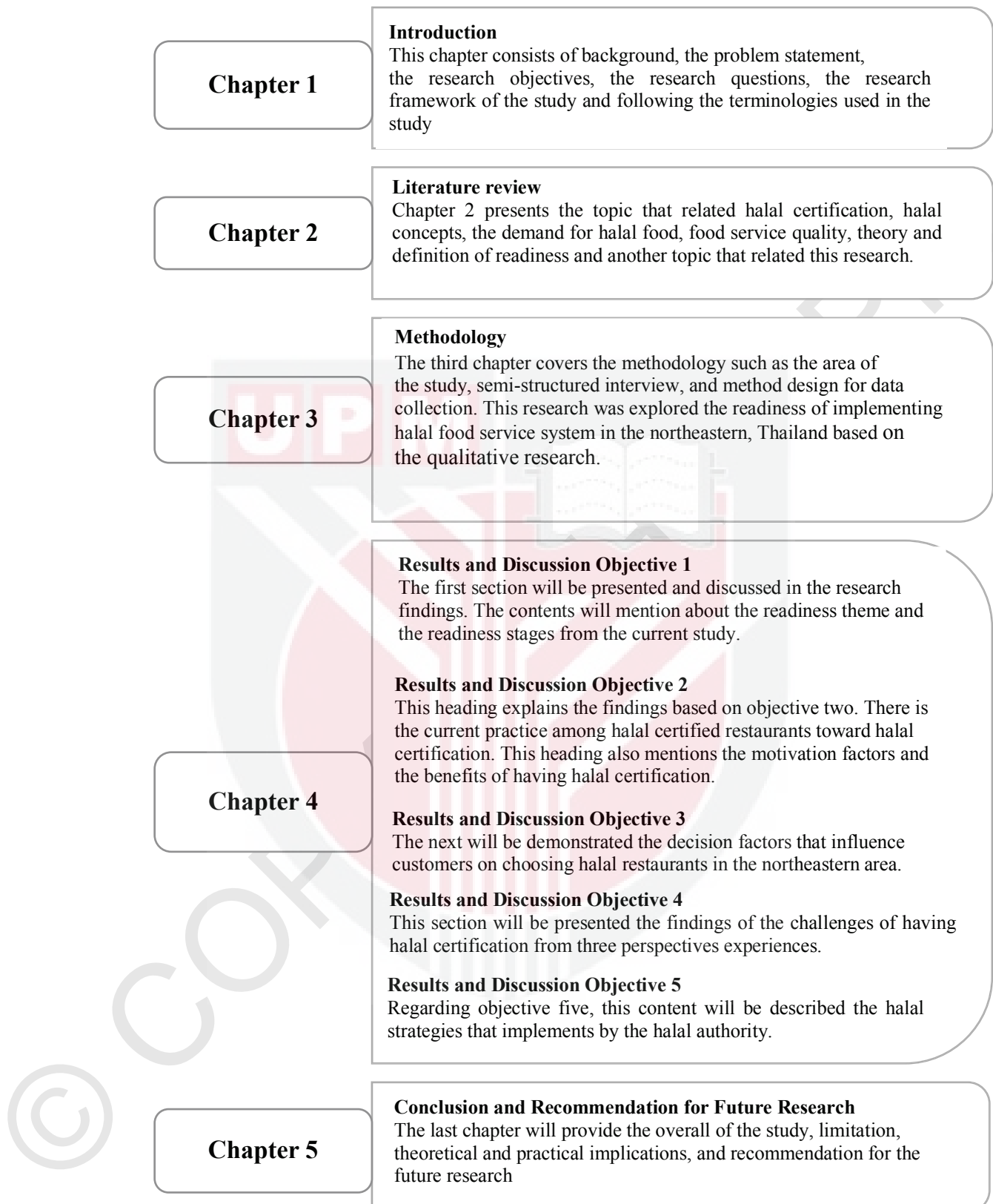
## **1.8 Organization of the Thesis**

Figure 1.7 shows the research objectives and the research questions of the study and followed by the thesis diagram's organisation presented in Figure 1.8. This thesis is organized into five different chapters. The main contents, such as problem statement, the background of the study, research objectives and research questions, were presented in the first chapter. Literature reviews related to the halal topics were described in Chapter 2. Next, Chapter 3 demonstrated the study's research methodology and Chapter 4 presented the results and discussion of this study. Finally, the fifth chapter presented the key contents, such as the summary of the study and recommendations for future research.





**Figure 1.7 : The Research Objectives and The Research Questions Diagram**



**Figure 1.8 : Organization of the Thesis Diagram**

## 1.9 Chapter Summary

The tourism industry provides a high income in Thailand's economy and provides more job opportunities for local people in which the possible reason to have accommodation such as hotels, restaurants, and souvenir shops. Around 658,278 and 744,826 tourists in 2016 and 2017, respectively, who were Muslims arrived in Thailand. Hence, to attract and promote the new tourist group by providing several quality cuisines, like halal certified restaurants, should be one of the essential facilities that Thailand has to prepare for them. Meanwhile, the northeast is getting blooming among tourists, but the number of halal certified restaurants are insufficient for people who want to try Muslim cuisine. The readiness of halal restaurants in this region toward establishing halal certification was studied as the findings could provide the current situation to plan the halal strategy by the halal authority in order to encourage non-certified halal restaurants to succeed on halal certification. In the next chapter, the literature reviews related to this study such as Islamic dietary laws, halal certification in Thailand, readiness theory and other topics were reviewed.

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