

# FOREIGN EXPERIENCE IN BINONDO (CHINATOWN), MANILA AS A FOOD TOURIST SITE

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**Abstract:** The Binondo (Chinatown), Manila is regarded as a food tourist site in which the tourist site offers authentic foods with a mix of Chinese and Filipino influence, the area also boasts other heritage sites such as the Binondo Church, Sta. Cruz Church, Jones Bridge and the Chinese-Filipino Friendship arch. The study explores the foreign experience in Binondo, Manila using secondary data gathering on online review website which is the TripAdvisor the researchers use review which is 5 years ago which range from 2015 to 2019 and 2020. There are a total of 104 respondents in which the reviews are used to analyze both quantitative and qualitatively. The result shows that that most of the foreign tourist experience in visiting Binondo is very good and the result shows that consistently the ratings of the foreign tourist improved every year. While the online reviews indicated that the themed for excellent online review is the place and the culture and traditions involved around it which includes the food, for average it is the authenticity of the area and the accessibility of the area and the maintenance of the old structures, while terrible review suggest mostly the place is overcrowded, heavy traffic and lack of parking space and lastly the poor review suggest security concerns and cleanliness of the place.

**Keyword:** Binondo, Chinatown, Experience, Foreign, Tourist.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The role of food helps tourist to increase their understanding of a place in the area where they are travelling. Food and nutrition related culture plays a key role integration between host and guest in destination and mediate in this case introduce the destination and satisfy the needs of tourist. There is a great emphasize on food and food culture in tourism literature. Food is a constant need of human beings and especially in travel with more care and caution. It is sometimes the main purpose of travel as people want to explore new experience that they cannot have in their hometown. Most of the streets are loaded with so many things that one can think of. If there is one thing that is most saleable for the pedestrians, it would be street foods. These are convenient, relatively cheap and readily available. Fried or roasted, in scoops or in sticks, all these yummy treats that are prepared and sold in public outdoor areas are part of most Filipinos' everyday fare.

Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie (2015) declare that the number of food tourism products is growing, and it is representing as a range of different experiences designed to satisfy the needs of gastronomists or consumers who want to gain social capital. Food tourism has become symbol of new tourism within which culture has metamorphosed into a normalized experience. Moreover, they have stated that foodstuffs and cuisine are greater elements in tourism that bring out identity, cultural significance and localism to tourists. (Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie, 2015).

The legal basis of the study is the republic act 9593 which the tourism act of 2009 in which the Department of Tourism (DOT) promotes as the agency in which the policy that acknowledges tourism as an "indispensable element of national economy and an industry of national interest and importance." In which the law provides a system when it comes to

tourism and to promote the tourism which includes promotion of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage sites and this also includes the promotion of food tourism as a form of tourism which is responsible for tourism activity and the economic activity and employment it can bring.

Foreign tourist often visited the area as this is one of the identified tourist sites in the city of Manila along with the Intramuros ([manila.gov.ph](http://manila.gov.ph)). Foreign tourist in relation with the topic often leaves a review which serves as a shared information on the internet in which it creates ratings that serves as a guide and what to expect with the tourist site for potential tourist that will visit the area and one of the review sites that is used is the TripAdvisor. TripAdvisor can be described as an online travel company which is responsible for reviews on different tourism establishments such as accommodation, sites and activities. The company operates a website and a mobile app in which users can also book accommodations, transportation and tourism activities. Many tourists have used the website and the reviews as a reference for other tourist in which this creates a user based which provides information for the online community (Valvidia, Luzon and Herrera, 2017).

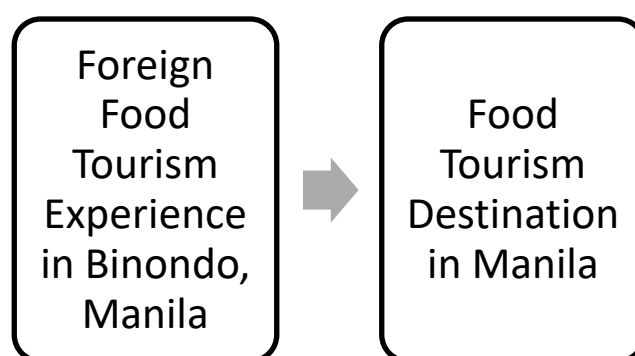
In relation with the topic foreign tourist often use the reviews such as on the TripAdvisor as a reference for potential visit on the site the effect of online reviews of experience of other users creates an effect to the decision of tourist in which if there is a bad review then other tourist might be turn off to visit a tourist site. The review information shared by other users creates affects the decision-making process of an experience tourist with the area and the possible tourist interest in visiting the tourist site (Zhang et. al, 2017).

On the other hand, the importance of online reviews in relation with experience have been given emphasis with the tourist satisfaction. A high rating attributes to better experience in which there is a chance to influence other tourist to provide a high rating as well in which tourist satisfaction is the most important factor to consider (Guo, Barnes and Jia, 2017).

However, on the other hand tourist experience varies differently with the individual experience on a tourist site it could be that their expectation and the preference towards their tour activity however it is determined that other factors such as accessibility, food and beverage choices, quality of staff's service, cleanliness of the place and the entertainment value are factors that should be consider when it comes to tourist experience (Mariani and Guizzardi, 2020).

The relationship between the reviews itself and the star rating had also been established in which star ratings are not that much important as compared with written reviews since most of the tourist based their expectation with the experience of the reviewers and the star ratings serves as a guide on their expectation but the decision comes from the reviews other tourist write on review sites. Which could lead to inconsistencies as there are reviewers who provided a high rating but the comments say the opposite or vice versa (Valvadia, Hrabova and Luzon, 2017).

The online reviews that are posted on the internet does not only affects the experience tourist to potential tourist but as well the providers either establishment or tourist sites. This creates an awareness to the companies and caught the attention of the governing body to improve their facilities in order to provide a better service and better experience with the tourist (Zisos et. al 2018).



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

The study conceptual framework uses the concept of Oliviera and Colleagues on consumer perception of tourist experience through online reviews the concept suggest that tourist experience create an effect of different perception to potential consumer in which in the case of the study is the tourist. Tourist experience creates a perception to other potential tourist by providing an information on a tourist site, service or provider that could affect the decision of another tourist. The relationship with the tourist and the company is also established by means that online reviews could suggest recommendations to the tourism provider, accommodation and service to improve in certain areas that needs to.

The conceptual framework mainly shows the independent variable and the dependent variable in which the food tourism experience in Binondo, Manila is the independent variable because the experience of the foreign tourist varies while the food tourism destination in Manila is the dependent variable because the rating of the foreign tourist depends on their experience in food tourism in Binondo, Manila.

The proposed study would like to assess the foreign experience on Binondo (Chinatown) Manila using documentation and interview as the tools of the research. The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the average rating of the foreigners visiting Binondo (Chinatown) Manila?
2. What are the experiences of the foreign tourist in visiting Binondo (Chinatown) Manila?

The scope of the study was the respondents selected which was the foreign tourist that provide an online review using the TripAdvisor website or app and the limit for the subject is the tourist experience itself to analyze other indicated limit that is used is the search using the TripAdvisor which is limited to the work Binondo itself and the year of the tourist review that was used was from 2015 up to 2020.

The study is significant to the tourist that plans to visit Binondo in order to create information and awareness about the food culture in Binondo, Manila. Another importance of the study is for the local community of Binondo to be more aware of the online reviews in order to be informed and to improve their services provided to the foreign tourist around the area. and lastly the study will be important to local government of Manila City in order to be aware and identify certain causes to improve the food tourism scene in the area.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study uses a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative methods the quantitative method is descriptive in nature while the qualitative method is exploratory type. Both of the mixed methods are useful in the study is because first the quantitative method is used to analyze the secondary data the respondents gathered through the website TripAdvisor while the qualitative method will be used in order to analyze the review feedbacks of the foreign tourist on the same website mentioned above.

The study uses cluster sampling in which the respondents are foreign nationals that provides a review on the TripAdvisor however the cluster sampling is suitable to used is because of the respondents reviews were divided into years range from 2015 to 2020. The year 2020 and 2019 was combined due to the lack of review because of the Coronavirus Pandemic that happens. Overall, there are 104 respondents in the study. The table below shows the summarization of the data that was gathered in the TripAdvisor.

**Table 1: Summarization of Respondents and Secondary Data Gathered from TripAdvisor**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Terrible</b>	<b>N</b>
2019 and 2020	5	10	8	0	0	23
2018	3	10	8	0	0	21
2017	4	10	7	1	1	23
2016	4	12	6	1	0	23
2015	3	3	4	1	1	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>104</b>

The instruments used in the study is mainly the secondary data from the TripAdvisor, the secondary data that was gathered was mainly the review of the foreign tourist regarding their visit in Binondo (Chinatown) the secondary data includes their rating which range from excellent as highest and the terrible as lowest, the scale is considered as a 5 point. The other instruments that is used in the study are the reviews and the feedback written by the tourist about the topic. The secondary data which serves as the primary data for the study was further analyze.

The data on the rating of the foreign tourist was selected by the researcher. The requirements for the rating is year 2015 and above the researchers were then look at the ratings of the foreign tourist one by one and list and group their ratings into the scale excellent as the highest and terrible as the lowest. After listing the rating with the corresponding number of the respondents the researchers further used statistical analysis to interpret the data. The statistical analysis that was used is the weighted mean the interpretation for the rating is 1.00 to 1.49 Terrible, 1.50 to 2.49 Poor, 2.5 to 3.49 Average, 3.5 to 4.49 Very Good and 4.5 to 5.0 Excellent.

Lastly the data on the review and feedback was analyze by the researchers and was transcribe and presented in an inductive approach manner in order for the researchers to identify the highlight of the foreign tourist on their experience in Binondo (Chinatown) Manila in different range of ratings from excellent as the highest and terrible as the lowest.

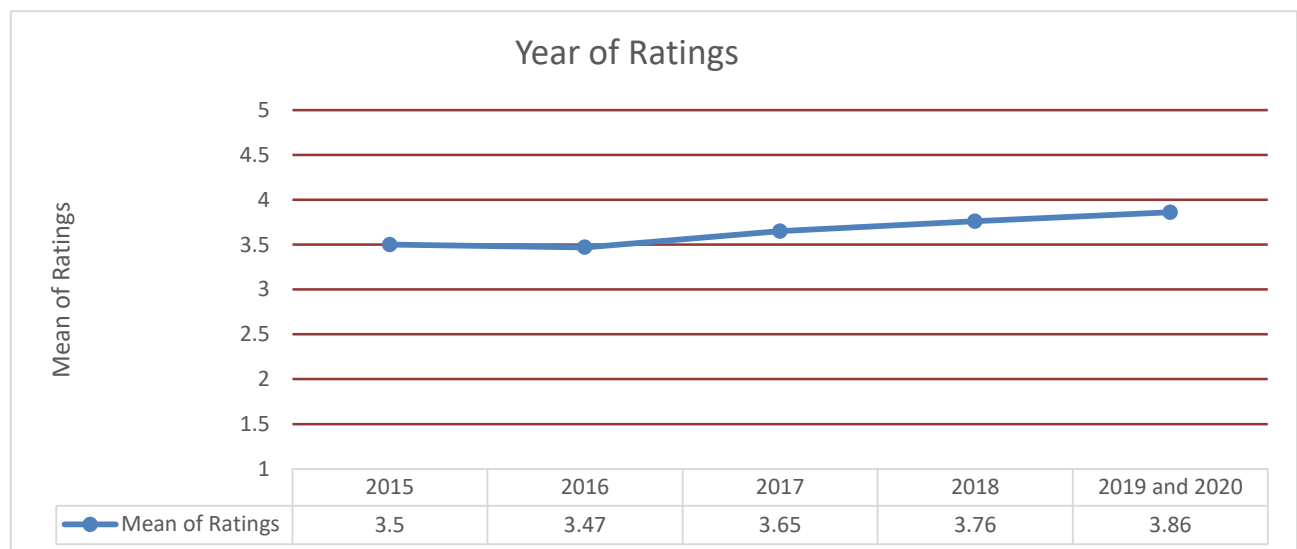
### III. RESULTS

**Table 2: Ratings of the Foreign Tourist in Binondo (Chinatown)**

Year	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
2019 and 2020	3.86	Very Good	1
2018	3.76	Very Good	2
2017	3.65	Very Good	3
2016	3.47	Average	5
2015	3.50	Very Good	4
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.65</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	

The table above shows the result of the ratings of the foreign tourist with their experience in Binondo (Chinatown) the result shows that most of the foreign tourist gave the highest rating during the year of 2019 and 2020 with a mean of 3.86 and interpreted as very good while the lowest mean can be found in 2016 with a mean of 3.47 and interpreted as average. The overall mean of 3.65 suggest that overall, the foreign tourist experience in Binondo (Chinatown) is very good.

Looking at the data presented above the mean varies but there is a pattern that can be looked at and that is that the mean increases for each of the year that passes which indicates that the foreign tourist has a better experience every year which means that it could be suggest that there is a development that happens in the tourist site (Binondo) which explains as to why there is an increase with the mean of the ratings of the foreign tourist. Further interpretation of the data is shown in the figure 1.



**Figure 2: Ratings Chart of Foreign Tourist**

The figure above shows the ratings of the foreign tourist when it comes to their experience with Binondo (Chinatown) the result shows that there has been a trend in increase ratings from 2015 to 2019 and 2020. Although the result shows that between the year 2015 to 2016 there has been a decrease in foreign tourist experience rating. The trend from 2016 to 2019 and 2020 shows an increase in ratings this could indicate that every year the foreign experience in visiting the tourist site

increases for the better this could indicate that there are some progress and programs that is done that improves the foreign tourist experience when visiting Binondo (Chinatown).

According to Zisos and colleagues 2018 online reviews helps to create awareness towards a situation in regards in the topic this could be a tourist, site if the issue is brought on to private and public sector responsible for the tourist site then this could create awareness and will try to act on behalf in order to improve the online reviews in this case the tourist experience in Binondo (Chinatown) is subject to the responsibility of the tourism office of the city of Manila therefore they are the one that is responsible for the improvement and infrastructures with the tourism in which the data shows that the yearly improvement on the ratings shows that the local government of Manila have done their thing to improve the ratings and develop the tourism in the area.

The city of Manila has done a lot of programs and development to ensure that the tourism experience will improve this includes programs such as City-Wide Cleaning which includes the Binondo (Chinatown) this will ensure that the tourist sites will be clean so that the impression and experience of the tourist will be better, improvement on certain gardens, reconstruction of the Jones Bridge, Manila Green City plan and many more ([manila.gov.ph](http://manila.gov.ph)) these programs certainly has direct and indirect improvements over the different tourist sites in Manila which includes Binondo therefore with the continued programs in tourism improvement there is also a continued increase in online reviews.

**Table 3: Foreign Experience in Visiting Binondo**

Excellent	Very Good	Average	Terrible	Poor
Place is Colorful and Vivid	Plenty of Attractions	Lack of Signage Creates Confusion	Lack of Parking Space	Pickpockets and Beggars are present in the area be careful with belongings
Lots of Chinese Culture and Tradition	Authentic and Affordable Chinese Cuisines	Lots of Shop that Sells Counterfeited Goods	Over Crowded	The Place is Dirty and Smelly
Authentic Food a mix of Chinese and Filipino Cuisine	Cultural Heritage Sites are located near the vicinity	Lower Range Shopping	Heavy Traffic	
Cheap and Bargain Shopping	Nice Rustic Feeling while visiting	Lots of old architecture but not maintained		
	Transportation is easy lots of Jeep and Tricycle available			

The table above shows the result of the foreign experience in visiting Binondo the result shows most of the feedback of the foreign tourist as based on the TripAdvisor website and using inductive qualitative analysis and divided the feedback between excellent, very good, average, terrible and Poor.

The result shows that when it comes to excellent feedback the respondents indicated that the place is colorful and vivid, lots of Chinese culture and tradition, Authentic food mix of Chinese and Filipino culture and the Cheap and Bargain Shopping this means that what the tourist find excellent in the Binondo area is the unique food, the place culture and tradition but the shopping experience as well. This also indicates that a better experience of a tourist translates to a better online review (Guo, Barnes and Jia, 2017)

According to Villareal, 2018 this is what the visiting the Binondo is all about in which it is a showcase of the Chinese and Filipino influence culture and tradition that is showcased in the vivid color of dragon dance, shops in which Chinese culture is still present such as the Chinses Temples located in the area but as well as to put an emphasis with the unique authentic Chinese-Filipino foods that is available in the area as some of the restaurants in the Binondo are serving the same goodness 50 years ago and the generation up to this date still enjoy this authentic Chinese-Filipino foods. This unique culture and experience the Binondo offers makes tourist visit the area.

In relation when it comes to the feedback on very good the result shows that the most foreign tourist reviews where the plenty of attractions, authentic and affordable Chinese cuisines, Cultural Heritage Sites are located near the vicinity. Nice Rustic Feeling and the Transportation which is lots of Jeepneys and Tricycles that can be used to access the area. What

the tourist finds very good when it comes to visiting Binondo was the attractions, accessibility and the Authentic experience visiting Binondo can offer.

According to Marvz (2020) Binondo is very known to have the most authentic Chinese cuisine because the restaurants and eatery located in Binondo is backed by years of Tradition which creates the atmosphere of Authenticity and the Cultural Heritage sites that is near the area creates the unique features of Binondo in which Chinese, Filipino and Spansih heritage are present with the old structures which creates a rustic atmosphere present in the area that creates the melting pot of different culture and heritage (Umali, 2019). With the advent of modern time the location of the Binondo is very accessible due to being the old downtown of Manila that there are many transportation modes available in the area (Marvz, 2020).

The result of the average online reviews shows some of the present issues that is present in the area such as the lack of signage which creates confusion, shops that sell counterfeited goods, lower range shopping and the old architecture that is ill maintained. Based on the online reviews of the foreign tourist the themed for the average online reviews is the signs, lower shopping and the maintenance of the old architecture.

According to Mariani and Guizzardi (2020) when it comes to cultural heritage site it is given that the old architecture should stand as to where their form nowadays as the themed for heritage site is to preserved and restored however due to the different jurisdiction as to where the old buildings stands in the Binondo the National Historical Commission of the Philippines suggest that buildings of over 50 years will be subjected as a historic structure and property and should not be demolished (manila.gov.ph) which indicates that why some of the old structures in Binondo are ill maintained is because of the jurisdiction of who should handle it. On the other hand, the counterfeited goods and the lower range shopping is identified it is because of the shopping mall that sells cheap goods such as the Lucky Chinatown Shopping mall (Mervz, 2020) as the Binondo is a center for shopping goods but not high-end shopping experience. While the last common themed for the average review which is the lack of signages is probably due to the place being overcrowded that the signs can be hard to read.

In relation with the result of the terrible review the result suggests that when it comes to the main themes here is the lack of parking space, over crowded streets and the heavy traffic. This shows that these themes are the terrible that can describe by the foreign tourist visiting Binondo

According to Valvidia and colleagues (2019) one of the most pressing issues when it comes to visiting tourist site is the crowd because some of the tourist site is very crowded which could create a much lower online rating however tourist have failed to recognized the reasons behind why being overcrowded and this could create inconsistencies with online reviews that affects another potential tourist to visit the site. If we are going to look at the main context as to why the Binondo is crowded we should look as the situation first the lack of availability of parking space is because the area of Binondo is very crowded which is because it is near Divisoria which is identified as the main commercial goods and shopping area aside from that the Binondo is also a center of the transportation as it is the last terminus of different Jeepneys operations and Tricycles (Marvz, 2020) therefore this explains the reasons as to why Binondo is crowded and the heavy traffic is present.

Lastly the result on the themes of very poor indicates that the place is dirty and smelly and the pickpockets and the beggars roaming around the area. Binondo as a known tourist site for foodie and a shopping destination entices pickpockets and beggars roaming around the area and this creates a negative publicity to a tourist site and since Binondo is a very busy place that this also creates a big problem with garbage that Binondo has a reputation with the foreign tourist as dirty and smelly it is because of the large crowds that goes into the area.

According to Valvidia and colleagues (2019) an important factor to look at that provides the most negative review is the safety of the place and this could indicate that this should be a no go to other tourist because safety is a very concern for every tourist which is why this should be a priority of the local government of Manila to improve the safety of the tourist by enforcing more policeman to patrol the area. On the other hand, the places very smelly and dirty it is also the job of the local government of Manila to clean the Binondo more often in order to reduce the negative publicity it brings to the foreign tourist, in which the local government of Manila implemented a city wide cleaning in which it improves the cleanliness and situation in Binondo (manila.gov.ph) as suggested by the improvement of every year online ratings based on the results of the figure 1.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The result on the rating of the foreign tourist with their experience of Binondo suggest that the foreign experience is very good with an overall mean of 3.65. The result suggests that there is an improvement with the foreign tourist rating with a consistent increase from 2016 to 2020. The result of the foreign experience review shows that when it comes to excellent the respondents indicated that the place is colorful and vivid, lots of Chinese culture and tradition, Authentic food mix of Chinese and Filipino culture and the Cheap and Bargain Shopping. The very good rating suggests that most foreign tourist reviews where the plenty of attractions, authentic and affordable Chinese cuisines, Cultural Heritage Sites are located near the vicinity. Nice Rustic Feeling and the Transportation which is lots of Jeepneys and Tricycles that can be used to access the area. When it comes to average rating issues that is present in the area such as the lack of signage which creates confusion, shops that sell counterfeited goods, lower range shopping and the old architecture that is ill maintained. The result on the terrible review shows that when it comes to the main themes here is the lack of parking space, overcrowded streets and the heavy traffic and lastly the result on the themes of very poor indicates that the place is dirty and smelly and the pickpockets and the beggars roaming around the area.

Based on the findings of the research the researcher concluded that most of the foreign tourist experience in visiting Binondo is very good and the result shows that consistently the ratings of the foreign tourist improved every year. While the online reviews indicated that the themed for excellent online review is the place and the culture and traditions involved around it which includes the food, for average it is the authenticity of the area and the accessibility of the area and the maintenance of the old structures, while terrible review suggest mostly the place is overcrowded, heavy traffic and lack of parking space and lastly the poor review suggest security concerns and cleanliness of the place.

With the foregoing findings the researchers have recommended the following in order to improve the foreign tourist experience in Binondo.

1. Frequent cleaning of the Binondo
2. More patrols to lessen the issue of pickpockets and beggars
3. Create a designated parking space in the Binondo Area
4. Improve the transportation system in the area to reduce the heavy traffic

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