

PARINE SA BULACAN: THE SHOWCASE OF THE FINEST PRODUCTS

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Abstract

Recent studies concluded that one of the reasons people travel now is for the food, which has an essential multiplier impact on tourist locations. Food has always been a significant draw to any location and is frequently highlighted in marketing materials by numerous locations. This occurrence is one of the indications that food has to be offered as a travel item. Bulacan is a province home to the best “pasalubongs,” or take-home gifts, but its rich culinary culture does not stop there. From the culinary heritage of Malolos City to the exquisite seafood of Hagonoy, a special longganisa breakfast from Calumpit, and many more. This study assessed the awareness of Bulakenyos of these local delicacies/products, their perception of their market profitability, and their suitability in gastronomic tourism by employing a quantitative method design. A survey questionnaire was distributed to 20 participants from each of the six municipalities in the 1st District of Bulacan, which gives us a total of 123 respondents. Malolos City deviated from the rest with 23 respondents. The researchers intended to focus on the impact of highlighting different local delicacies from Bulacan’s 1st congressional district and how it may benefit Bulacan if they were to be promoted as tourism products. As a result, this study concluded that Bulakenyos are aware, familiar, satisfied, and positively perceive the local delicacies in Bulacan. The assessment of the local delicacies in terms of the awareness of the product receive a high approval rating from the respondents. The respondents also approved that the local delicacies in Bulacan play a vital role in the market and in economic growth. In addition, the local delicacies in Bulacan have significant potential in the tourism industry. As used in this study, gastronomic tourism pertains to the tourist attraction through local delicacies, boosting the economy and promoting and preserving the culinary culture here in Bulacan.

Keywords: Pasalubong, Culinary Heritage, Local Delicacies, Tourism Industry.

Introduction

Bulacan is quite known in the nearby provinces for its sweets and delicacies as their favorite “pasalubong” or their take-home gifts for their families. Pastillas is a very well-known product of San Miguel, Bulacan. However, there is a lot to mention about the delicacies of Bulacan’s 1st District; the infamous “suka sa sasa” of Paombong, Seafood products of Hagonoy, Heirloom recipes of Malolos, Longganisa of Calumpit, and many more. All of which the respective municipalities take great pride in. Wouldn’t it be fulfilling to make these products well-known similar to our Pastillas? Recent studies in Malaysia (Atikahambar, Zainal, Rahayu, & Mokhtar, 2018 [3]) further elaborated that despite satisfying taste buds, research shows that food tourism affects visitor pleasure and inclination to return (Hendijani, 2016). In the competitive market of tourist destinations, revisit intention was emphasized as a key research topic, and academics of tourism focused on return visits as a predicate of destination loyalty. Studies in the past

confirmed that a lot of tourist locations rely heavily on repeat visitors (Jayaraman et al., 2010). In this instance, earlier research looked at variables impacting tourists' decision to return. One major event, attraction, and climactic experience that might entice people to travel to their destination and motivate them to make additional trips is food tourism (Allan, 2016). Since food has become a significant part of the tourist experience, returning visitors frequently consider the quality of the food (Cho et al., 2017 [7]), which increases their desire to return (Jayaraman et al., 2010). Notably, the goal of food tourism is to gain unique exposure to and knowledge with regional cuisines of various ethnicities. With the local delicacies of Bulacan’s 1st district, the province can use its local delicacies as a lever to increase its tourism revenue. Although we should find a way to enhance and restore some heritage cuisines to the market to mark the identity of Bulacan as a food tourism destination.

Most of the municipalities within Bulacan have their

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own original products to share with its diverse culinary culture. Some dishes' origin spans way back to the Spanish Colonial Era, including the traditional Hamon Bulakenya, Pinaso, and the Nilagang Manok na Puti which was Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo's favorite dish. Some products are created from the ingenuity of women at the time, like the Pinaso. Pinaso is similar to Leche Flan and Creme Brulee, a dessert that uses sugar and a lot of eggs. The history behind the creation of these dishes is what makes them a significant part of Bulacan Culture. Although some of the heritage dishes might have been already forgotten, there are times like today when the newer generations can finally take over our history. It is essential that we should remember how our culture and province came to be. As the famous saying goes "the person who doesn't look back to where he came from, wouldn't get anywhere".

There have been many variables affecting the loss of our heritage dishes and products altogether. But as a bulakenyo, it is hard to see many batting no interest in our products, even some are bulakenyos. Although you can clearly see the blood and sweat of labor put into them, the history behind every creation of the products. The different municipalities of Bulacan and the locals would procure, process, and sell them. Most of the time, MSMEs would have a hard time selling due to the fact that they can only sell them within their municipality and only a handful of them can transport their products to nearby provinces effectively, assuming that they would actually sell. With the infrastructures coming to Bulacan, we can surely see an opportunity, an influx of travelers coming from neighboring provinces. The province is developing to become an extension of Manila. We can take this opportunity to showcase what Bulacan is, its products, and its beauty to those who happen to pass by our province.

This study aims to determine whether the local delicacies of Bulacan's 1st congressional district could be promoted as a tourism product and assess how it could be beneficial for the tourism industry of Bulacan. Since Bulacan has a wide range of famous local delicacies from its many different municipalities, they could possibly make Bulacan a gastronomic tourism destination.

Statement of The Problem

The general objective of this study is to showcase the finest products of Bulacan's 1st District by determining the local food products and assessing the benefits of implementing gastronomic tourism in the municipality. The study aims to address the following questions:

1. **What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of the following?**
 - 1.1. Age
 - 1.2. Years of Residency in Bulacan
 - 1.3. Municipality of Residence

2. **How may the local delicacies of Bulacan's 1st District be assessed in terms of:**
 - 2.1. Awareness of the Product
 - 2.2. Market Profitability
 - 2.3. Suitability in Gastronomic Tourism

3. **How could a detailed marketing plan be crucial for the promotion of the local delicacies of Bulacan as a tourism product?**

Conceptual Framework

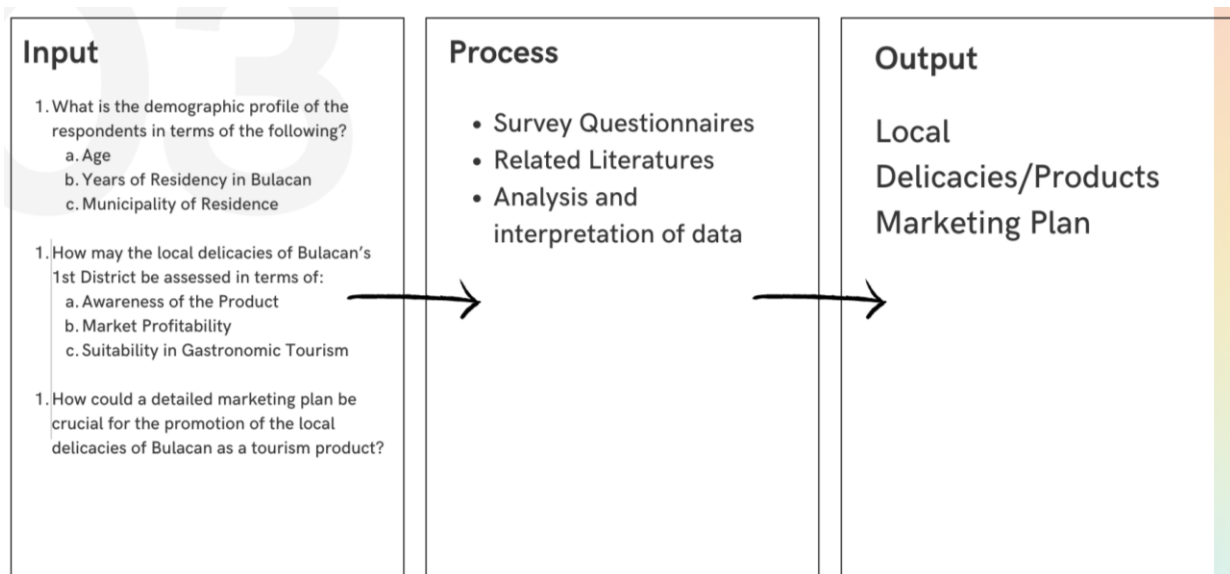


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The input will be composed of the demographic profiles of the respondents such as age, years and municipality of residency in Bulacan. It will then be collected through survey questionnaires, processed through analysis and interpreted through the guide of the related literatures to produce the output which is the Local Delicacies/Products & Marketing Plan. The given input will serve as a basis to assess the impact of highlighting the local delicacies of the 1st district of Bulacan and determine whether these local delicacies/products could be promoted as tourism products.

Methodology

Design Evaluation Procedure. The Researchers used quantitative method research design to gather numerical data and entirely investigate the findings of our study. Quantitative design is used to evaluate Bulacan 1st District local delicacies or food products. The purpose of the quantitative design is to evaluate the perception of Bulakenyos regarding Bulacan 1st District local delicacies or food products. The Researchers choose this kind of research design because this is the most effective way to gather all the information needed on a topic.

Research Instrument. The researchers used two parts questionnaires to collect the necessary information. The first part is asking for the important details of the respondents such as Age, Gender, and Years of Residency in Bulacan. The second part is to assess information about local delicacies of 1st District Bulacan, it was divided into three sub-topics which is; Awareness of the Products, Market Profitability, and Suitability in Gastronomic Tourism. Through that, we can evaluate their knowledge and insights/perception about Bulacan's local delicacies/food products.

Sampling. Cluster sampling was employed by the researchers to collect data on its local delicacies to showcase the finest products. Cluster Sampling, is a technique for probability sampling in which experts

divide a huge population into smaller groups known as clusters and then choose individuals at random from the clusters to create a sample, (Simkus, 2022 [32]). Researchers clustered these respondents based on their location which is the six different municipalities within Bulacan's 1st district. Respondents will help to give the necessary information to answer the research questions.

Data Analysis. The study is conducted by employing a Quantitative design to measure and understand the limit and insights of our respondents. Surveys will be used to collect the data needed for the study. The researchers intend to gathered 120 respondents to answer the survey, and it was clustered to 20 respondents from each municipalities within Bulacan's 1st District which is Bulakan, Malolos City, Paombong, Hagonoy, Calumpit and Pulilan

Results

This chapter comprises the analysis, presentation, and interpretation of the findings resulting from this study. The presentation of the data follows the order in which the specific problems of this study are stated and is divided into sub-parts. The first part deals with the frequency and percentage of the respondents' demographic profile such as age, gender, years of residency in Bulacan, and the municipality of residence. The second part contains the assessment of local delicacies in Bulacan's 1st district in terms of the awareness of the product, market profitability, and suitability in Gastronomic Tourism. In line with this, the last part deals with the assessment of a detailed marketing plan as a tool for the promotion of the local delicacies in Bulacan as a tourism product.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

This presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents' demographic profile in terms of age, gender, years of residency in Bulacan, and municipality of residence.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents

Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
18 – 20 years old	26	21.13
21 – 23 years old	42	34.15
24 – 26 years old	13	10.57
27 and above	42	34.15
Years of residency in Bulacan		
10 years and below	12	9.76
15 years	16	13

20 years and above	95	77.24
Municipality of residence		
Bulakan	20	16.26
Calumpit	20	16.26
Hagonoy	20	16.26
Malolos City	23	18.70
Paombong	20	16.26
Pulilan	20	16.26
	<i>n</i> = 123	100

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, years of residency in Bulacan, and the municipality of residence. Out of 123 respondents, more than a quarter (34.15%) with a frequency of 42 aged between 27 years old and above, and 21 – 23 years old. In addition, less than a quarter (21.13%) with a frequency of 26 aged between 18 – 20 years old, and a percentage dropped nearly one in a ten (10.57%) with a frequency of 13 as respondents fell between 24 – 26 years old. In terms of years of residency in Bulacan, the highest group of respondents are from the range of 20 years and above with a frequency of 95 (77.24%), while more than one in a ten (13%) are from the range of 15 years. Moreover, less than one in a ten (9.76%) are from the range of 10 years and below with a frequency of 12. Lastly, in terms of the municipality

of residence the respondents were equally distributed to the 5 municipalities with the frequency count and percentage of 20 (16.26%), while there are 23 respondents from the City of Malolos with a percentage of 18.70%.

Assessment of Local Delicacies of Bulacan's 1st District in terms of Awareness of the Product

This presents the assessment of the local delicacies in Bulacan in terms of awareness of the products by the respondents through frequency count, percentage, mean, standard deviation weighted mean and verbal interpretation. As used in this study, the awareness of the product deals with the familiarity, satisfactory and recommendation of the local delicacies.

Table 2: Weighted Mean Scores of the Assessment of Local Delicacies in terms of Awareness of the Product

Item	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
1. How familiar are you with the Product?	4.33	0.77	Strongly Agree
2. Have you heard of/seen the product before?	4.25	0.76	Strongly Agree
3. Overall, how do you rate the quality of the product from 1 to 5?	4.41	0.68	Strongly Agree
4. Would you recommend the product to a friend or associate?	4.50	0.73	Strongly Agree
5. How likely are you to buy the product in the future?	4.38	0.75	Strongly Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	4.37		Strongly Agree

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As shown in table 2, the Assessment of Local Delicacies in terms of Awareness of the Product is interpreted ‘Strongly Agree’ (M = 4.37). The weighted mean of each item was range from 4.25 up to 4.50 wherein the verbal interpretation was all Strongly Agree. While the standard deviation are range from 0.68 to 0.77, wherein there is a small value of standard deviation which means that the dispersion of the variables are narrowly concentrated from the mean. As reflected in item 4 with the assertion of *Would you recommend the product to a friend or associate?* It displays one of the highest approvals from the 123 respondents with the weighted mean of 4.50 and verbal interpretation of Strongly Agree. In addition, the item 1 with the assertion of *How familiar are you with the Product?* It displays a weighted mean of 4.33 with a verbal interpretation of strongly agree. With this, the Bulakenyos are aware, familiar, satisfied and has a positive perception to the local delicacies here in Bulacan.

The findings ran paralleled by the research of Choe & Kim (2017) [7], the study concludes that there is a significant effect between the tourists’ local food consumption value on tourists’ attitudes toward local food, food destination image, intention to recommend local food, and intention to visit the destination for food tourism.

Assessment of Local Delicacies of Bulacan’s 1st District in terms of Market Profitability

This presents the assessment of the local delicacies in Bulacan in terms of market profitability by the respondents through frequency count, percentage, mean, standard deviation weighted mean and verbal interpretation. As used in this study, the market profitability deals with the potential of local delicacies in the market, the sufficiency of local delicacies in the restaurants and shops, the affordability of the delicacies to the consumers and opportunities of the delicacies to the entrepreneurs.

Table 3: Weighted Mean Scores of the Assessment of Local Delicacies in terms of Market Profitability

Item	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
6. There is a sufficient number of restaurants/shops in Bulacan that offer local delicacies.	3.94	0.81	Agree
7. The products are reasonably inexpensive to make and relatively affordable for consumers.	3.96	0.79	Agree
8. Bulakenyos and tourists would be interested in trying various local delicacies thus creating a demand.	4.28	0.69	Strongly Agree
9. There could be an opportunity for local residents and entrepreneurs to start their businesses highlighting the local delicacies.	4.31	0.70	Strongly Agree
10. A comprehensive marketing plan could help promote and create a demand for our local delicacies.	4.32	0.68	Strongly Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	4.16		Agree

As shown in table 3, the Assessment of Local Delicacies in terms of Market Profitability is interpreted ‘Agree’ (M = 4.16). The weighted mean of each item was range from 3.94 up to 4.32 the standard deviation was range from 0.68 to 0.81 which means that the data are narrowly concentrated from the mean and the distribution are not spread out. As reflected in item 10 with the assertion of A

comprehensive marketing plan could help promote and create a demand for our local delicacies. It displays one of the highest approvals from the 123 respondents with the weighted mean of 4.32 and verbal interpretation of Strongly Agree. In addition, the item 6 with the assertion of *There is a sufficient number of restaurants/shops in Bulacan that offer local delicacies.* It displays a weighted mean of 3.94

with a verbal interpretation of agree. With this, the local delicacies in Bulacan have a big potential in the market, restaurants, shops and entrepreneur.

In support, the study of Alberts (2008) pinpoints that there is strong evidence that relying on locally sourced foods can improve tourism's long-term viability, add to the destination's authenticity, boost the local economy, and support ecologically friendly infrastructure. In addition, the study summarizes that the local food can be used as a promotional tool

to promote or improve a destination's image among potential visitors.

Assessment of Local Delicacies of Bulacan's 1st District in terms of Suitability in Gastronomic Tourism

This presents the assessment of the local delicacies in Bulacan in terms of suitability in gastronomic by the respondents through frequency count, percentage, mean, standard deviation weighted mean and verbal interpretation.

Table 4: Weighted Mean Scores of the Assessment of Local Delicacies in terms of Suitability in Gastronomic Tourism

Item	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
11. Tourists can be attracted to go to Bulacan for its local delicacies.	4.38	0.73	Strongly Agree
12. Bulacan's local delicacies can be promoted as tourism products.	4.55	0.62	Strongly Agree
13. Promoting Bulacan's local delicacies/dishes can help boost the economy.	4.57	0.59	Strongly Agree
14. Promoting local delicacies can also be a way to preserve them in our culture.	4.54	0.64	Strongly Agree
15. Each municipality would be recognized for its local delicacies thus creating revenue from tourist visitations.	4.54	0.60	Strongly Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	4.52		Strongly Agree

As shown in table 4, the Assessment of Local Delicacies in terms of suitability in gastronomic tourism is interpreted 'Strongly Agree' (M = 4.52). The weighted mean of each item was range from 4.38 up to 4.57 the standard deviation was range from 0.59 to 0.73 which means that the data are narrowly concentrated from the mean and the distribution are not spread out. As reflected in item 13 with the assertion of *Promoting Bulacan's local delicacies/dishes can help boost the economy*. It displays one of the highest approvals from the 123 respondents with the weighted mean of 4.57 and verbal interpretation of Strongly Agree. With this, the Bulacan delicacies plays a vital role in boosting the economy and businesses. In addition, the item 6 with the assertion of *Tourists can be attracted to*

go to Bulacan for its local delicacies. It displays a weighted mean of 4.38 with a verbal interpretation of Strongly Agree. With this, the local delicacies in Bulacan have a big potential in the tourism industry. As used in this study, gastronomic tourism pertains to the tourist attraction through local delicacies, boosting the economy, and promoting and preserving the culture here in Bulacan.

In line with this, the foreign study of Sanip & Mustapha (2020) [22] emphasizes that there is a significant effect of the Malaysia's traditional cuisine to the foreign tourism success, socioeconomic growth and promoting and preservation of the culture.

Table 5: Summary of Ratings

Assessment of Local Delicacies	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Awareness of the Product	4.37	Strongly Agree
Market Profitability	4.16	Agree
Suitability in Gastronomic Tourism	4.52	Strongly Agree
Overall	4.35	Strongly Agree

As shown in table 5, is a summary of all the assessment of the local delicacies in terms of awareness of the product, market profitability, suitability in Gastronomic Tourism and the overall assessment. The result shows that assessment of Local Delicacies was rated favorably with mean ratings from 4.16 to 4.52. Suitability in Gastronomic Tourism got the highest mean followed by Awareness of the Product and Market Profitability respectively. The overall rating was 4.35 with the verbal interpretation of Strongly Agree.

According to the findings of Osmana & Nazari (2020), people are keen to travel to new places to try new foods, thus a destination's reputation benefits when its restaurants serve tasty fare. Furthermore, food has always been an integral part of any vacation experience, and it is frequently highlighted in marketing materials for numerous destinations. This trend is indicative of the growing popularity of food as a tourism commodity. It may be argued that one of the main reasons individuals travel is to sample the regional specialties and regional specialties of the place. The rising popularity of regional and local products has important implications for the tourism sector.

Conclusion

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of the following?

1.1. Age

Majority of the respondents are in the age line of 20's, wherein most of the respondents are college students, professionals, worker, entrepreneurs, and business owners.

1.2. Years of Residency in Bulacan

Majority of the respondents have a residency of two decades and above, with this, based on the conclusion 1.1 and 1.2, a large percentage of the respondents have been raised in Bulacan since birth.

1.3. Municipality of Residence

All the respondents were equally drawn from the 1st district of the Bulacan. In line with this, the following municipalities are well known for their local delicacies.

2. How may the local delicacies of Bulacan's 1st District be assessed in terms of:

2.1. Awareness of the Product

The Bulakenyos are aware, familiar, satisfied, and has a positive perception to the local delicacies here in Bulacan. The assessment of the local delicacies in terms of the awareness of the product receive a high approval rating from the respondents.

2.2. Market Profitability

The local delicacies in Bulacan have a big potential in the market, restaurants, shops, and entrepreneur. The respondents approves that the local delicacies in the Bulacan plays a vital role in the market and in the economic growth.

2.3. Suitability in Gastronomic Tourism

Bulacan's delicacies play a vital role in boosting the economy and businesses. In addition, the local delicacies in Bulacan have significant potential in the tourism industry. As used in this study, gastronomic tourism pertains to the tourist attraction through local delicacies, boosting the economy, and promoting and preserving the culinary culture here in Bulacan.

3. How could a detailed marketing plan be crucial for the promotion of the local delicacies of Bulacan as a tourism product?

Question no. 10 (A comprehensive marketing plan could help promote and create a demand for our local delicacies.) included in the Assessment of Local Delicacies in terms of Market Profitability is interpreted 'Strongly Agree' (M = 4.32) with a standard deviation of 0.68. Bulacan's local delicacies have the potential to be promoted as tourism products, but it will need a comprehensive marketing plan for the province to mark itself as a gastronomic tourism destination.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions presented, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. The population of this study is limited to the 1st District of Bulacan, with this, the results of this

study may not generalize to all the Bulakenyos and Filipinos. Therefore, this study recommends that it may be conducted in a larger scope with equal distribution of the population.

2. The assessment of this study focused only on the local delicacies that can be found and famous in the 1st District of Bulacan. Therefore, this recommends that there must be a wider assessment of local delicacies that can be found in the different part of the Philippines. In addition, this study recommends the future researchers to use correlation research design that measures the degree of relationship between two variables or predicts the possible effects of two variables.
3. The researchers recommend that the proposed marketing plan be reviewed and implemented as a means for the promotion and marketing of Bulacan's local delicacies/products. It was clear that these local delicacies/products established a potential to be a tourism product and a vital role in the market and economic growth. Hopefully, this could be considered by the tourism office of Bulacan, use this a lever for a promotional strategy.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest between the authors in this manuscript.

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