

THE INFLUENCE OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION TOWARDS FILIPINOS TRAVEL BEHAVIOR TO THE USA

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Abstract. With the growing hate against Asians in the United States of America since the start of the pandemic, this study has attempted to determine whether racial discrimination has an influence on their travel behavior to the country and in what way is it affected. Through semi-structured interviews, information was gathered from purposively selected respondents, while it was analyzed using thematic analysis. Results revealed that racial discrimination had influenced the travel behavior of the Filipinos to the USA; they tend to avoid places where there are high incidents of racial discrimination, they prefer traveling with a companion, they are more cautious with the people they see and meet, and they develop less interest in going to the USA for leisure purposes. Additionally, literatures suggest factors that probably have caused the prevalence of racial discrimination in the country, which include weak law enforcement, poor knowledge of Americans on COVID-19, poor crime apprehension, and the inadequate degree of punishment provided by existing laws. The findings resulted in a recommended motivational plan for the government to decrease these incidents and to continuously attract Filipinos to visit the USA.

Keywords: *racial discrimination, COVID-19 pandemic, travel behavior, tourism*

Introduction

According to the WHO (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic leads to unusual global health, social, and economic emergencies worldwide. The phenomenon brought extraordinary challenges to the way of living of all individuals. The coronavirus pandemic is, first and foremost, a humanitarian disaster, and the outbreak is continuously affecting people's lives, leading to a global economic crisis. The epidemic has direct ramifications for the tourist sector, which is critical for many people, places, and businesses in which the impact is being felt sharply in countries, cities, and locations where tourism is a substantial contributor to the economy. In 2019, an infectious disease that may cause serious respiratory sickness at humans is growing in a seafood and poultry market in the Chinese city of Wuhan. The disease can be transmitted from person to person via intimate contact. In accordance with Sullivan and Laube (2021), the infection is evident in 214 nations around the globe, and the World Health Organization declares an outbreak last March 11, 2020. The unfortunate incident leads to President Donald Trump's announcement of a national emergency in the United States, including a verdict of blocking foreigners from visiting the borders, especially to areas with numerous COVID-19 cases like China, Iran, and 26 other European territories. Consequently, the worsening situation of the pandemic leads to an increase in hate crimes against Asians in the United States.

Liu (2020) explains that a negative connection is always evident between destitute groups in society and outbreaks all throughout history. In fact, Monica Schoch-Spana, a medical anthropologist from John Hopkins center confirms that people in the USA are

frequently blaming foreigners in every public health crisis, just like the event of H1N1 or swine flu in 2009 where the locals are accusing the Mexican-Americans, the HIV where the Haitian Americans are held responsible, and the emergence of SARS in 2003 points to the Chinese-Americans. Even in the bygone days, the series of accusations is highly evident where the Westerners believe that the Jews are the source of the Bubonic plague, the typhoid illness to the Irish in the 1800s, and the influenza virus to the Germans in the 1900s. The stigma of "forever foreigner" instills a sense of insecurity due to external features, language, and culture; Zhou (2021) argues that xenophobia is a serious cultural problem in the U.S. owing to the fact that the country implements a law known as "The Page Act of 1875" and "The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882" that states of absolutely preventing Chinese-American employees from entering the borders given the predominant racism about employment competitiveness. Apart from restricting immigration, the legislation makes it impossible for Chinese Americans to become U.S. citizens for many years. Joan Trauner, a public health researcher at San Francisco State University, identifies the Chinese citizens in San Francisco as "medical scapegoats" taking into account the smallpox outbreak in 1875 to 1876 wherein the officials blames the inferior surroundings of Chinatown, providing vile descriptions like "foul" and "disgusting", the aggression against the minorities persists to a greater degree. All the previous stories are still prevailing in the current age.

According to Hart (2021), President Trump's repeated comments regarding COVID-19 as "Chinese virus" and "Kung flu" result to discriminatory activities against Asian-Americans. It is evident looking at the statistics of over 1.2 million anti-Asian "hashtags," a metadata tag that prefaces by the hash symbol- # uses in social media to share content/ information under a specific theme, right after Donald Trump refers the illness as "Chinese virus." Several "netizens," a term for people using social media to communicate, even adopts the #chinesevirus hashtag in comparison to the previous 20% that is posting the standard #covid19 hashtag. Likewise, the hostility of the U.S. president steers to various hate crimes around the United States that cost thousands of deaths and violence, with Asians being the target of animosity. In proportion to Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism that happen in 2020, anti-Asian hate crimes surged by 149 percent in the main cities in the United States, such as New York City, Los Angeles, Washington DC, Houston, Texas, and other locations, from March to December 2020. Additionally, Horse et al. (2021) highlights that in conformity to the statistics data of Stop AAPI Hate, over 300 Filipinos are present from the total 3,795 assaults between March 2020 and February 2021 that records in the country, particularly of verbal harassment and physical attack.

Rocamora (2021a), in reference to a "Stop Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) hate report, provides a clearer picture of how racial discrimination is affecting Filipinos. According to the statistics, 9.1% of Filipinos in the USA are experiencing anti-Asian hate crimes. Fellow citizens are currently placing 3rd among the most affected, next to Koreans and Chinese that are also targets of hate incidents. As it gets worse, Tagala (2021) stresses that Noel Quintana, a 61-year-old Filipino-American, is a victim of violence, having been sliced with a sharp weapon while riding the subway. Even the Philippine Government has advised Filipinos to fight against Asian hate and to immediately report whatever discrimination they experience to the Philippines consulate general in New York (Ramos, 2021). The situation is observed to have effects on tourism, particularly of Asians' motivation to visit the United States (Hamdi, 2021). The report shows that prior to the outbreak, Asian Americans are expecting to provide \$1.3

trillion in consumer spending by 2022. Still, given the multiple cases of discrimination, the writer accentuates that the incidents may shake the perception of Asians to travel, provided that 42% percent of the tourists make up for independent travelers who are not associated with tour groups. Moreover, the survey by Dragon Trail International in 2021 shows that friendliness is currently the most important element that Chinese consider traveling to other countries more than the absence of virus cases and strict level rules. Furthermore, the same survey mentions that the Chinese perceive the USA as the most dangerous location to travel to, followed by Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

In terms of the legal basis, the United States of America has been fair, notably in its treatment of individuals of different races. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 makes it clear that discriminating against someone because of their race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, handicap, or genetic information is forbidden. This also applies to tourists because public accommodations are included, specifically Title II, Section 201, which states that all persons shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, and privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation, as defined in this section, which includes hotels and restaurants, without discrimination or segregation based on race, color, religion, or national origin. According to the Department of Justice (2015), some examples of discrimination include: a group of Asian Americans waiting for over an hour to be served in a restaurant, while white and Latino customers receive prompt service, and Haitian American visitors to a hotel being told they must pay in cash rather than by credit card, being charged higher rates than other customers, and not receiving the same amenities, such as towels and soap. The COVID-19 anti-discrimination act made it clearer that USA is indeed a country that supports equality; this law has been implemented in response to the increasing hate and violent crimes against Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders triggered by the spread of COVID-19 virus that has originated from Wuhan, China.

The majority of Filipinos perceive the United States of America as the land of dreams. As the global tourism industry tries to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it could be a challenge for the United States of America to maintain a reputable image and keep up with other countries in the context of tourism if the problem continues. Thereby, the researchers are keen to execute the study. The purpose of the study aims to determine racial discrimination. In particular, if Asian hate can affect travel behavior to the USA and recommend travel motivation plans to keep international tourism alive. The significance of the study is to benefit the government of the USA and countries with citizens that are normally traveling to the USA. The research can help promote useful approaches or ways that can minimize the incidents of Asian Hate, above all, to make the beneficiaries realize that the situation must be addressed immediately before it severely affects the international tourist arrivals. Future researchers can also take advantage of the study by filling up gaps that introduce things such as quantitatively measuring the impact of the situation on Filipino tourists or immigrant respondents in the USA. The Filipino tourists can also gain from the study, especially the locals who are unaware of the situation. Creating awareness can help the local travelers to plan an itinerary for the next USA adventure. Lastly, the research will benefit students and educational institutions that offer tourism management degree programs as the study will contribute new knowledge and attitude that will shape students to be globally competitive.

General problem/objective

With the current evidences, the researchers will attempt to understand how the travel behavior of Filipinos is affected by the rampant racial discrimination in the USA against Asians, and if it really gets affected or not. The findings could be an indication or projection basis for the numbers that will be recorded in the coming months or years in the context of international tourist arrival from the Philippines to the United States of America.

Specific problem/objective

The objective are includes: (1) To determine if and how Filipinos experience racial discrimination when traveling; (2) To determine how the travel behavior of Filipinos is influenced by racial discrimination against Asians in the United States of America; and (3) To identify what travel motivation plans must be proposed.

Conceptual framework

The researchers have indicated the independent and dependent variables for the study. Prevalence of Asian Hate or Racial discrimination in the USA serves as the independent variable considering that it is the one causing the changes in Filipinos' travel behavior to the USA. Five specific variables are indicated that consists of poor knowledge towards the virus, low attention on safety and security, weak law enforcement, poor crime apprehension, and inadequate degree of punishment given that it triggers the perpetrators to discriminate Asians, particularly the Filipinos. While the dependent variables are the effects of Asian hate on the respondent's travel behavior which comprises the need to travel with a companion, becoming more selective in destinations, having much vigilance when traveling, and a significant change of travel intention like not returning to the USA at all (*Figure 1*). Meanwhile, the procedure to gather and analyze the collected data will be through online interviews with semi-structured questions and thematic analysis of data to discuss the gathered input. Lastly, the researchers will recommend a travel motivation plan for the government to attract Filipino tourists to travel amidst the widespread racial discrimination in the United States of America.

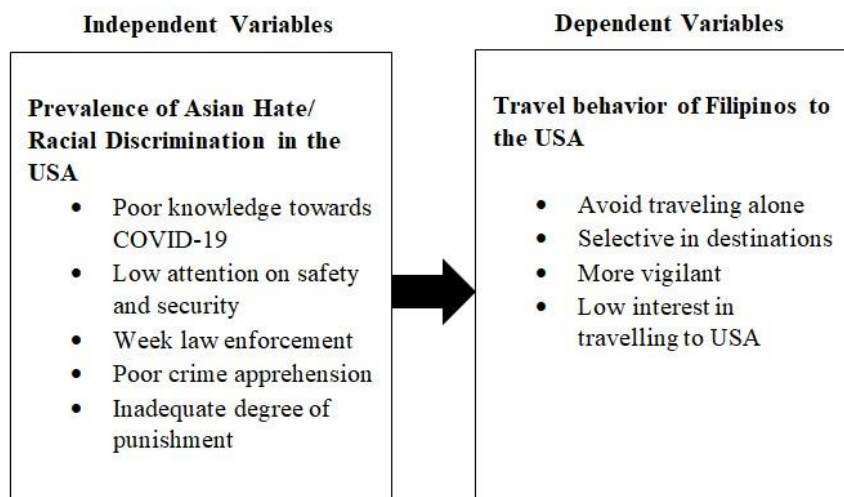


Figure 1. Paradigm of the study.

Review of literature

In the context of racial discrimination, based on the study by Lee and Scott (2017), it is widely known that African-Americans, also known as Black-Americans perceives different from the White-American counterparts, consequently determining that racial discrimination can affect the travel behavior of the Blacks to the USA. Fear is causing a contagion effect across all generations, to the point of establishing fear among the children who don't have a travel experience to the USA or have not yet encountered such discrimination due to the unfortunate incidents coming from the respondents' parents or grandparents. Likewise, the fear causes safety issues and a notable shift in travel patterns. One of the few influences of racial discrimination is that African-Americans are becoming more observant. Next, the respondents avoid rural areas and deep south regions, and the participants also prefer to stay in well-known hotels. Lastly, the travelers are much inclined to explore the area with companions rather than being alone. In a similar ethnicity, Hudson et al. (2020) states that African-American visitors are rapidly rising in the section of the tourism industry. The study emphasized that the respondents' travel selections are highly tied to given factors: (1) acceptance and (2) racial tolerance. The findings demonstrate that the concerns for racial prejudice remain a major barrier to African-American travelers in terms of visiting and enjoying vacations without any worries. The result of the study shows that the majority of the respondents indicate hostile relationships for both black people discrimination and future travel behavior. With this being said, the impression of racism clearly jeopardizes South Carolina's competitiveness in attracting more African-American tourists.

Moreover, the study of Dillette et al. (2018) applies a critical race theory lens to explore the Black travel experience utilizing roughly 300 tweets filtered with the hashtag #TravelingWhileBlack. Racism when traveling, according to Twitter users, is not a distant memory and the issue continues to be a severe concern for several Black visitors. The researchers did see a significant force within the Black community to promote courageous spaces where African-American travelers may discuss travel stories and get help to navigate through dangerous areas. Likewise, a study shows that Muslim Americans are also scapegoats of discrimination in the United States of America. Indeed, according to Livengood and Stodolska (2004), racism has a detrimental impact on Muslim foreigners' inclination to engage in leisure activities and the freedom constraints in terms of mobility, travel, scheduling, and location of initiatives. Taking into account that the episodes of discrimination are non-violent in nature, the experiences can still significantly influence the travel behavior that can force the tourists to be vigilant and conscious around the surroundings, such as walking in groups, trying to blend in, and choosing the places more carefully to visit with an aim to avoid the rampant incidents for being African-American.

Aside from travel behavior, racial discrimination also proves to affect the health and well-being of people. According to Murtaza (2020), racial discrimination can lead to depression and anxiety, thus, resulting in lower life satisfaction among young Muslim adults residing in the United States of America. As a psychological stressor, racial discrimination is considered to be harmful to one's mental health. Race-related issues may influence how bad experiences are perceived and reported in surveys, especially given the ambiguity of contemporary racism. In the study of Chae et al. (2017), racial identity factors could influence the link between ethnic hostility and implications in

mental wellbeing. Studies of racial discrimination and mental health should take into account both unconscious and conscious processes related to one's sense of one's racial identity when measuring racial bias. Moreover, Carter et al. (2017) investigates 105 papers on the connections between racial discrimination and health outcomes among Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics in the USA. The research found that racial discrimination leads to a highly relevant impact size, with studies employing multi-item measures having the greatest influence.

In a European setting, Wallace et al. (2016) indicates that ethnic minorities in the UK suffer from worsening mental health as a result of repeated experiences of racial persecution. Racism's impact on health may be underestimated by studies that just look at one instance of racial prejudice. While in the study conducted by De Castro et al. (2008), racial discrimination is connected with the increased number of health conditions among Filipinos working in the said country. On the other hand, Chen and Mallory (2021) explain that racial prejudice has a detrimental influence on the psychological and bodily well-being of several foreign groups particularly the Africans, Hispanics, and Asians in the USA. The study utilizes nationally representative data such as NSAL and NLAAS that calculates the incidents of discrimination. According to the findings, respondents that are suffering from racial prejudice had a 5% higher risk of heart illness, a drop 0.12 in body weight, a 3% increased risk of depressive disorder, and a 2% higher likelihood of drug use illness. The study reveals that culture origin, gender, social economic status, physical location, and health insurance claims all have moderating effects.

Gee et al. (2009) has reviewed 62 pieces of research that assess the relationship between racial discrimination and health among Asian Americans. The investigations confirm that discrimination leads to mental health problems. Thus, the researcher concluded that racism is also a determinant of physical and behavioral issues. The following researchers, despite having different methodologies, whether it follows a quantitative approach or a qualitative research design, still result in the same conclusion. The same goes with the studies that explore racial discrimination and travel behavior, which all agree that the mentioned form of discrimination affects the behavior of tourists. In relation to career, according to Shum et al. (2019), racial discrimination can also influence the employment sector, particularly the tourism hospitality industry. As shown in the findings of the study, racial discrimination is common in the hospitality business, with people of color are facing more prejudice than White individuals. As a result of the mediating effects of racial discrimination and basic needs fulfillment, the authors observed that persons of color had a lower degree of professional satisfaction.

In relation to the influence of identity on one's travel experience, the investigation of Miller and Torabian (2016), utilizes study inventive and improvisational methods to analyze the author's own travel experiences to examine the linkages between racism and tourism. The research portrays how privilege, race, and national identity are portrayed in leisure settings with the results arriving at a significant conclusion that race can influence a traveler's freedom to explore and how a person is being treated especially if an individual is White. Furthermore, Arcodia et al. (2018) explored how traveling alone for Asian women might expose them to gender and racist dangers such as sexual assault, discrimination, abusive behavior, and public humiliation. The data also show that gender overlaps with race in amplifying and structuring Asian women's risk judgment. The research indicates the assertiveness and character development of female respondents and through managing threats. The research emphasizes how such

phenotypic differences can transcend to micro-level societal alterations in an Asian environment.

The group claims that few authors took an interest in exploring racial discrimination's influence on travel behavior. The researchers state that most of the literature focuses on the impact of health. Furthermore, most studies concerning racial discrimination and travel behavior concentrate on other races instead of Filipinos, where numerous pieces of literature connect to African-Americans. Hence, the group aims to fill the gap of the study. However, the paper will not determine the differences in Filipinos' perspectives and demographic profiles to determine whether racial discrimination uniquely affects the respondents' travel behavior irrespective of age, gender, travel experience, and so on, thus, leaving an opportunity for other researchers to fill the gap.

Materials and Methods

The study will be conducting a qualitative-descriptive research approach. The data gathering procedure will involve a series of reviewing works of literature from credible academic resources and a semi-structured interview guided by Lee and Scott (2017) among the selected respondents. Thematic Analysis or Coding of data will be performed, and information provided will be compared, leading to how the travel behavior of Filipinos to the United States of America is affected by racial discrimination. According to Gibbs (2007) as well as Braun and Clarke (2006), qualitative coding or theme analysis is a technique for studying qualitative data that involves scanning across a data collection to find, evaluate, and review on duplicating patterns. Given that the study will gather data through interviews with an aim to determine patterns in the responses of participants, a coding/ thematic analysis is requisite.

The researchers will be conducting a Semi-Structured interview with 7 respondents from Cavite as per the approval of the research adviser. In accordance with Condor Ferries Official Portal (2021), inbound overseas tourists stay an average of 18 nights. Usually, they spend \$4,200 while exploring the United States of America, and Domingo (2020) emphasizes that middle-class Filipinos earn at least Php 43,828.00. In proportion to the Philippine Statistics Authority Official Portal (2013), more than half of 52.8% of international tourists from the country consist of females, while six in every ten citizens are between 25 and 54 years old. Leading by the example of Lee and Scott (2017), the participants should possess the following criteria: (1) someone who is earning at least Php. 43, 828.00 monthly; (2) preferably female and at least 25 years old but not older than 54 years during the interview; (3) Filipinos that are traveling to the United States of America in the past 5 years for the purpose of tourism and not employment. A purposive sampling method governs the selection process to realize the study's objectives.

The group develops the interview questions from McCracken (1988) and the group will organize the guideline into three sections. In proportion to Lee and Scott (2017), the participant's background is vital to set the researchers' and the interviewee's vibe and relationship. Next are the participant's travel behaviors and lastly, the respondents' experience when traveling to the USA. Some of the aspects include the participant's reaction to the rampant Asian hate problem and how the experience or awareness of the situation affects the respondent's behavior towards visiting the USA. To get participants

for this study, the researchers started by asking their relatives, friends, and other people they know if they know people who have been in the United States of America or at least plan to go there, female, and belong in the middle who earn at least Php 43,828.00 monthly. Should this plan fail, the researchers will try to reach potential participants through social media by searching keywords that can access public posts made by people, such as the chances of traveling to the USA and other demographic information like gender and age can be available.

Another strategy that will be observed by the researchers is to join a social media group called as “DIY Travel Philippines” with 1,191,703 total members as of March 18, 2022. The search will be a collective effort from all group members to maximize the number of people that could be reached, assuming that not everyone will agree to participate. Once potential participants have been identified, they will be informed about the study, particularly what is it about and the objective of it, which will be followed by a request invitation to participate on it. After getting consent from the required number of respondents, interviews will be done through a video conferencing platform where the session will be recorded; it could be through ZOOM, Google Meet, or Facebook Messenger, depending on what is convenient to the interviewee. The researchers are open to a face-to-face interview if the participant wishes, but the action will be subject to the approval of the research adviser. The data gathering procedure expects to last a maximum of one month, with the researchers continuously working on the interviews during weekends. The session might last up to 30 minutes on average; hence, the target output for a day is 4-5.

This study will consider all ethical considerations in research. The researcher will seek consent from people to be the respondents. Voluntary participation has been expressed by the respondents should they agree to answer the research instrument, hence, no person will be forced to do so, while data collected will be solely used for this study. Participants’ responses will be treated as highly confidential and will not be disclosed to anybody, and when placed on paper will be kept anonymously. Through an informed consent statement, the respondents will be informed about the purpose and scope of this study, the name of the researcher and the school where they are enrolled at. The participants will be asked if they voluntarily allow the researcher to get the information on their perceptions towards traveling to the United States of America after learning about the rampant hate crimes or discrimination. Without agreeing to this, they will not be obliged to answer the questionnaire. Moreover, it is also stated in the informed consent statement that they will not be receiving something in return of any kind by participating in this study.

Results and Discussion

The researchers were able to meet all objectives of the study. With a 100% response rate and compliance of the respondents to the queries of the researchers, this study was completed on March 22, 2022.

Filipino tourists travel behaviour in the United States of America

Preferred tourism attraction

The first area that was examined was the preferred type of tourist attractions of Filipino tourists who visit the USA. For this, the respondents were asked what kind of

destinations they usually visit when they go to the country. Most of the respondents chose urban destinations such as malls, recreational parks, monuments, and historical places found in the city proper. As one of the respondents, a male said:

“I like to go to the city proper, going to malls, and heritage attractions such as museums.”

This indicates that most Filipinos who travel to the USA for leisure purposes usually go to highly urbanized areas rather than remote ones. This is opposite to the travel behaviour of Canadians as they prefer rural areas more than urban areas as determined by Yun et al. (2016), while it is similar to the travel behaviour of Indians based on the study of Gupta and Bhargava (2018) that says Indians prefer urban tourism over rural tourism. Moreover, it has also been found out that Filipinos who go to the United States of America for leisure purposes travel once a year on average. Results could be attributed to the fact that most popular tourism destinations in the Philippines are nature-based attractions, therefore, motivating tourists to visit other types of tourism attractions when they travel in other countries, particularly the United States of America. Meanwhile, the frequency of their travel to the United States of America could be attributed to the high travel cost due to the very low currency exchange from Philippine Peso to United States Dollar.

Preferred accommodation

The next information that the researchers attempted to get is the preferred accommodation type of Filipinos. For this the respondents were asked where they usually stay while they are in the USA for a vacation. Most of the respondents said they stay in the house of a relative. As a male said:

“We normally stay in our uncle’s place.”

This indicates that the majority of Filipinos do not stay in hotels when they go to the USA and that they are likely to have friends or relatives living in the USA, provided that their preferred accommodation while in the country are their homes. This is in support of the survey conducted by Airbnb in 2021 as cited by Rocamora (2021a), where it was determined that when Filipinos travel, visiting close relatives and friends is normally part of the activities, therefore, having the chance to stay with them. However, in the study of Aguilar et al. (2020), this is the opposite on how Filipinos, particularly those residing in Rizal Province in the Philippines behave when traveling locally as they prefer staying in resorts among all types of accommodation. These results may be attributed to the fact that many Filipinos have migrated to the United States of America or at least have moved there to work, as data shows that as of 2018, 4.5% of the country's immigrants are Filipinos (Gallardo and Batalova, 2020). Additionally, this could also be caused by the high room rates offered in hotels in the country, at least in the eyes of Filipinos due to the huge difference between Philippines and USA currency rates, and also to the fact that Filipinos are known for having strong and close family ties.

Tourists’ preference between travelling alone and travelling with a company

Another area that was examined was the Filipinos preference between traveling alone and with a companion. For this, they were asked if they normally travel alone or most of the time they go with a companion. All of the respondents said they prefer traveling with a companion, specifically a family member. As a female respondent said:

“I like traveling with my family than to be alone.”

This indicates that the majority of Filipinos do not stay in hotels when they go to the USA and that they are likely to have friends or relatives living in the USA, provided that their preferred accommodation while in the country are their homes. This is in support of the survey conducted by Airbnb in 2021 as cited by Rocamora (2021b), where it was determined that when Filipinos travel, visiting close relatives and friends is normally part of the activities, therefore, having the chance to stay with them. On the other hand, this is inconsistent according to the article of Medel (2021), a survey conducted by Klook indicates that 76% of Filipinos have already traveled alone or at least considering it. These results could still be connected to the culture of Filipinos of having strong and close family ties, nevertheless, the researchers have also observed that most of the respondents were very busy persons and are in their late adult years, which could mean that traveling is really their only way to spend time with their family, and with their age, traveling alone is not a thing anymore.

Motivating factors in selecting a place to visit

The researchers have also tried to know the factors that motivate Filipinos to visit a tourism attraction. The respondents were asked what specific factors they consider before selecting a place to visit for tourism. Factors that were mentioned by the respondents were safety and security, accessibility, popularity, affordability, value for money, and familiarity. As a male respondent said:

“I think it is safety and security, and accessibility.”

This result indicates that Filipinos who travel to the USA prefer places where they would feel safe, therefore, destinations where there have been zero or less crime incidents or involving natural phenomena. Accessibility is also a main factor to most Filipino tourists as they normally travel with their family including older members; it is important that the place has facilities that would assist the elderly and persons with disabilities. Popularity falls to third place as Filipinos like to go to the places that are widely known; places they have learned about in social media and other platforms that have established their interest to be there someday. These data show that the behavior of Filipinos who travel to the USA are different from how they select tourism destinations in the Philippines, particularly in the province of Laguna as determined by Aldueza et al. (2021); it is the destination's image, price, distance, recreational activities, and visiting relatives that most influence them, nevertheless, it is somehow agreeing since the findings also showed that accessibility and safety could demotivate Filipinos from going to places if not provided.

Filipinos' racial discrimination experiences when traveling to the USA

Do Filipinos feel welcomed when they visit the United States of America?

Another area that was assessed by the researchers was the racial discrimination experience of Filipinos when they travel to the USA. For this, the respondents were asked if they feel welcomed when they go to the USA. Most of the respondents confidently expressed their appreciation to Americans as they feel respected and welcomed whenever they visit the United States of America, however, there are reservations; this is only felt in tourism commercial establishments such as hotels, restaurants, and some shops. As a female respondent said:

“Yes, but only in service-oriented places such as hotels, and restaurants.”

All of them on the other hand have said that discrimination against Filipinos in other public areas, especially out in the streets and airports is rampant, which became worse during the COVID-19. As a female respondent said:

“It is severe in public areas, especially during the pandemic years because they put the blame on Asians, including Filipinos, for the spread of the virus.”

This finding supports the study of the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism that happen in 2020 has shown that anti-Asian hate crimes surged by 149 percent in the main cities in the United State amidst the pandemic. In fact, two of the respondents shared an experience when they were in the airport in the USA for a vacation, which has happened several times; they were interrogated by the immigration officers saying that they are suspicious due to their Asian look. The most common practice by Americans that makes Filipino tourists feel unwelcomed and disrespected is staring at them in an intimidating way and saying hateful words. One of the respondents shared her experience with an American working in a store when she intended to buy something for her dog; the American stared at her and said “I don’t like you”, causing her to feel nervous and to immediately look for her husband. This incident stayed in her mind for a week. What made this incident worse is the fact that this is the first time she has experienced such treatment since her first trip to the USA in 2017 and this happened during the pandemic.

The main perpetrators of racial discrimination against Filipinos

The respondents were also asked who are the main perpetrators of racial discrimination against them and fellow Filipinos. Based on the experience of the Filipino tourists, it is the White Americans and Hispanic Americans who are more likely to discriminate against them. As a female said:

“Black people are good people, white people, they don't like Asian People, but in my experience, mostly Hispanic and White Americans.”

This description of Black Americans could be connected to the study of Lee and Scott (2017) that proved the discrimination against them by their counterparts, thus, could be interpreted that victims of racial discrimination do not engage with the practice.

Influence of rcial discrimination towards Filipino tourists’ travel behaviour to the USA

The drive of Filipino Tourists to go to the United States of America after experiencing racial discrimination and/or learning about the increasing incident of hate crimes in the country has been unpredictable based on the result of the interview. Some Filipinos (3 in this study) expressed strong desire to travel again in the USA arguing that the goal is to see the attractions, and not to build relationships with Americans. As a respondent said:

“Yes. I will still go there for travel, I will still go to shops, tourism-related stores etc. I will go there for the purchase, not for the people who work there. My goal is to see the attractions. Racial discrimination will not stop us from traveling.”

While there are some (4 in this study) who firmly said that they will no longer go back as they don't feel safe there anymore. As a female respondent said:

“No, I don't feel safe in the USA at all.”

Nevertheless, those who have expressed interest in going back said that they will be more cautious this time by carefully selecting places to go to, avoiding getting close to Americans, not trying to converse with strangers, and not turning the attention of people to them. As a male respondent said:

“Yes, I will still go to the USA, but will be more cautious, avoiding getting physically close to Americans, and choosing places where to go, avoiding places where discrimination is rampant.”

Additionally, traveling alone will never be an option. As a female said:

“I won't travel alone for safety and security purposes. Traveling alone makes tourists more vulnerable to discrimination.”

This indicates that Filipinos' travel behavior has been affected by the racial discrimination scenario also known as Asian Hate in the United States of America, which is synonymous with the findings of the study of Lee and Scott (2017) involving African-Americans; Filipinos' travel behavior are affected by the discrimination like them who travel to the United States of America for tourism purposes.

Recommended plans for the US government to motivate Filipino travelers in the coming years

In response to the results of the study, the researchers hereby recommend this series of actions that may motivate Filipinos to travel to the USA despite previous racial discrimination incidents and reports: (1) Reorientation of tourism officers across all tourism establishments such as but not limited to airports, hotels, restaurants, and public transportation; (2) The government agency concerned in tourism marketing, planning, and development together with tourism attractions and establishments must focus on rebranding and give heavy emphasis on safety and security in their advertisements; (3) COVID-19 pandemic awareness program for Citizens through community workers/officials; and (4) Increase the severity of punishment to deter such crime and ensure that perpetrators are apprehended. These series of actions could be marked as

successful once the following targets have been reached: (1) 100% participation of employees in tourism-related establishments during seminars and training; (2) 50% decrease in Asian hate related crimes in the USA; and (3) 50% increase in criminals apprehended for perpetrating racial discrimination. These will be funded, executed, and monitored by the US Government, incorporating a convergence approach involving all concerned government offices such as but not limited to tourism, law enforcement, senate, local government units, social welfare and development office, finance department, and education.

As stated in the results of the study, there is racial discrimination against Filipinos in the USA, even in airports, restaurants, and hotels, though less incidents are recorded compared to open spaces, thus, reorientation of employees in these establishments is a must, provided that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 specifically Title II, Section 201 states that all persons shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, and privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation, which includes hotels and restaurants, without discrimination or segregation based on race, color, religion, or national origin. A COVID-19 pandemic awareness program for Citizens with the help of local officials is also a must as based on the result, racial discrimination got severe because of an impression that Asians are the reasons why COVID-19 became a pandemic. Clearly, Americans are not well informed how the virus came to being and had spread. The senate must also revisit the sanctions for this kind of crimes, based on the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the offender cannot be fined more than \$1,000 or imprisoned for more than six months if convicted. This could be one of the reasons why people are not afraid to discriminate against other races. Lastly, as the results suggest changes in the travel behaviour of Filipinos and the fact that safety and security was their top motivating factor in choosing a place to visit, the government agency together with private establishments, particularly tourism destinations must rebrand, and focus its advertisements on establishing an impression that USA is a safe place to visit, especially to Asians. Initial results of these recommended actions are expected to show within the first year of execution, and would fully be evident across the country in the next 3 years as part of the tourism management and development plan by the government.

Conclusion

When traveling within the United States of America, most of the respondents prefer going to highly urbanized areas for tourism rather than other types of tourism attractions. They normally travel once a year, go with a companion, preferably a family member, and they usually stay at the house of a relative or friend living in the country. The majority of the respondents have experienced and heard about the rampant racial discrimination against Filipinos in the USA. It has been determined that Filipinos are more vulnerable to discrimination when they are out in the streets and airports and are safer inside establishments such as hotels and restaurants. The most typical approach for Americans to make Filipino visitors feel uncomfortable and disrespectful is to stare at them in an intimidating manner and speak derogatory comments, while the usual perpetrators are White Americans and Hispanic Americans. Lastly, results showed that Filipinos' travel behavior has been affected by the racial discrimination scenario also known as Asian Hate in the United States of America.

Most Filipinos who travel to the USA for tourism purposes prefer visiting places located in urban areas, therefore, they normally go to downtown areas and states that are fully developed such as New York City and Los Angeles, California, which is probably caused by their low interest towards nature-based attractions as the Philippines have a lot. All of the Filipinos who participated in this study normally stay at the houses of a family member, which means the majority of the Filipinos who go to the USA probably have a relative residing there as 4.5% of the country's 44.7 million immigrants are Filipinos as of 2018 (Gallardo & Batalova, 2020). In regards of racial discrimination, most of them have experienced it at least once, validating the claim of the researchers that racial discrimination against Filipinos is indeed happening in the USA, which even got severe during the pandemic. Nevertheless, incidents are less in tourist commercial establishments such as hotels and restaurants, and are more in open areas such as the streets, therefore, Filipinos to avoid becoming a victim must avoid going to open spaces alone and must go to regulated establishments such as what have been mentioned. Filipinos are sociable people, but this study has proven that experiencing racial discrimination or learning about the incidents changes their behavior; they tend to be more cautious, they avoid talking to Americans, they carefully assess the destinations before going, particularly in terms of safety and security, and they do not travel alone anymore as they believe that traveling alone makes one more vulnerable to such crime. In fact, these learning and experiences have majorly affected them; some respondents have expressed their intention to not go back to the USA anymore.

Future researchers should investigate deeply about some other aspects of the paper given that there are three limitations in the study. To begin, the participants are Cavite residents so inviting respondents from other parts of the country could provide new perspectives and a better analysis of the subject. Second, the informants are only limited to specific age scope therefore it would be interesting to explore the variation of the answers depending on the nature of age considering that there is a strong connection between one's time of life and potential opinions and behavioral patterns. Likewise, the participants in the study were Filipinos from the middle class with above-average earnings, professional careers, and college degrees. Although our data contained a wealth of information about Filipino tourists, including perspectives from various socioeconomic backgrounds would be beneficial. Above all, the study only used qualitative data hence the future researchers may apply a quantitative approach of measuring the impact of the situation on Filipino tourists or immigrant respondents in the USA. The collection of numerical data would enhance the findings' universal applicability and provide a more complete picture of Filipino travel patterns.

Above all, the US government should strengthen the enforcement of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 through reorienting immigration officers and law enforcers about upholding the provisions of the regulation. This will be crucial to ensure that the tourists in the USA would feel safe in every corner of the country. The government should have an act in order to call public attention to the problem of racial discrimination, and not just in regards to the treatment of Black Americans but also of Asians. People who may benefit from the acts or campaigns could experience changes in their behavior that are not simply temporary but also long-lasting like mental health improvements. These enforcements would help in fostering peace and order for the community.

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Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest with any parties involved in the study.

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