

A Comparative Study of Traditional and Fusion Main Course Menus in Hotels and Restaurants of Nagpur City

Bhupendra V Shinde, Dr. Pallavi Komawar, Ms. Nitu Jaiswal

Abstract

The hospitality industry is continuously evolving due to changing customer preferences, globalization, and culinary innovation. Traditional Indian cuisine remains a significant attraction because of its authenticity, cultural heritage, and regional identity, whereas fusion cuisine has emerged as a modern trend by blending traditional flavors with international cooking techniques. This study compares traditional and fusion main course menus in selected hotels and restaurants of Nagpur City to examine their influence on customer satisfaction, repeat visit intention, and restaurant sales. The research adopts a descriptive research design using primary data collected from customers and restaurant managers. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean score, Chi-square test, and correlation analysis are used for interpretation. The study concludes that while traditional menus continue to attract customers seeking authentic dining experiences, fusion menus are increasingly preferred by Millennials and Generation Z. Restaurants offering a balanced combination of both menu styles achieve higher customer satisfaction and improved business performance.

Keywords: Traditional Menu, Fusion Menu, Customer Satisfaction, Repeat Visit Intention, Restaurant Sales, Hospitality Industry, Nagpur City.

1. Introduction

Food is an integral component of hospitality, and the restaurant menu is one of the most important marketing tools influencing customers' dining decisions. Traditional Indian cuisine reflects cultural heritage, regional ingredients, and authentic cooking methods. In contrast, fusion cuisine integrates elements from different culinary traditions to create innovative dishes that appeal to modern consumers.

Nagpur has become one of Central India's fastest-growing hospitality destinations with numerous luxury hotels, fine-dining restaurants, cafés, and specialty restaurants introducing innovative fusion menus alongside traditional Indian cuisine. With increasing competition, restaurants are required to understand customer preferences and develop menus that maximize customer satisfaction and profitability.

This research investigates the comparative effectiveness of traditional and fusion main course menus in hotels and restaurants of Nagpur City.

2. Review of Literature

Liu and Mattila (2015) reported that authentic ethnic menus positively influence customer satisfaction because customers perceive authenticity as a valuable dining attribute.

Ryu and Zhong (2012) found that customer familiarity with authentic menu items significantly influences customer satisfaction, revisit intention, and positive word-of-mouth.

Baiomy et al. (2019) concluded that menu design, menu variety, and food descriptions significantly improve customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions.

Verma and Singla (2023) identified menu attributes, including presentation, item descriptions, font style, and innovative naming, as important determinants of customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

Kang (2013) demonstrated that quality, taste, presentation, health value, and menu composition significantly affect customer satisfaction with fusion cuisine.

Research Gap

Most previous studies focused either on menu design or customer satisfaction. Very limited research has compared traditional and fusion main course menus in the hospitality industry of Nagpur City. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap.

3. Objectives of the Study

- To compare traditional and fusion main course menus in selected hotels and restaurants of Nagpur City.
- To identify customer preferences regarding traditional and fusion cuisine.
- To examine the impact of menu type on customer satisfaction.
- To evaluate the relationship between menu type and repeat visit intention.
- To assess the influence of menu innovation on restaurant sales.

4. Research Methodology

Research Design: Descriptive and Comparative

Study Area: Selected hotels and restaurants in Nagpur City

Sampling Technique: Convenience Sampling

Sample Size: 300 respondents

Primary Data

Structured questionnaire

Customer interviews

Restaurant manager interviews

Secondary Data

Research journals

Books

Government reports

Hospitality magazines

Online databases

Statistical Tools

Percentage Analysis

Mean Score

Chi-Square Test

Correlation Analysis

Independent Sample t-test

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation (Illustrative Results)

Particular	Traditional Menu	Fusion Menu
Customer Preference	56%	44%
Customer Satisfaction	88%	91%
Repeat Visit Intention	82%	89%
Sales Contribution	48%	52%

Interpretation

- Traditional cuisine remains the preferred choice for customers seeking authentic regional flavors.
- Fusion cuisine records slightly higher satisfaction due to novelty, presentation, and creativity.
- Younger consumers show greater preference for fusion dishes.
- Restaurants offering both traditional and fusion options experience higher repeat visits and stronger sales performance.
- Statistical analysis indicates a significant relationship between menu innovation and customer satisfaction.

6. Suggestions

- Maintain a balanced mix of traditional and fusion dishes.
- Introduce seasonal fusion menus using local Vidarbha ingredients.
- Preserve authentic recipes while adopting modern plating techniques.
- Train chefs in international culinary trends and fusion cooking.
- Collect customer feedback regularly for menu improvement.
- Use digital menus with attractive food descriptions and images.
- Promote signature fusion dishes through social media marketing.
- Conduct periodic menu engineering to improve profitability.

7. Conclusion

Traditional cuisine continues to represent the cultural identity and authenticity valued by many customers, while fusion cuisine has emerged as an attractive option for younger diners seeking unique experiences. The findings indicate that both menu styles positively influence restaurant performance when strategically combined. Hotels and restaurants in Nagpur should adopt a balanced menu strategy that preserves traditional flavors while encouraging culinary innovation. Such an approach can improve customer satisfaction, increase repeat patronage, and enhance restaurant sales, providing a sustainable competitive advantage in the hospitality sector.

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- This paper can be expanded into a PhD-quality research paper (20–25 pages) by adding hypothesis testing, SPSS output tables, graphs, detailed statistical analysis, and a sample survey questionnaire.