

Evaluating Customer Responses to Innovation in Vada Pav offerings in Ulhasnagar

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Abstract: *day, Vada Pav is inseparable from the city of Mumbai, where residents, spanning from factory laborers and college students to Bollywood celebrities, openly profess their adoration for it. Each day, more than two million of these delectable and crunchy sandwiches are savoured in India's bustling financial hub and largest metropolis. "In a city known for its perpetual hustle, I believe Vada pav stands out as the swiftest, budget-friendly, and grab-and-go snack," notes one local. It is often considered as the first "eating out" experience for virtually anyone in Mumbai. Its affordability transcends social classes, making it a great equalizer. While Vada pav's taste is undeniably delightful (as fried snacks typically are), the intense affection for this snack can be puzzling to outsiders. However, the reality is that Mumbai's cultural connection with Vada pav runs much deeper than mere flavour.*

The concept of fusion cuisine is becoming increasingly popular in the modern culinary world, where traditional recipes and ingredients are combined with innovative and diverse elements to create new and exciting flavours. Mumbai's iconic Vada Pav, a beloved and quintessential street food, has also been subject to this trend of fusion cuisine.

In this context, "fusion" refers to the blending of different culinary traditions, ingredients, or cooking styles. It's about taking a well-known and cherished dish, like the Vada Pav, and infusing it with new ingredients, flavours, or cooking techniques to create a fresh and unique culinary experience. This approach is often seen as a way to cater to evolving tastes and preferences, as well as to capture the spirit of innovation and creativity in the world of food.

The idea that even a classic and beloved staple like Vada Pav has been subject to fusion cuisine shows how adaptable and versatile traditional dishes can be. It's a testament to the ever-evolving nature of food and the willingness of both chefs and consumers to experiment with new flavours and combinations, creating a dynamic and exciting food scene in Mumbai and beyond.

Keywords: Vada pav, invention, consumed, financial capital, consumers, vendors, commuting hours, development, strategies.

I. INTRODUCTION

Being one of the iconic dishes that encapsulates the fast-paced and ever-changing essence of Mumbai, the vada pav has long been a staple in the hurried meals and evening snacks of urban dwellers. Let's delve into the historical roots of this deep-fried delicacy, its various variations, and where you can savour this delectable treat across Mumbai.

The history of Bombay Vada Pav is intricately intertwined with Mumbai's vibrant street food culture. This cherished and budget-friendly snack, with its humble beginnings, has become an iconic fast-food item relished by millions, not only in Mumbai but throughout India. The roots of the vada pav can be traced back to a period heavily influenced by South Indian cuisine. The practice of using a spicy potato filling and deep-frying it in a gram flour batter was not exclusive to the vada pav but was a common method found in Indian snacks like the Bonda.



Fig. 1

The vada pav's popularity can be attributed to Mumbai's bustling metropolis, where it served as an economical and portable meal option for mill workers in the mid-20th century. Mumbai's diverse culture and culinary influences are reflected in its street food scene. Food vendors and entrepreneurs in the city started offering this snack to the large working-class population and busy commuters seeking a quick and filling meal.

One of the most renowned figures associated with making vada pav an icon in Mumbai is Ashok Vaidya. In the 1960s, he began selling vada pav from a modest stall outside Dadar railway station. His innovation was the use of a pav, a type of soft bread roll, instead of traditional bread. This ingenious adaptation made it a convenient handheld snack and gave birth to the vada pav we know today. It's often referred to as the "poor man's burger" or the "Indian burger" due to its similarity to a patty in a bun.

While the classic Vada Pav features a spicy potato filling, various vendors and eateries have added their own unique twists to the recipe. Some incorporate chutneys, garlic powder, or different types of fillings to cater to a wide range of tastes. Here are some delectable varieties of vada pav you can savour around Mumbai:

Classic Vada Pav: This version consists of a spicy mashed potato filling, seasoned with coriander, garlic, and spices. It's coated in a gram flour batter, deep-fried until golden brown, and placed inside a soft bread roll (pav). It's served with coriander and mint chutney, tamarind chutney, and a dry red chili condiment.



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Schezwan Vada Pav: A fusion variation of vada pav, the Schezwan Vada Pav features a patty seasoned with Schezwan sauce, a spicy Chinese condiment known for its chili-garlic flavour. It offers a spicy kick and is often served with Maharashtrian garlic chutney for an extra kick.

Pav Bhaji Vada Pav: In this innovative twist, the vada is made using leftover pav bhaji mixture, another popular Mumbai Street food dish comprising mashed spiced vegetables served with pav. The pav bhaji vada is created by

shaping the leftover pav bhaji mixture into patty form, coating it in batter, deep-frying it, and then serving it inside a pav with chutneys.

Cheese burst Vada Pav: This variety combines a gooey potato patty with a melting cheese filling, which is deep-fried and sandwiched between two buns. It marries the best of the vada pav and grilled cheese worlds. This fusion vada pav has gained popularity in recent times for its burst of flavours.

Vada Misal: This variation combines two beloved Maharashtrian snacks – the misal and vada pav. A spicy misal mixture, typically made with sprouted lentils, serves as the gravy in which hot, deep-fried vada is immersed and then enjoyed with soft pav. The spicy and flavourful misal adds a unique twist to the street-side classic.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Harris Solomon, 30/1/2005)

This article explores Mumbai's vada pav street food. It delves into how a local political party introduced its own version, the methods used by street vendors, and how corporate franchises mechanized its production for hygiene. It argues that the street is central to food processing, which transforms raw ingredients into something else. This expands our understanding of processing in both local politics and corporate settings, allowing for different transformations. The unique relationship between vada pav and the street shapes the political and social effects of processing, emphasizing the role of the street in urban life.

(Anand Narasimhan and Aparna M. Dogra, September,2012)

Goli Vada Pav aimed to fill the gap between street-food vendors and global fast-food chains by offering hygienically prepared, authentic food. Yet, the company faced challenges early on, including inconsistent quality and shelf life of handmade patties, pilferage issues, and rising raw material costs that squeezed profit margins.

(Manisha Dunghav, 2013)

In today's fast-paced lifestyle, individuals often turn to fast food to save time and energy when they experience hunger. Common options include vada pav, fruit salads, a variety of milkshakes, and more. In such instances, Ayurveda can serve as a dietary guide. Ayurveda places significant importance on "viruddha aahar," which can lead to imbalances in the doshas. Everything we consume has an impact on our body and mind. Therefore, it is advisable to opt for wholesome, nutritious foods that can enhance our overall health. Preventing diseases through the avoidance of viruddha aahar is crucial. Making conscious choices to steer clear of incompatible food combinations plays a vital role in disease prevention.

(Anand Narsimha ,2012)

Venkatesh Iyer, now the CEO, recognized a massive market potential of 500 million young Indians who would pay at least Rs10 (around 20 US cents) for a Vada pav—a popular Mumbai Street food comprising a spicy vegetable patty in a bun.

His journey as CEO of Goli Vada Pav aimed to elevate this cherished local street food, deeply ingrained in the hearts of Mumbaikars. Instead of opting for an American franchise, he saw the opportunity in promoting Indian street food. Simultaneously, he foresaw significant social changes in India, such as longer commutes for the lower-middle-class population.

This bold endeavour to make Vada pav stand out in a market crowded with burgers and pizzas, once considered unconventional, has turned into a remarkable reality. Goli Vada Pav, which began with its first store in Mumbai's suburbs in 2004, has expanded to 300 stores across 90 cities and 20 states, firmly establishing itself in the market.

Objectives:

Investigate the historical origins of Vada Pav.

Analyse the popularity of Vada pav among Mumbai residents.

Identify various Vada pav variations.

Evaluate customer responses to Fusion Vada pav.

Assess the impact of Fusion marketing techniques on Vada pav sales.

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III. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

How often do you eat Vada pav?

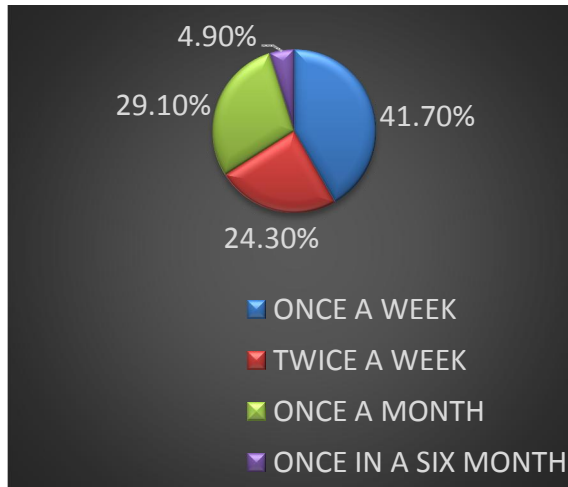


Fig 4

41.7% of respondents eat Vada pav once a week. 24.3% of respondent have Vada pav twice a week and 29.1% people have Vada pav once a month with context only 4.9% people have Vada pav once in 6 months.

On the basis of the above data, it has been observed that maximum respondents in Ulhasnagar consume Vada Pav on regular basis.

Does any one of the above-mentioned centers in Ulhasnagar, serve fusion Vada pav?

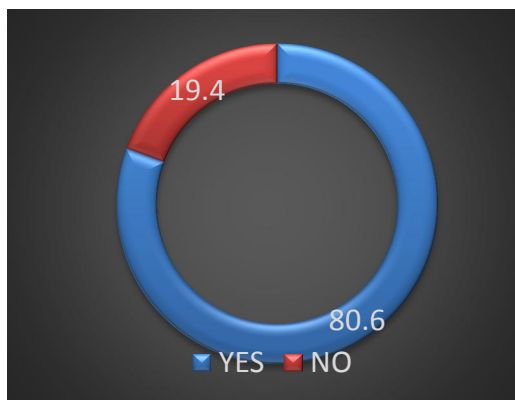


Fig 5

With the shown figure we can analyse that 80.6% of the centres in Ulhasnagar servers' fusion Vada pav and 19.4% of centres do not serve fusion Vada pav.

Fusion Vada pav is made and being sold in most of the Vada pav centres of Ulhasnagar, as a marketing technique to sustain competition and lure the customers.

If given a choice, what would you prefer to have?

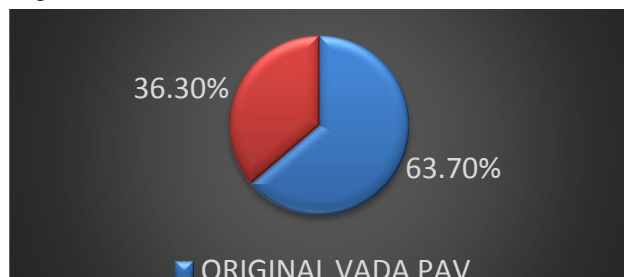


Fig 6

In a given chart we can see 63.70% of the respondents have chosen original Vada pav and 36.30% of the respondents have chosen fusion Vada pav.

Even after so many variations brought about in the recipe by the Vada pav vendors, original Vada pav remains close to the hearts of the customers.

Do you feel Vada pav is losing its identity with the concept of fusion Vada pav?

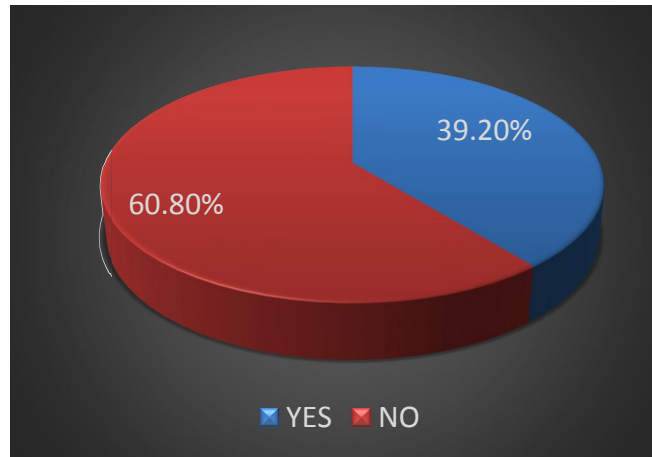


Fig 7

Here we can see that 60.80% of respondents do not think that Vada pav is losing its identity with the concept of Fusion Vada pav, and 39.20% of respondents felt that Vada pav is losing its identity with the concept of Fusion Vada pav.

There have been a lot of Vada pav centres selling Fusion Vada pav, to keep up with the pace of commercialization. But the customers have been patronizing the original Mumbai Vada pav. Hence, we can conclude that the original Vada pav is not losing its identity.

IV. CONCLUSION

In today's culinary landscape, Vada pav has become synonymous with the vibrant cities of Maharashtra. It's a unifying delight enjoyed by an extensive cross-section of residents, ranging from industrious factory workers and eager college students to Bollywood luminaries. For these individuals, the Vada pav encapsulates the genuine essence of their city, making it the quintessential, go-to snack that represents a piece of home.

However, as Vada pav's popularity soars, many Vada pav establishments and brands are innovating to maintain their foothold in a competitive market. They're venturing into diverse territory by introducing an array of new flavors and variations to their Vada pav menus. Yet, amidst the tempting array of choices, a compelling truth emerges — customers maintain a fervent affection for the classic, original Vada pav.

This preference for the authentic taste extends not only throughout Maharashtra but also to towns and cities like Ulhasnagar. Here, as in many other places, consumers ardently insist on the traditional Vada pav over the fusion options. The enduring charm of the original Vada pav is rooted in its distinctive taste, which is revered and cherished by aficionados. It's a taste that they hope will remain preserved and faithfully represented in each innovative creation. The essence of tradition, it seems, is at the heart of what continues to captivate discerning palates.

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