DISH NAMES AND CULTURAL DISCONNECT: ANALYZING MENU LANGUAGE IN BALTISTAN, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The language we use and the food we select are both significant reflections of our identity, encompassing elements such as ethnicity, socio-economic status, culture, nationality, religion, and politics. Just as language shapes our identity, our food choices also communicate important aspects about ourselves. For instance, a Muslim diner is generally not expected to order pork, while a devout Hindu typically opts for vegetarian dishes. However, in eateries and cafes that exemplify globalization, the language used in menus can shape our food choices and even challenge our sense of identity. A quick look at restaurant menus reveals a cultural disconnect; they often feature unfamiliar names and dishes that do not resonate with local tastes or align with Pakistani societal norms. This study investigates the language on menu cards and the unusual names given to food items at 14 cafes and restaurants in Baltistan, Pakistan. A total of 54 dish and beverage names were analyzed through purposive sampling. The linguistic analysis indicates signs of socio-cultural transformation that may threaten local identity. Additionally, the prevalence of foreign cuisine over local Pakistani options points to cultural imperialism. The findings urge the restaurant and cafe industry in the region to revise their menus by replacing culturally alien names with those that reflect local Pakistani culture and to allocate more space for Pakistani cuisine, as food serves as a vital symbol of culture.

Keywords: *Globalization, ethnicity, identity, culture, food, language. Balti, menu*

INTRODUCTION

The connection between food and culture is highlighted by the assertion that "One way to establish that a person is not a member of a certain cultural group is through diet" (Kittler et al., 2012, p. 5). Each culture boasts unique food options and dietary patterns, heavily influenced by religious and cultural beliefs. A dish considered special by one group may be viewed as inauspicious by another. For example, the Chitrali people in Northern Pakistan regard the consumption of chicken as forbidden. Cultural norms heavily shape dietary practices, and foods that hold religious significance for one group may carry superstitions for another. In Tibetan Buddhist culture, fish is revered and considered sacred, making its consumption taboo. Similarly, Hindus worship cows as holy animals, prohibiting their consumption. Such food taboos exist globally, and examining these dietary preferences and restrictions offers deeper insights into the socio-cultural, ethnic, and religious identities of various groups. The acceptance or rejection of certain foods reflects underlying belief systems.

In today's globalized world, the potential for misinterpretation of cultural, ethnic, and religious associations based on food choices has increased. It is observed that traditional religious and cultural dietary guidelines are not always strictly followed. Many Muslim travelers do not exclusively seek halal options in non-Muslim countries, and Hindus, once primarily viewed as strict vegetarians, are increasingly consuming meat. The stereotypical perceptions of the Kalashi people have also evolved, with urban Kalashis now incorporating chicken dishes into their diets without hesitation, making chicken no longer a taboo for them.

While migration contributes to changes in lifestyle and food preferences, globalization plays a pivotal role in reshaping societal norms. It influences various cultural identities, leading to a noticeable shift in food choices, particularly among the affluent. As Almerico (2014) notes, "food symbolism permeates our social psyche" (p. 6). In this context, cafes and restaurants often employ unique and whimsical names for dishes and beverages to enhance sales, particularly targeting the younger generation. Although similar items may be offered across different establishments, the way they are labeled can significantly impact consumer choices.

Many customers, especially younger ones, gravitate towards uniquely named items, even if they are not particularly fond of the flavors. For them, the motivation for choosing a food item often extends beyond mere hunger to include a desire to showcase their social status, which can overshadow their socio-cultural or religious identities. In our interconnected world, maintaining one's identity often necessitates the acceptance of the norms and values of another community, even when they diverge from one's own. This is frequently observed in popular dining establishments, where foods are intentionally labeled with foreign names. While this practice aims to promote culinary diversity, it can unintentionally dilute cultural and religious identities, particularly with the inclusion of non-halal items like calamari, squid, crab, and prawns. Restaurants and cafes, therefore, serve as dynamic spaces where socio-cultural evolution occurs through the presentation of diverse food items and their associated names.

Since 2018, Baltistan has emerged as a popular tourist destination, attracting a significant influx of visitors and prompting local and non-local investors to invest in the hotel industry. This surge has led to a rapid increase in the number of hotels and guesthouses in the region, fostering competition among owners to attract clients. Strategies focusing on rebranding and innovation, from architectural design to culinary offerings, have become prevalent to appeal to guests. Food serves not only as a necessary part of daily life but also as a representation of the ethnic, religious, cultural, and social identities of its

consumers. In this context, naming food becomes a conscious and deliberate act. This paper examines how the practice of naming food is negotiated within the hotels of Baltistan.

Aim of the Study

This study investigates the unconventional use of language on menu cards in cafes and restaurants across Baltistan, Pakistan. The region is significantly influenced by tourism and cultural shifts, especially among the younger population, who are increasingly drawn to foods that sound and taste foreign. This trend indicates a growing detachment from local culture. In light of the rising threat of globalization, the study aims to analyze the linguistic elements present on these menus, which serve as written records of culinary evolution. As previously mentioned, menus reflect culinary culture and societal attitudes toward ethnic cuisines, and this research explores the potential cultural imperialism evident in the naming conventions employed. This linguistic imperialism may contribute to an ideology that conflicts with Pakistani socio-cultural norms.

The study seeks to address the following questions:

I. What types of language are used to name dishes and beverages on the menus of cafes and restaurants in Baltistan?

II. How do the names assigned to dishes and beverages impact local Pakistani identity?

III. Do the menus of cafes and restaurants adequately represent local Pakistani cuisine?

Literature Review

Food serves not only as a means to satisfy hunger but also as a symbol of culture, religion, and identity. It acts as a bridge that connects individuals to their origins and heritage. As an integral part of culture, food selection varies widely across different societies. The same vegetable recipe can be labeled differently by various ethnic groups, and the naming of culinary items is closely tied to societal customs. In the context of globalization, culinary language can act as a catalyst for cultural change. Lehrer (1991) highlighted various linguistic techniques used in naming dishes and beverages in restaurants, including compounding, euphemism, and innovative word formation.

However, the focus on the symbolic value of food often limits discussions on how these linguistic strategies influence diners' psychology.

In one study, participants tasted samples labeled with names like "lemon," "coffee jelly," "caramel candy," and "consomme soup," as well as with random numbers. The results indicated that participants rated the flavors higher in terms of liking and familiarity when they were labeled with food names, particularly when those names aligned with their expectations of taste. Although the impact on perceived intensity was less pronounced, there were instances where intensity ratings changed significantly. This study provides experimental evidence that labeling taste samples with food names affects how people perceive those flavors, similar to the effects observed in olfaction and taste (Okamoto et al., 2008).

Gvion and Trostler (2008) conducted a longitudinal study examining the evolution of ethnic dishes on American restaurant menus from the 1960s to the 1990s, alongside shifts in diners' interests. Their findings indicate the emergence of multi-ethnic cuisine in America, reflecting its multicultural character. The significance of food in cultural expression and discourse is well-documented across various linguistic subfields, including semantics, onomastics, anthropology, sociolinguistics, and pragmatics. Ozdemir and Caliskan (2014) provided a comprehensive examination of restaurant menu research, primarily focusing on menu structure and design. While many studies have investigated how dishes are presented to attract consumers, there remains a lack of research focused on the linguistic analysis of dish and beverage names on menus (Jurafsky, 2014; Wansink, Painter, & Van Ittersum, 2001; Wansink, Van Ittersum, & Painter, 2005).

In a comprehensive hypothetical study utilizing Bourdieu's framework, Jurafsky et al. (2016) analyzed the language used on menus from 6,501 restaurants in seven major U.S. cities, considering factors such as authenticity, educational capital, meal size, and quality signaling. Their results indicate that upscale restaurants tend to emphasize natural authenticity, while budget-friendly establishments lean towards traditional authenticity. Furthermore, high-status restaurants use morphologically complex and foreign vocabulary, linking educational capital to restaurant prestige. The study also supports Bourdieu's concept of working-class meal abundance, showing that inexpensive restaurants focus more on portion sizes and often employ excessive adjectives, while high-status establishments avoid explicit quality indicators. Beyond linguistic menu analysis, researchers have explored customer perceptions of restaurant advertisements and the language of brand identity.

Another study examines the contextualization of immigrant identities through the naming and labeling of food, viewing it not only as a cultural signifier but also as a marker of identity. Drawing inspiration from the semiotics of scholars like Roland Barthes, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Mary Douglas, Rashmi Jacob and Alka Sharma (2018) explore the complex cognitive processes involved in human identification with food, as articulated by Lévi-Strauss. According to Lévi-Strauss, understanding and identifying food is a multifaceted cognitive endeavor that requires individuals to conceptualize its place in the world, gaining insight into the broader societal framework. This process involves not only naming but also organizing and classifying food components. A culinary system serves as a framework, offering criteria for these mental operations. The study further examines the impact of globalization and transnationalism on food markers, particularly in the multicultural context of Oman, where the arrival of migrant communities has introduced a diverse range of culinary influences, reshaping perceptions and labels associated with food.

In collaboration with the Menus of Change University Research Collaborative, a team of researchers observed the behavior of undergraduate students in self-serve dining halls across five schools nationwide over three months. They monitored approximately 140,000 food decisions regarding 71 vegetable dishes categorized into taste-focused, health-focused, or neutral labels. These dishes were served consistently on the same day of the week with identical accompanying food options, differing only in their labels. Taste-focused

labels highlighted specific flavors or preparation methods, often invoking positive experiences through terms like excitement, indulgence, tradition, or geographic references. In contrast, health-focused labels emphasized nutritional qualities and health benefits, while neutral labels were less descriptive. The results revealed that taste-focused labels increased vegetable selection by 29% compared to health-focused labels and by 14% compared to neutral labels. Moreover, at one of the schools, researchers measured actual vegetable consumption by weight and found that diners consumed 39% more vegetables when presented with taste-focused labels compared to health-focused ones. However, the effectiveness of taste-focused labeling goes beyond just appealing adjectives. A supplementary study indicated that the label must accurately convey positive flavor expectations; for example, a label like "panko parmesan crusted zucchini" performed better than a vague positive label such as "absolutely awesome zucchini." Lead researcher Turnwald emphasized this finding's significance, especially among college students, who generally have lower vegetable intake rates than other age groups. He noted that college years are crucial for establishing positive relationships with healthy eating habits as students navigate new stresses, environments, and food options (Jeniffer Huber, 2019).

Restaurateurs frequently use descriptive language to evoke sensory experiences and nostalgia, shaping customers' perceptions. Seontaik Kim (2020) indicates that dish names can influence diners' impressions of a restaurant's warmth and competence. Experiments replicated across different menu contexts, such as entrées and desserts, reveal that restaurants with sensory and nostalgic food names are perceived as offering warmer service experiences than those with more generic names. Similarly, establishments that use brand names are viewed as providing more competent service. However, variations exist in how sensory names affect warmth-related impressions in dessert menus. Additionally, this research suggests that perceptions of warmth and competence can impact anticipated satisfaction and willingness to pay, with warmth playing a more significant role in

anticipated satisfaction and competence influencing the willingness to pay more.

Shumaila Ali (2022) explores how language serves as a conduit for various facets of identity, including ethno-linguistic, socio-economic, cultural, national, religious, and political dimensions. Food choices also play a crucial role in expressing identity; for instance, a Muslim individual would typically avoid pork, while a devout Hindu would select vegetarian options. However, in upscale eateries and cafes that often represent globalization, the language used on menus can influence consumers' food selections, occasionally challenging their sense of identity in multiple ways. In examining the menu offerings of such upscale establishments in major Pakistani cities, one might experience a sense of cultural dissonance, as these menus are frequently dominated by unconventional names and dishes that do not align with local tastes or aesthetic sensibilities. Some dish names can even starkly contrast with the socio-cultural identity of Pakistani society. This study investigates the language employed on menu cards and the unconventional names assigned to dishes at fifty-five elite cafes and restaurants in Karachi, Pakistan. A total of 300 dish and beverage names were subjected to purposive sampling for linguistic analysis. The findings reveal clear signs of socio-cultural transformation, potentially leading to the erosion of local identity. Moreover, the prevalence of foreign cuisine over indigenous Pakistani fare in these establishments reflects cultural hegemony. This study underscores the necessity for the restaurant and café industry in Pakistan to reconsider their menu offerings, replacing culturally alien names with those that resonate with local Pakistani culture. Additionally, there is a call for more space on menus for Pakistani cuisine, recognizing food as a powerful symbol of culture.

Son Ngos Phan (2023) examines the linguistic and cultural aspects of dish names, analyzing their structure and the relationships between their components and meanings. He investigates how these names reflect the culinary trends of specific ethnic groups. The findings indicate that food naming involves processes such as combining, modifying, and rearranging

elements. Additionally, contemporary culinary trends increasingly align with modern lifestyle changes, emphasizing health, traditional values, and contemporary influences. His study aims to enhance the understanding of culinary language and culture by examining dish names.

Despite global interest, there is a lack of research on Pakistani, especially Baltistani restaurant menus. This study seeks to bridge that gap by linguistically analyzing dishes and beverages in the cafes and restaurants of Baltistan, emphasizing the connection between language and culture in shaping group identity

Methodology

This qualitative study explores the complex linguistic nuances surrounding dish and beverage names within the dining landscape of Baltistan. Covering a wide range of establishments, from popular cafes to busy fast-food outlets, the research employs a rigorous qualitative methodology, utilizing purposive sampling for the careful selection of venues for comprehensive analysis. These venues were thoughtfully chosen based on multiple criteria, including online visibility and their popularity among the city's dynamic young demographic. In addition to reviewing menus available online, some selections were further verified through physical visits, ensuring a well-rounded representation of the culinary landscape.

Focusing specifically on items with names that diverge from the traditional Pakistani cultural lexicon, the study aims to uncover the intricate relationship between language and culture—an interplay that significantly shapes societal ideologies. By applying purposive sampling techniques, a total of 53 dish and beverage names were rigorously analyzed linguistically to reveal underlying patterns and themes.

At the core of this investigation is the recognition of restaurants' intentional efforts to create evocative names that not only identify dishes but also serve as vehicles for storytelling and cultural expression. These unique titles often transcend mere labeling, capturing the essence of the dish, its cultural heritage, or engaging in playful wordplay and puns to enchant and engage diners. Through a detailed examination of the linguistic elements of these culinary creations, the study aims to provide valuable insights into how language serves as a medium for cultural expression and social discourse within the gastronomic context, particularly in the vibrant dining scene of Baltistan.

Data Analysis

For our research study, we collected data from various restaurants and cafes in Baltistan to identify unique and distinctive food items. The establishments included in our study are Shangrilla Resort Skardu, Khoj Resort Skardu, Rafsal Hotel Skardu, Shahi Dewan Skardu, Work Chef Skardu, Byarsa Hotel Skardu, BFC Skardu, MFC Skardu, Haks Hotel, Say-One Skardu, Serena Shigar, Skyway Pizza Skardu, Rahat Pizza, and Chainomy Skardu.

We conducted a comprehensive analysis of the qualitative data gathered from these venues, focusing on their menus, which showcase unusual and distinctive dish names. Additionally, we examined the implications of these naming practices on the local identity of the region.

Geographical Labels Focusing on Non-Native Identity (18 instances):

Items: Afghani Beef, Beef Afghani Boti, Chicken Dhaka, French Fries, Sausage Milano Pasta, Texas Beef Burger, Mexican Beef Burger, Dhaka Fries, Grilled Atlantic Fish, Szechuan Chicken, Shanghai Fish, Turkish Boti, Mongolian Chicken, Russian Salad, Arabian Hot Soup, Chicken Bihari Boti, Thai Chicken Clear Soup with Cracker, and American Hot Soup.

Analysis: The use of geographical labels in describing food items is a common strategy that reflects a growing trend towards globalized culinary experiences. By incorporating these names, restaurants aim to evoke a sense of exoticism and authenticity, appealing to consumers who associate these dishes with foreign or traditional cultures. This geographical labeling encompasses a broad spectrum, ranging from local to international, highlighting the fusion of diverse culinary influences within the dining scene.

Implications:

1.   **Cultural Appeal:** The use of geographical labels on menu items signals to

customers that the restaurant offers a diverse and eclectic range of dishes. This can create an impression of a cosmopolitan dining experience, where patrons feel they are exploring global cuisines. The inclusion of internationally recognized food names may suggest a higher level of sophistication, attracting diners who seek out unique culinary experiences that reflect a broader cultural palette.

2. Exoticism: The exotic nature of these names can serve as a powerful draw for customers seeking something beyond standard fare. Dishes labeled with geographical origins or unique descriptors can evoke curiosity and excitement, encouraging diners to step out of their comfort zones. This allure of the unknown can transform a routine meal into an adventure, making the dining experience feel more memorable and special. As a result, restaurants can cultivate a clientele that values novelty and is eager to try new flavors and preparations.

3. Authenticity Perception: Geographical labels can significantly enhance the perceived authenticity of a dish, even if the preparation methods diverge from traditional practices. For example, a dish labeled as "Afghani Beef" might lead customers to assume it embodies the true flavors and techniques of Afghan cuisine, regardless of whether the restaurant adheres strictly to authentic recipes. This perception of authenticity can strengthen the dish's appeal, enticing consumers who are increasingly interested in experiencing global flavors.

4. Consumer Perceptions: Customers often associate dishes with the quality and authenticity implied by their names. When they see food items labeled with regional descriptors, they may anticipate specific flavors, ingredients, and cooking styles characteristic of the mentioned cuisine. This can create expectations regarding taste and presentation, leading diners to judge the restaurant's overall quality based on whether their experience aligns with those expectations. Additionally, the names may influence their willingness to pay a premium, as diners might feel that they are investing in

a more authentic or high-quality dining experience.

Glorification of Deviant Lifestyle (12 instances):
Items: Chicken Jalfrezi, Club Soda, Club Sandwich, Margherita Pizza, Neapolitan Chicken, Athlete's Meal Salad, Chardonnay Beef Steak, Royal Chicken Supermo, Crown Crust, Chicken Supermo, Sky Fiesta, and Tower Burger.

Analysis: The naming of these dishes employs terms that evoke indulgence, luxury, and a departure from conventional dining norms. This strategic approach appeals to consumers' aspirations for unique and extravagant experiences. By incorporating terms that suggest opulence or a sense of adventure, these menu items position themselves as more than just food; they offer an experience that aligns with a lifestyle characterized by enjoyment and self-indulgence.
For example, names like "Chardonnay Beef Steak" and "Royal Chicken Supermo" suggest a premium quality and an elevated dining experience, while titles like "Tower Burger" and "Sky Fiesta" create a sense of excitement and grandeur. This trend toward extravagant naming not only captures the attention of diners but also caters to their desire for meals that feel special and memorable. Consequently, this approach can drive customer engagement and loyalty, as patrons seek out these distinctive offerings to satisfy their cravings for both novelty and indulgence.

Implications:
1. Indulgence Appeal: The use of extravagant names suggests that the dishes are rich, luxurious, or gourmet, effectively attracting consumers in search of a special treat or a sense of exclusivity. Diners are often willing to indulge themselves, especially on occasions when they want to celebrate or enjoy a unique culinary experience. This allure of indulgence can increase the likelihood of customers opting for these items, as they are perceived as a reward or an escape from the mundane.
2. Modern and Trendy: Names that convey a sense of modernity and trendiness resonate particularly well with younger

demographics, who are often drawn to contemporary lifestyles and experiences. By marketing dishes with names that feel fresh and innovative, restaurants can engage a clientele that values not only the food itself but also the overall dining experience. This alignment with current trends can help establishments remain relevant and appealing in a competitive market.

3. Diversity in Choices: Offering a range of dishes with indulgent names allows restaurants to cater to varied tastes and dietary preferences, including those seeking 'cheat' meals or more decadent options. This diversity can enhance customer satisfaction, as diners feel that their cravings for both indulgent and healthy choices are being met. Additionally, it allows restaurants to attract a broader audience, as they can provide something for everyone—whether it's a rich burger or a lighter salad.

4. Consumer Perceptions: Dishes with glamorous names are often perceived as high-calorie, luxurious, or gourmet, influencing how consumers approach their dining choices. Patrons might view these offerings as opportunities for special dining experiences or deviations from their everyday eating habits. This perception can create a positive association with the restaurant, as customers may see it as a place where they can treat themselves to something extraordinary. Furthermore, the expectation of a memorable dining experience can enhance their overall satisfaction and increase the likelihood of return visits.

Brand Labels to Promote Class Consciousness (15 instances):
Items: Khoj Special Soup, Khoj Special Halva, Rafsal Special, BFC Biryani, BFC Special Chicken, King Kababish, King Beef, King special, Zing Zang Burger, Say One Special, Haks Special Honey Crispy Chicken, Skyway Special Pizza, Skyway Creamy Wings, Shangrilla Special Spicy Paneer Tikka, and Rahat Special Pizza.

Analysis:
The use of distinctive brand-specific labels serves as an effective marketing strategy that aims to cultivate a strong brand identity and foster a sense of class consciousness among patrons. By associating unique names with each dish, the restaurant not only differentiates its offerings from competitors but also enhances its overall appeal. These carefully crafted labels contribute to a memorable dining experience, establishing a unique character for the restaurant and its culinary creations. This strategy not only promotes brand loyalty but also invites customers to engage more deeply with the menu, elevating their dining experience beyond mere sustenance to an exploration of the restaurant's identity.

Implications:
1. Brand Identity: Naming dishes after the restaurant or specific brand names is an effective strategy for establishing a strong and memorable brand identity. This approach allows the restaurant to create a distinct personality that sets it apart from competitors. When customers see a dish labeled with a unique name tied to the restaurant, it reinforces brand recognition and fosters familiarity, making it easier for patrons to remember and recommend the establishment to others.

2. Exclusivity and Quality: The choice of distinctive names can convey a sense of exclusivity and uniqueness, suggesting that the dish is a signature or special offering. This perception not only enhances the perceived value of the dishes but also attracts customers looking for unique dining experiences. When patrons believe they are enjoying something special or not easily found elsewhere, they are more likely to view the dish as high quality, often justifying a premium price point.

3. Customer Loyalty: By employing this branding strategy, restaurants can effectively foster customer loyalty. When diners associate specific names with enjoyable meals and positive experiences, they are more likely to return to the restaurant. This connection goes beyond the food itself; it taps into the emotions and memories associated with dining at the establishment, creating a sense of belonging and attachment that can keep customers coming back.

4. Consumer Perceptions: The use of unique names can shape consumer perceptions significantly. Customers may view these specially named dishes as exclusive to the restaurant, creating a sense of intrigue and desire to try them. This exclusivity can also lead to a perception of superior quality and attentive service, as diners often associate creative branding with an establishment that takes pride in its offerings. Consequently, customers may be more inclined to share their experiences with others, further enhancing the restaurant's reputation and attracting new patrons. Ultimately, this branding approach can significantly influence how consumers perceive the overall dining experience and the establishment itself.

Use of Terms That Sound Abhorring and Violent (8 instances):
Items: Wild Mushroom Chicken, Dynamite Chicken, Wild Mushroom Beef, Dynamite Fries, Dynamite Dings, Fish Cracker, Dragon chicken, and Sandwich Loaded Fries.

Analysis:
The incorporation of aggressive or intense descriptors in menu names serves as a strategic tactic to evoke bold flavors and adventurous dining experiences. By using evocative language, restaurants can capture the attention of potential diners, setting their offerings apart from more conventional or understated options. These striking descriptors not only pique curiosity but also suggest a heightened level of excitement and intensity associated with the dishes.

Furthermore, the use of violent imagery can emphasize the strength, uniqueness, and distinctiveness of the dishes. This approach invites customers to step out of their comfort zones, encouraging them to try something that promises to be memorable and thrilling. The aggressive language can create a sense of anticipation, positioning the restaurant as a place where culinary boundaries are pushed, and bold flavors reign supreme. Overall, this strategy enhances the overall dining experience by framing the menu as an adventurous journey, appealing to those who seek excitement and novelty in their culinary choices

Implications:
1. Bold Flavor Profile: Names that evoke violence or intensity can strongly imply that the dish features robust, bold flavors or offers an exciting culinary experience. This suggests that diners can expect a dynamic taste that stands out, enticing those who crave powerful and impactful flavors.

2. Attention-Grabbing: Such evocative names are often memorable and eye-catching, effectively attracting customers who are curious or seeking something beyond the ordinary. This approach can help the restaurant differentiate its menu in a crowded marketplace, drawing in diners who are intrigued by the promise of intensity.

3. Adventurous Appeal: Descriptors that convey a sense of adventure appeal to diners who enjoy trying new and unconventional foods. This adventurous spirit can enhance the dining experience, encouraging patrons to step out of their comfort zones and explore bold flavor combinations that they might not typically choose.

4. Consumer Perceptions: Dishes with intense or violent names may lead consumers to anticipate that they will be spicy, flavorful, or unique. This expectation can create an aura of excitement around the meal, positioning it as a more thrilling or challenging option. Additionally, diners might associate these names with a daring and adventurous eating experience, increasing their willingness to try something that promises a memorable culinary journey. This heightened perception can contribute to a stronger overall dining experience, as customers feel they are engaging in something special and noteworthy.

Use of Names of Foreign Fictional and Fairy Tale Characters (1 instance)
Item: Hakuna Matata
Analysis
The incorporation of names derived from foreign fictional or fairy tale characters, while less common, can be a compelling strategy for evoking nostalgia, familiarity, and cultural connections. By referencing

well-known characters, restaurants tap into the emotional resonance that these figures hold for many diners. This can transport customers back to cherished memories of childhood stories, films, or cultural narratives, creating a deeper emotional engagement with the dishes.

Such names can also foster a sense of familiarity, making the menu more approachable and relatable to customers. When diners recognize a beloved character, it can pique their interest and encourage them to explore the associated dish. Furthermore, these references can provide cultural connections that resonate with diverse audiences, allowing the restaurant to celebrate and honor various cultural backgrounds through its menu.

Ultimately, using names from fictional or fairy tale characters can enrich the dining experience by weaving storytelling into the culinary journey. This approach not only enhances the appeal of the dishes but also invites customers to share in the narrative, making the meal more memorable and meaningful.

Implications:

Nostalgia and Familiarity: This naming strategy leverages familiar references to attract customers by invoking a sense of nostalgia. By associating dishes with beloved characters, restaurants can create an atmosphere of comfort and fun, making the dining experience feel more inviting and relatable. This familiarity can help to ease decision-making, encouraging diners to choose a dish that resonates with their memories.

Cultural Appeal: Names derived from foreign fictional or fairy tale characters tap into rich cultural narratives and popular culture, appealing to fans of the source material. This connection can enhance the restaurant's identity and create a unique theme, drawing in customers who appreciate these cultural references and may be eager to explore the related culinary offerings.

Consumer Perceptions: Consumers may feel a personal connection to dishes named after characters or stories, which can enhance their interest and willingness to try them. These names often evoke a playful or whimsical image, transforming the dining experience into something more enjoyable and memorable. This playful approach can also encourage social sharing, as diners may be more inclined to discuss and recommend dishes with imaginative names to friends and family, further amplifying the restaurant's appeal.

Findings:
Prevalence of Geographical Labels
The analysis identified 15 instances of geographical labels, such as "Afghani Beef" and "Szechuan Chicken," used to emphasize non-native identities. These labels are common in restaurant menus and serve to evoke a sense of exoticism and authenticity. This trend reflects the globalization of culinary experiences, appealing to consumers' curiosity and desire for diverse tastes.

- **Cultural Representation:** These geographical names enhance the perceived authenticity and sophistication of the menu, tapping into cultural narratives and global culinary trends.

- **Consumer Perceptions:** Customers often associate these dishes with quality and traditional cooking methods, anticipating authentic flavors and high-quality ingredients.

Glorification of Deviant Lifestyle
The analysis revealed 12 instances where terms suggesting indulgence or a departure from traditional dietary norms were employed, including names like "Royal Chicken Supermo" and "Chardonnay Beef Steak." This strategy appeals to consumers seeking unique or luxurious dining experiences, often perceived as a 'treat' or a special occasion meal.

- **Marketing Strategy:** These names create an allure of luxury and exclusivity, targeting those looking for indulgent options.

- **Demographic Appeal:** This approach is particularly attractive to younger, trend-conscious demographics who are open to experimenting with their diets.

Brand Labels to Promote Class Consciousness

The analysis noted 14 instances of brand-specific names, such as "BFC Biryani" and "King Kababish," utilized to establish a strong brand identity and promote class consciousness. This tactic helps differentiate the restaurant's offerings and build a loyal customer base.

• **Brand Identity and Loyalty:** These names contribute to a unique and recognizable brand image, fostering customer loyalty and perceived value.

• **Perceived Quality:** Associating dishes with the brand name signals higher quality or unique recipes, enhancing customer expectations and satisfaction.

Use of Terms That Sound Abhorring and Violent

The analysis revealed 8 instances of names like "Dynamite Chicken" and "Wild Mushroom Beef." These descriptors are likely intended to suggest bold flavors or an adventurous eating experience.

• **Attention-Grabbing:** Such names stand out on a menu and attract attention, appealing to consumers seeking excitement or strong flavors.

• **Consumer Expectations:** Customers may expect these dishes to be particularly flavorful, spicy, or intense. Names suggesting aggression can appeal to adventurous diners, promising a thrilling culinary experience.

Use of Names of Foreign Fictional and Fairy Tale Characters

The analysis highlighted the single instance of "Hakuna Matata," showcasing the use of cultural references to evoke familiarity and nostalgia. Although less common, this strategy can be effective in creating a playful and memorable dining experience.

• **Nostalgia and Cultural Appeal:** This approach can attract customers through comforting and familiar references, adding a fun element to the dining experience.

• **Consumer Engagement:** Such names can forge a positive emotional connection, enhancing the overall dining experience and encouraging diners to share their experiences with others.

Discussion:

The findings indicate that menu naming conventions go beyond merely describing a dish; they serve as a powerful tool for influencing consumer perceptions and behaviors. These naming strategies not only reflect but also shape cultural narratives, appeal to specific demographics, and enhance brand identity.

Cultural and Social Dynamics:

The use of geographical and fictional names mirrors broader cultural trends and the ongoing globalization of food. By incorporating these names, restaurants can effectively position themselves within a larger culinary landscape, making them more relatable to diverse audiences. This strategy allows establishments to celebrate various cultural influences, fostering an appreciation for global cuisine and enhancing the overall dining experience.

Marketing and Branding:

The strategic employment of brand labels and evocative names that resonate with specific lifestyles or emotions can significantly impact consumer loyalty and perceptions of quality. Such branding efforts help create a distinct restaurant identity, enabling establishments to differentiate themselves in a competitive market. By cultivating a strong brand presence through naming conventions, restaurants can effectively attract and retain customers who identify with the brand's values and offerings.

Consumer Expectations:

Understanding how different naming conventions affect consumer expectations is crucial for restaurants seeking to tailor their offerings and marketing strategies. By recognizing the associations that specific names can evoke—such as luxury, authenticity, or excitement—restaurants can better align their menus with customer preferences. This tailored approach not only enhances customer satisfaction but also

encourages repeat visits, as diners feel their expectations are being met and exceeded.

Conclusion

By examining the cultural and marketing dimensions of menu names, this research emphasizes the significance of thoughtful and strategic naming within the food industry. It underscores how carefully crafted menu titles significantly influence consumer expectations, enhance dining experiences, and foster brand loyalty. This study specifically investigates the linguistic and cultural aspects of menu naming strategies in cafes and restaurants in Baltistan, illustrating how these names shape consumer perceptions and behaviors.

The analysis reveals that prevalent tactics include the use of geographical labels, terms glorifying deviant lifestyles, brand-specific names, and descriptors that suggest bold or intense flavors. These naming conventions not only serve to attract attention and appeal to diverse consumer demographics but also play a crucial role in reflecting and shaping cultural narratives and identities.

However, the findings also suggest that such practices may lead to a perceived dilution of local cultural identity, especially in the context of globalization and cultural imperialism. This insight highlights the need for the restaurant industry to carefully navigate the balance between innovation and cultural authenticity, ensuring that menu names resonate with local traditions and values.

The implications for the restaurant sector are clear: there is a necessity to balance creative and culturally relevant names to maintain authenticity and connection to the local community. Future studies could further explore the impact of menu language on consumer psychology and cultural identity across different regions and contexts, providing a deeper understanding of the intricate interplay between food, culture, and commerce. This exploration could yield valuable insights for restaurateurs aiming to enhance their branding strategies while respecting and celebrating the unique cultural landscapes in which they operate.

Recommendations:

Based on the data analysis, the following recommendations aim to create a harmonious balance between food, language, and culture in the restaurant industry:

1.   Cultural Sensitivity in Menu Naming:
Restaurants should carefully consider the cultural and religious significance of certain foods when naming dishes. By avoiding names that may offend or alienate specific cultural or religious groups, establishments can enhance customer inclusivity and create a more comfortable dining environment.

2.   Promote Local Cuisine:
To preserve and celebrate local culinary heritage, restaurants in Baltistan and similar regions should prioritize including traditional Pakistani dishes on their menus. This approach can help counteract the dilution of local identity while providing tourists with authentic cultural experiences that enrich their understanding of the region.

3.   Strategic Use of Foreign Names:
While incorporating foreign dish names can appeal to a diverse clientele and suggest a sense of exoticism, it's essential to balance this with representations of local flavors. This strategy can attract a broader customer base while respecting and honoring local cultural norms, fostering a more inclusive dining experience.

4.   Impact of Descriptive Language:
Restaurants should focus on utilizing descriptive language that highlights the taste, quality, and preparation of the dishes rather than resorting to names that suggest violence or excessive indulgence. This approach can contribute to a more appealing and sophisticated dining atmosphere, enhancing the overall experience for customers.

5.   Avoid Stereotypical or Simplistic Branding:
The use of brand-specific labels should be approached with care to avoid reinforcing class distinctions or stereotypes. Instead, restaurants should aim to create a brand identity that emphasizes quality, uniqueness, and cultural richness, allowing the establishment to resonate with a wider audience without alienating any particular group.

6. Collaboration with Local Communities:

Engaging with local communities in the development of menus can ensure that the offerings are respectful and reflective of local culture. This collaboration fosters community support and enhances the authenticity of the dining experience, allowing restaurants to build stronger connections with their patrons.

By implementing these recommendations, restaurants can effectively navigate the complex interplay between food, language, and culture, creating dining experiences that are both enriching and respectful of local traditions.

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