

A Comparative Evaluation of Classic and Signature Cocktails

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Abstract

One of the latest market trends observed lately, in bars, is all about the signature cocktails. Almost every bar has a cocktail menu precisely signature cocktails which generally portrays the theme, if any, culture, uniqueness, etc. of a bar. It has now become one of the greatest attractions as these cocktails can be revamped seasonally, occasionally, etc. Even the bartenders keep coming up with new recipes if the guests order them to make something innovative, which is not common, not regular however to come up with these signature cocktails, classic cocktails are the base or are fundamental aspect. Bartenders can easily twist the original recipe or simply create a customized recipe just by keeping the basic/base recipe in mind. In India, especially after the pandemic, it was noticed that the drinking culture gained popularity as wine shops were the primary consideration for gaining quick revenue, post which it was also observed that the wine shops or the places serving alcohol i.e. bars were found in every corner or at every specific interval of the city. Now almost all of the bars have cocktail menus be it classic, signature, or both. This research will help us to recognize which cocktails are most preferred by the guests.

Keywords: Cocktail, Classic Cocktail, Signature Cocktail, Need, USP (Unique Selling Point), Customize, Demand, Bar, Mixologist/Bartender, Menu

INTRODUCTION

Signature cocktails are a part of a bar menu almost everywhere, this is one of the latest innovations that the beverage industry is experiencing. This is a great way to reflect the theme of a restaurant, the creativity of the mixologists, and offer a unique blend of recipes that will only be available in a particular bar which will make guests come back to the same place to have it next time. Signature cocktails are highly in demand as customers love to explore new cocktail variations and on the other

hand, even bars want these cocktails to be a part of the beverage menu. It is true to believe that these signature cocktails are impossible to come into existence without Classic cocktails as these recipes act as base recipes for almost all cocktails in some way or another (Charming, 2015).

<i>Types of Cocktail</i>	<i>Description</i>
Classic	Recipes made in ancient times or history are mentioned first in the book Ultimate Bartenders Guide (1862 by Jerry Thomas) world's very first cocktail recipe book.
Twisted	Slightly changing ancient recipes where one ingredient can be replaced/substituted with another, a popular concept during the US prohibition period.
Signature/ Contemporary	Customized recipes made considering classic cocktails, identified first at the beginning of the 21 st century and are now one of the latest booming trends in post-pandemic.

(Hudson, 1806) One of the first cocktail definitions appeared in the year 1806 in New York's publication "The Balance and Columbian Repository" where it was defined as a stimulating spirit made with any kind of spirit, sugar, bitter, and water.

(Wells, 2006) Jerry Thomas, the father of American Mixology and the world's first celebrity bartender, based in America, gave the world its first bartending book, How to Mix Drinks in 1862, having the recipes of classic cocktails, the second edition of 1876 had twisted recipes which included variations of classic cocktails. (Saloon keeper and Bartender) He also owned the world's first

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Saloon where he served the cocktails which he made himself. Later the year 1920, during the US Prohibition period, is considered a golden era both for bartenders and for cocktails where cocktail culture boomed inside speakeasy bars which was just the beginning for signature cocktails and, to date, there is no end. It is also observed that there's a great response towards signature cocktails and these cocktails are loved by all the guests.

Cocktails (Tim Warren, 2022) It is a drink made with a combination of two or more alcoholic drinks predominating from each other. In history, there are so many speculations, about the origin of cocktails.

Three Conditions for Successful Cocktails

For a cocktail to become popular with a wide range of people and make its own identity there are three conditions:

- *Taste*: For better taste, naturally the choice and measure of ingredients must be right. All the aromas must complement each other. Usually practice of mixing spirits made from the same basic elements should be followed. Mixing light spirits with aged spirits isn't a very good idea as aromas of aged spirits may get hampered with neutral spirits. This principle may not be applicable for long drinks like LIIT's.
- *Appearance*: Cocktails should be always attractive, and excessive decorations should be avoided. One can also consider different results that can be obtained using the same ingredient.
- *Name*: It is an essential component of a cocktail as it stimulates the imagination, and eventually the customer will figure out the hidden meaning behind it. It can indicate the degree of alcohol in a cocktail or whether it is non-alcoholic if it was invented for a particular occasion or in honour of an important person.

Methods of Mixing Drinks (The History of Cocktail Drinks, 2018)

- *Shaken*: Shaking not only mixes the drink but also chills and dilutes it. It is important to the resulting cocktail as we should use the right amount of each

ingredient. If the ice is used in small quantities it will quickly melt in your shaker making over diluted cocktail, so always use 2/3rd of your shaker with fresh ice. Losing grip while shaking will make you look embarrassed so always hold your shaker with both hands. Never shake fizzy ingredients.

- *Stirred*: If the recipe calls for you to stir with ice and strain, stir in a mixing glass with a bar spoon. Place ice and ingredients in a mixing glass, slide the spoon down the mixing glass, and twirl gently between the thumb and finger. The spoon with rotate inside the mixing glass, gently stirring the drink. Strain the drink into a serving glass using a hawthorn strainer and if required double strain using a conical strainer.
- *Blended*: When the recipe calls to blend with ice, put all the ingredients along with lots of ice in a blender and blend until smooth, and even consistency is achieved. Ideally one should pour all the ingredients into the blender and then add ice, if one is using a variable-speed blender always start slow and then build up.
- *Muddled*: It means pummelling fruits, herbs, and spices with a muddler to crush and release juices & oils. As using a pestle and motor, push down on the muddler with a twisting action. Only attempt to muddle in a shaker or a suitably sturdy glass. Never attempt to muddle hard and unripe fruits in a glass as the pressure applied to muddle the ingredient could break the glass causing injury.
- *Layered*: As the name says, layered drinks include layering of different ingredients of contrasting colours and different densities. The effect is achieved by carefully pouring each beverage into a glass and on top of another beverage so that it floats over.
- *Built up*: This term refers to making a cocktail by combining the ingredients in the glass in which it's going to be served.

Preparation Method of Glass (Tim Warren, 2022)

- *Chilling*: Fill the glass with ice water for a minute then empty the glass before pouring the drink.
- *Frosting*: Usually beer mugs are frosted; keep the glass in the freezer.

- *Rimming*: Also called flavouring, dip the rim of the glass in lemon juice or syrup then in salt, grated chocolates, coloured sugar, etc.

Garnish

- *Edible*: Garnishes that can be eaten.
- *Non Edible*: Garnishes that can't be eaten.

Golden Rules for Making Cocktails (Godwin, 2015)

- All the equipment used must be clean and odour free.
- Use ice in an appropriate form, never use the same ice twice.
- Always start with cheap ingredients and measure it.
- Ensure serving glasses are chilled.
- Ensure the ingredients used are of the best quality.
- Clean the shaker after each use, and serve immediately after the beverage is ready.
- The beverage should be properly balanced in terms of flavour, so taste the beverage before serving.
- Use a large shaker and shake vigorously to ensure the mixing of all the ingredients.

Through this study, the researcher will find out the perception of the guests towards both Classic well as Signature cocktails concerning the preference of cocktails as per age, pricing, presentation, need for signature cocktails in the bar menu, taste, name, etc. This will help the researcher to better understand which type of cocktail should be present in the bar menu.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Murphy, 2007) The article here talks about the importance of having signature cocktails on the bar menu. Having them in the menu makes the menu complete and almost all of the famous bars have signature cocktails which have gained popularity all around the world and attracted millions of visitors. It is an amalgamation of all the sources that are available to make or design signature cocktails, therefore it is now mandatory to have a signature cocktail on a bar menu.

(Felten, 2022) The author of this article is trying to explain how signature cocktails becomes a modern classic and talks about all the challenges that come in the way of mixologists, recipe, and a lot of other situations. Once all the challenges are settled the cocktail finally becomes a modern classic as it easily makes its way into the cocktail recipe books, and eventually, everyone knows about it.

(Agarwal, 2013) Here the researcher talks about how the classic cocktails are made using different spirits, methods, liqueurs, syrups, etc. Here she picks the top 10 classic cocktails and states how a mixologists can twist a classic recipe and create a new variation of the same recipe based on the customer's preference. She carefully finds out what variations can be done in a particular cocktail to make it palatable which can be further implemented in most of the recipes.

(Petraske, 2016) The author of this fantastic book is a bartender himself who took the bartending culture to a new level with a speakeasy bar named Milk & Honey. In this book, he mentions 85 classic & signature cocktails from his collection from the bartenders he trained himself. He carefully writes how to make these cocktails, which ingredients can be substituted, how the cocktail can be easily made, etc. with the intention that everyone can make cocktails easily at home.

(Michelle Dey, 2013) This article talks about how beverage preference is associated with a few psychological factors. This study was conducted in Switzerland which mostly is a wine-forward country but as per the conclusion, beer was the most preferred beverage associated with risky drinking patterns as it is quite affordable.

(Fowler, The Transformation of Occupations: A Case Study of Professionalism in Cocktail Bartending, 2017) This is a very interesting research where the researcher found bartending to be one of the emerging professions specifically in Mixology. As per her research, she concluded stating it is one of the highly skilled professional who requires various skill sets, specialized knowledge and cocktail making expertise because of which he is highly trusted and rarely criticised.

(Anna K. M. Blackwell, 2020) Here the authors are helping us to find out which types of beverages Alcoholic and Non-Alcoholic are most preferred by the people. The conclusion was derived based on detailed research where respondents preferred non-alcoholic beverages which

mostly were a mock of alcoholic beverages as well as regularly available alcoholic beverages.

(How to Produce a Profitable Cocktail Menu) In this article the author focuses on various aspects to consider while creating a bar menu like the number of cocktail choices offered in the menu, offering the right recipe, using attractive images, pricing, the theme of the bar, training mixologists to prepare cocktails as per menu, designing the menu, etc. This is a great piece of help for one planning to create a menu.

(resraurantindia, 2019) In this article, the author interviews Award-winning Mixologist Rohan Matmarey who has a huge amount of industry experience. In an interview, he talks about the beverage industry as it never goes out of fashion and is only going to grow, he also says that millennials prefer gin and whiskey as the base of their cocktails and demand for an attractive presentation to hype their social media platforms.

(Puri, 2019) The author of this article also runs the cocktail community page on social media platforms. In this article, she talks about how the bartending culture is evolving and consumers are now moving away from classic cocktails and looking for signature cocktails. It is a very creative journey for mixologists to come up with innovative recipes as people prefer cocktails more than flaring. She also mentions a few of the emerging cocktail trends in the industry. She concludes by saying Mixology is the new trend.

(Katie, 2019) In this beautiful article, the author explains the need to have signature cocktails on the bar menu as it helps the bar to stand out from others, it is unique to a specific bar, it reflects several presentations and tastes that will make the guest come back to the same outlet to have it another time, unlike classic cocktails which are available everywhere. She also mentions signature cocktails are a great way to communicate with the customers without talking.

(Thacker, 2019) In this article, the author carefully explains the factors to consider while pricing the menu i.e. landing cost and pouring cost for both alcoholic beverages and non-alcoholic beverages along with portion control, fresh juices & customer base, required for making cocktails. Further to this menu engineering should be done to add profit margins.

(Bland, 2022) The author of this article writes a beautiful blog on top trends in the industry where one can understand what is lately, happening in the beverage industry. Here she talks about how the spirit industry picked up during the pandemic and how it thriving to date, it has a bright future. She also mentions trends like dark spirits are highly preferred as a cocktail base, the non-alcoholic beverage industry is also contributing high revenue, huge options in craft/premium brands, Kombucha & Mead gaining popularity, cannabis-infused beverages launching in the market, botanical flavour preferred in the cocktails, etc.

Research Gap

In the above reviews, it is quite clear that there is a lot of study that goes behind making cocktails be they classics or signature, and the bartender is a crucial entity to ultimately curate this cocktail. The above reviews also help us to understand how important it is to have signature cocktails on the menu, however, this research focuses on which type of cocktails are preferred by the guests.

OBJECTIVES

- To Analyze the concept of cocktails.
- To Identify the need for signature cocktails on the menu.
- To Compare classic cocktails with signature cocktails.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For this research primary data was acquired by circulating a questionnaire designed to understand the preference. The questionnaire was divided into two components. The first component focused on understanding the need for signature cocktails on the bar menu and the second focused on ordering preference & comparative analysis between classic and signature cocktails. To conduct the following research random sampling method was followed where the data collected was recorded by 108 respondents and the questionnaire was circulated to nearly 250 people. To collect this data the researcher also met guests at various bars where the questionnaire/survey form was printed on paper and manually filled by the respondents. This activity is limited to Pune city where researcher visited nearly 18-20 bars, serving both cocktails, to collect the data for comparative study.

Data Interpretation

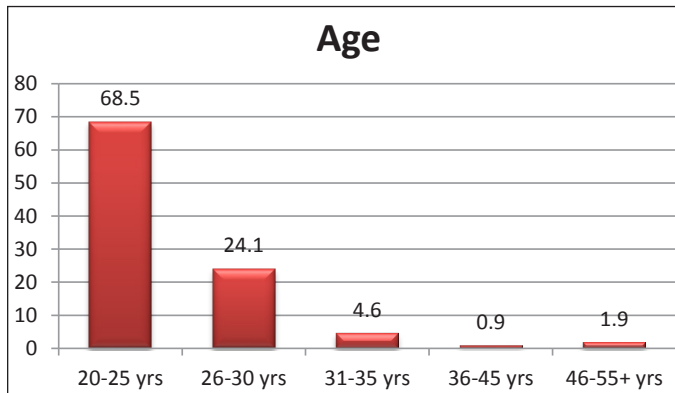


Fig. 1: Age Group of Respondents

According to the data collected the majority of respondents (68%) belong to the age group of 20-25 years. Furthermore (24%) respondents belong to age group of 26-30 years followed by (5%) belonging to the age group of 31-35 years, while (1%) respondents belong to 36-45 years. Finally (2%) respondents belong to the age group of 46-55 years and above.

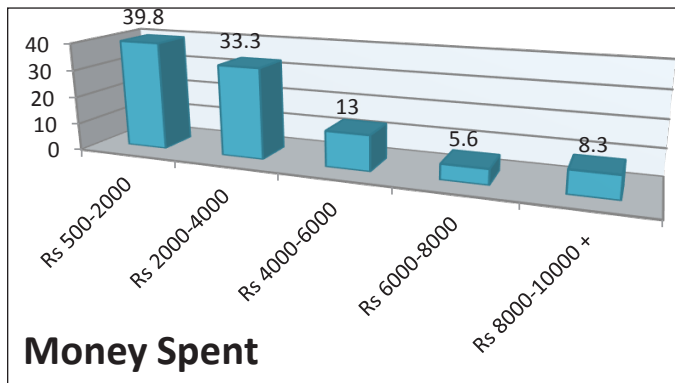


Fig. 2: Money Spent Per Visit Per Person

The Fig. 2 states the spending capacity of respondents per visit. As per the observation, we can say that the majority of respondents (39.8%) prefer spending the amount of rupees between 500-2000, followed by (33.3%) of people prefer spending Rupees 2000-4000. We can clearly see that there is less number of respondents who prefer spending amount of rupees more than 4000 i.e. (13%) respondents prefer spending Rupees 4000-6000, (5.6%) respondents spend Rupees 6000-8000. Finally (8.3%) respondents spend Rupees 8000-10000 and above.

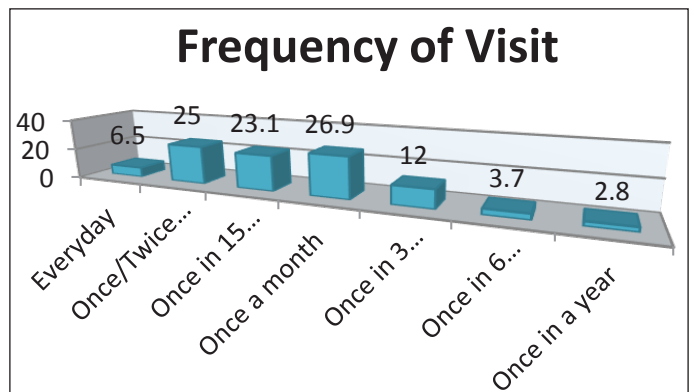


Fig. 3: Respondents Frequency of Visit

The Fig. 3 helps us to understand the frequency of respondents visiting the bar. As per the analysis of the Fig. 3 we can find out that the maximum number of respondents (27%) who prefer visiting the bars once or twice a month followed by (25%) prefer going to bars once or twice a week. Further, we can find (23%) respondents prefer going once in 15 days followed by a few respondents (12%) visiting once in three months. There are only a few respondents, who prefer going to bars everyday (6%), once in six months (4%) and finally once a year (3%).

Table 1: Correlation Between Frequency of Visit and Money Spent Per Visit

Frequency/ Spending (Rs)	500-2000	2000-4000	4000-6000	6000-8000	8000-10000+
Everyday	2	0	1	3	1
Once/Twice a week	6	13	4	2	2
Once in 15 days	10	7	5	1	2
Once a month	14	9	4	0	2
Once in 3 months	6	5	0	0	2
Once in 6 months	2	2	0	0	0
Once a year	3	0	0	0	0

As per the data collected it is observed that most of the respondents (68%) are young adults being aware of the cocncept of cocktails. Most of them prefer visiting the bar once a month or week and are comfortable spending Rs 500-4000/-.

aren't served however the bartender can still surprise a guest by creating a unique blend of cocktail.

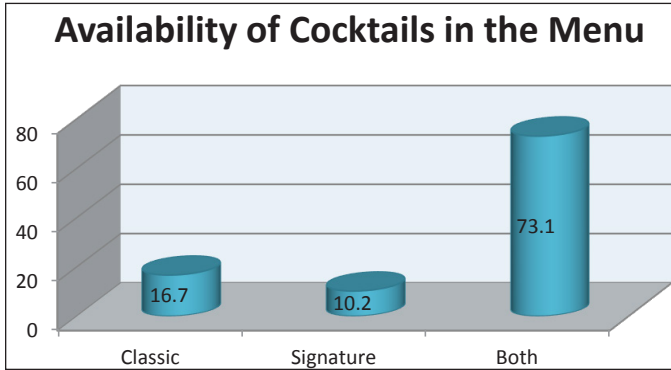


Fig. 4: Understanding the Concept of Cocktails

Fig. 4 tells us how many respondents are aware of the concept of cocktails. 99% of respondents are aware and only 1% that is 1 respondent who is not aware.

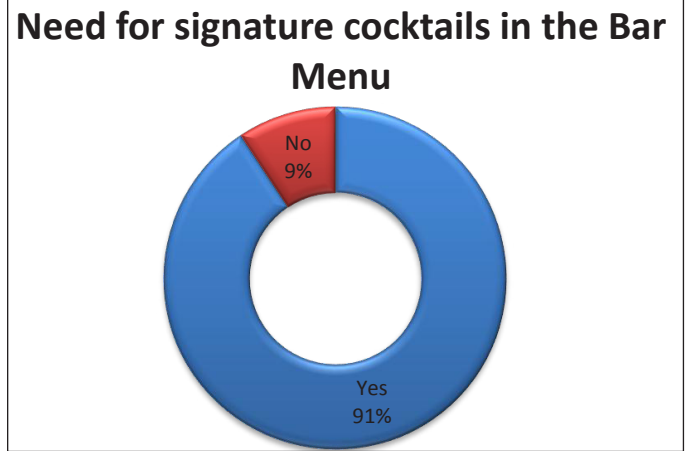


Fig. 6: Need for Signature Cocktails in the Bar Menu

The Fig. 6 helps us to understand, as per respondents, if is there a need to have signature cocktails on the bar menu where:

- (90.7%) feel YES, there is a need for signature cocktails.
- (9.3%) feel NO, signature cocktails are not needed.

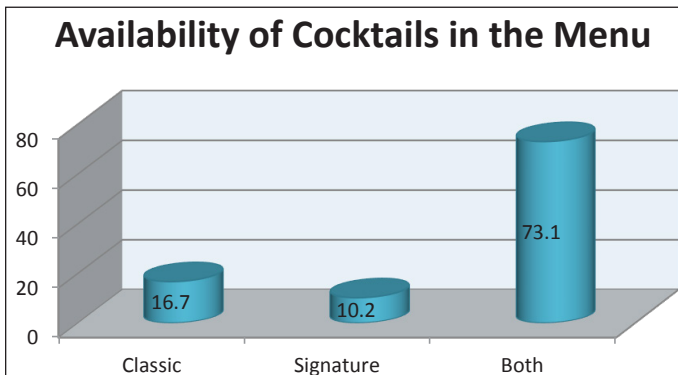


Fig. 5: Availability of Cocktails in the Bar Menu

The Fig. 5 helps us to understand which cocktails are often observed on the menu as per the chart we can clearly understand both signature and classic cocktails are observed on the menu (73.1%). Still, few bars have either one cocktail on the menu (16.7%) Classic and (10.2%) Signature.

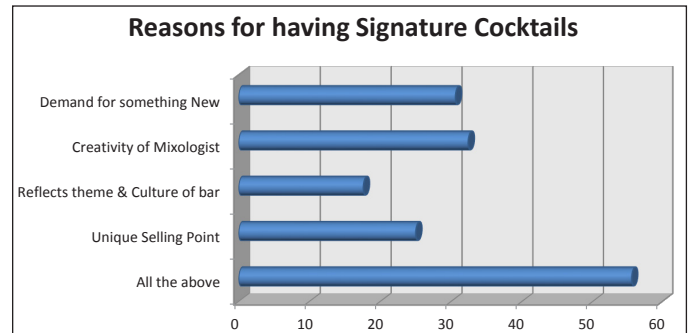


Fig. 7: Reasons to Have Signature Cocktails on the Bar Menu

The Fig. 7 tell us about what exactly is the need for signature cocktails on the bar menu. To collect these data respondents were given multiple options to select. Here most of the respondents (55.6%) feel all the given options are necessary for signature cocktails to be a part of the menu. Most of the respondents chose options individually:

- Demand for something new (30.6%).
- Unique selling point (25%).
- Reflects theme and Culture of Bar (17.6%).

Nearly more than half (73%) of respondents find both classic as well as signature cocktails on the menu. The remaining of them came across only one type of cocktail. It is observed that when only signature cocktails are observed on the menu classic cocktails are still served in the bar but when the case is reversed signature cocktails

- Creativity of Mixologist (32.4%).
- All the above (55.6%).

Respondents also shared their personal views:

- Attractive.

- They’ve stories to tell. It’s well blend of fusion & innovation. Their use is wider and their overall ethnicity.

- Classic is general, Signature defines a place.

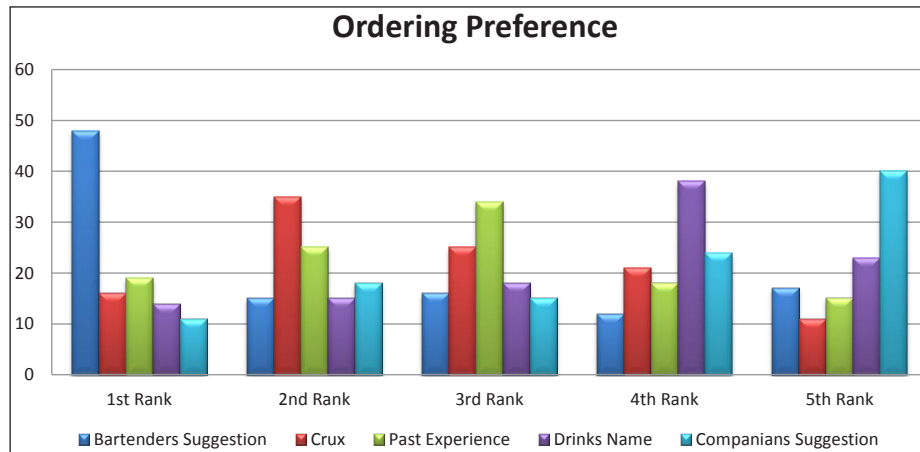


Fig. 8: Ordering Preference of Respondents

The Fig. 8 illustrates the order of rank; respondents choose to order the cocktail at the bar. As per the chart above it is quite evident maximum number of respondents.

- 48 (44.44%) rank first to order based on Bartenders Suggestion.
- 35 (32.41%) rank second to order based on Crux (Menu Description).
- 34 (31.48%) rank third to order based on Past Experience.
- 38 (35.19%) rank fourth to order based on Exploring by the Drinks Name.

- 40 (37.04%) rank fifth to order based on Companions/partners suggestion.

As per the Fig. 8 observed above respondents decide on the order based on the bartender’s suggestion followed by the menu description. It is quite obvious that the bartender will suggest the signature cocktail by asking about the preference of the guest and customising the cocktail. Respondents ranked third to order as per past experience which means the respondents liked the overall vibe and culture of cocktails experienced in the previous visits.

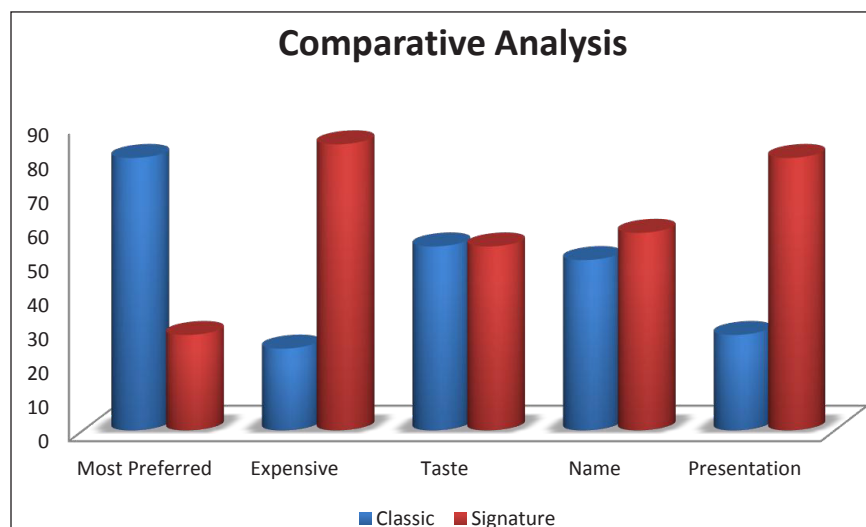


Fig. 9: Comparative Analysis Between Classic v/s Signature Cocktails

The Fig. 9 illustrates the comparative study between the aspects of Classic & Signature Cocktails. As per the Fig. 8 respondents hold their opinion as:

- 80 (74.07%) Prefer classic cocktails and 28 (25.93%) Prefer signature cocktails.
- 84 (77.78%) find signature cocktails Expensive and 24 (22.22%) find classic cocktails Expensive.
- 54 (50%) of both, Classic & Signature cocktails find an equal balance of taste.
- 58 (53.7%) find the Name interesting of signature cocktails and 50 (46.3%) find the Name interesting of classic cocktails.
- 80 (70.07%) find the Presentation/Appearance to be very attractive to signature cocktails and 28 (25.93%) find it attractive to classic cocktails.

Table 2: Correlation Between Respondents Age and Comparative Analysis

Age/Preference	GO TO	Expensive	Taste	Name	Presentation
	*C S	*C S	*C S	*C S	*C S
20-25 yrs. (69%)	55 19	21 53	37 37	34 40	22 52
26-30 yrs. (24%)	17 9	2 24	12 14	12 14	5 21
31-35 yrs. (5%)	4 1	1 4	2 3	3 2	0 5
36-45 yrs. (1%)	1 0	0 1	1 0	1 0	1 0
45-55+ yrs. (2%)	1 1	0 2	2 0	0 2	0 2

(*C= Classic; S=Signature)

Findings

- As per the data presented in the Table 1, it is quite clear that respondents commonly visit the bar once a month and prefer spending Rs 500-2000/-.
- Sticking to the latest trend of signature cocktails, respondents want the signature cocktails to be a part of the bar menu for various reasons it reflects the culture/theme of the outlet, as the menu is the mode of communication between the outlet and the guest without having to speak.
- The data as per Table 2, shows the relation between the age group of respondents and their opinion upon the cocktails. The data above states majority of respondents are young adults who prefer Classic cocktails, find Signature cocktails expensive, their names and presentations to be interesting. It is clear that most young adults live on pocket money provided by their parents because of which they may not be able to spend on signature cocktails even if they want to.
- As observed in Fig. 8, respondents ranked 1st to order cocktails based on bartenders preference which means respondents can trust bartenders to make a cocktail to the respondents preference. In this case, bartenders rarely make classic cocktails but always a signature.
- Overall it is quite clear that signature cocktails are the most trending in the market and even respondents prefer these cocktails. A lot of bars offer these cocktails on events like ladies' night and cocktails on MRP, bars can also customize these cocktails as per the festive occasion, brunches with unlimited cocktails, wine/beer + signature cocktail combo, etc.
- Almost every brand of spirit has its signature cocktail where the recipe is curated to enhance the spirit and cocktails are crafted carefully by the mixologist. Nowadays most of the craft spirit brands have an event such as a bar takeover where customized cocktails are designed and sold at special prices.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of data it is clear that respondents prefer the cocktails and they demand signature cocktails to be a part of cocktail menu what's more interesting is respondents are more inclined to have signature cocktails in the bar menu. To cater to this latest trend even the Bar ensures to have signature cocktails in the bar menu. The concept & culture of cocktails are popular in all age groups of people what is more interesting is now they demand to have signature or customized cocktails as it reflects various things just through one drink. As per the

comparative analysis, we can observe two things, Most preferred cocktails are Classic whereas Expensive are Signature. As most of the time, youth or young adults go to parties and bars, they would look for pocket-friendly options that would make them order classic cocktails. As a solution to this, it is evident that a lot of bars serve signature cocktails with the brunch menus, where food is limited but cocktails are always unlimited, there are also a lot of offers applicable on weekdays i.e. 1+1, 2+1, discounts, combos which is generally paired with food and signature cocktails or only cocktails.

Even craft spirit brands organise lots of events where they can portray spirit through their signature cocktails at pocket-friendly prices where people from all age groups can attend the event and enjoy signature cocktails. It is observed that these events generally sell huge amounts of signature cocktails earning huge revenue. Based on the same observations even the bars are having signature cocktail menu to meet their customization, creativity, and USP. If the guest happens to like the cocktail he/she is definitely returning to the same bar to have the cocktail. This, for the bar, will ensure fixed business and for the guest his/her fixed choice. Far more to this lot of mixologists have also patented their recipes of signature cocktails, unlike classic cocktails which are available everywhere, be it on the menu or not, guests can order them wherever they want and whenever they like.

Signature cocktails are a great technique followed by various bars to have the repetitive business as it is already found that in a restaurant and bar, it is always alcohol that generates more revenue than food and signature cocktails are a key to making alcohol palatable which can be curated to guests preference.

Indians especially are keen on looking at desi flavours in their cocktails which will reflect local ingredients and can make cocktails customized to their taste.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis above it is quite clear that guests are demanding signature cocktails on the bar menu and are also aware with the concept of cocktails. As signature cocktails are expensive which is why respondents prefer classic cocktails, it is highly recommended for the bartenders as well as bars to slightly reduce the prices of signature cocktails in the menu post which everyone

can buy as they will be available at affordable prices. Bartenders can also work on a few aspects of classic cocktails like presentation. Also, there can be a lot of offers attached to the signature cocktails which will help customers to buy them.

LIMITATIONS

The research conducted above limits me to circulate the questionnaire to the guests who are actually dining in the restaurants. As the privacy factor of the guests was hampered it was quite difficult to circulate the questionnaire on the field. It also limits my circulating the questionnaire to respondents staying abroad where the cocktail culture is booming.

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