

## **“A STUDY ON CONSUMER DISSONANCE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MC DONALD’S IN CHENNAI”**

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### **Abstract**

The theory of consumer dissonance concentrates on creating knowledge about important psychological processes of individuals. Specifically, it focuses on the relationships among cognitions that are elements of knowledge that people have about their behaviors, attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, feelings, or environments. Since human nature is the main subject of all social sciences, the theory has awakened interest and led to significant research in different academic domains. This study makes a thorough analysis of the theory's application in psychology, management, and marketing fields with an aim to assess the contribution of the theory to the development of knowledge in these areas. It is observed that the theory is commonly used by marketers to explain consumer behavior while its adoption in the management field to examine human related issues is considerably underdeveloped. Accordingly, the aim of this paper is to extend the literature on cognitive dissonance by discovering the under-investigated areas and pave the way for further theoretical and empirical research. Identification of existing gaps and suggestions for further scholarly inquiries are also believed to contribute to the recent efforts to regenerate interest to topic and to boost its generalizability through its greater utilization in the development of knowledge.

### **Key words:**

### **Introduction**

#### **Cognitive Dissonance**

Cognitive dissonance refers to conflicting attitudes, behaviours or beliefs, according to Simple Psychology. The theory of cognitive dissonance states that it occurs when someone holds two or more conflicting attitudes or beliefs about one product or service. Cognitive dissonance is most likely to occur after a consumer makes a purchase. Products or services that involve a high level of commitment contain a greater risk for dissonance. Examples of products with high levels of commitment include homes, vehicles and luxury vacations. Consumers may also experience dissonance prior to making a purchase. Small-business owners should be aware of why dissonance happens and ways they can help reduce it.

Cognitive dissonance may cause the customer to rationalize his/her decision. One of the ways she might accomplish this is through research. A customer who has remorse will gather more information about the product. Some customers will gather information that reaffirms their decisions. Other customers will gravitate towards information that confirms they made a mistake. Either way, the customer becomes more comfortable with keeping the product or making the decision to return it. Customers may come back to your company for information.

#### **Consumer Dissonance**

In this article the author describes a consumer-decision experiment which involved four dissonant-producing factors simultaneously. Even though the study is limited to only one product, an automobile battery, the findings provide useful insights that might be applicable to various product categories.

Dissonance theory postulates that if a person, given a choice between two equally desirable products, chooses one and rejects the other, he will experience dissonance.

The surprising phenomenon occurs in the case of frequently purchased products, such as food and personal-care items. The buyer, after establishing a routine decision process, may begin to feel bored with such repetitive decision making.

On the other hand, the consumer who has just purchased an expensive specialty good is likely to experience strong dissonance if his purchase is irrevocable and if it is important in some psychological sense.

### **Dissonance Attribution Model**

In consumer learning theory, consumers will attempt to reduce cognitive dissonance after a purchase by gathering positive, reassuring information about the product, and ultimately attributing the purchase to good judgment, rather than the influence of peers, family members, or aggressive salespeople.

**Attribution Theory** -The theory that consumer assumptions about a product or situation are derived from the consumer's experience, personality, or attitudes. For example, a consumer who has had poor experiences with domestic automobiles and a good experience with an import might attribute the quality of the import to the fact that it is not U.S.-made. Such a consumer will be predisposed toward products that emphasize their foreign origin. Similarly, a product endorsement by a celebrity who is perceived to be unethical will be attributed to the money being paid for the endorsement and not to the celebrity's honest assessment of the product.

### **Review Of Literature**

- A review by Cummings and Venkatesan (2011) marked a reduction of interest in the subject in marketing, despite their conclusion that “the evidence in favour of dissonance theory in the consumer behaviour literature looks good.
- In psychology, cognitive dissonance is the mental stress or discomfort experienced by an individual who holds two or more contradictory beliefs, ideas, or values at the same time, or is confronted by new information that conflicts with existing beliefs, ideas, or values.
- Leon Festinger's (2012) theory of cognitive dissonance focuses on how humans strive for internal consistency. When inconsistency (dissonance) is experienced, individuals largely become psychologically distressed. His basic hypotheses are listed below:
  - "The existence of dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance “.
  - "When dissonance is present, in addition to trying to reduce it, the person will actively avoid situations and information which would likely increase the dissonance.
- A simulated purchase study by Holloway (2013) examined the effects of inducement to purchase, cognitive overlap, and presence/absence of supportive information. These factors had the predicted -but a nonsignificant--effect on product re-evaluations. Holloway also manipulated subjects' anticipated dissonance and found (contrary to expectations) greater product re-evaluation under low anticipated dissonance, but, again, non-significantly so.
- Dissonance theory also predicts that product satisfaction should increase when the amount of effort expended in obtaining the product is increased. Cardozo (2014) found that subjects who expended a good deal of effort to obtain a product (a ball-point pen) rated this product significantly higher than did subjects who expended little effort. However, this effect was significant only when subjects were expecting a higher quality product than they actually received.
- Cognitive response is based on the same idea i.e., a consumer's mind can be swayed through knowledge.

- Newman (2015) categorized the determinants into six categories: Cost, Potential payoff (price, style, perceived difference, perceived risk, knowledge, experience, education, and income).

- A similar breakdown Bettman 2016 classified determinants of choice process intensity (which includes processing of information as well as collection) into five categories: properties of choice situation (availability of information, difficulty of choice task, and time pressure), costs versus benefits of information, conflict and conflict response strategies, individual differences (in-store versus prior processing, abilities, concern with optimality of choice) and knowledge.

## **Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Need For The Study**

Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs) in India are a new concept when they came to Tamilnadu. The first McDonalds started business in Chennai on Oct 2009. The western way of having a quick and energetic snack for lunch is an American concept of having a working lunch. For this concept to be accepted in Tamilnadu it took sometimes for the residents of Chennai because lunch is the heaviest meal in Tamilnadu. Their menu options consisted of many non-vegetarian options and very few vegetarian options. But to be accepted in India they need to have a majority of vegetarian options than non-vegetarian options. Another change which they needed to make was even in the non-vegetarian menu was that pork needs to avoided for Muslims and beef for Hindus. Hence QSRs took a while to gain acceptance. Another major change they had to make was with regards to price as the Indian customer is a very price conscious customer. They also needed variety in the menu which needed to include Indian items like veg samosa, veg burgers, veg pattis, veg rice items etc. All these QSRs have their own customer feedback mechanism but they are unable to identify customer dissonance early and prevent loss of customers.

### **3.2 Objectives Of The Study**

#### **Primary Objective**

To identify the level of Consumer Dissonance in McDonald's in Chennai.

#### **Secondary Objectives**

To identify the factors that influence Consumer Dissonance at McDonald's in Chennai.

To identify when and how Service Failure occurs in McDonald's in Chennai.

To suggest remedial measures to reduce the impact of Service Failures and ensure that they do not occur in the future at McDonald's in Chennai.

### **3.3 Research Design**

As the research is marched out a less-trodden path, the research is an Exploratory Study.

- Type of Research: Descriptive Research.
- Data Collection Method: Survey Method.
- Sampling Design: Convenience Sampling
- Sample Size: 98
- Tool for Data Collection: Primary Data collected by a Structured Questionnaire and other data from Secondary Sources.

- Sampling Unit: Customers of QSRs in Chennai.

### **3.4 Data Collected Methods**

#### **Primary Data**

The information is collected through primary sources like:

- Responses through questionnaires conducted personal interviews with the respondents.

#### **Secondary Data**

The data is collected through secondary sources like:

- Websites & News papers

### **3.5 Statistical Tools Used**

- Percentage Analysis

Tool for Data Collection: Primary Data collected by a Structured Questionnaire and other data from Secondary Sources like internet, published papers dealing on the subject, and lay publications viz. newspapers and magazines.

Exploratory research design does not aim to provide the final and conclusive answers to the research questions, but merely explores the research topic with varying levels of depth. “Exploratory research tends to tackle new problems on which little or no previous research has been done” (Brown, 2006, p.43). Moreover, it has to be noted that “exploratory research is the initial research, which forms the basis of more conclusive research. It can even help in determining the research design, sampling methodology and data collection method” (Singh, 2007, p.64)

Descriptive studies can involve a one-time interaction with groups of people (cross-sectional study) or a study might follow individuals over time (longitudinal study). Descriptive studies, in which the researcher interacts with the participant, may involve surveys or interviews to collect the necessary information. Descriptive studies in which the researcher does not interact with the participant include observational studies of people in an environment and studies involving data collection using existing records (e.g., medical record review).

#### **Case Example Of A Descriptive Study**

Descriptive studies are usually the best methods for collecting information that will demonstrate relationships and describe the world as it exists. These types of studies are often done before an experiment to know what specific things to manipulate and include in an experiment. Bickman and Rog (1998) suggest that descriptive studies can answer questions such as “what is” or “what was.” Experiments can typically answer “why” or “how.”

Survey means ‘to look at in a comprehensive way’. There are numerous survey research methods, including in-person and telephone interviews, mailed and online questionnaires.

A survey is a research method for collecting information from a selected group of people using standardized questionnaires or interviews. While many people think of a questionnaire as the “survey”, the questionnaire is just one part of the survey process. Surveys also require selecting populations for inclusion, pre-testing instruments, determining delivery methods, ensuring validity, and analysing results. In continuous quality improvement, surveys help to identify customer expectations, measure satisfaction levels, and determine specific areas for improvement.

### Scope Of The Study

- The transactions of consumer dissonance will span over McDonalds,
- The Chennai has been covered through relevant sampling techniques.

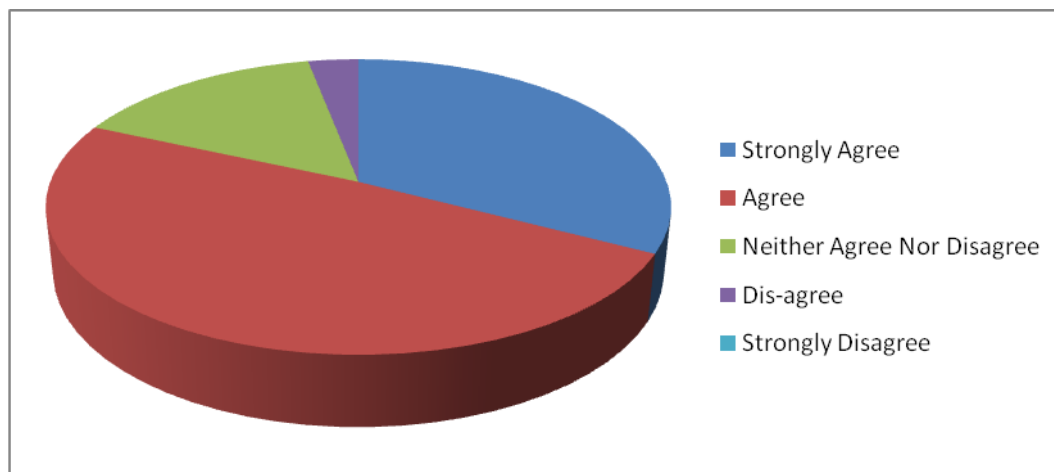
### 3.6 Limitation Of The Study

- Some of the respondents refused to fill the questionnaires.
- The people were busy in their own work so they might not have given actual responses.
- Limitation of time.
- The survey is conducted in the area of Chennai hence the results may vary in other parts of the cities.
- Small sample size.
- The findings are based on the survey conducted in the month of March and April the results may vary in other month as it is a seasonal product.

TABLE NO .4.8 DĚCOR IN THE RESTAURANT

PARTICULARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32.65</b>
<b>Agree</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48.97</b>
<b>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15.30</b>
<b>Dis-agree</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.06</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100</b>

CHART NO .4.8 DĚcor In The Restaurant

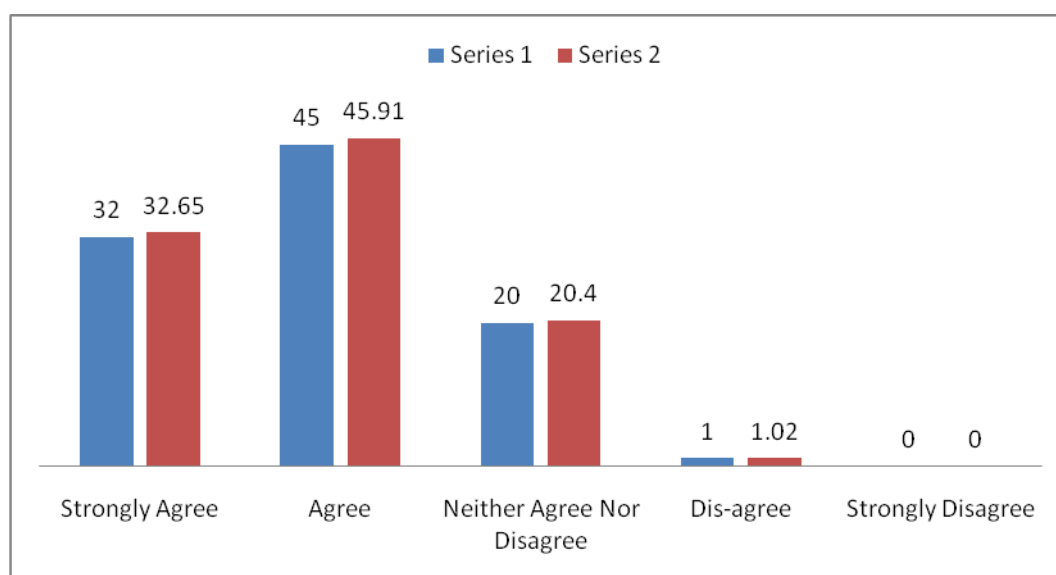


Inference: It can be seen from table 4.8 that 32.65% of the respondents rated Strongly Agree; 48.97% of respondents rated Agree; 15.30% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 3.06% of the respondents rated Dis-agree

TABLE NO 4.9 COMPETENCE OF THE EMPLOYEES

PARTICULARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
Strongly Agree	32	32.65
Agree	45	45.91
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	20	20.40
Dis-agree	1	1.02
Strongly Disagree	0	0
TOTAL	98	100

CHART NO 4.9 COMPETENCE OF THE EMPLOYEES

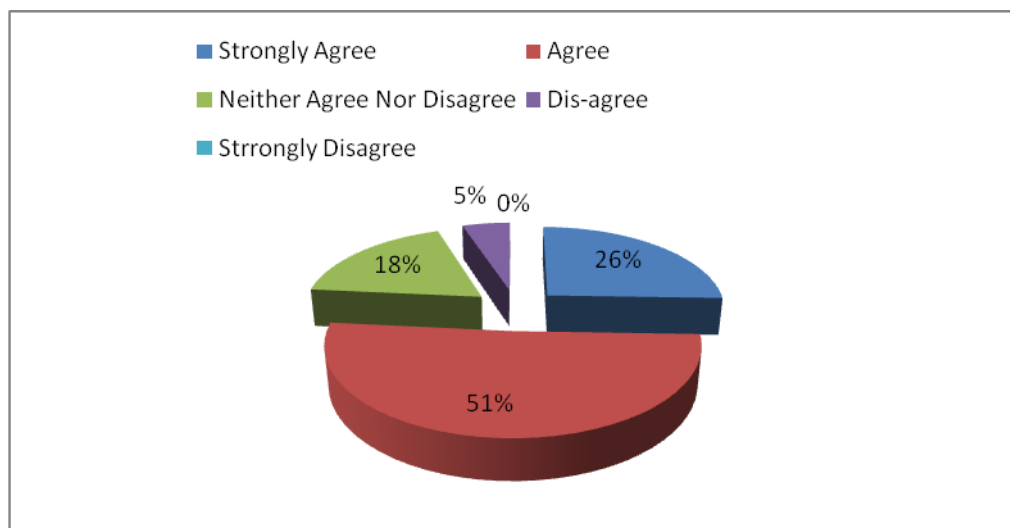


Inference: It can be seen from table 4.9 that 32.65% of the respondents rated Strongly Agree; 45.91% of respondents rated Agree; 20.4% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 1.02% of the respondents rated Dis-agree

TABLE NO 4.10 PROMPTNESS OF SERVING

PARTICULARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
Strongly Agree	25	25.51
Agree	50	51.02
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	18	18.36
Dis-agree	5	5.10
Strongly Disagree	0	0
TOTAL	98	100

CHART NO 4.10 PROMPTNESS OF SERVING

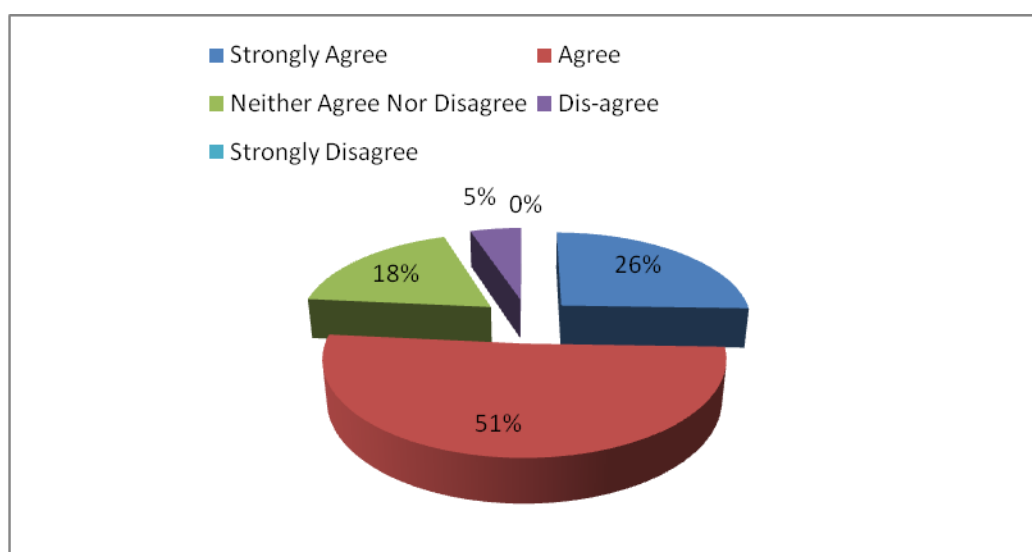


Inference: It can be seen from table 4.10 that 26% of the respondents rated Strongly Agree; 51% of respondents rated Agree; 18% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 5% of the respondents rated Dis-agree

TABLE NO 4.11 ORDER ERROR –FREE

PARTICULARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
Strongly Agree	25	25.51
Agree	50	51.02
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	18	18.36
Dis-agree	5	5.10
Strongly Disagree	0	0
TOTAL	98	100

CHART NO 4.11 ORDER ERROR –FREE

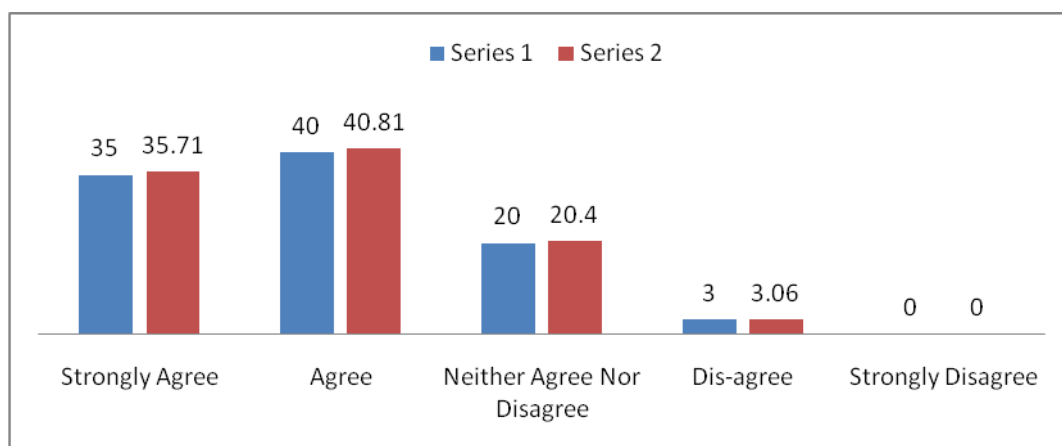


Inference: It can be seen from table 4.11 that 26% of the respondents rated Strongly Agree; 51% of respondents rated Agree; 18% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 5% of the respondents rated Dis-agree

TABLE NO 4.12 HAPPINESS OF THE CUSTOMER

PARTICULARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Strongly Agree	35	35.71
Agree	40	40.81
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	20	20.40
Dis-agree	3	3.06
Strongly Disagree	0	0
TOTAL		100

CHART NO 4.12 HAPPINESS OF THE CUSTOMER



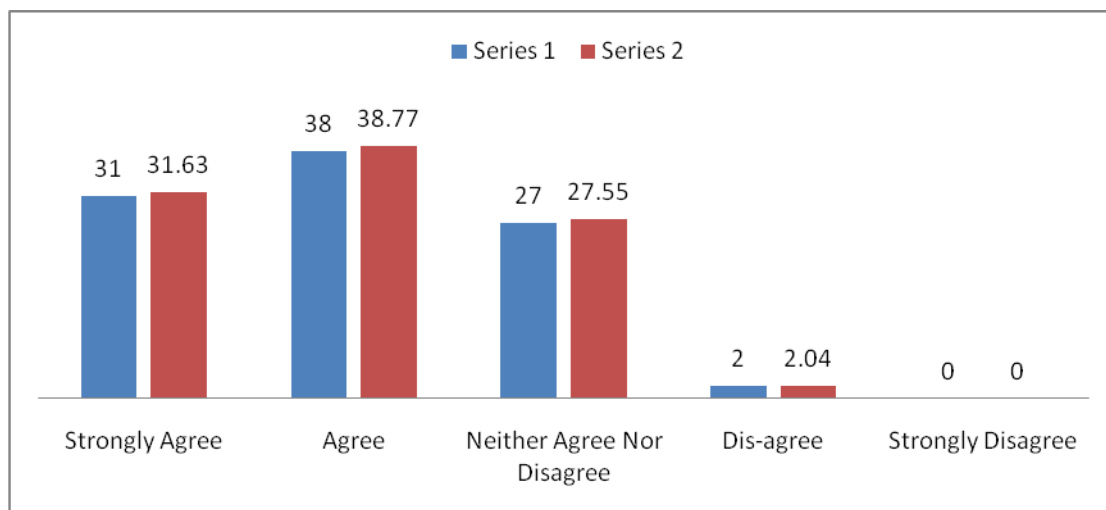
Inference: It can be seen from table 4.12 that 35.71% of the respondents rated Strongly Agree; 40.81% of respondents rated Agree; 20.4% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 3.06% of the respondents rated Dis-agree

TABLE NO 4.14 HAPPINESS OF THE CUSTOMER

PARTICULARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Strongly Agree	31	31.63
Agree	38	38.77
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	27	27.55
Dis-agree	2	2.04
Strongly Agree	0	0
TOTAL	98	100



CHART NO 4.14 HAPPINESS OF THE CUSTOMER

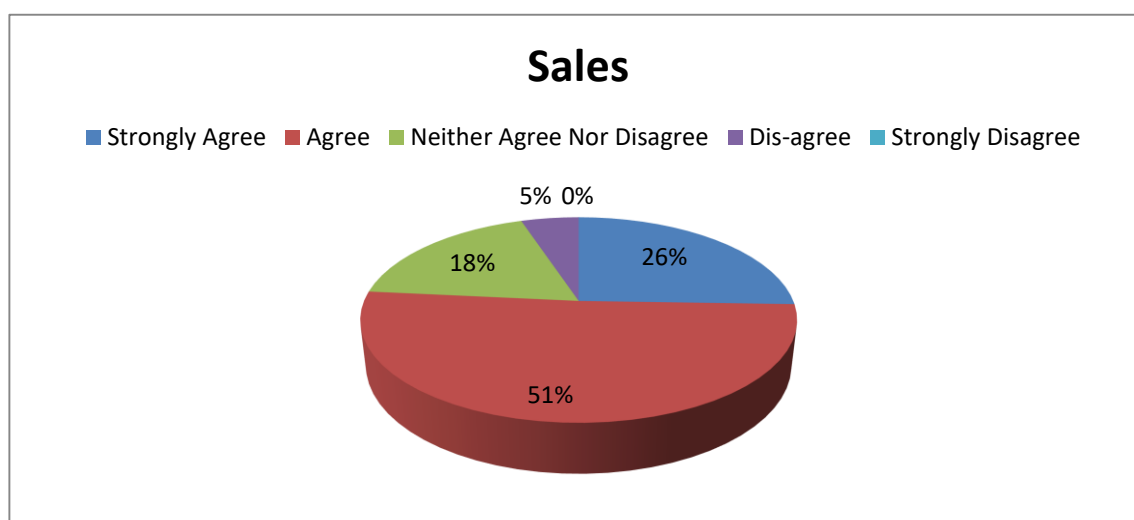


Inference: It can be seen from table 4.14 that 31.63% of the respondents rated Strongly Agree; 38.77% of respondents rated Agree; 27.55% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 2.04% of the respondents rated Dis-agree.

TABLE NO. 4.15 COURTESY

PARTICULARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Strongly Agree	25	25.51
Agree	50	51.02
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	18	18.36
Dis-agree	5	5.10
Strongly Disagree	0	0
TOTAL	98	100

TABLE NO. 4.15 COURTESY

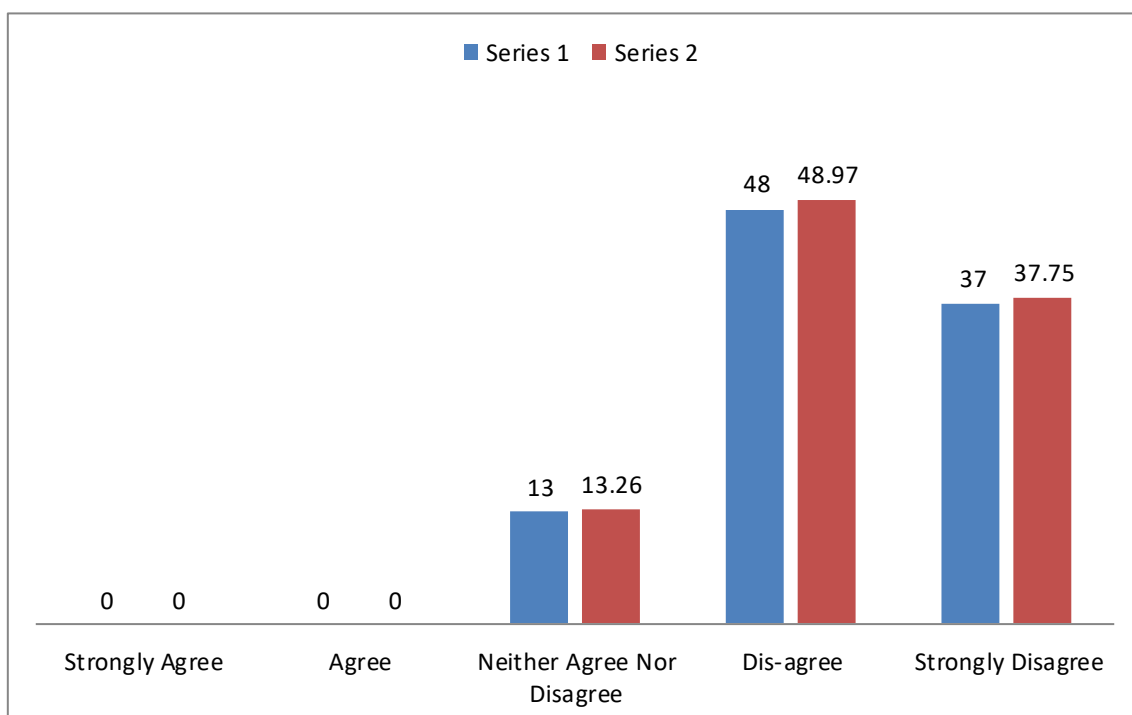


Inference: It can be seen from table 4.15 that 26% of the respondents rated Strongly Agree; 51% of respondents rated Agree; 18% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 5% of the respondents rated Dis-agree

TABLE NO. 4.16 DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE CUSTOMERS

PARTICULARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Strongly Agree	0	0
Agree	0	0
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	13	13.26
Disagree	48	48.97
Strongly Disagree	37	37.75
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100</b>

CHART NO. 4.16 DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE CUSTOMERS

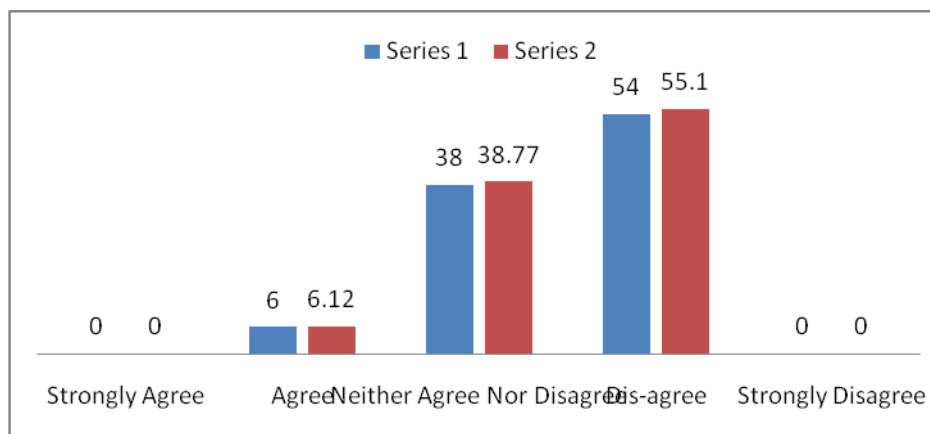


Inference: It can be seen from table 4.16 that 37 % of the respondents rated Strongly Disagree; 13.26% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 48.97% of the respondents rated Dis-agree

TABLE NO 4.17 COMPARE WITH THE ALTERNATIVE QSRs,I SAVE MORE MONEY HERE

PARTICULARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Strongly Agree	0	0
Agree	6	6.12
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	38	38.77
Dis-agree	54	55.10
Strongly Agree	0	0
TOTAL	98	100

CHART NO 4.17 COMPARE WITH THE ALTERNATIVE QSRs,I SAVE MORE MONEY HERE



Inference: It can be seen from table 4.17 that 6.12% of respondents rated Agree; 38.77% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 55.1 of the respondents rated Dis-agree

### 5.1 Findings

- It is found that the majority of the respondents are male with 70.42% and remaining 28.58% of the respondents are female.
- The Age of respondents are seen from 58.17% of the respondents rated 18-24years; 35.71% of respondents rated 25-34years; 6.12% of the respondents rated 35-44years
- The Education level of respondent is on table 4.3 that 8.16% of the respondents rated High School; 37.75% of respondents rated University; 54.09% of the respondents rated PG
- Family status of the respondent is shown on table 4.4 that 84.69% of the respondents rated Single; 5.10% of respondents rated Married without Children; 7.14% of the respondents rated Married with Children; 3.07% of the respondents rated Others
- Occupation of the respondent on table 4.5 that 3.06% of the respondents rated Govt Servants; 2.04% of respondents rated Service Worker; 13.26% of the respondents rated Self Employed; 77.55% of the respondents rated Students; 4.09% of the respondents rated Others

- Monthly income of the respondent is on table 4.6 that 19.38% of the respondents rated Below 20K; 8.16% of respondents rated 21K-30K; 4.09% of the respondents rated 31K-40K; 66.32% of the respondents rated Others (Unemployed)
- Dining purpose can be seen from table 4.7 that 14.28% of the respondents rated Dining with Family; 62.26% of respondents rated Dining with Friends; 9.18% of the respondents rated Dining with Colleagues; 13.26% of the respondents rated Celebrating Special Events; 1.02% of the respondents rated
- Decor in the restaurant is on table 4.8 that 32.65% of the respondents rated Strongly Agree; 48.97% of respondents rated Agree; 15.30% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 3.06% of the respondents rated Dis-agree
- Competence of the employees on table 4.9 that 32.65% of the respondents rated Strongly Agree; 45.91% of respondents rated Agree; 20.4% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 1.02% of the respondents rated Dis-agree
- Promptness of serving the food is shown on the table 4.10 that 26% of the respondents rated Strongly Agree; 51% of respondents rated Agree; 18% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 5% of the respondents rated Dis-agree
- Order Error Free can be seen from table 4.11 that 26% of the respondents rated Strongly Agree; 51% of respondents rated Agree; 18% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 5% of the respondents rated Dis-agree
- Happiness of the customer is shown table 4.12 that 35.71% of the respondents rated Strongly Agree; 40.81% of respondents rated Agree; 20.4% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 3.06% of the respondents rated Dis-agree
- Restaurant anticipates needs and wants table 4.13 that 25.51% of the respondents rated Strongly Agree; 45.91% of respondents rated Agree; 22.44% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 6.12% of the respondents rated Dis-agree
- Courtesy is shown table 4.15 that 26% of the respondents rated Strongly Agree; 51% of respondents rated Agree; 18% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 5% of the respondents rated Dis-agree
- The Disappointment of the customer table 4.16 that 37 % of the respondents rated Strongly Disagree; 13.26% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 48.97% of the respondents rated Dis-agree
- Comparing with alternative QSR can be seen from table 4.18 that 36 % of the respondents rated Strongly Agree; 41% of the respondents rated Agree; 20% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 3% of the respondents rated Dis-agree
- Preference of customers to MC Donald's is on table 4.19 that 15% of the respondents rated Agree; 18% of the respondents rated Strongly Disagree; 37% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 30% of the respondents rated Dis-agree
- The Service Failure is shown in the table 4.20 that 35.71% of the respondents rated Strongly Agree; 40.81% of the respondents rated Agree; 20.4% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 3.06% of the respondents rated Dis-agree
- Recommendations is shown in the table 4.21 that 14.28% of the respondents rated Strongly Agree; 26.53% of the respondents rated Agree; 48.97% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 10.2% of the respondents rated Dis-agree

- Online Platform can be seen from table 4.22 that 79.59% of the respondents rated Available; 3.06% of the respondents rated Sometimes Available; 17.34% of the respondents rated Always Available
- The Positive Review is given on table 4.23 that 36% of the respondents rated Strongly Agree; 53% of the respondents rated Agree; 11% of the respondents rated Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- Favourite QSR has seen from table 4.24 that 36% of the respondents rated MC DONALD'S; 50% of the respondents rated KFC'S; 8% of the respondents rated SUBWAY; 6% of the respondents rated PIZZA HUT.
- The Advt seen from table 4.25 that 4% of the respondents rated T.V; 3% of the respondents rated Magazines; 8% of the respondents rated News Papers; 27 % of the respondents rated Internet; 58 % of the respondents rated Friends/Relatives/Associate
- The Cleanness has seen from table 4.26 that 16.33% of the respondents rated Extremely Clean; 83.67% of the respondents rated Clean

## 5.2 Suggestions

- Perform a detail demand survey at regular interval to know about the unique needs and requirements of the consumer.
- The company should focus to bring some more flavours and variety of schemes rather than bring second and repeat same old one. It is always better to be first than being better.
- The company should also use time to time some more and new attractive system of word of mouth advertisement to keep alive the general awareness.

## 5.3 Conclusion

Consumer's behaviour is often studied because certain decisions are significantly affected by their behaviour or expected actions. For this reason, consumer behaviour is said to be applied discipline. In a general sense, the most important reason for studying consumer behaviour is the significant role it plays in our lives. Much of our time is spent directly in the market place, eating or engaging in other activities. A large amount of additional time is spent thinking about products and services, talking to friends about them, and seeing or hearing advertisements about them. In addition, the goods people eat and the manner in which they use them significantly influence how they live their daily lives. These general concerns alone are enough to justify our study of consumer behaviour. However, many seek to understand the behaviour of consumers for what are thought to be more immediate and tangible reasons.

The main reason behind this project was to find out the behaviour of the consumer behaviour while eating in small eating joints because most of the population surveyed preferred to eat at large restaurants and how day by day the consumer's demands are increasing and through this project I came to know that what are the various behaviour of a typical customer who eats in different eating joints.

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