Consumer Dissonance and its Influence on Consumer Loyalty in Quick Service Restaurants in Chennai City

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Abstract: Identifying Consumer Dissonance in Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs) and ensuring that their consumers do not get dissatisfied and become consumers of their competitors is the need of the hour for all QSRs. Hence this study attempts to identify the factors that cause Consumer Dissonance (CD) in QSRs and what are the factors that have a relationship with CD. In this case it is Consumer Loyalty (CL).

This Research paper is based on a study conducted on the basis of the responses given to the structured questionnaire administered to the respondents of the four QSRs viz., McDonalds, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), Pizza Hut, and Subway in Chennai City by the researchers. The two important factors which affect customers in QSRs in Chennai City as identified by the researchers are CD and CL. Another aspect which has been studied by the researchers is the kind of relationship that exists between CD and CL in the abovementioned QSRs in Chennai City.

Keywords— Dissonance, Cognitive Dissonance, Consumer Dissonance, and Consumer Loyalty.

I. INTRODUCTION

A) Dissonance

"Dissonance is defined as lack of agreement; especially: The beliefs one holds is inconsistent with one's actions It is also defined as an instance of such disagreement."1

B) Cognitive Dissonance

"It is a psychological tension share arising due to incompatibility between a person's attitudes, behaviour, beliefs, and/or knowledge, or when an individual has to make a tough choice between equally attractive or repulsive alternatives. One example is 'buyer's remorse,' a guilty feeling associated with doubts about the decision of a purchase decision that one experiences after one makes an expensive purchase. Marketers try to manage these doubts with supportive information such as testimonials, money-back guaranties, and after-sales service."2

"For example, when people smoke (behaviour) and they know that smoking causes cancer (cognition). Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory suggests that we have an inner drive to hold all our attitudes and beliefs in harmony (consonance) and avoid disharmony (or dissonance)."

C) Consumer Dissonance

"Dissonance in marketing causes a conflict or tension within a consumer considering a product purchase. This is an uncomfortable feeling for the consumer and usually leads to the buyer taking the money elsewhere or experiencing remorse over the purchase."3

a) "In this article the author describes a consumer-decision experiment which involves 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 other product categories."4

b)"Dissonance theory states that if a person, given a choice between two equally desirable products, chooses one and rejects the other, he will experience dissonance."5

c) "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".6

d) "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."7

D) The Theory of Cognitive Dissonance

a) "Leon Festinger proposed in Cognitive Dissonance Theory, that a powerful motive to maintain cognitive consistency can give rise to irrational and sometimes maladaptive behaviour.

According to him, we have many cognitions about the world and ourselves; and when they clash, a discrepancy is evoked, which results in a state of tension known as Cognitive Dissonance. As the experience is unpleasant, we are motivated to reduce or eliminate it, and achieve consonance (i.e. agreement)".8

b)"A review by Cummings and Venkatesan has resulted in a reduction of interest in marketing, despite their conclusion that "the evidence is in favour of dissonance theory is positive and the consumer behaviour literature looks good."9

E) Consumer Loyalty

"Consumer Loyalty indicates the extent to which customers are devoted to a company's products or services and how strong is their tendency to select one brand over the competition."10 "Likelihood of previous customers to continue to buy from a specific organization is called Consumer Loyalty."11 "Great attention is given to marketing and finding out the number of customers who are loyal to the brand. Organisations employ loyalty programs which reward customers for repeat business. At QSRs, consumers prefer faster service, order accuracy, ordering simplicity and better packaging."12

II. NEED FOR THE STUDY QUICK SERVICE RESTAURANTS IN CHENNAI CITY

a) Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs) in India are a new concept when they came to Tamilnadu. The first McDonalds started business in Chennai on Oct 2009.13The first Pizza Hut started operations in Chennai on March 2014..14The first Subway restaurant opened its first store in Chennai on Oct 2003.15. The first KFC Restaurant started its first store operations on Oct 2003.16

b) "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 some time for the residents of Chennai because lunch is the heaviest meal in Tamilnadu."17

c) "Their menu options consisted of many non vegetarian options and had 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 had to make in their menu was, even in the non-vegetarian items pork had to be avoided for Muslims and beef for Hindus as it is against their religious beliefs. Hence QSRs in took a while to gain acceptance in the conservative Chennai."

d) "Another major change they had to make was with regards to price, as the Indian consumer is a very price conscious one.

They also needed variety in the menu which needed to include Indian vegetarian 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 to their competitors."

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A) Research Design

The Researchers have used Descriptive Research in this study, which is also known as Statistical Research. It describes the data and characteristics about the population or the phenomenon being studied.

B) Data Collection Tool

A Structured questionnaire was administered by the researchers to study the relationship between Consumer Dissonance and Consumer Loyalty amongst the respondents of Mc Donalds, Pizza Hut, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) and Subway Quick Service Restaurants.

C) Sampling Method

Convenience sampling method was used. The respondents of each one of these 4 Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) branches were stratified on the basis of the 4 QSRs and then the 104 respondents for the study were selected.

D) Sample Size

The sample size for the study was fixed at 104 respondents. For the study, 42 respondents of Subway in Kodambakkam, 22 respondents of Mc Donalds in Ashok Nagar,14 respondents of Pizza Hut in Ashok Nagar and 26 respondents of KFC in Ashok Nagar were contacted for the collection of the primary data for the study.

E) Consumer Dissonance

Consumer Dissonance had 4 dimensions viz.,

(i)Emotional Concepts-EC.

(ii) Cognitive Changes-CC

(iii) Wisdom of purchase-WP and

(iv) Concern over deal CD.

The abovementioned 4 dimensions of Consumer Dissonance were measured using

a five point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).

"Consumer Dissonance was measured using the Multi dimensional scale for measuring Consumer Dissonance developed by Jillain.C.Sweeney, Douglas.Hausknecht and Geoffrey.N.Soutar (2000)."18

F) Consumer Loyalty

"Consumer Loyalty indicates the extent to which customers are devoted to a company's products or services and how strong is their tendency to select one brand over the competition."19 "Likelihood of previous customers to continue to buy from a specific organization is called consumer loyalty. Great attention is given to marketing and customer service to retain current customers by increasing their customer loyalty."20 "Through loyalty programmes, firms can potentially gain more repeat business." 21"At QSRs, consumers prefer faster service, order accuracy, ordering simplicity and better packaging".22

G) Personalisation

"In his article "Personalised Customer service increases Revenue and Loyalty" written by Shep Hyken, he mentions that "Consumers want personalised service be it a restaurant or super market. When I was at the restaurant, last night, and the server picked up on something my colleague said and made an excellent recommendation, which he accepted." "All of that is personalization, and customers don't want that type of service only once in a while. They want it as a rule, not an exception."23

H) Simplicity

• Marketing wants customer experience simplicity.

"Choice is good. But the exponential growth of options when consumers consume – brands, models, channels, retailers – raises the stakes for clarity and ease of consideration/purchase."

"Experiencing simplicity reduces cognitive overload and moves barriers to purchase out of the way."24

• Service Operations wants customer experience simplicity.

"The more complexity in the customer experience, the higher the service costs. And not just because complexity requires customer service staff to handle more calls; experience complexity also drives service cycle times, representative turnover and capital investment. Experiencing simplicity means fewer calls, easier calls, less representative burnout

and more straightforward service technology investments. Oh, and service reps could spend more time on interactions with customers that grow their value instead of defending against customer defection."25

IV. CUSTOMER RECOGNITION

"In the past fifteen years, however, computers have become extremely powerful, and inexpensive. It is possible today, economically, to hold in a computer the kind of information that the old corner grocers used to keep in their heads, and to use this information to provide recognition and personal attention to each customer. The customer service representatives at L. L. Bean, for example, seem to know you intimately when you call. They know what you bought last, and are in a position to make suggestions for future purchases. L. L. Bean is an example of a modern customer recognition system interactions with customers that grow their value instead of defending against customer defection."26

The customer recognition system consists of several elements:

1 "A database that contains the details like customer names, addresses, phone numbers, and purchase history. It contains personal information specific to each customer, such as personal preferences, and the events that triggered each purchase (granddaughter's birthday, for example)."

2. "A personal customer service representative (CSR) is assigned to each customer."

3. "Caller-ID which is electronically connected to the database. When a customer calls, the calling number is routed to a computer that searches the database for the customer with that number. If the call is from a company phone, the database will list all the customers at that number so that the CSR can choose the correct one. If the call is from a new person, a new database record will automatically be created with the phone number inserted, ready for the CSR to enter the rest of the data."

4."An intelligent Automated Call Distribution (ACD) which routes calls to the CSR assigned to that customer (based on the phone number) or to an available agent if the CSR is not available or not known."

5."Sophisticated CSR software that puts on the screen the type of information that the CSR needs to know to make the call satisfying to the customer and profitable for the company. In this case, the CSR sees a window that suggests she mention the red sweater ordered for Mary Webster's

granddaughter's birthday last October 12th." 27

Individually for Consumer Dissonance (CD) and Consumer Loyalty (CL) collectively and the results have been listed as follows.

TABLE 1 RELIABILITY ANALYSIS FOR CONSUMER DISSONANCE

Variables	No of items	Cronbach Alpha
Emotional Concepts(EC)	5	0.972
Cognitive Changes(CC)	5	0.610
Wisdom of Purchase(WP)	5	0.777
Concern over deal(CD)	8	0.883

With regards to Consumer Dissonance m there are 4 factors. They are as follows

1.Emotional concepts(EC)

2.Cognitive Changes(CC)

3.Wisdon of purchases(WP)

4.Concern over Deal(CD)

The factor EC consists of 5 variables and its Cronbach Alpha value is 0.972, which is greater than 0.70 and hence acceptable. The factor CC consists of 5 variables and its Cronbach Alpha value is 0.610,which is less than 0.70 and hence not acceptable. The factor WP consists of 5 variables and its Cronbach Alpha value is 0.777, which is greater than 0.70 and hence accept-able. The factor CD consists of 5 variables and its Cronbach Alpha value is 0.883, which is greater than 0.70 and hence acceptable. Hence we have 3 values which are acceptable. They are EC,WP and CD which are acceptable and CC is not acceptable.

TABLE 2 RELIABILITY ANALYSIS FOR CONSUMER LOYALTY

VARIABLES	NO OF ITEMS	CRONBACH ALPHA
CONSUMER LOYALTY	4	0.949

The next factor is Consumer Loyalty which has 4 variables and their Cronbach Alpha value is 0.949, which is above 0.70 and hence acceptable.

(a)Correlations Between The 4 Dimensions of Consumer Dissonance of QSRs In Chennai City

According to the researchers, there exists a negative correlation between the 4 dimensions of Consumer dissonance viz., Emotional Concepts, Cognitive Changes, Wisdom of Purchase and Concern over Deal.

b) Pearson Correlation Coefficient

"The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is a measure of the strength of the linear

It is referred to as Pearson's correlation or simply as the correlation coefficient. A perfect positive linear relationship, r= 1."28

TABLE 3-CORRELATIONS OF THE VARIOUS DIMENSIONS OF CONSUMER DISSONANCE

Consumer Dissonance	Emotional Concepts	Cognitive Changes	Wisdom of Purchase	Concern over Deal
Emotional Concepts	1	0.528(**)	0.607(**)	0.617(**)
Cognitive Changes		1	0.704(**)	0.702(**)
Wisdom of Purchase			1	.794(**)
Concern over Deal				1

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

"Results revealed that propensity to engage and loyalty behaviours vary significantly between the contexts studied . We also conclude that the majority of loyalty behaviours are correlated, in both contexts, with customers' propensity to engage."29

V. QUICK SERVICE RESTAURANTS IN CHENNAI

"The Indian fast food market has been witnessing rapid growth on the back of positive develop-ments and presence of massive investments. Currently, market growth is largely fuelled by the rising young population, working women, hectic schedules, and increasing disposable income of the middle-class households. Some of the unique properties of fast food like quick served, cost advantage, etc., are making it highly popular among the masses. Thus, India offers enormous opportunities for both domestic as well as international players."30

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"The first Pizza hut started operations in Chennai on March 2014.31 KFC has opened what it's calling a green outlet on the beach front in south Chennai. It will serve as a prototype/laboratory as from now on, all the brand's outlets will be designed to be 20 per cent more energy- and water-efficient, says Niren Chaudhary, President, Yum India. Chaudhary told Business Line here that the outlet's double-glazed windows, LED lights and light and body sensors would conserve energy. A solar panel would heat all the water necessary for the restaurant's operations. The packaging is made from recycled material. The investment cost in such an outlet is 30 per cent higher, he said. However, prices are the same as in other stores." The first Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) started operations in Chennai on 2002.32 The first Subway restaurant opened its first store in Chennai on Oct 2003.33

VI. DISCUSSION

A) CORRELATION

"Correlation is a statistical measure that indicates the extent to which two or more variables fluctuate together. A positive correlation indicates the extent to which those variables increase or decrease in parallel; a negative correlation indicates the extent to which one variable increases as the other decreases."34

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 (2 tailed)

All the 4 dimensions of Consumer Dissonance (CD) are negatively correlated at 99% accuracy level at 1% significance level.

d) Correlations Between The 4 Dimensions Of Consumer Dissonance And Consumer Loyalty of QSRs In Chennai City

Both Consumer Dissonance (CD) and Consumer Loyalty (CL) are negatively correlated and the Overall CD is also correlated to CL at 99% accuracy level or 1% significance level.

VII. REGRESSION

"Regression is a statistical measure used in finance, investing and other disciplines that attempts to determine the strength of the relationship between one dependent variable (usually denoted by Y) and a series of other changing variables (known as independent variables)."35

According to the researchers, in our study, the following variables are Independent variables viz., Concern over Deal, Emotional Concepts, Cognitive Changes and Wisdom of Purchase. These are basically the 4 dimensions of Consumer Dissonance. They are also called as Predictors. The dependent variable is Consumer Loyalty.

TABLE 5-REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Variables Entered/Removed(b)

Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
Concern over Deal, Emotional Concepts, Cognitive Changes, Wisdom of Purchase(a)	.	Enter

a All requested variables entered.

b Dependent Variable: Consumer Loyalty

The dependent variable is Consumer Loyalty and all the other factors like Concern over deal, Emotional Concepts , Cognitive Changes and Wisdom of purchase are all Independent Variables.

TABLE 6-MODEL SUMMARY

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	666.241	4	166.560	55.38080	0.000(a)
Residual	285.719	95	3.008		
Total	951.960	99			

A Predictors: (Constant), Concern over Deal, Emotional Concepts, Cognitive Changes, Wisdom of Purchase.

TABLE 7-COEFFICIENTS(A)

	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Significance
(Constant)		19.783	0.000
Emotional Concepts	-0.470	-6.347	0.000
Cognitive Changes	-0.195	-2.311	0.023
Wisdom Of Purchase	-0.393	-3.919	0.000

Concern over Deal	-0.103	-1.023	0.309

VIII. CONCLUSION

According to the Researchers, from the above data it is clear that there exists a negative relationship between the 4 dimensions of Consumer dissonance (Emotional Concepts , Cognitive Changes, Wisdom of Purchase and Concern over deal) and the Consumer Loyalty in the data collected from the respondents of McDonalds, Pizza Hut, KFC and Subway in Chennai City.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY

The relationship that exists between Consumer Dissonance and Consumer Service Quality amongst the respondents of QSRs in Chennai can be studied. The relationship that exists between Consumer Service Quality and Consumer Loyalty amongst the respondents of QSRs in Chennai can be analysed. The relationship between Consumer Satisfaction and Consumer Loyalty amongst the respondents of QSRs in Chennai can be found out. The relationship between Consumer Satisfaction and Word of Mouth amongst the respondents of QSRs in Chennai can be realised.

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