CHAPTER 3

CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK

3.1 CUSTOMER BEHAVIOURAL ATTRIBUTES

3.1.1 Food Quality

Lewis 1981; M. Turner and Collison 1988; Auty 1992; Kivela Inbakaran and Reece 1999; Tao and Yeung 1999; Rajpoot 2002; Lo and Lam 2004; Sulek and Hensley 2004; Sangyup Sean Hyun 2010 have viewed that “In the restaurant industry, quality of food influences the most on patrons behavior”. “A concept that can provide insights on how to rejuvenate products and the way they are viewed by customers” as defined by Murphy, Pitchard, and Smith (2000). Importance to taste for the quality of food has been given by various researchers when considering the determinants of food quality for study purpose (Kivela, Inbakaran, and Reece 1999; Koo, Tao, Yeung 1999; Law, To, and Goh 2008, Sangyup Sean Hyun 2010). It is also discussed that the food has to be delivered at right temperature (Johns and Tyas 1996; Kivela, Inbakaran, and Reece 1999, Sangyup Sean Hyun 2010). Researchers Kivela, Inbakaran, and Reece 1999; Sulek and Hensley 2004; Sanghyup Sean Hyun 2010 have given their view that food quality is an essential determinant to enhance customer satisfaction in the restaurant industry. As given by the researchers Knight and Todd 2007; and Sanghyup Sean Hyun 2010, food quality is defined to be related to the safety issues influencing the trust worthiness of a restaurant. According to Johns and Tyas (1996) customers consider health as an important factor in life and hence food quality is related to the credibility of the restaurant.

3.1.2 Service Quality
Many studies have been conducted to prove that the service quality is an essential factor in assessing the customer satisfaction as given by Chow et al. 2007; Soriano 2002; Sangyup Sean Hyun 2010. It is also proved that the service quality is the main determinant towards achieving customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. It is proved that it is the important strategy used to position the restaurant in the market (Soriano 2002; Yuksel and Yuksel 2002; Chow et al. 2007; Ladhari, Brun and Morales 2008; Namkung and Jang 2008). Gounaris and Venetis 2002 have empirically proved that the service quality is essential to build trust with the customers in restaurant industry. It is also stated that the service quality aids in enhancing the service experience altogether.

### 3.1.3 Price

Erickson and Johansson (1985), Andaleeb and Conway (2006), Law, To, and Goh (2008), have proved empirically that the price has direct influence on quality of the service. Higher the price, higher is customer expectation on quality. Price is one attribute that determines the expectation in the minds of the customers towards the service. Sheth, Mittal and Newmann (1999) have proved that for the service provider to attract customers for repeat service, they will have to constantly improve upon the service quality and at the same time work on ways to reduce the price. Andaleeb and Caskey (2007), Bhattacharya and Friedman (2001) and W.Kim, Lee, and Yoo (2006) have proved that one of the critical factor that influences the customer satisfaction and trust is price. Kim, Lee, and Yoo (2006) have discussed that if pricing is considered at a fair level then the customer is likely to be more satisfied than anything else. Overcharging the price just to boost the quality of the service will lead to loss of customers. They may not tend to revisit the restaurant and loss of trust would be the first thing to happen. And the customers may not return to the restaurant anytime in the future.

### 3.1.4 Environment

Bitner (1992) have proved that service environment is a place where the service
provider and the customer come in contact with each other. The environment is the first thing that speaks for the service provider. Namkung and Jang (2008) and Hyun (2010) have also proved that if the customer is happy with the environment then the chance of customer being satisfied after the service increases multifolds. The environmental factors that influence the service are proper lighting, enough space between the tables, music and cleanliness.

3.1.5 Location

Auty 1992, Heung 2002; Law, To, and God 2008; Hyun 2010 have defined location to be the place of the service encounter. It is measured by the factors of accessibility and the parking facilities that are available with the service provider. It is also proved that the customers feel satisfied because of the restaurant being at the proper location. It is also considered as a parameter towards assessing the competitiveness.

3.2 RELATIONSHIP QUALITY ATTRIBUTES

3.2.1 Trust

Anderson and Weitz 1989, have defined Trust to be the belief of one party, which have to be fulfilled by the servicing party. This trust enhances the confidence of the customers and increases the comfort zone of the customer towards the restaurant. Thrau and Klee 1997, have associated the trust to the relationship quality. Kim and Cha 2002; Hyun 2010 have argued that the relationship quality is based on the aspect of building the long term customer relationship which is based on trust. This allows the customer to return to the same restaurant again and again which reduces the cost of serving that customer.

3.2.2 Customer Satisfaction

The satisfaction is being related to the relationship quality by various researchers. Crossby, Evans and Cowles (1990); Hyun (2010) have stated that the relationship quality is an
indicator for the service provider’s ability in reduction of the customer’s perceived uncertainty and enhance their satisfaction. Hence, the customer satisfaction is defined as the “customer’s cognitive and affective evaluation based on their personal experience across all service episodes within the relationship”. (Storbacka, Strandvik and Gronross 1994). Naude and Buttle 2000; Hyun 2010, have defined satisfaction to be the prerequisite of relationship quality formation as if the customer is not satisfied with the service provider, then the relationship cannot continue.

3.3 MEDIATING VARIABLE – WORD OF MOUTH

Harrison (2003), have expressed in his research work, “the word of mouth is an informal way of communication aiding in promotion of the restaurant”. He has also emphasized on the fact that the positive word of mouth has more say on the customer loyalty. This intrigues the customer to try out the service and be satisfied. As these customers knew already what the service would be like, it will be easier to serve such customers. Riechheld and Sasser (1990) have expressed that zero defection in the service will lead to the positive word of mouth, further leading to customer loyalty. Teas (1993) have also proved that the service encounter stage is important which cater to the positive word of mouth to be emphasized by the customers. Nguyen and Leblanc (1998) have mentioned in their research work about the mediating role of word of mouth and its effect on customer retention. Ioannis et. al., (2009) have explained customer satisfaction through the word of mouth. They have proved that the satisfied customer is incharge of spreading positive word of mouth about the service.
3.4 OUTCOME VARIABLE – CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Oliver (1994), have expressed customer loyalty to be the extension to the relationship quality. He has defined loyalty to be “a deeply held commitment to buy or patronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same brand set purchasing, despite situation all influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior.” As per Foster and Cadogan, 2000; Shandasani and Balakrisshnan 2000; Hyun 2010 stronger the relationship quality, stronger is the loyalty which will have a powerful impact on the firm’s performance. Iacobucci 2001; Kim and Cha 2002; Rust, Zeithaml and Lemon 2000 have added to this that these two factors are the important factors of a company with high competitive edge over the other competitors. Mattila 2001; Hyun 2010 have proved empirically that loyal customers are very important to the chains of restaurants. These chains of restaurants have implemented customer oriented marketing strategies. This concept of customer loyalty is even more important in chains of restaurants as the number of employees in the chains of restaurants is higher when compared to any other service organizations. This is again proved by Jang and Mattila 2005 as well.

Meng and Elliott 2008 have emphasized that when a chains of restaurant is maintaining a strong loyal relationship with their customers, then it is for sure that this service provider is way ahead of their competitors. The outcome of the relationship quality leads to long term customer loyalty formation.

With the literature background, the study proposes a framework linking customer behavior, relationship quality and customer outcomes like loyalty as given in the figure below.
3.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Sanghyup Sean Hyun has proposed a model on the customer loyalty in the year 2010. This study was conducted in University of Virginia in United States of America. This study has considered the model devised by the above mentioned researcher [5]. The variable which attempts in identifying the impact of word of mouth is measured through the variable word of mouth which acts as a mediating variable [256]. This research work focuses on measuring the behavioural pattern of customers of Tamil Nadu, India in the chains of restaurants.

The word of mouth attribute is been adopted from the article proposed by Harrison. This word of mouth influences the customer loyalty aspect. The model devised is based on some of the research gaps identified in the above mentioned journal articles. This model is then tested quantitatively with the samples from the various chains of restaurants based in Tamil Nadu.

Whatever task the service provider does the main aim of the entire show revolves around one aspect called the customer loyalty. This is the centre core of any service concern. This is one aspect for which the service provider train their employees as well design the strategy accordingly in order to achieve higher customer loyalty. Customer loyalty is not an entity by
itself, its derived from various aspects like customer satisfaction, trust, word of mouth etc.

**Customer Satisfaction and Food Quality**

Young Namkung and Soo Cheong Jang (2007) in their paper have proved empirically the fact that to attain customer satisfaction adoption and maintenance of food quality is must. There are various attributes which define the food quality. Some of the aspects are like the taste of the food, the presentation of the food the way it is served etc. They prove to be an essential ingredient in achieving customer satisfaction [67].

This is also measured by the temperature of the food at which the food is supposed to be served. The food meant to be hot had to be hot, the food that is meant to be warm had to be warm and the food that is meant to be cold had to be cold. Only if the food remains at the right temperature and is rightly presented with the best taste, will the food be relished by the customer and will be enjoyed by them and will be in a position to appreciate the taste of the food and can accept it to be in the best quality.

Lars Gronholdt, Martensen and Kristensen (2010) have in their research paper said that it is the food quality which is of the major concern in identifying the satisfaction of customers. According to the researcher there are various attributes which lead to the customer satisfaction in any service industry, but the major role is played by the food quality. He has proved that if the food is only at the right temperature with the perfect taste which is presented properly will be appreciated by the customers and can accept it to be in the best quality. Customer patronization of a specific restaurant depends on the quality of the food. Yet despite the quality customers repeat visit to the hotel depends on the right presentation and also quantity of the food served. [276]. Hence, the replication hypothesis proposed as:

**H1:** The Food quality positively influences the customer satisfaction.

**Service Quality leading to Customer Satisfaction**

On assessing the various facets which influence the customer satisfaction, it was empirically proved that the customer satisfaction is maximum achieved through the intangible aspects of the service. This intangible aspect comes into contact of the customer during the
service encounter stage where the employee of the service firm comes in contact with the customer providing the service requested by the customer. The customer not just look for the product as such but intern look for the various intangible cues and try to achieve the success by making the customers a satisfied or rather a delighted customer. these intangible cues are addressed in the name of service quality. If employee of the service industry extends a friendly hand towards the customers and they are being serviced properly and their queries are being well handled then that leads to a happy customer and the customer becomes a satisfied customer. If the same is done with negativity in the minds of the employee and the same negativity is being transferred to the customers or if the customer is not being given the due respect which he or she is supposed to get during the service encounter stage then that will lead to a dissatisfied customer [277]. This is also proved in one another research article. It also says that customer satisfaction enhances as the service quality of the service firm improves. The better is the service quality the happier are the customers [278].

Mohammad Rahmman, Abdul Khan and Md. Haque (2012) in their research paper have suggested that,” the relationship between the service quality and customer satisfaction have been taken the area of concern”. It is proved that if the service quality is given to the customer with the proper blend then that leads to high customer satisfaction if the same is not taken care and the service quality is not handled properly then that will lead to poor service encounter which leads to a dissatisfied customer. It is also proved that there are many aspects that need to be taken care inorder to achieve customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is one main aspect which impacts the customer loyalty to a great extent[279]. Hence, the hypothesis proposed as:

H2: The Service quality positively influences the customer satisfaction.

Customer Satisfaction from Pricing Strategy

Thomas J.Maronick, Sandra Gleason and Ronald Stiff (1989) have proved empirically that, “Customers correlate the price directly with satisfaction.” If the price is fixed at the higher side then the customer expectation also increases. Hence, they relate the price to the quality of the service that they are being provided . The customers never had problem with the higher pricing, what problem they have is that when they pay higher price they expect higher service quality. If that expectation is not being met only then their satisfaction level goes down. The
customer when they are paying less price, their expectation level is also resulting in the customers being happy when they are even when they are provide with lower level of service encounter. The price seems to be directly proportional to expectation of the service. The higher the price the higher is the expectation of the service. Customers have a tendency to be satisfied when they seem to have paid higher price for the service [280].

Eugene W. Anderson (1996) have conducted a study where he had proved the relationship between the price paid and the level of satisfaction to be positive. According to his study the price is immaterial when the expectations are met. He has also proved that the customer never cribbed of paying more or less but it is the question of how satisfied are they in achieving their expectations [281]. Hence, the hypothesis proposed as:

**H3: The Price of the food items positively influences the customer satisfaction**

Customer Satisfaction and Location

Location is another aspect of concern which leads to customer satisfaction as per the study conducted by Pedro Longrat (2010). The customer always wish to identify the restaurant in the location of their choice. If any restaurant is in the location of the choice of customer then the customer feels happy about it. If restaurant is placed in the location of the choice of the customers, that itself aids to the attaining certain amount of satisfaction. The rest of the factors influencing the satisfaction are secondaryr. If in a remote case a very good restaurant is located at such a geographical area where its an ordeal to reach that particular location, but still its food quality is really good, with the best service quality, priced reasonably with enchanting environment, still the customer may not be often attracted towards that restaurant and will be ready to compromise with that restaurant which is easily accessible with mediocre food quality, mediocre service quality, priced higher and just a decent environment. The availability of the restaurant in the location of the choice of the customer highly satisfied is the customer [282]. Hence, the hypothesis is proposed as:

**H4: The location of the restaurant positively influences the customer satisfaction.**

Customer Satisfaction and Service Environment

Joseph Cronin, Michael Brady and Thomas Hult (2000) in their empirical study have
established relationship between environment and satisfaction of customer. There is a positive correlation between them. If environment of the restaurant is cluttered and doesn’t give peace of mind to the customers while dining then that restaurant might not be in a position to earn satisfied customers and repeated customer visit is out of question. Some customers like calm and serene environment while eating but some might like environment which is full of fast music or people talking to each other, so on and so forth. The one thing which is important for the customers to have a good environment is that the place where customers eat should be clean and free from any foul smell. The choice of colours of the restaurants should induce the customers a mood to eat and create a stress free zone.

The service provider has varied choices of creating the environment with their creativity, but that should lead the customers to have a happy experience while dining. The soothing environment itself will lead the customer to be satisfied [283]. Hence, the hypothesis can be:

**H5:** The service environment positively influences the customer satisfaction.

**Trust and Food Quality**

In the paper proposed by Svein Ottar Olsen (2002) he has established the importance of food quality. It is proved that the food quality has direct relationship towards customer trust. The customer trust then further leads to customer loyalty [284]. Jagdip Singh (2000) proposed that, “Agency and Trust mechanisms in consumer satisfaction and loyalty judgments”, . This paper has proved two frameworks. One of the framework clearly indicates that increase in the quality of food indicates the increase in the customer trust. This is essential for any service industry to sustain in the market. If food quality is really good then the customer will start developing a trust and will be ready to visit the restaurant again and again. The food quality is defined by the right temperature of the food which is presented properly and of the right quantity. Higher the food quality, higher is the trust towards that restaurant [4]. Hence, the hypothesis is proposed as:

**H6:** The food quality positively influences the trust
Trust and Service Quality

Service providers around the globe are struggling to encash the competitive edge over the rest of the competitors. It is identified that the service quality is one such aspect which may lead to trust. When the service quality is being practiced by the service provider, then according to this research paper where it is empirically proved that service provider can gain on trust factor. Mostly in service industry it is the employees of the service provider who makes a greater influence in the minds of the customers more than any other attributes towards enhancing their service in their minds of the customers. If the employee extends a friendly hand towards the customers in order to serve them and to create a positive impact in the minds of the customers, the customers will have a long lasting impression about the service firm. Their trust towards the service provider increases multifold.

There are known evidences where in the customers in any service organization moves away or shifts to the competitors when the employees of that organization hops job to the competitive concern. This also provides clear evidence that the employees who create the service quality have a greater role to play in increasing or decreasing the trust of the customers towards the service provider [285]. With the increase in the income of the family, the disposable income also have increased. This is also one of the reason for the growth of restaurant’s market share in Tamilnadu.

This paper focuses on the negativity of service. It helps in identifying the service gaps. It has helped in identifying that the restaurant may lose their customer base if they do not up keep the service quality. When service quality is taken care that will improve the trust of customers towards that restaurant. It is a proven fact that if the service quality that is being provided to the customers is of low quality and that the employees are doing their job without any involvement or commitment resulting in low service quality then the trust towards that service organization in the minds of the customers will start reducing drastically [286]. Hence, the hypothesis proposed as:

H7: The service quality positively influences the trust

Trust and Pricing Strategy
Jay Kandampully and Duri Suhartanto (2000) have proved that price is one aspect along with brand image, satisfaction towards the service, attitude of employees are responsible in building trust. This trust cannot be built in a single encounter. It has to be built over a period of time when the customer seem to be satisfied through out a period of time. More the instances the customer is satisfied, intense is the trust. Customers directly link price to the effectiveness of the service provider or rather it is the brand image that plays a vital part. Customers without any doubt have always had greater trust towards the service provider whose brand image and their value is higher. It is pictures in the minds of the customers that higher the price higher is the brand image. Hence, higher pricing has never been a hurdle in developing the trust towards the service provider [287]. Reverse psychology of customers have been studied by Sulin Ba and Paul Pavlou (2002). Trust is an aspect which once built will in customer retention. This is especially helpful during times when there is increase in pricing due to unforeseen instances. The customers have developed a mentality over a period of time that if the quality of the product have to be higher then the price of that product also should be higher. This leads to increase in trust and helpful in building trust.

During worse situation where the price of the raw material has increased and also due to various other reasons if the price of the service or food item is increased, it has always been easier to deal with such price rise with the customers who have stronger trust factor towards the service provider. This is also proved in comparison with the situation when the trust level is low [277]. Hence, the hypothesis proposed as:

**H8: The price positively influences the trust**

**Trust and Customer Satisfaction**

Sungyup Sean Hyun (2010) has empirically validated that, “there is a positive relationship between the customer satisfaction and trust”. One of the most touted fact ist that if a customer is satisfied during the service encounter stage then his trust towards that service provider increases. If at the same time if a customer is having a very bad experience with the service provider during the service encounter as well as during the service recovery stage then their trust towards that service provider falls down and it is very rare that the customer will
return to that service provider [5]. Hence, the hypothesis:

H9: The customer satisfaction positively influences trust

Word of Mouth and Customer Satisfaction

It is proved empirical by Ruth N Bolton (1998) that those customers who are with the service provider for a longer period of time tend to provide with positive word of mouth. This positive word of mouth has greater influence on the survival of the restaurant amidst tough competition. With the people sharing each and every activity in the social networking sites, it is very clear that the customers who have had an unsatisfactory service with a service provider will immediate pass on the negative word of mouth with relevant photographs to all their near and dear through the social networking sites. This will have greater impact in the existence of the service provider. The customers tend to believe their friends and relatives word of mouth.

A satisfied customer will share their happy experience with the service provider to all the near and dear and create a positive word of mouth wave to pass on. Hence, it is very clear that only a satisfied customer will pass on positive word of mouth and bring in many more customers to the organization and generate revenue at almost nil advertising charges. If the customer is dissatisfied then that also creates a word of mouth but in the negative aspect and creates a big question mark for the survival of the service provider [288]. Magnus Soderlund (1998) has proved that, “customer with high satisfaction exerts a positive word of mouth as compared to those who are either less satisfied or not satisfied. These people tend to exert negative word of mouth”. The word of mouth is an important aspect which also decides on the loyalty of the customers towards the service firm [289]. Hence, the hypothesis is:

H10: The customer satisfaction positively influences word of mouth

Customer Loyalty and Customer Satisfaction

In 2008 an empirical study has proven that employees of the service firm plays a vital role in devicing the customer satisfaction. Only the satisfied customer could be turned to a loyal customer. This can happen over a period of time. It is a proven fact that only a satisfied
customer will return to the service provider again and again. It takes quiet some time before a
customer becomes a loyal customer. Only a customer is satisfied will that repeated satisfaction
level be transformed into a loyal customer [290]. It was in the year 2010, it was empirically
proved that the customer’s expectation have to be met only then the customer may be satisfied. It
is only when the customer is satisfied during the repeat visits to the service firm, that the loyalty
towards the service firm develops. The customer will be satisfied only when the actual service
is at least to the level of his or her service expectation. When the actual service becomes higher
than the expected service the customer becomes not just satisfied customer but an elated
customer and he will be visiting the restaurant again and again. With every satisfied encounter
the increased customer satisfaction will lead to increase in the loyalty levels. Satisfaction and
loyalty are positively related to each other [291]. Hence, the hypothesis proposed as:

**H11:** The customer satisfaction positively influences the customer loyalty

**Customer Loyalty and Customer Trust**

Sangyup Sean Hyum (2010) has derived that “customer loyalty increases with the
customer trust”. And that “as customer’s trust towards the restaurant goes down then the
customer loyalty will also go down “ [5]. In the year 1991, it is proved that trust is another
important aspect for the loyalty to increase. The loyalty is the end result for which the trust also
adds on to it either increase or decrease. [10]. Gerrard Macintosh and Lockshin (1997) have
proved that for any service industry to remain in the market, the employees should first gain the
trust of the customers. This trust towards the employees will enhance the trust towards the
service being provided, which will further aid in enhancing the customer loyalty [292]. Hence,
the hypothesis proposed as:

**H12:** The customer trust positively influences the customer loyalty

**Word of Mouth and Trust**

Naveen F. Awad and Arik Ragowsky (2008) have used the e marketing scenario to
prove empirically how the word of mouth is affected by the trust towards the service by the
customer. The higher the trust towards the service provider, positive will be the word of mouth.
The lower the trust then the word of mouth will be towards the negative aspect. When the trust towards the service provider increases then that increases the positive word of mouth to be forwarded. When the trust increases then the customer tends to send positive word of mouth to various friends around the globe through the social networking sites. Higher the trust higher will be the impact positive word of mouth will be sent across the globe [293]. In 2009, a study on five star hotels have been conducted, wherein attempt was made to find out how the trust attribute behaves towards the word of mouth. It was found that the customer revisited the hotels when the affluence of trust towards the hotel was very high. It was also noticed that such customers who had high trust towards the hotel tend to show a positivity towards the word of mouth. When the trust does not improve then the word of mouth degrades drastically [294]. Hence, the hypothesis proposed as:

H13: The customer trust positively influences the word of mouth communication

Word of Mouth and Customer Loyalty

Jean and Harrison Walker (2001) in their empirical research work had emphasized on the aspect of word of mouth. They have concluded that the impact of word of mouth varies with different areas of industries. With the service industry, the impact of the mentioned variable word of mouth is very very high. In this industry of study, the word of mouth has greater concern over the customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Repeated customer satisfaction enhances customer loyalty and makes the customer to stay with the service provider for a longer period of time[256]. The concept of word of mouth was also proved by Hartline and Jones in their empirical study. In their study they have compared the effect of the word of mouth on customer loyalty with regard to service quality, it was found that even if the service quality was little low than the expectation, but with the positive word of mouth, the customers tend to be loyal with the service provider. When a positive word of mouth regarding a service provider is being shared among various customers then many more customers tend to try service with that service provider when again the satisfaction of the customers will lead them to turn into a loyal customer very soon [295]. Hence, the hypothesis proposed as:

H14: The word of mouth communication influences the customer loyalty.
Mediation Hypotheses

The Mediating Role of Trust

Aguilla, et.al, (2013) have succeeded in proving that there is impact of service quality in the service encounter stage. During the service encounter, when the service quality is higher then that leads to increase in trust towards the service provider, this trust further enhances the loyalty towards the service provider. The service quality is higher when the employee is able to give the service to the customer so that the customer is highly satisfied. This satisfaction turns into customer loyalty over a period of time after multiple attempts to acquire the service from the same service provider. Even before the satisfaction turns into customer loyalty there is one mediation aspect called trust towards the service provider. Only when the customer has good or high trust towards the service provider will the customer satisfaction turns into the customer loyalty [296].

H15: The Trust mediates the relationship between the restaurant service quality and customer loyalty

The intensity of trust was measured by Dr. Sajjad Ahmad Baig (2015) in his research work, wherein this variable was found to mediate satisfaction and loyalty and that increase in trust towards the service provider has proved to increase the loyalty of that service provider. Only when the customer is satisfied will the customer return to the same restaurant again and again. The repeated visit to the restaurant and each time the restaurant makes the customer happy and satisfied will this satisfied customer turn into a loyal customer. For the loyalty to stay for a longer period of time and to acquire the customer loyalty within a short span of time, the customers need to be developed with the attribute trust. This trust acts like a catalyst to increase the speed with which the customer can become a loyal customer [297]. It is proved by Wen Chin Tsao (2012) that trust is developed when a customer is being satisfied over the service provided to him and this in turn affects the loyalty and commitment towards the service provider. The customer is bent enough to stay with the same service provider for a longer period of time. It is proved that the satisfied customer will visit the same restaurant again and again hence
improving the trust towards the restaurant. This trust in turn leads to improving the customer loyalty [298].

**H16: The trust mediates the relationship between the customer satisfaction and customer loyalty**

**The Mediating Role of Word of Mouth**

An empirical study (2013) have proved the importance of brand image and how it impacts the customer satisfaction leads to positive word of mouth and how the word of mouth improves the customer loyalty. The trend in today’s social networking is that whenever a person tries out something new it is being immediately shared with the friends and lot of discussion happens with regard any achievement or any new venture or any new service taken or anything for that matter. This satisfied customer in turn broadcasts the positive word of mouth across the globe and the already satisfied customer becomes a loyal customer based on how strong the word of mouth is. If for an instance, a customer is satisfied with the food at a particular restaurant but his friend had a bad experience in the same restaurant. His friend spreads a negative word of mouth of the service provider. Hence even though the customer happy with the service provider, then negative word of mouth will bring down the loyalty towards the restaurant [299].

**H17: The Word of Mouth mediates the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty**

A study in 2012 have insisted that higher satisfaction increases the trust and which implies a positive word of mouth which further enhances the customer loyalty. Only when the trust towards the restaurant increases with customer will he or she will be ready to give a positive word of mouth. This positive word of mouth will increase the customer loyalty. The impact of word of mouth is higher on acquiring and maintenance of the customer loyalty [198].

**H18: The Word of mouth mediates the relationship between trust and customer loyalty**