CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
This chapter presents the summary of the research work done including the major findings, recommendations and scope for further research. The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section presents the study in brief under the heading ‘THE STUDY IN RETROSPECT’. The second section deals with the major findings arrived at through the detailed analysis of data. The third section is devoted for presenting the major recommendations given by the researcher on the basis of research findings. The fourth and fifth section deals with the scope for further research and concluding remarks.

5.1 THE STUDY IN RETROSPECT

The Indian food and beverage industry witnessed rapid growth in past few years (NRAI, 2016). The industry contributes significantly to the economy in terms of investment, employment generation and GDP. The key factor for the growth of food industry is the growing volume of young population, increasing disposable income, changing lifestyle and increasing women population (NRAI, 2016). Nuclear family, rise of self-employed (Navajith and Dushyant 2004) and increase in the foreign tourist arrival are some of other reasons for the growth of food industry.

The review of literature revealed that though there are several studies that deal with the behavior of fast food consumers, there are no specific studies that comprehensively deal with the antecedents and descendants of customer satisfaction relating to fast food restaurants in Kerala. The findings of the study filled this gap in the existing literature.

The changing tastes and preferences led to the rapid growth of fast food industry in India. Given this context, a study to understand the consumer behavior
assumes special importance. The study may help the marketers to better understand the changing food market in Kerala in General and Fast food market in particular. The study examines both antecedents and descendants of Customer satisfaction. The insights gained from the study will help the marketers to develop more effective strategies to gain competitive advantage in the industry. The study also shed light on Body Mass Index (BMI) and consequent incidence of health problems affecting fast food consumers in Kerala which will help the government to bring in new regulations to improve the quality of products sold by these restaurants. The consumers of fast food will be better enlightened with the findings of the study as they can shape their behavior for the betterment of their health and wellbeing.

The restaurant landscape of India changed with the entry of American fast food chain Mc Donald’s in 1996. After that many MNC fast food players like KFC, Domino’s Pizza, Chicking, and Subway entered the Indian food market. They slowly penetrated into the market and now have branches in almost all major Indian cities. This penetration is also visible in the state of Kerala. The food habits of Keralites have undergone drastic changes primarily driven by the entry of such multinational players. However, there is severe criticism against such fast food restaurants on the ground that the fast food causes lot of health issues.

In the context of changing preference of consumers towards fast food especially among the young population and the entry of multinational fast food restaurants in Kerala offers new challenges and opportunities to all stakeholders. The paradigm change in relation to fast food restaurants raises the following pertinent research questions. What are the drivers which influence the consumers towards fast food restaurants? What are the antecedents and descendants of
Customer Satisfaction? Whether such drivers, antecedents and descendants differ according to consumers demographic characteristics? How far does the different antecedent contribute to Customer Satisfaction? How far the descendants of customer satisfaction such as Customer Loyalty and rate of usage of fast food restaurant are influenced by Customer Satisfaction? How far the rate of usage of fast food restaurant contribute to its consequent health indicators such as BMI and incidence of Health problems.

The Study is undertaken with the following specific objectives;

1. To identify the various drivers that determine the choice of fast food restaurants and see whether these drivers differ according to demographic characteristics of consumers.

2. To assess the various antecedents and descendants of Customer Satisfaction and examine whether they differ according to demographic characteristics of consumers.

3. To assess how far the antecedents such as Service Quality, Brand Image, Perceived Value, and Product quality contribute to Customer Satisfaction.

4. To assess how far Customer Satisfaction contribute to its descendants such as Customer Loyalty and Rate of Usage of fast food restaurant and its consequent Health indicators like BMI and incidence of Health problems.

5. To develop and test a model that would effectively explain the behavior of consumers of fast food restaurants in Kerala using the dominant constructs identified through the review of literature including both antecedents and descendants of Customer Satisfaction.
6. To give suitable suggestions and recommendations based on the findings of the study

The scope of the study is limited to consumers of selected branded multinational fast food restaurants operating in the state of Kerala, India such as McDonald, KFC, Dominos, Subway, EFC and AFC. The theoretical aspects covered under the study are buying behavior, drivers that influence the choice of fast food restaurants, Service quality, Perceived value, Customer satisfaction, Customer loyalty, BMI and incidence of Health problems among consumers of fast food.

The data and other information required for the study is collected through primary and secondary data sources. Primary data for the study was collected through a structured questionnaire. The variables were identified through a detailed review of literature. A pilot study covering 30 respondents was undertaken to fine tune the questionnaire. The reliability or internal consistency of the measurement scale was assessed and was fine-tuned by removing few items that were found significantly improving the Alpha value. Before deleting the items, detailed consultations were made with the subject matter experts to ensure that no relevant variables are removed. Alpha value of all the constructs crossed the threshold limit of .07 indicating the internal consistency of the scale adopted.

The target population of the study was consumers of branded fast food restaurants in Kerala. Though the population of the study can be defined, being consumers it is neither practically possible to find nor create a sample frame that includes all units of the population. Therefore, taking the cues from prior research studies, the samples are taken through purposive sampling method, the prominent method of data collection adopted in similar studies. The samples for the study were
taken from three districts of Kerala namely Trivandrum, Ernakulum and Kozhikode. These districts were selected purposefully because of two reasons. Firstly, they represent the southern, central and northern districts of Kerala which obviously will give due representation to entire state. Secondly, the number of branded fast food restaurants is comparatively high in these districts. A sample of 600 was taken for the study. The researcher visited the selected branded restaurants in each district and collected data during three time slots, viz, noon time, evening time and night time on all 7 days of the week. The restaurant to be visited in a day was decided by drawing lot. Every fourth customer is contacted for the data. If the fourth customer refused to give the data, then the fifth customer is contacted followed by next fourth customer and so on. The process is continued until the stipulated 200 is reached from each selected district. Though the researcher has collected 600 questionnaires using the above mentioned procedure, the researcher was forced to remove a few questionnaires that were found incomplete or filled up carelessly. 555 questionnaires that were found suitable were taken up for the detailed analysis. The sample size was found adequate given the significance level of 5% with a margin of error of 5%. The collected data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools such as Percentages, Averages, $\chi^2$ test, t test, One Way ANOVA and SEM. The statistical software’s SPSS and Smart PLS were used for the analysis of data.

The thesis is organized into five chapters. The first Chapter titled ‘introduction’ presents the significance, statement of the problem, objectives, hypotheses, scope, methodology etc. of the study. Chapter two carries a detailed review of Literature. Chapter three deals with the analysis of Data and its interpretations. The fourth chapter presents the tested conceptual model. The fifth
and last chapter presents the Summary, major findings, recommendations and scope for further research.

### 5.2 MAJOR FINDINGS

The evidence collected from 555 respondents through the sample survey brought out many interesting findings relating to fast food restaurants operating in Kerala. A Cross Section of sample showed that 61 percent of sample respondents are male and 39 percent are females. 44 percent of the sample respondents are from urban area, 40 percent from semi urban area and 16 percent are from Rural Area. Regarding marital status, 62 percent of sample respondents are unmarried and 38 percent are married. The major findings resulting from the detailed analysis of data collected from these respondents are given below.

1. 48 percent of respondents belong to ‘Below 25’ age group, 36 percent belongs to ‘25-35’ age group, 13 percent belongs to ‘35-45’ age group and 3 percent belongs to ‘Above 45’ year’s age group. Hence the majority of consumers of fast food restaurants are belonging to younger age group of less than 35years of age.

2. 53 percent of the sample respondents are Graduates and 35 percent are Post Graduates. 12 percent belong to the less educated background of SSLC and Plus two. Hence the majority of the consumers of fast food restaurants are unmarried and well educated.

3. 40 percent of the sample respondents belong to Rs 25,000- Rs. 50,000 income category, 45 percent of respondents belong to ‘Above Rs 50,000’ income category and 15 percent belongs to less than Rs 25,000 income
category. Hence the majority of consumers are from relatively high income groups.

7. The exploratory factor analysis brought out six drivers that influence the choice of branded fast food restaurants. They were labeled as ‘Promotional measures,’ ‘Quality food at reasonable price’, ‘Convenience’, ‘Brand Image’, ‘Environment’ and ‘Staff service’.

8. The relative influence of drivers is significantly more for males than females with regard to environment, staff service, brand image, quality food at reasonable price.

9. There is a significant difference among customers residing in rural, urban and semi urban areas regarding various drivers such as ‘promotional measures’, ‘Quality food at reasonable price’, ‘Brand Image’, ‘Convenience’ and ‘Staff service’. The driver ‘Promotional measures’ is significantly more for semi urban and rural consumers than the urban consumers. The driver ‘Quality of food at reasonable price’ is significantly more for semi urban consumers than the urban and rural consumers. The driver ‘Convenience’ is significantly more for rural consumers than the urban and semi urban consumers. The driver ‘Staff service’ is significantly more for rural and semi urban consumers than urban consumers.

10. There is a significant difference between married and unmarried consumers regarding the driver, convenience and staff service. The driver ‘convenience’ is significantly higher for married consumers than unmarried consumers.
whereas the driver ‘staff service’ is significantly more for unmarried consumers than married consumers.

11. There is significant difference among consumers of different educational background in choosing fast food restaurants. The driver ‘Promotional measures’, ‘convenience,’ ‘brand image’ and convenience is significantly higher for less educated group. The driver ‘Quality of food at reasonable price’ is significantly more for highly educated group.

12. There is significant difference among consumers with different occupational backgrounds regarding the driver, promotional measures, Brand Image, Environment and Convenience. The relative influence of the driver, promotional measure, brand image, environment and convenience is significantly more for employed group than students group.

13. There is significant difference between male and female consumers regarding tangibility, responsiveness and empathy aspects of service quality. The service quality dimensions tangibility and responsiveness is significantly more for males than females. Whereas, Empathy is significantly higher for females than male consumers.

14. There is significant difference among consumers residing in Urban, Semi Urban and Rural area regarding the various Service Quality aspect such as assurance, tangibility, reliability and empathy. The assurance and tangibility aspect of service quality is more for rural consumers and semi urban consumers than the urban consumers. The reliability and empathy is more for rural consumers than urban and semi urban consumers.
Summary, Findings and Recommendations

15. There is significant difference between married and unmarried consumers in respect of various service quality aspects. The service quality aspects such as 'Tangibility', 'Reliability', 'Assurance' and 'Empathy' is significantly higher for married consumers than unmarried consumers.

16. There is a significant difference among consumers with different educational background in respect of various service quality aspects such as reliability, assurance and empathy aspects of service quality. The reliability and responsiveness is more for less educated group than relatively high educated group of consumers. Whereas the empathy and assurance aspects is significantly more for high educated group than low educated group of consumers.

17. There is a significant difference among consumers with different occupational background regarding the tangibility, reliability, and assurance and empathy aspects of service quality. The tangibility aspect is more for well-placed group of consumers. The Responsiveness aspect is more for private group of consumers than students group of consumers. The assurance aspect is more for employed consumers than students. The empathy aspect is more for employed group of consumers than students.

18. There is significant difference between male and female consumers regarding the perceived value. The perception regarding Perceived Value is significantly more for females than males.

19. There is significant difference among consumers residing in Urban, Semi Urban and Rural area regarding the Perceived Value. The perception
regarding perceived value is significantly more for rural consumers than the urban and semi urban consumers.

20. There is significant difference between married and unmarried consumers in respect of Perceived Value. The perception about perceived value is significantly more for married consumers than unmarried consumers.

21. There is a significant difference among consumers with different educational background in respect of Perceived Value. The perceived value aspect is significantly more for less educated group than highly educated group of consumers.

22. There is a significant difference among consumers with different occupational background regarding Perceived Value. The perception regarding perceived value is more for employed group of consumers than students.

23. There is significant difference among consumers residing in Urban, Semi Urban and Rural area regarding Customer Satisfaction. The customer satisfaction is significantly more for semi urban and rural consumers than urban consumers.

24. There is significant difference among consumers belonging to different age groups in respect of customer satisfaction. The customer satisfaction is significantly more for older age group than other age groups.
25. There is significant difference among consumers with different occupational background in respect of customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is more for employed groups than students groups.

26. There is significant difference between married and unmarried customers in respect of customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is significantly more for married consumers than unmarried consumers.

27. There is significant difference among consumers residing in urban, semi urban and rural areas in respect of customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is significantly more for semi urban and rural consumers than urban consumers.

28. There is significant difference between Male and Female consumers regarding customer satisfaction. The customer satisfaction is significantly more for male consumers than female consumers.

29. There is significant difference among consumers belonging to different age groups in respect of customer loyalty. The Customer Loyalty is significantly more for older age groups than other age groups. There is significant difference among consumers of different occupational background regarding Customer Loyalty. The Customer Loyalty is significantly more for employed group than students group.

30. The structural model shows the influence of both antecedents and descendants of Customer Satisfaction. In the model, Product quality, Service quality, Brand Image and Perceived value are considered as the antecedents of Customer Satisfaction. Customer loyalty, rate of consumption at fast food
restaurants, BMI and health issues are considered as descendants Customer Satisfaction. The model revealed that 80 percent of variance in customer satisfaction is explained by Brand image, Perceived value and service quality. Similarly 42 percent of variance in brand loyalty is explained by product quality, brand image and service quality. 42 percent of variance in perceived value is explained by product quality and service quality. 28 percent variance in brand image is explained by product quality and service quality. 25 percent variance in health problems is explained by BMI. 8 percent variance in BMI is explained by rate of usage of fast food restaurants.

31. Path coefficient showed the relative influence of independent variable on the dependent variable. The model revealed that the foremost predictor of customer satisfaction is service quality followed by perceived value and brand image. The prominent predictor of perceived value is service quality followed by product quality. The important predictor of brand image is service quality followed by product quality. The dominant predictor of health problems is BMI whereas the noticeable predictor of BMI is rate of usage. The prominent predictor of rate of usage is customer satisfaction. The significant predictor of brand loyalty is service quality followed by brand image and product quality.

32. Multi group analysis result showed that occupation plays a moderating role on relationship between perceived value and customer satisfaction.
5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Service quality is found to be the major predictor of customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. The service quality can be improved by selecting the right employees with the apt set of skills and knowledge. In order to attract better talents attractive salary package may be offered. In addition to that, continuous monitoring and training of employees is required to make them more competent and professional. Trained employees can guide and serve customers better. Therefore, the training content shall include topics such as safe and healthy food habits, the initiatives taken by the company to protect the health of consumers, etc.

Perceived value is an important predictor of customer satisfaction. So the marketers should frame suitable pricing strategies like combo offer, discount etc to enhance the perceived value to further enhance the satisfaction of customers.

Product quality is an important predictor of Customer Loyalty. In order to improve the quality of the food products the marketer may procure quality raw materials preferably from local farmers on contract basis. It will help the farmers to earn a regular income and also help the firm to fulfill its CSR initiatives. Such a step will also help to reduce the negative marketing among the public pointing out the health issues and exploitation by branded fast food restaurants.

The findings of the study point out that increased usage of fast food increases BMI and consequent health problems. The marketers shall avoid unsafe food and educate the consumers about safe food habits according to age. Providing information about the measures adopted by the company to ensure the quality of food can address that consumers concern regarding the safety side of fast food.
The study showed that majority of respondents are students. In order to create awareness among students, courses on healthy food habits may be introduced in school and college level curriculum.

The imposition fat tax by the government of Kerala on junk foods is welcome initiative. Similar initiatives should be taken all state government to reduce the intake of unhealthy food by next generation. The government should ensure the quality of products through laboratory testing and setting standards by FSSAI. The restaurants using local and organic raw materials may be encouraged through duty cuts and offering awards and recognitions.

5.4 SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There is further scope for further research relating to the topic under study. Since the present study was confined only to branded fast food restaurants in Kerala, it is possible to enhance the scope of the study by including non-branded fast food restaurants also. Similarly, there is a scope for conducting a comparative study of branded Indian and Foreign fast food restaurants in Kerala. Such a study is quite relevant as more and more Indian companies are coming to the field offering stiff competition to Multinationals. Though incidence of health problems and BMI is relatively high with the increased usage of fast food restaurants, it may not be purely because of fast food usage. A study that may further explore the various causes including the fast food usage that may result in high BMI and Health problems, will complement the findings of the present study by establishing whether the high BMI and health are indeed on account of fast food restaurants.
5.5 CONCLUSION

Food determines the culture of the people. Kerala have its own traditional cuisines, but recently changes are observed in the food habits among people. The change in food habits from traditional to fast food is primarily driven by the entry of branded fast food restaurants particularly the MNCs. The study was undertaken to find out the drivers that influence the choice of branded fast food restaurants, the antecedents and descendants of Customer Satisfaction towards branded fast food restaurants. A detailed review of literature was undertaken to find out the research gap and to identify the relevant variables. A structured questionnaire was used for the collection of primary data. The data collected from 555 sample respondents were analyzed using suitable statistical and mathematical tools. The study revealed the dominant drivers that influence the choice fast food restaurants. They are promotional measures, quality food at reasonable price, brand image, convenience, environment and staff service. The study also brought out the prominent antecedents and descendants of customer satisfaction in respect of fast food restaurants. The evidence suggests that the foremost antecedent of customer satisfaction is service quality followed by perceived value and brand image. 80% of variance in customer is explained by service quality, perceived value and brand image. The descendants of Customer Satisfaction such as Customer Loyalty, the rate of consumption of fast food restaurants were also significantly influenced by customer satisfaction. 25 percent variance in health issues is explained by BMI. 8 percent variance in BMI is explained by rate of consumption. 7 percent variance in consumption is explained by customer satisfaction.
The evidence collected for the study, therefore, supports the popular perception that fast food use are more likely to result in high BMI and higher incidence of health issues. Needless to say, the high usage rate of fast food restaurant is also the result of high level of customer satisfaction that is guaranteed by the branded fast food restaurants.