ABSTRACT

This study is based on the international tourists' satisfaction with regard to the houseboat concept in Kerala, India. The research is carried out on the houseboat tourism industry which is becoming a prominent tourist attraction among foreign tourists visiting the southern part of India. The objectives of the research are to study international tourists' demographic profile affecting their satisfaction and also to study the products and service attributes concerning the houseboat concept and their relationship with the international tourists' satisfaction.

The demographic factors like age, gender, income, nationality and length of stay were considered as independent variables in order to identify the differences in the level of satisfaction among the international tourists. The researcher also tried to determine the strength of relationship which exists between the product and service attributes as independent variables, namely variety of menu, food quality, atmosphere and convenience with the satisfaction level of international tourists.

Nine hypotheses statements were formulated and the data was collected using 400 questionnaires, distributed among the international tourists as respondents who were selected using non-probability convenience sampling. The data was analyzed using the Kruskal – Wallis and the Mann-Whitney U tests for the demographic variables. Spearman Rank Correlation was used to find out the relationship between the satisfaction level and the product and service attributes.

The researcher found that except for gender, all remaining variables like age, income level, nationality and length of stay were found to have differences with the level of satisfaction among international tourists. The correlation tests however, indicated that all the product and services attributes had moderate to strong positive relationship with the level of satisfaction among international tourists using the houseboat concept in the backwaters of Kerala, India. From the test it was found that out of the four products and service attributes, the menu variety was the highest in rank with respect to the relation to the satisfaction level of the international tourists.