

**INFLUENCE OF SERVICE QUALITY AND FOOD  
EXPERIENCE ON TOURISTS' SATISFACTION – A  
STUDY ON HOUSEBOAT TOURISM IN KERALA**

*Thesis Submitted to*

*Cochin University of Science and Technology  
for the Award of the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
under the Faculty of Social Sciences*

*by*

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(Reg.No.4367)**

*Under the Supervision of*  
**Dr. Muhammed Aslam M.K**



**SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES  
COCHIN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
KOCHI -682 022, KERALA**

July 2019

# **INFLUENCE OF SERVICE QUALITY AND FOOD EXPERIENCE ON TOURISTS' SATISFACTION -A STUDY ON HOUSEBOAT TOURISM IN KERALA**

*Ph.D. Thesis under the Faculty of Social Sciences*

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## **Certificate**

This is to certify that the research work entitled **“Influence of Service Quality and Food Experience on Tourists’ Satisfaction – A Study on Houseboat Tourism in Kerala”** is a record of bona fide research work done by Ms. Shiji Mohan N, Research Scholar (Reg. No.4367), under my supervision and guidance.

This thesis is the outcome of her original work and has not formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or any other similar title and is work submitted for the award of degree of Doctor of Philosophy under the faculty of Social Sciences of Cochin University of Science and Technology. Also, I certify that the plagiarism check was done for this work using the official facility in the CUSAT Library and found satisfactory. All the relevant corrections and modifications suggested by the audience during the pre-submission seminar and recommended by the Doctoral Committee have been incorporated in the thesis.

Place: Kochi-22  
Date: 15/07/2019

**Dr. Muhammed Aslam M.K.**  
Supervising Guide



## *Declaration*

I, Shiji Mohan.N hereby declare that the thesis entitled “**Influence of Service Quality and Food Experience on Tourists’ Satisfaction – A Study on Houseboat Tourism in Kerala**” submitted to the Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT) for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy under the Faculty of Social Sciences is a record of the bona fide research work done by me, under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Muhammed Aslam M.K, Associate Professor, School of Management Studies, CUSAT, Kochi. This work did not form part of any dissertation submitted for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or any other similar title or recognition from this or any other institution.

Place:Kochi-22  
Date: 15/07/2019

**Shiji Mohan.N**



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**Shiji Mohan.N**



## *Abstract*

Tourism industry is one of the largest service industries in the world and it is an important economic activity in several developing countries. National Geographical traveler selected Kerala as one of the 50 destinations of a lifetime and one of the thirteen paradises in the world. Houseboat tourism is one of the most important tourism product of Kerala, cruising in a houseboat is a wonderful experience and increase the level of satisfaction of tourists in the houseboat highlights the scope of development of future prospects of the Kerala tourism.

To attract tourists to this unique destination of Kerala, it is essential to spread word-of-mouth information about tourists' satisfaction relating to particular activities or experiences. The ability to attain international standards and consistently deliver high quality in services are the main success factors in the promotion of Kerala Houseboat Tourism on the global market.

The present study aims to model the relationship between service quality, food experience, perceived value dimensions like functional, social, emotional value and tourists' satisfaction. In this, relation between service quality and food experience is measured with the dependent variable tourists' satisfaction. The study used primary data collected from 416 foreign tourists who travelled by using houseboats in Kerala. A structured questionnaire is used to collect the required data. Socio- demographic profiling as well as hypotheses testing is done using PLS-SEM.

**Keywords:** Kerala tourism, Houseboat Tourism, Tourists' Satisfaction, Customer Satisfaction, Service Quality Perceived, Food Experience, Perceived Value.



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## *List of Abbreviations*

AARS	Average Adjusted R Squared
APC	Average Path Coefficient
ARS	Average R Squared
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CB-SEM	Covariance Based Structural Equation Model
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CS	Customer Satisfaction
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
EV	Emotional Value
FE	Food Experience
FQ	Food Quality
FV	Functional Value
FTAs	Foreign Tourist Arrivals
GDP	Gross Domestic Production
Gof	Goodness of Fit
KMO	Kaiser- Meyer-Olkwin
PCA	Principal Component Analysis
PLS	Partial Least Square
PSQ	Perceived Service Quality
PV	Perceived Value
SPR	Sympson's Paradox Ratio
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SQ	Service Quality
SV	Social Value
TPV	Tourists Perceived Value
TS	Tourists' Satisfaction
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor



**INTRODUCTION**

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	<b>1.6</b>	Relevance of the study
	<b>1.7</b>	Potential Contribution of the study
	<b>1.8</b>	Structure of the thesis

*This chapter intends to provide a general introduction to the topic of this research. The chapter attempts to bring out the importance of tourism industry in society so as to present the rationale for the study. The relevance and the need for the present research are also discussed. The potential and expected contributions of the study are also included in the chapter. Finally, the organization of the thesis is given.*

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Curiosity and the spirit of adventure are inherent in human beings. The desire to travel in order to see new sights and new experiences and live under different environments will always grow. Tourism is a temporary short-term movement of people to destinations other than the places they normally live and work in and their activities during their stay at those destinations (Bennett, 2000). This means that the demand for travel and tourism products will grow and travel and tourism can be marketed. The service sector plays an increasingly important role in modern economies (Olorunniwo, 2006). Travel and Tourism is one of the world's largest service industries (Hui, Wan, & Ho, 2007; Canny, 2013). It also plays a very important role in the economy and stimulated the growth of other economy (Mukhles, 2013). In addition, tourism industry is one of the international growing pioneers among service industries (Fourie & Gallego, 2011). This generate a strong flow-through effect in other sectors such as retail, transportation and construction (Hui, Wan, & Ho, 2007). The importance of tourism is highlighted through its role via revenue and foreign exchange, a preserver of cultures and historical heritage, a promoter of national development and a vital and crucial factor of employment opportunities (Abuamoud, 2013; Hui et al., 2007). Tourism is an important economic activity and continues to be the fastest growing sector and hence is typically included among the top ten industries (Retail and Wholesale trade, Agriculture, Real Estate, Banking and Insurance, IT industry, Transportation, Engineering and Machinery, Chemical, Tourism, Textile industry ) in the country. Although India has progressed a lot since the fifties with respect to

tourism, the country is still way behind the developed or even the developing countries (Ramesh & Joseph, 2011).

Tourism is a sector, which is turning into the first industry in the world due to positive social, cultural and economic effects in a way that many countries intend to benefit from this industry through providing proper backgrounds and infrastructures and attempting to satisfy tourists' demands (Aghdaie & Momeni, 2011). Tourism has been seen as a driving force for regional development. Successful tourism can increase destinations tourist receipts, income, and employment as well as government revenues. How to attract the tourists to revisit and/or recommend the destination to others is crucial for the success of destination tourism development (Chen & Tsai, 2007).

## **1.2 TOURISM INDUSTRY- AN OVERVIEW**

Foreign Tourist Arrivals in India from different regions of the World during last three years are given in Table No1.1. It can be observed clearly that the FTAs in India have been increasing from all regions. The growth was maximum from South Asia (34.50%) followed by Central and South America (16.9%), Eastern Europe (16.5%), Australasia (10.6%), South East Asia (10.5%), East Asia (7.4%), North America (6.1%), Africa (5.2%), Western Europe (5.1%) and West Asia (1.3%). The percentage share in FTAs in India during 2017 was the highest for South Asia (29.41%). The following table shows the FTAs in India from different regions of the world and month-wise number and percentage share of FTAs in India during 2016-2018.

Region/ Country	Number of Arrivals			Percentage Share		
	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
South Asia	1946207	2194555	2951665	24.25	24.93	29.41
Western Europe	1880203	2029412	2133673	23.42	23.05	21.26
North America	1494930	1614178	1712358	18.62	18.33	17.06
South East Asia	700298	746069	824575	8.72	8.47	8.22
East Asia	555770	617563	663295	6.92	7.01	6.61
West Asia	417616	451842	457760	5.20	5.13	4.56
Eastern Europe	331051	406002	472872	4.12	4.61	4.71
Australasia	312101	348908	386059	3.89	3.96	3.85
Africa	293569	302164	318023	3.66	3.43	3.17
Central and South America	70831	78730	92067	0.88	0.89	0.92
Not Classified elsewhere	24557	14988	23456	0.31	0.17	0.23
Grand Total	8027133	8804411	10035803	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Bureau of Immigration, India

**Table 1.1:** FTAs in India from different regions of the World 2014-2017

Report of Bureau of Immigration, in 2017, as per the analysis 59.3% of foreign tourist arrivals was for the purpose Leisure, Holiday & Recreation activities. The average duration of stay by foreign tourists in India (21 days) is significantly high; there is scope for further increase in view of availability of variety of tourism products, culture, cuisine etc to offer the tourists by India.



Weather conditions at different tourist destinations are one of the important determinants of tourist arrivals. In the past, seasonal variations have been observed in FTA to India. The table1.2 gives the month-wise FTAs in India during 2018 as well as comparative figures for the previous two years. In 2017, December has been the peak month for FTAs in India followed by November, January, February and March.

Month	Foreign Tourist Arrivals			Growth rate in FTAs		%share 2017
	2016	2017	2018	2017/16	2018/17	
January	844533	964109	1047948	14.2	8.7	9.61
February	848782	931025	1052766	9.7	13.1	9.28
March	809107	885936	1025830	9.5	15.8	8.83
April	592004	717899	749477	21.3	4.4	7.15
May	527466	622408	606043	18.0	-2.6	6.20
June	546972	663470	681279	21.3	2.7	6.61
July	733834	779309	806255	6.2	3.5	7.77
August	652111	719129	784814	10.3	9.1	7.17
September	608177	719964	719121	18.4	-0.1	7.17
October	7741770	866976	881763	16.9	1.7	8.64
November	8878280	997738	1012128	13.6	1.4	9.94
December	1021375	1167840	-	14.3	-	11.64
Total	8804411	10035803	9367424	14.0	5.6	100.00

Source: Bureau of Immigration, India

**Table1.2:** Month-Wise number and percentage share of FTAs in India during 2016-2018

Foreign Tourist arrival to Kerala during the year 2017 is 1091870 showing an increase of 5.15 % over the previous year. Foreign exchange earnings for the year 2017 are 8392.11crores which recorded a growth of 8.29% over the previous year. Kerala is a leader in India when it comes to destination management, tourism promotion as well as tourist arrivals. The backwater of Kerala is a unique product of the state and is found nowhere else in the world.

### **1.3 TOURISM PRODUCTS IN KERALA**

Kerala, located on the south western tip of India, evolved into a prominent international tourism destination primarily by linking tourism experiences with nature. Fondly referred to as ‘God’s Own Country’, Kerala was selected as one of the 50 destinations of a lifetime and one of the thirteen paradises in the world by National Geographical traveller in the United States (1984). Its unique eco tourism initiatives, culture and traditions coupled with its varied demography has made Kerala one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. An equable climate, serene beaches, tranquil stretches of backwaters lush hill stations and exotic wildlife are the major attractions of this land. Although sufficient significance has been accorded to tourism as a development strategy in Kerala, tourism’s contributions to the development processes and the sustainability of tourism activities remain unexplored. (Sebastian & Prema, 2009). Kerala’s tourism brand is listed among the top 100 brands of India and has been accorded the highly coveted ‘Super Brand’ status Kerala is cited as one of the 50 destinations of a lifetime by National Geographic Traveller, and is also a ‘Partner State’ to the world tourism and travel Council ( Mathen, 2012).

Kerala's principal tourism products fall into six categories: (1) heritage/cultural / religious sites and events, (2) backwaters, (3) beaches, (4) hill stations, (5) wild life sanctuaries and (6) ayurveda, with the common cord of green environs harmonising them all together to form a Green Symphony.

**a) Heritage and cultural tourism**

Heritage and cultural tourism constitutes a dominant component among both domestic and foreign tourists visiting the state. Among the available assets, it is imperative to identify and focus upon those that are outstanding enough to attract and satisfy varied interests. Possible models for tourism development that would draw strength from the local culture, arts and lifestyle of Kerala include rural tourism, development of a heritage village, and business tourism packages incorporating cultural performances, local cuisine, etc. Suitable elements of these models could be incorporated into various projects, or separate projects along these lines could also be considered at appropriate locations in the state.

**b) The eco-tourism concept**

Awareness and interest in the concept of eco- tourism in Kerala is quite encouraging. Some vibrant initiatives such as the Thenmala Eco-tourism project are already in place. Given Kerala's diverse natural resources, the concept can be developed further to encompass a wide gamut of eco- tourism activities. Due consideration may also be given to various places already identified for this purpose. The real test would be to see eco-tourism practiced in letter and spirit on a larger canvas right across the entire state.

**c) Hill station tourism**

Kerala's best known hill station Munnar, has faced considerable deterioration over the years, though it is quite serene and idyllic compared to many other much trodden hill stations in India. Tourism development is also having a negative impact on the local plantation based economy. One suggestion that emerges is that tourism development may be encouraged in places where the plantations or other forms of local economy are on the downside due to extraneous reasons. It would be appropriate to explore the possibility of attracting further investments to this region to achieve economies of clustering and integration of tourism activities, so that they can benefit from common access roads, transportation and other facilities.

**d) Forest and wildlife tourism**

Development of tourism in forest areas has often been a subject of considerable debate. Quite clearly, all new tourist facilities should be created outside the protected area boundaries. This would eliminate the prime cause for conflict. Also, operators of tourist facilities should be active participants in conservation and improvement activities, as they have a long term stake in the same.

**e) Backwater tourism**

While other forms of tourist attractions are found a plenty in different parts of India, the extensive backwaters are a distinct feature of Kerala, providing a unique opportunity for positioning as an exotic tourism product. The geographical expanse of the backwaters also makes it convenient and conducive to spread tourism activity across the state, thus dispersing accompanying economic benefits and mitigating the negative impacts. At

present, most backwater resorts and houseboats are at the high end of the price spectrum and consequently out of reach of the average tourist, both domestic and foreign. One of the components of backwater tourism is the development of suitable islands in the backwaters to provide resort accommodation, recreation and other facilities.

**f) Beach tourism**

Beach destinations are commonly sold through charters. Beaches and associated marine areas could offer a variety of options, as may be feasible, such as swimming, boating, wind and board surfing, water skiing, parasailing, snorkelling and scuba diving and sport fishing. A comparative graded evaluation of the potential beach areas in Kerala could be carried out and efforts could be focused on those that are appropriate for development.

**g) Ayurvedic tourism**

With ayurvedic rejuvenation treatments becoming available widely in different parts of India and abroad, Kerala would have to strengthen its positioning as the real destination for ayurveda, and clearly distinguish its product from those available at other places. The product can sustain itself in the long run against competition, provided it can attract repeat business and also sustained business from new customers through word of mouth publicity. This can happen only if one avoids distortion of traditional ayurveda and its commercialization for quick gains.

Currently, Kerala attracts 5 million domestic tourists and 0.2 million foreign tourists per annum. Destination-wise tourist statistics suggest the following pattern of interest (by percentage) among the tourists across the various tourism products table 1.3.

<b>Tourism product category</b>	<b>Domestic tourists</b>	<b>Foreign tourists</b>
Heritage, culture & religion	65	40
Backwaters	15	20
Beaches	8	25
Hills & hill stations	7	5
Forests & wildlife	5	10

Source: Tourism statistics 2018

**Table No 1.3:** Tourism Products Categories- Kerala

The Kettuvallom (Houseboat in Kerala) is a large floating structure with high load carrying capacity was a part of Kerala's culture and heritage over the past years. Houseboats could sail harnessing wind energy. For centuries, houseboat was an important mode of transportation in coastal Kerala just because of its accessibility to the most remote areas. Due to its sheer size and shape, houseboats can carry load, which is more than thrice that of a cargo truck. As time passed, the motorized road, rail and air transportation scored over the slow and staid country boat, with people opting for speed over charm (Mathen, 2012). Objectives of the Tourism Vision statement are to make tourism, Kerala's core competency sector, to generate employment and enhance productivity, to promote and market Kerala tourism products at national and international level thereby making Kerala a premier global tourism destination (Ramesh & Joseph, 2011).

#### **1.4 THE ROLE OF HOUSEBOAT TOURISM IN KERALA**

God's own Country has become a well recognised tourism brand and the State has achieved impressive growth in foreign tourist arrivals in particular. The backwaters of Kerala are formed by 40 rivers that flow into

the Arabian Sea from the Western Ghats. The backwaters are an integral part of the people of Kerala both in terms of economy as well as lifestyle. They are used for transportation of people and products between villages as well as towns. Today, they play a new role; backwater tourism is one of the most important tourist products of Kerala. In addition, the backwater destination is a dearest place for tourists for holiday enjoyments and leisure irrespective of seasonable factors (Thomas, 2013). The largest backwater stretch in Kerala is the Vembanad Lake which flows through Alappuzha and Kottayam districts and opens out into the sea at the Kochi Port. Alappuzha possesses 40 per cent of the total backwater stretch of Kerala, and the state's houseboat industry is based in Alappuzha district (Varughese, 2013). Cruising along the backwaters of Kerala in a houseboat is an enchanting experience for the tourists and it is a gateway for total backwater stretch of Kerala. Cruising through the backwaters in a houseboat or any other boat is termed as backwater tourism. Backwaters offer the tourist one of the most incredible tourist destinations for pleasure and holidays enjoyments in Kerala. This backwater destination is made up of interconnected waterways, rivers, lakes and bays. This enchanting backwaters destination offers visitors many leisure options like boating, sightseeing and fishing of Kerala in a houseboat is an enchanting experience for the tourists. It is a gateway for the visitors to see firsthand, the unhurried village and village life of rural Kerala. A boat that serves as a place of residence is called a houseboat. In tourism terminology it is also called a boatel or a floating hotel. It has a unique ecosystem that perfectly blends scenic beauty, soothing climate, traditional waterways travel on houseboat and delicious spicy foods for both foreign and inland tourists a wonderful experience of an aquatic life. Kettuvallom is a country boat that

was used in the early days for the transport of goods from the isolated interior villages to the towns. With the advent of roads, bridges and ferry services, gradually, the kettuvalloms went off the scene. Now these kettuvalloms are back again as major tourist attractions in the form of houseboat. Since the concept was creative and useful, it got an overwhelming response through a massive imitation thereby promoting a huge growth and finally evolving into an industry of today with an approximate strength of 999 houseboats. The main scope of houseboat industry is being a source of attraction for the tourists. (Ali & Shabana, 2013).

Today they play a new role; backwater tourism is one of the most important tourist products of Kerala. (Varughese, 2013). The tropical specialties, natural beauty, days at houseboat, spicy foods Ayurveda and soothing climatic conditions give an unforgettable journey to the tourists. Holiday packages on the houseboat, traditional kettuvalloms provide a fabulous experience to tourists.. They offer countless support for the tourism industry during the offseason too. Alappuzha has grown in importance as a backwater tourist centre, attracting several thousands of foreign tourists every year who come here to enjoy the serene marine beauty of the state. Boat races, houseboat holidays, beaches, marine products and coir industry are some of the major attractions offered by Alappuzha (Chandy & Rajesh, 2017).The various tourist attractions in Kerala can be classified broadly as cultural attractions like Museum, Palace, heritage, arts, pilgrimage centre and crafts and natural attractions like Backwater, forest (Mohammed & Ajims, 2014). A houseboat is a boat with luxurious accommodation facility.



Houseboat consist of 1 to 10 bedrooms; commonly available houseboats consists of 1 two bedrooms. A ride on a houseboat is a fabulous way to explore the fascinating beauty of the backwaters of Kerala. A houseboat is about 67 to 100 feet in length and has a width of around 13 feet in the middle. (Varughese, 2013).

## **1.5 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

The State's Tourism Vision 2025 envisages sustainable development of tourism with focus on backwaters, ayurveda and eco-tourism. In terms of tourism, tourists are customers who generate income for the country. In Kerala, Alappuzha has grown in importance as a backwater tourist centre, attracting several thousands of foreign tourists every year who come here to enjoy the serene marine beauty of the state (Chandy & Rajesh, 2017). To attract tourists, it is essential to spread word-of-mouth information about tourists' satisfaction relating to particular activities or experiences (Poria, Biran, 2009 ; Hendijani & Sambasivan, 2013). Understanding the behaviour of tourists has been a main topic in tourism studies for decades (Zabkar, Brencic, & Dmitrovic, 2010). The level of satisfaction derived from different activities has been found to have an impact on the intention to revisit a destination (Chen & Tsai, 2007), which could result in higher income generation for the location in question. Thus, in respect of continuing to develop the tourism sector emphasis should be given to the assessment of tourist satisfaction pertaining to the service quality provided (Hau & Omar, 2014). Beyond a competitive pricing strategy, achieving quality is another key to Kerala's competitiveness. The ability to attain international standards and consistently deliver high quality products and services are critical success factors in the promotion of Kerala products on the global market.

(Ramesh & Joseph, 2011). It is vitally important to create confidence in the products Kerala offers. There is much greater awareness and operators have come to realize that delivering quality translates into greater business efficiency, lower operating costs and increased profits.

The emergence of backwater tourism in Kerala in 1980s lead to exponential growth of houseboat industry and facilitated in attracting a large number of tourists to Alappuzha, Kerala. Chandy & Rajesh (2017) conducted a study about the impact of Back Water Tourism in Kerala. The result shows that Houseboat is very much important in back water tourism. The success of backwater tourism depends on the level of facilities available in the houseboat (Isacc, 2012). In spite of houseboat tourism being the most well known tourism attraction in Kerala, the tourism industry is confronted with several problems for its survival. Planned development of houseboat industry along with the provision of essential backwater regions of Kerala is indispensable at any cost.

The current tourism literature has mostly reported findings about tourist perceptions and satisfaction levels towards travelling in Western societies but not the Asian countries (Heung, 2000). Houseboating is an attractive tourism activity to explore the scenic beauty of Kerala. These type of houseboats or traditional kettuvalloms are not available anywhere else in the world (Varughese, 2013). Cruising along the backwaters of Kerala in a houseboat is an enchanting experience. Such a wonderful experience cannot be obtained anywhere around the globe and the high level of satisfaction of the tourists about the backwater tourism of Kerala highlights the scope of development of future prospects of tourism in the state. (Varughese, 2013).

According to Tseng et al., (2010) the research findings of tourist behaviours, once tourists are satisfied after travel, they may develop revisit intention and behaviours, and also pointed out that tourist satisfaction is significantly correlated with revisit intention. That higher tourist satisfaction leads to higher the revisit intention. Therefore, this study intended to investigate tourist satisfaction after the end of tourism activities. Many attractions and destinations tend to rely heavily on repeat visitation since the cost to retain this group is considered to be less expensive than to attract the other (Um, Chon, & Ro, 2006). Tourism is a section, which is turning into the first industry in the world due to positive social, cultural and economic effects in a way that many countries intend to benefit from this industry through providing proper backgrounds and infrastructures and attempting to satisfy tourists' demands (Aghdaie & Momeni, 2011). Tourist satisfaction also is important to tourism management because it influences destination choice (Lee, Tsung, & Hung, 2009). Researchers in marketing generally agree that satisfaction and perceived quality are two of the most fundamental elements in effective service management (Oliver, 1994). A destination is a package of tourism facilities and services, which, like any other goods and services, is composed of a number of multi destination attributes that together determine its attractiveness to a particular tourist in a given travel situation (Kim, 1998).

The greater customer demand for service qualities and tourists becoming more information driven, travel destinations are also fiercely competitive with one another (Hui et al., 2007). Providing high quality service and ensuring customer satisfaction are widely recognized as important factors leading to the success of the tourism industries (Stevens,

1995). Quality services and tourist satisfaction develop long-term relationship with tourists and in turn bring about destination loyalty (Hui et al., 2007). Service quality, customer satisfaction and customer value have become the priority of both manufacturers and service provider in the increasingly intensified competition for customers in today's customer-centred era (Lo & Yang, 2004). Satisfaction has been a central subject of tourist's behaviour (Som & Bardarneh, 2011). Measuring satisfaction in post-consumption moments aims at providing feedback from a current customer to push managers towards service improvement (Danaher, 1996). Several studies have found that tourists are increasingly interested in searching for new experiences that are derived from exploring the cultures and traditions of a particular destination (Breakey, 2015; Hendijani & Sambasivan, 2013). This finding is supported by tourism marketing research highlighting local food choices available at various destinations (Lee & Scott, 2015). Furthermore, recent studies have indicated that food experiences can be a key factor that affects the level of satisfaction a tourist feels about a destination (Hendijani & Sambasivan, 2013). Food can play different roles during a trip. Several studies have indicated that food can be a way to experience a new culture and can also be a source of enjoyment (Zahari et al., 2009). In terms of cultural experience, Cusack (2000) said that food experience is recognized as an expression of identity and culture and is, therefore, an essential part of cultural tourism.

In a similar study Hall et al., (2003) suggested that food is a window into the culture of a destination. Although promoting the unique products and services of a destination constitutes an important task for tourism authorities,

their ability to innovate, improve and creatively market tourist experiences may ultimately determine their continued success and this researcher expressed that success is satisfied tourists. Measuring and managing customer satisfaction is crucial for the survival, development and success of service industries like tourism (Sirakaya, 2004). Hence, the development of a consumer-based system for evaluating tourism service performance that focuses on tourist satisfaction is of great importance for tourist destination management (Song, Veen, Li, Gang, & Chen, 2012). Where the type of tourist was concerned, international tourists who were satisfied would be more likely to revisit these destinations and recommend them to others, when compared to domestic tourists. These findings have important implications for marketing rural tourism destinations (Munikrishnan, 2015). In the age of the experience economy, tourists are becoming more active and looking to involve new experiences, and they want to have holiday experiences that will change them rather than simply filling them with a variety of entertaining experiences (Godbey, 2008). In the words of Lan et al., (2014), perceived value to predict tourists' revisit intention can lead to a better understanding of tourists' after-decision-making behaviours. The concept of perceived value is related to service or product benefits, thus it is important to understand how this value is seen or viewed by the customer and what type of value or dimensions that can be created by the company (Septa 2016).

## **1.6 RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY**

Tourism places a significant role in the economic and social development of any nation. This is true with respect to Kerala tourism. Backwater tourism has emerged as major source of income in the tourism sector of Kerala. As far as backwater tourism concerned, houseboat tourism

is the prestigious tourism product in Kerala. It attracts large number of foreign as well as domestic tourists every year. Therefore it is necessary to have a planned development of houseboat tourism in Kerala, and also the study of tourists' satisfaction of houseboat is of great importance.

The present study aims to conceptualise a model explaining the relationship among the service quality, food experience perceived on the one hand and tourists' satisfaction on the other hand with the perceived value dimensions as the mediating variable. The study will help policymakers and tourism management authorities in ensuring the tourists' satisfaction by providing both high quality service and food experience which will render the tourists to perceive functional, social and emotional values along with the services provided and food experience perceived.

### **1.7 POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY**

Tourism deserves significant attention in the context of developing policies and strategies promoting tourists' satisfaction. A developing nation like India cannot neglect the development of tourism sector to accelerate the economic growth. The success of tourism sector will be measured in terms of the number of tourists that visit and revisit the given destination as well as in terms of quality of services provided by the tourism sector as well as the quality of food experience perceived by the tourists.

The present study conceptualises a model stating the relationship among service quality and food experience perceived as the independent variable and tourists satisfaction as the dependent variable. In the conceptual model, functional social and emotional values act as a mediating variable.

Without considering the above mentioned dimensions of perceived value, tourists' satisfaction cannot be measured appropriately. Most of the studies on the tourists' satisfaction are confined to only a single dimension of perceived value.

## **1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction.**

This chapter attempts to introduce the research topic, an overview of tourism industry, Kerala tourism, relevance of the study, and potential contributions of the study and the organization of the thesis.

### **Chapter 2: Literature review.**

Literature on Tourists' Satisfaction, Antecedents of Tourists' Satisfaction, Service Quality, Food Experience, Perceived Value and Tourists' Satisfaction are reviewed very extensively. This chapter also explains the theoretical frame work and Conceptual development of the study.

### **Chapter 3: Research methodology.**

This chapter deals with the rationale of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, definition of the variables and hypothesis. For this study, the research utilizes Warp PLS. Instrument for measurement, method of data collection and sampling.

### **Chapter 4: Data collection and sample profile**

The data collection, analysis of socio-demographic feature of the respondent and the reliability analysis and validity analysis of the measures used in the study are also presented in this chapter.

**Chapter 5: Hypotheses testing and model analysis**

The testing of research hypotheses, analysis of both conceptual model and structural model are detailed in this chapter.

**Chapter 6: Discussion on Findings**

This chapter shows the detailed summary of findings and discussions.

**Chapter 7: Implications and Conclusions**

Implications both theoretical and managerial implications as well as the summary of the research, limitations and the scope of future research is also included in this chapter.





**REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FOCUS**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>2.1</b>	Introduction to houseboat tourism
	<b>2.2</b>	Concept of customer satisfaction
	<b>2.3</b>	Concept of tourist's satisfaction
	<b>2.4</b>	Theories of customer satisfaction
	<b>2.5</b>	Antecedents of tourists' satisfaction
	<b>2.6</b>	Service quality
	<b>2.7</b>	Food experience
	<b>2.8</b>	Perceived value
	<b>2.9</b>	Research Gaps
	<b>2.10</b>	Research questions of the study
	<b>2.11</b>	Conceptual focus of the study
	<b>2.12</b>	Conceptual framework of the study
	<b>2.13</b>	Chapter Summary

*This chapter begins with an introduction to houseboat tourism focusing on proper background information. It proceeds to dwell on the concept of customer satisfaction with special emphasis on tourists' satisfaction. Thereafter various theories of tourists' satisfaction have been probed into and the antecedents of tourists' satisfaction are determined. The relationship among all the significant variables along with the mediating variables of functional value, social value and emotional value has been established. The gap in the literature has been fixed. And the conceptual focus and the framework of study are highlighted.*

## **2.1 INTRODUCTION TO HOUSEBOAT TOURISM**

A literature on tourism tends to emphasize tourism as a quest for novel experience that is spectacular and different from what tourists have previously experienced. In India, houseboats which function as accommodation for tourists are common on the backwaters of Kerala, Houseboats in Kerala, are huge, slow-moving barges used for leisure trips. They are a reworked model of Kettuvallams which, in earlier times, had been used to carry rice and spices from Kuttanad to the Kochi port. In ancient times, Kerala houseboats were used as a convenient means of transportation. The popularity of Kettuvallams has returned and it functions as a one of the major tourist attractions at the present time. Kerala is famous especially for its ecotourism initiatives and beautiful backwaters. Its unique culture and traditions, coupled with its varied demography, have made Kerala one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. In the age of post modernity, the experiences of consumers play an increasingly important role in economic and social life. The potential of tourism sector to stimulate economic and social development thereby transforming economies in internationally Knowledge of consumer psychology is extremely important in determining the success of destinations (Rodrı, 2008). The implicit assumption driving this investigation is that certain attributes and destination features can influence the tourists experience and perceptions of quality and value. The controllable and uncontrollable destination factors, such as the natural environment, the scenery, the culture, the climate and other general features might be among the prime determinants of satisfaction.

## **2.2 CONCEPT OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

Satisfaction is a subjective judgment and can be assessed after each purchase and consumption experience. Um, Chon, & Ro (2006) customer satisfaction, quality and retention are global issues that affect all organizations, be it large or small, profit or non-profit, global or local (Fen & Lian, 2007). In this, Customer satisfaction plays an important role as a marketing tool to attract the most variable segments of the market (Hau & Omar, 2014a). Some researchers believe that customer satisfaction has the most important role in business although the ways of it and its management are ambiguous (Haghtalab, Tarzeh, & Nabizadeh, 2012). It is critically important because it reflects subjective customer evaluations of the attribute performance associated with the consumption experience (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). It is a leading criterion for determining the quality that is actually delivered to customers through the product/service and by the accompanying services (Vavra, 1997). It is universally accepted fact that it costs about five times as much in time, money and resources to attract a new customer as it does to retain an existing customer. Consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction is determined by the overall feelings, or attitude, a person has about a product after it has been purchased (Solomon, 2002). It is a psychological concept that involves the feeling of well-being and pleasure that results from obtaining what one hopes for and expects from an appealing product and/ or service (WTO, 1985). It is often defined in the marketing literature as a customer's overall evaluation of his or her purchase and consumption experience of a good or service (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Customer satisfaction is the response concerning the state, the process and the result of the experience of services received (Hau & Omar, 2014). Customer satisfaction is defined Oliver (1997) here in terms that it is

the consumer's fulfilment response. It is a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provides a pleasurable level of consumption related fulfilment. In other words, it is the overall level of contentment with a service/product experience (Conway, 2006). Vavra (1997) customer satisfaction can also be defined as satisfaction based on an outcome or a process. Outcome definition of customer satisfaction characterizes satisfaction as the end state resulting from the experience of consumption. This end state may be a cognitive state of reward, an emotional response to an experience or a comparison of rewards and costs to the anticipated consequences. He also puts forth a definition of customer satisfaction based as a process, emphasizing the perceptual, evaluative and psychological processes contributing to customer satisfaction. In this definition, assessment of satisfaction is made during the service delivery process (Lovelock & Wright, 1999). Satisfaction is defined as the psychological state when emotions that enclose disconfirmed expectations are coupled with consumer's prior feelings about consumption experiences (Ellis A. , 2016). There are at least two different conceptualizations of customer satisfaction. One is transaction-specific, the other is cumulative or general overall satisfaction (Lu, Wei, & Zhang, 2010). First, transaction specific customer satisfaction refers to the assessment a customer makes after a consumption experience. Cumulative customer satisfaction is an evaluation based on the overall purchase and consumption experiences with a product or service over time (Wang, Lo, & Yang, 2004) or overall satisfaction refers to customers' rating of the purchase to their experiences (Lu, Wei, & Zhang, 2010). In the words of Smith & Rangaswamy, (2003) overall satisfaction is defined as the cumulative influence of a chain of distinct service transactions with the provider within a fixed

period. Overall satisfaction strongly and positively influences the customer loyalty across a wide range of destination as well as service and product categories (Wu & Liang, 2011). Customer satisfaction is a consequence of a tourists experience during various travel stages; it is also significant for destination management organizations to understand satisfaction of travel packages (Kim & Thapa, 2018).

### **2.3 CONCEPT OF TOURISTS' SATISFACTION**

In terms of tourism, tourists are customers who generate income for the country. Tourist satisfaction is viewed as an important research topic by both practitioners and academics. From a managerial point of view, tourists' satisfaction is the primary source of future revenue and is regarded as the key factor in winning market share. . In academia, tourists' satisfaction has been a popular topic since the early 1960s, reflected by the constant growth of literature on tourists' satisfaction (Xia, Jie, Chaolin, & Feng, 2009). Satisfaction was a concept that was essential in understanding and evaluating tourists and exploring their behaviours (Burns, 1999). Tourists' satisfaction has been widely acknowledged as a forward indicator of destination success and a crucial predictor of tourists' behaviours (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). In tourism literature, maximizing customer satisfaction is of the most importance, leading to increasing customer loyalty, cost decrease, and in a wider look, raising tourist number and income. Tourists' satisfaction is pulling power an attraction possesses and is the main element of tourists' behaviour (Chaudhary & Aggarwal, 2012). Tourists' satisfaction is a feeling generated both by cognitive and emotional aspects of tourism activities, as well as an accumulated evaluation of various components and features of the destination

(Xia et al., 2009). A multidimensional measure of satisfaction could help destinations to better understand their specific areas of strength and weakness in this increasingly competitive global tourism market. Therefore, satisfaction is a final construct of the purchase decision making process. Satisfaction is not a universal phenomenon and not everyone gets the same satisfaction out of the same hospitality experience. The reason is that customers have different needs, objectives and past experiences that influence their expectations (Ellis, 1999).

Satisfaction has been conceptually defined as a post-consumption emotion that consumers experience following their purchase (Um et al., 2006). In tourism research, satisfaction has been viewed as the tourists' emotional state after experiencing the trip (Baker & Crompton, 2000). Satisfaction has been regarded as a post-purchase measure of performance of the destination (Westbrook, 1991). Satisfaction with a holiday destination is the extent of overall pleasure or contentment felt by the visitor, resulting in the ability of the trip experience to fulfil the visitor's desires, expectations and needs in relation to the trip (Chen & Tsai, 2007). Tourists' satisfaction is a positive perception or feeling that tourists develop or acquire by engaging in recreational activities and is expressed as the degree of pleasure derived from such experiences (Beard & Ragheb, 1980). Satisfaction could be defined as a customer's post-purchase evaluation of a product or service attained after the tour experience (Ozkan, 2007).

## **2.4 THEORIES OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

There are varieties of theories to the explanation of customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction. They can be broadly classified under three groups: Expectancy-Disconfirmation, Equity and Attribution (Athiyaman, 2004). There exist a

number of frameworks that were developed over the years to explain customer satisfaction, one of which is the Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory. This theory which is proposed by Oliver (1977) posits that satisfaction is a result of the discrepancy between expectations and perceived performance. Disconfirmation theory argues that satisfaction is related to the size and direction of the disconfirmation experience that occurs as a result of comparing service performance against expectations. When the performance is under the expectation level, dissatisfaction happens. Expectations can be described as a mutable internal standard which is based on a multitude of factors including needs, objectives, past personal or vicarious experiences with the same establishment restaurant, with similar establishments, and the availability of alternatives (Ellis, 1999) whereby consumer satisfaction or dissatisfaction is a function of the disconfirmation arising from discrepancies between prior expectations and actual performance. Higher performance relative to expectations results in satisfaction and vice versa (Hui, Wan, & Ho, 2007).

The expectation-disconfirmation model Oliver (1980) suggests that consumers develop expectations about a product before purchasing. After using the product, they compare actual performance with those expectations. If the actual performance is better than their expectations, they are likely to have a positive disconfirmation, suggesting that consumers are highly satisfied and will be more willing to purchase the same product again. However, if the actual performance is worse than expectations, they are likely to have a negative disconfirmation, suggesting that consumers are dissatisfied. In the event of a negative disconfirmation, consumers are likely to look for alternative products for their next purchase.

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Equity theory implies that the ratio of outcomes to inputs should be constant across participants in an exchange (Oliver & Swan, 1989). They argued that consumer satisfaction is the result of the relationship between the costs associated with the purchase including price, time and effort and the rewards (benefits) they anticipate. If the rewards exceed the cost, consumers are likely to be satisfied. Several researchers also used the norm theory suggested by (Peat, 1979) to examine satisfaction. The approach suggested by norm theory is almost identical to the expectation disconfirmation model approach. In norm theory, norms serve as reference points for evaluating the product. Satisfaction occurs in the event of confirmation of those norms.

Another approach used to examine satisfaction is the Perceived Performance Model, developed by (Tse, 1988). This model suggests that consumers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a product can be assessed by only examining their evaluation of the actual performance. This model puts forward that measuring perceived expectations and perceived performance is redundant. The primary determinant of customer satisfaction should be the perceived performance. Assessing customers' satisfaction with actual performance should indicate whether they are satisfied.

According to the attribution model, consumers are considered as rational processors of information who search for reasons to explain why a purchase outcome has occurred (Bitner, 1990). Research by Chon (1989) also contended that tourists' satisfaction is a function of the goodness of fit between visitor expectations about the destination and the perceived evaluation outcome of the experience, which is simply the result of a comparison between their previous images of the destination and what they actually see, feel, and



achieve at the destination. Tourists' satisfaction has been often measured by a multi-item scale, which refers to the sum of tourists' evaluation of each destination attribute (Tribe & Snaith, 1998; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). It is universally accepted that satisfaction is a post-purchase and post-consumption evaluation (Oliver 1981).

## **2.5 ANTECEDENTS OF TOURISTS' SATISFACTION**

In the following section, an attempt is made to review some of the studies relating to antecedents on satisfaction carried out in the tourism context. The review also tries to map the theoretical development of the satisfaction construct within the context of tourism industry. Customer satisfaction is recognized as of great importance to all commercial firms because of its influence on repeat purchases and word-of-mouth recommendations (Gilson, 1986). In today's competitive environment one of the most important goals of corporate cultures is retaining and satisfying current and past customers. Experience shows that only consumer oriented corporations can achieve this goal. The company's focus on the needs and want of specific target groups and then work hard to maximize satisfaction with the product or service being offered. In the long run the level of satisfaction may decline, customers' attitudes and desires change, and new competition may emerge (Ellis, 1999). Research has shown satisfaction to be a good indicator of the firm's economic profits and a clear antecedent of customer loyalty. Research that analyzes consumer satisfaction finds that the main consequences of consumer satisfaction are intention to buy again and to recommend to friends and family, or word-of-mouth communication (Yi & La, 2003).

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According to Ekinci, Dawes, & Massey (2008) consumer satisfaction will positively impact on the overall attitude of the consumers to the service sector. There is much debate in the marketing literature about the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, as well as the direction of their causality. Even though some researchers argue that satisfaction affects quality (Oliver, 1980, 1997). The dominant view supports the opposite notion, namely that quality influences satisfaction (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). A study by (Al-ababneh, 2013) concerning tourist satisfaction examined the impact of the quality of the tourism product on overall tourist satisfaction, and measured tourists perceptions concerning the quality of tourism services provided at the Petra historical site . The findings noted that service quality, including destination facilities, destination accessibility and destination attraction, directly impacted tourists' satisfaction.

Arrey (2009) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between tourists overall satisfaction and cultural festival attributes. Nine festivals attributes, organization, promotion, facilities, shopping, facilitates, refreshment, food, infrastructure, environmental ambience and safety and security were investigated. Four of these nine attributes showed a significant relationship with overall satisfaction. Tourists' satisfaction is a behavioural phenomenon, which is formed by emotional and cognitive factors of tourism activities as well as the evaluation of various elements and forms of destination (Mohsen et al., 2015). Service quality has been one of the frequently used antecedents for tourist satisfaction (Tribe & Snaith, 1998). Oh (1999) proposed a holistic model of evaluation constructs including the satisfaction construct for explaining post-purchasing behaviour.

Service quality, perceived price, perceptions of company performance, and customer value were included in the model as antecedents of customer satisfaction. Um et al., (2006) study reveals that Perceived attractiveness, quality, and value for money were significant indicators of satisfaction, in these perceived attractiveness was the most influential antecedent of satisfaction. Perceived quality of service was influential in affecting satisfaction; however, it was not a significant antecedent to revisit intention. Perceived value for money was a significant variable in affecting both revisit intention and satisfaction.

Lentell (2000) has reported that perceptions of service quality predicted a significant variance in satisfaction responses. Because of growth in the tourism competitive market, it is essential to better understand the factors that may affect tourist satisfaction. In tourism, satisfaction is often evaluated through the characteristics of tourism offers (Hendijani & Sambasivan, Effect of gastronomy experience on overall satisfaction: difference between backpackers and mass tourists in Malaysia, 2013). To determine the attributes affect to tourists' satisfaction Lopez (2012) mentioned that modern tourists are increasingly motivated by the search of new experiences through visiting traditions and cultures of a particular destination. Indeed, researchers have identified that food experience at destination can represent an important source of satisfaction for tourists (Getz, 2000; Ignatov, 2006). Different destinations are increasingly using local foods as a way to differentiate themselves from their competitors to attract more tourists. Considering the increasing significance of food as a tourism attraction with multi-dimensional aspects, it is crucial to understand the perceptions and levels of satisfaction that tourists

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have regarding their food experiences (Hendijani & Sambasivan, 2016). Asian food has begun to attract more attention among international tourists (Jalis, 2009).

Kivela (2009) mentioned that food can add value to the tourist experience and is associated with quality tourism for tourists in search of new experiences that yield a high level of satisfaction. Changes in satisfaction with the meal experience may result from changes in the perception of the actual quality of outcomes received, or from changes in the expectations against which these outcomes are compared. Unlike material products or pure services, most hospitality experiences are an amalgam of products and services. Therefore it is possible to say that satisfaction with a hospitality experience such as a hotel stay or a restaurant meal is a sum total of satisfactions with the individual elements or attributes of all the products and services that make up the experience (Ellis, 1999).

In service organizations, the assessment of the quality of a service is made during the actual delivery of the service usually an encounter between the customer and a service contact person. Gursoy (2008) findings suggest that the travel and tourism experience is a multifaceted and hybrid experience. This implies that the tourism experience takes place in phases and travellers use services from more than one existing organization. Travellers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the services they receive from each of those organizations will determine their overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their trip experience. The hybrid travel experience suggests that travel and tourism products are deconstructed products because they bring together a number of services from a number of individual businesses. Usually, the product is

deconstructed by the traveller, by his or her travel agent, by a tour operator, or by some other entity through the process of choosing specific companies from among a number of alternatives. The traveller receives some form of service from each of those individual companies.

## **2.6 SERVICE QUALITY**

Service quality is essentially a cognitive assessment of customer perception, which is the main factor in developing a strong brand service to improve and make a unique brand in the market (Nam, 2011). Recognizing the significance of service quality as an essential indicator of a company's overall performance, an ongoing effort has worked to identify what determines customer satisfaction. Among the potential candidates, perceived quality has been generally accepted as the foremost antecedent of tourists' satisfaction (Dabholkar, 2000). Like most service industries, the importance of perceived quality has been recognized as well (Oh, 2000). Quan; Wang (2004) conducted a study about the food experiences in tourism and also he developed a conceptual model. In this study reports that, the tourists increasingly demand a higher standard in quality services, particularly for quality food and hospitality, such secondary, derisive and supporting experiences have caught the full attention in the tourism industry on the one hand and in the literature on hospitality on the other. In parallel with recent managerial interest in service quality measurement programs, researchers have become interested in the identification and measurement of service quality dimensions. Although more research findings concerning quality have appeared in the past two decades, it is still worth noting here that there are several distinct conceptualizations of quality. Holbrook (1994) quality is considered to be the overall evaluation

made by consumers regarding the excellence of a product. In marketing and economics, quality often has been viewed as dependent on the level of product attributes. In service literature, quality is viewed as an overall assessment (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). Quality is considered to be the overall evaluation made by consumers regarding the excellence of a product. Providing high quality service and ensuring customer satisfaction are widely recognized as important factors leading to the success of the tourism industries (Stevens, 1995). Quality services and tourists' satisfaction develop long-term relationship with tourists and in turn bring about destination loyalty (Hui et al., 2007).

The research findings of the study confirm that the physical quality is critically important in determining service quality and tourist food quality satisfaction (Hassan & Sreenivasan, 2017). According to Ekinici et al., (2008) consumer satisfaction will positively impact on the overall attitude of the consumers to the service sector. Gronroos (1984) states that service quality has two dimensions: technical and operational. Technical dimension refers to service outcomes (what the customers receive); the operational dimension refers to the service providing process (who the customers receive these services). As a result, perceived service quality is the sequence of customers viewpoint on the dimensions of a service package with regard to two technical and operational (responsibility) dimensions and operational quality cannot be measured the same as technical quality. The perceived quality (PQ) construct has been a popular research topic over the past 20 years with numerous studies in the area of services marketing, (Quintal & Polczynski, 2010).

In service quality construct, Parasuraman et al., (1988) have made use of qualitative and quantitative research following generally accepted psychometric procedures. This resulted in the development of the original twenty two item SERVQUAL instrument that represents one of the most widely used operational definitions of service quality (Caruana, 2002). Parasuraman et al., (1988) suggest that customers evaluate overall service quality on five underlying dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. In subsequent research, they developed an instrument called SERVQUAL that measures customers' perception of service quality (Parasuraman et al.,1988). According to Parasuramen et al., (1988) reliability refers to the ability to perform the promised services dependently and accurately. Responsiveness means willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. Assurance is defined as the knowledge and courtesy of employees, as well as their ability to convey trust and confidence. In addition, empathy refers to the provision of caring and individualized attention to customers. . Despite its broad applicability across all service sectors, attention should be paid to adapting SERVQUAL to a specific setting. SERVQUAL is a useful starting point, not the final solution, for assessing and improving service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1991). Cronin & Taylor, (1992) analyzed four research models of service quality: (i) Service Quality = (Performance - Expectations) (ii) Service Quality= Importance (Performance - Expectations); (iii) Service Quality = (Performance) and; (iv) Service Quality = Importance (Performance). They concluded that model three provided a more construct-valid explication of service quality.

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While there has been a consensus that service quality has a distinct construct, discrepancies still remain over some issues regarding its measurement. The SERVQUAL instrument proposed by (Parasuraman et al., 1988) posits the computed disconfirmation approach whereby the difference (or gap) between a customer's expectation and the actual performance (both measured after the service) is calculated. This approach has been heavily criticized by several authors for a number of weaknesses. The alternative approach, referred to as SERVPERF, is that measurement of the customer's perception of the performance of a service provides adequate assessment for service quality, (Gronroos, 1984; Cronin & Taylor, 1992). The increasing body of research continues to provide preferential support for the perceptions only approach (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Conway, 1994). (Cronin & Taylor, 1992) suggested that measuring perceived quality based on performance alone was superior to the SERVQUAL approach. This paper adopts the "perceptions only" or SERVPERF approach. Perceived quality refers to consumer's judgment about the performance of product or service (Cronin & Taylor, 1992).

Perceived service quality is defined as the customer's assessment of the overall excellence or superiority of the service (Zeithaml 1988). Perceived quality refers to consumer's judgment about the performance of product or service (Zeithaml, 1987). Perceived quality can be considered as the outcome of the evaluation process of the service in which tourists compare their expectations with the perceived service that has been received (Brady, 2001). Hubbert (1994) pointed out a customer's overall dissatisfaction or satisfaction is derived from every service transaction and is perceived via the total service experience. Therefore, overall satisfaction should be differentiated from its



components found in every service example. Tourists are satisfied with what they experienced as well as with how they were treated and served at a destination (Um, Chon, & Ro, 2006).

The study was conducted to investigate the causal relationship among the components of service quality (destination image, destination support services and security, destination cleanliness and destination facilities) and tourists' satisfaction. The results of the analysis confirmed that destination image, support services and security, cleanliness and facilities directly influenced tourist satisfaction. The results also indicated that service quality has a significant and positive impact on tourists' satisfactions (Hau & Omar, 2014).

(Quintal & Polczynski, 2010) the purpose of this paper is to examine how university students' satisfaction with perceived attractiveness, quality, value, and low risk impact on their revisit intentions to a holiday destination. The empirical results from the structural model suggest that satisfaction with the attractiveness, quality, and value provided by the destination positively influenced revisit intention. Tourists appear to be willing to spend more if they perceive the service quality to be high and are more likely to make a repeat visitation if their expectations are fulfilled. As Dabholkar (2000) have suggested and tested, factors associated with service quality (e.g. reliability, responsiveness, tangibles, assurance and empathy) are antecedents to customer perceived service quality rather than as dimensions or components of the construct.

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The quality construct was defined as a quality of a performance or opportunity that refers to the attributes of a service controlled by a supplier. On the other hand, the satisfaction construct was defined as a quality of experience that refers to an emotional state of mind after exposure to the opportunity (Um et al., 2006). Dabholkar et al., (1995) suggested that the antecedent role of service quality and satisfaction is situation specific and that if a consumer is cognitive oriented, he or she will perceive the relationship as service quality causing satisfaction, whereas if a consumer is affective oriented he or she will perceive the relationship as satisfaction causing service quality.

## **2.7 FOOD EXPERIENCE**

There are many factors that could influence the houseboat tourists' satisfaction. In terms of cultural experience Cusack (2000) said that food experience is recognized as an expression of identity and culture and is, therefore, an essential part of cultural tourism. In a similar study, food is the most essential part of the overall experience. Kivela (1999) identified five main factors of customer satisfaction i) Impressions ii) service excellence iii) food excellence and comfortable feeling iv) ambience excellence and v) reservations and parking. Qin (2008) the findings show that food is a significant factor in satisfaction. In view of the increasing significance of food as a multi-dimensional tourism product, this study intends to investigate food-related experiences and their effect on the overall satisfaction of international tourists visiting Indonesia. Hendijani & Sambasivan (2016) although there is no consensus on the individual attributes that constitute food quality, a thorough review of the literature reveals that the general description of food quality among researchers focuses on presentation, healthy options, taste, freshness, and temperature. Presentation is defined as how attractively food is

presented and decorated as a tangible cue for customer perception of quality. Tasty and fresh food plays an important role in the attempt to outpace competitors. Hence, quality food is one of the best means to maximize success in the restaurant business. Several studies have found that tourists are increasingly interested in searching for new experiences that are derived from exploring the cultures and traditions of a particular destination (Breakey, 2015). Furthermore, recent studies have indicated that food experiences can be a key factor that affects the level of satisfaction a tourist feels about a destination (Kivela & Crofts, 2006; Smith, 2010). Food can play different roles during a trip. A study indicated that food can be a way to experience a new culture and can also be a source of enjoyment (Kivela, 2009).

The need for more specific research about food tourism has increased because the needs and interests of tourist organizations are growing. By learning about the food experiences of tourists, destination marketers may achieve a better understanding of visitor behaviour. Understanding the different food experiences of tourists can provide valuable insights that can be used to better position a tourist destination in the marketplace and lead to more effective strategies for promotion of tourist attractions (Hendijani & Sambasivan, 2016). Foods also provide sensuous and sensual experiences that enhance the pleasure of a vacation and attract tourists to a destination (Mitchell, 2003). Furst (1996) found that sensory properties can have an important physiological and psychological outcome on the appreciation of food. More specifically, it was found that for some tourists, sensory factors (e.g. taste, smell and visual appearance) can induce some visitors to sample local food choices (Kim, 2009). Varied food-related characteristics such as preparation,

cooking style, presentation, dining customs, food culture and food consumption which may subsumed as commissaries can be included in the construct of the experiences visitors have with food at tourist destinations. The findings of this research indicated two factors of food experiences affect overall satisfaction of tourists. Therefore, it is suggested future studies need to explore different aspects of food experience to know better about the important role of food experience in overall satisfaction. (Mohaydin et al., 2017) find out the relationship between food quality and customer satisfaction and mediating effect of food safety upon them. The results shows that food safety has mediating effect on food and customer's satisfaction and people are concerned about what they eat is either safe or not and pay attention to what adds up in their food and what they engulf in eating. Food producers and restaurants must pay attention to their food processing procedures and home cooking persons should make sure about healthy food items. Hall et al., (2003) suggested that food is a window into the culture of a destination. Despite the importance of food in promoting a destination Hall et al., (2003) there have been only limited numbers of studies examining the result of experiences with food on tourists' satisfaction.

## **2.8 PERCEIVED VALUE**

For marketing practitioners and researchers, the construct of perceived value has been identified as one of the more important measures of tourists' satisfaction (Cronin, Brady, & Hult, 2000). Provision of service value to consumers becomes an essential strategy for success in today's world of intense competition (Sweeney et al., 1999). Customer perceived value is one of the many issues of interest to marketing academics and practitioners alike and yet it is reasonably new in the marketing literature In addition, perceived

service value is considered as a critical factor in the consumer decision-making process (Sweeney, 2003). From a managerial point of view, perceived value is linked to marketing strategies such as market segmentation (Tellis, 1990). In recent years perceived value has been the object of attention by researchers in tourism (Sachez, Callarisa, Rodriuez, & Moliner, 2006). In the marketing literature, perceived value has been characterized as key to explaining consumer behaviour (Petrick, 2004 ; Oh, 1999). Perceived value is the essential result of marketing activities and is a first-order element in relationship Marketing (Dumond, 2000; Oh, 2003). Perceived value is a different construct from satisfaction. While perceived value occurs at different stages of the purchasing process, including the pre-purchase stage (Woodruff, 1997).

In recent years, researchers have acknowledged that tourist behaviour is better understood when observed through value perceptions (Martina G Gallarza, 2006). Perceived value is a subjective construct that varies between customers, between cultures and at different times. This appreciation conceives perceived value as a dynamic variable, experienced before purchase, at the moment of purchase, at the time of use, and after use, (Sachez et al., 2006). Perceived value is considered as a key construct in relationship marketing and for gaining competitive edge (Ravald, 1996).

The value concept is multi-faceted and complex. First, the term value is extremely abstract and polysemous in nature. It has different meanings not only for consumers (Zeithaml, 1988) but also among researchers (Lai, 1995) and even for practitioners (Woodruff, 1996). A customer's assessment of value depends on sacrifice (i.e., the monetary and nonmonetary costs associated with utilizing the service) and the customers' frame of reference (Zeithaml, 1988).

Perceived value is defined as “the consumer’s overall assessment of the utility of a product or service based on perceptions of what is received and what is given”. Customer perceived value can be defined as the result of the personal comparison between perceived overall benefits and the perceived sacrifices or costs paid by the customer. Lovelock (2000) defined perceived value as the trade-off between perceived benefits and perceived costs. Butz (1996) defined it as an emotional bond established between a customer and a producer after the customer has used a salient product or service produced by that supplier. In tourism research, Perceived Value is viewed as a measure of a provider’s output (Baker & Crompton, 2000). Most of relationship marketing is based on a new understanding of the value concept, which places it at the very heart of the modern approach to consumers (Ravald, 1996 ; Ladhari & Morales, 2008).

Perceived service value has been recognized as one of the most important elements of differentiation in service marketing strategies (Hu, 2003). Research studies suggested that perceived value may be a better predictor of repurchase intentions than satisfaction (Oh, 1999; Cronin & Taylor, 2000). Another study Lee (2007) found that perceived value is the best predictor of behavioural intentions. More recently Bajs & Pandza (2013) found that tourists’ perceived value directly affects their satisfaction, while satisfaction has a direct impact on their future behavioural intentions toward the destination. Mattila (2005) proposed that consumers’ affective responses are directly related to perceived value in highly experiential service settings, such as cruising. It has been recognised that consumer behaviour is better understood when analysed through perceived value (Woodruff, 1996).

The quality of the physical environment and food were significant predictors of customer perceived value. In addition the results reinforced that customer perceived value is indeed a significant of customer satisfaction (Ryu, Lee, & Kim, 2012). In addition to service quality and food quality, price/ value is viewed as a factor that is relevant to customer satisfaction (Lee, Yoon, & Lee, 2007). Affective responses are the feelings generated in the consumer, which may be favourable or unfavourable, and vary in intensity, (Um et al., 2006). Perceived Value has been assessed as a cognitive evaluation of the time and/or money invested in a trip in comparison to the tourist experiences that were gained (Murphy et al., 2000).

The consumer value concept has evolved from the development of two pivotal dimensions of consumer behaviour: the economic and the psychological (Cronin et al., 2000). Concerning value typologies, the range and variety found in the literature is very wide. There are two classical approaches that transcend in most cases: the acquisition vs. transaction value difference (Monroe, 1987). Petrick (2002) identifies five dimensions: quality, emotional response, monetary price, behavioural price and reputation. The empirical results indicate that all of the underlying dimensions of tourist's - perceived value (functional, overall and emotional value) have a significant effect on tour satisfaction (Lee et al., 2007). All the authors echo the two underlying dimensions of perceived value: functional and affective (Gassenheimer, 1998; Sweeney, 2001). In this sense, the functional dimension refers to the rational and economic valuations made by individuals. The quality of the product and of the service would form part of this dimension. The affective dimension is less developed, but captures the feelings or emotions

generated by the products or services. There seems to be a growing consensus to separate it into an emotional dimension (relating to internal emotions or feelings) and a social dimension (relating to the social impact of the purchase made). Sheth (1991) proposed that consumers buy products to obtain various benefits, which can be grouped into five categories: (a) functional value related, utilitarian benefits); (b) social value (c) emotional value (d) epistemic value and (e) conditional value.

Among the latest attempts Sweeney (2001) perceived value scale (so-called PERVAL scale) ought to be mentioned. Based on Sheth (1991) work, it identifies four dimensions: emotional value, social value, and two types of functional value (price/value for money and performance/quality). Consistent with the marketing literature, value studies in tourism suggest that perceived service quality and monetary price are the two main antecedents of perceived value of tourism services (Oh, 2000). In general, it is widely accepted in tourism marketing literature that perceived service quality is positively related to perceived value while perceived monetary price is negatively related to perceived value (Duman & Mattila, 2005). A rare exception is Petrick (2003) study of cruise vacationers in which he showed that service quality, emotional responses and price are significantly linked to perceived value.

## **2.9 RESEARCH GAPS**

In India, the state of Kerala is the most preferred destination for domestic as well as foreign tourists around the world and Houseboat tourism is the most renowned attraction of Kerala. Cruising in a houseboat is a wonderful experience which maintains high level of satisfaction of the tourists. This highlights the scope of development of future prospects of tourism in



Kerala. Majority of the studies Hall (2003); Prybutok (2008) reported that food experience is one of the potential determinants of tourists' satisfaction. Academic literature pertaining to Kerala tourism has hardly focused on the impact of food experience on tourists' satisfaction with proper attention. Satisfaction of tourists specifically in the houseboat tourism sector in Kerala has not been traced so far. Role of dimensions of perceived value influencing tourists' satisfaction has not been given much attention in the hitherto tourism literature. In an attempt to fill this gap in tourism marketing literature, the researcher tries to investigate satisfaction of tourists with respect to service quality, food experience and dimensions of tourists' perceived value in the context of houseboat tourism.

## **2.10 RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY**

Based on the background of the study and statement of the problem the following research questions have been raised.

- What are the key attributes influencing tourists' satisfaction of houseboat in Kerala?
- What are the effects of perceived value dimensions of functional value, social value and emotional value on tourists' satisfaction in houseboat in Kerala?

## **2.11 CONCEPTUAL FOCUS OF THE STUDY**

Theoretical framework is the foundation on which any research is based. It is a conceptual model of how the researcher makes logical sense of the relationship among the various factors that have been identified as important to the problem being studied. This chapter explains the theoretical

framework of the study and discusses the relationships among the variables that have been identified, explains the theories underlying these relations and also describes the nature and direction of the relationships. The framework has been developed from the extensive literature survey done and from the interviews that were conducted with houseboat owners, officials of tourism department, tourists and experts in the field. The chapter also explains the choice of theories that compose the theoretical framework. The research model is designed to confirm the casual relationship among service quality, food experience, perceived value, and tourists' satisfaction of houseboat tourists in Kerala. The relationship among these three constructs has been received much attention in tourism related literature the theories have been chosen with consideration to the research question and objectives. Statistically speaking, the conceptual framework describes the relationship between specific variables identified in the study. While the theoretical framework is the theory on which the study is based, the conceptual framework is the operationalisation of the theory. This chapter also elaborates the procedure by which various hypotheses are developed based on the model developed for study. It is claimed that we are witnessing the emergence of the experience economy. Tourism is surely one of the pioneer examples of the experience economy. From the 1970 onwards the tourist experience has become one of the most popular academic topics, reflected in the constant growth of the social science literature on the tourist experience during the last three decades. Kerala, the mesmerizing land located in the south of India enjoys geographical features that are unique and rich. The shift in employment sector from agricultural to the service sector is caused as a result of change in attitude and perception to the traditional occupation like agriculture (Chandy & Rajesh, 2017).

Destination can be viewed as a uniquely complex product of the tourism industry comprising, among other factors, an area's climate, infrastructure and superstructure services, and natural and cultural attributes (Kim, 1998). Visitors to site attractions have become increasingly discriminating and have high expectations. Hence, a successful site attraction or destination requires a critical mass of compatible products which have market viability and appeal. Despite the availability of a wide variety of attractions, however, some destinations fail to fulfil their tourism potential mainly because their promotion is not themed or targeted effectively. To enlarge the theoretical base, the tourism product comprises a number of activities, services, and products including lodging, food and beverage, transportation, local goods and entertainment. The tourism product is, therefore, the end of productive activities and services. Furthermore, tourism resources are either natural or built; they range from sun, sea, and landscape, to cultural and heritage assets and amenity attractions. These two categories are obviously not mutually exclusive so that invariably natural and built resources have to be balanced to meet tourist needs. Earlier factors, such as accommodation, catering, entertainment, and internal transport are secondary, but they may enable or encourage tourism, although not in a uniform fashion (Kim, 1998). Rise of tourism sector results into shift of employment, one or two member from each house is now engaged in tourism industry as houseboat operators or other employment related to house boat and backwater tourism. Beyond a competitive pricing strategy, achieving quality is another key to Kerala's competitiveness. This ability to attain international standards and consistently deliver high quality products and services are critical success factors in the promotion of Kerala products (Ramesh & Joseph, 2011).

The scientific beauty of the backwaters has also led to its being developed as a tourist destination. There has been a spectacular rise of tourism industry in Vembanad Lake in the past twenty years (Kariagains & Narayan, 2014). Backwater tourism emerged as the backbone of the tourism sector of Kerala state which leads to the tremendous increase of Houseboats in the shore of lake .The houseboat industry is situated mostly in Allepy and Kumarakom (John, 2018). With the growth in size of the service sector of the global economy, services are distributed regionally, nationally, and globally and are earning a larger portion of an organizations revenues and the quality of their services plays a very important role in customer satisfaction. Past tourism interpretations of the product environment have also lacked the necessary complexity to begin to clarify the diverse colour and atmosphere we see in many destination images throughout the world, the tourism product framework can become a tool that not only helps marketers think about the destination as an integrative entity but one that can be used diagnostically to improve the tourism product. Destination may be viewed as an amalgam of individual products and experience opportunities that combine to form a total experience of the area visited (Murphy et al., 2000). A destination has been defined as the location of a group of attractions as well as tourists' facilities and services (Kim, 2012). Mo (1993) one particular study showed that the destination's environment was the primary factor e.g. social and culture features, and the destination's service infrastructure the secondary factor e.g. transportation, food and lodging services, is an international tourists experiential desires of the destination product.

Satisfaction is one of the most relevant variables when analysing tourist behaviour, as it influences the choice of destination, the consumption of

products and service, and the decision to return (Feng, 2007). For this reason tourist's satisfaction has been a priority subject of research in recent years. Numerous studies have been carried out to measure the degree of tourist satisfaction, but very few papers have focused on analysing the antecedents behind this variable and the possible relationships between them. The vast potential for rural tourism to function as the main pull factor to attract tourists to a particular destination led to extensive studies based on a number of factors understanding of previous experience (Rajaratnam et al., 2014), quality of service (Butnaru & Miller, 2012) and visitor motivation (Davesa, Laguna, & Palacios, 2010). Among the different types of antecedents that influence tourist satisfaction, a great deal of analysis has been directed towards the attributes of the service offering, i.e., to identifying those special characteristics that a tourist service needs to be successful (Tosun, 2007). Tourists' satisfaction has been identified as an important concept in establishing the performance of different destinations. Considering the high level of competitiveness, it is essential for tourism management authorities to understand the main factors which may cause satisfaction or dissatisfaction for the tourist. Tourism essentially a service industry and its management practices are concerned with issues such as quality and productivity so as to serve the tourists well (Lee & Hung, 2009). An assessment of tourists' satisfaction of the rural destinations visited can assist rural tourism players to have a better understanding of tourists' perceptions and focus their efforts to enhance tourists' positive experiences in the rural destinations. The level of satisfaction attained by an individual may influence their future intentions, in terms of revisiting a destination and/or recommending it to other people ( Munhurrun, & Naidoo, 2014). A fuller model of a product's environment is offered by (Kotler, 1996).

They propose that six environmental factors shape the (destination) `macro-environment; demographic, economic, social, cultural, technological, political, and economic characteristics of a destination develop an environmental effect that directly influences tourist perceptions and experiences (Russell, 1980). Murphy et al., (2000) the growing interest in destination competitiveness has focused attention on the definition and description of a destination product, and how the tourist perceives this complex amalgam of elements and experiences. The results reveal that general environmental elements and quality seem more significant.

Heritage sites which are rich in cultural value are commonly recognized as important tourist attractions and they continue to be a powerful motivator in tourists' journeys. However, managing them for maximized tourist satisfaction and loyalty is challenging. It is believed that the tourist satisfaction determinants need to be appropriately and holistically identified for more effective management (Lee, 2009). In the context of rural tourism, the quality of service offered by rural tourism providers is an essential factor in attracting customers and as destinations are one of the products of rural tourism, it is necessary to assess the quality of these destinations (Munikrishnan, 2015). Consequently, tourist satisfaction with tourism destinations has been extensively investigated (Kim, 2012; Eusebo & Vieira, 2013). Limited research attention has focused on houseboat rural tourism and its satisfaction.

Where the type of tourist was concerned, international tourists who were satisfied would be more likely to revisit these destinations and recommend them to others, when compared to domestic tourists (Munikrishnan, 2015). This distinctiveness may mean that tourists have

different expectations and needs as well as exhibit different post-experience behaviour. These differences constitute major challenges for destination marketers, as they would need to develop a thorough understanding of the characteristics of these distinct tourist groups. Only then can they effectively design and implement marketing strategies and tourism activities tailored to these target groups (Chi, 2012). It also significantly influences the choice of destination, the consumption of products and services, and the decision to return (Kozak, 2000). Service quality, customer satisfaction and customer value have become the priority of both manufacturers and service provider in the increasingly intensified competition for customers in today's customer-centred era (Quan & Wang, 2004).

Generally speaking, within the tourism social science, the tourist experience has been one of the established areas of tourism studies (Quan & Wang, 2004). There are two general approaches to the study of the tourist experience, namely the social science approach and the marketing/management approach. It is claimed that tourists choose travel as a way to experience something different from their daily lives. Such a type of the tourist experience can be termed here peak experience. The schism between the tourists experience as the peak experience held in social science literature and as the supporting or general consumer experience held in marketing/management literature is also reflected in the treatments of the experience of food consumption in tourism. Food study in the tourism social science is simply ignored or taken for granted. Food, along with other phenomena such as religion, events, festivals and architecture are considered to be gray zones of cultural tourism (Scarpato, 2002). Such gray zones exist

not only in cultural tourism, but also in tourism in general. As (Hudman, 1986) suggests, in reality, food has become an increasingly important element in the tourist industry and up to 25% of total tourist expenditure is accounted for by foods. However, social science of the tourist experience lacks sufficient consideration of the role of the experience of food consumption (Quan & Wang, 2004). Smith (1993) suggested that the tourist product is the result of a process where facilities, services and attitudes from multiple firms are configured to produce an experience of value to customers. By contrast, in the literature on tourist destinations, the importance of foods has been recognized. As more and more researchers focus on the role of food in culture. Hegarty (2001) food has been regarded as not only being a basic necessity for tourist consumption but also an essential element of regional culture (Jones, 2002). Since food has been proven to be an important means of selling the identity and culture of a destination, food consumption is regarded as one of the important factors in the destination marketing development. The other reason is that food consumption enables local food producers to add value to their products by creating a tourist experience around the raw materials. Moreover, it is important to recognize that food consumption is not only a means of generating revenues for a destination, but also an important part of the tourist experience.

### **2.11.1 Variables under study**

Based on the literature review, the variable that are significantly impacting the tourists' satisfaction were identified. From the observation made from the critical analysis of review of literature, the independent variables are service quality and food experience, the dependent variable is tourists' satisfaction, perceived value dimensions like functional value, emotional



value, social value act as a mediating variable between the above two independent variable and the dependent variable tourists' satisfaction.

### **2.11.2 Linkages between Independent variables and dependent variable**

Tourists' satisfaction is one of the most frequently examined topics in the hospitality and tourism field because it plays an important role in survival and future of any tourism products and services. Further, each destination exhibits somewhat different patterns in tourists' perception of attribute factors. For firms that operate in competitive markets, achieving satisfaction for their customers is particularly important if they want to survive in those markets (Guillen, 2004). The linkages among tourist satisfaction, quality and value are arguably the most widely studied relationships in tourism literature. The concepts and definitions of destination, quality and value are somewhat vague in the tourism literature due to the large number and varied users of the terms, each with their respective priorities (Murphy et al., 2000). Customer satisfaction is one of the most important and most frequently examined concepts of modern marketing thought and practice (Neal & Gursoy, 2007). Satisfaction is a function of consumer perceptions. While measuring the perception of individuals is difficult at best, the issue is most challenging in tourism due to the nature of the product (Gursoy, 2008). As suggested by the number of different approaches used to measure consumer satisfaction, measuring the perception of individuals is difficult at best; the issue is most challenging in tourism. The tourism experience takes place in phases (e.g., trip planning, travel to and from the destination, the destination experiences). Although this fact is well-established in the travel and tourism industry, most satisfaction studies in tour and other aspects of leisure are conducted after the

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service experience and look at overall opinions expressed by guests regarding the general tourism experience. To truly understand the travellers' overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction with various aspects of the trip each aspect should be examined because it is likely to have a significant impact on overall satisfaction. It reflects the perceived quality of products that are actually delivered to customers and is essential for the survival of any type of business (Berkman, 1986).

Previous studies found a positive link between the quality of services and satisfaction (Nam, 2011; (Lee, 2011). Lentell (2000) has reported that perceptions of service quality predicted a significant variance in satisfaction responses. Canny (2013) studied service quality, tourist satisfaction and future behavioural intentions among Domestic local tourist at Borobudur temple. The findings of this study showed that service quality had significant positive relationship with tourist satisfaction. Therefore, an understanding of satisfaction with each aspect of the trip must be the basic parameter used to evaluate overall satisfaction with the trip (Gursoy, 2003). Dmitrovic et al., (2008) conceptualizing tourist satisfaction at the destination level, in this model includes eight latent constructs, with tourist satisfaction being the central one. The analysis of the antecedents like quality, image, value, and costs and risks of customer satisfaction provides insights into the processes underlying the creation of satisfaction, while the outcome constructs (complaint behaviour and loyalty) indicate the consequences of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. One of the crucial elements of successful destination marketing is tourists' satisfaction, which influences the choice of destination and the decision to return. Therefore, enhancing customer satisfaction should be one of primary functions and a prerequisite for the development of a strategy

leading to a destination's enhanced attractiveness and its competitive positioning.

Cote (2000) emphasised the need to specify satisfaction levels on the basis of the context in which it is evaluated. They identify three basic element of context (i) response to an emotional judgement (ii) a specific aspect of the service (a particular service encounter) and (iii) a specific moment in time. This study provides support for the idea that tourist satisfaction of the houseboat should be studied consist not only service quality, perceived value, but also food is also important component.

In tourism, satisfaction is often evaluated through the characteristics of tourism offers. Researchers typically create a pool of destination attributes and ask respondents to evaluate them on a satisfaction scale (ranging, for example, from delighted to terrible (Kozak, 2001) or from fully satisfied to not at all satisfied (Fuchs & Weiermair, 2003). These items are then observed individually, summated, or assigned to dimensions of a construct measuring tourists' satisfaction. The main goal of measuring tourist satisfaction is to provide managerial guidance. Fuchs & Weiermair (2003) show that those models where destination attributes are regressed or correlated to a variable measuring total satisfaction with the destination produce more valid managerial implications than models that only employ individual destination attributes. Assessing satisfaction through the characteristics of a tourism offer involves several problems. First, consumers (tourists) are unable to assess objectively the characteristics of product offerings and they often add their own interpretations (Johnston & Heineke, 1998). Second, consumers normally do not simply sum up their evaluations of each characteristic and do not give an

equal weight to each characteristic, as assumed by a summated scale that is often used in such an approach (Oliver, 1997). Third, when the measurement of customer satisfaction is based on a destination's attributes, the calculated score depends on the particular choice of attributes included in the measurement instrument. Changing the selection of the offer's characteristics necessarily affects the satisfaction score, even though the actual satisfaction of the respondent has not been altered. In addition, as the offer's characteristics are not separated from the measurement of satisfaction researchers are unable to analyze the impact of each specific antecedent (set of characteristics) on customer satisfaction. Satisfaction should therefore be measured separately from the elements of tourism offers. Unfortunately, tourism researchers have largely neglected this principle. Only recently have researchers started to design and evaluate models where these elements are distinct (e.g. Hui et al., 2007; Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

Measuring the service quality and customer satisfaction are the utmost critical factors in service marketing as the service sector has been flourishing since the past few decades. Researchers and marketers are placing their firm endeavour and discovering the service quality of different industries by comparing the customer expectation and customer perception about a particular service (Sultana, 2015). Therefore, it has become ubiquitous for service providers to seek out competitive advantages by providing superior service (Yun, 2004). Tourism and hospitality is a people business, which means that the encounter between service providers and tourists is an important characteristic of the industry. Hence, many tourism and hospitality operators are keen to adopt industry-wide and internationally recognised service standards to ensure high levels of service quality (Song et al., 2012).

For long-term development under the competition environment, many companies not only focus on attracting new customers, but also securing and improving customer loyalty. Recent work on the determinants of loyalty has emphasized the importance of perceived quality, perceived value and customer satisfaction (Mattila, 2005). Service customers, such as cruise passengers, rely more heavily on word of mouth than goods customers do and base future purchase decisions mainly on strong experience qualities (Mattila, 2005). To attract customers to their ship, the harbour cruise companies also compete with each other in terms of price, food, entertainment, service and ship facilities apart from sightseeing. Research on service quality becomes a major concern in tourism and hospitality industry, since these industries basically dealing with people-oriented service delivery. Tourists' satisfaction with a particular destination may be the result of multiple factors, including the expectations generated before and during the trip, as well as the tourists perception of the service received. Customers judge the quality of services on the basis of their perceptions of the results of those services, which on a cruise can be the perception of the food, attentiveness of the personnel, accommodation and entertainment, and is one of the variables affecting firms' profitability (Lobo, 2008).

Within the marketing/management literature on the tourist experience, one of the foci is placed on the service quality experienced by tourists, such as hospitality, accommodation, and transportation (Quan, & Wang et al., 2004). Furthermore, it is the customer who decides on whether a service is of quality or not. Hence, tourists' evaluation of service quality is of prime importance (Munikrishnan, 2015).

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The level of hygiene in developing countries lags behind that of developed countries (Narayan, Rajendran, & Sai, 2009). This situation may be more persistent within rural tourism destinations in developing countries where basic infrastructure necessary to maintain an acceptable level of hygiene may be lacking, as is the case in some rural tourism destinations. The right to enjoy hygienic conditions is not only a basic human right but also a prerequisite to attract tourists. Cleanliness of the accommodation, streets and food are part of the destination-specific attributes that tourists would interact with or experience and would subsequently impact on their satisfaction with these destinations. Undoubtedly then, hygiene is a significant contributor to service quality and maintaining the desired level of sanitation in tourist facilities and physical environment must be given utmost priority by rural tourism service providers and decision makers. Hygiene as a dimension of service quality has also received attention from other researchers (Moutino, 2012). Thus, in respect of continuing to develop the tourism sector emphasis should be given to the assessment of tourists' satisfaction pertaining to the service quality provided (Hau & Omar, 2014).

Yague (2009) studied the non-linear effects of determinants on tourists' satisfaction. The results of this research are that the tourist's perception of quality has a positive and significant effect on his or her satisfaction. Entrepreneurs must know how improvement in service quality influences customer satisfaction and what price levels they might consider to increase consumer satisfaction and to influence the quality perceived by the consumer. Leung (2008) this paper investigates how service quality, perceived value, satisfaction and loyalty in a Hong Kong Harbour Cruise company. The results imply that good perceived service quality are very important for this case study

on harbour cruise travellers as it affects perceived value, overall satisfaction and loyalty directly and significantly. (Dabholkar, 2010) perceived quality has been generally accepted as the foremost antecedent of customer satisfaction.

Guillen (2004) studied the impact on the satisfaction of restaurant customers with respect to perceived quality and price. Prominent among the antecedents that determine the level of customer satisfaction are perceived quality and total perceived price. The research carried out shows that perceived quality has a direct and positive impact on the level of customer satisfaction. Munikrishnan (2015) aims to examine the direct influence of perceived destination quality on tourists' behavioural intentions and the indirect effect through satisfaction. The results supported as perceived destination quality was found to have a significant positive effect on tourist satisfaction. The topics of quality and satisfaction have probably been discussed more than any other issues of consumer behaviour, with the positive relationship between the two constructs confirmed by prior studies. According to (Taylor, 1992) (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988), higher levels of perceived service quality result in better consumer satisfaction. (Xia et al., 2009) found that perceived quality was found to be a significant predictor in determining tourists' satisfaction. Wang et al., (2004) customer perceived service quality contributes positively and significantly to customer satisfaction not only in the main-effects model but also in the interaction model. Among the many factors, researchers have identified that high-quality service influences customer satisfaction significantly, (Kim et al., 2013). Perceived quality can be considered as an antecedent of satisfaction, (Asadi, 2015). (Oh, 1999) proposed a holistic model of evaluation constructs including the satisfaction construct

for explaining post-purchasing behaviour. Service quality, perceived price, perceptions of company performance, and customer value were included in the model as antecedents of customer satisfaction. Service quality and satisfaction have been dominating constructs since the very earliest studies of tourism marketing (Baker & Crompton, 2000). As providing high quality service and ensuring tourist satisfaction are recognized as important factors influencing the success of the tourism industries (Chen, 2011). Service quality and customer satisfaction have become the most core marketing priorities since they are prerequisites of consumer loyalty, such as repeat sales and positive word-of-mouth (Han, 2009).

Food is the most significant element in the overall life experience. A thorough review of the literature reveals that the general description of food quality focuses on presentation, healthy options, taste, freshness, and temperature. Food experience and tourists' satisfaction have become increasingly important for growth and development of the economies of rural regions. Food experiences have a prominent role to play in tourist decision making and satisfaction alongside factors such as tourism products and place promotion strategies. Although, food is crucial for satisfying a multiplicity of life-sustaining needs, it also provides other highly relevant functions, it offers pleasure and entertainment serves a social purpose. It also gives insight into ways of life and helps one to understand cultural differences (Tikkanen, 2007). The concept of local food also encompasses a wider meaning by including the increasing interest in sustainability of food production systems and consumer confidence in food. Mynttinen (2015) studied the perceptions of food and its locality among Russian tourists in the South savo region of Finland. The results show that Russian tourists especially value the freshness and healthiness



associated with local food. Food tourism, which is also referred to as culinary tourism and gastronomic tourism, has attained increased significance in recent years. Both gastronomy tourism and culinary tourism are perceived as a subset of cultural tourism as they specifically emphasize foods and dishes from the culture of the host region (Hendijani & Sambasivan, 2016). This paper aims to investigate food-related experiences among international tourists and the effect of food on their overall satisfaction. The result indicates that food experience had a significant effect on the overall satisfaction of tourists.

Asian food has begun to attract more attention among international tourists (Jalis, 2009). Using food as a feature of tourism can help improve its destination attractiveness and competitive position relative to neighbouring countries. Looking at the uniqueness of food, drinks and food cultures, the government through the Ministry of Tourism and other related stakeholders start to spend a great effort promoting these tourism products, especially among European and Asia-Pacific countries, which make up the largest proportion of total tourists annually. Cohen, (2004) noted that studies of consumer behaviour in the area of food experience are uncommon, studies are required to understand international tourists more effectively. Alegre, (2010) researchers have reported that the overall satisfaction of tourists is a central factor for the success of a tourists' destination that uses food as one of its tourist attractions. Ramanathan (2016) examine the importance of factors influencing customer satisfaction in the context of a Chinese buffet restaurant, the authors have found that food is the most significant factor influencing customer satisfaction, followed by price, ambience and service, respectively.

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Accordingly, the relationship between service quality perceived and tourists' satisfaction on the one hand and the relationship between food experience and tourists' satisfaction on the other hand are posited as the spring board for formulating the following hypothesis.

Hypotheses 1: Service quality perceived has a significant impact on tourists' satisfaction.

Hypotheses 2: Food Experience perceived has a significant impact on tourists' satisfaction.

### **2.11.3 Perceived value dimensions of functional, social and emotional value as a mediating variable**

Service quality and perceived service value are, without any doubts, interconnected concepts that affect consumers' behavioural intentions (Oliver, 1994). Quality and value are concepts that can provide insights on how to rejuvenate products and the way they are viewed by customers. Several destination marketing organisations have highlighted quality and value as critical objectives for revitalising their flagging tourism industries (Murphy et al., 2000). Ladhari & Morales (2008) the purpose of the study is to propose a conceptual model and empirically test the relationships between perceived service quality, perceived value, and recommendation in the public library setting.

Perceived quality is an eminently cognitive construct, which values the result, where expectations are compared to the result. Perceived value, on the other hand, is an evaluation in which benefits and sacrifices are compared, and also influenced by emotions. For this reason scales for measuring perceived quality (SERVQUAL) or performance (SERVPERF) must be completed with

sacrifices and with affective responses in order to measure perceived value, (Sachez et al., 2006). Value is inextricably linked to major consumer behaviour constructs such as quality and satisfaction. The consistent effort made in services literature to deepen the understanding of differences between satisfaction and quality leads very often to the value concept, both outside (Cronin et al., 2000) and inside tourism literature (Oh, 1999). Quality perceived by sport tourists has a positive effect on the perceived value of this sport destination (Asadi, 2015). Sheth (1991) consider that perceived quality and performance form part of the positive component of functional value.

Sweeney (2001) in value models, quality and price have been treated as separate influences on perceived value: quality has a positive influence and price a negative influence. (Sachez et al., 2006). Therefore it can be argued that price and quality are functional sub-factors that contribute separately to value and should be measured separately. Results found that there is a strong relationship between perceived service quality and value.

The quality of the physical environment and food were significant predictors of customer perceived value (Ryu et al., 2012). Among food quality attributes, the healthfulness dimension has become increasingly critical. After the discovery of the positive influence of food quality on diners' behavioural intention, Namkung (2007) examined the differential effect of six food quality components (presentation, variety, healthy options, taste, freshness, and temperature) on behavioural intention. They found that healthy options were the third essential predictor of behavioural intention followed by taste and presentation. Literature has shown green customers' willingness to pay higher prices for greener products such as green hotel rooms (Lee et al., 2010) and

organic produce and meat at the grocery store (Goldman & Clancy, 1991; Gilg et al., 2005; Hutchins and Greenhalgh, 1995). This result implies that healthy attributes are likely to be perceived as good value for money for green customers.

In addition to food and service quality, value is viewed as a factor that is relevant to customer satisfaction (Prybutok, 2008). The concept of customer value has been defined as the evaluation made by a consumer compares the advantages or the utility of a product or service and the perceived sacrifices or costs (Zeithaml, 1988). The definition adopts a value-for-money orientation to customer value, i.e. benefits vs costs, give-up vs get-back (Chaudhuri, 2009). Research into customer value has evolved from a utilitarian and functional perspective with attributes like quality, reliability, durability and price (Zeithaml, 1988). Toward a multidimensionality which includes dimensions like functional value, emotional value and social value (Sweeney, 2001). In this sense, Sweeney & Soutar (2001) developed the PERVAL scale, which identifies three dimensions: functional value (quality and value for money), emotional value and social value. In the context of cruises, Petrick (2002) developed the SERV-PERVAL scale in which he identified five dimensions: behavioral price, monetary price, emotional response, quality and reputation. Sanchez (2006), developed another scale called GLOVAL, in which they identified six dimensions: functional value of installations, functional value referring to the professionalism of the contact personnel, functional value of the product or service, functional value of the price, emotional value and social value. The interest in customer perceived value stems from the recognition that it is a source of competitive advantage is essential for the long-term profitability of organisations and is a determinant of customer satisfaction

(Cronin, 2000). The multidimensional approach to customer perceived value developed by (Sweeney, 2001) and (Petrick, 2002) will be utilised and adapted in the present study to ascertain the impact of each dimension of perceived value on tourists' satisfaction. Ouschan (2007) results indicate that four out of five dimensions of customer perceived value (service quality, technical quality, price, and social value) have a positive impact on the satisfaction. Fornell & Johnson, (1996) found a positive relationship between perceived value and customer satisfaction. On the basis of the above literature, this paper has used the most habitual functional value, emotional value and social value dimensions of perceived value to test a new model of satisfaction of houseboat.

The emotional value of a product or service is a psycho-social dimension that the consumer perceives when the consumption of the product or service provides him/her with affective situations or feelings (Sheth, 1991). This aspect is important in the cruise industry because the very consumption of the service produces emotional responses among the cruise passengers (Petrick, 2002). The emotions in a service are associated with the most hedonic part of the consumption, with feelings and emotions, such as happiness, amusement, enjoyment, fear, anger, envy, anxiety, pride (Havlena, 1986) and have a strong influence on satisfaction (Rojas & Camarero, 2008). Tourists feelings can affect their judgements of the destinations performance. (Baker & Crompton, 2000).

Consumer behaviour research has shown the importance of social value in the consumer's perception. Social value is defined as the association made by a consumer with one or more social groups of reference in the choice of a product or service (Sheth, 1991). It involves the consumer's self-concept

(Sweeney, 2001). In this sense, and regarding the consumption of services related to leisure and entertainment (Mort, 2005) consider that social value has importance because these services are often consumed in an environment that implies influence among the members of the social group. One of the previous studies has shown that cruise passengers have a need to obtain social recognition (Hung, 2011).

The results reinforced that customer perceived value is indeed a significant predictors of tourists' satisfaction (Ryu et al., 2012). (Lee et al., 2007), the empirical results of the SEM model indicate that all of the underlying dimensions of tourist's -perceived value (functional, overall and emotional value) have a significant effect on tour satisfaction. Fornell & Johnson, 1996) found a positive relationship between perceived value and customer satisfaction. Xia et al., 2009) perceived value appeared to be an important antecedent of tourists' satisfaction. Perceptions of value can therefore be generated without having bought or used a product, whereas satisfaction depends on the experience of using of the product or service (Sachez et al., 2006). Lee et al. (2011) in their study have found tourists' perception of value has an influence on their satisfactions. Based on the relevance of perceived value the following hypotheses are formulated under study.

Hypotheses 3: The relationship between service quality and tourists' satisfaction is mediated by functional value of the tourists.

Hypotheses 4: The relationship between service quality and tourists' satisfaction is mediated by social value of the tourists.

Hypotheses 5: The relationship between service quality and tourists' satisfaction is mediated by emotional value of the tourists.

Hypotheses 6: The relationship between food experience and tourists' satisfaction is mediated by functional value of the tourists.

Hypotheses 7: The relationship between food experience and tourists' satisfaction is mediated by social value of the tourists.

Hypotheses 8: The relationship between food experience and tourists' satisfaction is mediated by emotional value of the tourists.

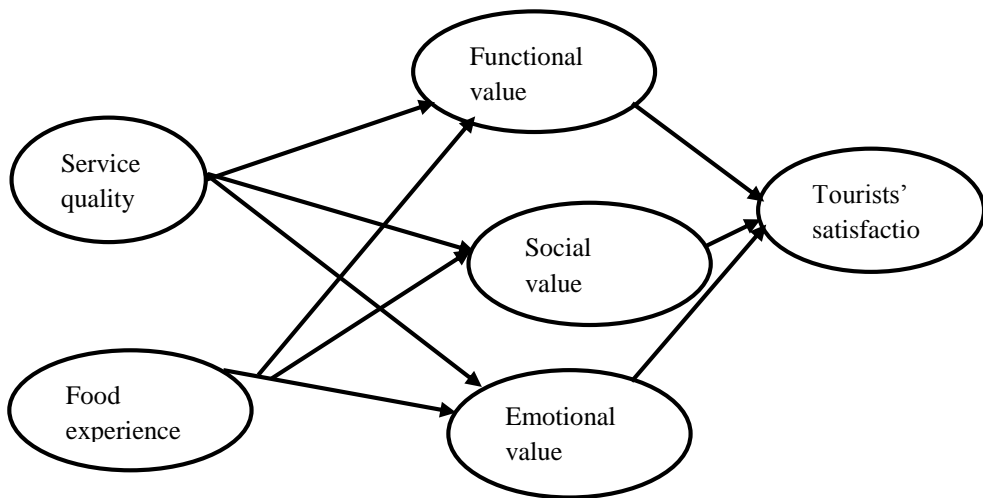
Hypotheses 9: Functional value of tourists towards houseboat has a positive impact on tourists' satisfaction

Hypotheses 10: Social value of tourists towards houseboat has a positive impact on tourists' satisfaction

Hypotheses 11: Emotional value of tourists towards houseboat has a positive impact on tourists' satisfaction

## **2.12 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**

The model (figure 2.1) to be tested proposes that service quality and food experience are directly influence the tourists' satisfaction of houseboat in Kerala. The role of perceived value dimensions of functional, social and emotional value is also stated in the framework.



**Figure No 2.1:** Conceptual framework of the study

Based on the literature review, the variable that is significantly influencing the tourists' satisfaction were identified. From the observation made from the critical analysis of review of literature, the conceptual framework was developed as shown in Figure 2.1. The independent variables are service quality and food experience. The dependent variable is tourists' satisfaction of houseboat tourism. Perceived value dimensions of functional, social and emotional value act as a mediating variable between two independent variables and one dependent variable.

### 2.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed in detailed about the various review of literature on tourists' satisfaction scenario covering Asian and Western countries. This chapter reviewed two main variables such as service quality and food



experience contributing towards the satisfaction of tourists in Kerala. Reviews on perceived value and its various dimensions, antecedents of tourists' satisfaction also presented in this chapter. Finally in this chapter also presented a theoretical foundation of the study.





**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>3.1</b>	Rationale of the Study
	<b>3.2</b>	Statement of the Problem
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	<b>3.6</b>	Hypotheses
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	<b>3.9</b>	Tools for data collection
	<b>3.10</b>	Pilot Study
	<b>3.11</b>	Validity analysis of measures
	<b>3.12</b>	Chapter Summary

*This chapter outlines the research methodology followed in the study. Objectives of the study, hypotheses, variable under the study, research design, Pilot study and finally the tools of data collection and the pilot study etc are presented.*

### **3.1 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

Tourism is one of the largest service industries in the world and it has significant role to play in the social and economic and development of a nation. This is true with respect to a developing country like India especially when the Kerala scenario is considered. In the view of National Geographical Traveler, a magazine published by the National Geographic Partners in the United States (1984), Kerala is one of the fifty destinations of a lifetime and one of the thirteen paradises in the world. The article on Kerala titled, State of Enlightenment, showers high praise on the State, her people, her natural beauty, her culture and recommends it as a hot spot for tourists around the world.

Backwater tourism has emerged as the major pillar of the tourism sector of Kerala state and has resulted in a tremendous increase in the number of houseboats. Houseboats are the prestigious tourism product in Kerala, fascinated large number of international as well as domestic tourists every year (Tourism Statistics, 2015). As the houseboat industry of Kerala is one of the major contributors to the national income of the country, it is necessary to have a planned development of the same. Cruising in a houseboat is a wonderful experience and the tourists derive a high level of satisfaction. Therefore the scope of development of future prospects of tourism in Kerala is unavoidable. So it is essential for tourism management authorities to understand the main factors contributing tourists' satisfaction. Therefore it is very clear that, the study of tourists' satisfaction in houseboat in Kerala is considered to be very of great importance.

The present study aims to propose a conceptual model explaining the relationship among the two variables of service quality and food experience on the one hand with the tourist perceived value as a mediating variable and the variable of tourists' satisfaction on the other hand. Of these, the service quality and food experience are independent variable and tourists' satisfaction as dependent variable. The mediating variable i.e., perceived value is conceived of as consisting of functional value, social value and emotional value. The study highlights how far the direct influence of service quality and food experience in tourists' satisfaction is deviated from the impact of these variables when influenced through the different dimensions (functional value, social value, emotional value) of the mediating variable. The study also attempts to empirically test the conceptual model.

The significance of the study lies in the acknowledged fact that it will be helpful to policy makers and tourism management authorities in ensuring tourists' satisfaction by way of providing high quality service as well as food experience which will enable the tourists to perceive functional, social, emotional values accompanied with the services provided and the food served.

### **3.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In the tourism scenario of Asian countries including India, the influence of the service quality and food quality experienced by domestic as well as international tourists remain overlooked. This is true with respect to Kerala Houseboat tourism. The researcher undertake to investigate the hitherto taken for granted relationship among the variables of service quality, food experience on the one hand with the mediating variable of tourists perceived value consisting of functional, social and emotional value and the dependent

variable of tourists' satisfaction on the other hand. So that it will trigger the tourism management authorities as well as policy makers to adopt suitable measures for furthering tourists' satisfaction and thereby ensure social and economic development in the nation.

In India, the state of Kerala continues to be the most preferred destination for domestic as well as international tourists around the world and Houseboat tourism is the most renowned attraction of Kerala. The desire to travel new sights and experiences of tourists can increase the demand of houseboat tourism, and the satisfaction of tourists' have to be ascertained. Although, there are many studies which explored the antecedents and factors determining tourists' satisfaction, these studies were conducted in the western context only.

There are many academic studies that address service quality, perceived value and tourist satisfaction (Cronin et al 2000). But most of the literature on tourism has reported findings about tourists' perceptions and satisfaction levels within the limited boundary of Western societies, but not the Asian countries (Heung, 2000). Prybutok (2008) reported that food is one of the potential determinants of tourists' satisfaction. As far as Kerala tourism is concerned, these dimensions have not been traced effectively so far. Hence the researcher tries to investigate the satisfaction of houseboat tourists in connection with Service quality and food experience and it will enhance the knowledge about tourists' satisfaction of houseboat in Kerala and thus, the study is to fill the gap in the tourism marketing literature. Thus, the research problem is to establish the influence of service quality and food experience

perceived by tourists and how perceived value dimensions like functional, social, emotional value of tourists influences on satisfaction.

### **3.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

#### **General objective**

To explain the satisfaction of Houseboat tourists in Kerala is the main focus of the study. In order to achieve this primary objective, the following specific objectives were stated.

#### **Specific objectives**

- To establish the relationship between service quality perceived by tourists and tourists' satisfaction of houseboat.
- To explore the relationship between food experience perceived by tourists and tourists' satisfaction of houseboat.
- To study the mediating role of perceived value dimensions of functional, social, emotional value in influencing the relation between the service quality and tourists' satisfaction of houseboat.
- To study the mediating role of perceived value dimensions of functional, social, emotional value in influencing the relation between the food experience and tourists' satisfaction of houseboat.
- To empirically test a model linking the relationship between service quality, food experience, perceived value dimensions of functional, social, emotional and tourists' satisfaction of houseboat.

### **3.4 VARIABLES IN THE STUDY**

From the conceptual framework, following are the variables under study.

1. Tourists' satisfaction ( Dependent Variable)
2. Functional value (Mediating Variable)
3. Social value (Mediating Variable)

4. Emotional value (Mediating Variable)
5. Service quality (Independent Variable)
6. Food experience (Independent Variable)

### **3.4.1 Definitions of variables**

The theoretical and operational definitions of variables in the study are given below.

#### **Tourists' satisfaction**

Tourists' satisfaction is a subjective customer evaluations of the attribute performance associated with the consumption experience (Cronin, 1992). Tourist satisfaction has been operationalized as a positive feeling which a houseboat tourist attains on account of being able to derive complacency on account of experiencing the quality of the service provided and that of food served.

#### **Service quality**

Service quality refers to consumer's judgment about the performance of a product or service (Zeithaml, 1987). The Service Quality can be defined operationally as the tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance of the service provided as well as the empathetic consideration of service providers towards the houseboat tourists.

#### **Food experience**

Food experience refers the quality evaluated using food temperature, presentation; freshness and selection range (Johns & Pine, 2002). Food experience can be operationalized as consisting of taste, variety of flavours



and smell, attractiveness, freshness and wholesomeness of the food served in the houseboat.

### **Functional value**

Functional value refers the utility derived from the quality in terms of the price offered (Sweeney, 2001). Functional value is operationalized as the utility derived from the service for the houseboat tourist and the quality of food served in terms of the price paid.

### **Social value**

Social value is referred to as utility derived from the products or service's ability to enhance social self-concept (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Social value is the utility derived from the efficiency of the houseboat to enhance social self concept such as the feeling of acceptability from other people and how the service can make good impression on the other people.

### **Emotional value**

Emotional value refers to the value that includes enjoyment, relax, feeling good, and pleasure (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Emotional value of houseboat is the utility derived from the feeling of goodness, liking happiness and comfort.

## **3.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This section provides details about spacio temporal consideration with respect to the sources from which information has been collected for the study.

### **3.5.1 Time Dimension**

The time dimension of collected data pertaining to the houseboat tourism in Kerala was done during the period between March 2015 to February 2016.

### **3.5.2 Place of Study**

The place of the study confined within the districts of Alappuzha and Kottayam which being major destination of houseboat tourism.

### **3.5.3 Data sources and data collection**

Secondary data, where ever significant, was collected from published sources. Survey research using a structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from the respondents.

## **3.6 HYPOTHESES**

The following hypotheses were formulated on the basis of the conceptual framework and the expected relationships among variables identified significant for the objectives of the study.

Hypotheses 1: Service quality perceived has a significant influence on tourists' satisfaction.

Hypotheses 2: Food experience perceived has a significant influence on tourists' satisfaction.

Hypotheses 3: The relationship between service quality and tourists' satisfaction is mediated by functional value of the tourists.

Hypotheses 4: The relationship between service quality and tourists' satisfaction is mediated by social value of the tourists.

Hypotheses 5: The relationship between service quality and tourists' satisfaction is mediated by emotional value of the tourists.

Hypotheses 6: The relationship between food experience and tourists' satisfaction is mediated by functional value of the tourists.

Hypotheses 7: The relationship between food experience and tourists' satisfaction is mediated by social value of the tourists.

Hypotheses 8: The relationship between food experience and tourists' satisfaction is mediated by emotional value of the tourists.

Hypotheses 9: Functional value of tourists towards houseboat has a positive impact on Tourists' satisfaction.

Hypotheses 10: Social value of tourists towards houseboat has a positive impact on Tourists' satisfaction.

Hypotheses 11: Emotional value of tourists towards houseboat has a positive impact on Tourists' satisfaction.

### **3.7 METHODOLOGY**

The objectives of the study were finalized after the review of literature and hypotheses were formulated accordingly. The methodology followed for carrying out the study is detailed in this section. It includes specifying the research design, sample design, sample selection procedure, data analysis strategy and data collection tool and instrument is given in this section.

#### **3.7.1 Research Design**

The study is descriptive and explanatory as it describes and portrays the relationships among the concepts. A descriptive study used to make descriptions of the phenomena or the characteristics associated with subject

population: who, what, when, where and how of a topic (Coper & schindler, 2003). The methods typically used in a descriptive research could be surveys, panels, observations, or secondary data analyzed in a quantitative manner (Malhotra, 2004). In this study, both primary data and secondary data were used as a part of descriptive research. The study is descriptive in nature as it tries to explore and explain information regarding the concepts such as service quality perceived, food experience, perceived value (functional value, social value and emotional value) and tourists' satisfaction. The study is also explanatory in nature as it tries to explain both the direct and indirect effects of independent and mediating variables on tourists' satisfaction.

### **3.7.2 Sampling design**

Since the source list (sampling frame) for the population is not available for the present study, because there was no proper record of keeping the details of those tourists who travelled in the houseboat. So it was decided to proceed with a non probability sampling method for this study.

### **3.7.3 Sampling method**

Convenience sampling method was used for this study. It is non probabilistic sampling method which is suitable when the source list or the sample frame of the population is not available.

### **3.7.4 Population**

Sample frame for the population is non-existing so in this study the population includes all foreign tourists who have travelled by houseboats in Kerala.

### **3.7.5 Unit of Analysis:** Tourists.

### **3.7.6 Sample Size**

A sample size of 416 foreign tourists who visited houseboats from Allapuzha and Kottayam were selected for the purpose of study. As a rule of thumb, minimum sample size should comprise of 5 observations for each measurement variable (number of items) that is used (Hair et al., 2006). As the total items in the current study are 44, a minimum of 220 samples are required. In this study data were collected from 525 samples and 416 valid responses were used for data analysis.

### **3.7.7 Unit of observation/ Sampling unit**

The unit of observation or the sample unit consists of foreign tourists who are above the age of 15 and they were the first time visitors in the Kerala houseboat.

## **3.8 DATA COLLECTION**

First of all details regarding the houseboat servicing in the destination of Alappuzha and Kottayam have been collected especially with respect to the ownership. There after permission from the houseboat owners for collecting the data have been sought. During the period which the data has been collected, the researcher visited the starting point of the Houseboat and meets the respondents and distributed questionnaire among them. In some cases questionnaires have been entrusted with the functionaries of the houseboat. So that they could distribute questionnaires among the foreign houseboat travelers and the data collected at a convenient time and return to the researcher. This procedure has been followed in both the destinations of Alappuzha and Kottayam. This has resulted saving much time and energy and

prevented the procedure from lagging behind the expected duration for completion of data collection.

### **3.9 TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION**

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. A statement explaining purpose of the study and assurance of confidentiality of the data collected was given in the beginning. Scales from prior research were adopted for the study in order to elicit responses from the sample units. Thus data have been collected from the respondents by administering independent tests of proven validity and reliability. All the scales used were subjected to reliability test using Cronbach's alpha. Questions were handed over in sealed envelopes and the respondents were asked to mark their responses.

The questionnaire has two parts. The first part of the questionnaire was used to collect the demographic information of the respondents like age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, occupation and income. The next part deals with the questions related to service quality, food experience, perceived value dimensions and tourists' satisfaction. Standardized scales are adopted and used for collecting information about variables under the study. The following instruments were used for the measurement of variables under the study.

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Tools of Data Collection</b>	<b>Scale Items</b>	<b>Cronbach alpha</b>
SQ	Cronin & Taylor, (1992)	19	0.809
FE	Qin & Prybutok, 2009; Ryu et.al., (2012)	6	0.905
FV	Sweeney, (2001)	6	0.811
SV	Sweeney, (2001)	4	0.775
EV	Sweeney, (2001)	5	0.839
TS	Cronin & Taylor, (1992)	4	0.917
	Total	44	

(SQ-Service Quality, FE – Food Experience, FV – Functional Value, SV – Social Value, TS- Tourists’ Satisfaction.)

**Table 3.1:** Tools of data collection

### **Tourists’ satisfaction**

Tourists’ satisfaction was measured by adapting the scale by (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). The scale contains the measurement items like “I really enjoyed my Houseboat experience”, “I am satisfied with my decision to visit houseboat” etc. All the items were measured on a seven point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree).

### **Service quality**

In this study service quality was measured by adapting the scale by (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). The scale contains nineteen items. All the items were measured on a seven point Likert scale.

### **Food experience**

Food experience by tourists was measured by adapting the scale by (Qin & Prybutok, 2009 ; Ryu et al., 2012). The scale contains six items. All the items were measured on a seven point Likert scale.

### **Functional value**

Functional value of tourists was measured by adapting the scale by (Sweeney, 2001). The scale contains six items. All the items were measured on a seven point Likert scale.

### **Social value**

Social value of tourists was measured by adapting the scale by (Sweeney, 2001). The scale contains four items. All the items were measured on a seven point Likert scale.

### **Emotional value**

Emotional value of tourists was measured by adapting the scale by (Sweeney, 2001). The scale contains five items. All the items were measured on a seven point Likert scale.

To test the proposed hypotheses, a sample of foreign tourists above Fifteen years old who had visited Questionnaire method was used for the data collection. Data was collected from the foreign tourists who are first time visitors and above the age category fifteen were taken. The following table 3.2 presented the whole structure of a questionnaire used for data collection of the study.



<b>Section</b>	<b>Dimension</b>	<b>No. of items</b>	<b>Measure</b>
Section A	Demographic Profile	5	Nominal
Section B	Service quality	19	Scale
Section C	Food experience	6	Scale
Section D	Functional value	6	Scale
Section E	Social value	4	Scale
Section F	Emotional value	5	Scale
Section G	Tourists' satisfaction	4	Scale
Total Number of Items		49	

**Table 3.2:** Structure of questionnaire.

### **3.10 PILOT STUDY**

A panel of experts of tourism management authority, houseboat owners, government officials, academicians, houseboat employees etc., reviewed the initial questionnaire before pre-testing in order to assess the face validity and content validity of the questionnaire. According to the reviewers' comments, the questionnaire was revised and modified. This questionnaire was pre-tested for its clarity and scale reliability on a small sample of foreign tourists. The pilot questionnaire was administrated on 100 respondents in Alappuzha and Kottayam district to assess the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. All the constructs were presented to the respondents in a manner that could be understood easily. The reliability of the scale was also checked and found to be acceptable as Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) values exceeded 0.7 (Cronbach, 1951).

### **3.11 VALIDITY ANALYSIS OF MEASURES**

Validity depicts the instrument's capability in measuring what it is intended to measure. There are different types of validity. Initially, content validity and face validity of the instrument was checked. Content and face validity examine whether the scale is able to measure what it intended to measure or whether the concepts under consideration are in tune with the existing theory (Zeller, 1980). A thorough review of literature along with pilot study was undertaken to ensure the content and face validity of the study. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), was carried out during the pilot study with data collected from 100 respondents to check the uni-dimensionality of the scale and the items with loadings above 0.04 are retained.

### **3.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter outlined different aspects of methodology used in the study. It provided research hypotheses, theoretical and operational definitions of the constructs used in the study. Details of the data source, sampling method, scope and structure of the questionnaire are also dealt with in detail. The chapter ends with the methods of measurement of various factors, emerged important through the study of previous works, which contribute to the primary data of the study.



**DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLE PROFILE**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>4.1</b>	Metrics of data collection
	<b>4.2</b>	Socio- demographic profile of sample respondents
	<b>4.3</b>	Reliability and factor analysis
	<b>4.4</b>	Descriptive statistics of the variables under study
	<b>4.5</b>	Analysis of normality data
	<b>4.6</b>	Correlation analysis
	<b>4.7</b>	Chapter summary

*This chapter deals records of the data collection profile of the sample and the socio- demographic profile of the respondents in detail. This chapter also discusses about the reliability analysis, factor analysis and descriptive statistics of the variables. Thus this chapter deals with the primary analysis of final data collected.*

#### **4.1 METRICS OF DATA COLLECTION**

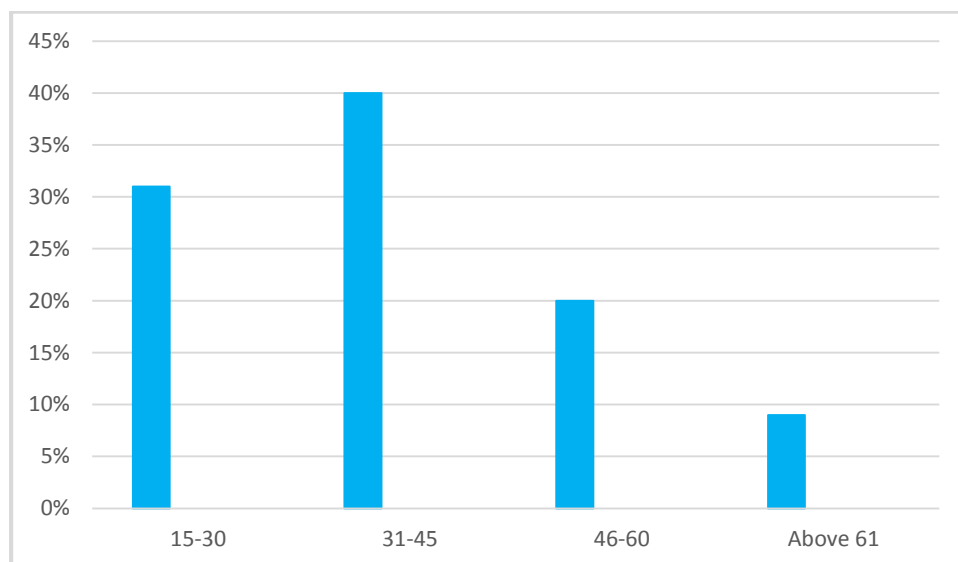
A total of 1000 respondents from the two six districts of the state such as Alappuzha and Kottayam were selected for participation in the survey. These two destinations are the major houseboat tourism destination. Questionnaires, together with a letter of introduction were distributed directly to the foreign tourist related to the objectives. After the initial screening, the incomplete questionnaires were rejected. Finally 525 responses received in total, 109 were rejected due to either incompleteness of response or non fulfilment of sample selection criteria. Thus, the final sample size of the study was 416 which was sufficient to ensure data adequacy in the study. The data set was entered into SPSS for further processing.

#### **4.2 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE RESPONDENTS**

Profile of the respondents according to the demographic features such as age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, occupation and income of the respondents are discussed in the following section.

##### **4.2.1 Age profile of the respondents**

Age is classified into four categories and data were collected on this basis of this classification. Majority of the respondents comes under the age group of 31-45 years, 31% of the respondents comes under 15-30 age group, 20% under 46-60 age group and only 9% in the age group of 61years and above.



**Fig. 4.1:** Age profile of respondents

Sl. No.	Age group	Frequency	Percentage
1	15-30	121	31
2.	31-45	166	40
3.	46-60	83	20
4.	Above 61	38	9

**Table 4.1:** Age profile of respondents

#### 4.2.2 Gender profile of respondents

Gender is an important demographic variable. From the diagram it is clear that majority of the respondents comes under the female category who visited in houseboat. The percentage analysis reveals that 64% of the respondents are females; only 36% respondents are coming under male category.

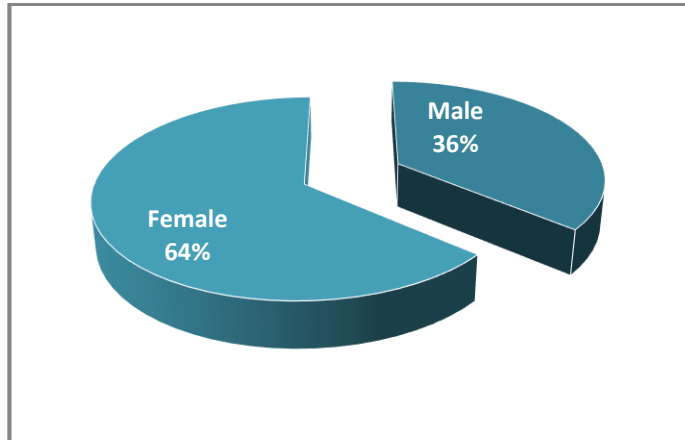


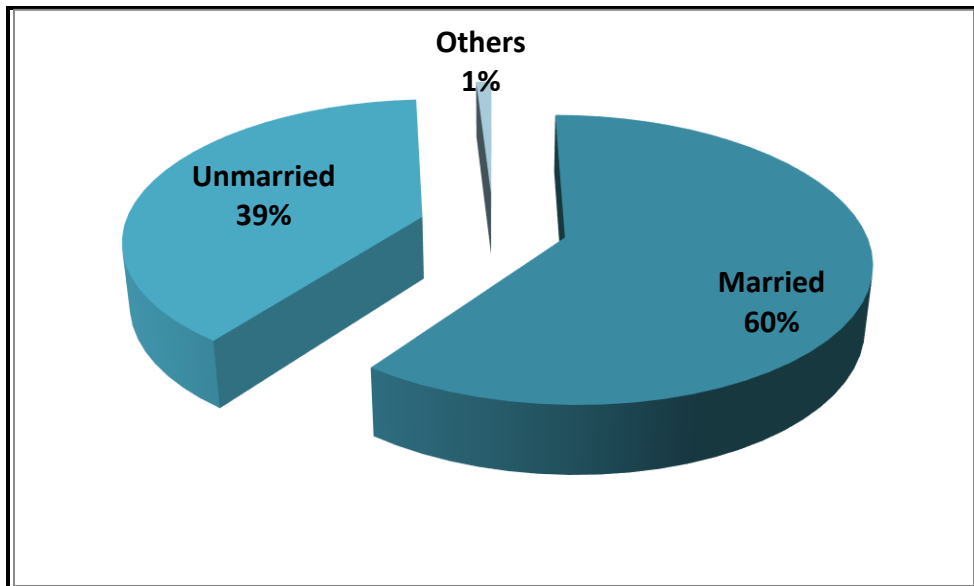
Fig. 4.2: Gender profile of respondents

Sl. No	Gender	Frequency	Percent
1	Male	150	36
2	Female	266	64

Table 4.2: Gender profile of respondents

#### 4.2.3 Marital status of respondents

The marital statuses of the respondents are given in the table 4.3 below. The percentage analysis of the respondents reveals that 39% of the respondents are unmarried, 60% married. Thus majority of the respondents travelled in the houseboat comes under the married category.



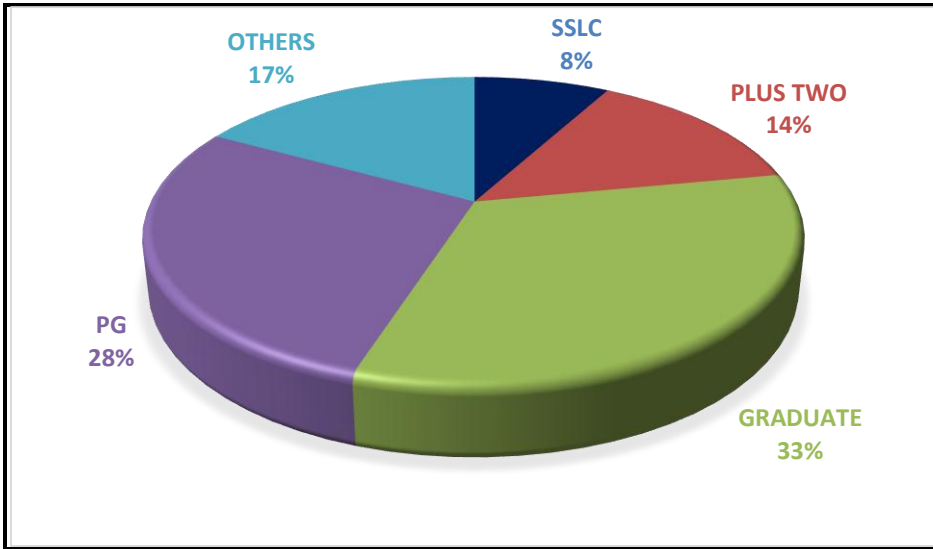
**Fig. 4.3:** Marital status of the respondents

Sl. No	Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
1	Married	250	60
2	Unmarried	162	39
3	Others	4	1

**Table 4.3:** Marital status of respondents

#### 4.2.4 Educational qualification of respondents

Educational qualifications of respondents are given in the table 4.4 below. From the table 4.4 it is clear that around 33% of them are Graduates, 28% of them are Postgraduates, 14% acquired plus two, 8% are SSLC and 17% constitute others.



**Fig. 4.4:** Educational qualification of the respondents

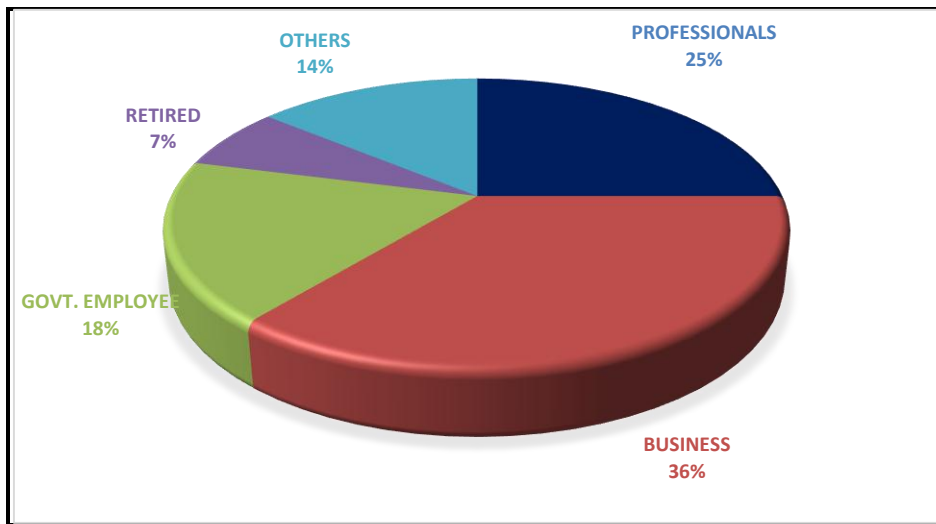
Sl. No	Education	Frequency	Percent
1	SSLC	33	8
2	Plus Two	58	14
3	Graduate	137	33
4	PG	117	28
5	Others	71	17

**Table 4.4:** Educational qualification of respondents

#### 4.2.5 Occupation of the respondents

The respondents are classified into six categories like Professionals, Business/Self-employed, Government employee, retired and others.





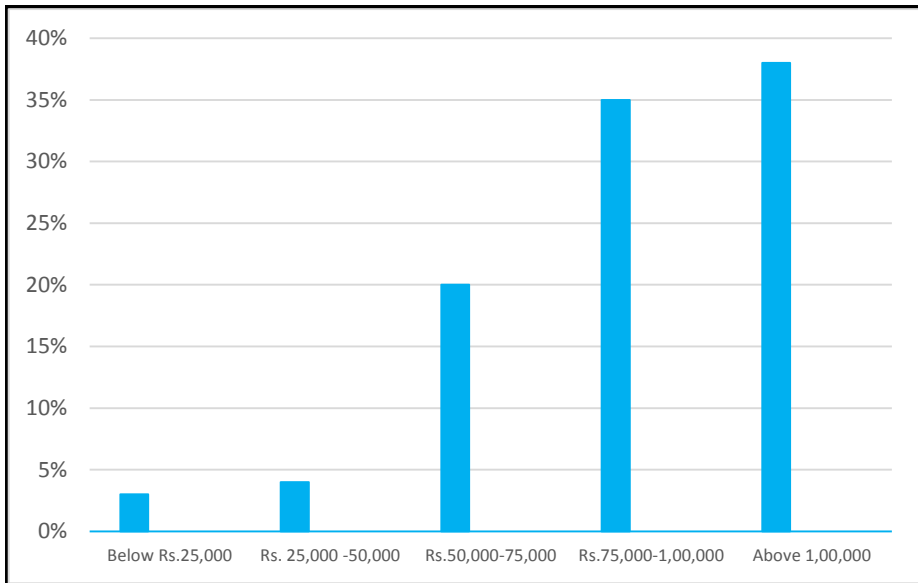
**Fig. 4.5:** Occupation of the respondents

Sl. No.	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Professionals	104	25
2.	Business	149	36
3.	Govt. Employee	75	18
4.	Retired	30	7
5.	Others	58	14

**Table 4.5:** Occupation of the respondents

#### 4.2.6 Income of respondents

The respondents are classified according to their earnings or monthly income. Since the majority of the respondents are above the age of 31, almost all are earning members. The respondents are classified under five heads, respondents having monthly income below 25,000, 25,000 to 50,000, 50,000 to 75,000, 75,000 to 1,00,000 and above 1,00,000.



**Fig. 4.6:** Income of respondents

Sl.No	Income category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Below Rs 25,000	13	3
2	Rs 25,000- Rs 50,000	16	4
3	Rs 50,000-Rs 75,000	83	20
4	Rs75,000-Rs 1,00,000	146	35
5	Above Rs 1,00,000	158	38

**Table 4.6:** Income of respondents

### 4.3 RELIABILITY AND FACTOR ANALYSIS

It is mandatory for a measurement instrument to have good reliability both the composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha coefficients should be equal to or greater than 0.7. The reliability analysis by internal consistency method was conducted for service quality, food experience attributes,

perceived value dimension like functional value, social value, emotional value and tourists' satisfaction. Some of the items were deleted so as to enhance the reliability. The final cronbach's alpha of dependent and independent variables are listed below.

### 4.3.1 Service quality

#### i. Reliability

Reliability analysis by internal consistency method was conducted for service quality. The scale had nineteen items. The reliability analysis with Cronbach's alpha revealed the entire item-total correlation is above acceptable minimum. The analysis shows a Cronbach's alpha of 0.809 which confirmed that all the item-total correlation is acceptable.

#### ii. Factor Analysis

Explanatory Factor Analysis using Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation nineteen items was conducted for factor extraction for work factors. KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity for perceived service quality were performed for the scale items. The following table shows the result of both the analyses.

KMO	0.779	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4027.864
	Df	171
	Sig	0.000

**Table 4.7:** Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of sphericity for service quality

From the above table we can see that the KMO measure is 0.779, which is above the obligatory minimum of 0.5, hence sampling adequacy is well confirmed. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) at 4027.864, therefore the stability of the dataset for factor analysis is confirmed.

The Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation resulted in the extraction of one factor. Factor loadings of 0.5 or above were taken as significant loadings. The factor structure explains 68.398% variance for perceived service quality. Thus the percentage of variance explained by the factor structure is acceptable.

### **4.3.2 Food Experience**

#### **1. Reliability**

Reliability analysis by internal consistency method was conducted for food experience scale. The scale had 6 items initially. The reliability analysis with Cronbach's alpha revealed the entire item-total correlation is above the acceptable minimum. The analysis shows a Cronbach's alpha of 0.905, which confirmed that all the item-total correlation is acceptable.

#### **2. Factor Analysis**

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation of 6 items was performed. KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity for food experience were performed for the scale items. The following table presents the result of both the analyses.

KMO	0.812	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2805.411
	Df	15
	Sig	.000

**Table 4.8:** Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity for food experience

The above table shows that the KMO measure is 0.812, which is well above the obligatory minimum of 0.5, hence sampling adequacy is confirmed. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) at 2805.411, therefore the stability of this dataset for factor analysis is confirmed.

The principal component analysis with Varimax rotation resulted in the extraction of one factor. Factor loadings of 0.5 or above were taken as significant loadings. The factor structure explains a variance of 68.290 for food experience construct. Thus the percentage of variance explained by the factor structure is acceptable.

### 4.3.3 Functional value

#### 1. Reliability

Reliability analysis by internal consistency method was conducted for functional value scale. The scale had 6 items. The reliability analysis with Cronbach's alpha revealed the entire item-total correlation is above the acceptable minimum. The analysis yields a Cronbach's alpha of 0.811, which confirmed that all the item-total correlation is acceptable.

## 2. Factor analysis

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation of 6 items was conducted. KMO and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity for functional value were performed for the scale items. The following table presents the result of both the analyses.

KMO	0.798	
Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	982.916
	Df	15
	Sig	.000

**Table 4.9:** Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett’s Test of sphericity for functional value

The above table shows that the KMO measure is 0.798, which is well above the obligatory minimum of 0.5, hence sampling adequacy is confirmed. Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity is significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) at 982.916, therefore the stability of this dataset for factor analysis is confirmed.

The principal component analysis with varimax rotation resulted in the extraction of one factor. Factor loadings of 0.5 or above were taken as significant loadings. The factor structure explains a variance of 53.948 for functional value. Thus the percentage of variance explained by the factor structure is acceptable.

### 4.3.4 Social value

#### Reliability

Reliability analysis by internal consistency method was conducted for social value scale. The scale had 4 items. The reliability analysis with Cronbach’s alpha revealed the entire item-total correlation is above the

acceptable minimum. The analysis yields a Cronbach's alpha of 0.775, which confirmed that all the item-total correlation is acceptable.

### Factor analysis

Principal Component Analysis with varimax rotation of 4 items was done. KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity for social value were performed for the scale items. The following table presents the result of both the analyses.

KMO	0.705	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	495.143
	Df	6
	Sig	.000

**Table 4.10:** Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity for Social Value

The above table depict that the KMO measure is 0.705, which is well above the obligatory minimum of 0.5, hence sampling adequacy is confirmed. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) at 495.143, therefore the stability of this dataset for factor analysis is confirmed.

The principal component analysis with Varimax rotation resulted in the extraction of one factor. Factor loadings of 0.5 or above were taken as significant loadings. The factor structure explains a variance of 60.054 for social value. Thus the percentage of variance explained by the factor structure is acceptable.

### 4.3.5 Emotional value

#### 1. Reliability

Reliability analysis by internal consistency method was conducted for emotional value scale. The scale had 5 items. The reliability analysis with Cronbach's alpha revealed the entire item-total correlation is above the acceptable minimum. The analysis yields a Cronbach's alpha of 0.839, which confirmed that all the item-total correlation is acceptable.

#### 2 Factor analysis

Principal Component Analysis with varimax rotation of 5 items was done. KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity for emotional value were performed for the scale items. The following table presents the result of both the analyses.

KMO	0.826	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1117.795
	Df	10
	Sig	.000

**Table 4.11:** Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's test of Sphericity for emotional value

The above table depict that the KMO measure is 0.826, which is well above the obligatory minimum of 0.5, hence sampling adequacy is confirmed. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) at 1117.795, therefore the stability of this dataset for factor analysis is confirmed.

The principal component analysis with Varimax rotation resulted in the extraction of one factor. Factor loadings of 0.5 or above were taken as



significant loadings. The factor structure explains 65.624-variance for emotional value. Thus the percentage of variance explained by the factor structure is acceptable.

#### 4.3.6 Tourists' Satisfaction

##### 1. Reliability

Reliability analysis by internal consistency method was conducted for tourist satisfaction scale. The scale had 4 items. The reliability analysis with Cronbach's alpha revealed the entire item-total correlation is above the acceptable minimum. The analysis yields a Cronbach's alpha of 0.917, which confirmed that all the item-total correlation is acceptable.

##### Factor Analysis

Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation of 4 items was done. KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity for tourists' satisfaction were performed for the scale items. The following table presents the result of both the analyses.

KMO	0.818	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1266.258
	Df	6
	Sig	0.000

**Table 4.12:** Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's test of Sphericity for tourists' satisfaction

The above table depict that the KMO measure is 0.818, which is well above the obligatory minimum of 0.5, hence sampling adequacy is

confirmed. Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity is significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) at 1266.258, therefore the stability of this dataset for factor analysis is confirmed.

The principal component analysis with varimax rotation resulted in the extraction of one factor. Factor loadings of 0.5 or above were taken as significant loadings. The factor structure explains a variance of 80.194 for tourist satisfaction. Thus the percentage of variance explained by the factor structure is acceptable.

#### **4.3.7 Reliability analysis of different measures of the study**

For the present study, the reliability was tested by computing Cronbach’s Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) and composite reliability for all the measures. The values of Cronbach’s alpha are given in the table 4.13

<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>No of Items</b>	<b>Cronbach’s alpha (<math>\alpha</math>) coefficients</b>
1.	Service quality	19	0.809
2.	Food experience	6	0.905
3.	Functional value	6	0.811
4.	Social value	4	0.775
5.	Emotional value	5	0.839
6.	Tourists’ satisfaction	4	0.917

**Table 4.13:** Reliability analysis of measures of construct

As seen in the table 4.12 the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient from 0.775 to 0.917, it is above the 0.7 threshold. Hence, it can be concluded that all the measures of the study has an acceptable reliability.

### 4.3.8 Exploratory factor analysis

Principal Component Analysis with varimax Rotation was conducted using SPSS 21.0. KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were performed for the scale items. The following table presents the results of both the analyses.

Sl. No.	Measures	KMO	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity			Percentage of variance explained
			Approx. Chi-Square	Df	Sig	
1.	Service quality	0.779	4027.864	171	0.000	68.398
2.	Food experience	0.812	2805.411	15	0.000	68.290
3.	Functional value	0.798	982.916	15	0.000	53.948
4.	Social value	0.705	495.143	6	0.000	60.024
5.	Emotional value	0.826	1117.795	10	0.000	65.624
6.	Tourists' satisfaction	0.818	1266.258	6	0.000	80.194

**Table No. 4.14:** Exploratory Factor Analysis

Above table shows that the KMO measures of all the variables which lies between 0.705 to 0.826, which are exceeding the obligatory minimum of 0.5, thus sampling adequacy is confirmed. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) and the test value was high leading to the conclusion that there were correlation in the data set appropriate for factor analysis, hence the stability of the data set for factor analysis is confirmed.

## 4.4 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF VARIABLES UNDER THE STUDY

The table 4.15 below shows the descriptive statistics of both dependent and independent variables under the study. The mean and the standard deviation are also presented. Standard deviation shows the spread of

the data. It is clear from the table that all mean scores are on the higher scale and the standard deviation on the lower scale, indicating that the respondents have understood the questions in the same way and the questions have been answered properly.

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
SQ	416	5.08	0.777
FE	416	5.19	1.29
FV	416	5.17	1.19
SV	416	4.83	1.47
EV	416	5.68	0.909
TS	416	5.88	0.991

**Table 4.15:** Descriptive statistics of variables

#### **4.5 ANALYSIS OF NORMALITY OF DATA**

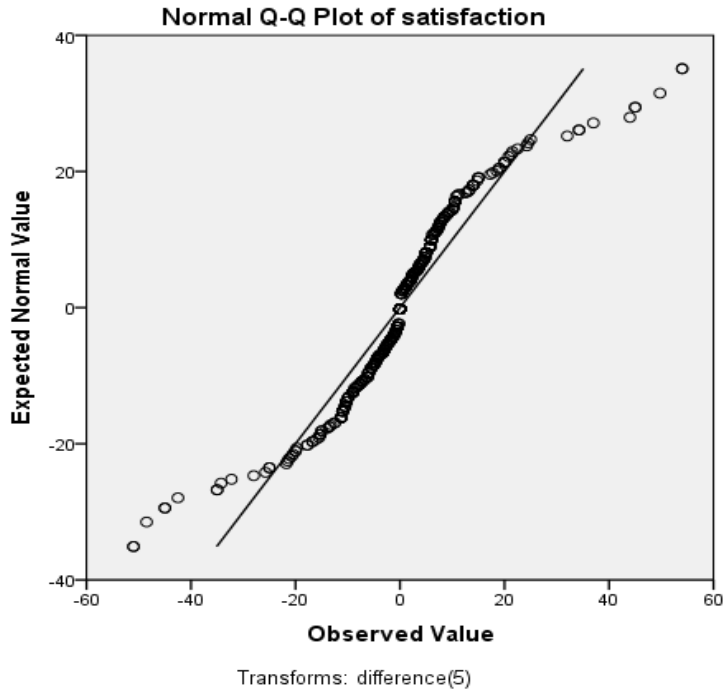
As a preliminary step for analyzing the data distribution and normality, normal Q-Q plot have been explored for the dependent variable. The analysis was done merely by eyeballing. Hence it was decided to check for skewness and kurtosis for detailed analysis. These methods are generally accepted as a more accurate test of normality- assumptions. Normality of the data is a conventional assumption in the estimation process. Data distribution with a either highly skewed nature or with Kurtosis is indicative of non-normality which has random effects on specification or estimation. Therefore an attempt has been made to ascertain the normality of the data with its Skewness and Kurtosis values. If the values of mean and median were approximately equal, then we could consider data to be symmetrically distributed. In a skewed distribution, deviation from the mean would be larger in one direction, and the kurtosis measures the relative peakedness or

flatness of the curve. The measure of skewness and kurtosis should be as close to zero as possible, however a small departure from zero will not be a violation of normality assumption as long as the measures were not too large compared to their standard error and they fall within the range of -1.96 to +1.96.

The data under study were slightly skewed and Kurtotic, but did not differ significantly and are approximately normally distributed (Table 4.16). Thus, normality assumption was confirmed through the symmetric distribution obtained, analysis of skewness and kurtosis and normal Q-Q plots.

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>
Service quality	3.790	0.39010	-.313	3.524
Food experience	4.060	0.41786	-.412	4.659
Functional value	4.120	0.52204	-.409	5.678
Social value	4.231	0.51326	-.789	3.545
Emotional value	4.118	0.55641	-.134	4.751
Tourists' satisfaction	3.897	0.44287	-.489	3.425

**Table 4.16:** Skewness and Kurtosis



**Fig. 4.7:** Normal Q-Q Plot of tourists' satisfaction

#### 4.6 CORRELATION ANALYSIS OF VARIABLES

Correlation using Karl Pearson's,  $r$  for values of relationship among variables of this study is discussed here. The magnitude of the correlation between service quality, food experience, functional value, social value, emotional value and tourists' satisfaction are given in the table 4.17. The correlation ranges between 0.133 to 0.704. This is very much below 0.90, and common method variance can be ruled out (Siponen, 2010), since the ceiling suggested by (Pavlou, 2007) is 0.90. The study anticipated positive correlation with dependent variable and all independent variables under the study. All the correlation values are significant and under acceptance limit.

	<b>SQ</b>	<b>FE</b>	<b>FV</b>	<b>SV</b>	<b>EV</b>	<b>TS</b>
AVGPSQ	1					
AVGFQ	0.277	1				
AVGFV	0.133	0.845	1			
AVGSV	0.327	0.597	0.508	1		
AVGEV	0.242	0.431	0.341	0.575	1	
AVGTS	0.232	0.407	0.345	0.704	0.521	1

**Table 4.17:** Correlation matrix of variables

#### 4.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter deals with the data collection records, sample profile, reliability, validity of measures and descriptive statistics. The socio-demographic profile of data are analysed for the better understanding of the study. The descriptive statistics and normality assumption of dependent variable is also presented in the chapter.







**HYPOTHESIS TESTING AND MODEL ANALYSIS**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>5.1</b>	Testing of hypothesis
	<b>5.2</b>	PLS structural equation modeling - an overview
	<b>5.3</b>	Conceptual model analysis
	<b>5.4</b>	Measurement model analysis
	<b>5.5</b>	Structural model analysis
	<b>5.6</b>	Mediation analysis
	<b>5.7</b>	Model fit and quality indices
	<b>5.8</b>	Chapter summary

*After discussing about the details of data collection, sample profile, factor validity, reliability and descriptive statistics, the next stage is to proceed to the testing of hypothesis and empirical analysis of the conceptual model. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 21.0 and Warp PLS 5.0. The test of hypothesis dealing with the positive influence of variables and its mediation are presented first. Then the conceptual model analysis using PLS is presented. Model analysis presented in two segments. The first segment discusses about reliability and validity of the measurement model. The structural model analysis and its interpretations are stated in the second segment. In addition to this Common Method Variance is also discussed in the present chapter.*

## **5.1 TESTING OF HYPOTHESES**

The analysis of the collected data has been carried out with SPSS and PLS SEM. All hypotheses formulated for the purpose of the study were tested using appropriate statistical tests. The hypotheses relates to major variables in the conceptual model of the study like service quality, Food experience, Functional Value, Social Value, Emotional Value and Tourists' Satisfaction. After that all the paths in the structural model were examined to test the hypotheses. There were eleven hypotheses including the meditation hypotheses developed for study.

## **5.2 PLS STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING- AN OVERVIEW**

The first generation statistical methods such as factor analysis and regression analysis dominated the research landscape through the 1980s. But since the 1990s, second generation methods have expanded rapidly and is being extensively used in empirical research. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling is one such emerging second generation tool (Hair et al., 2017). PLS path modelling is a variance based structural equation modelling (SEM) technique. There are two types of SEM: Covariance based (CB) SEM and Partial Least Squares based SEM. CB-SEM is used to confirm or reject theories. It does this by determining how well a proposed theoretical model can estimate the covariance matrix for a sample data set. In contrast, the PLS SEM is used to develop theories in exploratory research. This is particularly useful and considered as an alternative to CB SEM, when the main aim is prediction and explanation of the target variable (Rigdon, 2012). While being a regression based approach, it does not make any assumptions regarding the distribution of data. Table 5.1 gives the key characteristics of PLS-SEM.

<b>Data Characteristics</b>	
Sample data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ No identification issues with small sample sizes.</li> <li>➤ Generally achieves high levels of statistical power with small sample sizes.</li> <li>➤ Larger sample sizes increases the precision (i.e., consistency) of PLS SEM estimations.</li> </ul>
Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ No distributional assumptions</li> <li>➤ Highly robust as long as missing values are below a reasonable level.</li> </ul>
Scale of measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Works with metric data.</li> <li>➤ Some limitations when using categorical data to measure endogenous latent variable.</li> </ul>
<b>Model Characteristics</b>	
Number of items in each construct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Handles constructs measured with single and multi-item measures.</li> </ul>
Relationship between constructs and their indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Easily incorporates reflective and formative measurement models.</li> </ul>
Model Complexity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Handles complex model with many structural model relations.</li> </ul>
<b>PLS-SEM Algorithm properties</b>	
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Minimizes the amount of unexplained variance.</li> </ul>
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Converges after a few iterations to the optimum solution.</li> </ul>
Nature of constructs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Viewed as proxies of the latent concept under investigation, represented by composite variables.</li> </ul>

Construct scores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Estimated as linear combinations of their indicators</li> <li>➤ Are determinate</li> <li>➤ Used for predictive purposes</li> <li>➤ Can be used as input for subsequent analysis</li> <li>➤ Not affected by data inadequacies</li> </ul>
<b>Model Evaluation Issues</b>	
Evaluation of the overall Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ No established global goodness of fit criterion</li> </ul>
Evaluation of the measurement model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Reflective measurement models: Reliability and Validity assessment by multiple criteria</li> <li>➤ Formative measurement models: Validity assessment, significance and relevance of indicator weights, indicator collinearity</li> </ul>
Evaluation of the structural model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Collinearity among set of constructs, significance of path coefficients and criteria to assess the the model's predictive capabilities</li> </ul>
Additional analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Impact performance matrix analysis</li> <li>➤ Mediating effects</li> <li>➤ Hierarchical component models</li> <li>➤ Multigroup analysis</li> <li>➤ Uncovering and treating unobserved heterogeneity</li> <li>➤ Measurement model invariance</li> <li>➤ Moderating effects</li> </ul>

Source: (Hair et al., 2017)

**Table 5.1:** Characteristics of PLS-SEM

### **5.2.1 Measurement of constructs**

This study involved relationships among variables which were not directly measurable. As the variables involved in the study were abstract, the concept of latent variables was introduced in the study. Latent variables are hypothetical constructs that cannot be directly measured and which are created to understand the research area. To operationalize the latent variables, observable and measurable indicators that have a logical link with the concept were identified so that the relationships between the theoretical constructs could be analyzed. Generally there are two different ways to measure unobserved variables. One approach is referred to as reflective and the other formative. The approach to modelling constructs is an important consideration in developing path models. Construct specification involves defining the causality of relationship between a construct and its measures or indicators. Constructs can be either reflective constructs or formative constructs. After measurement of the constructs as reflective or formative, the next step is determining the path model. A PLS path model consist of two elements- Structural model (also called the inner model) and measurement model (also called the outer model). The key characteristics and differences between reflective and formative constructs is given below in Table 5.2.

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Reflective</b>	<b>Formative</b>
Casuality of construct	Items are caused by construct	Construct is formed from items
Conceptual relationship among items	All items are related conceptually because they have a common cause	No requirement of conceptual linkage to other items
Domain of items	Representative sample of potential items	Exhaustive inventory of all possible items
Covariance among items	Expected collinearity among items	No expectation of collinearity. High collinearity among formative items can be problematic
Internal consistency	Required	Not required
Forms of construct validity	Internal and external	Only external

Source: (Hair, 2009)

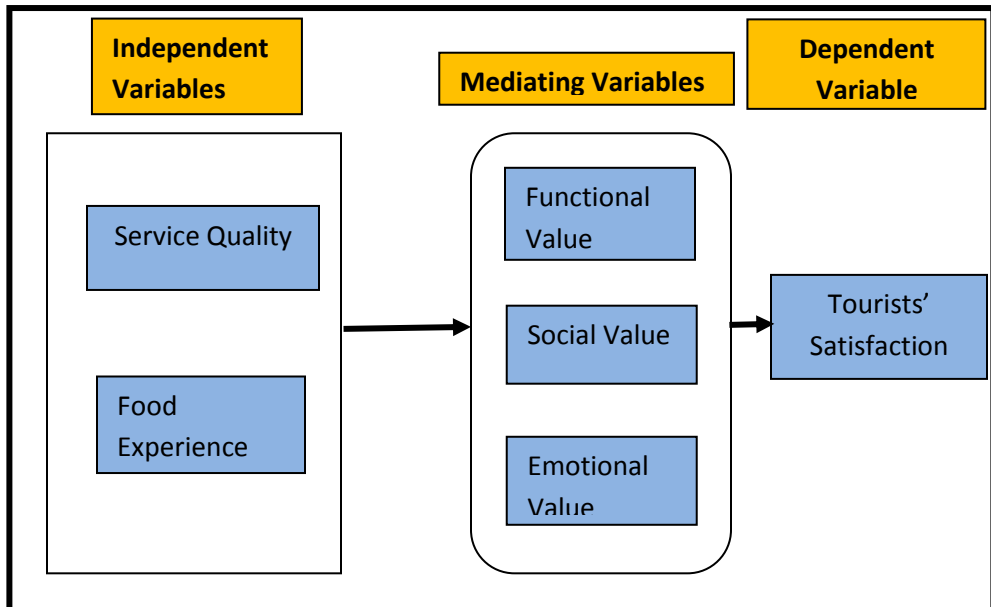
**Table 5.2:** Reflective and formative constructs

### 5.3 CONCEPTUAL MODEL ANALYSIS

Analysis of conceptual model delivers empirical measures of the relationships between indicators and constructs in the first stage measurement model, as well as between the constructs in the structural model. The empirical measures will enable us to compare the theoretically established measurement and structural models, as represented by the sample data. The figure 5.1 shows hypothesized relationships in the study. Tourists' satisfaction is the dependent variable, Food experience, Service quality are conceptualized as predictors of tourists' satisfaction as shown in the conceptual model. The mediating role of perceived value dimensions of

functional value, emotional value and social value between independent variables and dependent variable is also examined.

Hypotheses 1 to 11 are about relationships among the variables under study. These hypotheses are proposed to be tested through Structural Equation Modelling using Partial Least Square (PLS-SEM) method. The diagram, Figure 5.1 depicts the hypothesised relationships among the variables of the study through a path model. Service quality attributes and food experience contribute tourists' satisfaction directly and indirectly through the mediating influence of functional, social and emotional value.



**Fig. 5.1:** Conceptual model of the study

Here the researcher identified service quality constitutes tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy in this study context based on thorough literature survey and discussion with the tourism officials

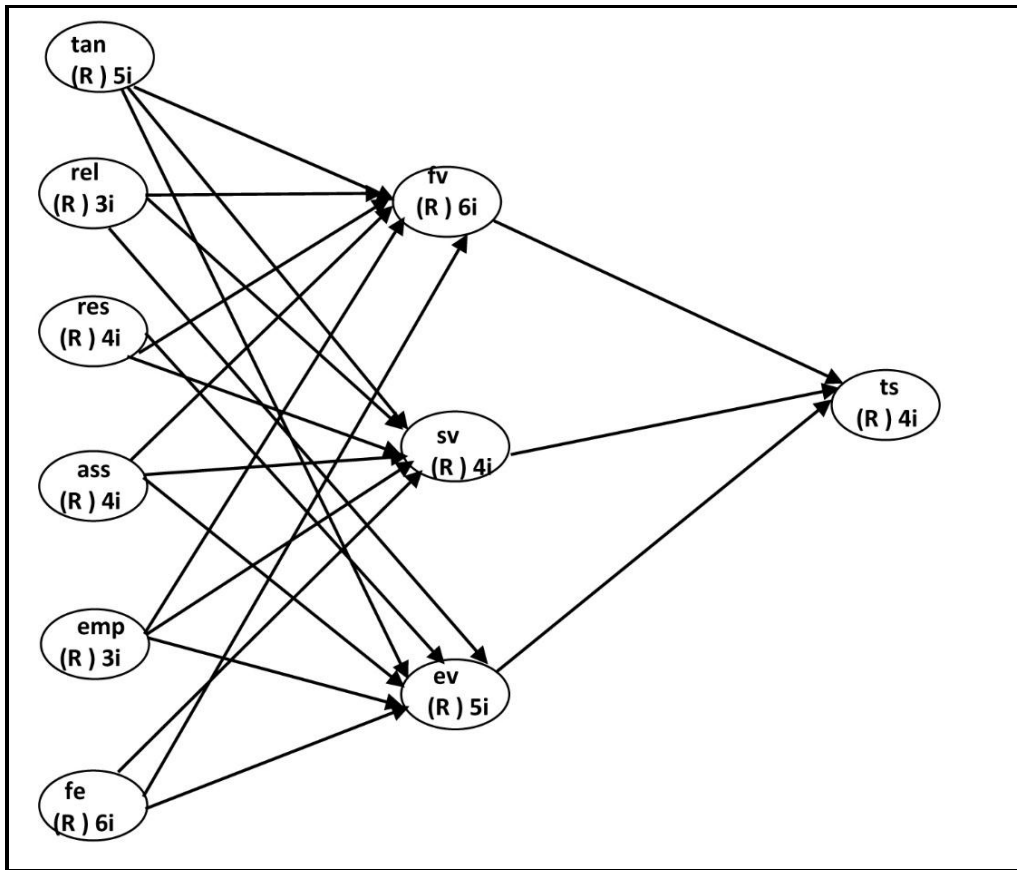
and owners and other major players in this field. Then the researcher identifies the relation between variables like service quality, food experience and dimensions of the perceived value on the tourists' satisfaction. The conceptual model clearly focuses the mediating role of dimensions of perceived value between service quality, food experience and tourists' satisfaction.

#### **5.4 MEASUREMENT MODEL ANALYSIS**

There are six latent constructs under study in this research. Service quality has 19 indicators. Food experience has 6 indicators, functional value has 6 indicators, social value has 4 indicators, emotional value has 5 indicators and finally tourists' satisfaction has 4 indicators. Among the 6 latent constructs, service quality is measured as second order constructs. The five latent dimensions of service quality is specified as reflective indicators of their second order constructs.

PLS SEM results are reviewed and evaluated using a very systematic process. The systematic evaluation and analysis follows a two step process. The process includes separate assessment of the measurement model and the structural model. Initially the PLS model focuses on the first stage measurement model. The first stage measurement model is evaluated in terms of unidimensionality, reliability and validity (convergent validity and discriminate validity). The criterion for establishing unidimensionality is Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (Tenenhaus, 2005). Another, Unidimensionality using PCA is established if Eigen value of the first factor is less than 1 (Vinzi, 2010). The measurement model of the study is given in figure 5.2.





**Figure 5.2:** First stage measurement model of the study

#### **5.4.1 Reliability measures (at the first stage measurement model)**

This section deals with the analysis of the measurement model. The measurement model in PLS-SEM is evaluated in terms of reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity.

The table 5.3 shows the composite reliability and Cronbach' alpha coefficient of the latent constructs at the first stage measurement model. Both the coefficient are shown above 0.7 recommended threshold, meaning the

instrument used has adequate reliability (Nunnally, 1978) and it can be seen in literature that a value of 0.60 is an acceptable minimum (Bagozzi, 1992).

Construct	Tan	Rel	Res	Assu	Emp	FE	FV	SV	EV	TS
Composite Reliability	0.895	0.909	0.847	0.881	0.868	0.875	0.926	0.882	0.930	0.942
Cronbach' Alpha	0.852	0.797	0.762	0.743	0.786	0.802	0.906	0.881	0.808	0.915

**Table 5.3:** Reliability measures (1<sup>st</sup> stage measurement model)

Composite reliability range from 0.847 to 0.942 for various measures of variables. It is above the threshold level of 0.70. In addition Cronbach's alpha is also checked and it was found that it varies between 0.743 to 0.915, which is considered a better measure of unidimensionality (Chin, 1998). Thus unidimensionality check using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability is within the accepted norm.

#### 5.4.2 Reliability of constructs (in the 2<sup>nd</sup> order level)

At the second stage measurement model, the reliability checks were done in a similar fashion as in the first stage measurement model. For the second order constructs service quality, acceptable reliability measures using Cronbach's alpha and Composite reliability was obtained. The details of the same are given in the table 5.4 given below.

<b>Construct</b>	<b>SQ</b>	<b>FE</b>	<b>FV</b>	<b>SV</b>	<b>EV</b>	<b>TS</b>
<b>Composite Reliability</b>	0.708	0.927	0.873	0.857	0.903	0.942
<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>	0.728	0.901	0.855	0.799	0.878	0.923

**Table 5.4:** Reliability of constructs in the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage measurement model

All the variables at the second stage level have Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability above 0.7 which indicates the reliability of constructs.

#### **5.4.3 Convergent validity at 1<sup>st</sup> stage measurement model**

Convergent validity refers to the degree to which two measures of constructs that theoretically should be related are in fact related. We can ensure the convergent validity by examining the loadings of indicators. The rule of convergent validity is that the loadings of all indicators should be 0.50 (Hair, 2009) or above and they should be significant at  $p \geq 0.05$ . Convergent validity of the scale is captured by PLS through the measure of average variance extracted (AVE) of each construct. It indicates the construct's variance explained by all its indicators together. If this measure is more than 0.5 (i.e., 50 % of the variance explained), one can consider convergent validity as established (Fornell, 1981). An AVE of 0.5 signifies that 50% of the construct's variation is explained by its measurement block consisting of all indicators.

Average Variance Extracted										
Construct	SQ_Tan	SQ_Reli	SQ_Resp	SQ_Assu	SQ_Emp	FE	FV	EV	SV	TS
AVE	0.634	0.714	0.572	0.712	0.687	0.683	0.539	0.600	0.656	0.802

**Table 5.5:** Convergent validity- AVE values of constructs (at first order model)

AVE values of all constructs were found to be higher than 0.5, thus confirming the convergent validity of the constructs (Table 5.5). Another check for convergent validity is, at the indicator level where all indicators should load on their respective latent constructs with significant t values.

	Sq-tan	Sq-rel	Sq-res	Sq-ass	Sq-emp	FE	fv	sv	ev	ts	SE	P value
Sq-tan1	0.896	-0.043	-0.099	0.076	-0.022	-0.009	0.152	-0.177	0.057	-0.003	0.044	<0.001
Sq-tan2	0.64	0.229	0.173	0.073	0.088	-0.186	0.061	0	-0.205	-0.212	0.045	<0.001
Sq-tan3	0.908	-0.035	-0.053	0.082	0.011	0.021	0.165	-0.107	-0.007	0.05	0.043	<0.001
Sq-tan4	0.687	-0.023	0.009	-0.159	0.004	0.055	0.328	0.245	-0.089	-0.063	0.045	<0.001
Sq-tan5	0.811	-0.075	0.024	-0.098	-0.061	0.086	-0.122	0.042	0.182	0.168	0.044	<0.001
Sq-rel1	0.006	0.851	0.008	-0.004	-0.013	-0.075	0.211	-0.015	-0.043	0.21	0.044	<0.001
Sq-rel2	0.028	0.852	0.021	0.003	0.02	-0.019	0.078	-0.17	-0.048	0.023	0.044	<0.001
Sq-rel3	0.045	0.828	-0.073	0.002	-0.047	0.069	-0.29	0.202	0.121	-0.203	0.044	<0.001
Sq-res1	-0.078	-0.085	0.799	-0.002	0.038	0.02	0.014	-0.017	-0.031	-0.017	0.044	<0.001
Sq-res2	0.071	0.002	0.854	0.001	-0.075	0.085	0.014	0.07	-0.011	0.089	0.044	<0.001
Sq-res3	0.146	0.032	0.852	0.047	-0.04	-0.023	-0.042	0.048	0.062	0.21	0.044	<0.001
Sq-res4	-0.083	0.045	0.872	-0.049	0.063	-0.22	0.131	-0.169	-0.053	-0.091	0.045	<0.001
Sq-ass1	-0.152	0.059	0.042	0.826	0.072	0.154	-0.105	0.03	-0.004	-0.255	0.045	<0.001
Sq-ass2	0.01	-0.111	0.023	0.792	-0.005	0.044	-0.134	0.101	0.052	-0.051	0.044	<0.001
Sq-ass3	-0.057	0.149	-0.073	0.713	0.016	0.005	-0.127	0.13	0.048	0.025	0.044	<0.001
Sq-ass4	0.048	-0.097	0.042	0.685	-0.012	-0.05	0.269	-0.237	-0.102	0.026	0.044	<0.001
Sq-emp1	0.023	-0.077	0.023	0.015	0.809	-0.004	0.055	0.024	0.057	0.099	0.044	<0.001
Sq-emp2	0.017	0.004	-0.05	-0.042	0.852	-0.021	0.023	-0.005	-0.086	-0.044	0.044	<0.001
Sq-emp3	-0.04	0.071	0.028	0.029	0.826	0.026	-0.078	-0.018	0.033	-0.052	0.044	<0.001
FE1	0.278	0.056	0.079	0.094	0.045	0.711	0.125	0.258	-0.158	0.043	0.045	<0.001
FE2	-0.108		0	-0.007	0.008	0.926	0.069	-0.122	-0.035	-0.016	0.043	<0.001
FE3	0.009	0.026	-0.077	-0.019	0.014	0.83	0	0.109	0.18	0.035	0.044	<0.001

FE4	0.097	-0.152	-0.052	0.007	-0.036	0.81	-0.126	0.107	0.031	0.058	0.044	< 0.001
FE5	-0.135	-0.057	0.005	-0.068	0.034	0.733	0.071	-0.168	-0.007	-0.093	0.044	< 0.001
FE6	-0.092-	0.104	0.017	0	0.003	0.924	0.082	-0.135	-0.026	-0.025	0.043	< 0.001
Fv1	-0.01	0.034	-0.002	0.141	0.04	-0.126	0.725	0.738	-0.102	0.115	0.045	< 0.001
Fv2	0.022	0.033	0.031	-0.084	0.045	0.212	0.642	0.23	-0.273	0.137	0.045	< 0.001
Fv3	0.043	0.031	-0.002	-0.083	0.184	-0.215	0.562	1.079	0.164	-0.115	0.045	< 0.001
Fv4	-0.033	0.055	-0.006	-0.026	-0.076	0.002	0.844	-0.428	0.021	-0.016	0.044	< 0.001
Fv5	0.037	0.03	0.081	-0.022	-0.078	0.064	0.811	-0.439	0.117	-0.016	0.044	< 0.001
Fv6	-0.043	0.015	0.012	0.049	-0.044	0.029	0.783	-0.73	0.056	-0.103	0.044	< 0.001
SV1	-0.003	-0.144	-0.026	0.144	-0.05	-0.122	-0.204	0.845	-0.052	0.066	0.044	< 0.001
SV2	0.037	0.023	-0.055	-0.088	0.018	0.214	0.191	0.737	-0.266	0.141	0.044	< 0.001
SV3	-0.043	-0.006	0.015	-0.041	0.128	-0.256	-0.661	0.744	0.236	-0.147	0.044	< 0.001
SV4	-0.003	0.03	-0.004	-0.034	-0.086	0.176	0.681	0.769	0.084	-0.066	0.044	< 0.001
EV1	-0.009	-0.049	0.056	0.017	-0.048	0.058	0.049	-0.049	0.878	0.062	0.044	< 0.001
EV2	0.078	0.034	0.014	0.017	0.063	-0.104	0.037	-0.132	0.899	0.144	0.044	< 0.001
EV3	-0.063	-0.041	-0.062	0.046	0.009	-0.036	-0.26	0.101	0.802	-0.22	0.043	< 0.001
EV4	-0.095	0.045	-0.014	-0.076	0.036	-0.067	-0.152	-0.03	0.851	0.07	0.044	< 0.001
EV5	0.01	-0.035	0.068	-0.003	-0.091	0.22	0.452	0.185	0.579	-0.116	0.044	< 0.001
Ts1	-0.019	0.002	0.026	0.022	0.078	0.006	-0.169	0.138	0.034	0.896	0.044	< 0.001
Ts2	-0.123	0.084	-0.024	0.005	-0.025	-0.015	0.181	-0.146	0.102	0.899	0.045	< 0.001
Ts3	0.011	0.053	-0.084	-0.044	-0.026	0.005	-0.019	0.053	0.011	0.93	0.044	< 0.001
Ts4	0.138	0.004	0.05	0.021	-0.028	0.005	0.008	-0.048	-0.154	0.855	0.044	< 0.001

Table 5.6: Combined loadings and cross loadings of the latent variables (1<sup>st</sup> order level)

Convergent validity for the measurement models are established by acceptable AVE criteria and the significant indicator loadings on latent constructs.

#### **5.4.4 Convergent validity at second order level**

In a fashion similar to establishing convergent validity at the first order, the second order convergent validities can be established. The table 5.7 below shows the AVE at second order level and in all cases it is above the threshold level of 0.50.

<b>Construct</b>	<b>SQ</b>	<b>FE</b>	<b>FV</b>	<b>SV</b>	<b>EV</b>	<b>TS</b>
AVE	0.537	0.683	0.539	0.600	0.656	0.802

**Table 5.7:** Convergent validity at second order- AVE values of the constructs (at the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage)

The table 5.8 shows the combined loadings and cross loadings at the second stage model. All the indicators have clearly loaded on their respective latent variables. In each case, cross loadings are not substantial and they are very much lower than the indicator loading. The p values are less than 0.05.

	SQ	FE	FV	SV	EV	TS	SE	P VALUE
Iv-tang	0.82	0.076	0.216	-0.207	0.135	0.085	0.044	<0.001
Iv-empl	0.495	-0.19	0.091	-0.088	-0.128	-0.133	0.046	<0.001
Iv- relia	0.747	-0.029	-0.108	0.183	-0.032	0.092	0.044	<0.001
Iv-resp	0.509	0.12	-0.112	0.003	-0.142	-0.057	0.046	<0.001
Iv-empl	0.522	-0.037	-0.377	0.336	0.219	-0.197	0.048	<0.001
fe 1	0.287	0.711	-0.122	0.248	-0.126	0.076	0.045	<0.001
fe2	-0.063	0.926	0.048	-0.103	-0.052	-0.024	0.043	<0.001
fe3	-0.088	0.83	0.013	0.109	0.213	0.026	0.044	<0.001
fe4	0.034	0.81	-0.086	0.077	0.042	0.064	0.044	<0.001
fe5	-0.073	0.733	0.061	-0.171	-0.047	-0.107	0.044	<0.001
fe6	-0.051	0.924	0.061	-0.117	-0.042	-0.028	0.043	<0.001
fv1	0.141	-0.127	0.725	0.784	-0.113	0.115	0.045	<0.001
fv2	0.038	0.196	0.642	0.213	-0.277	0.129	0.045	<0.001
fv3	0.055	-0.208	0.561	1.12	0.211	-0.172	0.045	<0.001
fv4	-0.058	0.015	0.844	-0.447	0.003	-0.013	0.044	<0.001
fv5	-0.06	0.078	0.811	-0.491	0.105	0.025	0.044	<0.001
fv6	-0.076	0.009	0.783	-0.712	0.069	-0.1	0.044	<0.001
sv1	0.114	-0.123	-0.205	0.845	-0.08	0.088	0.044	<0.001
sv2	-0.037	0.2	0.203	0.737	-0.27	0.14	0.044	<0.001
sv3	0.075	-0.25	-0.688	0.744	0.277	-0.183	0.044	<0.001
sv4	-0.162	0.186	0.695	0.769	0.079	-0.054	0.044	<0.001
ev1	-0.054	0.06	0.042	-0.044	0.878	0.066	0.044	<0.001
ev2	0.011	-0.128	-0.008	-0.087	0.899	0.107	0.043	<0.001
ev3	0.116	-0.04	-0.259	0.098	0.802	-0.21	0.044	<0.001
ev4	0.003	-0.052	-0.133	-0.051	0.851	0.064	0.044	<0.001
ev5	-0.1	0.239	0.503	0.141	0.579	-0.069	0.045	<0.001
ts1	0.005	-0.016	-0.199	0.171	0.062	0.896	0.044	<0.001
ts2	-0.049	-0.017	0.16	-0.128	0.071	0.899	0.043	<0.001
ts3	-0.01	0.002	0.003	0.029	0.005	0.93	0.043	<0.001
ts4	0.058	0.034	0.037	-0.076	-0.145	0.855	0.044	<0.001

**Table 5.8:** Combined loadings and cross-loadings of the latent variables (in 2<sup>nd</sup> stage model)



### 5.4.5 Discriminant Validity (at first order level)

Discriminant validity of scales used in a model is established by checking whether the square root of AVE of a construct is greater than the inter-construct correlation between the construct concerned and other constructs present in the model (Fornell, 1981). Another check for discriminant validity is at the indicator level. Here, absence of cross loadings of indicators indicates discriminant validity, i.e., indicators should indeed load on their respective latent constructs only. In the following paragraphs, discriminant validity of the measurement model is assessed at both construct-level and indicator.

This is the value on the diagonal of the table containing correlation among latent variables, which are the square root of average variance extracted for the each latent variable, should be higher than any of the value above or below them in the same column.

	tang	relia	resp	assur	emp	fe	fv	sv	ev	ts
tang	<b>0.796</b>									
relia	0.217	<b>0.845</b>								
resp	0.53	0.172	<b>0.756</b>							
assur	0.225	0.131	0.153	<b>0.844</b>						
emp	0.116	0.067	-0.049	0.16	<b>0.829</b>					
fe	0.426	-0.035	0.277	0.175	0.048	<b>0.826</b>				
fv	0.469	0.138	0.396	0.164	0.104	0.443	<b>0.734</b>			
sv	0.247	0.013	0.272	0.034	0.073	0.341	0.716	<b>0.775</b>		
ev	0.573	0.083	0.428	0.185	0.124	0.533	0.571	0.45	<b>0.81</b>	
ts	0.469	0.002	0.352	0.135	0.05	0.51	0.427	0.357	0.713	<b>0.896</b>

**Table 5.9:** Discriminant validity (at first order level)

Based on the criterion, it can be seen from the Table No 5.9 that all latent variables meet the discriminant validity criteria. Thus the square root of AVE value of each construct is greater than any inter construct correlations for all constructs.

#### 5.4.6 Discriminant validity (at second order level)

Check for discriminant validity is done at the second order level also. The tables 5.10 below gives the values of AVE, square root of AVE and inter construct correlation of constructs. It can be understood that the diagonal entries are greater than values above or below it, thus establishing discriminant validity.

	SQ	FE	FV	SV	EV	TS
SQ	<b>(0.597)</b>					
FE	0.358	<b>(0.826)</b>				
FV	0.479	0.443	<b>(0.734)</b>			
SV	0.249	0.341	0.716	<b>(0.775)</b>		
EV	0.534	0.533	0.571	0.450	<b>(0.810)</b>	
TS	0.408	0.510	0.427	0.357	0.713	<b>(0.896)</b>

**Table 5.10:** Discriminant validity (at second order level)

Cross loadings of indicators is also a check for discriminant validity. If all indicators in a measurement model load heavily on their respective latent factors without substantial loading on any other factor, discriminant validity is assumed (Chin., 1998). In the table 5.10 it can be seen that indicators load on their respective construct, with no substantial cross loadings to other constructs in the study.

It can be understood from the above mentioned section that the measurement model successfully crossed the reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity. This shows soundness of the measurement model. Hence analysis can be taken to the next stage of structural model evaluation.

## **5.5 STRUCTURAL MODEL ANALYSIS**

This section presents the detailed analysis of the structural model which represents the hypothesized relationships among the variables under study. A PLS model is primarily assessed by the weights of the latent constructs and the path coefficients on similar lines of a regression analysis (Chin, 1998). The structural model evaluation is given by the PLS path diagram in Figure 5.2.

Here tourists' satisfaction is the dependent variable of the study. Service quality and food experience are independent variables and perceived value dimensions such as functional value, social value, emotional value as a mediating variable. From the figure 5.2 the structural model of the study along with p value and R square value can be clearly measured. The figure shows R square value of tourists' satisfaction is 0.69 ie. The study variables explains 69% variance in the dependent variable tourists' satisfaction .It clearly depict a higher R square value which states that these are the major independent variables which contribute towards tourists' satisfaction. It also shows the path coefficient of all hypothesized relationships were significant at p values less than or equal to 0.001.

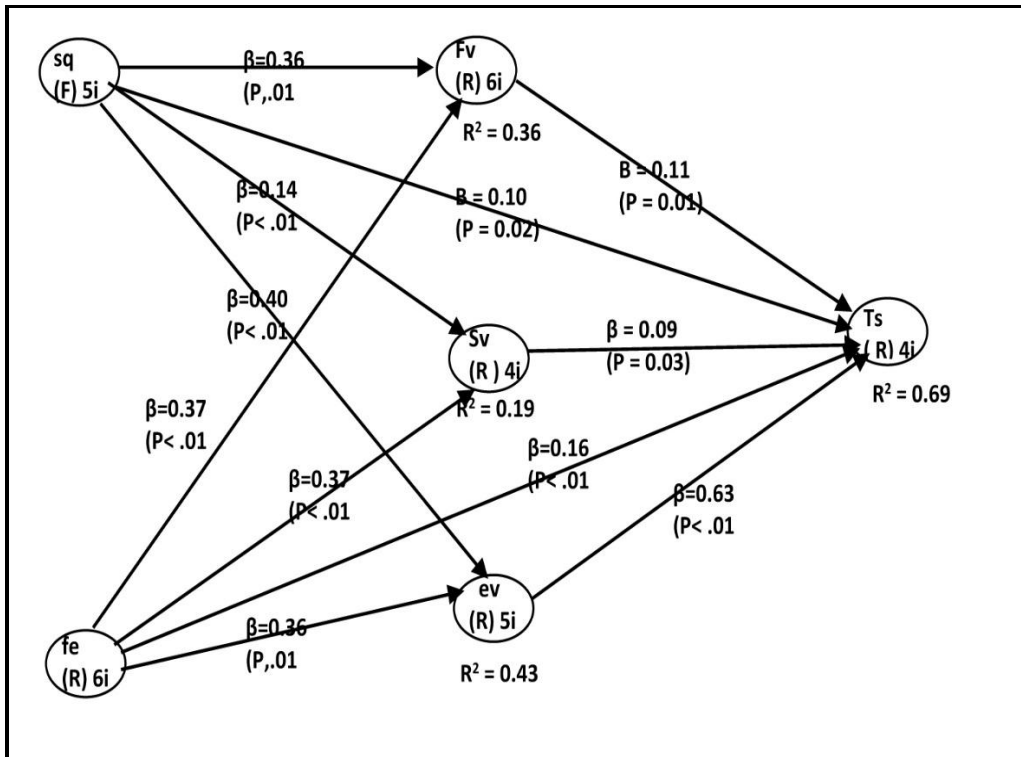


Fig. 5.3: Analysis of the structural model

### 5.5.1 Path coefficients and p value in the structural model

Path coefficients indicate whether the hypothesized relationships among the constructs exist or not and if they do, they are in the predicted directions. According to (Chin, 1998) the path should be above 0.1 and 0.2 to be meaningful and theoretically interesting. As Table 5.11 shows, all paths in the model are above 0.1 indicating that the hypothesized paths are meaningful.

<b>Hypothesized paths</b>	<b>Path coefficient</b>	<b>Sign. level</b>	<b>Accept/reject hypothesis</b>
SQ → TS	0.104	P<0.05	Accept
FE → TS	0.157	P<0.01	Accept
SQ → FV	0.362	P<0.01	Accept
SQ → SV	0.138	P<0.05	Accept
SQ → EV	0.402	P<0.01	Accept
FE → FV	0.369	P<0.01	Accept
FE → SV	0.365	P<0.01	Accept
FE → EV	0.377	P<0.01	Accept
FV → TS	0.110	P<0.05	Accept
SV → TS	0.094	P<0.05	Accept
EV → TS	0.634	P<0.01	Accept

**Table 5.11:** Path coefficients and p values

A latent construct and all its measurement indicators together are called a block. Thus a measurement model has many blocks. Structural model (the inner model) consists of the hypothesized structural paths between the latent constructs. Analysis of the model starts with the evaluation of measurement model and in the event of satisfactory results on the validity and reliability of the model; it proceeds to the next stage of structural model evaluation.

Measurement model assessment is done in terms of reliability, discriminant validity and convergent validity (Tenenhaus, 2005). Structural model is assessed using path coefficients and weights of the constructs. Path coefficients and weights are interpreted in the same way as beta coefficients and  $R^2$  of regression analysis.

### 5.5.2 R squared and Q squared coefficient results

The R squared values or coefficient of determination speaks about the explained variance of the endogenous constructs in the structural model. As per (Cohen, 1988) values of above 0.02 for R squared coefficient and adjusted R squared coefficients is acceptable with regard to the explanatory power of the endogenous variable.

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>FV</b>	<b>SV</b>	<b>EV</b>	<b>TS</b>
R-Square	0.355	0.186	0.428	0.690
Q-Square	0.357	0.190	0.431	0.598

**Table 5.12** R square and Q square coefficients

The R square coefficient for functional value is 0.355, social value is 0.186, emotional value is 0.428 and tourists' satisfaction is 0.690. According to (Chin, 1998), R squared value of 0.67 is considered substantial, 0.33 moderate and 0.19 as weak. The study clearly shows that around 69% variations in the endogenous construct or the outcome variable of this study i.e., tourists' satisfaction is being explained by the service and food experience attributes and perceived value dimensions of functional, social and emotional value.

Q squared coefficient or predictive validity is also called as Stone Geisser Q squared coefficient (Geisser, 1974 & Stone, 1974). If the difference between predicted and original values is smaller, the Q square will be greater, thus signifying the predictive relevance of the structural model. A value of Q squared coefficient greater than zero is considered acceptable (Chin, 1998 & Hair., 1998). As per table 5.16 the endogenous variables of

the study have Q squared coefficient within the limit and thus good predictive validity.

## **5.6 MEDIATION ANALYSIS**

Barron and Kenny approach was one of the most important method to test the impact of mediator on a relationship between independent and dependent variables. According to Baron & Kenny (1986), four conditions are necessary to establish mediation.

**Step 1:** There must be a casual relationship between independent variable, X and dependent variable Y.

**Step 2:** The Independent Variable, X should be correlated with the mediating variable, M.

**Step 3:** The mediating variable M should have a causal relationship with the dependent variable, Y.

**Step 4:** The effect of independent variable on dependent variable must be lower than the direct relationship between independent and dependent variable when the mediation variable is controlled.

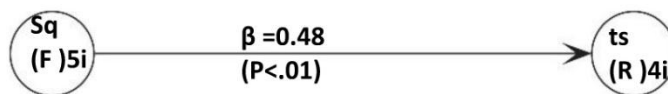
### **Analysis of Mediating Effect of Perceived value dimensions of service quality – tourists’ satisfaction relationship**

In the present study, the mediation effect of perceived value dimensions of functional social and emotional value on service quality-tourists’ satisfaction are separately analysed for this purpose.

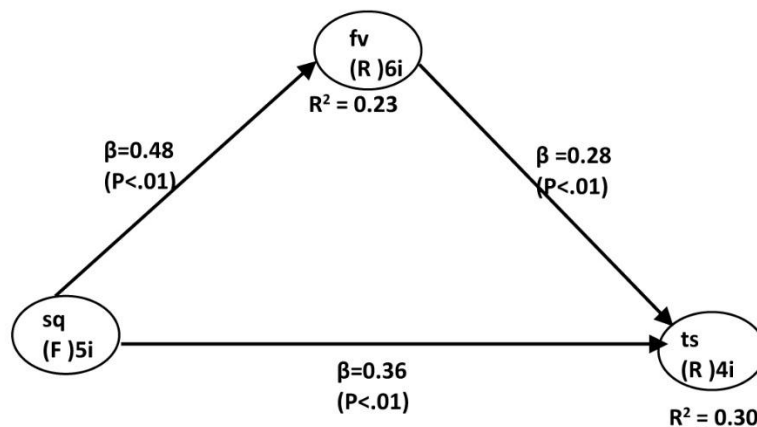
#### **a) Functional Value mediates the relationship between service quality perceived by tourist and satisfaction of tourists**

Warp PLS was used to test the significance of a mediating effect of a variable M, which is hypothesized to mediate the relationship between

Variable X and Y, by using (Baron & Kenny, 1986) criteria. In order to do the mediation analysis, two models are built. The first model was drawn with two variables X pointing at Y, without mediation variable (M) being included in the model. The second model was drawn with mediating variable (X pointing at Y, X pointing at M and M pointing at Y).



First Warp PLS model (Without mediator)



Second Warp PLS model (With mediator)

**Fig. 5.4:** Model showing the mediation effect of functional value on the relationship between service quality and tourists' satisfaction.



Path	Path Coefficient	R <sup>2</sup>	P Value
SQ- TS	0.48	0.23	0.000
SQ-FV	0.48	0.23	0.000
FV-TS	0.28	0.26	0.000
SQ-TS( with FV)	0.36	0.30	0.000

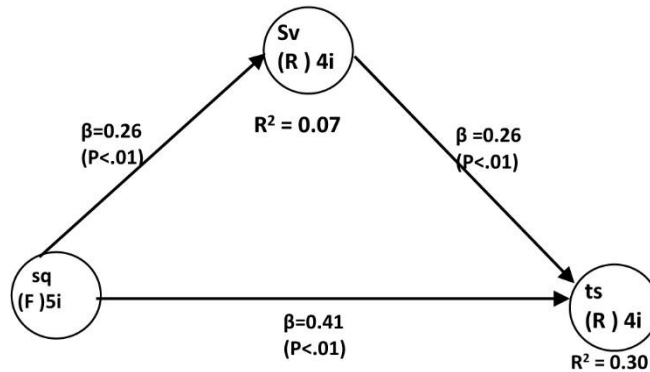
**Table 5.13:** Path coefficients with functional value in service quality and tourist satisfaction relationship

According to the above table and figure, two models are created for undertaking the mediating effect significance test. The mediating variable is functional value and it is hypothesized that functional value mediates the relationship between service quality and tourists' satisfaction. It can be seen from the table 5.13 that all conditions for establishing mediation are met. Therefore as per (Baron & Kenny, 1986) approach, there exists a mediational influence of functional value in the relationship between service quality and tourists' satisfaction.

The first model shows, the direct relationship between service quality and tourists' satisfaction is depicted and it is significant ( $p < .01$ ,  $\beta = .48$ ). In the second model, all the paths are significant including the direct effect of service quality and tourist satisfaction, but the strength of the relationship is decreased by 0.12 ( $\beta = 0.36$ ) indicating a partial mediation. Thus it can be concluded that functional value partially mediates the relationship between service quality and tourists' satisfaction.

**b) Social value mediates the relationship between service quality perceived by tourists and satisfaction of tourists**

The next hypothesis is that the relation between service quality and tourists satisfaction is mediated by functional value.



Second Warp PLS Model

(With mediator)

**Fig 5.5:** Model showing the mediation effect of social value on the relationship between service quality and tourists' satisfaction

Path	Path Coefficient	R <sup>2</sup>	P Value
SQ- TS	0.41	0.23	0.000
SQ-SV	0.26	0.07	0.000
SV-TS	0.26	0.14	0.000
SQ-TS( with SV)	0.41	0.30	0.000

**Table 5.14:** Path Coefficient with social value (in SQ and TS relationship)

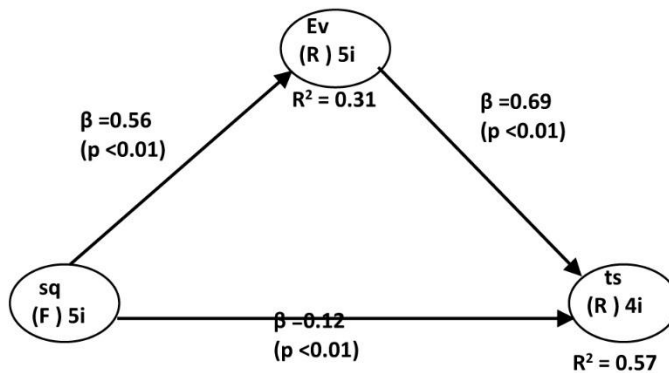
According to the above table and figure, this model is created for undertaking the mediating effect significance test. The mediating variable is

social value and it is hypothesized that social value mediates the relationship between service quality and tourists' satisfaction.

In this model, all the paths are significant including the direct effect of service quality and tourist satisfaction, but the strength of the relationship is decreased by 0.36 ( $\beta=0.12$ ) indicating a partial mediation. Thus it can be concluded that social value partially mediates the relationship between service quality and tourists' satisfaction.

**c) Emotional Value mediates the relationship between service quality perceived by tourist and satisfaction of tourists**

The next hypothesis is that the relation between service quality and tourists satisfaction is mediated by Emotional value.



**Fig 5.6** Model showing the mediation effect of emotional value on the relationship between service quality and tourists' satisfaction.

Path	Path Coefficient	R <sup>2</sup>	P Value
SQ- TS	0.48	0.23	0.000
SQ-EV	0.56	0.31	0.000
EV-TS	0.69	0.56	0.000
SQ-TS( with EV)	0.12	0.57	0.000

**Table 5.15:** Path Coefficient with emotional value (in SQ and TS relationship)

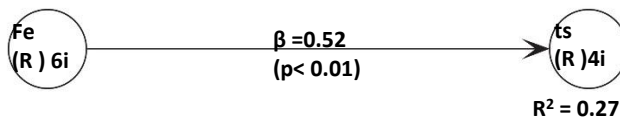
From the first model, it is clear that the direct relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction is significant ( $p < .01$ ,  $B = 0.48$ ). In the second model, all the paths are significant including the direct effect of service quality and tourist satisfaction, but the strength of the direct relationship decreased by 0.07 ( $B = 0.41$ ) indicating a partial mediation. Thus, it can be concluded that emotional value partially mediates the relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction.

The mediation analysis of emotional value on the relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction indicates that emotional value serves as a foundation for tourist satisfaction. Creating higher emotional value will help to improve the satisfaction of tourist in the houseboat.

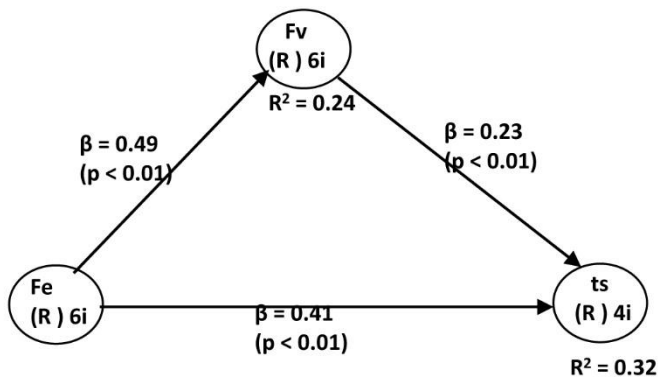
**d) Functional value mediates the relationship between food experience perceived by tourists and satisfaction of tourists.**

Warp PLS was used to test the significance of a mediating effect of a variable M, which is hypothesized to mediate the relationship between Variable X and Y, by using Baron & Kenny (1986) criteria. In order to do

the mediation analysis, two models are built. The first model was drawn with two variables X pointing at Y, without mediation variable (M) being included in the model. The second model was drawn with mediating variable (X pointing at Y, X pointing at M and M pointing at Y).



First Warp PLS model (Without mediator)



Second Warp PLS model (with mediator)

**Fig. 5.7:** Functional value mediates the relationship between food experience perceived by tourists and satisfaction of tourists

Path	Path Coefficient	R <sup>2</sup>	P Value
FE-TS	0.52	0.27	0.000
FE -FV	0.49	0.24	0.000
FV-TS	0.23		0.000
FV-TS( FV Controlled)	0.41	0.32	0.000

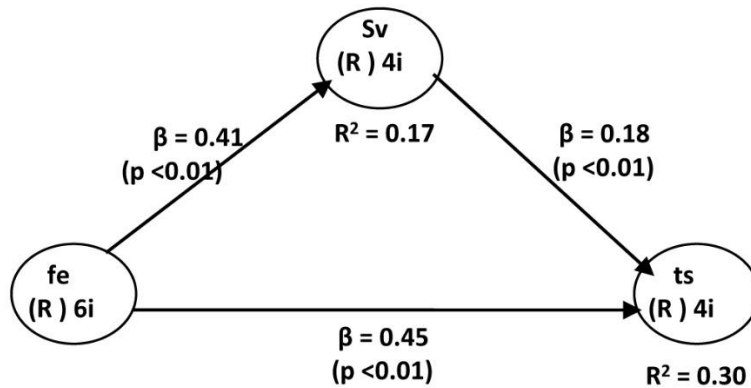
**Table 5.16:** Path Coefficient with functional value (in FE and TS relationship)

According to the above table and figure, two models are created for undertaking the mediating effect significance test. The mediating variable is functional value and it is hypothesized that functional value mediates the relationship between food experience and tourists' satisfaction.

The first model shows, the direct relationship between food experience and tourists' satisfaction is depicted and its significant ( $p < .01$ ,  $\beta = .52$ ). In the second model, all the paths are significant including the direct effect of food experience and tourists' satisfaction, but the strength of the relationship is decreased by 0.11 ( $\beta = 0.41$ ) indicating a partial mediation. Thus it can be concluded that functional value partially mediates the relationship between food experience and tourists' satisfaction.

**e) Social value mediates the relationship between food experience perceived by tourists and satisfaction of tourists**

The next hypothesis is that the relation between food experience and tourists satisfaction is mediated by social value.



**Fig5.8:** Model showing the mediation effect of Social value on the relationship between food experience and tourists’ satisfaction.

Path	Path Coefficient	R <sup>2</sup>	P Value
FE- TS	0.52	0.27	0.000
FE-SV	0.41	0.17	0.000
SV-TS	0.18	0.14	0.000
FE-TS( with SV)	0.45	0.30	0.000

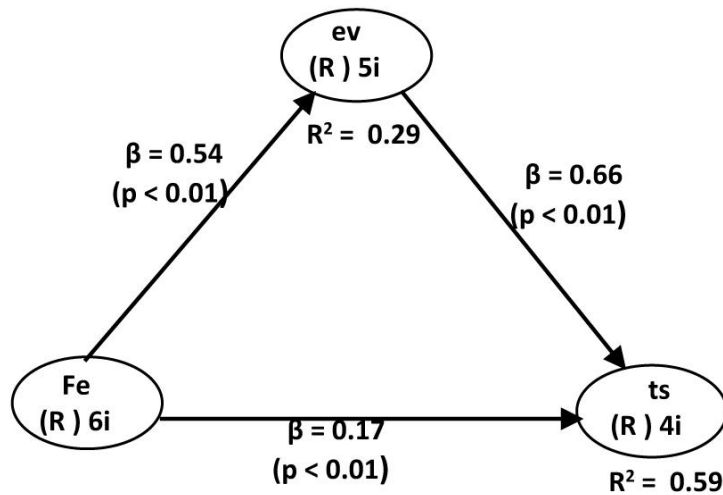
**Table 5.17:** Path Coefficient with social value (in FE and TS relationship)

According to the above table and figure, this model is created for undertaking the mediating effect significance test. The mediating variable is social value and it is hypothesized that social value mediates the relationship between food experience and tourists’ satisfaction.

In this model, all the paths are significant including the direct effect of food quality and tourist satisfaction, but the strength of the relationship is decreased by 0.35 ( $B=0.17$ ) indicating a partial mediation. Thus it can be concluded that social value partially mediates the relationship between food experience and tourists’ satisfaction.

**f) Emotional value mediates the relationship between food experience perceived by tourists and satisfaction of tourists.**

The next hypothesis is that the relation between food experience and tourists' satisfaction is mediated by Emotional value.



**Figure 5.9:** Models showing the mediation effect of emotional value on the relationship between food experience and tourists' satisfaction.

Path	Path Coefficient	R <sup>2</sup>	P Value
FE- TS	0.52	0.27	0.000
FE-EV	0.54	0.29	0.000
EV-TS	0.66	0.56	0.000
FE-TS( with EV)	0.17	0.59	0.000

**Table 5.18:** Path Coefficient with emotional value (in FE and TS relationship)



According to the above table and figure, two models are created for undertaking the mediating effect significance test. The mediating variable is emotional value and it is hypothesized that emotional value mediates the relationship between food experience and tourists' satisfaction.

The first model shows, the direct relationship between food quality and tourist satisfaction is depicted and it's significant ( $p < .01$ ,  $\beta = .52$ ) In the second model, all the paths are significant including the direct effect of food experience and tourists' satisfaction, but the strength of the relationship is decreased by 0.09 ( $\beta = 0.45$ ) indicating a partial mediation. Thus it can be concluded that emotional value partially mediates the relationship between food experience and tourists' satisfaction.

## **5.7 MODEL FIT AND QUALITY INDICES**

The analysis of the structural model of the study can be done with ten model fit and quality indices like Average Path Co-efficient (APC), Average R square (ARS), Average Adjusted R square (AARS), Average full Co-linearity VIF (AFVIF), Average Block Variance Inflation Factor (AVIF), Tenenhaus GOF (GOF) and Sympon's Paradox Ratio (SPR). All these indices are clearly reported in the below table.

Indices	Values	Decision Rule
Average Path coefficient	0.283	P<0.001
Average R-squared	0.415	P<0.001
Average adjusted R squared	0.412	P<0.001
Average Block VIF	1.625	ideally $\leq 3.3$
Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF)	2.587	ideally $\leq 3.3$
TenenhausGoF (GoF)	0.502	large $\geq 0.36$
Sympson's paradox ratio (SPR)	1	ideally = 1

**Table 5.19:** Model fit indices.

It is recommended that the p value for APC, ARS, and AARS be equal to or less than 0.001. By the table report it is clear that APC, ARS and AARS values of the model are significant at 0.001. The other indices AVIF and AFVIF show the mutli collinearity factors. It is reported that both AVIF and AFVIF are equal to or lower than 3.3 that shows low collinearity between variables.

According to (Wetzels, 2009), The GoF Path Coefficients in the Structural Model Path coefficients indicate whether the hypothesised relationships among the constructs exist or not and if they do, they are in the predicted directions. According to (Chin, 1998), the path should be above 0.1 and 0.2 to be meaningful and theoretically interesting. The GoF value of model is 0.502 which shows the large fit.

## **5.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter deals with model analysis of the study showing the relationship between Service Quality, Food experience and Tourists' satisfaction. The hypotheses related to the study were tested using PLS-SEM. The mediating role of perceived value dimensions of functional, social and emotional value is also tested with PLS-SEM mediation analysis. PLS-SEM analysis and the results discussed in this chapter adequately offer the explanatory relationship between variables under study.





**DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>6.1</b>	Introduction
	<b>6.2</b>	Summary of the findings
	<b>6.3</b>	Discussion on hypotheses findings
	<b>6.4</b>	Chapter summary

*This chapter gives the summary of the research findings. It discusses and critically examines the findings of the present study in the light of the research objectives.*

## **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The primary objective of this study was to analyze the satisfaction of Houseboat tourists in Kerala. In order to achieve this primary objective; the following specific objectives were stated. To establish the relationship between service quality perceived by tourists' and tourists' satisfaction, explore the relationship between food experience perceived by tourists and tourists' satisfaction, to study the mediating role of perceived value (functional, social, emotional) in influencing the relation between the service quality and tourists' satisfaction, to study the mediating role of perceived value (functional, social, emotional) in the relation between the food experience and tourists' satisfaction and empirically test a model linking the relationship between service quality, food experience, perceived value dimensions and tourist satisfaction. Based on the literature review and the theoretical frameworks, a model linking service and food quality attributes, perceived value dimensions (functional, social and emotional value) and tourists' satisfaction was developed and anticipated relationships among variables are tested with the data collected from the foreign tourists in Alappuzha and Kottayam. A total of 416 responses were collected from these two destinations who visited in houseboat. The collected data were further analysed with statistical methods. The following section presents the findings of the study based on the data analysis.

## 6.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The following are the major empirical findings from this study:

- Service quality has a significant relationship with functional value of the tourists.
- Service quality has a significant relationship with social value of the tourists.
- Service quality has a significant relationship with emotional value of the tourists.
- Food experience has a significant relationship with functional value of the tourists.
- Food experience has a significant relationship with social value of the tourists.
- Food experience has a significant relationship with emotional value of the tourists.
- Functional value of tourists has a significant relationship with tourists' satisfaction.
- Social value of tourists has a significant relationship with tourists' satisfaction.
- Emotional value of tourists has a significant relationship with tourists' satisfaction.
- Functional value of tourists partially mediates the relationship between service quality and tourists' satisfaction.
- Social value of tourists partially mediates the relationship between service quality and tourists' satisfaction.
- Emotional value of tourists partially mediates the relationship between service quality and tourists' satisfaction.
- Functional value of tourists partially mediates the relationship between food experience and tourists' satisfaction.
- Social value of tourists partially mediates the relationship between food experience and tourists' satisfaction.
- Emotional value of tourists partially mediates the relationship between food experience and tourists' satisfaction.

- Model linking tourists' satisfaction to service quality, food experience and perceived value dimensions of functional value, social value, and emotional value was supported and had an acceptable model fit.

### **6.3 DISCUSSION ON TESTING OF HYPOTHESES**

The findings of the study are presented under following heads

- a) Relationship between service quality and tourists' satisfaction,
- b) Relationship between food experience and tourists' satisfaction.
- c) Relationship between perceived value and tourist satisfaction
- d) Mediating role of perceived value dimensions like functional, social and emotional.

#### **6.3.1 Relationship between service quality and tourists' satisfaction**

This study aims to explain the satisfaction of Houseboat tourist in Kerala. The study revealed that service quality perceived by tourists significantly influenced tourists' satisfaction. These results confirm findings from previous research (Hau & Omar, 2014 ; Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Service quality, customer satisfaction and value are three elements that many managers in service firms would gladly profess to be striving to provide to their customers (Caruana et al.,2000). Even though the literature on service quality shows a strong relationship between tourists' satisfaction, the literature suggest that the interest in service quality has been influential in contributing significantly to the growth of the general services marketing field (Ramanathan & Ramanathan, 2016). Guillen & Iglesias (2004) in this study shows that perceived quality has a direct and positive impact on the level of customer satisfaction. Not only tourism sector, other sectors also found that all five service quality dimensions strongly influences the overall



satisfaction of tourist. And also it believes that service quality is antecedent to satisfaction argue that since service quality is a cognitive evaluation, a positive service quality perception can lead to satisfaction, which lead to favourable behavioural intentions. As Schmenner (1986) pointed out, services with low customer interaction/customization (as in the service factory) face among other challenges, that of making their services “warm” or responsive (dimension of service quality), developing innovative marketing practices to attract and retain customers (customer satisfaction/customer relationship management), paying attention to the technological advances, capital investments and physical surroundings (the tangibles dimension of the service quality construct), and managing a fairly inflexible work force and work procedure hierarchy with the need for standard operating procedures. Turel & Serenko (2004) suggest that perceived quality is the actual experience of a customer about service. Guillen & Iglesias (2004) revealed that perceived quality has a direct and positive influence on the level of customer satisfaction. That is quicker delivery of service would be perceived as high service quality, while a slower delivery would be perceived as low service quality (Reimann et al., 2008).

The service quality significantly influences tourists’ satisfaction in the sense that when service quality is ensured the tourists who are satisfied tends to visit the destination again and again. Service quality is determined by certain significant factors like tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. These are to be considered while providing services in houseboat, so that tourists’ satisfaction in houseboat is ensured to the optimum. Thus the findings of the study, service quality are significantly

influence the tourists' satisfaction in houseboat is justifiable with the findings of earlier and similar studies. This research findings strongly support that service quality perceived by the tourist highly influences tourists' satisfaction in houseboat in Kerala.

### **6.3.2 Relationship between food experience and tourists' satisfaction**

The prior researchers stressed on the point that the food experiences undergone in houseboat are highly contributing towards the tourists' satisfaction in houseboat. The result of present study substantiates the result of earlier studies of (Hendijani & Sambasivan., 2016) and shows that two factors pertaining to food experience i.e., heritage and ingredients of food influence tourists' satisfaction in the case of international tourists. This harmonise with the findings of (Namkung & Jang, 2007), shows that overall food quality experience significantly affects customer satisfaction the result demonstrated that taste and presentation of food were the two greatest contributors to customer satisfaction. AlTit (2015) with regard to food experience the results of this study showed that food has a great influence on customer satisfaction. It is one of the most important factors resulting in higher levels of customer satisfaction. Ryu et al., (2012) examines the impact of three elements of food service quality dimensions ie physical environment, food, and service on restaurant and result also supported that quality of the physical environment, food, and service were significant determinants of customer satisfaction. Ramanathan & Ramanathan (2016) found that food is the most significant factor influencing customer satisfaction. According to Ekinici (2008) consumer satisfaction will positively impact on the overall attitude of the consumers to the service sector. The findings of this study food experiences of houseboat tourists are

significantly influence the tourists' satisfaction in houseboat is justifiable with the findings of earlier and similar studies.

The findings of the research shows that as far as foreign tourists concerned food experience is found to be a more significant variable than service quality provided in determining tourists' satisfaction in the case of Kerala houseboat. Food experience has a prominent role to play in tourists' decision making and satisfaction alongside the tourists services provided. Food is very significant in offering pleasure, entertainment and give insight into the cultural life of people of the destination. Therefore it serves as a social purpose also. Food can be viewed from different point of view such as a product component, an experience, a cultural phenomena and link between tourism and food production. Since food experience and tourists' satisfaction are significant variable while formulating decisions in tourism industry. Thus the research finding strongly support that food experience of the houseboat highly influences tourists' satisfaction of houseboat in Kerala.

### **6.3.3 Relationship between perceived value and tourists' satisfaction.**

Tourists' satisfaction is defined as being highly associated with 'value' and is based, conceptually, on the amalgamation of service quality attributes with such attributes as price (Athanasopoulos, 2000). Other findings of the study are the relationship between the dimensions of perceived value with tourists' satisfaction. The study points out that the perceived value experienced by the tourists from the houseboats is highly contributing towards their tourists' satisfaction in houseboat. In the study three dimensions of tourist perceived value such as functional value, social value and emotional value were considered. These the results of the study

confirm other findings, in the literature there is a strong relationships between tourist perceived value and satisfaction such as (Petrick, 2004 ; Liu et al., 2010 ; Forgas, Palau, Sanchez & Capliure, 2014).

The emotions in a service are associated with the most hedonic part of the consumption, with feelings and emotions, such as happiness, amusement, enjoyment, fear, anger, envy, anxiety, pride and have a strong influence on satisfaction (Havlena & Holbrook, 1986; Rojas & Camarero, 2008). Satisfaction level is a process linked to need, motivations and characteristics of the service offering, we need to study in greater depth the antecedents behind such evaluation and not restrict ourselves simply to its assessment, and otherwise we would be limiting our capacity to understand the clients' emotional experiences during their interactions with the service providers. (Gountas, 2007).

One of the studies found that cruise passengers have a need to obtain social recognition (Hung & Petrick, 2011). Social factors exert a significant influence on cruising intentions (Petrick et al., 2007). Mort & Drennan (2005) consider that social value has importance because these services are often consumed in an environment that implies influence among the members of the social group.

#### **6.3.4 Mediating role of perceived value dimensions (functional value, social value, emotional value)**

Mediating role of functional value, social value and emotional value is tested separately with two independent variables such as service quality, food experience and dependent variable tourists' satisfaction. This study found that relationship between service quality, food experience and tourist

satisfaction is partially mediated by functional value, social value and emotional value. This study result is consistent with the previous studies in the tourism context. According to Prbensen & Jinghua (2017) satisfaction in tourism consumption evolves through tourists' participation in creating value of the experience and this study find that novelty value, emotional value, and social value significantly influence tourists' satisfaction. The success of tourism sector is interpreted as consumers who are highly satisfied with or who give high value to their experiences. Their findings further suggest that consumers' self-perceived mastering and psychological co-creation are highly relevant to their value perceptions and satisfaction evaluation in experiential consumption. In a tourism context, perceived value has a positive impact on satisfaction (Bajs & Pandza, 2015). Williams & Soutar (2009) explained that the sociological and psychological value dimensions are more important than value for money in adventure tourism domain, because hedonism and the pursuit of emotional highs are key motivators of the tourists. Nordbo & Prebenssen (2015) reported that psychological value is found to be more important than physiological value, and the main motivation for tourists to take holidays is to find something emotional and to experience something novel (Bello & Etzel, 1985). An evaluation of the use of experience is based on how valuable the content is perceived (Eid & EI-Gohary, 2015). Lee et al., (2011) highlighted that perceived value based on a multidimensional construct embrace emotional value, social value and hedonic and utilitarian dimensions that critically build up positive emotions and customer satisfaction. Satisfaction is the result of perceived expectations being fulfilled by outcomes of the experience (Hume & Mort, 2010). Perceived value needs to be defined by customers when they are satisfied

with the total experience (Vandermerwe, 2003). Malik (2012) the finding for this research shows that perceived value does act as a partial mediating variable in the overall relationship between perceived service quality and customer satisfaction. The research findings of the study shows that service quality, food experience and tourists' satisfaction are partially mediated by functional, social and emotional value of tourists.

#### **6.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The chapter gives the major findings of this study. A detailed discussion with respect to each finding is made on the basis of the review of previous literature mentioned in the area.



**IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>7.1</b>	Overview of the study
	<b>7.2</b>	Implications of the study
	<b>7.3</b>	The scope for future research
	<b>7.4</b>	Limitations of the study
	<b>7.5</b>	Conclusion

*The main purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of the study, the theoretical and practical implications, and the scope for future research finally limitations of the study and conclusion.*

## **7.1 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

The present research pertains to the attributes that determine tourists' satisfaction with special reference to houseboat tourism in Kerala. The objectives of the research have been derived from the research question that had been developed from the background of the study and statement of the problem. The main objectives that have been developed include factors which explain the satisfaction of houseboat tourist in Kerala. The research seeks to establish the relationship between service quality perceived by the tourist and tourists' satisfaction. It also explores the relationship between food experience perceived by the tourist and tourists' satisfaction. While doing so the mediating role of perceived value such as functional, social and emotional value which influences the relation between service quality, food experience and tourists' satisfaction have also been taken into consideration. The research also aims at testing a model linking the relationship between service quality, food experience, perceived value dimensions and tourists' satisfaction of houseboat in Kerala.

The thesis is organised into seven chapters. The first one, the introduction, deals with the sufficient background information of the study. The second chapter pertains to the review of literature in connection with tourism, tourists' satisfaction, its antecedents and theories dealing with them. This chapter also presented a conceptual model linking the relationship between service quality, food experience, perceived value dimensions (functional, social, and emotional) and tourists' satisfaction has been developed. The third chapter deals with the detailed research methodology adopted for the study. The next chapter deals with the socio- demographic



profile of the sample respondents. The variables taken into consider here include gender, marital status, age, educational qualifications etc of the respondent. The fifth chapter deals with the testing of hypotheses and model analysis. The hypotheses relates to major variables in the conceptual model of the study. These include service quality, food experience, perceived value dimensions and tourists' satisfaction. The last two chapters dwell on the discussions of findings, implications and conclusion. The findings of the present research study has been critically examined and discussed in the light of the research objectives and then presents the implications of the results of the study both for theorising and for practical applications. The scope for future research is also discussed and finally the conclusion of the study is presented.

## **7.2 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study makes significant contribution to the theory and practice in the context of satisfaction of tourists in the houseboat. The study contributes to both theoretical and practical implications which are presented in the section given below.

### **7.2.1 Theoretical implications of the study**

From the theoretical standpoint, this study makes important contributions to the tourists' satisfaction of houseboat in Kerala. The suggested model provides a new knowledge to the houseboat tourism industry in Kerala. The current study examines the importance of quality of services, influence of food experience undergone by the tourists in the houseboat to increase the satisfaction of tourists and also the mediating role

of perceived value dimensions also checked. The identification and analysis of factors influencing tourists' satisfaction provides a better understanding about the theme.

The present research endeavours to theorise and add these theories to the existing theories, thereby enlarging the spectrum of theorising in the realm of the tourists' satisfaction. In spite of large number of tourists' satisfaction models, the theoretical model of tourists' satisfaction in houseboat tourism has not been developed. So tourists' satisfaction for the houseboat tourism in Kerala is valid contribution of the present study.

### **7.2.2 Practical implications of the study**

The theory formulated in the study has great practical implications. The findings of the study will greatly help the stakeholders of the houseboat tourism to understand the relationship among these variables and thereby help improve the overall service provided in Kerala tourism sector. As far as the managerial point of view is concerned, the study focuses on the importance of quality of operational tactics and strategic objectives since service quality is an important decision making criterion for tourists. The research model developed has the potential to assist managers and service providers to understand in a better way how tourists assess the quality of services. The study is highly valuable to the prospective entrepreneurs while providing houseboat service to the tourists.

Kerala Tourism marketers would also benefit from the model developed which would help them develop food and service related tourism packages. From the governmental point of view also, the study is of great

significance. It will help government to formulate and adopt appropriate measures conducive for the growth of tourism in Kerala. This research proves that local food experiences influence the overall satisfaction of tourists and that this information can be used by the authorities to promote Kerala Tourism. From the point of view of managers, the contribution of this research supports and assists hospitality and tourism operators in devising a comprehensive strategic marketing plan that focuses on the tourism market. Furthermore, this study provides helpful information that will enable managers to use tourism resources more efficiently. Utilizing information from this study, tourism marketers, managers and stakeholders would be better able to develop effective food tourism packages to increase the level of tourist satisfaction. According to the international tourists became part of the study they are satisfied and would be more likely to revisit these destinations.

### **7.3 SCOPE OF FUTURE RESEARCH**

- Future research can also focus on hitherto unexplored antecedents which might influence the satisfaction of the tourists travelling in houseboat
- The present research is expected to lead to future studies which survey the cultural background of the tourists. Information regarding divergent cultural background of the tourists is sure to prove a valuable variable in determining the satisfaction of tourists.
- The future research can focus on studying the comparative analysis of the different type of tourists such as foreign and domestic travelling in houseboat of Kerala.

- The potential study may be extended to measure the behavior of the tourists who have travelled in houseboat in Kerala.
- Future studies may use the longitudinal data collection approach, qualitative method or experimental design to explore tourists' satisfaction of houseboat in Kerala.
- The future studies may focus on the socio-economic aspects of houseboat service operators in Kerala.
- There is a scope of further research on the environmental issues related to houseboat tourism.

#### **7.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

In spite of the contributions of the present study, there are some limitations involved in it. They are mentioned in the following section.

- The present study measured the satisfaction of tourists in houseboat only. But it does not consider the satisfaction of other types of boats in the backwater tourism.
- The present study is confined to service quality, food experience perceived, perceived value dimension and tourists' satisfaction in houseboat. Therefore the result of the study is specific and not in general.
- Further the study is restricted to the satisfaction of foreign tourists who have travelled in houseboat in Kerala. In this respect also the result of the study is far from being generalized.

## 7.5 CONCLUSION.

Houseboat tourism in Kerala has been a major source in generating foreign revenue and a significant contributor to the national income of India. Therefore to promote tourists' satisfaction to the utmost level, so that tourists may revisit the destination and recommend the places they have visited to their friends and relatives. With a view to cultivate awareness in policy makers and planners as well as management of tourism authorities it is essential to establish the importance of service quality, food experience perceived and perceived value dimensions of functional, social and emotional value in bringing out tourists' satisfaction. A conceptual model has been formulated and relationship among service quality, food experience perceived, perceived value dimensions of functional, social and emotional value established, so that it will render transparency to the concept formulated. The planners and policy makers as well as tourists' authorities can gain valuable insight into quality attributes and the role of perceived value in determining the satisfaction of foreign as well as domestic tourists. This will enable them to fulfil the needs of each tourist and improve the level of their satisfaction.





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## Appendix

### Questionnaire

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am Shiji Mohan N, Research Scholar, CUSAT, undertaking a research project concerning **Influence of Service Quality and Food Experience on Tourists ' Satisfaction – a Study on Houseboat Tourism in Kerala**, as part of the requirement to complete my PhD thesis work. I seek your assistance in this regard by kindly requesting that you take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire. Please respond to each question based on how it relate to you personally. I assure you that any information provided by you will be kept confidential and will be used for academic purpose only. Thank you very much for being a part of this study.

#### **PART 1: General Information**

(Please mark '✓' your response to the following)

- |                              |                |                          |          |                          |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| 1. Gender                    | Male           | <input type="checkbox"/> | Female   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Marital status            | Single         | <input type="checkbox"/> | Married  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Age group                 | 15-30          | <input type="checkbox"/> | 31-45    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                              | 46-60          | <input type="checkbox"/> | Above 61 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Educational qualification | SSLC           | <input type="checkbox"/> | Plus Two | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                              | Graduate       | <input type="checkbox"/> | PG       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                              | Others         | <input type="checkbox"/> |          |                          |
| 5. Occupation                | Professional   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Business | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                              | Govt. Employee | <input type="checkbox"/> | Retired  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                              | Others         | <input type="checkbox"/> |          |                          |

6. Income Below Rs. 25,000  Rs.25,000-50,000   
Rs. 50,000-75,000  Rs.75,000-1,00,000

**PART-2 (Exploratory Section)**

7. Kindly mark ‘✓’ on the following elements you have experienced as a part of service quality of houseboat tourism product in Kerala.

**Service Quality Scale**

Tan1	The physical appearance of houseboat was inviting.	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
Tan 2	The houseboat arrangements were pleasant and attractive.	strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
Tan 3	The houseboat employees had neat and clean dressed.	strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
Tan 4	Furnishings throughout the houseboat were appealing.	strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
Tan 5	The houseboat’s interior and exterior were well maintained.	strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
Reli 1	The houseboat service provider deliver its services at the times it promises to do so.	strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
Reli 2	When the tourists have a problem, the houseboat employees show a sincere interest in solving it.	strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly Agree
Reli 3	The houseboat service provider deliver its services at the times it promises to do so.	strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly Agree



Res1	Houseboat employees responded promptly to my requests and questions.	strongly disagree	disagree	Some what disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly Agree
Res2	The houseboat employees tell me exactly when services will be performed.	strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly Agree
Res 3	The houseboat employees are always willing to help me.	strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly Agree
Res 4	The houseboat employees are never too busy to respond to my requests.	strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly Agree
Ass1	The houseboat atmosphere provided a safety feeling in my mind.	strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly Agree
Ass 2	The houseboat employees are consistently courteous with tourists.	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly Agree
Ass 3	The houseboat employees have knowledge to answer tourists questions.	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly Agree
Ass 4	Safe storage of my belongings was available.	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
Emp1	The employees give tourists individual attention.	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly Agree
Emp2	The houseboat service provider has tourists best interest at heart.	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly Agree
Emp3	The houseboat employees understand tourists specific needs.	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly Agree

### Food Experience Scale

FE 1	Taste of food in houseboat was good	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly Agree
FE 2	The houseboat offered a variety of menu items	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly Agree
FE 3	The smell of the food was enticing	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
FE 4	The food presentation was visually attractive	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
FE 5	The houseboat offered fresh food	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
FE 6	The houseboat offered healthy food	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree

### Functional Value

Thinking about your experience with houseboat service quality, please rate the value you feel you got for the money you paid. Kindly mark '✓' on the appropriate box.

FV1	Visiting the Houseboat was a good quality tourism product	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
FV2	The houseboat tour package was reasonably priced	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
FV3	Compared to the travel expenses, I got reasonable quality from visiting the Houseboat	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
FV4	Compared to other tourism destinations, the houseboat tourism product is a good value for the money	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
FV5	Visiting the houseboat was economical	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
FV6	The charges pay in houseboat is worth for the service that is provided.	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree

<b>Social Value</b>								
SV1	Houseboat journey would help me to feel acceptable.	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
SV2	Houseboat journey would improve the way I am perceived	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
SV3	Houseboat journey make a good impression on other people.	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
SV4	Houseboat journey gave me social approval	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
<b>Emotional Value</b>								
EV1	I would enjoyed the houseboat visit.	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
EV2	Visiting the Houseboat gave me pleasure.	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
EV3	Visiting the Houseboat made me feel good.	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
EV4	Is one that I would feel relaxed about using houseboat journey	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
EV5	Would make me want to use it.	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree

### **Tourists' Satisfaction**

(Please indicate for each row which word best describes how you feel about your visit in houseboat on a 7 point scale. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements. Kindly marks '✓' on the appropriate box).

SAT1	I really enjoyed my Houseboat experience	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
SAT2	I am satisfied with my decision to visit houseboat	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
SAT3	I have positive feelings regarding houseboat	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree
SAT4	This experience is exactly what I needed	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	neutral	Somewhat agree	agree	Strongly agree

**Thank you for your help**



## **List of Publications and Presentations**

### **Publications**

- 1) **A Study of Growth of Performance of Tourism With Respect To Kerala (2014)**, Conference Proceedings on Sustainable solutions for e-waste management, ISBN-978-81-923985-6-3.
- 2) **The Role of Food Experiences and Perceived Value on Tourist Satisfaction (2019)**, International Journal of Commerce and Management Research, 9(5), pp 182-187, ISSN: 2250-1627.
- 3) **Impact of Quality Factors On Tourist Satisfaction- A Study Of Houseboat in Kerala (2019)**, International Journal of Management, IT & Engineering, 9, 1(1), pp 400-406, ISSN:2249-0558.

### **Presentations**

- 1) **A Study of Problems of Houseboat Tourism Industry: An empirical study with Reference to Alappuzha District, Kerala** at UGC Sponsored National Workshop on Research Methodology at ST.XAVIER'S College, Aluva on August 3 to 7,2015.
- 2) **The influence of Quality of food on Houseboat Tourist Satisfaction** at International Seminar Traditional Medicine and Wellness Tourism at Pazhassiraja College, Pulpally on 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017.

