

Exploring Factors Influencing Glamping Intentions in Malaysia

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Abstract

Glamping is an innovation of camping tourism that promotes recreational activities and comfortable accommodations. The rise of glamping destination in Malaysia can be seen during the post pandemic. However, there exists a regional gap in understanding the relationship between glamping attributes and the intention of potential glampers to go glamping within the Malaysian context. This study investigates the factors influencing individuals' intentions to engage in glamping activities in Malaysia, utilizing the 6As Destination Attributes Model to analyze key attributes shaping tourists' preferences. Through a survey questionnaire targeting potential glampers, data will be collected to uncover the tourist preferences and the influential attributes of glamping in Malaysia. The study aims to contribute to academic literature by addressing this research gap and enhancing our understanding of glamping tourism in Malaysia. Additionally, practical implications for stakeholders in the tourism industry will be discussed, including recommendations for enhancing glamping offerings and promoting sustainable tourism practices. Ultimately, this study seeks to inform strategic decision-making processes aimed at advancing the development of glamping tourism in Malaysia.

Keywords:

Glamping, Intention, Destination Attributes, Malaysia, Camping

1 Introduction

As a unique and growing trend in the travel industry, glamping has drawn attention from tourists all around the world as a niche type of vacation (Gross et al., 2023). Globally speaking, careful analysis of glamping data in the US identifies several interesting trends. The size of the global glamping market was estimated by Grand View Research (2023) to be 2.73 billion as of 2022, with a projected compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.2% from 2023 to 2030. This kind of travel has attracted a lot of interest, especially from Western nations. Despite the growing trend in Western countries, a remarkable increase has been observed in the scholarly research on glamping in Southeast Asia, especially in Vietnam (Aeberhard et al., 2020; Vy, 2023) and Indonesia (Budiasa et al., 2019; Diwyarthi et al., 2023).

Within the context of Malaysia, a compelling opportunity presents itself amidst the global upswing in glamping's appeal. The enthusiasm for glamping is evident in the broader interest in camping tourism. According to Statista (2022), 56.27 thousand domestic travelers in Malaysia exhibit a substantial interest in the camping industry, and this figure is projected to grow to approximately 64.22 thousand by 2027. Familiarity with camping tourism can spark curiosity about glamping as an innovative form of camping, essentially an outdoor-based hotel experience (Lee et al., 2019). Additionally, the burgeoning demand for glamping in Malaysia is driven by the establishment of glamping sites across the country. Eminent travel websites, such as Booking.com, Traveloka, and Klook.com, have featured more than ten glamping destinations in Malaysia, as per the researcher's observations.

In light of these observations, the potential for burgeoning glamping tourism in Malaysia is evident. The potential aligns seamlessly with the objectives of the Tourism Malaysia Strategic Plan 2022-2026, promoting destinations that emphasize personalized eco-packages and the provision of nature-oriented activities (Tourism Malaysia, 2022). The accommodations and services offered in glamping sites align with the high standards set by traditional hotels, alleviating concerns about inconveniences frequently associated with camping (Lyu et al., 2020). However, as this nascent sector gains momentum, a comprehensive understanding of the factors driving the popularity of glamping in Malaysia is pivotal.

To address this, the study has adopted the 6As Destination Attributes Framework devised by Buhalis (2000), comprising six attributes: attractions, accessibility, amenities, available packages, activities, and ancillary services, as the factors influencing the intention to engage in glamping. This model will be employed to evaluate the factors shaping tourists' interest in glamping in Malaysia. Furthermore, this framework holds the potential to influence the formation of the destination image (Mahdzar et al., 2015). The image of a destination can be more effectively marketed when it is empirically substantiated. Consequently, there is a compelling rationale for conducting research to consider potential visitors' perceptions within a marketing catchment area (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991).

Hence, this study seeks to examine the factors influencing the intention to go glamping, particularly given the relatively limited body of research on the subject in Malaysia. The study also holds the potential to provide actionable insights to Malaysia's tourism industry, aligning with the objectives outlined in the Tourism Malaysia Strategic Plan 2022-2026 (Tourism Malaysia, 2022).

2 Literature Review

2.1 Glamping Tourism

Glamping represents a form of lodging that seamlessly integrates the rustic ambience of nature with opulent and comfortable amenities. The term “glamping”, derived from “glamorous camping”, was coined to describe a distinctive accommodation style, targeting travelers in search of an exceptional and luxurious lodging experiences (Brochado & Pereira, 2017). This burgeoning trend caters to the contemporary traveler’s desire for a harmonious union of immersion in the natural environment and the opulence associated with upscale accommodations. Glamping establishments offer an array of lodging options that transcend conventional tents, encompassing safari tents, yurts, treehouses, and even lavish canvas lodges. These lodging alternatives are meticulously designed to provide a level of comfort and convenience that surpasses that of traditional camping (Cvelić et al., 2017). To illustrate, one can envision the serene ambience of a secluded forest cabin replete with plush bedding, private lavatories, air conditioning, and delectable gourmet meals (Lu et al., 2022).

Within the realm of glamping, accommodations transcend their role as mere resting places to become meticulously curated havens that enhance the guest's overall experience. As an example, picture an intimate treehouse nestled high amid the branches, offering sweeping panoramic vistas and adorned with tasteful decor. This meticulous attention to detail distinguishes glamping from the conventional camping experience, where comfort may often be compromised in the pursuit of a deeper connection with nature (Lu et al., 2021). Typically overseen by resorts and hotels, these accommodations benefit from efficient management systems, attentive service protocols, and knowledgeable front desk personnel (Lyu et al., 2020).

The swift expansion of the glamping market can be attributed to its alignment with the escalating popularity of ecotourism and adventure travel (Grand View Research, 2023). For instance, glamping sites that adhere to sustainable practices, such as the use of eco-friendly materials and a commitment to minimizing ecological impact, resonate strongly with environmentally-conscious travelers (Fernandes et al., 2021). Imagine the allure of a glamping experience situated within a pristine natural reserve, where the emphasis lies on ecosystem preservation while delivering a memorable sojourn. The market's growth is also driven by travelers seeking transformative experiences, drawn to the unique combination of luxury, nature, and personal growth that glamping affords.

2.2 Destination Attributes Model

Destination attributes play a crucial role in shaping tourists' satisfaction (Gaffar et al., 2011). By considering both the perspectives of tourists and the characteristics of destinations, we can explore how these factors are interconnected. This approach helps us gain deeper insights into why tourists choose or reject particular destinations during their decision-making process (Karl, 2018). Bratić et al. (2021) support this by showing that destination attributes like natural and cultural attractions, safety, and cost significantly influence tourists' decision-making. Various studies have looked at how the evaluation of destination attributes impacts tourist behavior in different contexts (Schlesinger et al., 2020; Eid et al., 2019), and some have investigated how tourists are drawn to unique features within a destination (Raazim et al., 2021). Understanding how tourists perceive the essential attractions a destination offers is key because it can predict tourist behaviour (Gaffar et al., 2011). Below are the attributes introduced by Buhalis (2000) on Destination Attributes Framework.

Attractions	<i>Lake, beaches, mountains, caves, forests</i>
Accessibility	<i>Transportation system comprising routes, vehicles</i>
Amenities	<i>Accommodation and facilities, other tourist services</i>
Available packages	<i>Pre-arranged packages</i>
Activities	<i>All activities available in the destination</i>
Ancillary services	<i>Public services used by tourists (telecommunications, banks, hospitals)</i>

Adapted from Gaffar et al (2011)

2.3 Intention to Glamping in Malaysia

Understanding what influences tourists when they choose a travel destination is valuable for tourism planning and marketing strategies (Lam & Hsu, 2006). This understanding is especially significant in the context of glamping, which has garnered considerable attention and popularity. Traditionally, tourists' motivations for selecting a destination can be categorized using the widely recognized push and pull model (Crompton, 1979). In the realm of glamping, push factors encompass the internal motivations that drive individuals to seek out a vacation or travel experience. In contrast, pull factors consist of the destination's attributes that entice individuals to visit and engage in tourism activities (Uysal & Hagan, 1993).

Regarding push factors, Salmela et al. (2017) highlight reasons such as the quest for relaxation, stress reduction, and the desire for a sense of freedom. Additionally, studies suggest that glampers often seek an escape from their daily routines and a break from urban life (Brooker & Joppe, 2013). Other researchers underscore the importance of a pleasant atmosphere, psychological comfort, and the convenience of the destination as motivators for considering glamping (Sommer, 2020).

As for the pull factors, glampers are enticed by the expanding array of distinctive accommodation options and the overall quality of facilities in glamping sites (Brooker & Joppe, 2013). Furthermore, glampers are attracted to the prospect of direct engagement with nature, the need for seclusion and spacious accommodations, enjoyable outdoor activities, and a yearning for luxurious and high-quality services (Gross et al., 2023). Studies also indicate that those in pursuit of genuine authenticity are willing to pay a premium for top-tier services at glamping sites (Petruša & Vlahov, 2019). Sommer (2020) aligns with this viewpoint, suggesting that glampers are driven by the unique setting, top-notch services, and immersive interaction with the natural environment that glamping offers.

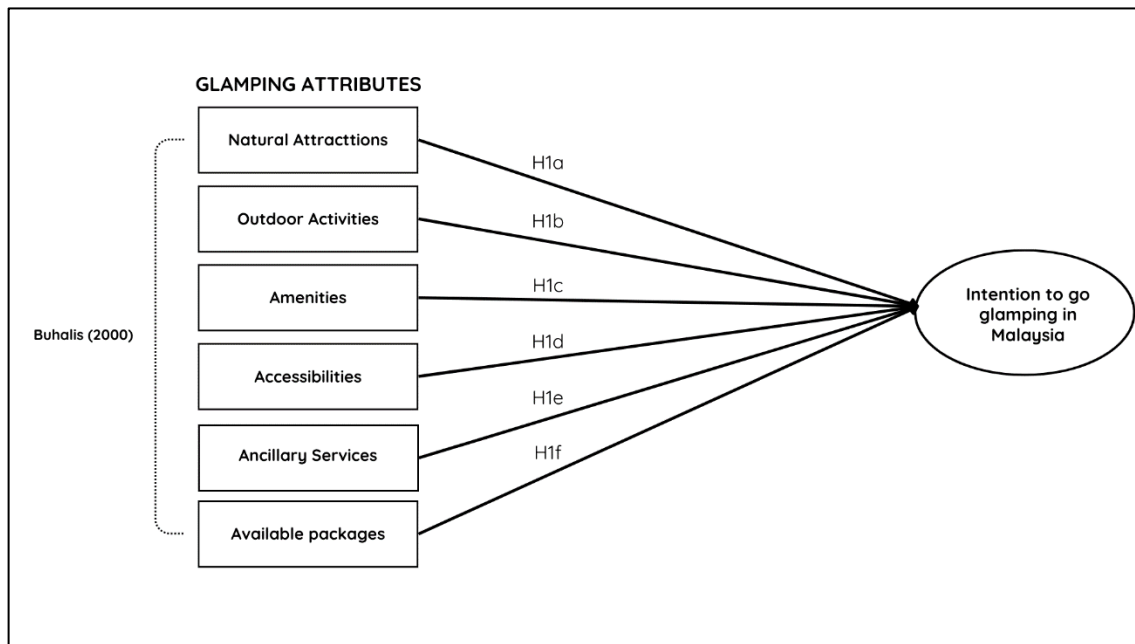


Figure 1: A proposed conceptual framework

3 Methodology

This study employs a survey research strategy in a non-contrived study setting. The unit of analysis focuses on potential glampers who have expressed an interest in engaging in glamping activities. Additionally, this study employs a one-shot or cross-sectional approach with a quantitative research method. A survey questionnaire, employing a 5-Likert scale, will be administered after the pilot study. Given the substantial size of the population and the absence of a sampling frame, this study utilized G*Power Analysis to determine the sample size. The analysis suggested a need for 153 respondents for this study. Given the median response rate of 58% in social science research, the targeted number of distributed surveys should aim to reach 230 respondents. As this study lacks a sampling frame, since it targets domestic travelers in 2023, non-probability sampling is employed. This study utilizes a convenience sampling

method, which is less expensive, easily accessible to the audience, and useful for obtaining a broad overview of the study. For data analysis, the study will use SPSS to analyze demographic information for the respondents and examine the relationships between the variables.

4 Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This research study makes a valuable addition to the existing body of knowledge in the field of glamping research. Despite the growing popularity of glamping as an emerging form of tourism, there is a noticeable scarcity of academic studies on this subject, particularly in Southeast Asia and Malaysia. The primary objective of this study, which is to evaluate the preferred attributes of glamping and their influence on future visit intentions, addresses this research gap and enhances our comprehension of the factors motivating individuals to participate in glamping activities. This initiative aligns with the recommendations of previous studies, which have stressed the importance of identifying consumer preferences in glamping choices and employing diverse research methods to expand the scope of leisure research (Lee et al., 2019).

Moreover, the adoption of the 6As Destination Attributes Model holds theoretical significance. This framework, designed to assess attributes related to attractions, ancillary services, accessibility, activities, amenities, and available packages, is a widely used tool in tourism research. By applying this framework to the context of glamping, this study may extend its applicability and demonstrate its adaptability to various segments of the tourism industry, thus contributing to the broader utility of this theoretical framework.

Furthermore, this study has practical implications in enhancing the overall glamping experience. Through its findings, it may illuminate ways to enhance glamping offerings to better align with the preferences of potential glampers. This has the potential to create a more authentic and unique glamping experience, possibly leading to positive word-of-mouth promotion and repeat visitation. Additionally, this study may offer insights that can assist the tourism industry in Malaysia in understanding the preferences of specific market segments with regard to the tourism destinations they intend to visit.

5 Conclusion

The concept of glamping, blending the allure of nature with the comforts of luxury, has emerged as a remarkable trend in the global tourism landscape. As glamping tourism brings more benefits to industry and environment, the strategies to sustain this tourism trends should be plan and improve. This ongoing study will only serve as a study for further research which later, may help the country to promote a better tourism product with quality and satisfactions.

6 About the author

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