



GLAMPING – CREATIVE ACCOMMODATION TREND AS A FACTOR OF RURAL DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:

The initial hypothesis of this work was that glamping as a creative form of accommodation could be a factor in the rural development of a destination. Glamorous camping offers guests unique experience, through respect for sustainable tourism development. The research presented two glamping destinations in Serbia, Lala Vineyard in Sremska Mitrovica and Buzzoffski Cabins in Sremski Karlovci, their authentic offer being in untouched natural landscapes. Also, for the purpose of the paper, a survey was conducted in Sremska Mitrovica and Sremski Karlovci, to which 228 respondents responded. The responses of the research participants confirmed the importance of glamping for the rural development of the destination, meaning that this type of accommodation fully meets the requirements of tourists.

Keywords:

glamping, rural tourism, Lala Vineyard, Buzzoffski Cabins.

INTRODUCTION

Camping in the 21st century is marked by new trends in the development of accommodation, primarily a new demand that combines the desire to stay in nature, but in the comfort and luxury of accommodation. The popularity of glamping, especially among younger generations, is driving the transformation of classic camping into glamping. In recent years, glamping encourages investors and hoteliers to look for new ways to transform campsites into a luxury type of accommodation capacity and to choose glamping as a competitive strategy for further development on the market with its differentiated product. Often referred to as “nature on a silver plate” or “a place where nature and luxury intertwine”, glamping marks a new chapter in tourism sector, offering an opportunity to form the best achievements of hotel industry and camping and combining outdoor living with authentic additional content (Milohnić *et al.*, 2019).

In Europe, this type of tourist trip counted 373 million overnight stays, according to Eurostat data from 2017. For some countries, such as Slovenia and Croatia, it is an important tourism product. It is important to emphasize that it is necessary to implement applications in the glamping industry, as well as introduce numerous activities, which will improve this form of selective tourism, because it has great potential to make the destination competitive through innovation and

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sustainable development of the destination. Changes in the European camping market are reflected in the changing camping styles and the implementation of new business models. Seasonality and innovation are becoming key challenges in the tourism sector. Hoteliers and other participants in the provision of tourist services are constantly making efforts to overcome the problem of seasonality with various methods and additional contents, and glamping is becoming an increasingly better solution to this problem with its creative offer (Cvelić-Bonifačić *et al.*, 2017).

Glamping is a combination of the words “glamorous” and “camping”, which means that glamping is actually luxury camping or 5-star camping. This type of tourist travel implies the introduction of modern and innovative forms of accommodation facilities, which will provide comfort and rest in the natural environment for its visitors. Also, glamping can be defined as a type of camping, which is more comfortable and luxurious than traditional camping, combining luxury and nature, comfort and responsible behavior towards natural landscapes (Vrtodušić Hrgović *et al.*, 2018). The feature of these accommodation facilities is uniqueness, exclusivity and high-quality service. Glamping provides an “escape from the city”, the modern fast pace of life, offering a vacation in nature, a stay filled with various activities, tasting local products and numerous other opportunities.

Compared to other forms of accommodation, glamping contributes to the competitiveness of camping destinations. In a competitive tourism environment, staying in nature is a necessary trip that is chosen by tourists from urban areas, who have desire and need to spend more time in nature, because of the urban lifestyle (Cvelić-Bonifačić *et al.*, 2017). For such visitors, the money allocated for the trip is not an obstacle, but free time, which they can use for vacation. Bearing in mind that after the corona pandemic, “working from home” became more and more common and such a trend persists, modern glam accommodation offers such an opportunity for business tourists with its modernly equipped accommodation units.

In accordance with the current trends in tourism demand, modern camping is becoming the lifestyle of the modern camping guest. According to Vrtodušić Hrgović and colleagues, the trend of adapting this form of selective tourism, known as glamping, is directly related to innovative and new accommodation facilities in camping, which brings together hotel industry and camping. This form of accommodation raises the quality of hotel service to a higher level, providing creative service to useful offers (Vrtodušić Hrgović *et al.*, 2018).

According to Sakáčová, the characteristics of glamping are: (Sakáčová, 2013)

- 1) Untouched natural areas
- 2) Luxury
- 3) High quality service
- 4) Active vacation
- 5) Wellness
- 6) The need for an innovative product
- 7) Rural tourism
- 8) Ecologically sustainable business
- 9) Lower price of accommodation compared to hotels
- 10) Local gastronomy

Modern times, with a changed perception of the environment and a developed awareness about the importance of ecologically sustainable business practices, herald a great comeback of camping, but in a glamorous way. Glamping offers its guests the opportunity to live in nature, but in a modern, comfortable way. Fans of green vacations, of which there are more and more, are happy to choose this form of tourism, expecting an authentic offer and a vacation in nature (Milohnić *et al.*, 2019).



METHODOLOGY

Considering that this concept of accommodation capacity has not yet been developed in Serbia, it is important to emphasize that there are two destinations in Serbia where this model of accommodation exists - Lala Vineyard in Sremski Karlovci and Buzzoffski in Zasavica.

Features of Lala Vineyard glamping resort in Sremski Karlovci

Fruška gora is the most dominant orographic unit in Vojvodina. It is located in the northern part of Srem, between two rivers, the Sava and the Danube. This mountain range is 80 km long and mostly stretches in the west-east direction. Its highest peak is Crveni Čot (539 m). This mountainous area covers 500 square kilometers. Because of its exceptional natural beauty, historical monuments, many monasteries, which is why it is also known as the Serbian Holy Mountain, and because of a great number of wild animals and plant species, it was declared a national park in December 1960. The area of the national park covers 25,520 ha in the central part of Fruška Gora. In addition to the national park, there are other protected areas such as the Special Nature Reserve Koviljsko-Petrovaradinski rit, the Begečka Jama Nature Park, the Nature Monument - Beočinska Beach, the Island of Love and the Dunavac Natural and Geomorphological Monument and many other contents (Medić *et al.*, 2012).

Lala Vineyard represents the first luxury glamping destination, located near Sremski Karlovci, not far from the Danube River, surrounded by forest areas of Fruška Gora and vineyards, where tourists have the opportunity to take a break from the urban lifestyle.

This glamping accommodation offers guests unique experience, which combines comfort and natural surroundings, with modernly equipped tents, rustically designed interior, adapted to different preferences and needs of tourists. The tents are elegantly furnished with private terraces and modern bathrooms with views of the vineyards and surrounding landscape.

Tourists also have the opportunity to complete their stay by visiting the Fruškogorski monasteries, riding a bicycle, canoeing or kayaking on the Danube River, picnicking in nature, visiting Sremski Karlovci or the Petrovaradin Fortress and Novi Sad. Lala Winery stands out as a desirable destination due to its ability to provide tourists with an enriched and dynamic stay, providing a variety of activities such as wine tastings, vineyard tours and cultural tours. This integrative approach not only complements the visitors' experience but also ensures that they will not lack content during their stay.

Figure 1. Lala Vineyard



Source: <https://selo.rs/o/lala-vineyard-glamping-resort>

Buzzoffski Cabins - glamping destination in the Special Nature Reserve in Zasavica

The special nature reserve Zasavica is located in the southern part of the province of Vojvodina. It covers an area of 671 ha, and the protected zone on an area of 1150 ha in the territory of the municipalities of Sremska Mitrovica and Bogatić. The area of Zasavica is the remnant of a once large marshy area in the Sava and Danube basin. In 2012, it was proposed to expand the boundaries of the protected area, on a total area of 1128 ha, with a protected zone of 3462 ha (Stojanović *et al.*, 2021).



SRP Zasavica is an area of international importance, considering that it is included in the following lists: Ramsar area, IBA (important area for birds), IPA (important plant area), PBA (Prime Butterfly Area), as one of 4 such in Vojvodina, an area of the Emerald Network of Special Importance for Conservation (ASCI), due to the presence of wetland, forest and meadow habitats of the Pannonian landscape, which are a priority for conservation and a proposed Natura 2000 conservation with 23 types of recorded flora of the conservation area. Due to its preservation and accessibility, it is extremely suitable for the development of ecotourism (Stojanović *et al.*, 2021).

The glamping destination Buzzoffski is located in the Zasavica Special Nature Reserve, offering a respite from the noise of the fast-paced life in the former swamp area, now a meadow expanse, filled with friendly animals, such as horses, donkeys, cattle and many other species. This glamping experience is situated in the very center of the reserve, where the cabins are placed, with respect to all the standards of the concept of sustainable tourism development. Their policy is designed to spread awareness among their guests about the importance of preserving the natural environment, which is very important for achieving the goal of protecting the natural environment.

Buzzoffski contains 4 booths, named “Mirka”, “Mozak na pašu”, “Mikrokosmos” and “Moram da ne moram”. The cabins are suitable for solo travelers, families or groups of friends. The cottages are comfortably and glamorously equipped for a longer stay at the destination, created for hedonists and guests who need a digital detox and a break from everyday duties. This accommodation does not disturb the natural environment, but blends into it, which means that nature and the cabins are one.

The philosophy of the Buzzoffski accommodation concept is that tourists pack only the necessary things and indulge in the enjoyment of nature, which is key to a psycho-physical vacation. The business policy of this glamping destination is to provide its visitors with a stress-free vacation, staying in nature, exploring the reserve, but also creative and productive activities. “The time has come to slow down and switch off in order to preserve ourselves and return to the true values of life.” It’s time for a change, and there is salvation in nature,” is the motto of Buzzoffski accommodation.

Figure 2. Buzzoffski Cabins



Source: <https://www.buzzoffski.com/>

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The survey results include a total of 228 responses from respondents from Sremski Karlovci and Sremska Mitrovica.

The respondents’ answers shown in Table 1 refer to their familiarity with the glamping accommodation concept. According to the survey, the respondents from Sremski Karlovci and Sremska Mitrovica had the opportunity to hear about this form of accommodation, given that 139 answers, i.e., 61% answered affirmatively. On the other hand, 48 respondents (21.1%) were not familiar with this concept, whereas 41 answers (18.0%) expressed uncertainty or lack of information. Based on the answers of the respondents who stated that they were familiar with the concept of glamping accommodation, we can conclude that the majority are informed about the new form of accommodation.



Table 1. Familiarity of respondents with the glamping accommodation concept

Do you know what the glamping concept of accom-modation means?		
Valid	Frequency	Percent
Yes	139	61,0
No	48	21,1
Not certain	41	18,0
Total	228	100,0

Source: Author’s

Table 2 shows the answers of the respondents on whether they had the opportunity to stay in glamping accommodation facilities. The answers of respondents who stayed in this accommodation dominate, i.e., 132 answers (57.9%), whereas 55 respondents (24.1%) answered negatively. The option “not sure” was chosen by 41 respondents (18%). Judging by the answers in Table 2, a significant number of the respondents had the opportunity to stay in glamping accommodation, which is very important for further analysis of the survey.

Table 2. Respondents’ participation in glamping accommodation

Have you ever stayed in glamping accommodation?		
Valid	Frequency	Percent
Yes	132	57,9
No	55	24,1
Not certain	41	18,0
Total	228	100,0

Source: Author’s

The respondents had the opportunity to share their opinion on the most important factors that influence the choice of vacation accommodation. The most important factor in the respondents’ decision was the natural environment, which was chosen by 125 respondents (54.8%), followed by comfort and luxury 51 answers (22.4%). A factor that also affected the choice of accommodation was the affordable price for 28 respondents (12.3%), while 24 residents of Sremska Mitrovica and Sremski Karlovci (10.5%) had other reasons when choosing accommodation. The responses from Table 2 confirm the importance of the natural environment when choosing accommodation, which means that such destinations have great potential in fulfilling the preferences of tourists.

Table 3. Main factor when choosing accommodation

What factors would you cite as the most important when choosing a vacation rental?		
Valid	Frequency	Percent
Nature	125	54,8
Comfort and luxury	51	22,4
Affordable price	28	12,3
Other	24	10,5
Total	228	100,0

Source: Author’s.



Table 4 provides an insight into the respondents' answers as to how often they choose rural holiday destinations. The participants in the research stated that they occasionally decided to spend their holidays in rural areas (99 responses, 43.4%), but the responses of respondents who often chose such destinations also dominated (97 responses, 42.5%). On the other hand, 32 respondents (14.0%) did not prefer to stay in rural destinations. The results from Table 4 claim that tourists want to stay in a natural environment, in rural destinations, in order to take a break from the urban lifestyle.

Table 4. Frequency of choosing rural vacation destinations

How often do you choose rural holiday destinations		
Valid	Frequency	Percent
Often	97	42,5
Occasionally	99	43,4
Never	32	14,0
Total	228	100,0

Source: Author's

With their answers, respondents shared their opinion about the impact of glamping on attracting tourists to rural destinations in table 5. Out of a total of 228 responses, 120 respondents (52.6%) were of the opinion that glamping was an authentic form of accommodation, which can have a favorable effect on attracting tourists, while 48 respondents (21.1%) claimed that it could not have a significant influence on the promotion of the destination. 26.3%, i.e., 60 respondents were not sure or were not informed if glamping could attract visitors to rural destinations. These results indicate that the majority share the opinion that glamorous camping can have a positive effect on promoting the destination in the form of attracting tourists.

Table 5. Respondents' opinion on the impact of glamping on attracting tourists to rural destinations

Do you think glamping can attract more tourists to rural destinations?		
Valid	Frequency	Percent
Yes	120	52,6
No	48	21,1
I don't know	60	26,3
Total	228	100,0

Source: Author's.

Table 6 provides insight into respondents' preferences when choosing traditional or glamping accommodation when staying in a rural destination. Respondents' responses show that the majority chose glamping facilities (136 responses, 59.6%), which means that a great number of respondents are environmentally conscious, while 52 respondents (22.8%) chose the traditional type of accommodation. When answering, respondents chose the option "I have no opinion" (40 answers, 17.5%) indicating that they have other preferences when choosing vacation accommodation.



Table 6. Responses of respondents who prefer traditional or glamping accommodation

Would you rather stay in traditional or glamping accommodation when staying in rural destinations?		
Valid	Frequency	Percent
Glamping	136	59,6
Traditional accomodation	52	22,8
No opinionion	40	17,5
Total	228	100,0

Source: Author's

The data from Table 7 provide an insight into how much money the respondents were willing to spend for a night in glamping accommodation. The option of less than 50 euros per night was chosen by 217 respondents (95.2%), 50-100 euros per night by 9 respondents (3.9%), whereas only 2 respondents (0.9%) were ready to set aside more than 100 euros per night. Such results may indicate a lack of information among respondents, because glamping offers luxury accommodation with many accompanying facilities, which justifies the higher prices of this type of accommodation. A small number of respondents are ready to spend more money, which indicates that they are better informed about the features of glamping.

Table 7. Responses of respondents on what they prefer: traditional or glamping accommodation

How much would you be willing to pay for a night in glamping accommodation?		
Valid	Frequency	Percent
less than 50 euros per night	217	95,2
50-100 euros per night	9	3,9
more than 100 euros per night	2	0,9
Total	228	100,0

Source: Author's.

Table 8 shows the results of respondents' answers when selecting the most significant factors that influence their final decision to stay in rural destinations. The location was the most important factor in the decision to stay at the destination, as claimed by 116 respondents (50.9%). The original and authentic design of accommodation was also a significant factor for 35 respondents (15.4%), accompanying activities and nature were chosen by 35 respondents (15.4%), while the comfort of accommodation influenced the decision of 21 respondents (9.2%).

Table 8. Responses of respondents on what they prefer: traditional or glamping accommodation

What aspects of glamping accommodation are most important to you?		
Valid	Frequency	Percent
Location	116	50,9
Original accommodation design	35	15,4
Diverse offer of activities in nature	35	15,4
Comfort of accommodation	21	9,2
Other	21	9,2
Total	228	100,0

Source: Author's.



The results from Table 9 represent the decisive factors for the respondents' decision to stay in glamping accommodation. Judging by 123 respondents' answers (53.9%), ecological principles and sustainability had a great influence on the decision to stay in glamping accommodation, meaning that a great number of respondents have developed awareness of the importance of preserving the natural environment. Also, this data confirms the fact that tourism can influence the spread of awareness about the importance of business sustainability, both on tourism industry stakeholders, as well as on tourists and other users of services. Authentic experience was also an important factor in the respondent's decision, as claimed by 42 respondents (18.4%), a diverse offer of accompanying content and activities was chosen by 36 respondents (15.8%) and a location in nature by 13 respondents (5.7%). Also, 13 respondents (5.7%) had other reasons that influenced the decision to stay in glamping accommodation.

Table 9. Factors influencing respondents' decision to stay in glamping accommodation

What factors would be decisive for you to decide to stay in glamping accommodation?		
Valid	Frequency	Percent
Ecological standards and sustainability	123	53,9
Autentic experience	42	18,4
Offer of activities and content	36	15,8
Location in nature	14	6,1
Other	13	5,7
Total	228	100,0

Source: Author's

Table 10 provides an insight into respondents' views on the sustainability of glamping accommodation compared to traditional hotel accommodation. Out of a total of 228 responses, 137 (60.1%) believed that glamping accommodation respected the concept of sustainable development of tourism, which also emphasized the respondents' developed awareness of the importance of preserving the natural environment, as well as good information about the characteristics of this form of accommodation. On the other hand, 54 respondents (23.7%) believed that glamping did not respect sustainability standards. 37 respondents, i.e.16.2%, chose the option "I'm not sure" which indicated their lack of information.

Table 10. Respondents' views on the sustainability of glamping accommodation compared to traditional hotel accommodation

Do you think glamping is a more sustainable form of accommodation than traditional hotel accommodation?		
Valid	Frequency	Percent
Yes	137	60,1
No	54	23,7
I don't know	37	16,2
Total	228	100,0

Source: Author's



CONCLUSION

The research presents the concept of glamping, a modern form of accommodation, which respects the standards of sustainable tourism development, spreading awareness of the importance of preserving the natural environment among service users. Also presented are the characteristics of two glamping destinations in Serbia, Lala Vineyard in Sremski Karlovci and Buzzoffski Cabin in Sremska Mitrovica, which attract many tourists with their authentic offer.

Lala Vineyard and Buzzoffski Cabin represent a form of accommodation that combines the comfort of traditional accommodation with nature. Luxury tents and modernly equipped cabins offer a unique and authentic experience to its visitors far from the urban lifestyle, which is one of the factors that influence the decision of tourists to stay in this type of accommodation. With its innovative interior design, which fits into the natural environment, in private and isolated parts of the destination, it allows guests to fully experience nature. Applying environmentally friendly practices, they do not have a negative impact on the natural environment, which is of great importance. Glamping is a popular type of accommodation, which is chosen by an increasing number of tourists with the desire to stay in an untouched natural environment, but also to explore the destination on a deeper level.

A survey involving 228 respondents showed that many were familiar with the concept of glamping. Respondents wanted a unique stay in a preserved natural environment in rural destinations. The fast lifestyle in urban areas brought about a desire among tourists for rest and peace in the countryside, where nature and luxury are intertwined. Respondents expressed their desire for an active stay in nature, with a lot of accompanying content in accommodation that respected the concept of sustainable development. Glamping fully meets the preferences of tourists as a relatively new form of accommodation.

Glamping is becoming an increasingly popular option among travellers, challenging traditional hotel accommodations. This type of accommodation offers an authentic and specific experience to its users and attracts many tourists who choose environmentally friendly forms of accommodation. Glamping can serve as a good example of business practices for all other accommodation providers, especially when it comes to renewable energy use, recycling, use of local resources. Through the introduction of such standards, accommodation facilities can work together and contribute to preservation of the environment, while providing quality service to their guests.

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