

Glamping in Romania, a new perspective in camping tourism

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Abstract: Glamping accommodation exploded on the tourism market as a response and resilience of COVID 19 Pandemic. Romania is one of the European countries where this niche tourism has registered an unprecedented development. In this background, the current research analyzes the dimensions of consumers' perceptions via google reviews regarding the quality of glamping in Romania. In order to fulfill this aim, a qualitative-quantitative research known as a mixed method was applied. The results showed that statistics about glamping registered some inconsistencies between the official data and those from the field, and not all sites had a certification by stars. The rating given by tourists was extremely high compared to other tourist structures. Consumers were satisfied to the greatest extent with the views where glamping are framed and the quiet of nature. For the services, tourists appreciated the glamping at whole, as memorable experiences, with exceptional equipment, but also the friendly atmosphere of the hosts. Even if some negative aspects were reported, the study showed that the mountainous and hilly areas remained more suitable for the development of such accommodation units.

Key words: *glamping, Romania, rating, tourist's perceptions, reviews, quality*

1.Introduction

Glamping tourism flourished during the COVID 19 pandemic as a result of social distancing rules, so the specialized literature is relatively limited, including in Romania. Glamping tourism is included in camping tourism, and the latter emerged as an organized activity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with the growing interest in nature and leisure among Europe's middle classes and North America. The father of modern organized camping is attributed to Thomas Hiram Holding (1908), who organized tent expeditions and founded the Association of Cycle Campers in 1901. But the origins of camping can be considered to be the mobile dwellings of mobile peoples (Collins et al., 2020) or those from the Romanian and Ottoman military campaigns, the latter being characterized by luxury, somehow precursors of today's glamping (Vrtodušić-Hrgović et al., 2018). Tourist camping has become popular in national parks in the US due to the development of infrastructure and interest in nature conservation (Stephens, Leonard & Smolders, 1989). Increased access to automobiles facilitated transportation to camping sites, leading to the development of RV camping. After World War II, camping tourism expanded rapidly due to economic growth, the development of mass tourism, and the advent of more affordable camping equipment. Gradually, a variety of structures grouped in the traditional model appeared within tourist camping, namely tents located in special locations, caravan camping that offers more comfort, glamping, a form of luxury camping, with more sophisticated facilities (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020) and backcountry located in isolated areas without facilities for experienced outdoor activities (Leung & Marion, 1999). In Romania, this type of tourism gained momentum especially during the Covid-19 pandemic period, allowing tourists to enjoy nature without violating the restrictions put in place (Craig & Karabas, 2021). it can be considered that this

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