

CAMPING TOURISM RESEARCH: A SYNTHESIS OF GLOBAL TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE VIETNAMESE CONTEXT

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Abstract: *Camping tourism has emerged as a rapidly growing trend in the global tourism market, particularly in the post-pandemic landscape, with the global camping and glamping market estimated at USD 15.2 billion in 2023 (Grand View Research, 2024). While this segment has gained traction, academic research-especially in Vietnam-remains fragmented. This paper synthesizes existing literature on camping tourism, explicitly distinguishing traditional camping from glamping, and shifts from a descriptive overview to a critical evaluation of global findings and their applicability to the domestic context. By addressing conceptual ambiguities and identifying specific research gaps such as carrying capacity, psychological restoration, and technology integration, this study outlines a structured research agenda. It provides strategic insights for destination management in Vietnam and offers a solid theoretical foundation for future empirical investigation.*

Keywords: *camping, camping tourism, literature review, tourism*

I. Introduction

Camping tourism has long been recognized as an outdoor leisure activity and has, over time, evolved into a distinct segment of the tourism and outdoor hospitality industry (Timothy & Teye, 2009; Brooker & Joppe, 2013; MacLeod, 2017). Previous studies have approached camping tourism from multiple perspectives, including its conceptualization, typologies, market characteristics, and experiential dimensions. In particular, recent literature highlights the increasing relevance of camping tourism in the post-pandemic period, as tourists show stronger

preferences for domestic travel, short trips, and nature-based destinations (UN Tourism, 2022), with over 62% of post-pandemic leisure travelers prioritizing outdoor and nature-based experiences (UN Tourism, 2022).

Despite the rapid global growth of the outdoor hospitality market, which is projected to expand at a CAGR of 8.5% through 2030 (Grand View Research, 2024), camping tourism remains under-researched in the Vietnamese academic context. The spontaneous development of campsites in areas such as Dau Tieng Lake or various national parks has raised concerns regarding environmental sustainability and management

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standards. Therefore, synthesizing existing literature is a necessary step to provide a theoretical foundation for future empirical studies and to assist destination managers in understanding market demands. This review aims to systematically evaluate prior studies, identify critical knowledge gaps, and propose a detailed research agenda along with actionable destination management recommendations for the Vietnamese market.

II. Theoretical basis

2.1. Definition and evolution of camping tourism

Camping tourism is broadly conceptualized as an outdoor recreational activity in natural settings that has evolved into a distinct hospitality segment (Timothy & Teye, 2009; Brooker & Joppe, 2013; MacLeod, 2017). Though traditionally defined as a small-scale, fragmented sector, it involves overnight stays in temporary accommodations-such as RVs or campervans-substituting for permanent home comforts (Brooker & Joppe, 2014; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020). Recently, camping has evolved into a lifestyle choice that combines nature immersion, social interaction, and modern comfort.

Recognized as a growing form of nature-based special interest tourism (O'Neill et al., 2010; Mikulić et al., 2017; Cvelić-Bonifačić et al., 2019), camping research traces back to recreation studies in the 1960s-1970s (Garst et al., 2010). However, tourist demands have shifted from primitive setups (tents and campfires) toward high-amenity sites offering unique, comfort-driven experiences (Garst et al., 2010; Mikulić et al., 2017).

Domestically, Viet Anh (2021) characterizes camping tourism as open-air excursion activities involving tent setup, outdoor cooking, and recreational pursuits such as hiking, swimming, and fishing.

2.2. Characteristics of camping tourism and tourist behavior

Research suggests that camping tourists are fundamentally motivated by the desire to escape urban routines, alleviate daily stress, and seek “authentic” nature-based experiences (Brooker & Joppe, 2013). Unlike traditional mass tourists, campers often exhibit a strong preference for flexibility, mobility, and independence during their travel. The core appeal of camping lies in its ability to facilitate a direct connection with the natural environment, fostering physical activity, social bonding among family or friends, and a sense of personal freedom.

However, the demographic and behavioral profile of campers has diversified significantly in recent years. While traditional campers may prioritize self-sufficiency and rugged outdoor experiences, the rapid rise of “glamping” (glamorous camping) has introduced a highly lucrative segment to the market. In this literature review, traditional camping and glamping are explicitly treated as distinct segments. Traditional camping emphasizes basic self-reliance and minimal site intervention, whereas glamping emphasizes resort-grade comfort, personalized services, and aesthetic luxury (Craig & Karabas, 2021; Cvelić-Bonifačić et al., 2017). Modern campers, particularly “glampers,” seek a seamless blend of outdoor adventure and high-quality amenities (Cvelić-Bonifačić et al., 2017). This shift indicates that contemporary tourists are no longer willing to sacrifice comfort for nature immersion completely. Instead, they increasingly demand well-designed accommodations, comfortable bedding, personalized services, and even digital connectivity (such as Wi-Fi) while staying in natural and remote settings.

Consequently, tourists' expectations regarding campsite infrastructure and management have evolved. Studies have consistently established that functional and experiential factors-such as campsite aesthetics, strict hygiene standards, and safety-are critical determinants of tourist satisfaction and subsequent destination loyalty (O'Neill et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2019). In the post-pandemic context, the perception of health security and environmental sanitation has become paramount in decision-making. Furthermore, the aesthetic appeal of a campsite-including its spatial layout, landscape design, and harmonious integration with the surrounding natural topography-directly influences the emotional attachment tourists form with the destination. Fulfilling both these physical and psychological needs is essential for campsite operators to enhance the overall experiential value, thereby encouraging positive word-of-mouth and repeat visitation.

III. Research methods

This study employs a systematic literature review approach following PRISMA guidelines. Literature was sourced from major academic databases, primarily Scopus, Google Scholar, and Web of Science, using keywords and Boolean strings such as “camping tourism,” “glamping” or “campsite management”, and “satisfaction” or “tourist behavior” or “destination loyalty”. The selection criteria prioritized peer-reviewed articles from reputable international journals (e.g., *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism*, *Tourism Management*). To map the local landscape in Vietnam, non-academic sources (e.g., industry reports such as UN Tourism, 2022, and government statistics) and undergraduate theses in Vietnam were utilized. However, these are explicitly distinguished from

peer-reviewed theory to maintain the synthesis's scientific credibility, serving strictly as contextual baseline data rather than as formal theoretical foundations.

IV. Research results and discussion

4.1. Literature synthesis

4.1.1. Domestic research context

4.1.1.1. Overview and evaluation criteria of camping tourism

In Vietnam, camping tourism is a relatively new trend that has emerged rapidly in the post-pandemic period. Consequently, there is a limited number of in-depth academic studies on this form of tourism. Nguyen (2011) provided an overview of camping tourism and assessed the current status of weekend family camping activities in Hanoi, as well as the factors influencing their development. This study is among the earliest academic efforts to examine camping tourism in the Vietnamese context. In addition, Le et al. (2010) introduced an overview of camping tourism, covering definitions, camping activities, levels of comfort, types of camping, accommodation facilities, and camping formats.

Tran and Bui (2017) identified six key factors significantly affecting ecotourism development, with visitor satisfaction as the dependent variable measured through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), including (1) infrastructure, (2) safety and security, (3) transportation, (4) accommodation facilities, (5) prices of food, shopping, and entertainment services, and (6) tour guides. The findings provide valuable reference points for proposing solutions to develop ecotourism at Cat Tien National Park in particular and ecotourism in Vietnam in general, including camping tourism.

Pham and To, (2024) examined the development of glamping tourism in Da Nang drawing on the conceptual framework and evaluation criteria for glamping tourism such as accommodation types (bell tents, safari tents, cabins, caravans), supporting facilities (parking areas, restaurants, campfire spaces, swimming pools), and nature-based experiential activities (BBQ, stream bathing, cycling, outdoor music, and team building).

Furthermore, Nguyen (2019) in her study “Potential and development orientation of camping tourism in Da Nang city”, analyzed natural, economic, and social conditions to assess the potential for developing camping tourism in Da Nang.

4.1.1.2. Factors influencing camping tourism intention

Research on factors influencing camping tourism intention has also attracted increasing scholarly attention. Tran et al. (2024), in their study “Factors influencing camping tourism intention in Da Nang” examined the effects of destination image, perception, and social influence on tourists’ intentions to engage in camping tourism in Da Nang. Notably, the study integrated the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) within the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), demonstrating that social influence and FOMO significantly shape attitudes and behavioral intentions. In addition to identifying determinants of camping tourism intention, the study discussed several theoretical foundations relevant to subsequent research.

4.1.2. Global empirical trends

4.1.2.1. Conceptual development, infrastructure, and destination attractiveness of camping tourism

This stream of literature focuses on the definition, positioning, and historical development of camping tourism. Camping

tourism has been widely recognized as a growing segment of the tourism industry (O’Neill et al., 2010; Mikulić et al., 2017) and is commonly classified as a form of nature-based tourism within special interest tourism (Mikulić et al., 2017). Early academic attention to camping emerged in recreation studies during the 1960s and 1970s (Garst et al., 2010).

Over time, changes in tourist preferences and the emergence of new tourism trends have significantly transformed camping tourism. Traditional campsites characterized by tents and campfires have gradually evolved into modern camping facilities equipped with high-end amenities that enhance comfort and convenience. Contemporary campers increasingly seek unique and diversified experiences that extend beyond basic nature immersion and social interaction (Garst et al., 2010; Mikulić et al., 2017).

A substantial body of research highlights the importance of physical infrastructure and service facilities in shaping the attractiveness of camping destinations. Lee (2020) in a hierarchical analysis conducted in Taiwan, demonstrated that the development of camping tourism is primarily influenced by campsite infrastructure. The study emphasized that camping destinations are complex constructs whose attractiveness depends on their ability to deliver high-quality outdoor experiences while ensuring comfort, safety, and close interaction with the natural environment.

4.1.2.2. Tourist motivation, experience, satisfaction and loyalty in camping tourism

Another prominent research theme examines the interrelationships among tourist motivation, experience,

and satisfaction. Lin and Chuang (2021) revealed strong linkages between participation motivation, experiential quality, and tourist satisfaction. Their findings confirmed that motivation not only directly affects satisfaction but also indirectly influences satisfaction through the mediating role of tourist experience. By employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), this study provided robust empirical evidence regarding causal relationships among behavioral variables in camping tourism.

Several studies have focused on the multidimensional nature of camping tourism experiences. Radović et al. (2021) analyzed camping experiences through four dimensions—esthetics, education, entertainment, and escapism—and found that the esthetic dimension, reflecting the visual appeal and landscape quality of camping destinations, exerted the strongest influence on tourist satisfaction. In evaluating campsite attributes, Mikulić et al. (2017) applied relevance-determinance analysis to highlight the decisive role of sanitation and location in driving campsite choice, while O'Neill et al. (2010) established in “Defining visitor satisfaction in the context of camping oriented nature-based tourism: the driving force of quality” that facility and natural environment quality drive visitor evaluations.

Environmental conditions and hygiene standards have been identified as key determinants of satisfaction in camping tourism. Soylu et al. (2025), through a content analysis of online visitor reviews focused on camping travel motivation by push and pull factors in Mount Ida, highlighted that environmental cleanliness and natural tranquility serve as primary pull motivators.

Recent studies have extended the analysis beyond satisfaction to examine tourist loyalty. Cao et al. (2025) applying Expectation-Confirmation Theory in the Chinese context, identified relaxation, novelty, and destination image as key factors influencing tourists' satisfaction and loyalty. The study further highlighted the mediating roles of satisfaction and well-being in shaping repeat visitation and long-term loyalty in camping destinations.

4.2. Discussion and future research agenda

The review of existing literature indicates that camping tourism has been extensively studied in international contexts, particularly regarding tourist motivation, experience, satisfaction, and loyalty. Previous studies have identified a wide range of influencing factors, including infrastructure quality, esthetic landscape, environmental quality, hygiene standards, relaxation, novelty, and destination image. Advanced quantitative methods such as EFA and PLS-SEM have been widely applied to examine the relationships among these factors.

However, academic research on camping tourism in Vietnam remains limited and fragmented. Most domestic studies focus primarily on descriptive analyses, development potential, or tourism intention, rather than empirically examining tourist satisfaction with camping tourism services. Regarding geographical and temporal evolution, while early research provided an initial descriptive overview of weekend family camping in Hanoi (Nguyen, 2011), recent

quantitative behavioral studies have focused on Da Nang (Tran et al., 2024). Consequently, a methodological gap exists in conducting modern, structural quantitative studies to evaluate tourist satisfaction and post-pandemic behavior in major sending hubs such as Hanoi.

In addition, there is a noticeable lack of integrative research models that systematically identify and evaluate the key determinants of tourist satisfaction with camping tourism services in the Vietnamese context. The majority of previous studies have not fully adapted or validated international theoretical frameworks to reflect local conditions, tourist characteristics, and service attributes specific to camping tourism in Vietnam. These are potential areas for future research on camping tourism development in Vietnam.

All in all, while Vietnamese studies explore ecotourism satisfaction (Tran & Bui, 2017) and travel intentions (Tran et al., 2024), domestic research remains

fragmented and localized. Unlike global multi-dimensional modeling, an empirical gap exists in integrated framework testing (e.g., PLS-SEM) for post-pandemic dynamics. Thus, this review proposes a research agenda targeting key unexamined dimensions:

- Carrying capacity: Investigating the physical and social carrying capacity of spontaneous campsites to prevent environmental degradation, measured via perceived crowding metrics (Shelby & Heberlein, 1986) at an interval level.

- Psychological impacts: Measuring how nature immersion in camping contexts affects the mental well-being of post-pandemic travelers, operationalized via Attention Restoration Theory (ART) and the Perceived Restorativeness Scale (PRS).

- Technology integration: The role of digital platforms and social media “check-in” culture in driving camping destination choices among Vietnamese Gen Z, operationalized through adapted Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) constructs.

Table 1. Summary of reviewed literature on camping and glamping tourism

Author(s) & Year	Segment	Context	Methodology	Main variables	Key findings
Garst et al. (2010)	Traditional	US National Forests	Qualitative (Interviews)	Place attachment, nature experience	Core meanings: routine escape, family bonding.
O'Neill et al. (2010)	Traditional / Site	Western Australia	Quantitative (EFA/ Regression)	Service quality, satisfaction	Physical facilities and setting quality drive satisfaction.
Mikulić et al. (2017)	Campsite / Mixed	Croatia	Relevance-Determinance Analysis	Campsite attributes, choice	Cleanliness and location are decisive attributes.
Lee et al. (2019)	Campsite / Mixed	South Korea	Quantitative (SEM)	Infrastructure, health security	Health security significantly drives revisit intention.
Lee (2020)	Campsite / Mixed	Taiwan	Analytic Hierarchy Process	Infrastructure, landscape, safety	Infrastructure and safety weigh highest in site appeal.

Craig and Karabas (2021)	Glamping	USA	Quantitative (Experimental)	Post-pandemic motives, luxury	Pandemic accelerated glamping demand for safe luxury.
Lin and Chuang (2021)	Traditional / Mixed	Taiwan	Quantitative (PLS-SEM)	Motivation, experience, satisfaction	Experiential quality fully mediates motivation-satisfaction.
Radović et al. (2021)	Campsite / Mixed	Croatia	Quantitative (Regression)	4Es (Esthetics, Escapism, etc.)	Esthetics exerts strongest impact on satisfaction.
Cao et al. (2025)	Glamping / Mixed	China	Quantitative (ECT / PLS-SEM)	Confirmation, well-being, loyalty	Well-being mediates expectation confirmation and loyalty.
Soylu et al. (2025)	Mixed	Mount Ida, Turkey	Content Analysis (Online reviews)	Push & pull travel motivations	Cleanliness and peacefulness are primary pull factors.
Nguyen (2011)	Traditional	Hanoi, Vietnam	Descriptive Survey	Family demand, site conditions	Early account of weekend family camping needs.
Tran and Bui (2017)	Ecotourism / Site	Cat Tien NP, Vietnam	Quantitative (EFA / Regression)	6 service factors, satisfaction	Service quality directly impacts visitor satisfaction.
Pham and To (2024)	Glamping	Da Nang, Vietnam	Mixed-methods / Bibliometrics	Glamping typology, facilities	Mapped glamping supply and curated facility demands.
Tran et al. (2024)	Camping	Da Nang, Vietnam	Quantitative (TPB + FOMO)	Image, influence, FOMO, intention	FOMO and social influence strongly affect intention.

Source: Compiled by the authors

V. Conclusion

Camping tourism has become a dynamic and rapidly expanding segment within the global tourism industry, heavily driven by evolving tourist preferences for nature-based, short-term, and flexible travel experiences in the post-pandemic era. This review has systematically synthesized existing literature, highlighting a dichotomy between international and domestic research. While global studies have successfully employed advanced quantitative methods to evaluate complex constructs such as tourist motivation, experiential quality, satisfaction, and loyalty (Lin & Chuang, 2021;

Cao et al., 2025), academic research in Vietnam remains largely fragmented, exploratory, and localized.

To address this theoretical gap, this paper transitions beyond a descriptive overview by critically evaluating global findings and assessing their applicability to the domestic market. By identifying conceptual ambiguities and gaps in the current Vietnamese literature, this study establishes a comprehensive research agenda. Specifically, it directs future empirical studies to prioritize investigating the carrying capacity of spontaneous campsites, the psychological impacts of nature

immersion on travelers' well-being, and the integration of digital technologies in shaping destination choices. Advancing research in these specific areas will not only enrich the academic literature but also provide robust insights to help destination managers and policymakers develop sustainable, high-quality camping tourism products in Vietnam.

To translate these findings into practice, destination managers in Vietnam should implement four key strategies: (1) establish spatial zoning and strict physical carrying capacity limits at vulnerable natural sites like Lake Dau Tieng; (2) differentiate infrastructure planning between primitive traditional campsites and high-amenity glamping zones; (3) mandate standardized environmental hygiene and safety protocols; and (4) leverage smart tourism platforms for real-time capacity monitoring and crowd control.

Despite its contributions to synthesizing the literature, this review is subject to limitations. Primarily, the scarcity of rigorous, peer-reviewed empirical research originating from Vietnam necessitated a partial reliance on descriptive industry reports and undergraduate theses to map the current local landscape. As a literature review, this study does not directly test an empirical model; instead, it establishes the necessary theoretical baseline. Future research should employ primary data collection and advanced statistical modeling (e.g., PLS-SEM) to empirically investigate the key dimensions identified in this research agenda, thereby providing a deeper, data-driven understanding of camping tourist behavior in the Vietnamese market.

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NGHIÊN CỨU DU LỊCH CẨM TRẠI:
TỔNG HỢP CÁC XU HƯỚNG TOÀN CẦU VÀ HÀM Ý
CHO BỐI CẢNH VIỆT NAM

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Tóm tắt: Du lịch cắm trại đã trở thành một xu hướng phát triển mạnh mẽ trên thị trường du lịch toàn cầu, đặc biệt sau đại dịch. Mặc dù phân khúc này đang thu hút sự chú ý, các nghiên cứu học thuật-đặc biệt là tại Việt Nam-vẫn còn rời rạc. Bài viết này tổng hợp các tài liệu hiện có về du lịch cắm trại, chuyển từ cách tiếp cận mô tả sang đánh giá phê phán các kết quả nghiên cứu toàn cầu và khả năng áp dụng vào bối cảnh trong nước. Bằng cách giải quyết các điểm chưa rõ ràng về khái niệm và xác định các khoảng trống nghiên cứu cụ thể như sức chứa, tác động tâm lý và tích hợp công nghệ, nghiên cứu định hình chương trình nghị sự nghiên cứu (research agenda) và đề xuất các giải pháp chiến lược cho quản lý điểm đến tại Việt Nam.

Từ khóa: du lịch, cắm trại, du lịch cắm trại, tổng quan tài liệu

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