



Exploring Visitor Preferences and Market Potential of a Water-Based Glamping Destination: A Case Study of Danau Paisupok, Banggai Kepulauan

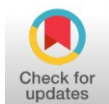
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Abstract:

This study explores visitor preferences and market potential for the development of a water-based glamping destination at Paisupok Lake, Central Sulawesi, an ecologically unique site characterized by exceptionally clear waters and preserved submerged logs. The research is grounded in the growing global trend toward sustainable, immersive, and comfort-oriented travel experiences, with glamping emerging as a hybrid form of eco-luxury tourism. The primary objective is to assess travelers' motivations, preferred activities, and facility expectations to inform strategic planning for ecotourism development in the region. A quantitative-descriptive approach was applied through an online survey distributed to 200 purposively sampled respondents aged 20–45 years with prior interest in nature tourism or glamping. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and cross-tabulation to examine links between demographics and travel preferences. Findings indicate that key motivations include relaxation, healing, and engagement with ecotourism, with favored activities being canoeing, snorkeling, and lakeside glamping. Respondents emphasized the importance of comfort, privacy, hygiene, and scenic views, while also valuing opportunities for conservation education. Market segmentation highlights a dominant group of young professionals (24–35 years old) with middle-to-upper incomes, positioning the destination within the eco-luxury segment. The study concludes that Paisupok Lake holds strong potential for sustainable glamping tourism by integrating comfort, environmental stewardship, and educational value. Strategic implications underscore the need for tailored short tour packages, storytelling-driven digital promotion, and community-based conservation initiatives to ensure long-term competitiveness and sustainability.

Keyword: Water-Based Glamping, Ecotourism, Visitor Preferences, Market Segmentation; Sustainable Tourism



INTRODUCTION

Contemporary global tourism trends reveals a discernible shift in travelers' inclinations. The paradigm shift is characterized by a transition from mass tourism to a preference for more personalized travel experiences, sustainable, and immersive travel experiences. Conversely, travelers are progressively interested in exploring unspoiled destinations, ones which are unique, as well as relatively unfamiliar (Groß & Sand, 2022).

One manifestation of this transformation is the increasing popularity of glamour camping, otherwise referred to as glamping. This is a concept that combines the convenience of modern accommodation with the authenticity and serenity of nature tourism.

Glamping refers to luxurious or at least innovative rented accommodations situated at camping sites, typically combined with a high level of service and attractive surroundings, thereby offering an experience that merges nature and camping with comfort and luxury (Walter et al., 2019). The quality of the glamping experience has been found to significantly correlate with repeat visit intentions and destination image, particularly when sustainability and comfort are harmoniously integrated (Hanafiah et al., 2022).

However, the majority of research and practice in the domain of glamping development has historically concentrated on Highland and forest areas (Gross, Sven et al., 2023; Lu, Jiandong et al., 2021). The development of glamping, which is integrated with aquatic landscapes such as lakes, rivers, or beaches, has been the focus of scant scholarly attention, particularly in the context of eastern Indonesian tourism. The lake, located in the Banggai Islands of Central Sulawesi, is distinguished by its distinctive natural features, including crystalline waters and weathered tree trunks at the lake's depths.

The clarity of the water is characterized by a transparency that is comparable to that of glass, attributed to the presence of karst rock at the lake's bottom, which exhibits a white, luminous quality and the surface's reflectivity. Lakes with karst rock types exhibit several characteristic features influenced by the karst topography itself, include: The site contains carbonate rocks, consists of a doline and an uvala, has a stable water discharge, and has a very clear water quality (Kasjuaji, 2018).

Concurrently, the logs in the lake water are prevented from undergoing decomposition due to the presence of a minimal concentration of karst rock solution (limestone water) in Paisupok Lake water. This low concentration of limestone water has been shown to impede the proliferation of fungi and bacteria. Moreover, the constant circulation of water within the system serves to mitigate the proliferation of mold and bacteria (Triadi, 2005; Ahmad & Nofrizal 2009). It is also notable for its endemic species, such as the *Tarsius* and Peling Crow, which are unique to this ecosystem. These characteristics position Lake Paisupok as a prime candidate for development as an ecotourism-oriented based glamping destination.

The objective of this research is to explore travelers' preferences for the water-based glamping concept and to assess the market potential of the destination. Theoretically, this study contributes to the expansion of the extant literature on tourist behavior in the context of eco-luxury tourism, particularly with regard to the dimensions of preference, market segmentation, and visit motivation for water-based destinations. Practically, the findings of this study offer valuable strategic insights for the development of local tourism, particularly concern in the domain of nature-based destination planning, where there is a need to balance the principles of conservation and human comfort in design.

The practical recommendations cover various aspects, including facility design, tourism activity options, marketing narratives, and target market segmentation, all of which can assist stakeholders in developing glamping destinations that align with the

demands of contemporary travelers and the principles of sustainability. Furthermore, the findings of this study complement earlier research, most of which has concentrated on glamping in mountain or forest settings (Suhartanto et al., 2021; Filipe et al., 2023; O.C. Dewi et al., 2024; Brochado & Pereira, 2017), as well as studies that have examined entrepreneurship in the glamping context (Grande et al., 2025) and glamping attribute preferences (Lee, Lee, & Moon, 2019). While the conceptual framework for the Water Glamping Park has already been formulated by the planning team, its successful implementation still requires a comprehensive analysis of market preferences.

By understanding the interests, motivations, and expectations of potential travelers, planning and promotional strategies can be more effectively directed. Traveler motivation can be categorized into two primary dimensions: push factors, which refer to internal drives such as the need for relaxation, escape, or the search for meaning, and pull factors, which denote external attractions such as amenities, the natural environment, and local culture (Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979). Within the context of nature-based glamping, the desire for healing and reconnection with nature emerges as a predominant motivating factor.

A number of studies have revealed that relaxation and the search for nature are the predominant reasons for choosing glamping (Filipe et al., 2023; Hanafiah et al., 2022). This motivation shows a notable similarity to Lake Paisupok, which is characterized as a distinctive and tranquil natural environment. Moreover, tourism activity preferences are shaped by the experiential value provided by a destination, including comfort, aesthetics, active involvement, and learning (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

Light and exploratory water activities are recognized as the preferred choice for urban tourists, particularly because such activities emphasize light interactions with nature and suit young travelers who prioritize a balance between experience and convenience (Utami, 2020). Glamping fulfills this dimension, especially within the youth market, which tends to pursue unique and memorable experiences (Hanafiah et al., 2022).

The servicescape theory highlights that the physical environment plays a crucial role in shaping consumers' perceptions of service quality (Bitner, 1992). In the case of glamping, comfort and immersion in natural surroundings emerge as the main contributors to visitor satisfaction, reflecting the idea that comfort can be offered without eliminating natural nuances, with scenic views and tranquility serving as primary selling points (Hanafiah et al., 2022).

Market segmentation theory emphasizes that tourism products should be designed in accordance with demographic variables such as age, income, and occupation, as well as psychographic traits such as lifestyle and interests (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Empirical studies confirm that the glamping market is predominantly composed of young, professional, and upper-middle-class travelers, with millennials showing particular openness to experiences that combine novelty with convenience (Suhartanto et al., 2021; Prayag & Hosany, 2014). Environmentally conscious tourists, as explained through social value theory and the concept of sustainable ecotourism, are more likely to favor destinations that incorporate education and conservation components (Schwartz, 1994; Weaver, 2001; Zoltan & McKercher, 2015).

In this respect, the Water Glamping Park featuring ecological conservation and educational programs that highlight the endemic flora and fauna of Lake Paisupok has

strong potential to appeal to environmentally aware travelers. The present research hypothesis is formulated on the basis of the following:

1. H1: The majority of respondents are motivated to visit the Lake Paisupok water-based glamping destination for reasons of relaxation, healing, and interest in ecotourism
2. H2: The predominant responses indicated a preference for activities such as lake strolling, snorkeling, and glamping in a water-based glamping concept.
3. H3: The respondents expressed a preference for glamping facilities that offer comfort and allow for direct visual access to the natural landscape.
4. H4: The predominant market segments for water-based glamping destinations consist of respondents within the age range of 24 to 35 years and with upper-middle income.
5. H5: Perceptions of environmental sustainability and the value of conservation education have been demonstrated to influence tourists' interest in water-based glamping destinations.

The strategic implications of these findings include the necessity of designing immersive yet flexible short tour packages, to enhance destination storytelling, drawing upon its distinct ecological characteristics, while leveraging digital promotion strategies to effectively target the productive age group. Consequently, this study not only provides an empirical framework for understanding the water-based glamping market, but also puts forward pioneering strategies for destination development, emphasizing inclusivity, sustainability, and relevance to post-pandemic shifts in trend.

RESEARCH METHOD

The present research employs a quantitative-descriptive approach, leveraging an online survey instrument. The decision to employ this particular design was made with the intention of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the preferences and motivations, and a market segmentation of potential tourists towards water-based glamping destinations at lake Paisupok. The objective of the descriptive approach is to describe trends, perceptions, and the respondents' characteristics were systematically derived from the obtained data.

Therefore, purposive sampling was employed to determine the sample in this study. Specifically, the following criteria were utilized to determine potential tourists: Individuals between the ages of 20 and 45, tourist who possess a penchant for nature tourism or have previously engaged in glamping or eco-travel, and have a medium to high spending capacity. The survey was conducted on a sample of 200 respondents. The following are the variables that were measured and their definitions:

Table 1. Operationalization of Research Variables on Tourist Motivation, Preferences, and Interest in Glamping

Variable	Operational definition	Indicator	Measurement Scale
Tourist Motivation	The internal motivations of travelers in choosing a destination of glamping.	relaxation, healing, nature exploration, education, and the pursuit of solitude.	Likert Scale (1-5)

Variable	Operational definition	Indicator	Measurement Scale
Activity preference	The types of activities that tourists are interested in when visiting.	lake cruises, snorkelling, glamping, conservation, and cultural excursions.	Multiple choice (max 3)
Facility preference	The following physical elements and services are considered important in glamping.	The amenities include a clean toilet, a comfortable bed, a landscape view, Wi-Fi, food options, and privacy.	Multiple choice (max 3)
Segmentation of demographics	The socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the respondents.	The following variables were considered: age, gender, income, occupation, and status.	Nominal
Tourists interest	A growing interest in the pursuit of glamping experiences.	very interested- not interested at all.	Ordinal scale

Source: Author, 2025

A data collection instrument was employed that included a Google Form questionnaire, including: 1) Demographic information, 2) The motivations of visitors to the region, 3) The preferences of visitors in terms of activities and facilities, 4) An exploration of the interest in and attitude toward Lake Paisupok destination. The distribution of the questionnaire occurred through various channels, including social media, traveling communities, nature lovers groups, and student/young employee networks in Sulawesi and Java. Subsequently, a quantitative descriptive approach was employed to analyze the data utilizing Excel and SPSS software tools. The following statistical analysis will ascertain the frequency, percentage, and value trends of each variable, as indicated by their mean.

Subsequently, a cross-tabulation (crosstab) was employed to ascertain the relationship between demographic variables (age, income) and preferences (activities/facilities). The subsequent step entails market segmentation, which is achieved by grouping respondents based on demographic and psychographic characteristics.

As this research employs a descriptive quantitative approach, hypothesis testing is conducted using descriptive and statistical methods: A rigorous testing process should be implemented to assess the proportions and frequencies of the data. This will allow for the verification of whether the majority of respondents exhibit shared characteristics or preferences. For instance, if more than 50% of respondents selected "glamping" as their preferred method of relaxation, this would indicate that a significant proportion of the sample shares a common preference.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Respondent Profile

This research study involved a sample of 200 respondents who were selected through a purposive sampling technique. The study's participants were individuals aged

20-45 years old who expressed interest in nature tourism or glamping experiences, and the upper-middle income group. The demographic composition of the respondents indicates a preponderance of individuals within the 24–35 age bracket, with a total of 142 respondents (71%) falling into this category, which is indicative of the prevalence of productive and millennial age groups, who often possess the financial means and temporal flexibility to engage in travel. In terms of gender, 57% of respondents were female and 43% were male.

This finding aligns with a prevalent trend in leisure travel research, where women tend to play a more active role in identifying and planning travel activities. In terms of monthly income, 64% of respondents spend IDR 3-6 million, while 28% spend more than IDR 6 million. This indicates that most respondents are in the middle to upper economic group. This segment is particularly well-suited for eco-luxury tourism markets, such as glamping. Regarding their occupational status, the majority of respondents were private employees (34%), followed by lecturers/teachers/academics (30%), with the remainder comprising entrepreneurs and active students. This data indicates that the majority of respondents are from the educated middle class, and they have a demonstrated interest in nature and educational value-added tourism.

2. The Motivation behind Traveler Choice of Destination

The survey's findings indicate that the primary motivations of tourists in selecting an outdoor glamping destination such as Lake Paisupok are as follows: 1) 81% of respondents reported experiencing relaxation and healing, 2) A total of 69% of the subjects indicated that their preferred activities were nature exploration and ecotourism, 3) The experience offered by the venue is unique and aesthetically pleasing, with 53% of respondents indicating that they would share it on social media platforms such as Instagram, 4) The proportion of educational initiatives focused on environmental issues is 42%.

This finding aligns with the push-pull motivation theory (Crompton, 1979) and corroborates the outcomes of Hanafiah et al. (2022), which indicate that intrinsic motivation (e.g., relaxation, tranquility) predominates in contemporary nature tourism decisions. In the context of Lake Paisupok, the combination of unspoiled natural beauty and tranquil atmosphere constitutes the primary attraction that aligns with the need for slow tourism.

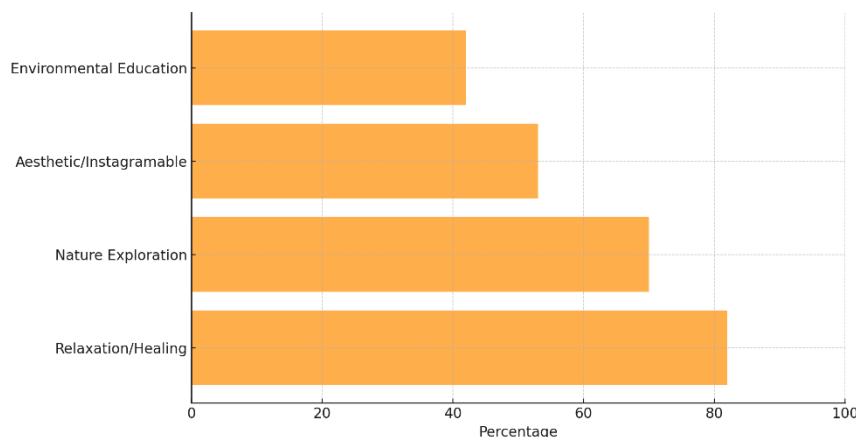


Figure 1. Visitor Preferences for Water- Based Glamping
Source: Primary data

The survey results demonstrate that relaxation and healing are the dominant motivations for travelers choosing glamping destinations, with over 80% of respondents prioritizing these experiences. This suggests that the psychological and emotional benefits of slow tourism are a key driver of destination choice, reinforcing the idea that travelers seek respite from urban stress and fast-paced lifestyles. The relatively high interest in nature exploration (69%) further emphasizes that glamping appeals to tourists who value immersive encounters with natural environments, which aligns with global trends in ecotourism and sustainable travel. These findings reflect a demand for destinations that combine comfort with direct interaction with nature, reinforcing the positioning of Lake Paisupok as a competitive outdoor tourism site.

Moreover, the notable percentage of respondents valuing aesthetic experiences (53%) and environmental education (42%) indicates a dual-layered motivation. On one hand, the “Instagrammable” aspect reveals the growing influence of social media in shaping destination appeal, as tourists increasingly seek experiences that can be visually represented and shared online. On the other hand, the attention to environmental education suggests that a significant proportion of visitors are also motivated by learning and awareness, reflecting a shift toward more responsible and meaningful forms of tourism. This dual motivation illustrates how glamping destinations can strategically combine leisure, aesthetics, and education to cater to diverse tourist expectations while also contributing to broader sustainability goals.

3. Most Popular Tourism Activities

In response to the inquiry regarding their preferred choice of three activities, the respondents exhibited the following responses: 1) Canoeing and paddling were selected by 78% of respondents, 2) Snorkeling 65%, 3) The experience of slumbering within a glamping tent while overlooking a lake was reported by 61% of respondents, 4) animal conservation and ecotourism for educational purposes constitutes 42% of the total, 5) The local cuisine and outdoor barbecue experience is a 35% experience. The heightened interest in water-based activities and nature exploration is indicative of travelers' pursuit of direct interaction with the environment, while maintaining a sense of comfort and safety. Activities such as glamping with natural scenery and conservation education packages are elements that strengthen the concept of eco-luxury experience at Lake Paisupok.

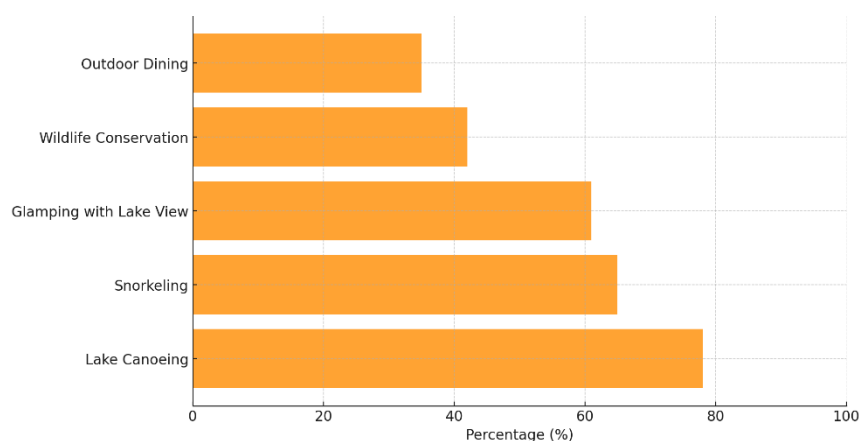


Figure 2. Most Preferred Activities

Source: Primary data

The data reveals that water-based recreation dominates visitor activity preferences, with canoeing and paddling (78%) and snorkeling (65%) ranking as the top choices. This indicates that travelers are strongly motivated by opportunities for immersive, experiential engagement with the lake environment, suggesting that Lake Paisupok's natural assets serve as its strongest competitive advantage. The popularity of glamping with lake views (61%) further highlights the demand for comfort-oriented experiences that combine proximity to nature with convenience and safety, underscoring the balance between adventure and relaxation sought by modern tourists.

Additionally, the interest in animal conservation and ecotourism (42%) and local cuisine experiences (35%) points toward a diversification of motivations that extend beyond leisure into educational and cultural dimensions. The integration of conservation programs and culinary tourism into the glamping package not only enriches the visitor experience but also aligns with the principles of sustainable tourism development. This indicates that Lake Paisupok has the potential to position itself not merely as a site for recreation, but as a destination that provides eco-luxury experiences blending environmental awareness, cultural authenticity, and outdoor enjoyment.

4. Tourist Preferences Regarding Facilities and Services

The survey results indicate that visitors place the greatest emphasis on physical comfort and privacy when choosing a glamping site. A comfortable and secluded bed was prioritized by 76% of respondents, highlighting that the quality of rest and personal space is central to the glamping experience. This suggests that travelers view glamping not only as a means of outdoor recreation but also as an opportunity for restorative leisure, where restful sleep and privacy become defining features of satisfaction.

Hygienic sanitation facilities were also deemed highly important, with 71% of respondents emphasizing cleanliness and maintenance as crucial factors. This aligns with the understanding that even in natural or rustic environments, tourists expect high standards of hygiene as part of their overall experience. Moreover, the presence of calming natural scenery, reported by 68% of participants, reinforces the role of environmental aesthetics in shaping visitor satisfaction, where landscapes such as lakes or forests enhance both relaxation and emotional well-being.

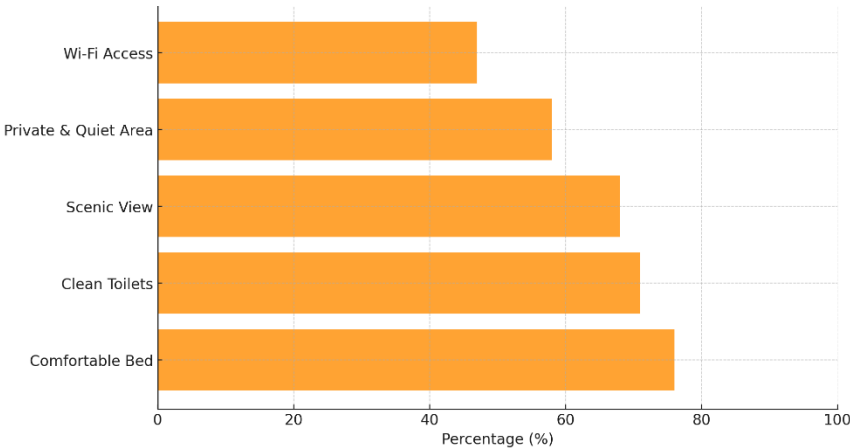


Figure 3. Top Facility Preferences
Source: Primary data

In addition, 58% of respondents valued tranquil and exclusive enclaves, while 47% highlighted the importance of internet connectivity. This combination demonstrates the dual expectations of contemporary glamping tourists: on one hand, they seek serenity, isolation, and closeness to nature, while on the other, they remain connected to digital networks for communication and sharing experiences. These findings resonate with Bitner's (1992) servicescape theory, which argues that both physical and atmospheric elements significantly shape perceptions of service quality. Thus, glamping is positioned not merely as accommodation, but as a curated travel experience designed to balance comfort, aesthetics, and harmony with the natural environment.

5. Segmentation and Development Potential of the Market

An analysis of demographic and psychographic data reveals that the most significant potential market is composed of individuals between the ages of 24 and 35, characterized by formal employment and higher spending patterns. This demographic is often referred to as "young professionals" or "urban eco-luxury seekers," who prioritize a balance between relaxation, exploration, and comfort. With regard to market projections, the article cites the middle-class population in Sulawesi and Java (approximately 850,000 individuals), Assuming an interest rate of 5% in destinations such as Lake Paisupok, the market potential would exceed 42,000 tourists per year. Projections indicate a steady annual growth rate of 0.12%, which, when compared to the Maldives model, suggests a potential increase to 43,100 tourists within the next five years.

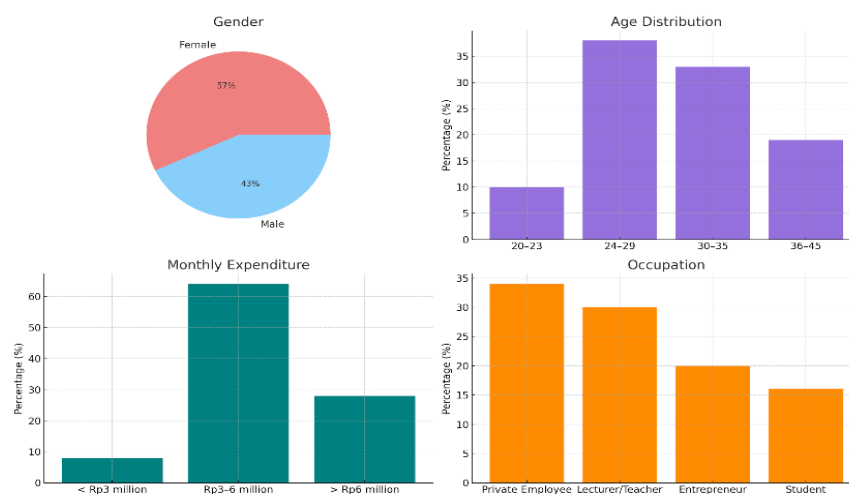


Figure 4. Demographic Segmentation of Respondents
Source: Primary data

This trajectory could lay the groundwork for the sustainable development of the destination. A Consideration of Strategic Implications in Destination Development. In light of the findings, the following strategic implications are recommended for consideration by relevant managers and stakeholders: 1) The focus on the professional millennial demographic necessitates storytelling-based promotions on digital media platforms, such as Instagram and TikTok, 2) Short tour packages, with a duration of two to three days and incorporating water activities and conservation education, have the potential to serve as the primary attraction, 3) The design of glamping facilities ought to

prioritize the elements of comfort and privacy, while also incorporating elements of nature into the design, such as glass cabins and exclusive tents by the lake, 4) The integration of sustainable ecotourism principles, encompassing the facets of conservation education, waste management, and the engagement of local communities, is paramount

6. Consideration of the Strategic Implications of Destination Development

The findings highlight the importance of carefully identifying and targeting the most relevant market segments for glamping destinations such as Lake Paisupok. In particular, the professional millennial demographic represents a highly strategic audience due to their growing purchasing power, preference for unique travel experiences, and active engagement with digital media. To capture this segment effectively, storytelling-based promotional campaigns should be prioritized across social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, which strongly influence travel decision-making. Narratives that emphasize themes of relaxation, adventure, sustainability, and cultural authenticity can foster a strong emotional connection between potential visitors and the destination, thereby enhancing competitiveness in an increasingly crowded tourism market.

In addition to targeted promotion, the development of short-duration tour packages is an important consideration for aligning with contemporary travel behaviors. Packages with a length of two to three days, tailored to include water-based activities such as canoeing and snorkeling, alongside conservation education experiences, are likely to attract both domestic and international tourists seeking a balance between leisure and meaningful engagement. These shorter tours cater to tourists who may be limited by time but still desire immersive encounters with natural environments. By combining recreation with educational opportunities, Lake Paisupok can position itself not only as a leisure destination but also as a site of responsible and sustainable tourism that meets the demands of modern travelers.

Equally significant is the strategic design of facilities and services to ensure visitor satisfaction and loyalty. Glamping infrastructure should place priority on comfort, privacy, and scenic immersion, with innovations such as glass cabins or exclusive tents situated near the lakeside offering both luxury and intimacy with nature. At the same time, the integration of sustainable ecotourism principles is critical for long-term destination viability. Initiatives such as conservation education programs, effective waste management, and local community participation will reinforce the authenticity and environmental stewardship of the site.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that Lake Paisupok in Banggai Kepulauan holds strong potential as a water-based glamping destination, primarily appealing to millennial professionals aged 24–35 with middle to upper-middle incomes who seek eco-luxury experiences combining comfort, exclusivity, and nature immersion. Visitors are particularly drawn by motivations such as relaxation, healing, and peaceful exploration, with preferred activities including lake cruises, snorkeling, and nature-based glamping. This market segment values privacy, comfort, cleanliness, and aesthetic natural views, which suggests that destination development should emphasize well-designed facilities

and sustainability practices. Additionally, marketing strategies should leverage digital platforms and storytelling to highlight the uniqueness of Lake Paisupok, while community involvement is essential to reinforce authenticity and long-term socio-economic benefits.

However, the study acknowledges several limitations, including reliance on purposive online sampling, a relatively small sample size of 200 respondents, and limited exploration of potential barriers or negative perceptions toward glamping tourism. To address these gaps, future research should employ broader and more representative sampling techniques, integrate mixed methods to capture travelers' emotional and experiential narratives, and apply inferential statistical models to strengthen predictive analysis. Furthermore, longitudinal evaluations of destination development are recommended to assess long-term impacts on visitor preferences and sustainability outcomes.

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