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AN OVERVIEW OF GLAMPING TOURISM WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE MIDDLE EAST TOURISM: THE CASE OF TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

In order to get as many shares as possible from the Middle East tourism market, which has a very high growth rate in terms of international tourist arrivals in the world and in Turkey, researching new trends and the use of marketing strategies in accordance with these trends are important. In this study, it is aimed to evaluate Glamping tourism which is one of the favorite trends of 2020s in terms of its suitability to Middle East tourism market. In this context, the literature on general characteristics of the Middle East tourism market was examined. After that the characteristics of Glamping tourism and the situation in Turkey were examined. The data were collected using audio-visual materials. Glampinghub.com, one of the world's leading websites was used for data collection. Data were subjected to content analysis. After all these investigations and analysis, some inferences were made. As a result, it is seen that there is quite a similarity among the general characteristics of Middle Eastern tourists and those who prefer Glamping Tourism. Experimental studies should be done for increasing the validity of this study. Glamping tourism can be considered as a good alternative in order to get more share from the Middle East tourism market. In this context, investigating the tourism businesses suitable for Glamping tourism in Turkey and raising awareness of business owners for this type of tourism are necessary. By adding more businesses to the international network of Glamping tourism enterprises, the share of the country in the Middle East tourism market can be increased.

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INTRODUCTION

In the 1990s, in Africa, the rich Europeans and Americans participating in safari tours spent the night in their private accommodation in the wild (Boscoboinik & Bourquard, 2011). These special accommodation tents were quite spacious, quite luxuriously equipped and had large windows to observe the surroundings. There was no electricity here (Kabourakis, 2017). This accommodation type later became widespread in America, Asia, Middle East and Europe, was given the name glamping and it was defined as “camping in the comfort of home” (Boscoboinik ve Bourquard, 2011). Glamping has the idea that the holiday in the camp can be done in a more comfortable environment and not to harm the environment while doing so. There are tendencies for the Glamping units to be built in a farm in some countries (Kabourakis, 2017).

Glamping tourism is one of the favorite trends of 2020s (Ergüven et al., 2015, pp. 256-257) and Middle East tourism market has a very high growth rate in terms of international tourist arrivals in the world and in Turkey (Sarı & Yıldırım, 2015; Orkney & Akın, 2016). Researching new trends and growing tourism markets and the use of marketing strategies in accordance with these trends are important. Because of this, in this study firstly, The Middle East tourism potential and general characteristics of the Middle East tourism market were searched. Then, the concept of glamping and the case in Turkey were investigated. And then, an evaluation of glamping tourism within the context of Middle East tourism was carried out. This study aimed to evaluate the suitability of glamping tourism in Turkey for the Middle East tourism market.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Middle East Tourism Potential

According to data of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), international tourist arrivals reached 1.4 billion in 2018 with an increase of 6% compared to 2017. While the Middle East (+10%) and Africa (+7%) grew above the world average, Asia and the Pacific and Europe grew by 6%. UNWTO forecasts 35 million international tourist arrivals from the Middle East in 2020. This represents a 5.8% growth for the period 1995 to 2020, which is higher than the world average of 4.1% (Vision, 2002).

UNWTO predicts that Saudi Arabia has the highest tourist potential in the Middle East and expects more than 9 million arrivals in 2020 worldwide. Saudi Arabia is followed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with 2 million international tourists and by Egypt, Kuwait, and Lebanon with 1.8 million international tourists. The six Gulf countries are the most important countries in the Middle East, which send tourists. While citizens of the Middle East spend their vacations in the Middle East countries, Europe ranks first among their destination preferences other than the region. The United Kingdom is the European country that attracts the most tourists from the Middle Eastern. The UK is followed by France, Turkey, Italy, Germany, Cyprus, Greece, Switzerland, and Spain, respectively (Vision, 2002).

Table 1 shows the top five countries in terms of the total number of tourist arrivals to Turkey and the share of the Arab world for the period from 2010 to 2017. What stands out in the table is the temporal change rate of the Middle East (excluding Iran) compared to the temporal change rates of other countries. There has been a downward trend in the figures of Germany and the UK in terms of foreign visitors to Turkey depending on Turkey's foreign politics and international political relations. Although there was a sharp decline in the number of Russian tourists declined between 2015 and 2016, the number of Russian tourists showed an increase in 2017 compared to the previous years. Given the top five countries in terms of the total number of tourist arrivals to Turkey and the share of the Arab world, the Middle East has the highest rate of temporal change for the period from 2010 to 2017. Syrian foreign tourists are not included in the data on the Middle East because the figures of Syrian tourists, which should be included in the Middle East, is unavailable.

Table 1. Top Five Countries in terms of the total figures of Turkey and the Arab World (2010 to 2017 - Thousand Persons)

Countries Visiting Turkey and the Share of the Middle East *2010=100 Index									Temporal Change
Nationality	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	*2010/17
Germany	4,385	4,826	5,028	5,041	5,250	5,580	3,890	3,584	-18.26
Russia	3,107	3,468	3,599	4,269	4,479	3,649	866	4,715	51.75
UK	2,673	2,852	2,456	2,509	2,600	2,512	1,711	1,658	-37.97
Middle East (except Iran and Syria)	1,820	2,053	2,218	1,804	2,217	2,707	2,122	3,045	67.30
Iran	1,885	1,879	1,186	1,196	1,590	1,700	1,665	2,501	32.67

Source: Derived from the official tourism statistics of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. <http://yigm.kulturuzm.gov.tr/TR-201114/yillik-bultenler.html>

According to the Tourism 2020 Vision report issued by the World Tourism Organization, it is forecast that the Middle East will be an international tourism region that both receives and sends tourists by 2020 (Orkney & Akın, 2016).

Table 2. Number of Arab Tourists Visiting Turkey based on Nationality (2008-2018)

Nationality	*2008=100 Index											2008/18
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Tempo ral Change (%)
Syria	406,967	509,679	899,494	974,054	730,039	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Iraq	250,236	285,229	280,328	369,033	533,149	730,639	857,246	1,094,144	420,831	896,876	167,973	-32.87
Lebanon	53,965	71,771	134,554	137,110	144,491	143,629	161,274	197,552	191,642	237,476	1,172,896	2,073,43
Saudi Arabia	55,623	66,938	84,934	116,711	175,467	234,220	341,786	450,674	530,410	651,170	747,233	1,243,38
Jordan	74,367	87,694	96,562	94,914	102,154	102,871	131,329	162,866	203,179	277,729	406,469	446.57
Egypt	57,954	66,912	61,560	79,665	112,025	107,437	108,762	100,040	94,871	100,971	148,943	157.00
Morocco	44,023	65,875	57,447	68,645	77,884	82,579	89,562	109,775	87,660	114,155	176,538	301.01
Tunisia	42,827	56,707	57,855	63,176	86,595	91,683	100,612	102,341	100,185	111,627	142,372	232.43
Algeria	63,915	91,236	68,459	50,621	104,489	118,189	160,052	171,873	176,233	213,333	288,207	350.92
Kuwait	22,659	26,801	27,281	41,617	65,167	88,238	133,128	174,486	179,938	255,644	298,620	1,217,88
UAE	19,750	22,051	30,480	35,579	48,071	52,424	53,736	51,600	38,315	49,360	43,292	119.20
Bahrain	8,050	9,090	9,375	9,712	13,342	16,230	24,305	32,476	41,505	59,442	77,075	857.45
Yemen	6,000	6,181	6,344	8,066	11,826	17,354	26,033	24,237	25,325	28,491	39,545	559.08
Qatar	4,565	4,902	6,043	7,661	13,971	18,630	29,743	35,832	32,681	48,764	96,327	2,010,12

Total	1,110,901	1,370,256	1,820,716	2,053,104	2,218,670	1,804,123	2,217,568	2,707,896	2,122,775	3,045,038	3,399,021	205.96
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Source: Derived from the official tourism statistics of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. <http://yigm.kulturuzm.gov.tr/TR-201114/yillik-bultenler.html>

Table 2 shows the number of Arab tourists coming to Turkey based on nationalities for the period from 2008 to 2018. Accordingly, although there has been a decline in some countries in certain years, the rates of temporal change in countries other than Iraq are quite high for the period from 2008 to 2018. It is also clear that there is an upward trend in the number of tourist arrivals. The countries with the highest rate of increase in the number of tourists in the ten-year period are Lebanon (2.073, 43%), Qatar (2.010, 12%), Saudi Arabia (1.243, 38%), and Kuwait (1.217, 88%), respectively.

To receive as much share as possible from the Middle East tourism market, which has the highest growth rate in the world tourism and Turkey’s tourism, it is of great importance to investigate new trends on a country basis and use suitable trends for marketing strategies. Against this background, this study set out to make an evaluation of glamping tourism, one of the most popular trends in the 2020s, in terms of its suitability to the Middle East tourism market. The study, thus, focused on the general characteristics of the Middle East tourism industry, the features of glamping tourism, and the case in Turkey. After all these investigations, a number of inferences were drawn.

General Characteristics of the Middle East Tourism Market

The Middle East is the name given to the cultural and geographical region that covers the area between western Asia and northeast Africa (Dalisay, 2016). The terms Middle East or Middle Eastern, like the terms Europe or European, refer to the cultural, anthropological, and historical unity. The term Middle East was coined by an American educator named Alfred Thayer Mahan (Farrokh & Vasseghi, 2017; Laçiner, 2006).

To have greater shares in the Middle East tourism market, which is predicted to be an international tourism region that both receives and sends tourists, it is necessary to know the characteristics of this market.

Souiden (2002) studied the responses of Arab consumers to different marketing stimuli and found some similarities which are applicable to standardized marketing strategies on the basis of country and consumer.

Marketers should pay attention to the fact that the wealth of Arab countries differs from one another. Most Gulf countries have a high gross national product per capita (Marinov, 2007). Although there is a distinction between rich countries and non-rich countries in terms of natural resources, the availability of riches does not mean that living standards are high. While living standards in Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE are improving, this is not the case in Iran, Libya, and Nigeria. Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the Middle East, while the UAE is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of per capita income. Bahrain, Kuwait and the UAE have a well-educated population and a promising market with highly affluent consumers. These highly educated young consumers have similar characteristics to consumers of the developed market countries in terms of purchasing behaviour. The expectations of consumers from these countries are not similar to the expectations of consumers in other Arab countries, but rather to the expectations of consumers in North America and Western Europe. Tourists from Gulf countries Saudi Arabia and Kuwaiti prefer Turkey as popular vacation destinations (UNWTO, 2012).

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are the countries that have the highest level of average expenditure per capita during travels abroad. A high level of national income and the advantage of being oil exporter do not always indicate a high level of travels abroad. Morocco, for example, does not have a high per capita income but has shown significant increases in both international departures and the amount of expenditure made during the period from 1995 to 2003 although it is not an oil exporter. In trips abroad, the longer the travel time is, the more luxurious hotels are preferred; however, in group trips abroad, more limited service options are preferred (Mengü, 2008). Middle Eastern tourists have high purchasing power. There is a significant need for health services in the Middle East tourism market. These needs include traditional treatment methods, beauty therapies, and spas. Therefore, Thailand is one of the most popular tourist destinations for Middle Eastern tourists (TAT, 2019; Chanin et al., 2015).

While elite consumers in the Middle East are willing to consume Western luxury, middle-class consumers are more willing to consume Western fashion and media. Middle-class consumers prefer gender-based shopping options and luxury vacations. This trend has considerably increased over the last two decades (Sandıkçı & Ger, 2001).

There is little published research on what drives travels from Middle Eastern countries to Western countries. Although the Middle East has a small share in tourism movements worldwide, it is a rapidly growing market (Prayag & Hosany, 2014). Therefore, understanding tourist preferences and behaviour is important to have a share in this growing market. Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia and the UAE, are the rapidly growing tourism market in international tourism movements. In the Middle East, the six Gulf countries account for 60% of international travels (ETC, 2012).

Saudi Arabia is one of the popular tourist destinations in the Middle East, which is followed by France as a luxury tourist destination. UAE citizens often go to Paris and Cannes for luxury shopping. Hotels such as Ritz and Marriott in Paris even show Arab films in Arabic (Prayag & Hosany, 2014). Although luxury vacations are traditionally perceived as something peculiar to wealthy couples aged 40 and over, previous studies have shown that there is a growing trend towards luxury vacations among young consumers (Danziger, 2005; Martin & Turley, 2004).

The UNWTO report shows that Middle Eastern tourists are mostly aged between 18 and 34 and married with children (UNWTO, 2012). They are also educated and are often from the upper socio-economic strata of society. Especially those visiting Europe are high-income and well-educated people.

Arab tourists tend to prefer luxury products and generally stay longer compared to average tourists (Michael et al., 2011). Accommodation is very important for Middle Eastern tourists and should be in line with Islamic rules. For Middle Eastern tourists, there must be Islamic places of worship and prayer rooms for women. Tourist attractions must be easy to access. Souvenirs must also be sold at reasonable prices (Chanin et al., 2015).

Middle Eastern tourists often travel as an extended family or as a group of young men. Travel times vary from 3 to 14 weeks, and tourists prefer home-cooked foods (Ladki, Mikdashi, Faed, & Abbas, 2002). Arab tourists often demand halal foods (Prayag & Hosany, 2014).

UAE citizens generally prefer trips that are tailored to their particular interests and enables them to have authentic experiences. They are ready to pay a high price to enjoy the highest quality experience. What motivates them to visit Europe includes rest, relaxation, sightseeing, and exploring new places. Spending time with family and seeking socialization are other motivating forces behind their trips to Europe (Prayag & Hosany, 2014).

In line with previous studies (Prayag and Hosany, 2014; UNWTO, 2012; Vision, 2002; GCC, 2014; Visit Britain, 2010; ETC, 2012), the general characteristics of Middle Eastern tourists can be listed as follows:

- Middle Eastern tourists like to see new and unusual things.
- They are usually motivated by a desire to escape from problems and reality.
- Visiting Europe on vacation is an indication of status for them.
- It is hard to please young tourists.
- Young tourists live an active life, seek luxury, and desire for fast and lively experiences.
- They usually prefer European capitals.
- Safety and the reputation of a place are important in the selection of destination.
- There are many factors that affect destination selection. These include the general environment, destination image, good tourist activities, cultural similarities, shopping opportunities, good weather conditions, visa procedures, entertainment opportunities suitable for all family members, and accommodation quality.
- Arab tourists do not have linguistic difficulties because their education levels are high.
- Destinations other than the Middle East are Europe, Asia, and Asia Pacific regions, respectively. Europe is the most popular holiday destination for Middle Eastern tourists.
- Middle Eastern tourists prefer Europe for its natural beauty, good weather, culture, and history. Other important attractions are shopping, outdoor activities, tourist attractions, and Spa. Escape from hot weather especially in the summer months is an important factor in the choice of European

countries.

- Arab tourists expect highly individualized services and generally prefer luxury accommodation.
- There are also some deterrent effects on Arab tourists' visits to Europe. These include high costs, visa requirements, and the perceived unavailability of halal foods.
- Two-thirds of those who travel are men and one-third are women.
- 70% of those travelling are families with children. Especially families with children prefer amusement parks, zoos, safaris, and family entertainment centres during their vacations.
- The average overnight stay of Middle Eastern tourists can reach 4 to 5 days in near destinations such as Cyprus, Turkey, and Greece, and 15 to 20 days in distant destinations such as England and France.
- Travel organizations are usually made as direct bookings or flight and hotel bookings through travel agencies. The rate of travel organizations as a package tour is very low but has been increasing day by day. Although bookings through travel agents are prevailing, online bookings have been increasing day by day.
- They usually make late bookings; thus, it can be said that they plan their vacations and make bookings at the last minute.
- Middle Eastern tourists attach great importance to word-of-mouth communication prior to destination selection. Especially friend advice is important in choosing a destination. Before visiting a new destination, families ask their friends or other families who have already been to that destination. The information they obtain from familiar people in their own countries gives them more confidence.
- There has been a trend in Middle Eastern countries towards travelling to pro-Islamic countries since the September 11 terrorist attacks. In Europe, Turkey has taken advantage of this situation as an Islamic country. Therefore, with good marketing efforts, the Middle East has the potential to reach an important position in Turkish tourism in the short and long term.
- Turkey's peak tourist season is usually the same as the time of vacation in the Middle East countries and coincides with summer months. However, this situation eliminates the opportunity of low-season discounts for Middle Eastern tourists. On the other hand, the devaluation of the Turkish lira has caused Turkey to become an inexpensive destination.
- The Gulf countries are among the countries where the use of smartphones has increased the fastest. In these countries, the rate of using smartphones in vacation planning has been increasing day by day.
- Some Muslim countries are extremely sensitive to price and do not seek high quality. Therefore, it is more logical to concentrate efforts on the main product rather than efforts to add additional value to products. Rice and Al-Mossawi (2002) suggested some tips for use in marketing in Islamic countries:
 - Promotional messages should usually be targeted at male consumers,
 - Messages should not be exaggerated, deceptive or misleading but informative.
 - Promotional messages should be simple and offer money saving opportunities. Especially messages containing free offers should not be used because consumers can question the honesty of previous prices and their confidence in the manufacturer or agent can be destroyed.

The Concept of Glamping Tourism

Glamping combines nature and camping tourism and is included in the category of special interest tourism. Glamping tourism has become a trend in recent years and is preferred by individuals who want to get away from city life and who like nature and camping. There has been a transition from a traditional touristic approach to a new touristic product, glamping tourism, which offers a combination of nature and camping preferences and the concept of luxury vacation (Göktaş et al., 2017, p. 108). The concept of glamping was first introduced in the 1990s with individuals who were participating in safari tours in Africa and integrating their luxury life into these tours, thereby spreading worldwide (Boscoboinik & Bourquard, 2011; Sakáčová, 2013). Glamping is defined in the Cambridge English Dictionary as *"a type of camping that is more comfortable and luxurious than*

traditional camping” (WEB1, 2019). Several definitions of glamping have been proposed by scholars. Boscoboinik and Bourquard (2011) define glamping as “camping in the comfort of home”. Birdir (2015) describes it as “a recent tourism trend or a new type of tourist product that allows tourists to escape from their usual places of accommodation, transforms intertwining with nature adventure into luxury, and makes outdoor accommodation comfortable”. Çelik et al. (2017) define it as “a type of tourism that offers a variety of nature-related activities and allows visitors to have an unusual vacation experience without sacrificing comfort and luxury”.

Based on the definitions above, glamping tourism can be defined as a type of tourism which can be evaluated within the scope of special interest tourism, provide a maximum level of camping, comfort and luxury in buildings, offers many activities and opportunities, is integrated into the natural environment without damaging nature, and ensures safety.

Glamping offers luxury (sheets, kilims, furniture, bathrooms, spa, etc.) in structures such as cabins, yurts, and tree houses, leaving behind the negative aspects of traditional camping (Brooker & Joppe 2013). In glamping, accommodation is not tent-oriented; thus, there are other available concepts such as wood, caravans, and igloos (Boscoboinik & Bourquard, 2011:158). The types of glamping listed on a famous glamping website (WEB2, 2019) can be summarized as follows:

Table 3. Types of Glamping

Tree houses	Safari tents	Yurts	Log cabins
Eco-pods	Caves	Huts	Barns
Cabins	Villas	Towers	A-frame cabins
Cottages	Igloos	Floating	Elevated cabins
Bell tents	Tents	Cabooses	Tented cabins
Domes	Tipis	Caravans	Nature lodges
Campervans	Islands	Vacation rentals	Tiny houses

Source: The table was derived by the authors from the website www.glampinghub.com.

Within the scope of these concepts, glamping facilities have pointed to their luxury outdoor opportunities to direct trends (Brochado & Pereira 2017), while travel agencies have expressed the qualities of glamping tourism using the words “nature, luxury, high-quality service, and environment-friendly” (Sakáčová, 2013). The characteristics of individuals who prefer a vacation in line with the concepts of “camping and luxury” can be listed as follows (Comino & Walter, 2014; Ergüven et al., 2015; Çelik et al., 2017):

- Families and couples,
- Those who love wild nature,
- Individuals aged 50 and over who seek tranquillity,
- Those who want to take a vacation by integrating nature and camping with luxury and without considering the problem of camping materials,
- Those who prefer adventure, freedom, and independence,
- Those who prefer their families to be safe and with nature,
- Those who want to get away from the stress of everyday life,
- Those who want a nature-themed vacation away from the concept of standard holidays,
- High-income people,
- Those who want to have direct contact with nature,
- Those who adopt a lifestyle of health and sustainability (LOHAS).

Glamping tourism is defined as eco-friendly tourism which hosts unspoiled and untouched beauties (Sakáčová, 2013). In terms of sustainability, glamping tourism also includes “energy efficiency, accessibility, waste prevention, non-destruction and protection of resources, nature-friendly building, and environment-friendly transportation” (Comino & Walter, 2014; Ergüven et al., 2015).

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study aimed to evaluate the suitability of glamping tourism in Turkey for the Middle East tourism market. The main research question of this study is: ‘How suitable is the glamping tourism for Middle East Tourism Market?’. The study attempted to identify facilities that offer glamping services in Turkey, to explore the characteristics of relevant facilities with respect to their glamping services, to explain the potential of glamping based on the general characteristics of the Middle East tourism market, and to put forward suggestions as to the applicability of glamping tourism to the Middle East tourism market. For this purpose, the data were collected using audio-visual materials. First, the Middle East tourism market and its position in Turkey were thoroughly investigated. Later, Glamping tourism and its position in Turkey were studied in detail through the content analysis of the facilities listed on glampinghub.com, one of the world’s leading websites. Then, the Middle East tourism market was evaluated in terms of glamping tourism.

Glamping has become a preferred form of tourism worldwide and many researchers have suggested that glamping will be among the tourism trends of 2020. Within the scope of this study, the researchers decided to examine and evaluate the situation of glamping tourism in Turkey and Turkey-based glamping facilities using the most visited glamping-focused website glampinghub.com. When navigating on the website, it was found that the website has a separate search function for Turkey-based glamping facilities through the URL glampinghub.com/turkey and lists Turkey-based glamping facilities registered with the website. In this regard, qualitative research was used to evaluate the Turkey-based facilities listed on the website. Qualitative research is defined as “*a process that seeks to present realistic and holistic descriptions of perceptions and events within their natural setting using qualitative data collection methods such as observation, interview, and document analysis*” (Yıldırım, 1999). The data were analysed using content analysis. Şimşek (2009, p. 45) notes that the main purpose of content analysis is to derive concepts and relations that can explain the collected data; thus, content analysis subject the data summarized and interpreted in descriptive analysis to a deeper analysis so that concepts and themes that go unnoticed in descriptive analysis can be discovered through content analysis. He further explains that the collected data must first be conceptualized and then logically organized based on emerging concepts; accordingly, themes explaining the data must be identified. This study made a qualitative analysis of Turkey-based glamping facilities listed on the web page glampinghub.com/turkey to explore the current situation and offered suggestions as to the situation of glamping tourism in Turkey in the context of the Middle East tourism market.

FINDINGS

Glamping Tourism in Turkey

Glamping is among the trends of the 2020s and a new concept for Turkey (Ergüven et al., 2015, pp. 256-257). Seventeen glamping facilities in Turkey were found to be registered with the website glampinghub.com, which plays an important role in the international glamping market, through the search to identify the presence of glamping tourism in Turkey (WEB 3, 2019).

Table 4 derived from the website glampinghub.com shows the general characteristics of the facilities that offer glamping services in Turkey. Accordingly, among a total of seventeen glamping facilities in Turkey, six are located in Antalya, seven in Muğla, two in Nevşehir, and two in Burdur.

Table 4. General Characteristics of Glamping Facilities

Location	Facility Name and Code	Facility Type								Number of Units	Capacity	Minimum	Pet-friendly	Pool	Car Park	Restaurant	Airport	Bar-Pub-Cafe
		Cottage	Cabins	Caves	Bell tents	Tree	Tipis	Tented	Safari									
Antalya	F1								✓	1	6	2	✓		✓			
Antalya	F2								✓	1	6	7			✓			
Antalya	F3								✓	1	6	2	✓		✓			
Muğla	F4							✓		4	8	1		✓		✓	✓	✓
Muğla	F5							✓		1	2	2			✓			
Muğla	F6					✓				1	2	2			✓			
Muğla	F7							✓		6	24	1		✓		✓	✓	
Antalya	F8					✓				11	34	2						
Burdur	F9								✓	7	14	1				✓	✓	✓
Muğla	F10								✓	5	14	1		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Antalya	F11					✓				12	24	1			✓			✓
Antalya	F12				✓					1	4	2	✓		✓			
Nevşehir	F13			✓						5	10	1	✓		✓		✓	
Muğla	F14		✓							1	2	7		✓	✓			
Burdur	F15	✓								5	10	1						
Muğla	F16	✓								1	7	1		✓		✓	✓	
Nevşehir	F17			✓						9	22	1	✓			✓		
TOTAL	17	2	1	2	1	3	3	2	3	17	50	6	5	6	10	6	6	4
AVERAGE												2.05						

Source: The table was derived by the authors from the website www.glampinghub.com.

Three facilities offer accommodation in tipis, two offer accommodation in tented cabins, three offer accommodation in safari tents, three offer accommodation in tree houses, two offer accommodation in caves, two offer accommodation in cottages, one facility offers accommodation in cabins, and one facility any offers accommodation in bell tents. A total of 176 units have a capacity for 506 people.

Table 5. Features of Glamping Facilities and Their Rooms

Facility Code	Conditioner-	Courtyard	Double Bed	Single Bed	Wireless	Barbecue	Electricity	Hammock	Kitchen and kitchen utensils	Living room-sitting room	bathroom, shower, Jacuzzi	Toilet	Water	Heating Stove	Television-Satellite TV	Telephone	Safe/case	Computer
1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			
4			✓				✓				✓	✓	✓					

5			✓	✓	✓							✓	✓					
6			✓	✓	✓							✓	✓					
7			✓								✓	✓	✓					
8	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓	✓	✓					
9	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓			
10	✓				✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
11					✓						✓	✓	✓					
12	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓					
13	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
14			✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓					
15	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓					
16			✓								✓	✓	✓					
17	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		

Source: The table was derived by the authors from the website www.glampinghub.com.

Given the data in Table 4, the number of units in facilities is very small, excluding the eighth facility (115 units) and the eleventh facility (12 units) in Antalya. Therefore, the capacity of the facilities is limited due to the small number of units, excluding the eighth and eleventh facilities.

Although they all are listed as glamping facilities and the minimum accommodation period varies from 1 to 7 days (2.05 days on average), only five facilities are pet-friendly. The glamping facilities in Table 4 offer services such as pool, car park, restaurant, airport transfer, and bar-pub-cafe.

Table 5 derived from the relevant website shows the features of glamping facilities and their rooms. These features were categorized by the authors using the information of the facilities on the relevant website as follows: “air conditioner-fan, courtyard, double bed, single bed, internet-wireless internet, barbecue, electricity, hammock, kitchen and kitchen utensils, living-sitting room, private bathroom-shower-Jacuzzi and appliances, toilet, water, heating stove, television, satellite, telephone, safe/case, and computer”.

Glamping tourism is defined as “a type of tourism that offers a variety of nature-related activities and allows visitors to have an unusual vacation experience without sacrificing comfort and luxury” (Çelik et al., 2017). According to the data in Table 5, considering that luxury and comfort must not be compromised, it can thus be stated that there are deficiencies in the services and opportunities offered by the glamping facilities.

Table 6. Activities Available during Accommodation in Glamping Facilities

Facility Code	Bicycle	Canoe	Hiking/Trekking	Safari-4x4	Swimming	Wine Tasting	Birdwatching	Biking	Entertainment	Meditation	Trip	Walking	Yoga	Boat Trip	Dinner	Feeding Animals	Photo	Snorkelling	Water Sports	ATV-Four Wheelers	City Tour	Fishing	Horseback Riding	Scuba Diving	Sailing	Massage	Paragliding	Spa Therapy	Shopping	Museums	Climbing	Hot Air Balloon	TOTAL	
1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓														19	
2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓															19
3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓															19
4	✓		✓	✓							✓			✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓									13	

5			✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓									✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		14	
6			✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		14
7									✓	✓	✓	✓											✓			✓			6
8		✓	✓							✓																	✓		5
9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓				✓			✓	✓	✓								✓		12
10	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓						✓			15
11			✓							✓															✓				3
12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								19
13										✓																			1
14			✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓									✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	14
15			✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓									✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	13
16										✓	✓	✓	✓											✓			✓		6
17	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓	✓													✓			✓		✓	10
																							AVERAGE	11. 8					

Source: The table was derived by the authors from the website www.glampinghub.com.

Table 6 derived from the relevant website shows activities that visitors can do during their accommodation in the glamping facilities. These activities include “bicycle, canoeing, trekking/hiking, Safari-4x4, swimming, wine tasting, birdwatching, biking, entertainment, meditation, sightseeing, walking, yoga, boat trip, dinner, feeding animals, photo, snorkelling, water sports, ATV-four wheelers, city tour, fishing, horseback riding, scuba diving, sailing, massage, paragliding, spa therapy, shopping, museums, climbing, and hot air balloon”.

Table 6 shows that the average number of activities offered by the seventeen facilities on the related website was 11.8. Considering the features of glamping tourism, glamping facilities that promote their services through websites need to specify in detail the activities that they offer. As it is the case in camping tourism, glamping tourists inevitably take part in activities during their accommodation. The majority of the Turkey-based glamping facilities indicate the activities that visitors can do in their facilities on the website analysed within the scope of the study.

An Overview of Glamping Tourism in the Context of Middle East Tourism

According to the data of UNWTO, the rate of participation of Middle Eastern tourists in tourism movements is quite high although the share of the Middle East tourism market in the world tourism is not as big as other tourism markets. The countries with the highest tourist potential in the Middle East are Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, Kuwait, and Lebanon, respectively. Gulf countries have the most important tourists in the Middle East. A comparison of countries in terms of foreign visitors to Turkey showed that the temporal change rate of Middle East countries is quite high. To receive as much share as possible from the Middle East tourism market, which has the highest growth rate in the world tourism and Turkey’s tourism, it is of great importance to investigate new trends on a country basis and use suitable trends for marketing strategies. Against this background, this study set out to make an evaluation of glamping tourism, one of the most popular trends in the 2020s, in terms of its suitability to the Middle East tourism market. The study, thus, focused on the general characteristics of the Middle East tourism industry, the features of glamping tourism, and the case in Turkey. After all these investigations, a number of inferences were drawn.

Glamping tourism is one of the popular trends of the 2020s and a type of tourism that combines traditional camping with luxury. Considering the characteristics of tourists who prefer this type of tourism, it is notable that these tourists have a high-level income and travel as families or couples. With respect to the characteristics of the Middle East tourism market, the most prominent characteristics of these tourists are as follows: the Middle East tourists are fond of luxury, have high incomes (especially in the Gulf countries), and travel together with their families.

Accommodation is very important for Middle Eastern tourists because they usually stay longer than the average tourists. Accommodation should be in line with Islamic rules. Thus, glamping facilities are a good choice for them, especially because they travel in large groups.

UAE citizens generally prefer trips that are tailored to their particular interests and enables them to have authentic experiences. Therefore, glamping tourism can be considered a good choice for UAE citizens. They are also ready to pay a high price to enjoy the highest quality experience. High income is a characteristic of those who prefer glamping.

Middle Eastern tourists like to see new and unusual things. There are many factors that affect destination selection. These include the general environment, destination image, good tourist activities, cultural similarities, shopping opportunities, good weather conditions, visa procedures, entertainment opportunities suitable for all family members, and accommodation quality. Middle Eastern tourists expect highly individualized services and generally prefer luxury accommodation. It can thus be said that Glamping tourism, which is considered to be suitable for those who want to take a nature-themed vacation away from the concept of standard vacation, can also be suitable for Middle Eastern tourists. Those who want to get away from the stress of daily life prefer glamping, while Middle Eastern tourists often want to escape from problems and reality.

For Middle Eastern tourists, Europe is the most preferred destination, other than their countries. They prefer Europe for its natural beauty, good weather, culture and history. Other important attractions are shopping, outdoor activities, tourist attractions, and Spa. Escape from hot weather especially in the summer months is an important factor in the choice of European countries. Therefore, it seems that glamping tourism can appeal to the Middle East tourism market.

Safety and the reputation of a place are important for Middle Eastern tourists in the selection of destination. Those who prefer glamping tourism prefer their families to be safe and with nature.

In general, the characteristics of Middle Eastern tourists and those who prefer glamping tourism are quite similar. Therefore, it can be argued that Glamping tourism is preferable for Middle Eastern tourists.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Turkey has the potential to attract more tourists from Middle East countries with the new trend glamping tourism. Indeed, the general characteristics of Middle Eastern tourists and the general characteristics of those who prefer glamping tourism are quite similar.

There are seventeen Turkey-based glamping facilities registered with the website glampinghub.com which plays a significant role in the international market. Among them, six are located in Antalya, seven in Muğla, two in Nevşehir, and two in Burdur. Among these facilities, three offer accommodation in tipis, two offer accommodation in tented cabins, three offer accommodation in safari tents, three offer accommodation in tree houses, two offer accommodation in caves, two offer accommodation in cottages, one offers accommodation in cabins, and one offers accommodation in bell tents. A total of 176 units have a capacity for 506 people. Thus, the number of these facilities and their capacity needs to be increased. Most of the glamping facilities are located in Antalya and Muğla. However, the Black Sea region is one of the most preferred regions in Turkey for Middle Eastern tourists. It is noteworthy that no facility in the Black Sea region has registered with this network that plays an important role worldwide. The Black Sea region has accommodation facilities suitable for glamping tourism. Further studies might explore the tourism potential of the Black Sea region. Thus, awareness of facilities in the region might be fostered and they might be encouraged to take part in this network. This will help to revive tourism in the region and contribute to tourism in Turkey.

There are some deterrent effects on Arab tourists' visits to Europe. These include high costs, visa requirements, and the perceived unavailability of halal foods. Therefore, religious and cultural similarities and affordability compared to Europe make Turkey an attractive destination for Middle Eastern tourists. There has been a trend in Middle Eastern countries towards travelling to pro-Islamic countries since the September 11 terrorist attacks. In Europe, Turkey has taken advantage of this situation as an Islamic country. Therefore, with good marketing efforts, the Middle East has the potential to reach an important position in Turkish tourism in the short and long

term. It is believed that glamping tourism is an important alternative in satisfying the demands of Middle Eastern tourists in search of luxury and in increasing the share of Middle Eastern tourists in Turkish tourism.

The features of the Turkey-based glamping facilities and their rooms include “air conditioner-fan, courtyard, double bed, single bed, internet-wireless internet, barbecue, electricity, hammock, kitchen and kitchen utensils, living-sitting room, private bathroom-shower-Jacuzzi and appliances, toilet, water, heating stove, television, satellite, telephone, safe/case, and computer”. The availability of kitchen in glamping facilities has a positive effect as Middle Eastern tourists give importance to halal foods and prefer home-cooked foods. Because Middle Eastern tourists like to shop, these facilities need to have shops nearby to satisfy this need.

The majority of the glamping facilities in Turkey have activities that visitors can do in the vicinity. These activities include “bicycle, canoeing, trekking/hiking, Safari-4x4, swimming, wine tasting, birdwatching, biking, entertainment, meditation, sightseeing, walking, yoga, boat trip, dinner, feeding animals, photo, snorkelling, water sports, ATV-four wheelers, city tour, fishing, horseback riding, scuba diving, sailing, massage, paragliding, spa therapy, shopping, museums, climbing, and hot air balloon”. Considering that Middle Eastern tourist like outdoor activities and want to spend time with the family, it is advantageous that there are a variety of activities that can be done around the glamping facilities in Turkey.

Although bookings through travel agents are prevailing in Middle East countries, online bookings have been increasing day by day. Therefore, the number of facilities in Turkey that are members of the international glamping network should be increased to receive greater shares of this market.

Middle Eastern tourists attach great importance to word-of-mouth communication prior to destination selection. Especially friend advice is important in choosing a destination. Before visiting a new destination, families consult their friends or other families who have already been to that destination. The information they obtain from familiar people in their own countries gives them more confidence. Therefore, it should be ensured that glamping tourists be satisfied with their trips.

In this study, it is tried to make inferences based on the previous studies about the subject in literature. In future studies, the tendencies of Middle Eastern tourists towards glamping tourism and their preferences for glamping facilities should be investigated by using quantitative methods.

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