RESEARCH ARTICLE

WHERE NATURE MEETS LUXURY: ISLAMIC TOURISM PRODUCT INDICATORS FOR ECO-GLAMPING (ITPIEG) SITES TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE ECOTOURISM

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Manuscript Info

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Abstract

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Known as green tourism, ecotourism refers to traveling in natural areas that conserve the environment and sustain local people's well-being. Natural beauty, relaxation, and harmony of the environment are among the benefits of ecotourism. Glamping has emerged as a global phenomenon in the outdoor hospitality sector in recent years as a combination of "glamorous" and "camping". The trend of glamping site vacations is quite popular in developed countries, and has started to be prevalent in Malaysia. It is imperative to study these new tourism trends; as academic research has emerged on glamping tourism. The aims of this study are to examine the indicators of accommodation and facilities offered by glamping operators and then consider the Malaysia experience on eco-glamping tourism. In light of how eco-glamping appeals to Muslim travellers, it shall further underscore in this study by developing an ITPI targeted specifically at the eco-glamping industry. This study is qualitative using systematic literature searches on priory research. The selected articles, documents, and relevant texts were then narratively reviewed and thematically organized. Comprehensive framework for Islamic Tourism Product Index (ITPI) offered by the Muslim friendly hospitality sector shall then be examined and identified. To gain insights into the findings of this study, content analysis is carried out to analyse the data. This study demonstrates that the comprehensive key indicators of the Islamic Tourism Product Index shall be extended to include glamping accommodations. It is strongly believed that the establishment of ITPI will satisfy the needs and interests of Muslim tourists while protecting the sustainability of the ecotourism industry.

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Introduction:-
Australian and New Zealand have been pioneering ecotourism since the 1980s, and it has proven to be a very popular activity worldwide. Since then, the ethics and conservation developed in those countries have spread across

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the globe. Until 2020, this nature-based specialty travel industry forecasts the ecotourism market to be the fastest-growing segment of the tourist industry, giving it a potential business opportunity. Researchers have further demonstrated that ecotourism includes many forms such as glamping, farm stays, adventure tours, and more. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has documented an upward trend in the number of tourists arriving in Malaysia, especially those from the Middle East. In recent decades, ecotourism has become a worldwide trend, especially in developed countries. Since 90, the Malaysian government has promoted Malaysia as an ecotourism destination, incorporating this into Malaysian plans and policies. Tourism agencies and operators tend to associate their businesses with ecotourism or green tourism activities. To such an extent, the Malaysian government and other stakeholders have worked hard to enhance ecotourism value, improve planning, management, and marketing methods (Siti Suriawati Isa, Mohd Husbalsa & Sergey Gerchkin, 2020).

A variety of ecosystems such as mangroves, swamps, mountains, coral reefs, limestone, forest, and caves have contributed to the emergence of eco-glamping tourism. Research into this new trend of tourist style is important due to the growing demand from local and foreign tourists. Moreover, a review of academic works of literature further highlights that, in the context of Malaysia, no published academic studies have been conducted so far concerning the very recent and modern domestic "glamorous camping" which belongs to the ecotourism niche. Concern for conserving natural resources and maintaining the environment is gaining traction in recent years. This makes it pertinent to explore the intended dimensions and critical indicators of a glamping accommodation with regards to current services and facilities.

When it comes to the perceived service quality offered by this glamorous accommodation to tourists, there have been large gaps in the literature on the Malaysian experience. An additional research study on eco-glamping tourism with a particular focus on Malaysia is called for in light of the current situation. By conducting this study, it will be possible to give prominence to the best practices of eco-glamping to meet the needs of both domestic and international tourists. A system to assess sustainability from an integrated perspective is essential to successfully implementing sustainable ecotourism; conserving nature-based products and safeguarding the cultural heritage and environment through Eco-Glamping accommodations. Furthermore, this study highlights the need to expand the potential of eco-glamping sites by incorporating Islamic tourism parameters that embrace Muslim Friendly Hospitality and Services.

2. Glamping as a New waved for Ecotourism: Concept & Malaysian Scenario

The term glamping is a lexical blend of "glamorous" and "camping" and has been described as a global trend in outdoor hospitality, combining comfort with direct contact with nature (Brochado&Brochado, 2019). The concept of glamping accommodations has been discussed in a few academic studies. A study by Anna Brochadoa and Cristina Pereira (2017) on the experience of a Glamping vacation in Portugal indicates glamping is derived from camping and has evolved into more luxurious and comfortable accommodations for those who enjoy the outdoors. According to Cheng (2016), the continuous demand for comfort and luxury in accommodations has spurred the growth of glamping products, which represents innovative and contemporary novel forms of accommodation in campsites (Milohnić, Cvelić-Bonifačić, &Licul, 2019). This gives rise to the words "Glam" and "Camping". Due to the emergence of the glamping industry, it is now evolving from the basic accommodation which used tents to a broader position that includes caravans, all kinds of tents, mobile homes, treehouses, floating houses, cabins, domes, villas, holiday flats, recreational vehicles, and luxury offerings (Milohnić et al., 2019).

By elevating ecotourism holidays to a whole new level, the relatively new trend of Glamping, or luxury camping, allows people to experience the outdoors comfortably, luxuriously, and conveniently. This is without compromising their comfort. Glamping has become a popular way for families or youth in Malaysia to enjoy holidays. Increasing interest in nature and outdoor events together with an inflated income level post-COVID-19 have led to a proliferation of glamping sites all over Malaysia.

In addition to luxury beds, quality linens, rugs, antique furniture, and sleek, modern baths, glamping sites often feature kitchens, TVs, Wi-Fi, and sometimes, housekeeping services (Filipe, S., Santos, C. A., & Barbosa, B., 2018). In contrast to camping, glamping sites often feature luxury beds, quality linens, rugs, antique furnishings, modern, sleek bathrooms, and several levels of luxury amenities, creating an opulent atmosphere and integrating personal wellness into outdoor hospitality experiences (Cheng, 2016; Milohnić et al., 2019). Glamping sites, cabins, and yurts are located in forested valleys in vehicle-free zones. Another key element of the glamping industry is the quality of service. Glamping managers can provide quality services in five facets: tangibles, staff, nature-based experiences,

food, and activities (Hrgović, Ana-Marija Vrtodušić, JosipaCvelićBonifačić, & Ines Milohnić, 2019). In contrast, Brochado and Brochado (2019) highlight dimensions of service quality commonly linked to staff response, complementary offers, relationships with tourists, tangible elements, and empathy.

As there is an increasing trend for local and international tourists to consume more environmentally friendly, comfortable, and value for money products and services, camping in Malaysia is becoming a popular choice for locals and international tourists alike. Since Covid-19, the camping sites are usually located on beaches or mountains and are run by non-profit organizations (Sheridan & Wyoming, 2021). In terms of market segments, glamping sites offer a wide variety of products, from basic to luxury with premium amenities and exotic features. In terms of segments, glamping sites offer wide options from cabins and pods and tents, treehouses, and yurts (Imarc Group, 2021). As a way to diversify the concept of glamping, services like wellness and adventure are always offered as part of a bundle. The top 14 glamping sites, according to KLOOK, a website promoting tourist attractions, are as follows:

14 Most Popular Glamping Sites	
1. Tiarasa Escapes, JandaBaik	8. Lost World of Tambun, Ipoh
2. The Rubber Escape, Melaka	9. Dusun Bonda, Batang Kali
3. Glamz @ Genting	10. Royal Belum State Park, Perak
4. Sea Horizon Resort, Johor	11. Time Capsule Retreat, Pahang
5. The Sticks, Kuala Kubu Bharu	12. Hammocks By the River
6. Lolo Mike's Eco Farm, Kerling	13. Endau-Rompin National Park, Johor
7. Gopeng Glamping Park, Gopeng	14. Umea Glam Kundasang, Sabah

Source: https://www.klook.com/en-MY/blog/camping-glamping-sites-malaysia/

Several studies have examined the potential for glamping after COVID-19, and a recent study on active leisure travelers revealed that there were more who planned to glamp (45.9%) after COVID-19 than those who would stay in a hotel/resort (24.7%). Craig and Karabas (2021) have concluded that glamping is a viable alternative to conventional leisure travel during and after the pandemic due to its ease of accessibility. As demand for glamping increases, the government can provide tax incentives to operators of glamping sites to encourage the growth of the industry. For this new tourism product to be more attractive to tourists, tax incentives are necessary to encourage its use.

Establishment of Muslim Friendly Hospitality Services in Malaysia Standard
Following the emergence of ecotourism worldwide and the surge of Muslim tourists over the past few years, halal tourism has progressively been offered in Muslim as well as non-Muslim countries. It's expected to increase by 73% from 1.6 billion in 2010 to 2.76 billion in 2050 (Global Halal Tourism Organization, 2021), making it the fastest-growing market for tourism this century. It is therefore evident that halal tourism has significant benefits for the growth of tourism in Islamic countries (Rusby and Arif, 2020).

An analysis of previous literature shows that halal tourism has been extensively discussed concerning its concept and practices, the opportunities it offers, as well as its challenges (Suban, S.A., Madhan, K. and Shagirbasha, S. (2021). Numerous studies have been conducted so far, especially in Malaysia (Battour et al. al.., 2011; Hanafiah and Hamdan, 2020; Rahman et al., 2020); Turkey (Battour et al., 2018; Boğan, E. and Sarıışık, M., 2019), China (Jia and Chaozhi, 2020), New Zealand (Prayag, 2020), Jordan (Harahsheh et al., 2019); the United States, Indonesia, (Abror et al., 2019; Adinugraha et al., 2021; Rahmawati et al., 2021; Ratnasari et al., 2020).

At present, Malaysia is much more advanced in introducing Muslim-friendly hotels in Malaysia as an Islamic tourism product. At the moment, there are three standards in place, providing specific requirements and guidelines to be followed by Malaysian hotel operators when offering Muslim-friendly hotel services. The Department of Standards Malaysia published MS 2610: 2015 Muslim Friendly Hospitality Services - Requirements, which provides the benchmark for Muslim-friendly hotels. The introduction of MS 2610: 2015 is a significant milestone in the effort to promote Muslim hospitality industry. It provides guidelines on the component of the Islamic tourism supply chain namely accommodation premises, tour packages and tourist guides. The requirements of MS 2610: 2015 are broken down into two major parts namely General requirements and specific requirements. The General requirements are further divided into six more arts which include requirements for accommodations aspects.

Accommodation standards cover five main areas including rooms, food and beverages, public bathrooms, public Musolla as well as recreational infrastructure and health facilities (Department of Standard Malaysia 2015).

Through the partnership with the MOTAC and ITC, Tripez Travel, a private Malaysian travel agency, presents Salam Standard as a Muslim-friendly hotel rating system. The government of Malaysia recognizes Standard greetings through the Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC) and Islamic Tourism Center (ITC) (Islamic Tourism Centre, 2016). On the other hand, the Crescent Standard is another international standard developed by a Singapore-based private agency (Zaini, M., Adib, M., Ariff, M.I., 2020) that offers halal-friendly travel ratings and accreditations for Muslim-friendly hotels. The Islamic Quality Standard for Hotels (IQS) is the same as the standard for Muslim-friendly hotels. By developing the Islamic Standard rating (Nor'aini&Shaya'a 2012; Che Musa et al. 2014), developed by Prof. Dr.Nor'ain Othman from UniversitiTeknologi Mara (UiTM) and Prof. Shaya'a Othman of the Universal Crescent Standard Center (UCSC), it provides basic requirements for determining the Islamic quality standard for hotels (Crescentrating, 2018).

As a result of cooperation with Mastercard, the Crescent rating created the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) which is the most comprehensive index on halal tourism for Muslim-friendly, halal tourism (Cuesta-Valiño, Bolifa&Núñez-Barriopedro 2020). It is apparent that the different agencies offer different criteria and requirements for Muslim-friendly hotel standards to be met (Zaini, M., Adib, M., Ariff, M.I., 2020).

Comprehensive Framework of Key indicators for Islamic Tourism Product Index (ITPI) in Muslim Friendly Hospitality Sector.
Four of the main features underpinning the halal tourism concept are Islamic morality in general, the legality of gambling, and the prohibition of alcohol and alcohol. Halal tourism places special emphasis on providing clean, pure, nutritious, and halalantoyyiban food, facilities, accommodation, and services following the basics of the fundamental principles of Islamic teachings that meet the needs and interests of Muslim travelers (Adinugraha et al., 2021; Prayag, 2020). Additionally, to create a halal-friendly environment and image in tourist destinations, cultural and social activities are crucial elements to meet certain criteria. In this case, it is extremely important for tourism management organizations to also develop and provide suitable cultural and social activities for Muslim travel-savvy (Han et al., 2019) with a specific reference to glamping accommodation.

To accomplish this, an Islamic comprehensive framework will need to be implemented to govern Islamic tourism products. The existing standards and requirements enshrined in MS 2610: 2015 will need to be applied, along with the Maqasid Syariah (the objective of Shari'ah) while establishing and promoting Islamic hospitality services. Al-Raysuni (1993) defines an objective as the construction of shari'ah with the primary goal of benefiting humankind. Some Muslim scholars have analyzed the Qur'an and Sunnah to identify the objectives of shari'ah and then summarized that the objectives include five essential values, including protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property (Al-Ghazali, 1993). These five aims are fundamental, comprehensive, and sublime targets for human needs. Al-Qahtani (2015) points out that the protection of these five ends will confer maslahah on human beings, otherwise, the neglect of these ends will cause mafsadah (harm) to humans. Therefore, the observance of these five ends is crucial to achieving the real purpose of shari'ah. Al-Shatibi (2004) adds that the protection of these five ends occurs in two aspects. Firstly: Protecting the positive aspects of human existence (janib al-wujud) by developing and taking measures to strengthen it. Second: Protecting from negative aspects (janib al-'adam), by preventing and avoiding anything that harms humans.

Protection of religion (hifz al-Din) is paramount. This includes performing obligatory worship or farduain (Al-Qadiri 2001; Hamdan 2012). Therefore, when developing Muslim-friendly hospitality, hotel providers should provide proper infrastructures and facilities for Islamic worship. For the comfort of the residents, basic needs that are properly maintained, such as water to purify hadas and ablution, prayer rooms, and identification of qiblah, should be made available. Information on a nearby mosque for Friday prayers should also be provided. Transportation to the mosque should also be provided for easy access for hotel residents. A hotelier should make sure their meal schedule allows residents to have sahur during Ramadhan, and break their fast. Those who do not perform fasting will continue as usual, with an exception made for those who are ill, as they are syar'ie ('uzur). In contrast, protection of religion from negative impacts can be achieved by ensuring that the rooms occupied by Muslims are free from Bibles and are not decorated with symbols or statues that are contradictory to Islamic beliefs. To ensure Muslim beliefs are not negatively affected, hotels as a whole need to be remodeled.

Protection of life (hifz al-nafs) is another value within the MaqasidSyari'ah framework that transcends beyond food. Seeking treatment for illnesses, consuming medication, and implementing qisas (retaliation) punishment are examples of this value. Furthermore, the prohibition of harming others, the law of self-defense, and taking action under duress are examples of Islamic law enforcement to protect life from being detrimental (Al-Mabid, 2005). When embarking on Muslim Friendly Hospitality, hoteliers must provide halal foods and beverages for their residents. Adequate information on halal restaurants nearby the hotel is also required, to the extent that a halal-certified restaurant should exist on the hotel's premises. In such a way, the hotel is being a Muslim-friendly hotel. To maintain a healthy body and clean environment, hotel rooms and areas must be kept clean and free from dirt and disease-carrying agents. Other requirements as part of the protection of life include: Having adequate space and leisure equipment, such as a gymnasium and a segregation swimming pool, that are following Islamic law and facilities, such as laundry services.

A hotel provider should prioritize security measures and mechanisms for the protection of hotel residents so that life is protected and their safety is enhanced. Security features that have been included in the hotel rooms, pools, gyms, and parking areas include trained security guards, closed-circuit cameras (CCTV), smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, water spray systems, fire hoses, fire lifts, emergency doors, and fire resistance, emergency guides, and first aid kits. It is the responsibility of the hotelier to ensure that the rooms, pools, gyms, and parking areas are safe for the guests. There should be appropriate guidelines as well as standard operating procedures (SOP) developed and trained to deal with emergencies. These measures should not only protect life, but also property (hifz al-mal).

To protect the mind from harm (hifz al- 'aql), it should be encouraged positively. For example, thinking, studying, and learning various knowledge (Reena & Huda 2019). To promote this value towards Muslim Friendly Hospitality, which is believed to bring benefits to hotel residents, television programs that give knowledge and generate information should be multiplied compared to entertainment programs. There should be useful information in the reading space and on the posters. In addition, since it has been made clear that consuming alcoholic beverages is prohibited in Islam, the hotel should not provide alcoholic beverages to the residents either in the restaurant, cafe, mini-bar, or the room. In such instances, alcohol shall be strictly prohibited from being brought into the hotel as it can cause discomfort among Muslim residents.

In the five essential values, the protection of lineage (hifz al-nasl) refers to maintaining the societies and descendants through legal marriage. Preserving dignity (hifz al-'ird) refers to all actions intended to preserve human purity, therefore adultery is prohibited. For this reason, some scholars, such as Al-Ghazali in his book IhyaUlum al-Din, Izz al-Din, Ibn 'Abd al-Salam, and others, argue that protecting dignity is the sixth kulliyat in MaqasidSyari'ah (Al-Duwayhi 2005). According to Zarkashi (1992) "it is customary for a rational individual to be willing to sacrifice his life and property, in the case of an emergency, defending something vital for survival is considered "daruriyyat".

To adhere to the value of protecting offspring and dignity, the Muslim-friendly hotel must ensure that all of its occupants are married, and proper observance of the aurah is essential, especially for Muslims. Gender mixing is also not permitted in some areas such as the swimming pool, gym, or spa. As a result, the hotelier is strongly encouraged to provide a segregated area or space that separates the sexes. Entertainment or recreation packages, or games designed to encourage free mixing between men and women, should not be offered by the hotelier. Internet access through Wi-Fi should be filtered to keep out obscenity and pornography. The entertainment must not contain elements that violate shari'ah, such as wild music, songs that are delusional, or clothing that exposes the aurah.

In the spirit of MaqasidSyari'ah, protection of property (hifz al-mal) is another essential value embedded within the framework. In addition to security guarantees, hotel occupants expect a full range of services. As such, in determining the standard for Muslim-friendly hotels, security should be considered as one of the main criteria that cannot be tolerated. The Muslim Friendly Hotel may take action to protect its property from being destroyed or stolen. If this occurs, payment for damages may also occur. Additional actions may be taken by the management of the hotel, for example providing a safety deposit box in each room for its users to use, safe deposit vault service, regular security patrols, and entry and exit control. Employees trained in integrity values operate a strict elevator based on occupant cards. Although the hotelier has an individual responsibility for property security and safety, the hotelier must be as secure as possible (Mulawi& al-Mesawi 2016).

Discussion and Recommendation: -

4.   Incorporating the Islamic Tourism Product Indicators for Eco-Glamping (ITPiEG)

From the discussion above, it can be seen that MS 2610:2015 addresses all the requirements and elements of Muslim Friendly Hospitality services. The requirements and criteria of these standards have been analyzed under the five kulliyyat which have been enshrined within the comprehensive framework of MaqasidSyari'ah which promotes the protection of five essential values: religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth. Despite the fact that the basic elements of Muslim friendly hospitality have been adequately addressed by the Malaysian Standard (MS 210:2015) it is still apparent that there are still loopholes that need to be addressed for further improvement. The present Malaysian standards currently in place are merely providing very general guidelines and requirements that are insufficient to serve holistic aspects and elements that were formerly included, an analysis conducted by Zaini, M., Adib, M., and Ariff, MI (2020) revealed.

In this regard, this study recommends that specific ITPIs be developed and expanded to meet Shar'iah-compliant requirements for eco-glamping sites in Malaysia. In establishing this, the indicators and elements outlined in the present MS should serve as a guideline, with some refinement required. In addition to the values comprehensively laid out in the Maqasid Syariah framework, the proposed Islamic Tourism Product Indicators for Eco-Glamping Resorts (ITPiEG) should take into account the suitability and the needs of tourists and stakeholders in Eco-Glamping resorts in Malaysia.

Accordingly, this study also proposed a brand-new index that is appropriate in the current situation to create a space and opportunity for Muslim travelers to feel the pleasure of being in an eco-glamping resort that is luxurious and yet still offers a Muslim-friendly resort atmosphere in various aspects, including aspects that cover the five kulliyat in Maqasid Syariah. As a result, the proposal for Islamic Tourism Product Indicators for Eco-Glamping Resorts (ITPiEG) is outlined in Table 1.

KulliyyatMaqasid Syariah	ITPI Relevant Criteria
Hifz al-Din (Protection of Religion)	Prayers: prayer mat, telekung, clean cloth dressing for men, direction qiblah, prayer schedule, musolla
	Fasting: iftar and sahur
	Ablution and bathing facilities
	Infrastructure purifies feces (if other than water together with instruction)
	Friday Prayers: information regarding the mosque nearby
	There is no holy book other than the Quran in the room
	Room decoration is not contradicted Islamic beliefs
Hifz al-Nafs (Protection of Life)	Halal food and beverages
	The restaurant is halal certified
	Safe and comfortable leisure room: such as a well-ventilated gym and swimming pool
	Clean: room and surrounding area hotel
	Security controls: such as guards, CCTV

	Fire control: such as detectors and fire extinguishers
	Emergency control: such as 'sop' and trained staff (especially in the event of an injury)
	first aid kit
	No smoking
	appropriate emergency torchlight
	Glamping Tent: well-maintained glass tents regularly, thick, secure, and well-covered canvas tent
	wellness spa: body massage (separated between men and women
Hifz al-Aql (Protection of intellect)	Provides more channels television with informative info
	Provides a reading room
	Does not provide drinks alcoholic: restaurants, cafes, and mini-bar
	Prohibition of entering alcoholic beverages
	Mind therapy spa: use therapeutic music that calms the mind and does not neglect
	Sound therapy: Quranic verses or nasyids that soothe the soul as the background music of the hotel/resort
Hifz al-Nasl (Protection of Lineage)	Prohibit couples not married share room- check marriage confirmation documents
	Separate spaces or tables use of the swimming pool, gym, and spa based on gender
	Free from recreational packages and that game encourages association free between men and women
	Free from the entertainment that can be neglect
Hifz al-Mal (Protection of Property)	Safety box inside the room
	Vault
	Periodic patrols
	Entrance control
	The elevator operates using a valid owner card

Table 1: - Eco-Glamping Resort- Islamic Tourism Product Index (ITPI) Based on MS 2610: 2015 and KulliyyatMaqasid Syariah.
(Source: Based on the researcher's analysis)

Concluding Remarks: -

For the formulation of a sustainable Islamic Tourism Product Index (ITPI) for the Muslim Friendly hospitality sector, the key elements in the Maqasid Syariah framework shall be the main benchmark to ensure that all parties are benefited, including hotels, hotel employees, and hotel guests, with Muslim friendly rights.

As discussed above, this study's proposed Islamic Tourism Product Index (ITPI), dedicated to eco-glamping resorts, analyzed the recommendations of previous studies. It was refined by the researchers of this study based on the facilities and needs of eco-glamping resorts today. It is hoped the Islamic Tourism Product Indicators for Eco-Glamping Resort (ITPiEG) can be used as a reference for entrepreneurs or prospective eco-glamping resort entrepreneurs who wish to set up and provide luxury eco-glamping resort lifestyles for their clients while still maintaining a shari'ah-compliant luxury eco-glamping resort atmosphere. This study strongly believes that this eco-glamping resort will receive tremendous prospects in the future through ITPI-based standards, given the positive response to Islamic tourism in the country from both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Acknowledgements:-

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