

# Treehouse Accommodation in Slovakia: Theoretical Foundations and Global Trends in the Context of Glamping Development

Viktória Bíziková<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Constantine The Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia Faculty of Central European Studies Department of Tourism, Slovakia, Nitra, Dražovská 4 949 01

ORCID: 0009-0002-6305-5116

Email: vbizikova@ukf.sk

## Abstract

**Purpose** – Treehouse accommodation is a specific form of glamping that combines nature-based tourism with unique experiences. Despite its growing popularity, scientific attention in Slovakia remains limited. Although this trend is gaining momentum, a comprehensive scientific analysis of this phenomenon from a tourism perspective is still lacking. This study presents a theoretical framework for analysing treehouse accommodation. The aim is to summarise current knowledge about treehouse accommodation, review existing research, identify key factors in its development, and propose methodological approaches for future empirical research in Slovakia.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The article employs systematic literature review methods and critical analysis of relevant scientific studies, case studies, research articles, and available international data on treehouse accommodation. Secondary data are thematically analysed and synthesised.

**Findings** – Previous research points to the growing importance of treehouse accommodation as a type of accommodation for a form of sustainable, experiential tourism that contributes to destination differentiation. Key typologies, motivational factors for demand, and challenges related to sustainability have been identified. The findings show that treehouse accommodation contributes to slow tourism. International studies emphasise its economic potential and experiential value. In Slovakia, existing scientific outputs are scarce, indicating a need for empirical research on supply, demand, and the impacts on sustainability in the tourism sector.

**Originality** – The summary of findings confirms that treehouse accommodation is a significant and sustainable form of glamping with global potential for destination differentiation. Theoretical foundations and international trends demonstrate its contribution to experiential and slow tourism. However, this area has not been sufficiently researched in Slovakia, indicating an urgent need for systematic primary research into supply, demand, and sustainability.

**Keywords:** Glamping, Treehouse, Treehouse Accommodation, Slovakia.

**Paper type:** Research Article

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, alternative forms of accommodation have emerged in response to shifting tourist preferences, emphasising authenticity, sustainability, and immersive experiences. One such trend is treehouse accommodation, a niche yet rapidly expanding segment of glamping (glamorous camping), which offers environmentally conscious travellers the opportunity to engage with nature without forgoing comfort and design quality. Treehouse accommodation blends the escapist appeal of natural settings with experiential and often luxurious features, aligning with contemporary trends in slow tourism, experiential travel, and wellbeing-oriented travel. A treehouse is defined as a structure or dwelling built on a tree or supported by one or more trees, primarily intended for recreational and residential or observation purposes. Its key characteristics are its location above ground level and its integration with living trees, which give it a unique atmosphere and perspective. Its primary function is to provide experiential and unconventional accommodation with minimal impact on the surrounding environment (Bíziková, 2025).

Globally, treehouse accommodation has attracted increasing attention from entrepreneurs and tourists, driven by a growing desire for reconnection with nature and a retreat from urban life. The global treehouse glamping market size was estimated at USD 332.4 million in 2024 and is projected to reach USD 473.2 million by 2030, growing at a CAGR of 5,9% from 2025 to 2030. Treehouse glamping is consistently gaining popularity among glamping enthusiasts. The European Treehouse Glamping market held the largest share of 28.5% in 2024 (Grand View Research, 2025). This form of accommodation has evolved into a distinctive tourism product that combines ecological design, experiential storytelling, and sustainable development principles in various parts of the world, primarily in North America, Asia and the Pacific, Africa, and several European countries, which are discussed in more detail in this article. Despite the growing popularity of treehouse

accommodation globally, academic literature remains fragmented and limited, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. In Slovakia, systematic research focusing on this segment – its supply, demand, and sustainability implications – is largely absent.

In Slovakia, the development of treehouse accommodation is still in its early stages. While several operators have entered the market, systematic research on this form of tourism – particularly regarding its supply, demand, motivations, and challenges – is notably absent. Given Slovakia's rich natural resources, forest landscapes, and growing interest in nature-based tourism, this niche holds significant potential for diversifying experiential tourism offerings and promoting sustainable tourism practices.

This paper aims to establish a theoretical framework for understanding treehouse accommodation in Slovakia, explore global development patterns, and identify key factors influencing its growth in the context of glamping. Special attention is given to tourists' motivations, typologies of treehouse accommodation, and the sustainability challenges associated with their implementation. The sub-goals are formulated as follows: 1. To provide an overview of the theoretical principles related to treehouse accommodation. 2. To analyse global trends and typologies of treehouse accommodation. 3. To identify and summarise existing scientific outputs produced by foreign authors. 4. To present the state of treehouse accommodation in Slovakia based on available secondary data. 5. To identify research gaps and propose directions for future empirical research. The study employs a systematic literature review and critical analysis of scientific publications, case studies, and market reports drawn from databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and ResearchGate to address these objectives. The selected sources are thematically analysed to identify patterns, theoretical approaches, and empirical findings relevant to the Slovak tourism context.

This paper is structured as follows: following this introduction, the methodology outlines the research design and data sources. The main body reviews international academic literature, identifies typologies, motivations, and challenges associated with treehouse accommodation, and examines their implications for Slovakia. The conclusion summarises the findings, discusses limitations, and proposes directions for future empirical research.

## 2. Methodology

The primary purpose of this paper is to analyse treehouse accommodation as a specific form of glamping, situating it within global development trends and evaluating its potential in Slovakia. The study aims to establish a theoretical framework, synthesise international findings, and identify opportunities and challenges for treehouse accommodation in the Slovak tourism sector. This research is based on a qualitative methodological framework that employs a systematic literature review and a critical analysis of secondary data sources. The materials analysed include peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, case studies, and reports from international databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and ResearchGate, and market analysis platforms (e.g., Grand View Research, GlobeNewswire). Additionally, secondary data on Slovak tourism were drawn from national sources, as well as the websites of providers and destination marketing organisations. The literature search was conducted between June and August 2025. The methodological process involved several steps:

- a. Systematic Literature Review – International and national studies were screened to identify key theoretical contributions, empirical research, and typologies relevant to treehouse accommodation. The search strategy was based on predefined keywords combined using Boolean operators. Selection criteria focused on publications between 2005 and 2025 that included “treehouse accommodation”, “glamping”, “experiential tourism”, “sustainable tourism, or “eco-tourism”. Additional keywords such as “innovative accommodation models”, “alternative accommodation”, and “slow tourism” were used to broaden the scope and capture an interdisciplinary perspective. The selection process followed a structured multi-stage procedure inspired by the PRISMA approach. In total, 56 relevant sources were included in the final analysis, excluding duplicate records and studies not directly related to tourism or accommodation.
- b. Thematic Content Analysis – The thematic analysis followed an inductive coding approach. The initial coding identified several recurring categories, including: (1) experiential value, (2) sustainability practices, (3) typologies of treehouse accommodation, (4) motivational factors, and (5) destination development implications. These categories were subsequently used to structure the theoretical framework and interpret the findings. This process enabled the identification of recurring patterns and gaps in existing knowledge.
- c. Comparative Analysis – Case studies from selected countries (e.g., Scandinavia, the UK, Germany, USA, Latvia, Croatia, Slovenia) were analysed to identify patterns, similarities, and context-specific differences. The comparative analysis was based on the following dimensions: location, target groups, level of comfort, integration with nature, sustainability practices, and market positioning.
- d. Contextualisation to Slovakia – The findings from the international literature were subsequently interpreted in the Slovak context. Secondary data on domestic treehouse facilities were collected from publicly available sources, including websites of providers and destination marketing organisations. These data were used to assess the current state, spatial distribution, and development potential of treehouse

accommodation in Slovakia. Available secondary data on existing Slovak treehouse facilities (approximately 19 locations in 2025) were used to assess the current trends and future development prospects.

Although no primary data collection was conducted, the study incorporates secondary empirical data on Slovak treehouse facilities (e.g., the number of locations, spatial distribution, and characteristics), enabling an initial assessment of the phenomenon. Each methodological step produced specific outputs: the systematic literature review identified key theoretical concepts; the thematic analysis led to the development of core categories (e.g., experiential value, sustainability, typologies); and the comparative analysis enabled the identification of differences across national contexts.

The research questions guiding this study are: Q1: What are the defining features of treehouse accommodation in the context of glamping? Q2: How has treehouse accommodation developed in selected countries, and what theoretical concepts explain its success? Q3: What insights from global research can inform the development of treehouse accommodation in Slovakia? Q4: What is currently known about treehouse accommodation in Slovakia?

The findings were synthesised to create a coherent overview of treehouses as an innovative and sustainable form of accommodation, offering a niche tourism product. Special attention was given to linking theoretical concepts (e.g., slow tourism, experiential tourism, sustainable accommodation) with practical implications for the Slovak market. A SWOT analysis was employed to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats specific to Slovakia. The study relies exclusively on secondary data and literature, which limits the ability to generalise findings or capture the full dynamics of supply and demand in Slovakia. The absence of primary empirical data (e.g., surveys, interviews, or environmental impact assessments) highlights the need for future research to validate and expand upon the results presented here.

### 3. Theoretical Framework of Treehouse Accommodation

In the contemporary global tourism landscape, a discernible shift is underway from conventional, mass-market travel towards more nuanced, immersive, and experience-driven forms of accommodation and activity (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). This paradigm shift has given rise to innovative lodging concepts that promise unique encounters with nature without sacrificing comfort. Among these emerging trends, glamping has rapidly established itself as a prominent segment within the tourism industry, offering a sophisticated blend of outdoor adventure and luxurious amenities (Adamovich et al., 2021; Vrtodušić Hrgović, Bonifačić & Licul, 2018).

Treehouse accommodation is a distinctive and captivating niche within this expanding glamping phenomenon. Far beyond mere elevated structures, treehouses embody the essence of glamping by offering an unparalleled fusion of architectural novelty, deep immersion in natural environments, and elevated levels of comfort. This section examines the theoretical underpinnings of treehouse accommodation, situating it firmly within the broader context of glamping and exploring its intrinsic connections to other pivotal concepts such as experiential tourism, sustainable and eco-tourism principles, and the philosophy of slow tourism. By examining these theoretical foundations, the paper aims to provide a framework for understanding the unique appeal, operational considerations, and developmental potential of treehouse accommodation within the evolving global tourism market.

#### 3.1. *Glamping as a modern tourism phenomenon*

Glamping – short for “glamorous camping” – is an innovative form of accommodation that combines the comfort and aesthetics of traditional hotel services with the natural environment typically associated with camping. Glamping offers a unique compromise between comfort and authenticity, appealing primarily to environmentally conscious and experience-oriented tourists (Broker & Joppe, 2013; Sun & Huang, 2023; Craig, 2025).

The rapid expansion of glamping as a contemporary tourism phenomenon is also supported by recent market data, which highlight its increasing economic and structural significance. The global glamping market was valued at approximately USD 3.4-3.8 billion in 2024 and is expected to grow substantially, reaching between USD 7-10 billion by the early 2030s, with an average annual growth rate exceeding 10% (Fortune Business Insights, 2026). This growth is primarily driven by the rising demand for experience-based and nature-oriented tourism, particularly among younger generations, with the 18–32 age group accounting for over 40% of market share (Grand View Research, 2026). From a regional perspective, Europe represents one of the dominant markets, holding approximately 35% of the global share, reflecting a strong demand for sustainable and eco-friendly accommodation. In terms of market structure, glamping supply is diverse, with cabins and pods representing the largest segment, while treehouses account for approximately 20% of accommodation types, indicating their growing importance within this segment. Furthermore, consumer behaviour is evolving, as more than 50% of bookings are made directly or via digital platforms, reflecting increasing digitalisation and the personalised nature of glamping services. These trends confirm that glamping, including treehouse accommodation, represents a dynamic and rapidly developing segment of the tourism industry, combining sustainability, experiential value, and increasing market demand (360 Research

Reports, 2026; Grand View Research, 2026).

The characteristic features of glamping are atypical forms of accommodation, which Bíziková (2025) identifies as, for example yurts, tree houses, geodesic domes, tiny houses, capsule houses, teepees; an emphasis on design and comfort; a location in nature; an individualised approach to customers; and an emphasis on sustainability (Celata & Sanna, 2021). The glamping market is segmented into several target groups, ranging from young eco-conscious travellers to couples seeking romantic getaways to families interested in alternative forms of leisure (Aversa et al., 2020). This innovative concept has redefined outdoor hospitality, catering to a broad spectrum of travellers who seek a deeper connection with nature without compromising modern conveniences (Jackson & Gilbert, 2013).

Treehouses, as a form of glamping, meet most of their basic characteristics – they offer unconventional design, a physical connection with nature, and a high degree of individualisation of the stay experience. At the same time, they carry a substantial symbolic value associated with nostalgia, childhood dreams, and escape from the stress of civilisation (Lu & Nepal, 2009; Dangel, LaRocca & Jaeger, 2020)

### 3.2. *Global trends and typologies of treehouse accommodation*

The concept of experiential tourism is based on the theory of experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), which posits that the value of a tourism product is determined by its ability to evoke emotional, sensory, and transformative responses. In the context of treehouse accommodation, the experience is enhanced by physical separation from the ground, the perception of height, silence, views, and the sounds of nature – all of which activate multiple senses simultaneously (Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016). Treehouses offer authenticity and uniqueness, which, according to Cohen (1979) and MacCannell (1973, 1999), are key aspects of postmodern consumption in tourism. Their experiential value stems from a combination of design, the story of the location, contact with nature, and a sense of isolation from everyday life (Morgan & Pritchard, 2000). These factors increase the memorability of the stay (Oh et al., 2007) and contribute to the formation of personal and emotional ties to the place.

Treehouses naturally align with the framework of sustainable and ecological tourism, primarily due to their emphasis on low environmental impact, the use of renewable materials, and their sensitive integration into the landscape. According to Gössling et al. (2009), such facilities should be designed with an emphasis on minimising their ecological footprint, for example through the use of dry toilets, solar energy, rainwater harvesting, and composting systems. According to Giampiccoli et al. (2021), treehouse tourism differs from mass tourism and is perceived as a more sustainable alternative. It is also necessary to highlight the weaknesses and challenges that this form of tourism presents from biological, social, and environmental perspectives. For example, there are potential negative environmental impacts (e.g., damage to trees, waste production) if such facilities are not properly managed.

The ecological aspects of treehouse operation require responsible behaviour on the part of visitors, which is often supported by informational materials, design solutions, and locations away from mass destinations (Miller et al., 2010). In addition to the ecological dimension, social and cultural sustainability also play a role, as these facilities can support the local economy, crafts, and community initiatives (UNWTO, 2019).

The concept of slow tourism is inspired by the broader slow movement. It represents a reaction to mass tourism, accelerated lifestyles, and the commodification of destinations (Mirandilla, Novo & Badilla, 2024). According to Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010), slow tourism promotes longer stays, slower travel, greater awareness of the environment and culture, and lower negative impacts on local communities.

Treehouses fully correspond to this philosophy – they provide space to slow down, relax, and connect more deeply with nature. Their location off the beaten track, limited capacity, and emphasis on quality over quantity allow visitors to pause and enjoy the place “here and now” (Fullagar et al., 2012). Treehouses can thus be an effective tool for decentralising tourism, contributing to its more sustainable development, with a focus on safety, privacy, and nature (Craig & Karabas, 2021).

The above trends and their impact on the basic principles of treehouse operation are summarised in **Table 1**. It highlights the potential of treehouses to serve as models for sustainable and environmentally conscious tourism development, offering unique experiences that align with global environmental imperatives.

**Table 1.** Overview of the basic principles of treehouse operation based on global trends

trend	Global	Principle	Importance and impact of Tree-houses
S l o w tourism		Sensory Immersion, Novelty and Adventure, Emotional and Psychological Impact, Personalisation, Authenticity	It allows guests to enjoy unique, personalised experiences in harmony with nature and local culture.
		Minimal Footprint, Ecological Construction, Sustainable Operation Practices, Conservation and Education	It ensures sustainable development and protection of the natural environment for future generations.
		Encouraging a Leisurely Pace, Deeper Connection with Nature, Regenerative Experience, Local Immersion	It provides an environment for relaxation, regeneration, and a deep experience of nature.

Source: Own elaboration, 2025

Treehouse (TH) accommodation represents a heterogeneous group of facilities whose variability is determined by the target group, capacity, ownership model, location, technical solution, range of services, design, and level of equipment. This segment belongs to the broader category of glamping, which combines comfort with the authenticity of the natural environment (Brooker & Joppe, 2013; Celata & Sanna, 2021).

The target groups mainly include couples, families with children, nature and ecotourism enthusiasts, as well as visitors seeking unusual experiences or adventure. Although these are diverse segments, they are united by a common motivation to seek authentic and personalised experiences in a natural environment, which corresponds to the trends of experiential tourism and “slow tourism” (Fullagar, Markwell, & Wilson, 2012).

The capacity of these facilities is usually limited, which promotes a sense of exclusivity and intimacy. Most commonly, these are facilities for two people (romantic getaways), two to four people (smaller families or groups of friends), and only exceptionally six to eight people in multi-room solutions. Large-capacity forms are rare in the TH segment (Cvelič-Bonifačić, Milohnić, & Cerović, 2017).

In terms of ownership, three basic models can be identified: (1) private facilities operated by individual owners as family businesses, (2) cabins integrated into larger resorts, campsites, or hotels as a premium glamping offer, and (3) projects financed by investment groups or startups seeking to develop larger operational units (Kaiser et al., 2022).

Location and relationship to the tree are important identifying features. TH accommodation can be located in completely isolated forest settings, on the outskirts of civilisation, near vineyards, or as part of tourist resorts. Structurally, such units differ in terms of their degree of integration with the tree – from fully supported tree structures to structures on poles, where the tree plays only an aesthetic or symbolic role (Babris & Bratuškis, 2019).

The use of these facilities depends on the technical equipment. Seasonal TH units are mainly operated during the warmer months, while year-round models have adequate insulation and heating systems, making them part of the year-round glamping offer (Brooker & Joppe, 2013).

The range of tourism services varies from basic standards (bed, linen, heating, terrace, private bathroom, often with a dry toilet, kitchenette, Wi-Fi) to luxury amenities (flush toilet, bathtub, whirlpool, sauna, air conditioning, TV, breakfast delivery). Additional offers may include, for example, a fireplace, barbecue, sports equipment, wellness treatments, and themed programmes (Miller et al., 2010).

The design ranges from modern and minimalist to traditional and futuristic, while the quality level varies from rustic and simple structures to ultra-luxurious constructions comparable to hotel standards (Sun & Huang, 2023).

Key features include adherence to sustainability principles, minimisation of impacts on trees and the surrounding environment, higher prices compared to traditional accommodation, the uniqueness of the architectural and experiential concept, and the need to comply with specific building and zoning regulations.

**Table 2** provides a summary overview of the various criteria used to classify and distinguish different types of treehouses.

**Table 2.** Typology of treehouses

Criterion	Characteristics
Target groups	Couples, families with children, nature and ecotourism enthusiasts, seekers of unconventional experiences, adventurers, and joggers. Diverse groups, yet united by the search for experience, connection with nature, and intimacy.
Capacity	Limited: two persons (couple), two to four persons (small family with children, close friends), max. six to eight persons (exceptional cases in multi-chamber TH). Group accommodation is rare.
Ownership	Self-employment, commercial companies
Location	Isolated (in deep forests), close to civilisation (forest edge, vineyards, part of a resort).
Construction	Entirely dependent on the tree or supported by stilts (tree only as a backdrop).
Seasonality	Seasonal (only in summer months), year-round (with insulation and heating).
Tourism services	Services: basic and supplementary, depending on level and scope. Basic services: bed, bed linen and towels, heating (fireplace, stove), lighting, terrace, private bathroom (often with a dry toilet, shower), running water, sink with storage tank, kitchenette, WiFi. Luxury amenities may include: flush toilet, shower/bathtub/hot tub/sauna, air conditioning, TV, fully equipped kitchenette, and breakfast delivery. Additional services: fireplace, barbecue, bike/kayak rental, tourist information, adventure programs, wellness, customised activities (yoga, massage).
Design	Modern, minimalist, traditional, futuristic.
Level	From simple rustic to ultra-luxury (hotel standard).
Specificities	Sustainability, minimal impact on the tree, higher price compared to traditional accommodation, uniqueness, and regulation (subject to specific building and spatial planning regulations).

**Source:** Own elaboration, 2025

### 3.3. Review of research on Treehouse Accommodation in selected countries

An analysis of foreign examples shows that the typology of treehouses is significantly influenced by geographical, climatic, and cultural factors, as well as by the level of tourism development and the legislative frameworks of individual countries. The cold climate, high forest cover, and the tradition of nature-oriented architecture shape the Scandinavian model of treehouse accommodation. An iconic example is the Treehotel in Sweden, where units suspended 4-6 metres above the ground minimise impact on nature and use local materials. The Biosphere project (2022) integrates bird nests, combining accommodation with biodiversity support (ArchDaily, 2022). Demand is generated mainly by couples and small groups seeking silence, digital detox, and wellbeing. The facility operates primarily year-round due to insulation and low-energy technologies. Nordic studies point to a preference for low-capacity, nature-friendly forms of accommodation that emphasise the quality of the experience and interpretation of nature (Øian et al., 2018).

According to Adamovich, Nadda, Kot, and Haque (2021), glamping in the United Kingdom is an established segment of alternative accommodation, is profiled as a premium form of camping with an emphasis on comfort, design, and unique experiences. Treehouses, as part of this segment, are primarily positioned in the luxury sector in the UK, with the target group consisting mainly of couples and small groups of guests who seek privacy, contact with nature, and a high standard of service. Research on glamping providers in the UK has shown that operators perceive treehouses as a product with a higher return on investment than traditional camping, owing to their ability to appeal to affluent clientele and offer a personalised stay experience. These facilities are often open all year round and feature thermal insulation, heating, private bathrooms, and additional services (e.g., private hot tubs, food delivery, themed interiors). Architecturally, British treehouses are characterised by a combination of traditional and modern elements – their rustic appearance is often complemented by contemporary technology and luxurious amenities. Their locations are usually strategically selected in naturally attractive areas, with good

accessibility for urban visitors, allowing them to be marketed as ‘romantic escapes’ or ‘weekend retreats’ (VisitBritain, 2021). Adamovich et al. (2021) also point out that the British glamping market, including treehouses, is highly competitive, requires an innovative approach to design and services, and faces challenges related to legislation, maintenance and sustainability.

Latvian treehouses are closely tied to the traditions of woodworking, ecological architecture, and the country’s diverse natural environment. According to Babris and Bratuškis (2019), they are designed to blend harmoniously into the landscape while minimising environmental impact. Structurally, they range from fully suspended designs to hybrid models, supported by columns, while maintaining both visual and functional connections to the surrounding trees. In *Practical Modelling in Treehouse Development*, Babris and Bratuškis (2019) present a methodology for assessing trees, environmental conditions, and construction optimisation to extend structural lifespan and reduce ecological footprint. From a tourism perspective, these facilities represent niche, low-capacity products, aimed at visitors seeking digital disconnection, romantic getaways, or ecotourism experiences. They are typically located in remote forests, lakes, or within nature parks, offering exclusive and authentic experiences. This model combines craftsmanship, modern design, and principles of sustainable tourism, and may provide useful insights for other countries.

In Germany, the treehouse sector has developed as a combination of nature-based tourism, design architecture, and wellbeing themes. According to Sloan, Legrand, and Kinski (2016), German treehouses are environmentally friendly, low-capacity facilities with high experiential value that support guests’ mental well-being. The structures utilise local wood and minimise impact on nature, with designs ranging from rustic cabins to modern, architect-designed iconic forms. Research by Gross et al. (2023) indicates that the primary target markets are couples and small groups seeking privacy, nature, and comfort, with a high willingness to pay for a distinctive accommodation experience. Many facilities operate year-round, and offer additional services such as saunas or hot tubs. Sustainability is based on a minimal construction footprint, the use of renewable materials, and nature-oriented design principles. The main challenges include legislation, safety standards, density regulations, and winter logistics. The German model thus combines premium design with environmental sensitivity, representing a significant segment of glamping.

Slovenian treehouses often combine architecture integrated into forest environments with wellness facilities such as saunas, thermal pools, and massage services. They are commonly incorporated into ecotourism destinations and are mainly located near national parks or protected areas. Their appeal is based on tranquillity, privacy, and accommodation for small groups (Oblak & Zupančič, 2020).

According to Cvelić-Bonifačić, Milohnić, and Cerović (2017), glamping in Croatia is a rapidly developing form of innovative accommodation, often integrated into camping resorts in both coastal and inland locations. Although the dominant types include mobile homes and luxury tents, treehouses are also a growing segment that adds diversity to the existing market.

Croatian treehouse accommodation is largely seasonal, with an emphasis on the summer months, when climatic conditions favour open architectural designs with natural ventilation and shaded terraces. Modular construction methods enable relatively rapid assembly and disassembly, reducing environmental impact and allowing adaptation to legislative requirements. The main target groups are families and couples seeking a balance between comfort and natural surroundings. Integration into larger resorts enables guests to access extensive infrastructure, including restaurants, swimming pools, sports facilities, and entertainment programs. As a result, treehouses form part of a broader glamping portfolio that enhances destination competitiveness and diversifies the tourism offer. Cvelić-Bonifačić, Milohnić, and Cerović (2017) emphasise that creative design, responsiveness to market demand, and the provision of experiences beyond traditional camping are key factors in the success of Croatian glamping.

Glamping, including treehouse accommodation, represent a rapidly growing segment of the tourism industry in the United States (USA), responding to demand for unique and luxurious nature-based experiences. This trend has been strengthened by the desire to escape everyday routines and participate in digital detox experiences, particularly among the younger travellers aged 18-32, who constitute the largest share of the market (GlobeNewswire, 2025). One of the key drivers of growth is the combination of adventure and comfort. Modern treehouses are no longer simple recreational structures just for children but sophisticated accommodation units equipped with amenities such as comfortable beds, private bathrooms, air conditioning, and Wi-Fi (Grand View Research, 2024). Demand is further stimulated by the strong influence of social media and the preferences of environmentally conscious consumers (Dangel, Larocca, & Jaeger, 2020; The Independent, 2014). From a legal and economic perspective, treehouse accommodation in the US is becoming increasingly attractive to investors. The market value for treehouse glamping in the US is estimated to amount to several hundred million dollars, with further growth expected in the coming years (GlobeNewswire, 2025). This sector includes a variety of enterprises, from family resorts in Oregon to luxury retreats in the Pacific Northwest, which emphasise sustainability and minimal environmental impact (The Independent, 2014). Despite its rapid growth, this segment faces significant challenges, particularly regarding environmental sustainability. Effective planning and management are essential to prevent damage to the natural environment, including harm to the trees supporting such structures. Nevertheless, treehouse accommodation appears to represent a promising model for the future of tourism, offering authentic experiences while respecting the natural environment.

The comparative analysis across selected countries is summarised in Table 3, highlighting key differences in location, target

groups, level of comfort, integration with nature, sustainability practices, and market positioning.

**Table 3.** Comparative analysis of treehouse accommodation in selected countries

Country / Region	Location & Setting	Target Groups	Level of Comfort	Integration with Nature	Sustainability Practices	Market Positioning
Scandinavia (e.g., Sweden)	Remote forest areas, high natural value landscapes	Couples, small groups seeking silence and digital detox	Medium to high (year-round, insulated units)	Strong integration (tree-supported structures, elevated design)	High – use of local materials, biodiversity integration (e.g., Biosphere concept)	Premium, experience-based, eco-conscious tourism
United Kingdom	Rural but accessible locations near urban centres	Couples and small groups, affluent customers	High (luxury amenities, private bathrooms, hot tubs)	Moderate to strong (nature setting with modern comfort)	Medium – focus on comfort with growing emphasis on sustainability	Luxury glamping, “romantic escapes”, high ROI segment
Germany	Forest and nature-based destinations	Couples and small groups focused on wellbeing	High (wellness features, year-round operation)	Strong (nature immersion + architectural design)	High – renewable materials, low-impact construction	Premium sustainable tourism with wellness orientation
Latvia	Remote natural environments (forests, lakes)	Niche eco-tourists, couples	Low to medium (simple to moderately equipped units)	Very strong (harmonised with landscape, traditional craftsmanship)	High – minimal environmental footprint, ecological construction methods	Niche ecotourism, authenticity-focused
Croatia	Coastal and inland camping resorts	Families and couples	Medium (integrated into camps, seasonal use)	Moderate (often platform-based structures)	Medium – modular construction, seasonal adaptation	Complementary product within resort-based glamping
Slovenia	Protected areas, near national parks	Small groups, wellness-oriented tourists	Medium to high (wellness integration, spa services)	Strong (nature immersion with added comfort)	High – eco-tourism integration, low-impact development	Eco-wellness tourism, boutique experiences
United States	Diverse (forests, resorts, private retreats)	Wide range (especially younger travellers, 18–32)	High (luxury features, modern amenities, Wi-Fi)	Moderate to strong (varies by provider)	Medium – sustainability varies significantly	Fast-growing market, experience-driven and social media influenced
Slovakia	Forested and mountainous regions near national parks	Couples, small families, nature lovers	Low to high (from basic to luxury units)	Strong (nature-based, often isolated locations)	Medium (growing emphasis, but not standardised)	Emerging niche market, aligned with slow tourism and experiential travel

Source: Own elaboration, 2025

#### 4. Results

In a broader global context, the development of treehouse accommodation in Slovakia reflects trends observed within the glamping market. The global glamping industry was valued at approximately USD 3.4-3.8 billion in 2024 and is projected to grow significantly, reaching up to USD 7-10 billion by the early 2030s, with an average annual growth rate exceeding

10% (Market Reports World, 2024; Grand View Research, 2026). Within this market, treehouse accommodation represents a smaller but expanding segment associated with experiential and nature-based tourism. Demand is primarily driven by younger, experience-oriented travellers, particularly those aged 18–32, who account for over 40% of the market, while Europe remains one of the dominant regions, holding approximately 30–35% of global market share (Market Reports World, 2024; Grand View Research, 2026). Despite global growth, the supply of treehouse accommodation remains relatively limited, reinforcing its niche character.

In comparison, Slovakia currently represents an emerging market with approximately 19 identified treehouse locations (2025), indicating a significantly lower level of market development but also substantial growth potential. This contrast highlights the gap between global market expansion and the early-stage development of treehouse accommodation in Slovakia, suggesting opportunities for future investment, diversification, and integration into sustainable tourism strategies.

Slovakia is a country with diverse natural and cultural resources, making it an attractive tourism destination in Central Europe. Its landscape is dominated by the Carpathian mountain ranges, extensive forests, national parks, rivers, and natural lakes, which provide favourable conditions for nature-based tourism. In addition, the country offers a rich cultural heritage, including historical towns, castles, and folk traditions, which complement its natural attractions. Tourism in Slovakia is currently focused on exploring nature and engaging in outdoor activities in the countryside, visiting spas and wellness centres, experiencing cultural heritage, savouring local gastronomy, and enjoying summer recreation by the water. In recent years, however, there has been an increasing emphasis on sustainable and alternative forms of travel. In this context, treehouse accommodation represents a niche yet promising product that aligns with the national trend of diversification and innovation in the accommodation services sector.

The development of treehouse accommodation in Slovakia is still at an initial stage when compared with Western European or Scandinavian countries. Treehouses, as a specific form of glamping accommodation, remain relatively rare. However, the number of such facilities has increased over the last decade, reflecting the growing demand for innovative, experience-based, and sustainable tourism products.

Treehouse accommodation in Slovakia has primarily developed in forested and mountainous areas, often in proximity to natural attractions and national parks. Current facilities are typically operated by private owners or small-scale entrepreneurs, who position treehouses as part of the broader glamping trend and emphasise their exclusivity, intimacy, and close contact with nature.

The highest concentration of treehouses is near the national parks of Low Tatras, High Tatras, Muránska Planina, Veľká Fatra, and Pieniny, where they complement mountain tourism with unique experiential stays. Other important locations include the Little Carpathians, Kysuce Beskids, and Pohronský Inovec, mountain areas renowned for their rich biodiversity and extensive hiking trails. In the lowland tourist areas of southern Slovakia, treehouses have also appeared near the Tokaj vineyards. As of summer 2025, there are approximately 19 known treehouse locations throughout Slovakia. The spatial distribution of treehouses in Slovakia is presented in Figure 1. The modest number of treehouse accommodation facilities underscores their niche position in the national tourism market.



Figure 1. Location of treehouses in Slovakia (Own elaboration by Google My Maps, 2025)

Key factors for the development of treehouse accommodation in Slovakia include:

- Attractive natural landscapes including extensive forests and picturesque countryside suitable for treehouse development;
- Growing domestic and foreign tourism (rising interest in nature tourism and experiential stays);
- Innovations in construction (availability of modern technologies and materials enabling safe and environmentally friendly construction).

These facilities vary in design and level of service, ranging from simple wooden constructions equipped with dry toilets and minimal amenities to luxurious units featuring fully furnished bathrooms, saunas, panoramic terraces, and wellness amenities. Nightly rates range from approximately €109 to €249 and correlate directly with the level of comfort and the extent of additional services. Lower-priced units tend to have a minimalist character, often lacking access to water, electricity, or full bathroom facilities, while higher-priced treehouses offer a standard comparable to conventional accommodation (bathroom, kitchenette, Wi-Fi, and wellness including saunas or hot tubs).

In terms of capacity, treehouses range from small units for two people to larger accommodation facilities for six or more guests, with some exceptions accommodating even larger groups (e.g., up to 11 people). This range reflects a focus on different customer segments – from couples seeking a romantic stay to families or groups.

From the perspective of amenities, two main product types can be identified: experience-oriented minimalist treehouses (with limited modern technologies, emphasising nature and simplicity) and higher-standard, comfort-oriented treehouses (with full facilities and additional services). Common features include terraces, fire pits, breakfast baskets, and themed interiors, all contributing to the experiential value of the stay. The treehouse accommodation market is highly diverse and flexible, capable of satisfying a wide range of visitor preferences – from simple nature stays to more luxurious glamping experiences.

The segment also resonates with the philosophy of slow tourism, as limited capacities and remote locations enable visitors to disconnect from everyday stress and appreciate natural surroundings in a more meaningful way (Bíziková, 2025).

Seasonality within the treehouse accommodation segment varies moderately, with a clear trend toward year-round operation among higher-standard units.

The analysis shows that some treehouses are explicitly operated year-round (e.g., Tree Houses Björnson, TREE-TOP VILLAGE Tokaj, and some mountain-based units). These types of accommodation are typically characterized by a higher standard of facilities – they include heating, full bathroom facilities, insulation, and often additional services (wellness, catering, Wi-Fi). Such features enable their use during winter months, thereby reducing seasonal dependency.

On the other hand, simpler, minimalist treehouses (e.g., those without water or electricity, or with dry toilets) exhibit implicit seasonality, primarily tied to warmer months. Although not always explicitly stated, the lack of heating or basic infrastructure suggests limited usability during winter.

From a demand perspective, the main season is likely concentrated in spring, summer, and early autumn, when weather conditions are favourable and interest in nature-based experiential accommodation increases. The winter season is more typical of higher-standard facilities, particularly in attractive tourist regions (such as the Tatras or Jasná), where stays are often combined with winter sports.

Seasonality in the treehouse accommodation segment is gradually decreasing due to improving standards and the growing number of year-round facilities. Nevertheless, it remains a significant factor, especially for simpler, experience-oriented units. Treehouses in Slovakia thus form a niche product that enhances the diversity of the national tourism offer. Their location in ecologically valuable and scenic areas positions them as a sustainable and experience-oriented type of accommodation. However, their further development is contingent upon overcoming challenges related to seasonality, legislation, and infrastructure.

Slovakia possesses significant potential for further growth of this niche segment, mainly due to its extensive forest resources, biodiversity, and increasing tourist interest in sustainable and alternative forms of accommodation. With appropriate regulatory support, infrastructure investment, and targeted marketing, treehouse accommodation could become a valuable element of rural and nature-based tourism, strengthening the diversification and competitiveness of Slovak destinations. While treehouse accommodation in Slovakia remains a marginal and under-researched phenomenon, it demonstrates growing potential in the context of glamping development. This highlights the need for empirical studies that focus on visitor behaviour, environmental impacts, and the economic viability of such facilities, to ensure the sustainable growth of this innovative tourism segment.

The above findings and the current state of treehouse accommodation are analysed using a SWOT framework in **Table 3**.

**Table 3** SWOT Analysis of Treehouse Accommodation in Slovakia

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attractive natural environment (mountains, forests, rivers, lakes, vineyards)</li> <li>• The enthusiasm of entrepreneurs to do business in this segment</li> <li>• Growing demand for authentic and experience-based tourism</li> <li>• Alignment with glamping, slow tourism and eco-tourism trends</li> <li>• Privacy, exclusivity, personalisation, authenticity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited number of facilities, niche character</li> <li>• Seasonality (many units not suitable for winter use)</li> <li>• Lack of systematic data and research</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential to attract international visitors (neighbouring countries)</li> <li>• Integration into broader rural and wellness tourism offers</li> <li>• Increasing global interest in sustainable accommodation</li> <li>• Digital detox</li> <li>• Positioning in destination tourism marketing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk of over-commercialisation and loss of authenticity</li> <li>• Environmental impacts if poorly managed (deforestation, soil erosion)</li> <li>• Unstable investment environment and limited institutional support</li> <li>• Competition from better-developed glamping markets abroad</li> </ul>

Source: Own elaboration, 2025

The SWOT analysis indicates that Slovakia's natural assets, combined with global demand for authentic and sustainable tourism, create favourable conditions for the development of treehouse accommodation in Slovakia. Strengths such as privacy, exclusivity, and alignment with glamping and slow tourism trends position treehouses as a promising niche tourism product. At the same time, weaknesses, particularly the limited scale of supply, seasonality, and lack of supportive legislation, restrict their wider expansion. Opportunities lie in attracting international visitors, integrating treehouses into rural and wellness tourism offers, and capitalising on the growing interest in digital detox and eco-friendly accommodation. However, threats such as environmental risks, insufficient institutional support, and competition from more developed foreign markets underline the need for strategic planning and sustainable management.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper aims to establish a theoretical framework for treehouse accommodation within the broader glamping paradigm, synthesising international trends and typologies, and situating these insights in the Slovak context, with the overarching goal of identifying research gaps and directions for empirical inquiry. It was guided by research questions concerning defining features, global development patterns, transferable insights, and the current state in Slovakia.

The review confirmed that treehouse accommodation is underpinned by experience-centric, sustainability-oriented and slow-tourism logics, and that mature markets (e.g., Scandinavia, the UK, Germany, and the USA) converge on low-capacity, high-quality, nature-immersive models with stringent environmental practices. When applied to Slovakia, the evidence suggests an early but accelerating stage of development: a modest supply dispersed across mountain and forest regions, typically in small, privately operated units (approximately 19 locations as of summer 2025), aligning with glamping and slow tourism motives yet constrained by seasonality. Conclusions and recommendations: (1) Policy and planning: create a light-touch registry to recognise treehouses as a distinct accommodation class for monitoring and support. (2) Sustainability practice: Promote year-round feasibility through insulation and efficient heating; mandate tree-health assessments and ongoing arboricultural monitoring. (3) Product development: Encourage interpretive programming (nature, wellness, agritourism linkages), small-scale clustering with shared utilities, and design that foregrounds authenticity while protecting ecosystems. (4) Destination management: Position treehouses as a niche lever for dispersal and season extension in mountain and rural destinations; integrate them into regional branding and visitor itineraries. (5) Evidence base: Embed treehouse categories in tourism statistics and support cooperative data sharing among operators to enable benchmarking and informed investment. These recommendations directly address weaknesses and threats identified in the SWOT analysis (limited scale, seasonality, legislative gaps; environmental risks; external competition) while leveraging Slovakia's strengths and opportunities (rich forests, experience demand, and sustainability positioning).

Future research. Building on the identified gaps, we recommend a mixed-methods programme: (a) supply-side mapping (GIS) and technical audits of sites; (b) national surveys of operators and guests to examine motivations, willingness-to-pay and seasonality; (c) environmental impact assessment combining tree-health metrics with life-cycle analysis of materials and utilities; (d) legal-institutional analysis of permitting pathways; and (e) longitudinal market tracking to evaluate performance

and community effects. Such work will transform the present theoretical scaffold into a robust evidence base for the sustainable development of treehouses in Slovakia. At the same time, it will generate research outputs suitable for international comparison with other countries based on the evaluated criteria.

The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing a structured synthesis of international research, developing a conceptual framework for analysing treehouse accommodation, and offering the first comprehensive overview of this phenomenon in the Slovak context.

**Conflict of interest:**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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