

A Systematic Literature Review on Tourist Experience of People with Disabilities in the Hospitality and Tourism Sector

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Abstract

This study assessed a systematic review of peer-reviewed scholarly articles on the tourist experience of disabled travelers available on Google Scholar. The study specifically aimed to identify barriers and opportunities that disabled people have encountered during their past travel experiences. The study also identified the focus of the published works, the forms of disabilities covered, the methodology used, the name of the journal that published the work, as well as the geographical location of the published works. This study followed a systematic review, whereby 13 peer-reviewed scholarly articles on the tourist experience of disabled travelers available on Google Scholar. The data search was done between Mid-July and the end of July 2023. Articles were generated based on keywords specified in the methodology section. Quantitative analysis of the literature was performed using an Excel spreadsheet. The results indicated that disabled people can have a positive tourist experience as long as the structural, interpersonal, and intrapersonal barriers are removed. A significant proportion of articles published focused on addressing tourists' overall past experience, while few have focused on specific context. Mobility impaired visitors especially wheelchair users were mainly covered. Most of the studies were conducted in Portugal, New Zealand, Australia and Indonesia. In those studies, semi-structured in-depth interview and purposive sampling strategies were mainly employed. Over 90% of all the published works were qualitative in nature and published in journals of hospitality and tourism management. Tourism service providers can draw lessons to understand both the negative and positive experiences of disabled people. This way, they can start supplying inclusive services to accommodate disabled travelers. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, this is among the initial systematic literature review studies addressing the tourist experience of disabled travelers.

Keywords: People with disabilities; tourist experience; systematic literature review; tourism; hospitality sector

Introduction

Tourist experience in a destination has served as a reminder of travellers' memories of their visit (Wang et al., 2020). Such tourist experience starts with preparations for the trip, continues while on the trip and ends after the return (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). After the trip, the concept of total tourist experience is very important for tourists (Braun-LaTour et al., 2006), but the decision to return to a place is largely influenced by their previous trip. Therefore, in a competitive industry such as tourism and hospitality, where quality of experience rather than quality of service is used to gauge consumer satisfaction, providing tourists with positive recollection becomes essential. To maintain an advantage in such competitive market, tourism service providers must, thus, ensure that travellers return home with fond memories. After all, visitors' memories prior travel experiences may significantly influence their choice to travel in the future (Kim, 2014; Tung & Ritchie, 2011).

With the ability to provide unforgettable experiences for all types of visitors, including those with disabilities, the tourism and hospitality sector is known to be an important economic driver in most countries. Yet, most researchers have not fully documented how people with disabilities (PWD) navigate the tourist industry. This is understandable considering the low participation of PWDs in tourism (Moura et al., 2023) partly because of the tourism industry's disregard for them (Kasemsarn et al., 2023). Therefore, it may be difficult to ensure that this

part provides tourists with a memorable experience. It is an untapped travel market in the tourism sector industry since they are frequently barred from participating in tourism-related activities because they are viewed as a niche market (Vila et al., 2019; Avis et al., 2005; Makuyana et al., 2020). As a result, most of the service providers were unwilling to serve them (Chikuta et al., 2017; Daniels et al., 2005) as hotel owners were reluctant to take an active role in ensuring that hotel rooms were accessible to PWDs (Darcy, 2000). On the other hand, travel agents have been accused of being barriers to assisting PWDs (McKercher et al., 2003).

The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) of 1995, both of which aimed to promote the development of social mentality, were the results of several movements that began fighting for the rights of people with disabilities around the world in the 1990s. Furthermore, the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities under Article 9 was launched in 2006. All these initiatives were designed to acknowledge and value that everyone is allowed to engage in social or recreational activities without restrictions regardless of their physical characteristics. Nevertheless, barriers persist that prevent PWDs from taking advantage of tourism services, despite the incredible initiatives to create user-friendly environment for them primarily because of lack of understanding of their needs (McKercher & Darcy, 2018). Therefore, the promise of a fulfilling tourist experience remains a nightmare for PWDs.

Numerous studies have been undertaken to determine the factors prevent people with disabilities from making travel decisions as a result of the ongoing challenges that PWDs have been experiencing in the tourism and hospitality industries. Core barriers have often included structural, interpersonal and intrapersonal barriers (Blichfeldt & Nicolaisen, 2011; Israel, 2002; Somnuxpong & Wiwatwongwana, 2020). Although there is ongoing debate about which of the three barriers that affect PWDs the most, some believe that intrinsic barriers to so (Murray & Sproats, 1990; Smith, 1987). Others contend that structural barriers, particularly those related to the social environment, are what prevent PWDs from engaging in tourism to the greatest extent (Daniels et al., 2005; Daruwalla & Darcy, 2005). Inconclusive findings have resulted into numerous studies in this area. Despite there being a wealth of literature on these issues, only few studies have connected these constraints with PWDs' overall travel experiences.

Even though there is limited research on PWD tourists, the ones that do tend to focus on particular kinds of disabilities and locations. Devile and Kastenzholz (2018), Qiao et al. (2023) and Small et al., (2012), whose studies were conducted in Portugal, China and Australia respectively, addressed the topic of the visually impaired tourists' travel experiences. Other studies have dealt with travellers on wheelchair (e.g. Özcan et al., 2021; Perangin-Angin et al., 2023; Poria et al., 2011; Yates, 2007), some have focused travellers with intellectual impairments (e.g. Gillovic et al., 2021), travellers with physical disabilities (Reindrawati et al., 2022), travellers with mobility impairments (e.g., Orakani et al., 2021; Rubio-Escuderos, et al., 2021), and travellers with diverse forms of disabilities (e.g., Figueiredo et al., 2012). These studies notwithstanding, a thorough systematic review of literature on PWDs' travel experiences in the tourism and hospitality sector has yet to be conducted. Some of the existing related works have addressed memorable tourist experience of abled-bodied people (e.g., Hosany et al., 2022; Hosseini et al., 2023), excluding this underrepresented group. Moreover, these studies emphasised favourably recalled memories. The current study, therefore, captured both favourable and unfavourable experiences, which has been largely lacking. It aimed to add such knowledge by examining the tourist experience of PWDs. Significantly, tourism researchers have argued for an understanding of the unique voices and lived experiences of visitors with disabilities (McIntosh, 2020; Small et al., 2012).

This study is crucial because tourism and hospitality industry are a rapidly expanding sector. Up-to-date review of literatures on visitor experience of the PWDs is essential to

highlight recent developments in this field and provide guidance on future research. Also, the number of disabled people is growing daily (Migliaccio, 2019), with the current statistics indicating that there are 1.3 billion or 16 percent of the global population living with disability (WHO, 2023). This number might rise even further because of improving life expectancy, urbanisation, and high spate of accidents maiming people's limbs and occasioning other impairments. Relevant data on visitor experiences in this market sector can help tourism enterprises create accessible services for different types of disabilities. Additionally, addressing the requirements of PWDs can aid tourism service providers in upholding their social and corporate obligations (Chang & Chen, 2012) in addition to attaining equity and equality in sustainable tourism. Engaging in tourism and leisure activities can also assist PWDs improve the quality of their lives and their general well-being (Cook & Shinew, 2014), implying the necessity for ongoing research focusing on their experiences. Due to the opportunities generated by PWDs, this market sector represents enormous economic prospects (Daniels et al., 2005). This article, therefore, intends to offer a systematic assessment of the literature on tourist experience of PWDs by highlighting the barriers and opportunities they have encountered during their past trips, identifying the focus of existing studies, identifying the forms of disability covered, methodology used, name of the journal publishing the article and geographical locations covered. This review applies quantitative analysis in accordance with the research objectives.

Methodology

Figure 1 presents a summary of the study's review process. Literature review can be conducted using a variety of techniques such as systematic review (Liu et al., 2022), bibliometric analysis (Monalina-Collado et al., 2022), integrative review (Tomczewska et al., 2022), Meta analyses (Wang et al., 2022), and framework-based analysis (Aquino et al., 2018). Systematic review identifies and critically assesses relevant existing works to answer a particular research question (Snyder, 2019) to produce reliable findings when a researcher manages to minimise biases and random errors by extracting all empirical literatures that meet the pre-determined inclusion criteria (Moher et al., 2009).

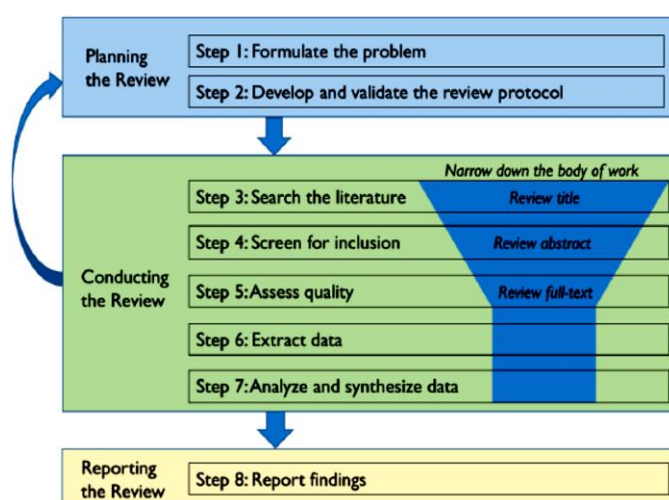


Figure 1: Systematic literature review
 Source: Xiao and Watson (2019)

In comparison to narrative reviews, the technique is more accurate in producing relevant literatures (Mays et al., 2005). Besides, this is not the first study to adopt a systematic literature review in tourism and hospitality studies (see, for example, Hosany et al., 2022; Hosseini et

al., 2023). The current study varies from the earlier ones by reviewing published articles on the disabled tourists' experience. The review also adopts Xiao and Watson's (2019) systematic literature review approach. A successful review requires three main stages: planning, reviewing and reporting (Breretona et al., 2007; Kitchenham & Charters, 2007).

Planning

The *formulation of the problem* constituted the first step. This step focuses on developing a study's research questions. This step in a literature review study was crucial since it influenced the methodology and subsequent literature review stages (Kitchenham & Charters, 2007). The study was guided by the following research questions: What is the tourist experience like for disabled travellers in the tourism and hospitality industry? What did related studies focus on? What forms of disabilities did they cover? What methodologies did they use? What journals published those works? What will be the future research agenda?

Developing valid research protocol was the second step. Like a research design in social sciences, any rigorous systematic literature review needs to undergo this important step to yield quality review, unbiased and reliable data (Kitchenham & Charters, 2007). Three specialists in hospitality and tourism fine-tuned the research protocol. Moreover, a five-member team from the Ministry of Tourism and Natural Resources further reviewed and polished the protocol. Furthermore, three staff members working with the association of physically disabled organisation were consulted to clarify different forms of disabilities.

The third step, *Literature search* strategy, entailed scanning through the Google scholar database to identify for relevant articles to the study. The database is one of the largest and most popular online search engines; moreover, hospitality and tourism studies have extensively employed it (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Also, Google scholar is a powerful tool for accessing open access peer-reviewed articles and grey literatures such as conference proceedings, theses and organisational reports (Xiao & Watson, 2019). This study focused on journal peer reviewed and articles since they contribute significantly to new knowledge generation (Xiao & Smith, 2006).

Identification of key words, as the third step, generating relevant articles database searches on the tourist experience of disabled travellers in hospitality and tourism (H&T) sector using the following keyword(s): "tourist experience" AND disab* OR tourist experience* AND disabled traveller* OR "tourist experience" AND accessible tourism" OR "tourist experience" AND "free barrier tourism" OR "tourist experience" AND "people with disabilities" OR "tourist experience" AND inclusive tourism" OR "tourist experience" AND "tourism for all" AND (tourism*OR hospitality* AND "tourist experience") OR tourist experience* AND disab* OR "travel experience" AND "disabled traveller". The researcher used a *backward search* to generate a complete list of literature (Webster & Watson, 2002). The task was completed by consulting the list of references that was provided at the end of each article. Also, the forward search approach helped to search for all articles cited in the articles reviewed. Google Scholar allowed the researchers to conduct forward searches. The exercise was made possible because Google scholar offers that privilege to a researcher to do forward search (Levy & Ellis, 2006). The search process was conducted from mid-July to the end of July 2023.

Screening for inclusion: To narrow the search process only peer reviewed published journals which met the criteria of being: (1) published in English language; (2) examined tourist experience of disabled travellers; (3) whose population consists of a sample size of PWDs of any form; (4) must be related to the identified key words; (5) only full-length available articles. The initial results generated 44 peer reviewed journal articles from Google scholar database.



Table 1 summary of all the scholarly articles used in this study

	Authors & year	Aim & Study area	Type of disability	Context	Data collection & sampling strategies	Journal	Methodology
1	Yates (2007)	Travel experience of mobility disabled tourists in Scotland UK	Wheelchair users and slow walkers	Overall past travel experience	Semi-structured interviews Online open-ended questionnaires Convenience sampling	IJTP	Qualitative Content analysis
2	Poria et al. (2011)	Barriers that PWDS confront during their hotel Experience in Israel	Wheelchairs, Disabled using crutches and visual impaired	Hotel	In-depth semi-structured interviews Snowballing technique	IJCHM	Exploratory study Thematic analysis
3	Figueiredo et al., (2012)	PWDs and their abilities to experience tourism & leisure activities in Portugal	Intellectual, Motor, Hearing and Visual	Overall past travel experience	Mailed questionnaires combination of a snowball sampling technique with a convenience approach	IJTR	Quantitative Univariate & multivariate techniques
4	Darcy (2012)	Air travel experiences of PWDs in Australia	Travelers with diverse form of disabilities	Air Travel	Open-ended questionnaire Semi-structured in-depth interviews Purposive sampling	JHTM	Qualitative Interpretative approach
5	Small et al., (2012)	Tourist experiences of people who are partially sighted in Australia	Visual impaired	Overall past travel experiences	In-depth interviews and focus groups. Semi-structured questionnaire Purposive sampling	TM	Qualitative study Thematic analysis
6	Deville & Kastenholz (2018)	The experience of people with visual impairment in Portugal	people with visual impairments	Overall past travel experience	In-depth- interviews Semi-structured questionnaires Purposive sampling Snowballing	JPRTLE	Qualitative Content analysis
7	Özcan et al., (2021)	Motivations, expectations, processes & experiences of wheelchairs to participate in tourism. Turkey	Wheelchairs users With difficulty speaking	Travel and accommodation	Semi-structured in-depth interview Open-ended questions Purposive sampling	IJERPH	Qualitative Thematic analysis
8	Gillovic et al., (2021)	Intellectual disabilities experience tourism in New Zealand	People with moderate intellectual disabilities	Overall past travel experience	semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews purposive sampling & professional criterion sampling	JHTM	Qualitative Thematic analysis
9	Orakani et al., (2021)	Constraints and facilitators experienced by travellers with mobility impairments in New Zealand	Mobility impaired	Overall past travel experience	Semi-structured interview Purposeful snowball	JHTM	Qualitative Content analysis
10	Rubio-Escuderos et al., (2021)	The tourist experiences of people with reduced mobility in Spain	People with permanently reduced mobility (most of them were wheelchair users)	Overall past travel overall experience	In-depth interviews Semi-structured in-depth interviews. Snowball sampling	TRR	Qualitative Thematic analysis
11	Reindrawati et al., (2022)	The tourism experiences of PWDs in Indonesia	Physical disability Visual Impaired	Overall past travel experience	semi-structured in-depth interviews Purposive	SS	Qualitative Thematic analysis
12	Qiao et al., (2023)	The tourism experience of visually impaired tourists in a Chinese cultural context	Visually impaired	Overall past travel experience	Travel notes posted by visually impaired tourists on the Zhisu Integration Tourism (ZIT) WeChat site were used as the main data Convenience sampling	AT	Qualitative Grounded theory
13	Perangin-Angin et al., (2023)	The travel experiences and expectations of wheelchair tourists in Indonesia	Wheelchair users	Nature tourism	semi-structured interviews with Snowball sampling	TRR	Thematic analysis

Key: IJTP=International Journal of Tourism Policy; IJCHM=International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management
 IJTR=International Journal of Tourism Research; JHTM=Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management; TM= Tourism Management; JPRTLE= Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure, and Events; IJERPH= International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health; TRR= Tourism Recreation Research; SS= Sustainability; AT= Annals of Tourism

Screening for exclusion: After the initial results, journals were subjected to a more strict screening process in order to ensure that only valid and relevant articles are generated. The screening criteria used to exclude some journals were:- (1) not published in English language; (2) conference proceedings, thesis/dissertation; (3) studies that were done in other fields of study other than hospitality and tourism (4) duplicates peer reviewed studies (5) book review chapters, conference proceedings, editorials and editorial materials, thesis and reports. The latter were excluded because of their limited contributions to the existing body of knowledge, and they are regarded as inferior in quality compared to peer reviewed scholarly works (Xiao & Watson, 2019). In this stage, abstracts of the selected journals were used to extract valid and relevant literatures. In this stage, fourteen (14) articles remained.

Quality assessment: Data quality was the final stage preceding data extraction and synthesis following screening. Based on Fink's (2005) suggestions, there must be a clear logic from the data collection method applied in the analysis, results, and conclusion section. This step enabled the evaluation for internal validity. One expert from the hospitality and tourism sector and another from an association of disability organisations conducted concurrent independent quality checks. This exercise enabled the discussion of the findings' context without altering the original article's intended meaning. One (1) article was eliminated due

vagueness surrounding how the study was analysed. Mismatches extended from the way research objectives were generated to data analysis part. The final assessment ended up with 13 peer-reviewed journals (See Table 1 which summarises tourist experience of PWDs studies).

Data extraction

Two independent participants—the primary researcher and a tourist and hospitality expert—were involved in the data extraction for the study. As Charrois (2015) and Gomersall et al. (2015) reaffirm, the use of two researchers during data collection reduce errors. When the two researchers disagreed on the data retrieved, especially on whether to include or exclude them, they deliberated amicably until they reached a consensus. *Data synthesis:* Data were quantitatively synthesised for this investigation. Using Excel, the study identified the primary focus of the research on the tourist experience, the types of disabilities covered, the methodology employed, the name of the journal, and the geographic area covered. The subsequent sub-section reviews literature review to conceptualise tourist experience and tourist experience of PWDs. Thereafter, the article presents, analyses the findings to determine the focus of the studies under review, the types of disabilities covered, the methodology employed, journal name, and the study's geographical area. The article presents the results in frequencies and percentages.

Literature review

Tourist experience concept

Since the 1960s, the topic of the tourist experience has been a fascinating subject of study (Uriely, 2005), and became even more popular in social science literature in the 1970s. During that period, according to Cohen's (1979) phenomenology study, the visitor's experience was connected to authenticity. Moreover, people travel to get away from their regular routines, experience, and learn about the real world (MacCannell, 1976). Consumers are always looking for experiences that surpass their senses, engage them intimately, speak to them on a deep level, and challenge their thinking (Schmitt, 1999). Implicitly, tourists are aware of their needs and prefer authentic experience over fabricated ones. In the 1990s, tourist experience was connected to their feelings, which were widely documented in diaries or by answering questions (Aho, 2001), because tourist experience is a participant-subjective condition that is associated with satisfaction. Since there is no universally, agreed-upon definition for this concept, it is inherently complex. According to some researchers, experiences are internally generated based on individual values, backgrounds, attitudes, emotions, and beliefs (Knutson et al., 2006) or from their own needs, desires and motivations (Wang et al., 2020), others depend on external factors such as destination-related amenities including accommodation, tourist attractions, transport, information and the host environment. Besides, experiences in tourism are produced by visiting, discovering, and taking part in things to do in a new place away from home (Stamboulis & Skayannis, 2003).

In addition to individual behaviour, perception, cognition, and explicit or implied emotions, researchers have contextualised tourist experience (Oh et al., 2007). Others believed that this idea encompasses a variety of experiences that a person must go through, regardless of their mental or emotional state of mind (Oh et al., 2007). For Tung and Ritchie (2011), these include an individual's subjective evaluation and understanding of affective, cognitive and behavioural aspects of events relating to his/her tourist activities from through the trip's duration and post-trip period (recollection). Rubio-Escuderos et al. (2021: 2) defined it as "first person narrative of the journey beginning from the decision to travel and ending with the return to the usual place of residence." Although it is challenging to develop a single definition that applies to all situations, the current study defined tourist experience as the overall impression

and emotions that a disabled traveller encounters while travelling to a specific location or while engaging in tourism-related activities from the pre-planning stage through the trip and after.

Tourist experience of visually impaired travellers

The existing literatures on tourist experience of PWD have made an effort to describe their experiences from different encounters. Both positive and negative factors (ranging from structural, interpersonal and intrapersonal barriers) can influence a tourist's decision to engage in tourism activities. Negative aspects include a lack of appropriate tourism services for people with disabilities, a lack of awareness of their needs, ignorance of tourism providers, and the negative attitudes (Devile & Kastenholz, 2018). Positive aspects that influence their tourist experience, on the other hand, include personality traits, previous travel experience, curiosity, self-confidence, acceptance of disability, support from social network and travel companion. The tourist experience of people who are visually impaired depends on self-sensory compensation, external sensory compensation, and their memory of previous experiences (Qiao et al., 2023). Apparently, people with visual impairments experience the world differently from those with other types of disabilities; in fact, tastiness, scent, movement, and music can all enhance their experiences (Small et al., 2012). This target group enjoys challenging tourism experience (like driving cars), escaping experiences (like relieving work-place stress), educational experiences (like visiting a religious temple), entertainment experiences (like listening to music), empathy experiences (like connecting with locals), and barrier-free experiences (like using free bus services) despite all the obstacles. The inclusion of other individuals on the trips, such as caregivers, family, friends, or guide dogs, is essential to their effectiveness.

Tourist experience of mobility impaired travellers

Regardless of all the barriers, people with mobility impairments enjoy barrier-free experiences (like using free bus services), escaping experiences (like relieving work-place stress), educational experiences (like visiting a religious temple), entertainment experiences (like listening to music), empathy experiences (like connecting with locals), and escapism experiences (like driving cars). Their effectiveness of the travels depends on including additional people, such as caregivers, family members, friends, or guide dogs (Özcan et al., 2021). Because they use walker aids, the architectural impediments constitute their biggest issue. Spacing continues to be a significant obstacle, whether it is at a parking lot, a hotel, or at the destination. For this target group, accessibility of services is crucial (Perangin-Angin et al., 2023). Moving around the buildings in a wheelchair can be difficult. For wheelchair users, a major source of concern is the absence of wheelchair-accessible restrooms, user-friendly restaurant facilities, or accessible lodging facilities (Poria et al., 2011). They must therefore choose which tourist activities to partake in carefully. Crutches, on the other hand, make people feel uneasy when they must go from one location to another. Another issue of concern to this group is care support and attitude of the service providers (Yates, 2007).

Tourist experiences of intellectual impairments

People who fall into this category, like those with other types of impairments, have diverse consumption patterns, and it is a crucial travel market that requires most attention their social inclusion (Eichhorn & Buhalis, 2011). Tourism signifies a sense of normalcy, self-efficacy, and increased relational ties to this group (Gillovic et al., 2021). They like to demonstrate their flexibility and appreciation for tourism experiences (Daniels et al., 2005). Although they have high opinions of the tourism industry, they are limited by a lack of an accessible enabling environment and lack of relevant information. Internal barriers like a sense of alienation are

another important barrier preventing individuals from enjoying a wonderful travel experience (Figueiredo et al., 2012). Along with that, service providers have a bad attitude. This population may be encouraged to travel abroad through accessible information written in clear, basic language, the availability of assistive devices, tourism service providers that are aware of their needs, and a shift in supplier attitudes.

Results and discussion

Structural barriers PWDs encountered during their past travel experience

PWDs' travel experiences have been a roller coaster, and their time spent working in the tourism and hospitality industries has only left them with regrettable memories. This issue is clear from previous research on PWDs' tourist experiences. The findings showed that information accessibility continued to be the predominant structural barrier notwithstanding the presence of other barriers. Although every traveller faces obstacles along the way, problems are made worse if one has a disability (Daniels et al., 2005). For accessibility-related reasons, travellers with disabilities rely on travel information (Michopoulou & Buhalis, 2013). Although vision and hearing impaired people also require clear information about assistive technologies before they make any travel decision, wheelchair users prefer to have comprehensive and up-to-date information about spacing issues in restaurants, parking, accommodations, and transportation as well as at the destination. This finding corroborates with Darcy (2010) and Ray and Ryder (2003) that PWDs' decision to travel is influenced by complete and accurate information. Despite the fact that disabled travellers rely on word-of-mouth, the internet, and travel guides (Ray & Ryder, 2003). Due to outdated and inaccurate information provided by service providers and displayed on websites, disabled individuals are deterred from travelling (Michopoulou & Buhalis, 2013).

The study also found that the lack of accessible transportation was another obstacle keeping impaired travellers from fully appreciating their journeys. Wheelchair users' travel experiences have been affected by this issue (Özcan et al., 2021), and some wheelchair users have expressed feelings of anxiety, helplessness, and embarrassment as a result (Yates, 2007). Others with different forms of disabilities, such as the visually impaired (Devile & Kastenzholz, 2018) and the hearing- and motor-impaired (Figueiredo et al., 2012) have also experienced this barrier. This experience has been demonstrated in plane travel, but they still face the same obstacle when boarding other forms of public transportation (Mwaka et al., 2023).

The study also found that lack of support services constituted another barrier that prevented disabled travellers from enjoying their trips. This problem is caused by limited knowledge regarding the disabled people's needs (Devile & Kastenzholz, 2018). Their participation in various tourism activities depended on the support of others (Darcy, 2002) since their level of support differed. One approach to solving this issue is to employ qualified personnel who can provide accessible services to travellers with disabilities. Even though the majority of them travel with friends and family, they nevertheless require service providers' assistance at every stage of their journeys.

Another barrier that prevents people with disabilities from enjoying a satisfying tourism experience is the physical surroundings. This barrier was demonstrated by Darcy (2012), Figueiredo et al. (2012), Poria et al. (2011), and Yates (2007). One of the reasons that made disabled individuals fail to go on holiday is associated with user-unfriendly architectural designs. Disability-related hurdles include a lack of space in restaurants, hotels, parking lots, and transportation networks. This conclusion supports what has previously been reported in research on disability, such as those Daniels et al. (2005) and McKercher et al. (2003).

However, this study did not find financial ability to be a major factor limiting disabled people from having an enjoyable tourist experience as in the studies by Var et al. (2011) and

Stumbo and Pegg (2005). Impliedly, besides financial resources, physical environment, accessibility to information and attitudinal barriers constitute major travel barriers with negative implications for disabled people that robbed them of having a memorable experience. On the other hand, the negative attitude from tourism business providers was the main interpersonal barrier hindering the disabled people’s having a memorable travel experience. Since PWDs have frequently been the recipients of subpar services from tourism industry suppliers, this finding is not shocking. Service providers disregard them, which is why (Özcan et al., 2021), even though some of them are unprepared to help them (Daniels et al., 2005; McKercher et al., 2003). Though it makes sense to see service providers in a competitive industry like tourism struggle to keep up a high standard for their clients, the problem of service failure to PWDs is overlooked (Ee Kim & Lehto, 2012). They are anxious, perceive risks, and lack autonomy because of the society's and service providers’ negative attitudes. Due to these difficulties, they must rely on their family and friends while making vacation plans (Devile & Kastenholz, 2018; Yates, 2007). Figures 1, 2 and 3 present the summary of the structural barriers, interpersonal and intrapersonal barriers encountered by disabled travellers during their previous travel experiences:

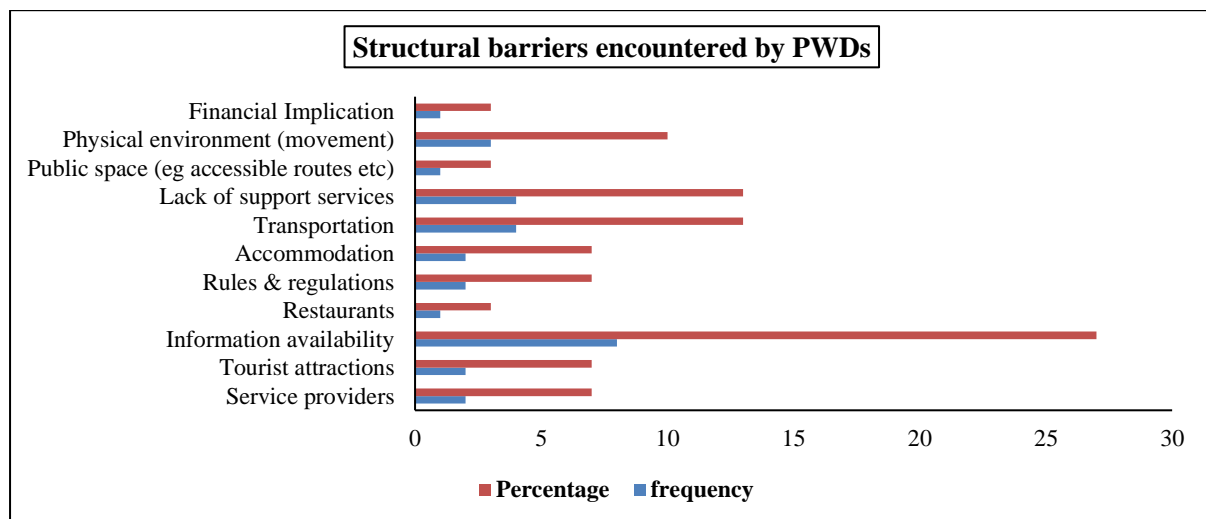


Figure 1: Structural barriers encountered by PWDs

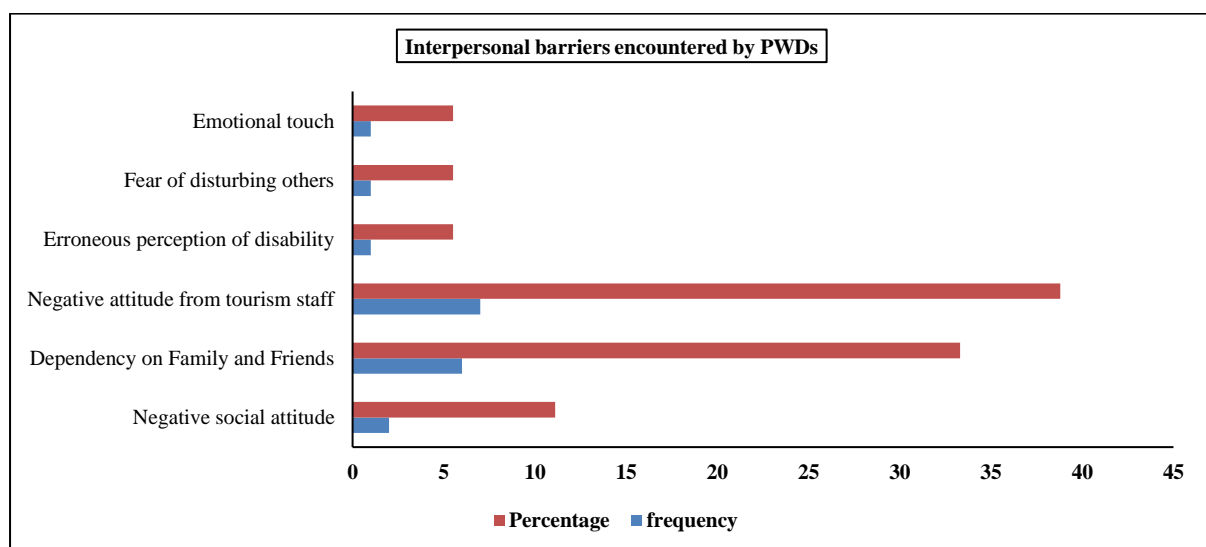


Figure 2: Interpersonal barriers encountered by PWDs

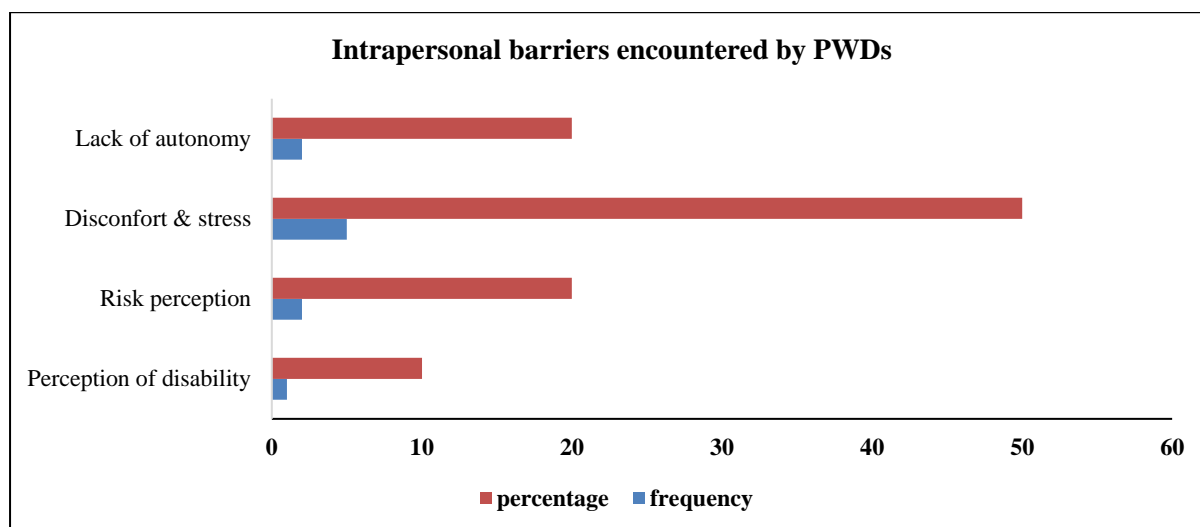


Figure 3: Intrapersonal barriers encountered by PWDs

Positive travel opportunities for PWDs

Positive attitudes toward the tourism experience for people with disabilities were also evaluated in this study. In the 13 scholarly published researches, 30 percent of the research had found that impaired passengers to enjoy favourable travel experiences. Despite their travel limitations, disabled travellers adopted coping mechanisms aimed to reduce the likelihood of future travel risks (Deville & Kastenholz, 2018). Further analysis revealed that the main benefits of their trip experience were the encouragement and support they received from social networks and the availability of services designed specifically to meet their needs. For disabled travellers, tourism experiences are important and valuable since they build their relationships and provide them a sense of normalcy and self-efficacy (Gillovic et al., 2021). This demonstrates that disabled travellers have a desire to travel and are excited to do so, just like able bodied travellers (Perangin-Angin et al., 2023); nevertheless, barriers must be addressed to allow them to freely pick the types of tourism activities in which they want to engage.

Focus of the tourist experience studies of PWDs

According to the descriptive findings, the majority of tourist experience studies on PWDs (69.2%) covered visitors' previous travel experiences, highlighting the challenges and opportunities they had to deal with during the prior trip whereas 7.7 percent of all the studies concentrated on visitors' tourist experiences in hotels, air travel, nature-based tourism, or travel and accommodations. Based on their overall prior travel experiences, this conclusion suggests that it is vital to emphasize impaired travellers' experiences. One would be able to learn about the actual experiences of passengers at various phases in this way. These results support the findings from Tung and Ritchie (2011) findings. The challenges and opportunities faced by impaired passengers at each stop along their journeys might then be easily tracked by tourist businesses. The data is essential for developing control systems that will allow PWDs to enjoy their travels equally as much as able-bodied people. A summary of the studies covered on PWDs' travel experiences is shown in Figure 4

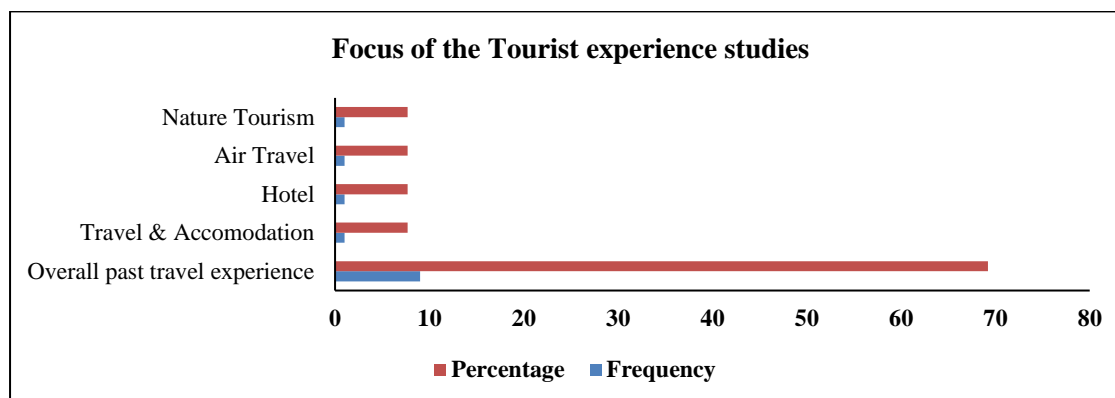


Figure 4: Focus of the tourist experience studies

Forms of disability covered

The study’s findings show that wheelchair users comprised 38.4 percent of all the disabled tourists discussed in visitor experience studies, followed by those who were visually impaired (23.1%) and intellectually challenged (15.4%). According to the findings, only seven percent of travellers were covered for limited mobility and intellectual impairment. The condensed version of this data as Table 2 illustrates.

Table 2 Forms of disability covered in tourism experience studies with PWDs

Form of disability	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Visual impaired travellers	3	23.1
Mobility impaired		
Wheelchair users	5	38.4
Reduced mobility	1	7.7
Intellectual	1	7.7
Diverse forms of disabilities	3	23.1
Total	13	100

Methodologies used in tourist experience studies of PWDs

The approaches applied in prior research on PWDs’ travel experiences are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Methodologies used in tourist experience studies of PWDs

Methodology used	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Approaches used:		
Qualitative	11	84.6
Quantitative	1	7.7
Mixed research	1	7.7
	13	100
Data collection method: IV +SQ	1	7.7
SSI	9	69.2
Questionnaire	1	7.7
Online platform (WeChat)	1	7.7
IV+FGD+SQ	1	7.7
Total	13	100
Sampling strategies used: Purposive + snowball	2	15.4
Purposive sampling	4	30.7
Snowball	3	23.1
Purposive and professional criterion	1	7.7
Snowball & convenience	1	7.7
Convenience	2	15.4
	13	100

Key: IV= In-depth Interview, Structured questionnaire; SSI=Semi Structured Interview; FGD= Focus Group Discussion; SQ= Structured questionnaire

Overall, results show that 84.6 percent of the studies were qualitative investigations. Phenomenology served as the research's main philosophical foundation because their goal was to record the authentic voices of PWDs on the topic of their experiences as tourists. Moreover, mixed research and quantitative study methodologies were used in 7.7 percent of the extant literature. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that comprehensive studies (69.2%) made use of semi-structured interviews, while just a small portion (7.7%) used questionnaires or online travel diaries from online platforms. Although only a small percentage of them chose snowballing and convenience or the professional and purposeful criterion, the purposeful sampling technique was the majority strategy adopted by 30.8 percent.

Name of the journal

The examination also looked at the name of the journal that published research on PWDs' travel experiences. According to the research, the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* published most of the articles (23.1%), followed by *Tourism Recreation Research*. Very few (7.7%) were published in other journals, such as the *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *Annals of Tourism*, *Tourism Management*, *Sustainability*, or *Journal of Policy*. The list of periodicals that published studies on PWD tourists' experiences is summarised in Figure 5.

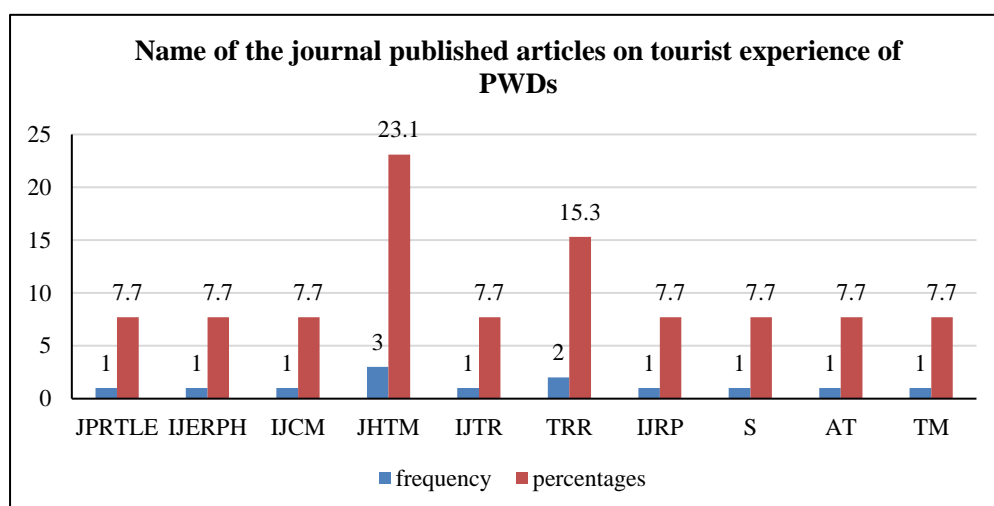


Figure 5: Name of the journal that published tourist experience of PWDs

Key: JPRTLE=Journal of Policy, IJERPH= Research in Tourism, Leisure & Events; International Journal of Environmental Research & Public Health; IJCM= International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management; JHTM= Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management; IJTR= International Journal of Tourism Research; TRR= Tourism Recreation Research; IJRP=International Journal of Tourism Policy; AT= Annals of Tourism; TM= Tourism Management.

Geographical location of the tourist experiences in published articles

The study findings further indicate that most of the peer-reviewed works had been published in Portugal (15%), New Zealand (15%), Australia (15%) and Indonesia (15%) whereas a few of them (8%) were published in Turkey, Israel, the United Kingdom (Scotland), Spain and China. Figure 6 presents a summary of the geographical coverage of the published studies:

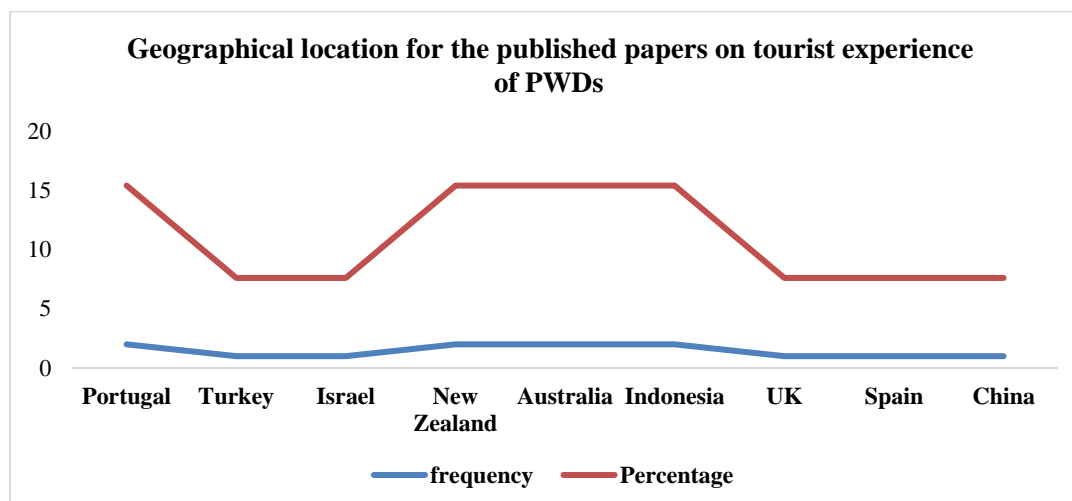


Figure 6: Geographical coverage of tourism experience studies of PWDs

Conclusion

Although tourist experience studies started in the 1960s, studies addressing disabled tourist experience caught tourism researchers' attention in the 2000s. This study has established additional knowledge regarding tourist experience of disabled travelers based on the existing scholarly works. Systematic review of literature was conducted using Google scholar. The final search contributed to 13 peer reviewed scholarly articles found on Google scholar. Data search was performed from Mid-July to end of July 2023. Most of the articles reported were in the context of Portugal, New Zealand, Australia and Indonesia while a few of them were reported in countries such as Turkey, Israel, UK, Spain and China. Physical disabilities predominated among the disabled people included in those research, followed by visual and cognitive impairments. These studies looked at the entire tourist experience for people with disabilities, with some of them concentrating on hotels, air travel, nature tourism, or travel and lodging. Many of the research were qualitative in nature, and purposive sampling was used to select respondents for those investigations. Semi-structured interviews were employed as the primary data gathering method. The major conclusions from these were that PWDs experience intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural difficulties. The physical environment, a lack of support services, a lack of user-friendly transportation, and a lack of accessible information are some of the things preventing disabled travellers from having fun while travelling. Additionally, they were prevented from having a great travel experience by the unfavourable attitudes of service providers, their dependence on family and friends, and bad social attitudes. PWDs experienced stress, helplessness, and humiliation because of the barriers that were in place. PWDs have expressed enthusiasm in travelling despite the obstacles, and they are eager to engage in tourism-related activities if the obstacles are addressed. Although their financial situation may not be the main obstacle preventing them from enjoying a good trip, other obstacles are keeping them from having fond travel memories.

Implications of the study to the existing body of knowledge

From the previously published scientific studies, this study has shown a comprehensive picture of the travel experiences of impaired travellers. Most of the research' overall findings have shown that PWDs confront numerous obstacles before, during, and after travel. The obstacles include structural, interpersonal, and intrapersonal obstacles. However, the lack of easily accessible information was the main issue before to travel. Their decision to travel is impacted by this. Most of the information provided by the tourism industry is erroneous and out-of-date. The results advise travel agencies to make sure that the information they give is accessible to

people with disabilities. The results showed that barriers continued to exist for impaired travellers throughout their journeys, from the time they boarded the aircraft until they arrived at their destinations. The results suggest that hurdles for impaired travellers accumulate as they move from one stage to the next. However, PWDs would be able to make informed travel choices if the problem of information accessibility were to be remedied. Another takeaway from this work is that persons with disabilities have a desire to travel and engage in various adventure activities, such as driving and seeing natural tourist areas, but that these desires are constrained by the hurdles that already exist. Therefore, these tourists can serve as a theoretical lens for the development of accessible services by tourism enterprises to draw in this increasing population.

The results of this study provide the conclusion that, practically speaking, disabled individuals can enjoy positive tourism experiences provided that the barriers mentioned in this work can be addressed. To deal with this expanding travel market, the "one size fits all" mindset must be modified and inclusive methods must be established. From this study, tourism service providers can learn how to comprehend both the good and bad experiences of persons with disabilities. By doing this, they can start offering more specialized services to meet client needs. Such data can be employed to support barrier-free travel occasions. Additionally, it has been determined from the studies that people with disabilities rely on other people (family and friends) for all of their travel arrangements. Since it is a potential source of cash, tourism business owners should endeavour to optimise this market.

Limitations of the study and areas for further studies

Despite the contributions provided by the systematic analysis of the literature review, the results must be interpreted considering significant limitations that also present potential for further research. First, our analysis was limited to full-length academic publications that were searched for on Google Scholar using the keywords listed in the methods section. Even though the data gathering method was thorough, editorial materials, conference proceedings, thesis/dissertation reviews, and book reviews were not included. Also, publications in languages other than English were not included. As a result, some research studies on the tourist experience in connection to disabled travellers may have been missed. Future research could generate data using various search engines like SCOPUS and WOS databases. The search might turn up fresh academic publications that support this study's conclusions. Future research may emphasize the tourist experiences of disabled persons in African countries because the prior studies have mainly focused on countries like New Zealand, Australia, Portugal, Indonesia, Spain, the UK, and China, leaving Africa unstudied. These findings may assist African nations in beginning to create a barrier-free environment to accept tourists with different forms of disabilities as most African nations are endowed with several tourist attractions and rely on tourism for economic development. Future studies could compare the travel experiences of able-bodied and impaired people as this study primarily focused on disabled travellers. The research's findings can show how their travel experiences differ or are similar. These results can be useful to destination managers and tourist industry professionals.

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