

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

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Abstract

The issue of tourist experience for disabled travelers has been given little attention compared to that given to able-bodied persons. This study assessed a systematic review of 13 peer reviewed scholarly articles on tourist experience of disabled travelers available on Google scholar. Quantitative analysis of the literature was performed using Excel spreadsheet. The results indicated that 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 and a few were done in countries such as the UK, Spain and China. 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. The review concludes with the practical implications of the study as well as future research agenda.

Keywords: *People with Disabilities, Tourist experience, Systematic Literature Review, Tourism, Hospitality Sector*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Tourist experience in a destination has been used as a reminder of travelers' memories of their visit (Wang et al., 2020). However, tourist experience starts before the trip (preparation stage), during and after the trip (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). The overall concept of tourist experience is considerably crucial for tourists after taking a trip (Braun-LaTour et al., 2006) but the decision to revisit a destination depends mainly on their last trip's memories. Therefore, in a competitive industry such as tourism and hospitality, offering visitors with positive memory becomes crucial since in this sector, quality of experience is used as a determinant for customer satisfaction than quality of service. Therefore, the best way for tourism service providers to stay ahead in the competitive market is to ensure that after the trip, visitors are left with pleasant memories in their minds. Visitors' recollection about their previous travel experiences may have

significant impact on their future travel decisions (Kim, 2014; Tung & Ritchie, 2011).

The tourism and hospitality sector is known for being a significant economic driver in most countries, and has the potential to offer memorable experiences for all types of visitors including those with disabilities. Most researchers have not exhaustively captured the tourist experience of people with disabilities (PWD). This is not surprising because the participation of PWDs in tourism is limited (Moura et al., 2023). This is partly because they have been ignored by tourism businesses (Kasemsarn et al., 2023). Therefore, ensuring that tourist memorable experience is attained for this segment can be challenging. They are constantly excluded from enjoying tourism activities because they are seen as just a niche market (Vila et al., 2019); this is why it is an untapped travel market in the tourism sector (Avis et al., 2005). As a result, most of the service providers are not willing to serve them (Daniels et al., 2005) as evident in hotels when owners were hesitant to take an active role in making sure that hotel rooms were accessible to PWDs (Darcy, 2000), while travel agents, on the other hand have been accused of being inhibitors to assist PWDs (McKercher et al., 2003).

Globally, several movements started since the 1990s to fight for the rights of people with disabilities. The outcomes of those movements were the introduction of Americans with Disability Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) of 1995. All these initiatives intended to champion the development of social mentality. As if that was not enough, in 2006 the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities under Article 9 was launched to recognize the fact that people with disabilities have a right to access buildings, physical environment, information and communication, just like any other person. All these initiatives were meant to recognize and appreciate that all individuals regardless of their physical nature are free to take part in social or leisure activities without any hindrances. Despite the great initiatives to develop a user-friendly environment for PWDs to enjoy tourism offers, it is still evident that there are barriers that are holding them back. This is because there is limited knowledge in the understanding of PWDs requirements and their tourism experience (McKercher & Darcy, 2018). Therefore, to PWDs the assurance of a positive tourist experience is still a nightmare.

Due to constant challenges that PWDs have been facing in the tourism and hospitality industry, significant number of studies have been conducted to assess factors limiting PWDs from taking travel decisions. Issues of structural, interpersonal and intrapersonal barriers have been frequently discussed as the main barriers (Blichfeldt & Nicolaisen, 2011; Israel, 2002). Although there is

ongoing debate as which among the three barriers affects PWDs the most, some believe that intrinsic barriers affect them the most (Murray & Sproats, 1990; Smith, 1987) while others think that structural barriers (particularly the social environment) are the most significant factors limiting PWDs from participating in tourism (Daniels et al., 2005; Daruwalla & Darcy, 2005). Inconclusive findings have resulted into massive studies on this area. Despite extensive literatures addressing these barriers, few of them have linked them with the overall tourist experience of PWDs.

Although there are limited studies addressing tourist experience of PWDs, their focus was narrowed to specific types of disability and in specific geographical context. For example, tourist experience of visual impaired were covered by Devile and Kastenholz (2018), Qiao, Song, Prideaux and Huang, (2023) and Small et al. (2012) though the studies were conducted in Portugal, China and Australia respectively. Others have looked at wheelchair users (e.g., Özcan et al., 2021; Perangin-Angin et al., 2023; Poria & Reichel, 2010. Yates, 2007) some focused on intellectual impaired travelers (e.g., Gillovic et al., 2021); physical disability travelers (Reindrawati et al., 2022), mobility impairment travelers (e.g., Orakani et al., 2021; Rubio-Escuderos, et al., 2021) and those with diverse forms of disabilities (e.g., Figueiredo et al., 2012). Despite these studies, a systematic review of literature on tourist experience of PWDs 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) just to mention a few, leaving aside this marginalized group. Also, these studies were focused on positively recalled memories. The current study captured both positive and negative experiences. Such information is vital for tourism businesses to develop strategies to provide a dazzling experience to disabled visitors. Additionally, 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 intended to add knowledge on that area by examining the tourist experience of PWDs. On top of this, the research in this field is still in its infancy stage since the existing related works started in the 2000s, although the concept of tourist experience started since the 1960s (Uriely, 2005). This study intends to shed some light on the issue at hand by systematically reviewing scholarly peer reviewed studies on tourist experience of PWDs.

This study is crucial because the tourism and hospitality industry is a fast-growing sector; therefore, up-to-date review of literatures on visitor experience of PWDs is crucial to highlight the literature developments on tourist experience, and shed light on the future research agenda. Also, the number of disabled people

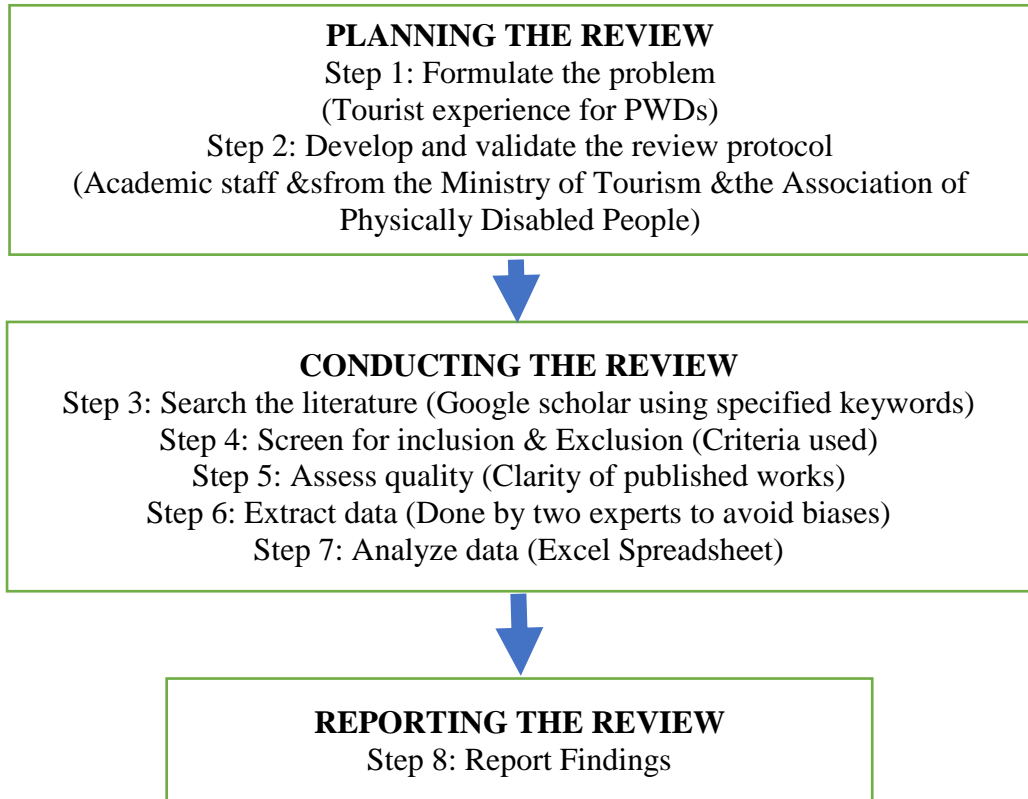
is increasing daily; the current statistics indicate that globally there are 1.3 billion people living with disability. This represents 16% of the total world population (WHO, 2023). With the increasing life expectancy, growth of urbanization, and frequent occurrences of accidents, this figure might go up. Therefore, current information on tourist experience of this segment is needed to assist tourism businesses to develop accessible services for specific disability type. Also, meeting the needs of PWDs will not only help tourism service providers to attain social and corporate responsibilities (Chang & Chen, 2012), but also to attain equity and equality which are important pillars in attaining sustainable tourism. Furthermore, active participation in tourism and leisure activities assists PWDs improve their quality of life and their general well-being (Cook & Shinew , 2014), implying the need for on-going studies addressing their experience. Furthermore, this segment represents potential economic market due to the opportunities generated by PWDs (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 the 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 to analyze the research objectives.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The current study adopts a systematic literature review process developed from Xiao and Watson (2019). There are different techniques to conducting a literature review including 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). In this study, systematic literature review was selected because it allows identification and critical assessment of relevant existing works to answer a particular research question (Snyder, 2019). This method can produce reliable findings if the researcher can minimize biases and random errors by extracting all empirical literatures that meet the pre-determined inclusion criteria (Moher et al., 2009). Additionally, the technique is more precise in generating relevant literatures compared to narrative reviews (Mays et al., 2005). On top of that, this is not the first study to adopt a systematic literature review; other researchers in the fields of tourism and hospitality studies including Hosany et al. (2022) and Hosseini et al. (2023), have also used it in their studies. The current study differs from the previous ones because it is focusing on reviewing published articles focusing on the topic of tourist experience of disabled travelers. Systematic literature review involves planning, conducting the review and reporting the

review as identified by Breretona et al. (2007) and Kitchenham and Charters (2007). Summary of the review process for this study is presented in Figure 1.



Source: Xiao and Watson (2019)

2.1 Systematic Literature Review Process

The study was guided by research questions such as; what is the tourist experience of disabled travelers in the tourism and hospitality industry? What was the focus of the related studies? What forms of disabilities were covered in the studies? What were the methodologies used? What were the names of the journals that published those works? What will be the future research agenda? Clarity on the formulation of the problem is key as this affects methodology and data analysis (Kitchenham & Charters, 2007). Data protocol was prepared with the assistance of three academic staff teaching hospitality and tourism courses. These experts were consulted to offer different understandings of the tourist experience concept. Additionally, a team of five staff from the Ministry of Tourism and Natural Resources was also consulted to review and polish the protocol before starting the reviewing process. Additionally, three staff members working at the Association of Physically Disabled People were purposively

selected to clarify different forms of disabilities. This process helped the researcher to unbiased and reliable data.

This study employed Google scholar database to search for the relevant articles. The database was selected because it is one among the largest and most popular online search engine databases, and has been employed extensively in most of hospitality and tourism studies (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Additionally, Google scholar is a very powerful open access database that hosts published peer reviewed articles and gray literatures namely conference proceedings, thesis and well reputable organizational reports (Xiao & Watson, 2019). Ever since it was launched, the database has been performing better than other search open access databases such as OAIster. This study restricted its data to peer reviewed and published articles in scholarly journals. This decision was reached because scholarly journals offer significant contribution on new knowledge in a particular field of study (Xiao & Smith, 2006).

Since this study aimed at reviewing all extant studies related to tourist experience of disabled travelers in the hospitality and tourism (H&T) sector, different key words were used to generate relevant data for the study. Keywords such as “touristexperience” AND disab* OR touristexperience* AND disabled traveler* OR “tourist experience” AND accessible tourism” OR “tourist experience” AND “free barrier tourism” OR “touristexperience” AND “people with disabilities” OR “touristexperience” 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 traveler” were among the key words used to generate the relevant journals. In order to make sure that a complete list of literature is generated, the researcher conducted a backward search to come up with the most relevant articles cited by the articles (Webster & Watson, 2002). The exercise was performed by looking at the list of references presented at the end of each selected article. Also forward search method was utilized to search for all articles that have since cited the reviewed articles. This 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.

In this study several criteria were put forward to ensure only relevant data was generated. 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 travelers; (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. After the initial results, journals were subjected to a stricter screening exclusion process in order to ensure that only valid and relevant articles were 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 contribution 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.

After the screening process, data quality was the last step before data extraction and synthesis. In this step, internal validity was assessed following suggestions from Fink (2005) that there must be clear logic from the data collection method used, to analysis, results and conclusion section. In this study two experts performed quality assessment: - one from the tourism and hospitality sector and the other one from the association of disability organization. The intention of doing so was to conduct parallel independent quality checks. Discussions were conducted to come up with the final resolution after reviewing full texts. This exercise offers us a chance to present context of the findings without distorting the intended message from the original article. One article (1) was removed since there was no clarity on how the study was analyzed. There was a lot of mismatch from the way research objectives were generated to the analysis part. Therefore, the final assessment ended up having thirteen (13) peer reviewed journals. See Appendix 1 for the summary of all the scholarly articles used in this study.

In this study data extraction was performed based on the research questions mentioned above. Two independent members performed the exercise; one was the main researcher and the other one was an expert in the field of tourism and hospitality. The intention of including two people came because we wanted to minimize errors in the data compilation process as suggested by Charrois (2015) and Gomersall et al. (2015). The two researchers worked tirelessly to resolve disagreement on the extracted data especially on the decision whether to include or exclude them.

In this study, data was synthesized quantitatively. Microsoft Excel was used to identify the focus of the tourist experience studies, forms of disability covered, methodologies used, identify the name of the journal and finally to identify the geographical area covered.

The following section covers literature review, results, discussion, limitations of the study and areas for further studies.

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Tourist experience concept

The issue of tourist experience started to be an interesting subject of study since the 1960s (Uriely, 2005) and became popular in the social science literature around the 1970s. During that period, tourist experience was linked to authenticity as Cohen (1979) described it in a phenomenology study. It was further reported that people travel because they want to escape their daily life routine, to experience and discover the authentic (MacCannell, 1976). Consumers are constantly in search of experiences that outshine their senses, engage them personally, touch their hearts and stimulate their minds (Schmitt, 1999). This implies that tourists are aware of their needs and they want authentic experiences instead of fabricated ones. In the 1990s, tourist experience was linked with thoughts and feelings which were well captured in diaries or by responding to questions. Experiences are core issues of concern in the tourism industry (Aho, 2001), because tourist experience is something that is linked to satisfaction and it is a subjective condition experienced by participants. This concept is complex in its nature as there is no universally acceptable definition to describe it. Some researchers believe that 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), while others depend on external factors such as destination related amenities such as accommodation, tourist attractions, transport, information and the host environment. On top of that, tourism experiences are created through a process of visiting, learning and enjoying activities found at the new location away from home (Stamboulis & Skayannis, 2003).

Researchers have contextualized tourist experience to include individual behavior, perception, cognition and emotions that are either expressed or implied (Oh et al., 2007). Others thought that this concept covers different things that an individual has to pass through, regardless of their mental or emotional state of mind (Oh et al., 2007). Tung and Ritchie (2011) defined it to include an individual's subjective evaluation and undergoing (i.e. affective, cognitive and behavioral) of events relating to his/her tourist activities from the planning (preparation), during (at the destination) and after the trip (recollection). Others have 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" (Rubio-Escuderos et al., 2021; 2). Despite the fact that it is difficult to come up with a universal definition to fit each context, the current study defined tourist

experience as the overall impression and emotions that a disabled traveler encounters during his/her journey to a particular destination, or while taking part in tourism activities from the pre-planning stage, during and in the post trip.

3.2 Theoretical Literature Review

3.2.1 Theory of Tourist Experience (Aho, 2001)

Aho developed a theory of tourist experience in 2001. The theory explains the tourist experience in seven stages. The author highlighted that the tourism experience involves complex processes, from the awakening of interest to the point where one is gaining his or her total experience. The seven processes are interlinked and combined. The theory assumes that the tourist experience is a dynamic system where previous stages (pre-planning stage) are important but not enough to justify the evaluation of the entire tourist experience (post-travel stage). In addition, the theory assumes that new experiences can emerge and old ones can be modified at each stage of the experience process. This implies that the evaluation of the tourist experience is cumulative in nature. The assessment of the final stage is determined by the initial experience that one has received. Additionally, the theory states that tourist experiences start before one undertakes any trip (awakening interest). This is a crucial starting point for tourist decisions. In this stage, the expectations that one receives may stay in one's memories, artifacts, and practices. The second stage is called attachment. This stage will be reached only when one's travel interest is strong enough to be attached to a selected destination. The third stage is called visiting. This is the time when one has actually visited the actual destination. This stage covers basic trip preparations as well as individual expectations. Therefore, all the activities that one performs during this stage will be used to determine the tourist experience at a later stage. Step four involves the evaluation stage. In this stage, tourists compare their earlier experiences with the alternatives. If the evaluation is positive, then one can conclude that the experience at this stage was satisfactory and memorable. The fifth stage is called storing. In this stage, tourists can decide to take photos, film, purchase souvenirs, and interact with other travelers for the sake of creating memories to remember. This stage involves psychological issues such as affections, impressions, and emotions. At this stage, the tourist experience will be based on the accumulated storage memories and expectations that were gained during the earlier experiences and the existing image of others. The assessment of the tourist experience at this stage depends greatly on one's expectations and the kind of social group that one has. The sixth stage is called reflection. In this stage, experiences can be evaluated individually or in a social context. Most intimate experiences are evaluated privately, and they are difficult to trace. Nevertheless, to the greatest extent, most touristic experiences offer interesting experiences for social communication. If a destination offers a great

experience, then tourists may decide to praise that destination to others. Others may decide to organize a meeting and reflect on what has transpired during the visit. The amount of time and effort used in the trip reflections is considered a positive experience for tourists. The last stage is called enrichment. At this stage, touristic experiences may be shared with those who did not travel for entertainment. The travel experience is shared with other people for the purposes of orientation, attachment, and evaluation. Nevertheless, some visits may lead to new skills that one might have acquired during the trip. From this stage, one can easily determine the growing value of tourist experiences afterwards.

Although this theory lays the foundation of the tourist experience, it is not free from criticisms. The theory assumes that the tourist experience is a dynamic system where the initial stage may not be sufficient to determine the overall tourist experience in the later stages. It is generally known that the tourist experience starts from the pre-stage (before the trip) to the post-stage (after the trip), but the overall experience is measured after the trip (Braun-LaTour et al., 2006). Since tourist experiences are arranged in a sequential manner, if the prior experience is not positive, it may affect the overall travel experience. The theory also did not consider individuals' minds during the visits. Despite these weaknesses, this theory has been widely applied in tourism studies. For example, Zatori and Beardsley (2017) employed it to examine on-site and memorable tourist experiences. Others, such as Manthiou et al. (2023), employed it to evaluate tourism experience measurements. While Nowacki and Niezgodna (2023) used it to address the experiences of tourists in national parks, just to mention a few, Therefore, this justifies that this is the most relevant theory to address issues related to the tourist experience. Additionally, this study addressed the tourist experience from the pre-stage to the post-trip; hence, that was made possible because this theory highlighted the tourist experience in different stages. This study adds new knowledge to this theory by highlighting the barriers and opportunities that people with disabilities have encountered during their past travel experiences.

3.3 Empirical Literature

3.3.1 Tourist experience of visually impaired travelers

The existing literatures on tourist experience of PWDs have tried to narrate their experiences from different encounters. For example, decision for visually impaired visitors to participate in tourism activities is affected by both positive and negative factors (ranging from structural, interpersonal and intrapersonal barriers). Negative factors such as lack of proper tourism services designed for PWDs, limited awareness regarding their needs, little knowledge regarding tourism providers, and negative attitude of others were among the main factors

affecting their tourist experience (Devile & Kastenholz, 2018). Furthermore, positive factors that influence their tourist experience include personality, past travel experience, curiosity, self-confidence, acceptance of disability, support from social network and travel companion. Due to the fact that visually impaired people have a unique way of experiencing things compared to people with other forms of disabilities, their tourist experience depends on self-sensory compensation, external sensory compensation and their mental library of past experiences (Qiao et al., 2023). Their experiences can be enriched through tactility, aroma, movement and sound (Small et al., 2012). Despite all the barriers, this target group enjoys challenging tourism experiences (e.g. driving cars), escaping experiences (e.g. relieve work-place pressure) and educational experiences (e.g. visiting religious temple). Furthermore, they also prefer entertainment experiences (e.g. music), empathy experience (e.g. connecting with local people), and barrier-free experiences (e.g. free bus services). The success of the trips depends on the presence of other people such as caretakers, family, friends or guide dogs.

3.3.2 Tourist experience of mobility impaired travelers

Travelers with mobility challenges such as wheelchair users, crutches users, walkers and others are also among the categories of the people whose tourist experience is limited by a number of factors. Just like visual impaired travelers, this group also depends on their friends or family members for them to have enjoyable trips. Although they have similar travel motives just like others, they are constrained by limited information, structural building obstacles, and lack of access to services. Sometimes they are limited to enjoy tourism activities because they don't have the right wheelchairs suitable for beach activities (Özcan et al., 2021). The main problem affecting them is the architectural barriers because they use walker aid tools. Spacing is still a major barrier be it in a parking lot, or in hotels or at the destination. Accessibility of services is very important for this target group (Perangin-Angin et al., 2023). For wheelchair users, movements within buildings can be frustrating. Lack of accessible toilets, user-friendly restaurant facilities or accessible room facilities becomes a major issue of concern for wheelchair users (Poria et al., 2011). As a result, they are obligated to be selective in taking part in tourist activities. On the other hand, those using crutches feel unsafe when they have to move from one place to another. Another issue of concern to this group is care support and attitude of the service providers (Yates, 2007).

3.3.3 Tourist experiences of intellectual impairments

Just like other people with different forms of disabilities, people who belong to this category have diverse consumption patterns, and it is a crucial travel market

that requires most attention to their social inclusion(Eichhorn & Buhalis, 2011). To this group tourism means sense of normality, self-efficacy and strengthened relational connections (Gillovic et al., 2021). They prefer to show they are dynamic and they do value tourism experiences (Daniels et al., 2005). Despite the fact that they take tourism experience positively, they are constrained by the absence of an accessible enabling environment and lack of relevant information. Furthermore, internal barriers such as feeling of exclusion is one among the significant factors limiting them from having a memorable tourist experience (Figueiredo et al., 2012). This is coupled with the negative attitude from the service providers. In order for this group to enjoy tourism offers, accessible information using plain simple language, availability of assistive tools, awareness of tourism service providers regarding their needs, change of attitude from the suppliers' side may encourage them to take international trips.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Structural barriers encountered by PWDs during their past travel experience

Tourist experience for PWDs has been a roller coaster; their experience in tourism and hospitality sector has been covered with nothing but unpleasant memories. This situation is evident in the past related tourist experience studies for PWDs. The results indicated that among several structural barriers, information accessibility remained to be the dominant barrier. Even though each traveler encounters challenges during their journeys, problems magnified if you are disabled (Daniels et al., 2005). Travelers with disabilities depend on travel information for accessibility purposes(Michopoulou & Buhalis, 2013). Wheelchair users prefer to have complete and updated information regarding spacing issue in restaurants, parking, accommodation, transport as well as at the destination; while vision and hearing impaired also need clear information regarding assistive technologies before they make any travel decision. This finding corroborates the findings of Darcy (2010) and Ray and Ryder (2003) that adequate and accurate information affects the entire travel decision for PWDs. Although disabled travelers depend on word of mouth, the internet and travel guides (Ray & Ryder, 2003)the information provided by the service providers and posted on websites is out of date and less accurate, hence this causes disabled people not to travel(Michopoulou & Buhalis, 2013).

Furthermore, the study also found that lack of accessible transport was another barrier limiting disabled travelers from enjoying their trips. This problem has affected travel experience of wheelchair users (Özcan et al., 2021), to the point that some wheelchair users felt anxious, helpless and humiliated(Yates, 2007).People with other forms of disabilities such as visual impaired (Devile &K

astenholz, 2018) and those with diverse forms of disabilities such as motor and hearing impaired (Figueiredo et al., 2012) have also encountered this barrier. This experience has been evidenced in air transport, but the same barrier is affecting them when boarding other public transport (Mwaka et al., 2023).

This study also found that lack of support services was another barrier limiting disabled travelers from enjoying their trips. This problem is largely caused by limited knowledge regarding disabled peoples' needs (Deville & Kastenholz, 2018). Their participation in various tourism activities depends on the support of others (Darcy, 2002) since disabled people differ in their level of support needed. Hiring proper staff who offer user-friendly services to disabled travelers can be one of the strategies to handle this problem. Although most of them travel with their friends and family members, they still need assistance from service providers in every step of their journeys.

Physical environment was also seen as another constraint that limits PWDs from having a positive tourist experience. This barrier was evidenced through research work by Darcy (2012), Figueiredo et al. (2012), Poria and Reichel (2010) and Yates (2007). As a matter of fact, unfriendly architectural designs are one of the reasons as to why disabled people are not taking leisure trips. Limited space in the transport systems, hotel rooms, restaurants, pathways and parking are among the things that add barriers to disabled people. This finding confirms what was published by the past related disability studies such as the works of Daniels et al. (2005) and McKercher et al. (2003).

This study also found that financial ability was not a major factor limiting disabled people from having an enjoyable tourist experience. This finding supported the findings of Var et al. (2011) and Stumbo and Pegg (2005). This implies that apart from financial resources, other things such as physical environment, accessibility to information and attitudinal barriers are the major travel barriers limiting disabled people from having a memorable experience.

On the other hand, negative attitude from tourism business providers was the main interpersonal barrier limiting disabled people from having a memorable travel experience. This finding is not surprising since PWDs have been the victims of receiving poor quality services from tourism business providers. This is because service providers ignore them (Özcan et al., 2021), while some of them are ill prepared to assist them (Daniels et al., 2005; McKercher et al., 2003). Although it is rational to see service providers in the competitive business such as tourism struggling to maintain high quality for their customers, the issue of service failure to PWDs is overlooked (Ee Kim & Lehto, 2012). Negative

attitude from both service providers and from the society has made them to be stressed, risk perception and feel like they lack autonomy. These challenges are forcing them to be family and friends dependent when it comes to their travel decision (Deville & Kastenholz, 2018; Yates, 2007). Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3 present the summary of the structural barriers, interpersonal and intrapersonal barriers encountered by disabled travelers during their previous travel experiences. Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3 present the summary of the structural results.

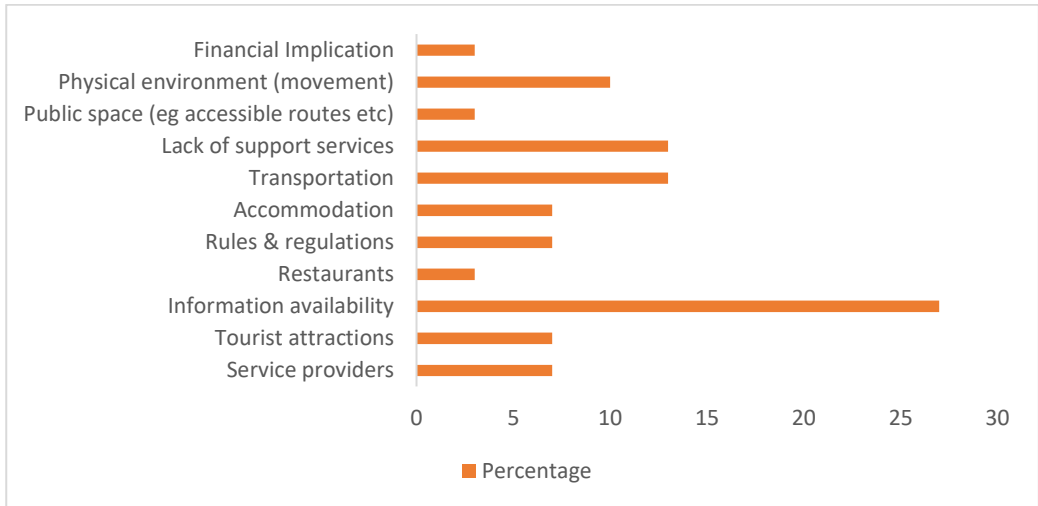


Figure 1: Structural barriers encountered by PWDs

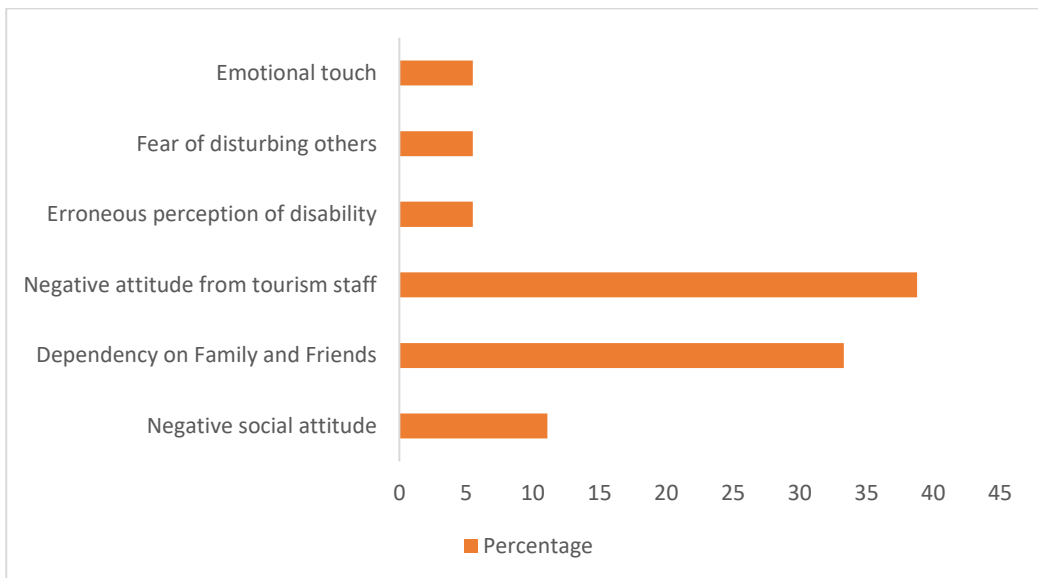


Figure 2: Interpersonal barriers encountered by PWDs

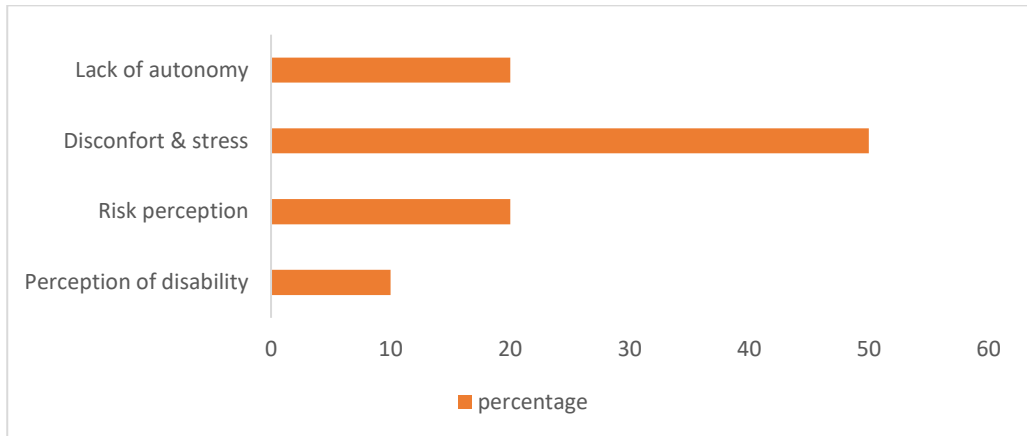


Figure 3: Intrapersonal barriers encountered by PWDs

4.2 Positive travel opportunities for PWDs

In this study, positive opinions regarding tourist experience for disabled travelers was also assessed. Out of 13 scholarly works 30% of all the studies have reported positive tourist experience for disabled travelers. It was argued that despite travel constraints, disabled travelers took those challenges as learning opportunities, and used coping strategies to avoid future travel risk (Deville & Kastenholz, 2018). It was further shown that encouragement and support from social network and having custom made services to satisfy their needs were the main strengths in their travel experience. Again, for disabled travelers, tourism experience was seen to be crucial and meaningful to participants as it gives them sense of normality, self-efficacy and strengthened their relational connections (Gillovic et al., 2021). This shows that disabled travelers have desire to travel just like others, and they get excited to travel (Perangin-Angin et al., 2023); however, barriers need to be controlled for them to freely choose the type of tourism activities they want to participate in.

4.3 Focus of the tourist experience studies of PWDs

Based on the descriptive findings, it was revealed that most of tourist experience studies on PWDs (69.2%) covered visitors' past travel experiences, depicting challenges and opportunities they have encountered during the previous travel, while 7.7 % of all the studies focused on addressing visitors' tourist experience in hotel, air transport, nature-based tourism or travel and accommodation. This finding implies that it is necessary to highlight disabled travelers' experience based on their overall past travel experience. This way one would be able to learn the real experience of travelers at different stages. These findings corroborate Tung and Ritchie (2011) findings. This way it would be easy for tourism businesses to make track on the challenges and opportunities disabled travelers

go through at each stage of their trips. The information is vital for tourism service providers to develop control mechanisms so that PWDs could have enjoyable trips just like able-bodied persons. Figure 4 presents a summary of the focus of tourist experience studies of PWDs.

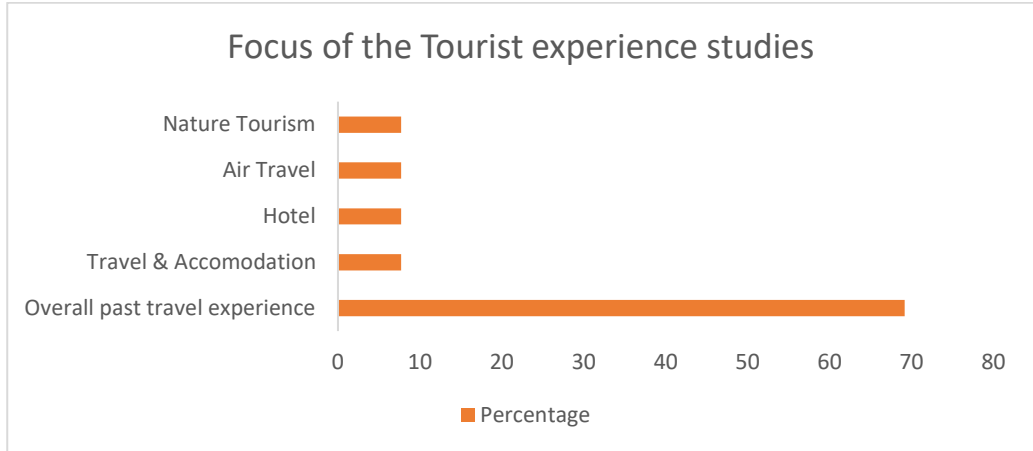


Figure 4: Focus of the tourist experience studies

4.4 Forms of disability covered

The findings of the study indicate that 38.4% of all the disabled travelers discussed in tourist experience studies were wheelchair users, followed by visual impaired (23.1%) and intellectual impaired (15.4%). The results indicate that very few (7%) covered those with reduced mobility and intellectual impaired travelers. Table 1 presents the summary of this information. This implies that most wheelchair users do take more leisure trips compared to those with other forms of disabilities. Therefore, tourism providers need to make sure that accessible facilities, including structural designs, are suitable enough to accommodate them. The removal of structural barriers may not only be beneficial to wheelchair users but also to people with other forms of disabilities.

Table 1: Forms of disability covered in tourism experience studies with PWDs

Form of disability	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Visual impaired travelers	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

4.5 Methodologies used in tourist experience studies of PWDs

The overall findings indicate that most of the studies were qualitative studies (84.6%). Since the aim of the studies was to capture the real voices on the issue of tourist experiences from PWDs, phenomenology was the dominant philosophical underpinning that guided their works. Furthermore, 7.7% of the existing literatures employed quantitative study and mixed research methods. Additionally, the findings show that extensive studies (69.2%) used semi-structured interview and an insignificant percentage (7.7) employed questionnaire, or online travel notes from online platforms. Purposive sampling strategy was the dominant strategy used by 30.8% while few of them opted for snowballing and convenience or purposive and professional criterion. Table 2 summarizes the methodologies used in past tourist experience studies on PWDs.

Table 2: 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	1	7.7
professional criterion	1	7.7
Snowball &	2	15.4
convenience		
Convenience		
	13	100

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

4.6 Name of the Journal

The assessment also involved the evaluation of the name of the journal used to publish tourist experience studies for PWDs. The findings show that most of the works (23.1%) were published by the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, followed by those published by the Tourism Recreation Research. Very few (7.7%) were published in other journals such as Journal of Policy, Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events, Annals of Tourism, Tourism Management, Sustainability or International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management. Figure 5 presents the summary of the name of the journals that published studies of tourist experience of PWDs.

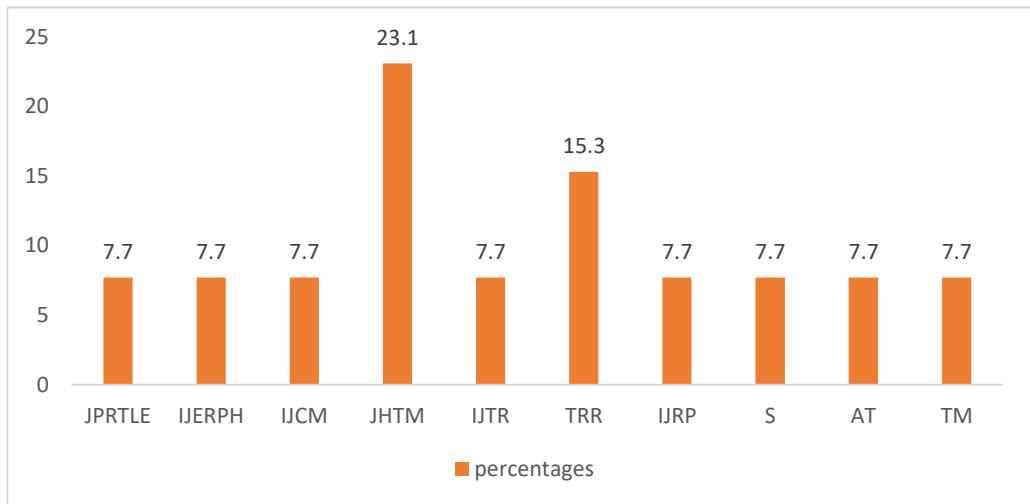


Figure 5: Name of the journal that published tourist experience of PWDs

Key: JPRTLE=Journal of Policy, IJERPH= Researchin 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.

4.7 Geographical location of the tourist experience published articles

The findings of the study indicate that most of the peer reviewed works have been published in Portugal (15%), New Zealand (15%), Australia (15%) and Indonesia (15%) while 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.

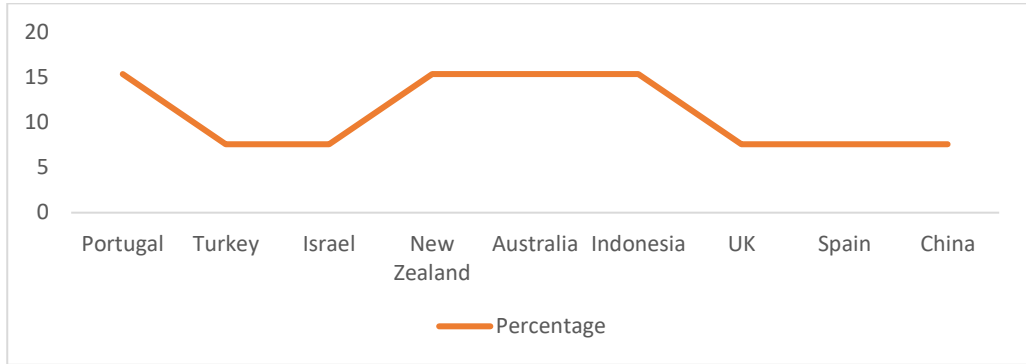


Figure 6: Geographic coverage of tourism experience studies of PWDs

5.0 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 them were reported 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. Majority of the disabled people covered in those studies were physically disabled, followed by visually and intellectually impaired people. These studies examined tourist experience of disabled travelers covering the overall travel experience while a few of them focused on hotel, air transport, nature tourism or travel and accommodation. A significant percentage of all the studies were qualitative in nature and respondents in those studies were picked via purposive sampling design. The main data collection tool used was semi-structured interview. The main findings from these indicated that PWDs face structural, interpersonal and intrapersonal barriers. Lack of accessible information, limited user-friendly transport, lack of support services and physical environment happened to be among the factors limiting disabled travelers from having an enjoyable time. Furthermore, negative attitude from service providers, dependency on family and friends and negative social attitudes also affected them from having a positive travel experience. Due to the existing barriers, PWDs ended up feeling stressed, helpless and humiliated. Despite the barriers, PWDs have shown interest in travel and they are excited to take part in tourism activities as long as the barriers are removed. Financial ability may not be a major barrier limiting them from having a memorable experience but other barriers are forcing them not to have positive travel memories.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY TO THE EXISTING BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

This study has brought to light the holistic picture regarding tourist experience of disabled travelers from the existing scholarly articles. The overall findings from most of the studies have highlighted that PWDs face many challenges from pre-planning, during and post trip. The barriers range from structural, interpersonal to intrapersonal barriers. However, the major problem pre-travel was lack of accessible information. This factor affects their entire travel decision. Most of the information offered by the tourism businesses is out-of-date and inaccurate. The findings encourage tourism businesses to ensure that information provided should be user-friendly to PWDs. The findings also highlighted that during their trips disabled people continued to face barriers right from when they board airplanes, to the point when they reached their destinations. Therefore, the findings imply that there is accumulation of barriers that disabled travelers face from one stage to the other. But, if the issue of information accessibility is resolved then PWDs would be in a position to make wise travel decisions. Another message drawn out of this work is that disabled people have the desire to travel and take part in different adventure activities including driving and visiting natural tourist attractions, but the existing barriers limit their travel motivations. Hence, these travelers can act as a theoretical lens for tourism businesses to develop accessible services to attract this emerging group.

Practically, the findings of this study offer the conclusion that disabled people can have a positive tourist experience as long as the barriers highlighted in this work can be removed. The philosophy of “one size fits all” strategy has to be changed and inclusive strategies have to be developed to handle this growing travel market. From this study, tourism service providers can draw lessons to understand both the negative and the positive experience of disabled people. This way they can start supplying more specific services to cater for their needs. In the end, such information can be used to promote barrier-free travel experiences. Additionally, the findings have also concluded that disabled people depend on others (family and friends) during their overall travel arrangements. Therefore, tourism business owners should try to optimize this market since it is a potentially viable source of revenue.

7.0 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Despite the contributions made from the systematic literature review analysis, the results generated must be interpreted in the light of some limitations which also offer opportunities for future studies. Firstly, this study focused only on full-length scholarly papers on Google scholar using the key words specified in the

methodology section. Although the data collection process was exhaustive, book reviews, thesis/dissertations, conference proceedings, editorial materials were excluded. Also, articles published in different languages other than English were also excluded. Therefore, some of the potential scholarly articles related to tourist experience in relation to disabled travelers may have been missed. Future studies may use different search engines such as SCOPUS and WOS databases to generate data. The search may bring out new scholarly works that may validate the findings of this study. Furthermore, since the existing studies have been reported in countries such as New Zealand, Australia, Portugal, Indonesia, Spain, the UK and China leaving Africa untouched, future studies may highlight tourist experience of disabled people in African countries. Since most of African countries are endowed with multiple tourist attractions and they depend on tourism for their economic development, then such findings may help them to start preparing a barrier-free environment to accommodate them. This study also dealt with tourist experience of disabled travelers only; therefore, future studies could compare tourist experience between able-bodied and disabled people. The findings of the studies may highlight differences or similarities in terms of their travel experiences. Such findings can be of help to destination managers and tourism business operators.

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Appendix 1: Tourist experience of PWDs studies

	Author(s) & year	Aim & Study area	Type of disability	Context	Data collection & sampling strategies	Journal	Methodology
1	Yates (2007)	Examination of the 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	International Journal of Tourism Policy	Qualitative Content analysis
2	Poria&Reichel (2010)	Identifying the barriers that people with disabilities confront during their hotel Experience in Israel.	Wheelchairs, Disabled using crutches and visual impaired.	Hotel	In-depth semi-structured interviews snowballing technique	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Exploratory study Thematic analysis.
3	Figueiredo et al., (2012)	Assessment of the diverse forms of being disabled, and their abilities to experiencing 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.	International Journal of tourism research	Quantitative Univariate and multivariate analyses techniques (frequencies & central tendency analysis), principal component analysis tests Kruskal–Wallis & chi-square for identifying

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							differences between groups. Kruskal–Wallis tests variance tests
4	Darcy (2012)	Investigation of air travel experiences of people with disability in Australia	Travelers with diverse form of disabilities	Air Travel	open-ended questionnaire semi-structured in-depth interviews Purposive sampling	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management	Qualitative mixed-method interpretative approach continual comparison of the qualitative data
5	Small et al. (2012)	Assessment of the embodied tourist experiences of vision impaired people in Australia.	Visual impaired	Overall past travel experiences	In-depth interviews and focus groups. Semi-structured questionnaire Purposive sampling	Tourism Management	Qualitative study Thematic analysis
6	Deville & Kastenholz (2018)	analyze 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	Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events	Qualitative Content analysis
7	Özcan et al. (2021)	Examining the motivations, expectations, processes and 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	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	Qualitative Thematic analysis

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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	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management	Qualitative Thematic analysis
9	Orakani, et al. (2021)	Examined constraints and facilitators experienced by travelers with mobility impairments in New Zealand	Mobility impaired	Overall past travel experience	Semi-structured interview purposeful snowball	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management	Qualitative Content analysis
10	Rubio-Escuderos, et al (2021)	Assessment of the tourist experience 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	Tourism Recreation Research	Qualitative Thematic analysis
11	Reindrawati et al. (2022)	Examined the tourism experiences of people with disabilities in Indonesia.	Physical disability Visual Impaired	Overall past travel experience	semi –structured in-depth interviews Purposive	Sustainability	Qualitative Thematic analysis
12	Qiao et al. (2023)	Examine aspects of the tourism experience from	Visually impaired	Overall past travel experience	Travel notes posted by visually impaired tourists on the Zhisu	Annals of Tourism	Qualitative Grounded

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		the perspective of visually impaired tourist's tourism experiences in a Chinese cultural context.			Integration Tourism (ZIT) WeChat site were used as the main data Convenience sampling		theory
13	Perangin-Angin et al. (2023)	Assessment of the travel experiences and expectations of wheelchair tourists in Indonesia	Wheelchair users	Nature tourism	semi-structured interviews with snowball sampling	Tourism Recreation Research	Thematic analysis