

A research of overcoming the barriers in tourism design by the perspective of tourists with disabilities and stakeholders in Antalya

Gülay Bulgan^{a*} and Aygen Oksay^b

^a Süleyman Demirel University (Assoc. Prof. Dr.), Isparta, Turkey ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9648-311X>

^b Süleyman Demirel University (Assoc. Prof. Dr.) Isparta, Turkey ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3186-5010>

Abstract

Individuals with disabilities, who represent a significant minority throughout the world, must be included in all areas of life. Tourism, which is one of these main areas, should include the needs and desires of individuals with disabilities. The aim of this study is to find out the difficulties' individuals with disabilities face in tourism and how to overcome them. A semi-structured interview technique was used for this purpose and the stakeholders serving in the tourism sector, members of the disability associations and tourists with disabilities were reached. As a result, it is found that tourists with disabilities mostly experience bad attitudes and behaviors from the tourism staff and face some difficulties during their transfer due to architectural barriers. In order to overcome these obstacles, tourism design should be given importance for all types of disabilities considering the individuals with disabilities when planning tourism activities.

Keywords: *Tourism, Individuals with disabilities, Accessibility, Barriers, Tourism design.*

1. Introduction

In modern societies, the removal of barriers to the participation of individuals with disabilities in the social life and ensuring their adaptation to all segments of life is an important indicator. When all the social structures are examined, the existence of individuals with disabilities cannot be ignored. As Burkhauser & Daly (1994) suggest Germans with disabilities on average earn only slightly less and enjoy the same household income as those without disabilities; while Americans with disabilities earn substantially less and face an income gap of more than 25% compared to those without disabilities. Access to all kinds of services that individuals with disabilities need to maintain their vital activities are not only an improvement made for them, but also a factor increasing the quality of life for everyone. The individuals with disabilities represent a significant minority across the globe and constitute a growing niche market group. In order to get more shares from the world tourism market, the tourism sector has to provide easy access to tourism activities for individuals with disabilities within the concept of accessible tourism. When the expectations of tourists with disabilities and their companions are understood correctly, necessary arrangements can be made easily for their access to tourism sector.

It is estimated that around 1 billion individuals with disabilities are in the world and more than 2 billion people, representing about 1/3 of the world's population, are directly affected by disability, considering their spouses, children and caregivers (UN-Disability Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2018). In general, when the number of individuals with disabilities in the whole world is examined there are approximately 53 million people in the United States, 4 million in Spain, 11 million in Pakistan, 9 million in Turkey, 7 million in Japan, 54 million in India, 66 million in China, 14 million in Germany and 9 million people in France (Darcy & Dickson, 2009). While these data represent a huge potential market for travel and tourism, tourists with disabilities still cannot benefit largely from tourism services due to discriminatory policies along with inaccessible travel and tourism facilities and services.

Accessible tourism enables all people to participate in tourism and to meet with tourism experiences. Individuals with or without a disability need access to tourism activities. For example, older and less mobile people or pregnant need access, as well. This situation can become a big obstacle during the travels. For this reason, accessible tourism is in a continuous effort to ensure that tourists have access to all

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: gulaybulgan@sdu.edu.tr (G. Bulgan)*, aygenoksay@sdu.edu.tr (A. Oksay)

Article info:

Research Article

Received: 30 December 2019

Received in revised form: 28 December 2020

Accepted: 7 January 2021

Ethics committee approval:

Data were collected between November 1st 2018 and July 15th 2019. All responsibility belongs to the researchers. All parties were involved in the research of their own free will.

To cite this article: Bulgan, G. & Oksay, A. (2021). A research of overcoming the barriers in tourism design by the perspective of tourists with disabilities and stakeholders in Antalya. *Journal of Tourism Theory and Research*, 7(1), 22-31. <https://doi.org/10.24288/jttr.839150>

tourist products and services, regardless of their physical limitations, barriers or ages. Accessible tourism includes publicly available and privately-owned tourist sites, facilities and services. Accessible tourism involves a collaborative process between end-users, including all stakeholders, governments, international agencies, tour operators and individuals with disabilities and their organizations (NGOs). A successful tourism product requires effective partnerships and cooperation in many sectors at regional, national and international levels. From idea to practice, access to information needed to visit one destination includes several factors such as various types of long-distance travel, local transport, accommodation, shopping and dining. Thus, the effect of accessible tourism goes beyond the tourist beneficiaries and increases accessibility of the social and economic values of the society (Coleman, 2006; Miller, 2004; Wakiya, 2011).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) in December 2006. In Article 9 of the CRPD; with regard to Accessibility, it is called upon to take appropriate measures to ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal access to the physical environments as other healthy individuals. This situation is considered within the scope of information given, transportation and other facilities and services. It also requires the elimination of barriers to accessibility, including all transport and facilities. Furthermore, in Article 30 of the CRPD; The States Parties to the Convention are called upon to ensure the participation of individuals with disabilities in cultural life, recreation activities, entertainment, sporting activities and all tourism activities.

The participation of Presidents of various States was ensured at the UN Disability and Senior Development History Meeting held in 2013 and issues related to the disability and development were discussed at the meeting. With this meeting, mainstream was increased for disability in the global development agenda and call for action was announced. In addition, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon invited the international community to make all cities accessible in his message on World Habitat Day in 2013. Thus, the disability organizations no longer focus on the individual's impairment or disability, but on society's obligations to remove physical and social barriers (Gilad & Rimmerman, 2014).

There are many access barriers that individuals with disabilities face during their travels and tourism activities. For individuals with disabilities, traveling is often difficult, costly and time consuming to find information about accessible services, check the baggage of an airplane or book an accommodation. In this context the types of obstacles the individuals with disabilities face during their tourism activities are summarized in the following items (UN-Disability Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2018):

- The presence of untrained staff who can inform and advice on accessibility issues,

- Inaccessible booking services and lack of relevant web-sites,
- Lack of accessible airports and transfer services;
- Access barriers to adapted and accessible hotel rooms, restaurants, shops, public places, etc.
- The presence of inaccessible streets and transportation services,
- Unattainable information on accessible facilities, services and tourism destinations.

When looking at the barrier's tourists with disabilities face, it is understood that one of the main problems comes from not working with specialist personnel who have adequate information on disability tourism. Other barriers faced occurs when booking, in accessing to airports and in providing transfers, as well as in local transportation services in the destinations they visit such as the hotels, shops, restaurants, etc. Basically, the regulatory measures that can be addressed in three categories, will allow individuals with disabilities access to tourism. These categories include the provision of assistive materials (wheelchairs, etc.) to enable individuals with disabilities to use their skills at the highest level; environmental and structural improvers (elevators, ramps, etc.) and changes in the attitudes and behaviors of local people and tourism workers towards individuals with disabilities (Figueiredo et al., 2012; Wakiya, 2011).

In line with the fact that providing the right information to tourists with disabilities and understanding the needs of them through the arrangements done in tourism establishments may lead to an increase in the number of visitors. Furthermore, increasing the accessibility of tourism services will increase the quality of services offered and the benefit of all tourists. In addition, these positive developments will serve as a basis for increasing the quality of life in local communities. The European Commission (EC) is committed to increasing the accessibility of tourism through a series of actions. Accessible tourism makes it easier for everyone to enjoy the experiences of tourism. Making tourism more accessible is not just a social responsibility; it also has a compelling force to improve accessibility as it can increase the competitiveness of tourism. The European Union (EU) supports co-financing projects related to the design, implementation and marketing of accessible tourism routes. The main purpose of these projects is to increase the existing travel opportunities for individuals with special access needs, to encourage socialization of individuals with disabilities and also to improve the skills of staff in the sector (EC, Accessible Tourism, 2018).

Individuals with disabilities usually travel with their companions, it can be said that the potential figure traveling in Europe is 130 million people and their approximate tourism expenditure is more than 80 billion Euros. In all hospitality facilities having the tourism operation license given by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Turkey, there are a

total of 1176 rooms for the individuals with disabilities in Turkey (www.tursab.org.tr). However, the studies show that Turkey doesn't fully comply with the standards in terms of the accessibility of tourism for individuals with disabilities due to the overall structure of facilities and unsuitable rooms for them and the service staff (Bulgan, 2014). If Turkey makes the necessary arrangements for disability tourism, a significant increase in tourism revenues can be achieved by benefiting from individuals with disabilities, who usually travel in low season and has an extending effect on the tourism season. The problems identified by Turkey Travel Agencies Association (TURSAB) Accessible Tourism Committee are as follows (www.tursab.org.tr):

- The lack of adequate vehicles for the public transport of the individuals with disabilities,

- Improper design of touristic attractions, the museums and the ruins for individuals with disabilities (lack of toilets and lack of proper ramps for individuals with disabilities, etc.),

- The lack of free parking facilities and appropriate signs for the individuals with disabilities,

- Difficulties due to the lack of spatial arrangements which facilitate the procedures at border gates for the guests arriving in Turkey with their own car,

- Lack of equipment to enable individuals with disabilities to benefit from the services in public buildings such as hospitals, health centers, police stations, etc. (when planning, it should be considered that there are physically, auditory, visually and mentally individuals with disabilities),

- The absence of private authorities where the individuals with disabilities can apply,

- According to the Regulation on Certification and Qualifications of Tourism Facilities, only the hotels and holiday villages with a capacity of 80 rooms and more are required to have rooms for individuals with disabilities at the number of 1% of the total room capacity. But the enterprises keep this at a minimum level. Thus, the number of rooms for individuals with disabilities even in accommodation centers with 300 rooms is not more than 3,

- Some of the rooms which already exist are not at the standard to meet the needs of them,

- Although arrangements for the use of physically individuals with disabilities at the entrance of the facilities, public toilets, eating-drinking units, break points, theme parks and entertainment centers have been specified to be made in the mentioned regulation, these articles have never been fulfilled in tourism enterprises or no adequate arrangements has been made.

The above findings indicate that Turkey has not yet addressed the disability tourism market. Scarcity of studies related to disability tourism and the lack of legislation and implementation also has a negative effect on the developments

in disability tourism in Turkey as well as in the world. By making the necessary arrangements immediately, Turkish tourism will be able to get into this important niche market.

Within this study, the difficulties that tourists with disabilities encounter and whether they are included in tourism design have been examined through interviews conducted in Antalya, the city with the most bed capacity for tourists with disabilities in Turkey. In all accommodation establishments providing accommodation for individuals with disabilities in Turkey, there are only 1176 rooms in total which more than half of them are located in Antalya, a city in the south coast of Turkey. Antalya, being the 1st city in Turkey and the 3rd in the world that hosts foreign tourists, has more 5-star hotels than Spain as a whole, which has around 400 hotels only. The statistics show that Antalya has hosted more than 13 million tourists in 2018. Therefore, this study is carried out in Antalya. With the interviews carried out in this study the employees at state institutions, local administrations, tourist information offices, tourist attraction centers, transportation enterprises, tourism enterprises, non-profit organizations, disability communities, the members of the disability associations and tourists with disabilities were reached. As a result, the tourists with disabilities are mostly not included in tourism activities due to the fact that they are seen in minority, the tourism personnel are in lack of training and knowledge about the tourists with disabilities and the existing physical difficulties depending on the nature of tourism activities. Thus, there is a need for employees with knowledge about tourists with disabilities as well as improvements in the architectural structures, especially in transportation to facilitate the access to tourism activities for tourists with disabilities.

2.Literature Review

Murray & Sproats (1990) argue that individuals with disabilities would like to participate in tourism, but the existing barriers must first be removed. When the studies on disability tourism in the world are examined Oxley & Richards (1995) have found that travel expenses of individuals with disabilities are not more than healthy individuals. Darcy & Daruwalla (1999), determined that the obstacles to the satisfaction of the tourism experiences are economic, physical and attitudinal. In another study Foggin (2000) has determined that individuals with disabilities are not satisfied with the services provided by tourism service providers. Burnett & Bender (2001) revealed that the type of disability of individuals also directly affect the travel decisions. In Parker (2001)'s study on the change of attitude towards individuals with disabilities in Asia, it is mentioned that according to World Tourism Organization data of 1997, individuals with disabilities living in each country are 12-15% potential tourists and this ratio will increase by 2 times in 2020. In a study conducted by Israeli (2002), it is stated that individuals with disabilities constitute an important market segment but they have not yet served well in the tourism sector. In their study,

Miller & Kirk (2002) have attempted to explore to what extent the tourism industry in the UK was affected by the Disability Discrimination Act and increased the performance in the tourism sector according to the Act. They have found that the services provided for the individuals with disabilities should be improved in the tourism sector. Takeda & Card (2002) investigated the challenges people who have difficulty walking face in the services and package tours provided by U.S. tour operators and travel agencies and it was determined that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was not fulfilled. In Snyman (2002)'s study, it was seen that individuals with disabilities have access barriers to tourism. Amanda (2003)'s research found that ADA, which has sanctions promoting the participation of individuals with disabilities in tourism activities is disregarded. However, according to the findings of Sielschott (2003), it was determined that the hotel enterprises located in the USA and participated in the study were compatible with ADA with a rate of 61%. The study on the individuals with physical disabilities living in China conducted by Bi (2007), found that individuals with physical disabilities had to struggle with the barriers of access in tourism.

Breedt (2007), in his study, has attempted to examine the problems faced by tourists with disabilities in hotel businesses and has concluded that arrangements should be made in the reception, bathrooms, pools and bars. In Rummel (2008)'s doctoral thesis, it was aimed to determine the opinions and thoughts of the managers about the travels of the individuals with physical disabilities, to investigate whether they had enough information on their travels, to determine whether the travel planners used different sources of information for the individuals with disabilities in the context of planning. However, positive results could not be obtained. Darcy & Taylor (2009)'s study showed that the majority of the problems experienced by individuals with disabilities in hotels were access barriers and communication barriers. Schitko (2009) has attempted to examine whether the attitudes of students who have received tourism education towards tourists with disabilities will change with the trainings to be given and it was found that the students who are employees of the future adopt positive attitudes as a result of the trainings given. According to Holden (2010)'s study it is found that the travel and tourism experiences of the tourists with disabilities and their companions consist of quite different components. According to these components, it is determined that planning of travels, preparing travel, problem of accessibility, expectations and physical needs of family member with disabilities should be taken into consideration. In their study, Poria et al. (2010) investigated the flight experiences of individuals with disabilities and argued that the flight crew's attitude and behavior towards them should be improved by training.

In a study, Freeman & Selmi (2010) compared the situation of the hospitality industry by directing the same questions to the domestic and foreign tourists with disabilities in

France and Canada. They found that in both countries' policies it was insufficient to take improving measures for tourists with disabilities in the tourism sector. It was concluded that tourists with disabilities could not satisfy their accommodation needs without difficulty and even this group represented a market segment which was excluded. Zbikowski et al (2011) listed the factors that hinder and restrain the participation of individuals with disabilities in tourism as participation fees, transportation difficulties, fears, obstacles, lack of information, lack of support from the family, lack of offers from institutions, lack of organization and lack of interest in activities. Among these, while the participation fees were found to be the most important obstacle, communication difficulties were listed as second important factor.

The result of the research carried out by Paga'n (2012) shows that individuals with disabilities who have limited daily activities devote less time to tourism activities compared to other healthy individuals and this rate is found to be less in men with disabilities. Mihaela (2012) investigated the factors that hampered the development of disability tourism in Romania and found that official and unofficial institutions did not work effectively for the problems of tourists with disabilities and that transportation was found to be the most important problem. According to Bratucu et al. (2016)'s study, showing in which places and situations individuals with disabilities experience, it's seen that most of the problems occur with the frequency of 27% in touristic trips, 17% in transportation, 16% in the lack of infrastructure and 15% in accommodation.

When studies on disability tourism in Turkey are examined it is seen that the hotel enterprises don't take into consideration the types of disability when designing the guest rooms. One of the main reasons for this is the lack of articles in the laws and regulations regarding the enterprises to design the guest rooms (Yörük, 2003). According to the results of Atak (2008), it is found out that hotel managers are not very knowledgeable about the disability tourism market, that they are quite new and unprepared for this target group but they are very eager to turn towards this market. Similar results were found by Yaylı & Öztürk (2006) and Eryılmaz (2010) also. In a study done by Mülâyim & Özşahin (2010), the problems experienced by tourists with physical disabilities in hospitality industry and suggested solutions have been examined. They have found that disability tourism in Turkey is unable to improve due to having serious issues and that the legislative regulations have also been found to be insufficient at this point.

Although there are studies in Turkey concerning the participation of tourists with disabilities in tourism activities, the convenience of the existing hospitality facilities for individuals with disabilities, the examination of 'disability' factor in the design of tourism structures, the evaluation of infrastructural possibilities in hospitality facilities for improving disability tourism, the investigation of the perspectives of the hospitality enterprise managers to the physical disability market (Arıcı, 2010; Artar & Karabacakoğlu, 2003;

Atak, 2008; Yörük, 2003), there has been no research examining the satisfaction of tourists with disabilities from hospitality facilities until 2012. Şahin (2012)'s thesis contributed to the literature by trying to determine the satisfaction level of the tourists with orthopedic and visually disabilities from accommodation facilities. According to his study, in order to increase the satisfaction level of the tourists with disabilities from hospitality facilities, it has been suggested that the staff in hospitality enterprises should be trained to help with the difficulties that the tourists with disabilities may encounter and to provide information about the services offered. According to the results of Tütüncü & Aydın (2013)'s study, it has been revealed that around 15% of the societies in the world are composed of individuals with disabilities and there is already a potential market for them. For this reason, it is emphasized that the structure of the touristic product differs from other industrial products and that the necessary measures should be taken to enable the tourists with disabilities to spend their holidays without any difficulties.

In a study conducted by Bulgan (2015), it was concluded that individuals with disabilities usually participate in tourism activities in the low season and this situation could have an impact on extending Turkey's tourist season. This study also revealed that the arrangements made in tourism enterprises were insufficient. In a study done by Yıldız et al. (2017) to examine the disability tourism in Turkey and around the world, it was cleared that there was a need to make substantial regulations for disability tourism, which was not counted among the existing types of tourism in Turkey but an important economic activity in the world.

When the results of studies on the disability tourism in the world and Turkey are examined, it is understood that about 95% of these studies emphasize the existence of access barriers to tourism activities for individuals with disabilities. The completion of legal, structural and environmental regulations, which will ease the lives of the individuals with disabilities and increase the participation level of them in tourism activities, will create an increasing effect on the living standards of all individuals and not only for the individuals with disabilities.

3. Methodology

Semi-structured interview technique, which is one of the qualitative research methods, where the researcher uses the questions that are already prepared and can also add additional questions according to the participant's responses, was applied in the study. The strength of this technique is that it allows the researcher to get the best answers in limited time (Dakto, 2015). Darcy (1998) underlines that the qualitative information collected also highlights a range of positive and negative comments about the "attitudes" of individuals in the tourism industry. According to him with surveys it is considered that many positive examples of the tourism industry's attitude towards individuals with disabilities would have gone unreported. Thus, a qualitative research method was decided to be the right method to uncover the attitudes

of the tourism stakeholders and the tourists with disabilities themselves towards disability tourism.

The universe of the research is composed of members of disability associations and employees at state institutions, local administrations, tourist information offices, tourist attraction centers, transportation enterprises, tourism enterprises, non-profit organizations, disability communities and tourists with disabilities in Antalya. The sample of the study was determined by purposive sampling technique. Purposeful sampling is a method used in case of a choice in terms of individuals, events, objects or situations in the study (Patton, 2002). In this context; 6 disability association executives, 14 tourism management employees, 7 transportation enterprises employees, 6 public employees, 15 disability association members and 8 tourists with disabilities were included in the study. The managers of 6 out of 8 disabled associations were included as well. These are Solidarity Association for the Physically Disabled, Association of Hearing Impaired in Antalya, the Antalya Branch of Turkey Disabled Association, Association of the Rights of Patients and Disabled People and Their Relatives, Antalya Disabled Art House and Beyaz Baston Association for the Visually Impaired.

The members of these associations were also included in this study. 3 participants from Solidarity Association for the Physically Disabled, 2 from Association of Hearing Impaired in Antalya, 3 from Antalya Disabled Art House, 2 from Antalya Branch of Turkey Disabled Association, 2 from Beyaz Baston Association for the Visually Impaired and 3 from Association of the Rights of Patients and Disabled People and Their Relatives were included. The total numbers of tourism enterprises in Antalya is 1859. But the hotels and the restaurants are the ones that serve to the individuals with disabilities directly. Along this study we have reached 6 restaurants and 8 hotels and stopped the sample when we started getting the same answers. There are 6 airline, 128 highway, 10 maritime businesses and none railway companies in Antalya. Within this study the sample consists of 7 individuals (3 airline, 2 maritime and 2 highway) that work in the transportation companies, 6 participants that work in the Governor of Antalya, Provincial Directorate of Culture, Tourist Information Offices and 8 tourists with disabilities.

The interviews were conducted face to face between November 1st 2018 and July 15th 2019 with 56 participants and descriptive systematic analysis technique was applied. Then, creating a framework, processing the data in accordance with the thematic framework, identifying and interpreting the findings were followed respectively (Newcomer, et al., 2015). In addition, by using frequency analysis and evaluative analysis technique, data were interpreted and tabulated.

4. Results

A total of 5 questions were asked to the participants in the study and the findings obtained from these questions were tabulated by descriptive systematic analysis, frequency analysis and evaluative analysis. 6 disability association

managers, 14 tourism management employees, 7 transportation management employees, 6 public employees, 15 disability association members and 8 tourists with disabilities participated in the study. The participants were asked whether they included the tourists with disabilities into the tourism activities or not. The answers to this question are shown in detail in Table 1. According to the results seen in Table 1, 28.6 % of the participants stated that they included tourists with disabilities; whereas 44.6% of them stated that they didn't include them in tourism activities. This result is important in terms of showing that the tourists with disabilities are not taken into consideration by tourism institutions when planning tourism activities. The reasons why the tourists with disabilities aren't included in the tourism activities are shown in Table 2.

According to the data obtained, transfer problems, with a rate of 26.8%, is one of the main reasons why tourists with disabilities aren't being included in tourism activities. It was determined that considering tourists with disabilities as minority and incomplete, with a rate of 25%, was the 2nd reason of exclusion. The 3rd reason of exclusion was found to be the inconvenience of physical conditions, with a rate of 21.4%. Table 2 shows that tourists with disabilities are mostly not included in tourism facilities because of transfer problems, physical difficulties due to the nature of tourism activities, the fact that tourists with disabilities are considered as minority and incomplete and also due to the lack of knowledge and training of tourism staff. Only 8 of the participants stated that they included tourists with disabilities because of motivation and awareness. The participants were asked what kind of challenges the tourists with disabilities face in tourism design. The answers were analyzed and the results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 shows that 37.5% of the participants stated that the structures of tourism enterprises were not convenient for tourists with disabilities and they emphasized that a standard suitable for those who have no disabilities was taken into

consideration in planning the architectural structure. When the problems faced by tourists with disabilities in tourism sector were examined, it was found out that 17 of the participants stated that the physical incompatibility of the transfer vehicles was a major problem for tourists with disabilities with a rate of 30.3%. The rate of the participants who stated that prejudice against tourists with disabilities, exclusion and lack of knowledge about tourists with disabilities is another problem, was determined as 12.5%. Communication problems, which are commonly faced by hearing impaired individuals, are emphasized by the participants with a rate of 9%. Contrary to these problems, the findings obtained in response to the answers of some tourists with disabilities who participated in the study show that there is no difficulty encountered by individuals with disabilities with a rate of 10.7%. These findings underline the fact that the tourists with disabilities mostly have to deal with the difficulties arising from the architectural structures and the transfer problems.

The answers to the causes of obstacles for tourists with disabilities to access to tourism activities are seen in Table 4. According to Table 4, 34% of the participants stated that the transportation vehicles used are inappropriate and restricted and that individuals with disabilities have obstacles to access due to the fact that tourists with disabilities are not recognized by others and due to the lack of training intended for individuals with disabilities. 16% of the participants in the study stated that the state policies carried out in the scope of tourists with disabilities were inadequate and that the lack of necessary and adequate supervision of the implementations was one of the obstacles to access. On the contrary, it was found that there were 9 participants who stated that there were no obstacles in terms of access to tourism activities. These results show that the tourists with disabilities have barriers to access to tourism activities and the problems they face most often arise from the prejudices of transportation enterprises and other healthy individuals.

Table 1. Inclusion of tourists with disabilities in tourism activities by tourism institutions and organizations

Inclusion of tourists with disabilities in tourism activities	Explanation	Frequency	%
Excluded	Individuals with disabilities are not included in tourism activities.	25	44.6
Included	Individuals with disabilities are included in tourism activities.	16	28.6
Partly included	Individuals with disabilities are partly included in tourism activities.	15	27.8

Table 2. Reasons of inclusion and exclusion of tourists with disabilities in tourism activities

Reasons of inclusion/exclusion of tourists with disabilities in tourism activities	Explanation	Frequency	%
Not included due to transfer problems.	Exclusion due to transportation difficulties.	15	26.8
Considered as minority and incomplete.	Exclusion because of the opinion of not seeing them as part of the market and considering them as incomplete.	14	25
Not included due to physical conditions.	Not being included in tourism activities due to inconvenient physical conditions in enterprises.	12	21.4
Inclusion for motivation and awareness.	Inclusion of individuals with disabilities in tourism activities to raise awareness and to provide the individuals with disabilities for self-confidence and motivation.	8	14.3
Exclusion due to lack of training and knowledge.	Problems arising from not recognizing individuals with disabilities and not taking necessary training.	7	12.5

Table 3. Challenges faced by tourists with disabilities in tourism design

Challenges faced by tourists with disabilities in tourism design	Explanation	Frequency	%
Physical incompatibility of the enterprise and standards for those who have no disabilities.	Architectural structures not suitable for individuals with disabilities, standardization for those who have no disabilities.	21	37.5
Physical incompatibility of transfer vehicles.	Inconvenience of transportation vehicles for individuals with disabilities, physical incompatibility.	17	30.3
Exclusion and lack of information and/or prejudice.	Prejudice against individuals with disabilities and insufficient knowledge about them.	7	12.5
Not encountering any obstacles.	Not encountering any difficulties.	6	10.7
Communication problems.	Not hiring an interpreter for hearing impaired individuals and communication difficulties	5	9

Table 4. Causes of obstacles for tourists with disabilities to access to tourism activities

Obstacles to access to tourism activities	Explanation	Frequency	%
Restriction of transportation vehicles for individuals with disabilities.	Lack of measures and implementations for individuals with disabilities and lack of necessary physical design in intercity trips.	19	34
Not recognizing individuals with disabilities and the lack of training.	Not recognizing the individuals with disabilities and approaching to them with prejudice.	19	34
Inadequate state policies and insufficient control.	Implementations and designs made for individuals with disabilities in enterprises are not adequately supervised, implementations are made to be made, not receiving the opinion of individuals with disabilities in the projects and implementations.	9	16
No obstacles to access.	Not encountering any obstacles to access to activities.	9	16

Table 5. Overcoming the obstacles for tourists with disabilities in accessible tourism design

Overcoming the obstacles	Explanation	Frequency	%
Providing necessary training about tourists with disabilities.	To provide necessary training about individuals with disabilities, the necessity of fully understanding them and perceiving what they want.	18	32.1
Institutions and individuals being sensitive to tourists with disabilities.	The necessity of individuals, businesses and institutions to be more understanding and more sensitive to tourists with disabilities.	15	26.8
Activities for individuals with disabilities and providing appropriate physical requirements.	The necessity of organizing special events for tourists with disabilities and providing physically appropriate environments for them.	12	21.4
No difficulty to be overcome.	Not having a difficulty to be overcome.	6	10.7
Obtaining the opinion of tourists with disabilities.	The necessity of taking the opinion of tourists with disabilities with priority in any tourism design or implementation.	5	9

The participants were asked what could be done to overcome these obstacles for accessible tourism design. The results are shown in Table 5. As seen in Table 5, participants stated that required training should be given to the tourism staff as the most important factor with a rate of 32.1%. Also, the participants emphasized that the institutions and the individuals should be sensitive to tourists with disabilities with a rate of 26.8%. It was found that 21.4% of the participants underlined the importance of organizing special events for tourists with disabilities and providing physical, technological and architectural requirements for them. In addition, it was found out that 9% of the participants stated that the opinions of the tourists with disabilities in the implementations made and planned for the tourists with disabilities should be taken into consideration with priority. In contrast to all these obstacles, the rate of participants who stated that there were no obstacles in the tourism sector for tourists with disabilities was found to be 10.7%. It is understood from Table 5 that the participants emphasize that the tourism staff must be trained and tourism workers, tourists and local people must adopt a more sensitive approach towards tourists with disabilities.

5. Discussion

When the literature on the tourists with disabilities is examined, it is seen that tourists with disabilities should be included in tourism within the concept of accessible tourism (Darcy & Taylor 2009; Mihaela, 2012; Tütüncü & Aydın, 2013). Similar results were obtained in this study as well. According to the results it was found that the planning was done mostly without considering the individuals with disabilities. Within the scope of the surveys, it's seen that most individuals with disabilities are having difficulties with transfer from airports to hotels and vice versa (Bratucu et al., 2016; Foggin, 2000; Poria et al., 2010). This result coincides with the results of this study. According to the results the tourists with disabilities aren't included in the tourism facilities because of some reasons such as transfer problems, which is the main reason; lack of knowledge and training of tourism staff, physical difficulties due to the nature of tourism activities and due to the fact that tourists with disabilities are considered as minority and incomplete. It is a fact that tourists with disabilities will be more involved in tourism activities if barriers about transfer are overcome.

The results of this study show that individuals with disabilities face the obstacles arising from the architectural structure of tourism enterprises and it is determined that there are other researches that emphasize the same problem (Bi, 2006; Daruwalla & Darcy, 2005; Wakiya, 2011). This study also examines the reasons of obstacles in access to the tourism facilities and the accessibility of barriers in the tourism design. According to the results the main barriers to the access of tourism facilities are the transfer of the tourists with disabilities and the prejudice attitudes of the personnel towards them.

The solution to these barriers is to educate the tourism personnel on communication and attitudes toward the individuals with disabilities in order for them to behave more responsible and helpful to the tourists with disabilities. Also, all the shareholders (the public, the businesses, non-governmental organizations, etc.) in the tourism sector should be persuaded to behave more sensitive to the tourists with disabilities. It will be easier to overcome this obstacle if individuals with disabilities are taken into consideration while planning the construction of tourism businesses. However, nowadays, all tourism businesses are made to the standards that only healthy individuals can benefit from. Wakiya (2011) contributed to the theory by the introduction of the concepts of design and inclusive design to tourism, leading to the development of the idea of inclusive design of tourism, which can address the issue of exclusion of individuals with disabilities from different areas of tourism and promote inclusionary practices in tourism.

Another important issue, which was obtained as a result of this study and supported by other researches, is that the tourism personnel who are serving to the tourists with disabilities do not have sufficient knowledge and have not received any training intended for tourists with disabilities (Atak, 2008; Eryılmaz, 2010; Poria et al., 2010; Zbikowski et al., 2011). As a matter of fact, the answers to 4 questions out of 5 show that the participants face a communication problem due to lack of education and knowledge. Thus, it is thought that increasing the knowledge of tourism personnel intended for tourists with disabilities will have a positive impact on the satisfaction of the tourism goods and services they receive. For this reason, services that are currently based on the structure of tourism and complex even for healthy individuals should be designed considering tourists with disabilities and training needs of service personnel should be taken into consideration.

But as Wakiya (2011) suggests one of the most significant reasons for the noninvolvement is the confidence of tourism businesses in their products, services or facilities when catering for individuals with disabilities. Since tourism businesses are confident with the external sources they use or their experience of working with individuals with disabilities, they feel that they do not need to involve individuals with disabilities any more in the design of tourism to meet their needs. However, as Shaw (2007) points out this

confidence in terms of their disability provision does not necessarily reflect their awareness and understanding of disability, and what they offer might not meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. As a consequence, the assumption made by the tourism businesses can deny individuals with disabilities' access to the design of tourism. This is to say, there is a possibility that tourism businesses unintentionally exclude individuals with disabilities from the design of tourism. The other identified reasons found for the non-involvement of individuals with disabilities were lack of resources, organizational and job constraints and the belief that it is enough to involve individuals with disabilities only in one stage (Wakiya, 2011).

6. Conclusion

Within the interviews carried out, the employees at state institutions, local administrations, tourist information offices, tourist attraction centers, transportation enterprises, tourism enterprises, non-profit organizations, disability communities, the members of the disability associations and tourists with disabilities were reached. As a result of this study; it is determined that tourists with disabilities are not taken into consideration in most cases by tourism institutions while planning tourism activities, mainly because of the reason that they're seen as minority and the existence of physical difficulties due to the nature of tourism activities. The study also shows that tourists with disabilities have problems resulted from mostly on transportation and the lack of knowledge and empathy of the personnel who deal with them. Another result of the study shows that the most common problem the tourists with disabilities have to cope arises from the difficulties faced because of the architectural structures of the tourism enterprises and the prejudices of transportation enterprises and other healthy individuals. In addition, the participants stated that tourism staff should be trained especially for tourists with disabilities so that they would be more understanding and helpful. The participants also claimed that in order to get more participation in tourism activities of tourists with disabilities, the tourism workers, tourists and local people should be more sensitive and empathetic towards tourists with disabilities. Governments can and does, provide direction and coordination through existing mechanisms. Thus, a coordinated approach by Government and the tourism industry should be planned for tourism access for individuals with disabilities.

As a summary, it is understood that individuals with disabilities are not included in tourism activities and they have problems with transfer, architectural access, tourism staff who have not received disability education. In addition to all these problems, it is understood that they are negatively affected by prejudiced attitudes and behaviors towards tourists with disabilities. For further studies that will analyze this problem, it is advised to do the similar studies with more participants from various cities/countries. Afterwards reports could be written to highlighting the opportunities for

specific tourism industry sectors (accommodation, attractions, transport, hospitality etc.) to provide or improve services to individuals with disabilities.

Tourism Accessibility Forums for discussing issues could be held in different countries. It is crucial to show the tourism businesses the market potential and the benefit of tourists with disabilities in order to involve them more in the design of tourism. The tourism businesses and organizations should actively try to involve tourists with disabilities, starting with the creation of services specifically targeting the individuals with disabilities. In other words, to give individuals with disabilities the confidence to participate in the design of tourism, tourism businesses need to start by offering specific services or consultations particularly targeting individuals with disabilities. It can be argued that until they overcome their fear and gain confidence to participate in it, individuals with disabilities will not actively participate in the design of tourism.

Author contribution statements

G. Bulgan and A. Oksay contributed equally to the design and implementation of the research, to the analysis of the results and to the writing of the manuscript.

Disclosure statement

No potential competing interest was reported by the authors.

Ethics committee approval

Data were collected between November 1st 2018 and July 15th 2019 All responsibility belongs to the researchers. All parties were involved in the research of their own free will.

References

- Amanda, H. A. (2003). Accessibility and attitudinal barriers encountered in sectors of travel and tourism by travelers who have disabilities, (*Published Master Thesis*), The Faculty of Graduate School University of Missouri Columbia.
- Arıcı, S. (2010). Bedensel engellilerin turizm sektöründen beklentilerinin tespitine yönelik bir araştırma, (*A survey to establish the expects of disabled people for tourism industry*), (*Unpublished Master Thesis*), Gazi University, Institute of Educational Sciences, Ankara.
- Artar, Y., & Karabacakoğlu, Ç. (2003). Türkiye’de özürülüler turizminin geliştirilmesine yönelik olarak konaklama tesislerindeki alt yapı olanaklarının araştırılması (Investigation of infrastructure facilities for the improvement in accommodation of the disabled in tourist resort in Turkey), *Milli Produktivite Merkezi*, Ankara.
- Atak, V. (2008). Marmaris’teki otel işletmelerinin bedensel engelli turizmüne bakışı (*The angle of views of the hotels of Marmaris about the tourism of physically disabled*), (*Unpublished Master Thesis*), Muğla University, Institute of Social Sciences, Muğla.
- Bi, Y., Card, J. A., & Cole, S. T. (2007). Accessibility and attitudinal barriers encountered by Chinese travellers with physical disabilities, *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 9, 205–216.
- Bratucu, G., Chitu, I. B., Dinca, G., & Ştefen, M. (2016). Opinions of tourists regarding the accessibility for people with disabilities in the area of Braşov Country, *Economic Sciences*, 9(58), 73–82.
- Breedt, T. F. (2007). The need for disabled friendly accommodation in South Africa, (*Published Master Thesis*) The Business Administration, North-West University.
- Bulgan, G., & Çarıkcı, İ. (2015). Engelli turizmi: Antalya ilindeki dört ve beş yıldızlı otel işletmelerinde bir araştırma (*Handicapped tourism—a research in four-star and five-star hotels of Antalya*), *Mehmet Akif Ersoy University Journal of the Institute of Social Sciences*, 7(13), 15–42.
- Bulgan, G. (2014). Engelli turizmi: Antalya ilindeki dört ve beş yıldızlı otel işletmelerinde bir araştırma (*Handicapped tourism—a research in four-star and five-star hotels of Antalya*), (*Published Doctorate Thesis*), Suleyman Demirel University, Institute of Social Sciences, Isparta.
- Burkhauser, R. V., & Daly, M. C. (1994). The Economic Consequences of Disability: A Comparison of German and American People with Disabilities, *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 5(1), 25–52.
- Burnett, J. J., & Bender, B. H. (2001). Assessing the travel-related behaviors of the mobility-disabled consumer, *Journal of Travel Research*, 40(4), 4–11.
- Coleman, R. (2006). *From margins to mainstream: why inclusive design is better design*. London: Royal College of Art.
- Dakto, J. (2015). On research methodology semi-structured interview in language pedagogy research, *Journal of Language and Cultural Education*, 3(2), 142–156.
- Darcy, S., & Dickson, T. (2009) A whole-of-life approach to tourism: the case for accessible tourism experiences. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 16, 32–44.
- Darcy, S., & Taylor, T. (2009). Disability citizenship: an Australian human rights analysis of the cultural industries, *Leisure Studies*, 28(4), 419–441.
- Darcy, S. (1998). Anxiety to Access: Tourism Patterns and Experiences of New South Wales People with a Physical Disability, Australia: Tourism New South Wales.
- Daruwalla, P.S., & Darcy, S. (2005). Personal and societal attitudes to disability. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 32, 549–570.
- Darcy, S., & Daruwalla, P. S. (1999). The trouble with travel: people with disabilities and tourism, *Social Alternatives*, 18(1), 41–46.
- Engelsiz Turizm, Dünyada ve Türkiye’de Engelsiz Turizm Pazarı (Accessible Tourism, Accessible Tourism Market in the World and Turkey), 2018, https://www.tursab.org.tr/tr/engelsiz-turizm/dunyada-ve-turkiyede-engelsiz-turizm-pazari_487.html
- Eryılmaz, B. (2010). Turizmde engelli pazarının değerlendirilmesi ve Bodrum örneği, (*The evaluation of tourism market for disabled people and the case of Bodrum*), (*Unpublished Master Thesis*), Sakarya University, Institute of Social Sciences, Sakarya.
- European Commission, Accessible Tourism, 2018, http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/accessible_en__Date:14.14.2018.
- Figueiredo, E., Eusébio, C., & Kastenholz, E. (2012). How diverse are tourists with disabilities? a pilot study on accessible leisure tourism experiences in Portugal. *IJTR*, 14(6), 531–550.
- Freeman, I., & Selmi, N., (2010). French versus Canadian tourism: response to the disabled, *Journal of Travel Research*, 49(4), 471–485.

- Foggin, E. S. (2000). The experience of leisure tourism of people with disabilities, (*Published Doctorate Thesis*), Programme de Sciences Humaines Appliquees Faculte Des Etudes Superieures, Philosophiae Doctor en Sciences Humaines, Universite de Montreal.
- Gilad, D., & Rimmerman, A. (2014). The Mission and Development Processes of the Disability Movement in Israel and the United States: A Comparison, *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 24 (4), 227-237.
- Holden, B. R. J. (2010). Inches from paradise: a documentary film exploring how caregivers of mobility- challenged family members experience, (*Published Master Thesis*), California State University.
- Israeli, A. A. (2002). A preliminary investigation of the importance of site accessibility factors for disabled tourists, *Journal of Travel Research*, 41(1), 101-104.
- Mihaela, B. C. (2012). Tourism Industry in Romania and the Needs of People with Disabilities, *Economic Science Series*, 21(1), 481-486.
- Miller, W. R. (2004). Definition of design. http://static.us-erland.com/rack4/gems/wrmdesign/DcdefinitionOfDesignl.doc_ Date: 13.07.2018.
- Miller, G. A., & Kirk, E., (2002). The disability discrimination act: time for the stick?, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 10(1), 82-88.
- Murray, M., & Sproats, J. (1990). The disabled traveller - tourism and disability in Australia. *Journal of Tourism Studies*, 1(1),9-14.
- Mülayim, A., & Özşahin, B. (2010). Bedensel engellilerin konaklama sorunları ve çözüm önerileri üzerine bir inceleme (An investigation on accommodation problems and solution suggestions for physically disabled people), *Journal of oz-veri*, 7(2),1663-1684.
- Newcomer, K. E., Hatry, H. P., & Wholey, J. S. (2015). *Handbook of practical program evaluation*, San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers.
- Oxley, P. R., & Richards, M. J. (1995). Disability and transport a review of the personal costs of disability in relation to transport, *Transport Policy*, 2(1), 45-57.
- Paga'n, R. (2012). Time allocation in tourism for people with disabilities, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(3), 1514–1537.
- Paker, K. J. (2001). Changing attitudes towards persons with disabilities in Asia, *Disability Studies Quarterly Fall*, 21(4), 105-113.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*, London: Sage Publication.
- Poria, Y., Reichel, A., & Brandt, Y. (2010). The flight experiences of people with disabilities: an exploratory study, *Journal of Travel Research*, 49(2), 216–227.
- Rummel, A. M. (2008). Travel by people with physical disabilities: a diffusion study focused on opinion leadership, (*Published Master Thesis*), Michigan State University, Department of Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource of Studies.
- Schitko, D. (2009). Can Attitudinal barriers relating to physical disabilities be modified with argeted education?, (*Published Master Thesis*), Auckland University of Technology, School of Hospitality and Tourism, New Zealand.
- Shaw, G. (2007) Disability legislation and the empowerment of tourists with disabilities in the United Kingdom. In: Church, A. and Coles, T. (eds.) *Tourism, power and space*. Chapter4:83-100. Oxon: Routledge.
- Sielschott, K. M. (2004). The Americans with disabilities act and accessibility standards for the disabled population in the lodging industry, (*Published Master Thesis*), The requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology, Miami University Oxford, Ohio.
- Snyman, J. A. (2002). The needs of tourists with disabilities, (*Unpublished Master Thesis*), Magister Artium in the School of Entrepreneurship, Marketing and Tourism Management, Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education.
- Small, J., & Darcy, S. (1996). *Tourism and inequality problems and prospects*, Mixed Sources, Australia: Cabi.
- Şahin, H. (2012). Engelli Bireylerin Konaklama Tesislerinden Memnuniyet Durumlarının İncelenmesi (*Analysis of disabled individuals' level of satisfaction with accomodation facilities*), (*Unpublished Doctorate Thesis*), Hacettepe University, Institute of Social Sciences, Ankara.
- Takeda, K., & Card, J. A. (2002). U.S. tour operators and travel agencies: barriers encountered when providing package tours to people who have difficulty walking, *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 12(1), 47-60.
- Tütüncü, Ö., & Aydın, İ. (2013). Ulaşılabilir turizm (Accessible tourism), *Anatolia: A Journal of Tourism Research*, 24 (2), 261-263.
- United Nations-Disability Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2018, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/issues/promoting-accessible-tourism-for-all.html> Date: 14.14.2018.
- Yaylı, A., & Öztürk, Y. (2006). Konaklama işletmeleri yöneticilerinin bedensel engelliler pazarına bakış açıları üzerine bir araştırma (A survey on the opinion of hospitality industry managers on disabled segment), *Anatolia: A Journal of Tourism Research* 17(1), 87-97.
- Yıldız, Z., Yıldız, S., & Karaçayır, E. (2017). Dünyada ve Türkiye’de engelli turizmi pazarının değerlendirilmesi (Evaluation of accessible tourism market in the world and Turkey), *Journal of Tourism and Gastronomy Studies* 5(2), 61-80.
- Yörük, Ü. K. (2003). Turizm yapılarının tasarımında özürli etmenin irdelenmesi (*The study of disability factor in designing tourism buildings*), (*Unpublished Master Thesis*), Yıldız Technical University, Institute of Science and Technology, İstanbul.
- Zbikowski, J., Kuzmicki, M., Dabrowski, D., & Soroka, A. (2011). Vocational activity as a determinant of participation in tourism of disabled people from the area of Eastern Poland. *Oeconomia*, 10(2), 121-129.
- Wakiya, T. (2011). Overcoming the barriers toward inclusive design of tourism, (*Published Doctorate Thesis*), The Philosophy at the University of Surrey, Guildford.