

**An Analysis of Challenges and Potentials of  
Destination for Tourists with Disability. Evidence  
form North Cyprus**

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the challenges and opportunities of accessible tourism (hereafter 'AT') for persons with disabilities and the implications for the development of accessible tourism in the case of North Cyprus. Also, examine the structural relationships between perceived value (PV) and satisfaction, with emphasis on the mediating role of destination image (DI). For data collection, 250 questionnaires were distributed to people with disabilities living in Northern Cyprus. Advanced structural equation modelling techniques (SEM - SmartPLS), linear regressions, ANOVA and t-tests were used to analyse the data in order to investigate the relationships between variables and test the research hypothesis. Our results confirm several important points: First, there are measurable deficits in accessible tourism despite the destination's great potential in terms of attractions and recreational facilities. Secondly our result, support the hypothesis that destination image mediates the relationship between perceived value and satisfaction for people with disabilities. This study provides insights into the needs of people with disabilities and formulates guidelines for adapting and developing this market for destinations that depend on tourism. Last but not least, a cultural orientation approach that educates residents to respect and accept the rights of the disabled population must be adopted.

**Keywords:** Accessible tourism, People with disabilities, Destination image, Perceived value, Satisfaction, North Cyprus.

## ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı, engelliler için erişilebilir turizmin (bundan böyle 'AT' olarak anılacaktır) zorluklarını ve fırsatlarını ve Kuzey Kıbrıs örneğinde erişilebilir turizmin gelişimi üzerindeki etkilerini araştırmaktır. Ayrıca, destinasyon imajının (DI) aracı rolüne vurgu yaparak, algılanan değer (PV) ve memnuniyet arasındaki yapısal ilişkileri inceleyin. Veri toplamak için Kuzey Kıbrıs'ta yaşayan engellilere 250 anket dağıtılmıştır. Değişkenler arasındaki ilişkileri araştırmak ve araştırma hipotezini test etmek için verilerin analizinde ileri yapısal eşitlik modelleme teknikleri (SEM - SmartPLS), doğrusal regresyonlar, ANOVA ve t-testleri kullanılmıştır. Sonuçlarımız birkaç önemli noktayı teyit ediyor: Birincisi, destinasyonun cazibe merkezleri ve eğlence tesisleri açısından büyük potansiyeline rağmen erişilebilir turizmde ölçülebilir açıklar var. İkinci olarak, sonucumuz, destinasyon imajının engelli insanlar için algılanan değer ve memnuniyet arasındaki ilişkiye aracılık ettiği hipotezini desteklemektedir. Bu çalışma, engelli insanların ihtiyaçları hakkında bilgi sağlar ve turizme bağlı destinasyonlar için bu pazarı uyarlamak ve geliştirmek için kılavuzlar formüle eder. Son olarak, sakinleri engelli nüfusun haklarına saygı duyma ve kabul etme konusunda eğiten bir kültürel yönelim yaklaşımı benimsenmelidir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Erişilebilir turizm, Engelliler, Destinasyon imajı, Algılanan değer, Memnuniyet, Kuzey Kıbrıs.

# DEDICATION

To my parents and my husband, I couldn't have done this without you.

Thank you for all your support along the way.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ADA	American Disability Act
AT	Accessible Tourism
CRPD	The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DI	Destination image
PV	perceived value
PWD	People with Disability
TBL	Triple Bottom Line
UD	Universal Design
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank
WHO	The World Health Organization

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Study

Tourism industry has become a human right and necessity for all people around the world. It is one of the most useful and varied ways to spend free time, engaging with foreign cultures and civilizations and experiencing different landscapes and environments (Cole, S., & Eriksson, 2010; Skarstad, 2018; UNWTO, 2020). On the other hand, efforts to make tourism and the environment accessible to people with disabilities are very important and have become a topic of international discussion (Popiel, 2016), as they have the same civil rights and social opportunities as other people in society that should be taken into account (Buhalisa & Michopouloub, 2011; Das & Rudra, 2015). The U.K. Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) describes a somebody living with a disability as follows: “A person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially and permanently affects his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.” (Ozturk, Yayli, & Yesiltas, 2008). Tourism is one motion that several people with disabilities feel should be given up, like it needs organized collaboration of mental, physical and social capabilities, which are usually undesirably influenced or settled by a disability. Nowadays, tourism industry pays more care to the desires of tourists with disabilities and recognizes that disabled people have the similar right to vacation and leisure (Yau et al, 2004). Thriving accessible tourism can lead to income generation, destination prestige, urban economic development, and job creation (Chen & Tsai, 2007). In 2009, the United

Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities highlighted these rights and recommended that this be translated into policy around the world. These rights should include accessibility, employment, education, health, independent living, contribution to culture, and sports activities as part of civil rights. Therefore, understanding the preferences, behaviors, and interests of PWDs is critical for the universal tourism business, especially accessible tourism (Al-Ansi & Han, 2019), because tourists make decisions based on destination perceptions instead of reality (Kani, Aziz, Sambasivan, & Bojei, 2017; Nazir, Yasin, & Tat, 2021). People with disabilities could be capable to participate in recreational, vacation and sporting doings on an equal basis with others. As the hospitality industry begins to tap into this market, it can exponentially increase both accessibility and profitability (Darcy, Cameron, & Pegg, 2010). In addition, due to changing demographics, more and more seniors will be travelling. Many of these seniors will travel with their children and grandchildren, and this market will continue to grow (Gillovic & McIntosh, 2020). As more seniors in need of accessibility join this market, the hospitality industry must meet their needs by offering more accessible accommodations to remain competitive (Chan, 2010; Domínguez Vila, Darcy, & Alén González, 2015). Accessibility will be of countless benefit not only to people with disabilities, but also to others in society, particularly the elderly (Roult, Carbonneau, Belley-Ranger, Brunet, & Adjizian, 2019). The tourism industry depends on the quality of service that the customer experiences through the service provider's offerings, such as lodging by the hotel industry, transportation companies, sightseeing by travel agents and tour operators, flights by airlines, and travel and entertainment by ferry companies (Dimou, Irini; velissariou, 2016). Also, the accommodation sector has become aware of provision of facilities for PWDs in order to improve their

experience when travelling and during their stay at destinations. Hotels and various lodging businesses have realized that by providing better and appropriate services to this particular market, they can attract and retain a loyal and faithful niche segment that may not have been fully explored (Domínguez Vila et al., 2015). For example, the American Disabilities Act (ADA) has focused on various aspects of this market, both from a human rights perspective and from a business perspective. The connection among people with disabilities and tourism has received growing attention from academia and governments in North and South America, Europe and the Asia-Pacific area over the past decade (Darcy, 2010). Also, identifying obstacles and constraints in the progress of the tourism business in the service sector and removing these barriers will be resulted in accessible tourism improvement and also increase the number of tourists, which can ultimately lead to economic prosperity, new jobs, improved infrastructure and, basic structures in the region (Pagán, 2015). On the other hand, destination image is a vital issue in the tourism industry for any purpose. It describes the overall impression tourists have of a purpose (Beerli & Martín, 2004) and is related to the decision-making process, purpose choice, and future intentions, sales of tourism products and services, and overall consumer behavior (Chen & Tsai, 2007). Planning a positive and confident destination image can help a destination become more competitive with other destinations (Baloglu, S., & McCleary, 1999). Furthermore, it is crucial for the destination that tourists revisit or recommend the destination to others, because tourists who desire a certain destination also make their purchase decision by comparing their perception of the destination with that of other destinations (Ghorbanzadeh, Shabbir, Mahmood, & Kazemi, 2021; Tavitiyaman & Qu, 2013). In addition to destination image and perceived value, the satisfaction of tourists with disabilities is also important, and

their level of satisfaction with services should be examined. This is due to the fact that tourists who are satisfied with a place are more likely to come back. (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2021).

### **1.1.1 People with Disabilities and Accessible Tourism**

Tourism allows a social group that is not or less willing to separate itself from the mainstream of society to broaden its perspectives and make friends. Tourists with disabilities describe the largest and fastest-growing market segment of the hospitality industry (Chan, 2010). Understanding impairment and disability as part of the human lifespan has long been a feature of policy and research. Their travel experiences are still hampered by transportation restrictions, unreachable accommodations and tourist attractions, and insufficient customer service (B. Lee, An, & Suh, 2021). If tourism industry professionals are to successfully tap into these potential new markets, they must understand the needs involved and learn how to respond to these challenges so that the tourism industry as well as PWDs benefit. The reality of a legal framework that ensures that PWDs have an equal right to access tourism services and facilities, and that motivates tourism experts and professionals to take appropriate action, is a critical component to achieving this goal (Kourakevitch, 2016). Each person in the tourism industry knew that people with special needs have the same right as everyone else to the same services and opportunities: reliable and clear information, accessible facilities, independent trip, and qualified staff. Everyone benefits from AT; more people have the chance to travel, which indicates the tourism industry receives more guests, longer seasons, longer stays and consistent income. New job opportunities, increased tax revenue for the government, and a more accessible environment for residents and visitors benefit society as a whole (Gillovic & McIntosh, 2020). “Accessible Tourism” (also known as “Access



Tourism”, “Universal Tourism”, “Inclusive Tourism” and in some countries, such as Japan, “Barrier-free Tourism”) (Black, McConkey, Roberts, & Ferguson, 2010) is a growing and thriving niche market world-wide and most countries are striving to legislate barrier-free access to their destinations based on an appearing niche market in the tourism industry relevant to disabled tourists regardless of disability, inclusive of people with mobility, hearing, vision, cognitive, or mental impairments; and seniors and those with temporary disabilities, which are an important component of the human lifespan and a phenomenon that can affect anyone at any stage of their lives(Chang & Chen, 2012). The scope of accessibility encompasses public and private tourist sites, facilities, transportation, services venues, and public spaces in urban and rural areas (Domínguez Vila et al., 2015; Ozturk et al., 2008). According to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank (WB), more than one billion people worldwide have some form of disability, and by 2050, 940 million people will be living with a disability in urban areas(Black et al., 2010). Nowadays, ‘accessible tourism’ has become a generic term that entails the transformation of social attitudes towards people with various forms of disability and their needs in the physical environment (i.e., the destination). Access varies according to disability type goes far further the physical type. Darcy (1998) has defined access in terms of three key aspects:

- a) Physical accessibility refers to individuals with physical impairments who use wheelchairs or walkers and requires the installation of handrails, ramps, elevators, and lowered work surfaces.
- b) Sensory access, which concerns people with hearing or visual disabilities and requires, for example, signs, tactile markings, auditory aids, labels, and audible cues for elevators and lights.

Communication access, i.e., people who have difficulty with the written word, and people with visual, speech, and hearing impairments of people from other cultures (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific., 2003).

This thesis tends to observe the challenges and opportunities of accessible tourism for people with disabilities regarding North Cyprus, which is extremely related on tourism. Moreover, it is important to recognize the type of disability because each form demands specific needs. In this study, we examine people with mainly physical disabilities. Therefore, this work focuses on the mobility needs of the following target group. People with visual and hearing impairments, people with wheelchairs, walking sticks and crutches, , seniors, families with strollers and pregnant women, tourists with weighty luggage and tourists with trolleys are the main stakeholders of accessible tourism (Dimou, Irini; velissariou, 2016). Notwithstanding the many initiatives that countries in the Asia-Pacific region have already taken to mark tourism accessible to people with disabilities, three key concerns are available that need instant notice:

- a) The implementation and formulation of appropriate legislation to defend the right of PWDs to accessible facilities and environments;
- b) Education people and specifically tourism industry staff to raise awareness of the concerns of PWDs; and
- c) Preparation of accessible facilities in the tourism sector (Darcy et al., 2010).

Despite the fact that the amount of travelers who would profit from accessible service and facilities is growing, and protection against discrimination in the workplace and human rights for people with disabilities are becoming more of a focus internationally (Gillovic & McIntosh, 2020), The majority of tourism

stakeholders have not yet realized the significance of taking any action in this region (Khatri, Shrestha, & Mahat, 2012). Most tourism service providers such as hotels, transportation and tourist attractions in North Cyprus have not yet realized the importance of working in this area, they are also inaccessible to many people with disabilities and the elderly. In addition, their employees have not been trained to provide friendly services for PWDs. This is due to the fact that there are no clear government policies and strategies to promote AT, tourism service providers' staff are not trained on the desires of tourists with disabilities, and there are no tourism programs that address these needs (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific., 2003). If the lodging industry is to tap into this new market and ultimately increase its revenue, it must better understand the needs of travelers with disabilities and provide appropriate accommodations. In addition, the industry should do more than the minimum required by law and provide accessibility to all disabled travelers (Bradley, 1997; Buhalis & Darcy, 2010). If the industry provides accessible accommodations to its customers, this can also lead to greater customer loyalty (Chan, 2010).

### **1.1.2 Understanding the Accessible Tourism Market and Specific Needs of the Market**

The disabled tourist has only recently been on the agenda of the tourism industry. PWDs should be able to travel for the same reasons and with the same rights as the rest of society (Albrecht, G. L., Seelman, K, D., & Bury, 2001; Darcy, S., & Buhalis, 2010; R. L. Oliver, 1980; Smith, 1987). There are many causes why the travel and tourism industry should focus more on this growing group of tourists. The number of people with disabilities is growing, and they have more money than is commonly assumed (Cockburn-Wootten & McIntosh, 2020). Although many tourists face

barriers to participating in tourism, people with disabilities have been shown to be disproportionately affected by these barriers (Smith, 1987). In spite of the likenesses with the overall population, there were about significant and specific alterations and requirements for PWDs. people with disabilities tended strongly to cope with the stress and uncertainty of travel by recurring to purposes they distinguished well. Consequently, they appeared to be more likely to make repeat visits and were loyal customers (Sellevoll, 2016). People with a disability need more support in planning their experiences so that they can travel as much as they want to and make it an enjoyable experience rather than a stressful one. Generally, additional detailed information was the top priority for travelers with a disability, especially those with limited mobility. While this primarily referred to digital sources such as websites and review portals, it could also refer to information that travelers can find anywhere, including at their destination (Sellevoll, 2016). Hotel operators and other tourism stakeholders can increase their profitability and customer loyalty by offering accessible facilities and accommodations. In addition, customers can enjoy the comfort and courtesy of accessible services at no additional cost (Chan, 2010; Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific., 2003).

### **1.1.3 The Whole Life Approach and The United Nations Convention**

The paradigm of the rights of persons with disabilities has been taken up and inserted in various theoretical frameworks, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN) (United Nations., 2008), which aims to guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities. Article 30 of the Convention affirms the "right of access to all areas of cultural life, including tourism" (Darcy et al., 2010, p. 515). This idea has been explored in tourism literature under the terms "accessible tourism," "inclusive tourism," and "tourism and disability" (Darcy, 2010b; Domínguez Vila et al., 2019;

Gillovic et al., 2018; Moura et al., 2018; Packer et al., 2007; Patterson et al., 2012; Tao et al., 2019). Disability rights have also been conceptualized as social model theory, which argues that "nothing is more fundamental than a shift away from focusing on the physical limitations of particular individuals to how the physical and social environment imposes limitations on particular groups or categories of people" (cited in Steint, 2017, p. 86). Perhaps the most comprehensive paradigm with implications for destinations that focus on accessible tourism as part of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) strategy for both commercial and ethical reasons is that of Universal Design (UD). The principle of this paradigm is to create an environment and product that may be used by all persons to the highest range probable (Preiser, W. F., Vischer, J., & White, 2015). This idea, along with the World Health Organization's classification system, led to a shift from disability within the medical model, which views disability as a characteristic of the person, to disability within the social model, which views it as a characteristic of interaction with the environment (Ostroff, 2011). These two models will be explained in detail next chapter. The latest trend of AT is emerging as a valuable area of academic research and industrial practicing. Accessible destinations are guided by the principles of universal design to provide independent, dignified, and equal experiences that give people with disabilities a sense of the destination's region (Darcy et al., 2010). This is an global human rights mechanism to keep the rights of people with disabilities to equality and dignity. This law aims to facilitate, protect, and ensure that tourists with disabilities can fully exercise their human rights. It represents a turning point in the history of human rights (United Nations., 2008). The European Commission views this new legislation as a critical component of the European Disability Strategy, which was unveiled last year. The European Commission is preparing a

comprehensive study to identify and analyze the obstacles and barriers that prevent people with disabilities from fully using public buildings, transport and all types of services. This act will serve as the foundation for new EU legislation on accessibility standards (Yau, McKercher, & Packer, 2004). Universal design aims to make life easier for everybody by making goods, communications, and accessible environment to more individuals at no additional cost. Universal design applies to individuals of all ages, abilities and sizes. (Darcy & Dickson, 2009; Ostroff, 2011). Furthermore, the infrastructure of buildings, products, and the service environment all have an impact on universal design. The idea of universal design investigates all stakeholders' understanding in depth (Darcy & Dickson, 2009; Yau et al., 2004).

Public transportation in many countries is organized mainly by the government, but the private sector also makes a large contribution. Public transportation includes busses, trains, subways, cabs, streetcars, ferries, and water cabs, etc., which are available to ordinary citizens or the public. Nowadays, in developed countries, airplane is also counted as public transportation because it transports the public from one place to another place every day (McKercher & Darcy, 2018).

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Destinations have not invested in accessible tourism because it is a challenge for both the private sectors and public according to the physical, social and environmental capitalization; it has also been overlooked in the context of sustainable tourism practices. Darcy et al. (2010, p. 516,) argue that "sustainable tourism research to date has largely ignored social arguments related to ageing and disability or those related to the underlying interrelationship between social, environmental, and financial considerations of accessible tourism." However, the main problem in this

study is that despite rhetoric to promote and develop AT, the participation and involvement of PWD in AT policies and tourism activities are very limited. In this study, we examine the case of North Cyprus, a Mediterranean island that is highly dependent on tourism. In doing so, we follow the notion that accessible tourism, as opposed to mass tourism, can be categorized as 'alternative tourism' with a strong connotation of sustainability. We assume that destinations that ignore the provision of accessible tourism facilities fail for several reasons. First, they fail to provide facilities for residents with disabilities. Second, they fail to take advantage of this niche market. Third, they fail to meet the rights of people with disabilities. Furthermore, these failures contradict the ethos of sustainable tourism because AT should be "part of the environmental, social and economic requirements of the triple bottom line (TBL) accounting that is so central to the operation of sustainable tourism" (Darcy et al., 2010, p. 516). We believe that destination development and urban planning policies should be merged and the needs of people with disabilities should be embedded in joint policies. This study examines the ideas and difficulties underlying accessible tourism, focusing on disabilities, and the characteristics of accessible tourism in Northern Cyprus and the implications for comparable situations. There are few studies in Northern Cyprus that address the needs, satisfaction, and loyalty of visitors with disabilities. The findings of this study have the potential to highlight differences in the requirements of disabled and non-disabled travelers, as well as to assist hotel owners and marketers in strengthening customer loyalty among disabled visitors. In addition, this study could encourage hoteliers in North Cyprus to make accommodations more accessible to travelers with disabilities and help them improve their quality of life through travel.

### **1.3 Aim and Objectives**

According to a review of available literature in the tourism and hospitality industry, people with disabilities face challenges when visiting or using tourism facilities (Agovino, Casaccia, Garofalo, & Marchesano, 2017; Özogul & Baran, 2016). However, there is hardly any literature of this kind of tourism in North Cyprus. The aim of this study is to investigate whether the tourism industry in North Cyprus is prepared for tourists with disabilities, to what extent facilities are available for this market and what strategic measures are being taken to take advantage of this market. It will also explore the challenges and potential of this destination for this particular market. North Cyprus is a promising tourist destination. Northern Cyprus will benefit from this research by identifying areas that need improvement to better meet the needs of the various markets in the tourism sector (Mopecha, 2016). In this sense, the study mentioned below aims;

- Understanding the general problems that affect accessibility for visitors;
- Identify available resources and facilities provided by the government and commercial sector in tourism and development plans for people with impairments. It will also identify impossibilities, such as missing, neglected or inadequate tourism infrastructures and services for people with disabilities, in order to raise awareness of the need for social inclusion.
- The knowledge gained from the study will make its own contribution to market segment knowledge and assist operators and managers in improving their services to better meet the needs of all customers, especially customers with disabilities.
- To study the adequacy of accessibility and mobility of tourism and hospitality facilities in North Cyprus.



- Present recommendations on accessible tourism to key stakeholders in urban centers.
- Provide a framework for policy makers to create an agenda to make the TRNC an attractive destination for people with disabilities.
- Current size and future potential of the accessible tourism market.
- Opportunities for market growth.

To achieve the research objectives, this paper consists of two parts. The first part addresses the concepts and issues underlying AT and focuses on disability and the dimensions of accessible tourism in North Cyprus and similar destinations. In the second part, we recognize that the strategic provision of the necessary infrastructure, facilities, products and services is the right approach to take advantage of this market and uphold the rights of travelers with disabilities. We suggest that achieving this goal requires merging destination development and urban planning policies so that the needs of people with disabilities can be embedded in common policies at the local, regional, and national levels (Pineda & Corburn, 2020). This study aims to investigate the views of PWDs and exploring the factors that impede the realization of AT in the case of North Cyprus and addresses research gaps in detail and develops a prioritized research agenda for AT.

#### **1.4 Significant of Study**

Multiple researches on tourism in less developed countries have been undertaken, with a concentrate on tourism's potential as a source of economic power for society and government. different studies on people with disabilities have concentrated on accessibility, disability types or characteristics, economic potential of the groups, legislation and regulation such as the American Disability Act (ADA), the Disability

Discrimination Act (DDA) (Akinci, 2013). Although much of the consideration is concentrated on people with disabilities in the developed area, outside of this region of the world, to which most of the literature refers, these people do not exist or use tourist facilities. Though developing countries have adopted the philosophy of inclusion and AT, many more states remain a barrier to disability tourism (Mopecha, 2016). However, government responses to the accessibility needs of PWDs differ greatly. Their responses to the wider issue of accommodation, rehabilitation and general welfare of PWDs generally reflect a country's economic growth or level of development (S. N. Hansen, 2017). Buhalis & Darcy (2010) emphasizes that it is the government's duty to ensure that tourism is accessible for people with disabilities. This study attempts to investigate a topic where little or no data has been gathered. North Cyprus was chosen not as this is a developing country, but because it can be a future tourism destination for people with disabilities (Mopecha, 2016). Although this study focuses primarily on domestic travel, it is worth noting that this will have an impact on international inbound markets as well (making the opportunities even greater) (Sellevoll, 2016). The scientificity and novelty of the current study derive from two points. First, this study aims to improve our understanding of the challenges faced by people with disabilities. It is very possible that the challenges that local people with disabilities experience at the destination also have an impact on tourists with disabilities. When people with disabilities find that there is a lack of accessible accommodations, public spaces, amenities, sidewalks, stores, beaches, parks, transportation, etc. at their destination, this also negatively impacts the quality of the experience of travelers with disabilities. Second, the mediating role of destination image for people with disabilities in the relationship between perceived value and satisfaction, most of the previous research focused on tourists in general

and destination image. In order to find solutions to develop this niche market, meet the needs and discover the tourism capacity for flourishing accessible tourism, this study aims to: (a) to identify PWDs destination image understanding their perceived value and satisfaction, and (b) to evaluate the mediating effect of destination image on the relationship between perceived value and satisfaction. Thirdly, the findings of this study on destination management and marketing enhance our knowledge of the importance of PWDs destination image on post-trip behavior and help destination marketing organizations to improve image reconstruction and reduce negative impacts.

To summarize, I believe it is critical to investigate how disability was regarded in the past and how it is perceived today in order to obtain insight into the information side of accessible tourism. When it comes to accessibility, it's not only about ramps, elevators, and physical access, because disability is more than simply a lack of mobility. That is why I opted to investigate scientific research on accessibility in general, and specifically on accessible tourism, because I feel that the material from previous studies gives a strong basis, knowledge, and insight when looking into the information part of accessible tourism.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

One of the reasons for choosing this topic for research is that North Cyprus is a desirable destination for tourists with disabilities due to many attractions. Although there is a potential market in North Cyprus, no proper research activities have been conducted in this area. This study has three main objectives to address a gap in previous studies: first, to assess current research gaps and potential collaborative research opportunities. Second, providing facilities for people with disabilities

requires collaboration between developers and institutions, and the last and most important objective confirms the mediating influence of destination image on the perceived value and satisfaction of people with disabilities. In line with these objectives, this thesis contributes to the tourism literature by providing a theoretical framework for understanding the perception of destination image by people with disabilities and the link between perceived value and satisfaction in Northern Cyprus. In order to achieve the objectives of this study, seven research questions and ten hypotheses were established based on the literature review and the objectives of the study. The following questions form the basis for the conceptual discourse:

RQ1. Is the tourism sector ready for tourists with disabilities? And if no, what are the overall barriers and challenges to PWD in the context of AT development?

RQ2. Are there adequate facilities and information points for tourists with disabilities?

RQ3: How does the destination image influence on tourist with disabilities perceived value and satisfaction?

RQ4. How do disabled people view the provision of facilities and infrastructure for their needs in Northern Cyprus?

RQ5: Will there be an improvement in accessible tourism if the perceived value of people with disabilities is taken into account?

RQ6: How can government and policymakers improve the perceive value of people with disabilities?

## **1.6 Content Structures**

To response to this study demand, the dissertation is organized as follows: The dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 includes study introduction, the problem statement, research aim and objectives, the significance of the study,

research questions, framework of research, the limitations and content structure of study. Chapter 2 includes a review of literature, outline of tourism and definition of terms, an explanation of the case study, and the development of hypotheses. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology and data collection method, research sampling, data analysis and study ethical considerations. The data analysis and data collection results are presented in Chapter 4. The final chapter concludes the thesis with a conclusion that answers the research questions and makes recommendations to the government, tourism investors and developers, as well as limitations and future research directions.

This report will assist in demonstrating the current state of accommodation, transportation and leisure facilities. The topic of the study is of global importance because the phenomenon of older people is a worldwide issue for PWDs and other demographic groups who want to be travel anywhere without any limitation and restrictions. The main stakeholders of accessible tourism are people with wheelchairs, walking sticks and crutches, people with visual and hearing impairments, seniors, pregnant women and families with strollers, travelers with heavy luggage and trolleys. The researchers chose North Cyprus as a case study for accessible tourism because it has the potential to generate revenue if service to disabled tourists is adequate. Based on a summary analysis of the accessibility of hotel chains and public transportation, the researchers make a potential recommendation.

## Chapter 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

The tourism is one of the largest industries in the world, and a vacation is one of the most popular recreational activities that improve the quality of life for both people without and people with disabilities (Burns, 2004). PWDs have the same desires and needs for tourism as others. However, since tourist activities are primarily intended for people who are not disabled, this presents a special challenge (Yau et al., 2004). People with disabilities should have the same right as people without disabilities to fully participate in society and enjoy the same life quality. This includes the right to go on vacation and participate in recreational activities. Living with a disability presents unique challenges and may limit participation in a variety of activities. Tourism is one of the activities in which many people with disabilities cannot participate because it demands a coordinated interaction of physical, social and mental skills that are more often impaired or affected by disability (Yau et al., 2004). Furthermore, the main barriers to travel for people with physical disabilities are access to physical infrastructure facilities, accessible accommodations, and access to attractions and destinations. As a result of these limitations, tourists are unlikely to enjoy their vacations. (Darcy, 2010).

The literature relevant to this topic can be divided to two broad sections; one is the issue/topic of ‘disability’ and people with physical impairment. Secondly, the

tourism industry and its efforts to integrate this market into the global tourism business. The literature has also addressed the knowledge and awareness of employees regarding the special needs of disabled travelers in the tourism sector (Bratucu, Chitu, Dinca, & Stefan, 2016). Notwithstanding, the significance of this market, the research about this market has remained limited and understudied (Ozturk et al., 2008), most of the destinations have not been able to take into account people with disabilities at every level of a tourism product; therefore, this has limited the attention of the industry to prepare itself for this market segment (Pineda & Corburn, 2020). To tap on this market, destinations need to overcome the barriers to mobility and develop facilities to provide satisfaction (B. K. Lee, Agarwal, & Kim, 2012). People with disability have to go through certain experiences in order to access tourism services. These stages are classified as personal relationship, cognitive perception, physical travel, and experimentation and observation (Yau et al., 2004). In a research conducted by Kaganek et al., (2017) on persons with impaired mobility, five aspects of accessibility were identified in relation to tourism: access to physical aspects, access to service processes, access to service features and physical, maintenance of service points, and access to specific and reliable information (Bratucu et al., 2016; Das & Rudra, 2015). On the same hand, Smith (1987) recognized numerous obstacles that influence the enjoyment of disabled people: environmental, attitudinal, architectural, and ecological. Nevertheless, tourism planners and destination managers should make sure their services and facilities would not result in feelings of ineptitude among disabled people that can affect their marketing in the future (Azevedo, Sampaio, Filho, Moret, & Murari, 2021). Bohdanowicz et al.,(2019) elaborated that the ease of usable facilities are the biggest problem for people with physical disability, especially in

the restaurants. She revealed that disabled people experience problems such as embarrassment while eating, because they have to be assisted; they are not comfortable when people are staring at them during these experiences; and unconscious/ unhelpful behaviors of employees. Research has shown that disabled people are trustworthy clients, and they revisit places with adequate accessibility and adapted facilities. When destinations provide such facilities, it also benefits the society. The residents can also benefit from the facilities. For instance, parents with pushchairs, injured people, and even tourists how might have heavy luggage (Gillovic et al., 2018).

## **2.2 Tourism and Leisure Overview**

Tourism industry is a rapidly growing industry worldwide, and it is, considered basic human rights that can improve the quality of life and create better living conditions for all people. The World Tourism Organization realize that "tourism includes the activities of people traveling to places outside their usual environment and staying there for no more than one year for leisure, business, or other purposes" (Ritchie, J. B., & Crouch, 2003). Cook & Shinew., (2014) assert that travel is temporary movement to destinations away from the place of residence or work (Chan, 2010). According to McKercher & Chon., (2004), the hospitality industry is closely intertwined with the travel and tourism industry, and the two strongly influence each other. This large industry consists of five components: food and beverage, travel-related services, lodging services, recreation services, and merchandise for each of these sectors include dozens of subsections. The hospitality and tourism network is based on these five separate and usually competing segments (Chan, 2010). The positive effect of traveling on well-being and quality of life has been proven according to numerous studies around the world. This is also valid for people with



various disabilities (B. K. Lee et al., 2012; Patterson et al., 2012). For tourism sector, an improvement in their facilities can lead to increased market share as well as enhancing their image of corporate social responsibility (Shier, Graham, & Jones, 2009). The early literature on leisure constraints was published under the topic “barriers to participation” (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Darcy et al., 2010). Subsequent literature addressed the issue as obstacles that prevent people from participating in leisure activities or achieving the desired level of satisfaction using leisure services (Crawford & Godbey, 1987). Leisure constraints are divided into interpersonal, intrapersonal, and structural (Darcy et al., 2010; Jackson, 1988). Intrapersonal constraints refer to the individual tourist’s characteristics, abilities, and level of functioning; interpersonal constraints are related to interaction and communication with others. Structural constraints refer to the situation in which tourists experience obstacles to accessing suitable facilities and services (Jackson, 1988; Smith, 1987). According to Yau et al., (2004), “tourists with disabilities expect the tourism industry to provide reliable information about whether or not the trip is suitable for their needs. This includes information about accommodation, transportation, availability of accessible facilities, availability of assistance, etc.”(Yau et al.,2004). The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and Moura et al., (2018) have indicated that “destinations seeking to develop accessible tourism should remove recreational barriers and challenges for travelers with disabilities. To achieve this, one approach is training professional staff to cater to this collection of persons according to provide a quality experience during the trip (Yau et al., 2004). The trained staff can provide and assist the disabled tourists by providing information on accessible reservation facilities and related websites, accessible airports and transfer facilities and services, availability of

adapted and accessible hotel rooms, restaurants, stores, toilets and public places, accessible roads and transportation services (Moura et al., 2018). Although constraints are not new to tourism and leisure literature, they have gradually evolved into a more tangible concept with possible applications for studying the needs of people with disabilities (Moura et al., 2018; Smith, 1987).

### **2.3 Understandings of Impairment and Disability**

Some argue that we should distinguish between disability and impairment when defining disability. There are varying meanings of disability, and the debate over which definition is correct has evolved. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines disability as "functional impairment at the whole-person level, which may include the inability to speak or communicate or to conduct activities of daily living or major occupational activities or no occupational activities" (Mopecha, 2016). Furthermore, the United Nations describe PWDs as those who have long-term physical, intellectual, sensory, or mental impairments that, when combined with other obstacles, may limit their full participation in society. Long-term means that the impairment is present from birth, lasts for one or more years, or worsens over time (Clery, Kiss, Taylor, & Gill, 2017). According to Kew (2003) Impairment refers to a person's limited ability to perform certain tasks or skills or to participate in certain activities or movements, whether physical, sensory, or mental. Some people are born with disabilities, others acquire them at different times in their lives; for some the condition is transient; for others it is permanent. The word "disability" implies that medical differences become social differences that affect people's ability to fully engage as members of the community (Mopecha, 2016). Impairment is an unavoidable human condition but, depending on its nature, can be controlled so that people with such impairment do not feel discriminated against, unwanted or a burden

on their families and society in general. In many countries, especially in the developed world, governments have enacted regulations to enable people with disabilities to participate in social life and recreational activities so that they can exercise, communicate, learn, and recreate without stress (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Jackson, 1988; Natalia, Clara, Simon, Noelia, & Barbara, 2019). In the less developed world, however, accommodations for people with disabilities are particularly lacking. Many are regarded as unwanted or a burden on society and family. They are offered limited or no opportunities, which represents the discrimination and social injustice that the world is fighting today (Mopecha, 2016). It is obvious that people with disabilities have to face many challenges throughout their journey in compare to normal people (Darcy, S., & Buhalis, 2010). This reality should draw the attention of tourism sector in every destination. Tourism sector cannot afford to ignore this huge market. Furthermore, equal access to tourism is elaborated in the UNWTO's Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (2016), which establishes a structure of reference for the effective and sustainable development of world tourism (Tourism & Unwto, 2020).

Finally, disability is a multidimensional construct, with each dimension having its own access elements that are significantly different from each other (Darcy & Dickson, 2009; Patterson et al., 2012). Managers of tourism establishments need to be aware that disable people are facing various challenges. The challenges include cultural barriers (e.g., the discrimination) environmental/structural difficulties (e.g., lack of basic support services for different types of disability); and lack of adequate information before the trip, as well as, during the staying in the destination (Eichhorn, Miller, & Tribe, 2013; Gillovic et al., 2018). In addition, accessible tourism can be carried out if additional information is provided to better know the

needs of people with disabilities (Darcy, 2010). Tourism for people with disabilities also means more than just removing physical barriers (Yau et al., 2004), it should provide a meaningful experience to ensure their quality of life. This term refers to the whole of life and means that individuals benefit from accessible tourism planning throughout their lives. People with permanent and temporary disabilities (Darcy & Dickson, 2009).

### **2.3.1 Disability Rights Laws**

The Americans Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 was the first comprehensive civil rights law in the United States (U.S.) for persons with disabilities (PWDs). According to the United States Department of Justice (2005), ADA disallows judgement compared to people with disabilities in service, state and local management activities, public transportation, public accommodations, and telecommunications. The ADA establishes a clear and comprehensive national commitment to exclude judgement against people with disabilities and requires that the United States federal government play a prominent role in implementing the standards established for the benefit of people with disabilities (United States Access Board, 2004). The U.S. Department of Justice has posted "Five Steps to create new lodging facilities in consent with the ADA" on its website to help lodging facility owners, franchisors, architects and contractors better understand and comply with the standards of ADA (Sweeney, 2017). The five steps are as follows:

Step 1: Obtain copies of the requirements from ADA and share them with your architect and contractor. All newly constructed accommodations must encounter the standards of ADA and ensure that all facilities can be used by people with disabilities. Owners and franchisors should ensure that all parties involved in the design and construction process understand the standards from ADA, as it is more

cost-effective to avoid ADA mistakes than to correct them after construction is complete.

Step 2: Inform your architect and contractor that you expect your new facility to meet the requirements of ADA. Owners and franchisors should inform architects, interior designers, contractors, and construction workers that full compliance with ADA is expected. In addition, the Department of Justice recommends that owners and franchisors include a contract clause requiring architects and contractors to correct or pay for renovations for any violations of ADA found during and after construction.

Step 3: Make sure building designs do not contain common ADA errors. Most ADA errors can be avoided by careful review of the building plans. Many errors in the development of lodging facilities can be traced back to the original building plans. To avoid ADA problems, owners or franchisors can hire ADA specialists to review the construction plans before construction begins. On the other hand, owners or franchisors can investigate the most common ADA problems using the Department of Justice Publication Common ADA Problems at Newly Constructed Lodging Facilities.

Step 4: Make sure the facility is designed in accordance with the ADA regulations outlined in the construction plans. Although most ADA errors occur during the construction design phase, there are also those that happen during the construction process. Many, if not all, ADA problems can be avoided if all parties are involved in the design and construction process and monitor the progress of construction.

Step 5: Upon completion of construction, inspect the facility to identify and correct any ADA violations. After construction, owners and franchisors should inspect new lodging establishments to ensure they are in compliance with ADA regulations. Many on-site inspections and compliance reviews of newly constructed lodging establishments are conducted by the Department of Justice. In addition, when errors are discovered, the Department of Justice takes all necessary legal action to ensure compliance with ADA.

The Department of Justice has also published the "ADA Checklist for Newly Constructed Lodging Establishments" to help hotel owners and franchisors identify errors ADA. The checklist is written in a simple yes/no format in non-technical terms. The checklist consists of 11 sections: parking and loading zone; exterior walkways; building entrances and lobby; interior walkways; public/community restrooms; interior signage; food service areas; fire alarm system; general guest room and suite issues; accessible guest rooms and suites; and operational issues. This checklist was developed by the Department of Justice after frequent problems were identified during inspections of lodging establishments. The purpose of this checklist is to help owners of lodging establishments or franchisors identify ADA errors that commonly occur in lodging establishments. It is important to comply with all requirements in the ADA Standards of Lodging Facilities, as design flaws as small as an inch can result in serious safety hazards or inaccessibility to people with disabilities.

## 2.4 Type of Disability

A disability limits person's ability to go beyond what is considered normal, and these individuals often has difficulty to participating in society and the environment like other citizens (Mopecha, 2016). There are different types of disabilities, including: Mental, visual, physical, sensory and learning disabilities. Below, we provide a brief definition of each type of disability for better understanding.

**Mental Disability** a mental impairment is a dysfunction of the brain. It may be a mental illness or anxiety. Such individuals must be carefully supervised.

**Physical Disability** this disability refers to an impairment of mobility, such as those who require a wheelchair, crutches, or canes. The World Health Organization (2001) defines physical disability as a condition in which a person has a severe deviation or loss of bodily function or structure, resulting in limitations in physical activities (Santos-Roldán, Canalejo, Berbel-Pineda, & Palacios-Florencio, 2020; Steint, 2017).

**Sensory Disability** this disability is an impairment of the senses, such as hearing, vision, and communication. People who are blind, deaf, or dumb fall into this group.

**Visual Impairment** a visual impairment is a handicap that causes a partial or total loss of vision or blindness, whereas a speech impairment is the inability to speak smoothly with others or a person whose speech attracts unwanted attention, impacting his or her social, intellectual, and emotional development.

**Cognitive or Learning Disability** a condition that stops a person from functioning and understanding normally named Cognitive or Learning disability. Such people

have difficulty speaking, listening, thinking and even writing. In such cases, a customized learning method can be beneficial (Lyu, 2017).

As mentioned earlier, disability can mean a limitation, a loss, a restriction, or a disadvantage in socialization. Thus, public attitudes toward people with disabilities often vary with the degree of disability rather than the impairment of the disability (R. L. Oliver, 1980). Even though these are not the only disabilities, as mentioned above, they are the most prevalent ones we see in the tourism sector, given the nature of tourism in the region under investigation.



Table 1: Barriers to tourism participation faced by persons with a disability

Internal		Exogenous	
Intrinsic barrier	Economic barrier	Environmental barrier	Interactive barriers
Lack of knowledge Affordability		Architectural / accessibility of accommodation, etc.	Skills challenges and incongruities.
Ineffective social skills Income disparities Health –related barriers need for travel companions/ special facilities		Ecological, paths, trails, hills, etc.	Communication challenges
Physical or Psychological Related barriers. Is travel seen as a right?		Transport	Lack of encouragement to participate
		Rules and regulations	Attitudes of travel and hospitality industry workers
		Safety	Availability and accuracy of information

Sources: (Darcy, 2004; Smith, 1987).

## 2.5 Theories and Perspectives of Disability

There are several arguments beyond the instrumental tactics of marketing for accessible tourism as a niche market. Destinations need to go beyond conventional marketing for mainstream tourists, which is highly homogenized and standardized (Dimou, Irini; velissariou, 2016; Wasfi et al., 2016). The main foundations of disability may be traced back to two disability patterns: the social and medical models. See Table 2. Sadly, some have perceived disability as a form of disease in the past; however, the new perspective based on ‘disability human rights

paradigm' (Lazar, J., & Stein, 2017), which integrates the common model of disability, the human development as a right, and capabilities approach to disability. While some view disability as a disease, the social model views people with impairments as normal people who live in a different way. The social model views disability dependent on social conditions rather than inherited biological conditions that limits the individuals. Cultural variations also play a role in culturally constructed view of disability that influences our views regarding individuals with disabilities (Buhalisa & Michopouloub, 2011). Tourism-related expenditures may be limited for individuals with impairments due to the need to meet basic living needs. For individuals who require more support, the costs and commitment are higher. The higher a person's support needs are compared to non-disabled people, the more difficult their travel arrangements are and the more expensive the trip is (Darcy & Dickson, 2009). There are some well-documented extra costs connected with disability, such as: Mobility aids (wheelchairs, orthopedic shoes ,crutches, etc.), personal care aids (commodes, shower chairs, lifts, etc.), personal care aids, attendant care services, and additional transportation costs because public transportation is inaccessible (Darcy et al., 2010).

### **2.5.1 Medical Understanding**

The medical model defines an impairment as "the absence of all parts of a limb or the presence of a damaged limb or mechanism of the body" (R. L. Oliver, 1980). Disability is described by the medical community as "a restriction in a individual's mental or physical ability to perform duties related to work, study, or other socially important or related tasks, to the level that a person may be recognized as needing assistance..." (Degener, 2017). In a medical understanding, disability is seen as a phenomenon caused by functional limitations resulting from illness, injury, or

handicap" (Vedeler, 2014, p. 11). The medical model of disability remained dominant until the 1970s, when the social model prevailed (S. N. Hansen, 2017). From the perspective of the medical model, it is the individual's impairment that causes the disability, and it is the individual's own problem. In most cases, the impairment is considered permanent. "A disability is any limitation or deficiency (as a result of an impairment) in the ability to perform an action in the manner or within the range considered normal for an individual" (Buhalis & Darcy, 2010; S. N. Hansen, 2017). Disability is describing as "limitation of activities due to the present social organization, which gives a bit or no consideration to people with physical disabilities and therefore keep out them from participation in social life," while "impairment" is understood as "the absence of part or all of a limb or a defect in a limb, organ, or mechanism of the body." Medical understanding is closely related to impairments, but the understanding of disability has changed over time (Tøssebro, 2004). Oliver (1990:14) points out that disability "to inaccessible environments (no elevators or ramps for disabled access), dubious notions of social intelligence competence (the impaired are incompetent, unable to care for own selves), the general population's incapability to use sign language, a lack of Braille reading materials, or the public's hostile attitude toward people with nonvisible disabilities (such as mental illness)" (Reindal, 2008). Originally, disability referred to physical impairments, but was later dropped to include all impairments, physical, sensory, and cognitive." (Steint, 2017).

### **2.5.2 Social Understanding**

The perception of disability has evolved over time. Most international organizations currently use the so-called "social model" based on the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) to define disability. This approach views disability

as a product of the interplay between a person's functional status and their physical, cultural and political environment, rather than an individual problem (Burchardt, 2004). In the social model, disability is viewed as a social construct, and "disability is not a characteristic of a person, but an intricate series of conditions and situations, many of them created by the social environment that is imposed in addition to a person's impairment" (Buhalis & Darcy, 2010). Lazar and Stein (2017) "elaborated on the connection between disability, human rights, and information technology that valorizes the social model of disability, which tourism destinations can benefit from by leveraging this market and upholding the principles of inclusive tourism" (Epstein et al., 2021). Most recent study on accessible tourism is based on the social model and social understanding of disability, so that accessibility is seen as a responsibility of society rather than a responsibility of the tourist with a disability (Buhalis & Darcy, 2010; Domínguez Vila et al., 2019; S. N. Hansen, 2017). This way of thinking offers people the opportunity to gain control over their own lives by seeking changes in their environment. This process of gaining control over one's own life is referred to as empowerment (Smith, 1987). According to Vedeler (2014), is result of barriers erected by society that make it difficult for disabled people to engage on equal terms with others. Social exclusion and oppression are caused by systematic and structural limitations erected by society. These can include factors such as the unavailability of buildings and transportation. A flawed form of society's concept of disability views subjective experiences of body and illness as fundamental criteria for identity and self-knowledge. This shows how discriminatory and repressive systems can lead to disability (Vedeler, 2014). In the social model of disability, impairment is not denied, but neither is it seen as the cause of economic and social disadvantage for disabled people. Instead, it is concerned with "the extent to which and the ways in

which society limits their ability to participate in mainstream economic and social activities" (M. Oliver & Barnes, 2012). This means that disability is defined as the result of an oppressive relationship between people with impairments and the rest of society (Smith, 1987). This strategy upholds the human right of all to equal access to tourism entertainment. Freedom to move and travel anywhere in the world is a fundamental human right. The laws listed below protect the rights of travelers with disabilities (Darcy & Dickson, 2009). When it comes to travelers with impairments, awareness is critical. Hotel and museum staff should be trained and knowledgeable about the accessibility of the facility where they work and how to make the visit smooth and enjoyable for people with disabilities (Darcy & Dickson, 2009; S. N. Hansen, 2017).

Table 2: Medical and social model (comparison)

<b>Medical</b>	<b>Social</b>
Personal problem	Social issue
Medical care	Social integration
Individual treatment	Social action
Professional help	Individual and collective responsibility
Personal adjustment	Environmental manipulation
Behavior	Attitude
Care	Human rights
Health care policy	Politics
Individual adaptation	Social change

Source: (Bohdanowicz-Godfrey et al., 2019; Wasfi et al., 2016).

## **2.6 Barriers to Tourism**

Barriers can be defined as obstacles encountered when participating or attempting to participate in a tourist experience. Smith (1987) has provided a framework for understanding and classifying the difficulties faced by people with disabilities when traveling for pleasure. These barriers have been conceptualized as inherent, communicative, and environmental. Inherent barriers derive from a person's own physical, psychological or mental functioning level (Lazar, J., & Stein, 2017). These barriers may be directly tied to a person's unique handicap, but they might also be the consequence of a lack of knowledge about tourism prospects, inadequate social skills, physical dependence on caregivers, and a mismatch between abilities and challenges (Darcy et al., 2010). External environmental barriers include attitudes toward people with disabilities, architecture, environmental considerations, transportation, economic components, regulations, and impediments by omission (Crawford & Godbey, 1987). Communication barriers result from interactions between the individual and his or her social environment (Smith, 1987). In Figure 1, you can see a simple example of barriers that we can see in our daily lives that impact the lives of people with disabilities and make their lives difficult.

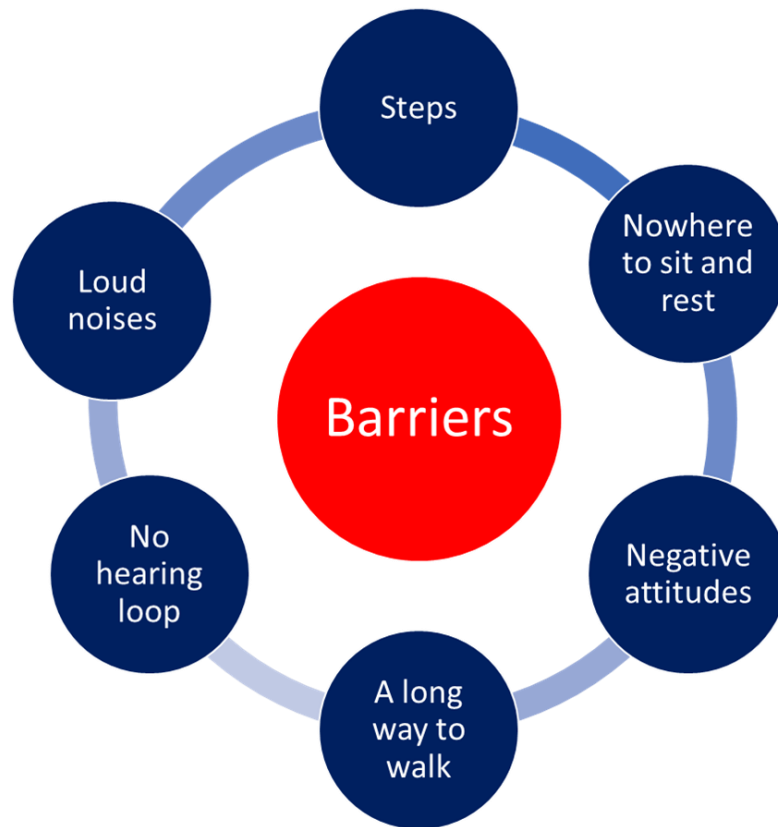


Figure 1: Barriers to people with disability

Tourists with disabilities journey limitations and obstacles can be conceptualized through the following stages:

- Transportation barriers and impediments
- Fundamental social and cultural constraints;
- Travel preparation information
- The destination experience
- Accessible accommodations (Darcy, 2004).

This typology is used as a framework for dealing with the limitations and obstacles that a disabled traveler may encounter (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific., 2003). The development of tourism in developing countries is

proceeding at a rapid pace compared to developed countries. This is due to the fact that there are numerous unexplored resources, and the uniqueness of these resources provides authenticity (Chang & Chen, 2012). Symbols and signs for PWDs should be incorporated in development strategies for tourism facilities as part of AT. Entrances, exterior and interior access, accessible room , accessible elevators, parking, ramps, spacious restrooms, tactile systems (Braille), and accessible desks and telephones are among the signs and symbols. Providing such amenities encourages and develops customer relationships and ensures a future market. Since the disabled cannot become extinct, the future success of tourism will demand the participation of everyone to demonstrate that the industry deserves global recognition. To meet consumer needs in tourism development, developing countries must work very hard, particularly in infrastructure and transportation area to improve accessibility (Mopecha, 2016). Disability Sign and Symbols are available in the Appendix.

### **2.6.1 Barrier Classification and Their Explanations**

**Natural environment or social constructed :** At this point, we look for the things that are physical obstacles for people with disabilities, resultant from an environment, in combination with the psychological and ecological views of social effort that adaptability, and knowledge of social structures (Qiu, Park, Li, & Song, 2020).

**Financial accessibility:** This state to the financial capacity or availability to engage in tourism activities, as well as if there are cost considerations for individuals with disabilities.

**Policy, law, and regulations:** This section contains information on the interpretation and application of legislation, as well as on the rules for accessible tourism and



building regulations set out in the Accessibility of Buildings for Persons with Disabilities Act.

**Accessibility to information:** This section is focus on the transmission of information for tourists, particularly for PWDs. Is it easy to obtain information in the tourism industry, and can they easily locate and use the services and facilities based on the information provided? It also aims to find out to what extent this niche segment is involved in the marketing and promotion of tourism products in the study area, as it represents a potential source of profit that does not seem to be exploited.

**Education:** We want to know whether tourism industry staff are aware of and adequately equipped to provide services to PWDs and what the government is doing to make tourism more accessible to all users through institutions such as the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, the Ministry of Social Affairs and others (Akinci, 2013; Tao et al., 2019).

**Attitudes and perceptions:** This section deals with the performance and views of professionals on the opinions of authorities and managers on accessible tourism for people with disabilities.

**Provision of resources:** This is about the required resources to promote and support the contribution of people with disabilities in tourism. It examines what is existing, what standards available, and what is required.

**Legislation and procedures:** This viewpoint concentrations on the judiciary to determine if there is a rule that regulates the development of the tourism industry and

what is being done by various agencies to guarantee that this regulation is followed so that all people with disabilities can fully enjoy and participate in the activities/offerings of the tourism industry in the region (Chan, 2010).

## **2.7 People with Disabilities**

Travel is often used as part of a therapeutic strategy for people experiencing age-related physical changes. Travel allows people to improve their health, lifestyle, and attitude. Travel also allows people to immerse themselves in a different environment. Accessible travel can help people with impairments improve their quality of life (Chan, 2010; Mladenov, 2016). The ability to travel, relax, and have a good time is a human right for people with disabilities as well as for people without disabilities, PWDs have become very vocal and have undergone a tremendous evolution in terms of perception and attitude towards people with disabilities. The "market for disabled customers" is becoming more and more important as one of the developing markets in the tourism industry worldwide. Therefore, tourism must be made accessible to a large number of people the growing attention to quality from the customer's point of view is an important development in the tourism industry, and the most important requirements for this market are qualified staff and adequate facilities (Agovino et al., 2017).

The ADA provides a general definition of people with disabilities: "People who are considered disabled under the law are individuals with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more major life activities, such as walking, talking, self-care, or working" (Chan, 2010). Burnett & Baker (2001) assert that the definition of disabled customers is broader than that of people with disabilities. A disabled client is defined as somebody who has a physical or mental

disability that substantially bounds and limit one or more life functions at any given time. People with short-term impairments, such as a broken leg or arm, could be classified as disabled customers under this definition (Burnett & Baker, 2001; Chan, 2010; Mamoon, 2013).

People with disabilities live in societies that are not specifically created for them (Hua, Ibrahim, & Chiu, 2013). Due to social and physical limitations, it is more difficult for them to participate in recreational activities than for non-disabled persons. Rejection by peers and social exclusion are two social challenges faced by people with impairments. Inappropriate equipment that is unsuitable for people with disabilities is one of the environmental barriers that people with disabilities face. These impediments might erode their sense of independence and control (Smith, 1987). Natural areas with water, sometimes called blue spaces, are particularly associated with health and well-being. It is said that people with disabilities prefer blue spaces for leisure and pleasure (Burnett & Baker, 2001). Furthermore, closeness to the shore is connected with reducing stress and physical exercise (Wiesel, Whitzman, Gleeson, & Bigby, 2019).

## **2.8 Accessible Tourism**

Accessible tourism can be defined as "a form of tourism that involves collaborative processes among stakeholders that enable people with limited mobility, vision, hearing, and cognitive abilities to live independently, equally, and with dignity by providing universally designed tourism products, services, and environments" (Isrif, 2017; Zaragoza, Trilles, & Gutiérrez, 2021). Darcy & Dickson (2009, p 34) define accessible tourism as the opportunity for people with disabilities, including hearing, vision, mobility, and cognitive needs, to act individually and independently, and with

dignity and equality, through the provision of universally designed products, services, and environments in the tourism industry (Hua et al., 2013). This definition assumes a lifelong approach, where people benefit from accessible travel arrangements throughout their lifetime. This includes tourists in wheelchairs, independent or with assistants, people with permanent or temporary disabilities, tourists with trolleys and heavy luggage, people with young children or visually and hearing impaired, seniors, families with strollers and pregnant women, who often move everywhere according to their wishes. Importantly, this definition recognizes the importance of accessible tourism, which requires a process based on three important values: Independence, Equality, and Dignity (Isrif, 2017). The concept of accessible tourism focuses on people with disabilities, regardless of the type of disability, as long as the challenge of access diminishes the quality of the travelling experience (Priporas, Vassiliadis, Bellou, & Andronikidis, 2015). The main challenge is how destinations can achieve the same quality experience for PWDs, on par with non-disabled tourists. Darcy and Buhalis (2010, p. 816) point out that tourism experiences for people with disabilities are about more than access. However, accessible places and reasonable accommodations from which to travel are a foundation of any tourism experience for people with disabilities (Nyanjom, Boxall, & Slaven, 2018). In addition, according to Yau (2004) and Akinci (2013), “it is a fundamental right for people with disabilities to use tourist services equally, hygienically, comfortably, honorably and actively”. They believe that “accessible tourism is not a process of assimilation, but a process of integration and that government should approach this process efficiently in order to benefit from this particular market “. They reiterated that “efforts must be made at the local, national, and global levels to remove the barriers (e.g., physical, behavioral, social, and

environmental) that limit people with disabilities. The tourism sector need to embrace this from of tourism to fulfill the human rights of PWD and benefit economically.”(M. Hansen, Fyall, Macpherson, & Horley, 2021; Wiesel et al., 2019; Yau et al., 2004). Under the umbrella of inclusive tourism (i.e., an ideal that aims to equal and same access and inclusion for all, two aspects must be considered: first, the cooperation among stakeholders to facilitate AT, and second, the different forms of disability and their specific needs when planning for this market. In this regard, Nyanjom et al. (2018, p. 676) argue that “inclusive tourism goes beyond access issues and defines the term as an ideal that contains the participation of all stakeholder groups, including PWD, in policy, planning and governance of the development of AT”(Carneiro & Crompton, 2010; Nyanjom et al., 2018).

In the context of the tourism industry, PWDs are a market to reckon with and require a different approach in terms of needs and desires. For persons with disabilities, travelling can be a challenge; however, this challenge is not only a burden for disabled travelers but also a daunting responsibility for the destinations. Tourist destinations have not invested in AT because it poses a challenge to both the public and private sectors in terms of physical, social, and environmental capitalization. It has also been overlooked in the context of sustainable tourism. For tourism destinations to become attractive locations for disabled people, there is a need for a new strategy and commitment, which has been ignored. Hansen et al. (2021, p. 2) state that:

“Tourism stakeholders fail to provide accessible services to people with disabilities through an apparent lack of education and awareness. Seemingly, by being wheelchair accessible, destinations assume they are accessible to all disabilities, when in fact this is a particularly complex demographic. However, this issue runs deeper in society with architects, designers and planners tending to reduce disability to medical and stereotypical notions,

thereby disregarding the diversity and complexity of disability”(Hudson & Gilbert, 2000).

The major part of the literature on accessible tourism has focused on the economic dimension (Gillovic et al., 2018; M. Hansen et al., 2021; Ozturk et al., 2008). However, a holistic approach to the needs and concerns of the local disabled population, with implications for tourists with disabilities, has not been developed in a comprehensive manner (Carneiro & Crompton, 2010). Thus, several gaps remain to be addressed regarding this topic. The main gap concerning AT in North Cyprus and similar destinations, including developing countries, is the lack of a measurement tool to assess the constraints and limitations of information; such a tool could be calibrated to the factors that influence PWD to clarify obstacles to travelling and accessing tourist attractions. Filling this gap may become a pathway in the case of North Cyprus and similar destinations. The second gap, which is not less important than the main gap, is the lack of case-specific and adequate infrastructure to serve the needs of disabled tourists (Akinci, 2013; Darcy, S., & Buhalis, 2010). On the other hand, innovating infrastructure and technology with a situational focus may increase the likelihood of better results and greater benefits for PWD. The third gap is cultural and attitudinal and is manifested in an overall apathetic attitude and the complacency of tourism operators and policy makers toward PWD (Alén, E., Domínguez, T., & Losada, 2012; Bowtell, 2015). In the end, destinations need to full respond to the requirements of the domestic disabled population and foreign tourists. Destinations should implement normative principles inspired by the human rights of disabled people, take advantage of this appreciable market, as well as diversify the tourism sector for sustainability. Nyanjom et al (2018, p. 684) eloquently noted that ‘the government, through regulation and legislation, is normally responsible for managing

the built environment – physical and adapted infrastructure – that is vital to sustainable accessible tourism; and for keeping the public informed’.

## **2.9 Specific Needs of the Accessible Market**

It is plausible that potentiality of the market in relation to disabled people is highly feasible and profitable. Because the views and perspectives of modern society has changed dramatically regarding the rights and abilities of this market. The old stereotypes have changed in many ways. Nowadays, technological innovation, changing perspectives, changing laws and attitudes of the public institutions have paved the way for flourishing of this niche market (Wiesel et al., 2019). Furthermore, older citizens are likely to experience physical difficulties as they age, which coincide with their retirement, can also benefit from facilities that are developed for disabled people (Dimou, Irini; velissariou, 2016). Tourism sector cannot afford this growing market, which is mainly in the traditional tourists producing economies (United Nations., 2008). Despite some similarities with the general population, there were also significant differences and special requirements. Travelers with impairments tend to cope with the stress and uncertainty of travel by returning to familiar places. As a result, they tend to return more often and are loyal consumers (Sellevoll, 2016).

Wootten & McIntosh (2020), Ozturk et al (2008), anticipated that disabled people have a higher propensity to travel; therefore, barrier-free facilities should become a policy priority in the hospitality if they want to tap on this market. Huan et al (2006), noted that such niche market encompasses larger market beyond the disabled travelers. They assert that disability market is much larger when taking into consideration the family members and those that travel along the disabled people as

assistants. Cook & Shinen (2014) pointed out that hospitality industry should pay close attention to the needs of this market by re-evaluating their facilities and services in order to adapt to such potential market. Gladwell and Henderson et al (1995) recognized the failure of hotels in training their employees how to interact and serve this market as well as the people who are attending the disabled people as their assistants. Facilitating accessibility for the local disabled population and tourists (domestic and international) is a highly complex task. It is logical for destinations to focus on both segments. Nonetheless, there are still measurable barriers in this particular market. These include lack of adequate infrastructure to serve the needs of disabled tourists (Sharifi et al., 2017; Yates, 2007), lack of awareness and a complacent attitude among operators (Deal, 2007) and an overall apathetic attitude towards disabled people, especially in developing countries (Mitra, Posarac, & Vick, 2013).

### **2.9.1 Tourism Infrastructure**

Tourism infrastructure holds great potential for attracting visitors and improving the sustainability of tourism. Infrastructure is essential for the growth of an ever-expanding industry. The presence of tourism infrastructure influences the decision-making process when choosing a location. Tourism infrastructure serves as a push and pull component of the market for the tourism sector. A location must positively stand out or position itself favorably in the eyes of customers in order to be successfully promoted in target markets. The development of a successful tourism location is dependent on infrastructure. The tourism sector encourages investment in new infrastructure, much of which benefits both residents and visitors. Infrastructure is at the heart of the tourism sector and critical to the growth of an ever-expanding industry (Chan, 2010). Several countries have recognized the value of infrastructure



to the tourism sector, and their governments have linked their activities to tourism by providing tourism-specific infrastructure facilities (Polat & Hermans, 2016). Roads, marinas, airports, water treatment plants, sewage systems, museums, and restoration of cultural monuments are examples of tourism development projects (M. Hansen et al., 2021). In the tourism industry, there are several examples of places that have lost both their business and their long-term reputation because they did not meet these criteria for infrastructural services and facilities (Sen & Mayfield, 2004). Tourist attractions are an essential aspect of the tourism supply side because they create, attract, and increase traveler interest. Attractions, accommodations, accessibility, and amenities are the other essential components that make up a destination, and they are the most important components of a destination's necessary tourism infrastructure. Because they are interrelated, tourism infrastructure development must be approached strategically. The key components required for a successful destination must be balanced. Accommodations, accessibility, activities, amenities, and attractions are examples (Asgarnezhad Nouri, Nemati, & Abbasgholizadeh, 2019). Destinations can only successfully attract visitors if they have a good choice of accessibility, accommodation and activities (Agarwal & Steele, 2016), and for that reason, It is critical for destinations to have sound infrastructure, including telecommunications services, environmental management, health and hygiene, and probably most importantly, safety and security. Identifying and prioritizing improvements to tourism infrastructure would improve the tourist experience and visitor satisfaction with the destination. However, planning and providing new infrastructure facilities is a difficult task (Özogul & Baran, 2016). According to Pelin & Leskovac (2021), There are seven measures that can be used to provide adequate tourism infrastructure: 1) ensuring accessibility to and within the destination, 2)

improving community infrastructure, 3) developing new lodging capacity, 4) improving the quality of services provided, 5) developing needed infrastructure, 6) expanding existing lodging capacity, and 7) focusing on the safety and cleanliness of the destination. Infrastructure has a positive impact on visitor flows. Consequently, adequate and appropriate development of tourism infrastructure is necessary for the maturation of a place. If tourism operators want to take advantage of the rising tide of accessible tourism to attract more tourists and have a competitive advantage in this growing niche market, they should improve infrastructure facilities to meet the needs of disabled tourists. In particular, this includes extensive infrastructural improvements, providing clear information for disabled tourists, improving the existing inadequate access to various venues, providing transportation and refreshment facilities for the disabled population, and ensuring adequate access to public places to meet the needs of disabled tourists and capture this market.

### **2.9.2 Information**

Tourists with disabilities want additional support in organizing their adventures so that they can travel as much as they want and make it a joyful experience rather than a stressful one (Yau et al., 2004). Overall, more comprehensive information was the most important request from disabled tourists, especially those with limited mobility. While this mainly refers to digital sources such as websites and review portals, it can also refer to information that tourists can obtain anywhere, including on-site (e.g., guided tours) (Sellevoll, 2016). Tourism authorities in the government play an critical role in organizing the local tourism industry. Armario (1996) Darcy believes this is related to the fragmentation of local tourism, rivalry between organizations and regional attractions, and the necessity for cooperative marketing in markets that promote tourism (Bowtell, 2015). This function should also include collecting,

marketing, and disseminating information about accessible travel. Gathering information about accessible tourism services is one of the simplest methods for national tourism organizations to develop a campaign for a new market niche. Systematic collection, presentation and dissemination of information about accessible travel is one of the problems that national tourism organizations need to solve. The Internet enables both domestic and inbound marketing and promotion of accessible tourism (Sellevoll, 2016). They need information that:

- Concerns their fragility
- Is easy to find and absorb - This refers especially to accessible tourist information, which is often not easy to recognize and is very complex Is well structured
- Is understandable, i.e., when choosing accommodations, attractions, or experiences, a set of images covering a wide range of disabilities would make the potential traveler feel that they have chosen an option in which they can participate (Sellevoll, 2016).

### **2.9.3 Transportation**

Transportation is another important factor in social participation and recreational enjoyment. According to the general experience of people with disabilities, accessibility and reliability of transportation serve as a link between the various sectors of the tourism industry, such as accommodations and attractions, etc (Arawindha & Fitrianita, 2018). Accessibility and the variety of transportation alternatives affect the ease with which people with disabilities can travel. Due to the higher costs associated with using paratransit services and their exclusion from packaged trips, the availability of these elements has a direct impact on the ability to participate in tourism (Sen & Mayfield, 2004). In many cases, accessible

transportation is not easy for people with disabilities to use. Accessibility of public transportation is also a major problem in developing countries (Ostroff, 2011). In many industrialized countries with anti-discrimination laws, accessible public transportation is now the norm (Steint, 2017). However, both developing and developed countries in Asia are behind in terms of alternatives to public transportation (Darcy et al., 2010). Transportation problems become more accentuated for tourism when a person has to bypass the transportation system to reach a place. These contain longer stay time, unfamiliar areas, and transportation choices (McKercher, Packer, Yau, & Lam, 2003). The main identified problems in transportation are:

- Adequate auxiliary services at airports (accessible restrooms/changing rooms, telephones, car banks, etc.);
- Dissemination of flight information by airlines to the visually and hearing and challenges;
- Managing information about the needs of PWDs;
- Additional expense for traveling with an attendant;
- Loss of independence and freedom when travelling;
- Training of staff on how to interact with people with mobility impairments;
- Seats with retractable armrests are not available.
- Equipment carrying rules and regulations such as (electrical batteries for oxygen and wheelchairs) (Degener, 2017; Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific., 2003).

Disabled people's overall satisfaction with the tourist experience can be seen as correspondingly lower than that of non-disabled people. This leads many people to desire to travel more regularly. According to an experienced traveler, all types of

public transportation are so inconvenient that they limit their trips to places where they can drive their own cars and vehicles. Transportation solutions demand a level of independence that provides a comparable level of service that non-disabled people currently have (Arawindha & Fitrianita, 2018).

Jette and Field (2007) point out that “transportation issues are an important obstacle for PWDs. Tutuncu (2017) pointed out that “if access to facilities is easy for people with physical disabilities, it has a direct impact on their satisfaction and loyalty, so they are happy to visit the place again” (Dimou, Irini; velissariou, 2016; Tutuncu, 2017). Some disabled people who are willing to participate in tourism activities are unable to do so due to inadequate transportation. Transportation planners need to work with tourism institutions to incorporate policies that meet the needs of PWD. Most of the destinations lack sufficient transportation facility for PWD, which curtails their mobility” (Chang & Chen, 2012; Darcy, 2010b; Mitra et al., 2013).

#### **2.9.4 Accommodation**

For many PWDs, the provision of accommodations is crucial throughout their stay at a place. Simply, if they are unable to find accessible accommodations, they will not travel to the destination (European Commission, n.d.). One problem with planning a trip is obtaining information about accessible accommodations. Many lodging providers do not know what accessible lodging means. They are frequently unable to give accurate or comprehensive information in their room amenities (Darcy, McKercher, & Schweinsberg, 2020). In many cases, lodging establishments represent their accommodations as barrier-free, many people with impairments find the rooms unsuitable. It is bad enough when this happens in one's own country, but when it happens in another country, it is a disaster for the disabled traveler (Hästbacka, Nygård, & Nyqvist, 2016). Accommodation barriers arise from the

accommodation environment (location, access to amenities, public transportation, drop-off and parking), rooms, reception, and other services and facilities. The accommodation needs and requirements of people with disabilities depend on the individual, their condition and disability, and the amount of assistance needed. Key accessibility features include the following information about accommodations:

- Prices for accessible accommodations are often higher;
- Insufficient continuous pathways (from parking and all hotel facilities to room);
- Excessively high counters at the front desk;
- Inconveniently located rooms;
- There are no steps to enter the rooms;
- Width of doorways;
- Balcony access;
- Location of cabinets, TV, refrigerator, radio, clock, telephone, and so on (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific., 2003).

Some tourists with mobility problems require extra aids such as toilet and shower seats or toilets in addition to accessible accommodations. Since very few accommodations provide these aids, travelers must either bring them themselves or rent them upon arrival. This means additional costs and/or travel planning for the travelers (Sisto et al., 2021).

### **2.9.5 The Destination Experience**

At the destination, the tourist experience includes a series of interactions and social relationship. The environment, cityscape, accommodations, day trip offerings, attractions, and customer service attitudes have a significant impact on the tourism experiences of PWDs. Wiesel et al (2019, p. 2) assert that the needs of disabled people (i.e., tourists and residents) ‘is likely to make new urban geographies,

particularly in our complex, fast evolving metropolitan areas, which bear serious academic consideration'. An improved understanding of how tourists with disabilities experience access challenges is still lacking. Therefore, destinations need to take the first step towards eradicating access disparities between individuals with disabilities and their non-disabled counterparts to fulfil their normative and ethical responsibility to uphold the rights of the disabled population and obtain a business dividend from this market. PWDs have historically been undervalued and underserved in many areas of service delivery. Tourism is no exception to this discrimination against PWDs (Darcy, 2004). Disability discrimination legislation and built environment regulations are two critical components in building an accessible destination. These two elements work together to create the physical and psychological environment that visitors find in a place. If accessibility is not considered in the design of the built environment, the physical environment, built environment, streetscape, and attractions will not accommodate the physical and sensory needs of travelers with disabilities. Second, The Disability Discrimination Act promotes an atmosphere in which the attitude and behavior of service providers take into account the needs of disabled travelers in the provision of their services. Tourists with disabilities must be welcomed as part of the total service package, not as an optional add-on (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific., 2003). Accessible tourism extends not only to the built environment, but also to customer service. People with disabilities are discriminated against in the provision of tourism services (Darcy, 2004). As a service industry, the attitudes of the tourism industry toward PWDs have a significant impact on their experiences. According to research, the views of destination marketers and tourism service providers in the field reflect society's perception of impairments (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2021; Gillovic et

al., 2018; Henderson et al., 1995). These prejudices must be combated in the tourism sector by consistently raising awareness of disabilities (Lehto, Luo, Miao, & Ghiselli, 2018). The findings of several authors clearly show that the process of becoming a compelling destination for PWD is related to the identification of the needs of PWD and consideration of their perceptions of the destination choice (Deal, 2007; Domínguez, Fraiz, & Alén, 2013; Sharifi et al., 2017; Yates, 2007). Yau et al. (2004) indicate that “people with disabilities are extremely loyal to the destination that can meet their needs and provides them with positive experiences” (Yates, 2007; Yau et al., 2004). Aside from the specific barriers already mentioned in the sections on transportation and accommodations, the detailed requirements for access by persons with impairments are shown in the table below.



Table 3: Access requirements for people with disabilities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pathways – provision, gradient and camber</li> <li>● Kerbs – provision, gradient and camber ●</li> <li>● Ramps – provision, gradient, camber</li> <li>● Handrails – provision and positioning</li> <li>● Circulation space</li> <li>● Street crossing provisions and time delays for pedestrian crossings</li> <li>● Doorways, doors and circulation space</li> <li>● Stairs/lack of lifts</li> <li>● Toilets numbers and unisex provision</li> <li>● Swimming pools, spas, and other recreational facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Car parking facilities and location</li> <li>● Need for integrated rather than segregated Seating</li> <li>● Street/outdoor furniture – design and and Landings location</li> <li>● Directional and locational signage</li> <li>● Audible and visual signals/warning signals</li> <li>● Tactile indicators</li> <li>● Showers and change rooms roll-in showers</li> <li>● Public utilities – gateways, check outs, Telephones, post boxes, automated teller Machines etc.</li> <li>● Hearing augmentation systems</li> <li>● Sound levels</li> </ul>
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Source: (Darcy et al., 2010)

## 2.10 Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is the positive feeling of customers towards a company (Jeong & Kim, 2020). Tourist satisfaction is critical for loyalty and customer retention and it is according to the correspondence between the expectations that the tourist has before stay at the target and the consequences of the experiences made at the destination, which reflect the correspondence between the image that the tourist has

previously formed of the target and what he actually sees, feels and remembers of the destination. This study provides guidance to travel proposers and policy causes on how to satisfy this unique market and gain its loyalty. Tourists with disabilities have certain expectations before they visit the hospitality industry. According to Oliver (1980), customer satisfaction is the result of a comparison between the expectations and the performance of a product or service, which they called "disconfirmation theory". This theory assumes that customers have a great level of happiness when they find that performance is higher than expected (Jeong & Kim, 2020). Chon, K. & Sparrowe (2000) assert that customer satisfaction comes from fulfilling a customer's wants and needs. The authors also state 10 principles key to achieve tourists satisfaction in the hospitality industry in order to developing accessible tourism: recognize the guest; make a positive first impression; service provided by the company and the customers' expectation; if actual service meets or exceeds customer expectations; provide a barrier-free environment; facilitate the customer's decision making; reduce waiting time; create good memories; get value for the money spent; provide discounts and special offers for tourists. Overall, these 10 principles are about satisfying customers by making everything easy for them (Chan, 2010). Customer satisfaction strengthens customers' positive attitudes and loyalty to the service provider (Dimou, Irini; velissariou, 2016). Research has shown that client happiness is completely based on customer loyalty and that client loyalty is confidently based on sales (Bowen & Chen, 2001; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990; Hallowell, 1996). Also, previous research has consistently found a positive relationship between perceived value and satisfaction (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Jeong & Kim, 2020; Jin, Lee, & Lee, 2015; Phillips et al., 2013). Asgarnezhad Nouri et al (2019) investigated the correlation amongst observed value and satisfaction and

showed that perceived value significantly and positively influences satisfaction. Jeong & Kim (2020) examined the effects of perceived value and satisfaction on loyalty and found that social and functional value significantly increase satisfaction. The customer loyalty ladder begins with customer awareness and ends with word of mouth and brand advocacy. Service providers strive to move customers from prospect status to brand advocate. In creating brand advocates, service providers must first identify tourists with disabilities and their expectations. Service providers should present a positive image to potential customers and provide them with comprehensive information; operators must also remove or minimize barriers before the initial purchase for PWDs. After customers have purchased, service providers should strive to meet or exceed customers' expectations. Only satisfied customers can become loyal customers who make repeat purchases, provide recommendations to others, and become brand advocates. Dissatisfied customers, on the other hand, will complain or switch brands. Based on the customer loyalty ladder, service providers can turn dissatisfied customers back into satisfied customers by handling their complaints well. If the customer feels that their complaint is not handled well, dissatisfied customers may choose another brand (Chan, 2010; Javier & Bign, 2001; Phillips et al., 2013). Bowen et al., (2014) point out that loyal customers can help hospitality companies increase profitability and reduce operating costs. Loyal customers not only increase the revenue of hospitality businesses, but also serve a fantastic marketing function through their recommendations and word-of-mouth (Calvo-mora, 2015). Dimou and velissariou (2016) highlight that “improving the diversity and quality of facilities for people with disabilities can increase tourists’ enjoyment and resulted a growth in the quantity of visitors and destination

diversification. However, facilities for PWD requires particular infrastructural design, need specific technology and service provision” (Lyu, 2017).

## **2.11 Destination Image**

The destination is the unit of action through which service providers, companies, organizations, and tourists engage via co-creating experiences. And tourism is more than just a product; it is an experience. Important factor is the destination image that tourists attach great importance to when choosing their destination. Infrastructure directly effects on the destination image that may be the main or the other destination image. Last capabilities or sources of information favor formation of a destination image that is considered the image before the visit. Therefore, it is required to generate a post visit destination image to make sure duplication visits and word of mouth that act such as catalyst for destination marketing. Destination image is the mixture of feelings, beliefs, ideas and impressions of tourists regarding the destination and explained as the psychological expression of a person's feelings, knowledge, and general perception of a specific destination (Kim, S. H., Holland, S., & Han, 2013; Nazir et al., 2021). Throughout the history of destination image, tourist sites have promoted themselves in different ways. Some places have become immensely popular, while others have remained relatively unknown despite significant marketing efforts. Destination branding has become increasingly popular because a destination's image is believed to have the greatest effect on customers' desire to visit that place. Many places around the world have adopted branding initiatives to differentiate themselves from the competition and attract more tourists. Differences in destination image may be caused by length of stay, experience effects, and the passage of time (Pike, S., Jin, H. S., & Kotsi, 2019). The image of countries and destinations varies among international tourists (Zhang, Morrison, & Chen,

2018). a basic aspect in destination management in the tourism business is destination image (Liang & Xue, 2021; Tavitiyaman & Qu, 2013) and plays two critical roles in behavior: (1) impact on the decision-making process when choosing the destination (2) post-decision behavior, including participation, evaluation, and future behavioral preferences (intention to revisit or enthusiasm to recommend the place) (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Javier & Bigné, 2001; C. Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2005). Referring to Milman & Pizam (1995), destination image is composed of a combination of three parts: the product (quality, price and type of fascinations), the attitude and behavior of the staff who are contacted directly with tourists, and the environment like the weather, landscape, and also physical protection. Wang & Hsu (2010) examined the dimensions of destination image and categorized them into five categories: tourism resources, amenities, supporting factors, travel environment, and service quality.

Ilban & Bezirgan (2015); Lu et al (2016); Phillips et al (2013) found that positive destination image increases intention to revisit and suggest it to the other people. Moreover, building or improving a destination's image is critical to reach of tourism improvement in encouraging loyal visitors to revisit or recommend it to others (Chen & Tsai, 2007). The more satisfactory destination image, the higher level of tourist satisfaction (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2021; Prayag, 2009; Tavitiyaman & Qu, 2013).

In addition, the image of the destination must be closely and regularly monitored, and it must be verified that the projected image is appropriately accepted by visitors and tourists.

## **2.12 Perceive Value**

Value is widely accepted in the marketing literature as the overall evaluation of services that customers receive from a service firm (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Hellier, Geursen, Carr, & Rickard, 2003). ,which is explained as the customer's overall assessment of what they receive (benefits) compared to what they are given (sacrifices) (Abror et al., 2021; Hsiao, 2021; Ye, Snow, & Jerry, 2019). Perceived value refers to a customer's view or opinion toward a product or service, which is often influenced by how the goods and services meet the customer's needs and expectations. Perceived value and satisfaction of tourist with disabilities are key components of destination image. It indicates how a customer evaluates or values a product or service compared to other similar products. Perceived value, which is the consequence of a customer's opinion of a product, is important to marketers because it helps them find the right strategies for marketing their products and services (Phillips et al., 2013). Therefore, the joint and systematic study of the interactions between a destination's image, perceived value, and tourist happiness can be resulted in an key competitive advantage for a destination in the tourism trade (Jeong & Kim, 2020). Previously, many researchers have addressed the image of perceived value factor in tourism, as it is likely the greatest important determinant of customer manners (Al-Ansi & Han, 2019; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Ilban & Bezirgan, 2015; Javier & Bign, 2001; Phillips et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2018). However, due to the peculiarities of the tourism division, it's impossible to measure the perceived value before purchase particularly about tourist destinations (Ilban & Bezirgan, 2015). High perceived value is when the profits people receive are greater than the costs they are going to pay. This means that, the perceived value is the perceived

advantage or disadvantage that customers gain or lose (Al-Ansi & Han, 2019). Based on the above definitions in the literature, several commonalities can be discovered:

- Perceived value is relevant to the use of a particular service or product.
- Perceived value is perceived by customers.
- Perceived value is generally related to a comparison among the privileges expended to find the services, products and the profits coming from the product (Ilban & Bezirgan, 2015).

### **2.13 North Cyprus**

The third biggest island in the Eastern Mediterranean has been divided into two enclaves (Turkish and Greek Cypriots) since 1974 in the aftermath of a bloody conflict (Keser, 2013). On 15 November 1983, North Cyprus declared independence, which culminated in the establishment of the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC) (See also Figure 1). Since then, North Cyprus has operated as a de facto state (Ker-Lindsay, 2017). Numerous attempts have been made at unification; however, due to the complexity of the situation on the ground, none of the resolutions has borne any fruits (Sözen & Özersay, 2007). Cyprus is located in an area that has routes to the continents of Asia, Europe and Africa, which is one of the main reasons for its strategic location. With an area of 3251 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 400,000, North Cyprus has established itself as a formidable economy and tourism is the main economic sector (Hatay, 2017). Cool and wet winters (particularly from December to February), also with rainfall of 60 percent yearly, keep Cyprus' rivers filled with compensate and water for the drought that occurs through warm summers. Turkish is the official language of North Cyprus and Turkish Lirasi is its currency (Alipour, Vaziri, & Ligay, 2011).

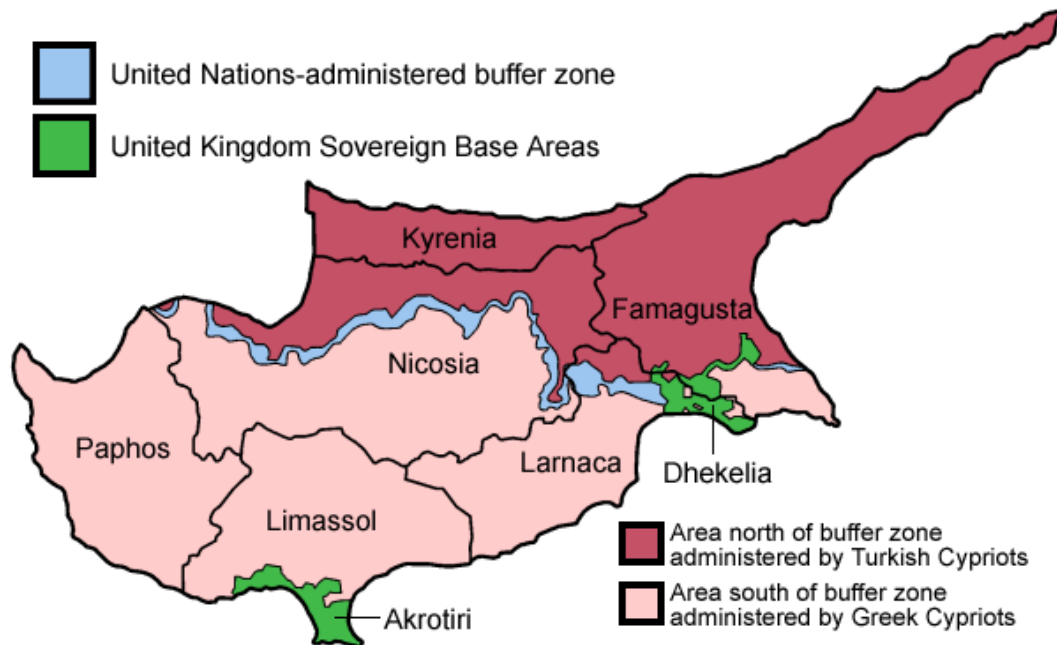


Figure 2: Map of North Cyprus with demarcation line

### 2.13.1 North Cyprus Tourism

North Cyprus has a rich natural and cultural appeal as a tourist destination. Understanding the attractiveness of North Cyprus is an essential issue that needs to be looked at closely (Hatay, 2017). Although, tourism activities are more developed in the Greek part of Cyprus compared to the Turkish part. With this, tourism sector has continuously remained one of the most important sources of earnings for the economic issue of North Cyprus. 8,004 jobs were created in North Cyprus by the tourism industry and the GDP of North Cyprus was 145.6 million dollars (Katircioglu, Arasli, & H.Ekiz, 2007). The advantageous climate, topographical position and beautiful nature mark North Cyprus a proper destination for tourism (Katircioglu et al., 2007). Also, the island is located near the attractive coastal zone that caters to significant numbers of international and domestic tourists who are looking for the sun, sea and sand (see Table 3). On the other hand, numerous historical and archaeological sites attract tourists who are curious about culture and history (Boyarkina, 2014). Nevertheless, North Cyprus differs from other sites in



terms of the comprehensiveness and variety of tourism offerings. Therefore, investigating its capacity for and strategies of accessible tourism is a logical undertaking with legitimate implications for policymakers as well as disabled tourists (Alipour & Kilic, 2005). The Tourism Master Plan of the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus was established with the aim of interesting more tourists from out of the country. Increasing the normal period of stay in tourist centers, avoiding seasonal variations in the tourism, cumulative tourism profits, developing national tourism, introducing mass tourism, implementing effective marketing and recognition measures, organizing educational plan on tourism and growing capability (Altinay, Altinay, & Bicak, 2002). North Cyprus might be a possible source of revenue if the facility for disabled tourists is sufficient. The condensed analysis of approachability in hotel chains, transport and ferry companies helps to generate an accurate number of businesses for which the investigators make a potential recommendation.

Table 4: Tourism movement in North Cyprus

Monthly arrivals	Total number of arrivals		
	2019	2020	% change
January	105,630	112,232	6.3
February	128,028	128,743	0.6
March	131,087	44,107	-66.4
April	146,768	67	-100.0
May	129,844	37	-100.0
June	150,051	477	-99.7
July	152,247	20,228	-86.7
August	159,250	35,119	-77.9
September	192,123	11,727	-93.9
October	177,127	13,275	-92.5
November	148,408	14,552	-90.2
December	129,416	8,282	-93.6
Total	1,749,979	388,846	-77.8

Source: TRNC Ministry of Tourism and Environment handover (2020)

### 2.13.2 North Cyprus Economy

The international tourism industry has experienced a continuous boom throughout the world in the 20th century and has developed one of the most significant financial developments in numerous countries in recent years. Tourism is in many places one of the most active and fastest growing sectors of the economy (Shahgerdi & Amin, 2014). Consequently, travel and tourism planning is critical for the growth of tourism, which will donate to the development economy in destinations. Countries

political ties have a significant impact on planning of tourism. They are one of the most important factors influencing tourism behavior. This is especially true for small island states, where tourism is the most important source of revenue (Rostampour, 2013). Northern Cyprus has a high economic value, both in terms of inbound and outbound tourism. The tourism sector is therefore both an opportunity and a challenge (Alipour et al., 2011). Although this destination market represents a significant portion of tourism in the Mediterranean, it is still poorly understood. Apart from Turkey, North Cyprus has no political or economic relations with any other country. As a result, tourism industry is a crucial economic segment for the economic growth of Northern Cyprus. In particular, the tourism industry in Northern Cyprus has an important source of revenue. (Bouzari, 2012). Katircioğlu, Araslı, and Ekiz (2007) pointed out that agriculture, travel industry, and higher education are the most important sectors in Northern Cyprus.

## **2.14 Hypothesis Development**

As mentioned earlier, this study is an attempt to improve our information and considerate of the challenges and unpleasant experiences that people with disabilities face when travelling. Therefore, destinations need to take the first step towards eradicating access disparities between PWDs and their non-disabled counterparts. This is not only an ethical responsibility; it is also the right approach to obtain a business dividend from this niche market. Regarding the mentioned literature review and gaps, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1.** As a destination, North Cyprus has remained complacent to the needs of PWDs; therefore, it has failed to capitalize on this market.

**Hypothesis 2.** PWDs has a positive perception of access to transportation for disabled people.

**Hypothesis 3.** The development of accessible tourism destinations depends on the quality and variety of the facilities for the local disabled population.

**Hypothesis 4.** The quality of transportation, accommodations, and recreational facilities has a significant impact on the PWDs satisfaction.

**Hypothesis 5.** The type of disability has a significant effect on satisfaction.

**Hypothesis 6.** The relationship between satisfaction and Perceive value is mediated by PWDs destination image.

**Hypothesis 7.** PWDs Perceive value has a direct effect on their destination image.

**Hypothesis 8.** Destination image has a positive effect on PWDs travelers Satisfaction.

**Hypothesis 9.** PWDs Perceive value has a positive impact on Satisfaction.

## **Chapter 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter is divided into eight sections that present the methodology of the study. The first section describes the theoretical framework, the second section describes the research method, the third section describes the pilot study, the fourth section describes the instruments and data collection, the fifth section describes the ethical considerations, the sixth section describes the population and sample, the seventh section describes the study setting, and the final section describes the statistical methods used in this study.

#### **3.2 Study Framework**

The conceptual framework of this thesis developed based on the relationship between variables and literature review and different approaches models about the disability and accessibility. In examining accessibility and disability, not only is there a clear difference between definitions of disability (e.g., the medical model and the social model), but also the importance of keeping in mind how impairment affects people's lives and how it varies from person to person. Furthermore, there is not just one experience of accessibility to a place, but numerous experiences and understandings of accessibility and disability. The field of accessible tourism is a complicated study, in part because of the complexity and diversity of impairments, but also because each country has its own version of accessible tourism, accessible regulations, and accessible tourism information. The categories of accessibility, disability, and

handicap are considered social constructs in the theoretical framework of this thesis and should be viewed as dynamic concepts that depend on the environment in which they occur.(Gillovic & McIntosh, 2020). To understand how accessible tourism information is perceived by the people it is intended for, it is important to ask them about their experiences with accessible tourism information as well as travel experiences where accessible information has made a difference.(Zajadacz, 2014). The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges and opportunities of accessible tourism for people with disabilities and the impact on the development of accessible tourism and to determine the image of the destination for people with disabilities based on the relationship between perceived value and satisfaction in the case of North Cyprus. Northern Cyprus is one of the most famous destinations in the Mediterranean region. The contribution of the tourism sector to the GDP of North Cyprus is only \$982.9 million. This is far less for an island that has the potential to become the number one tourist destination among countries that have the same level. Unfortunately, accessible tourism in North Cyprus has yet to really take off, which may be due to the lack of infrastructure, lack of coordination within the authorities, and security issues(Hatay, 2017). The research structure is illustrated in Figure 3.

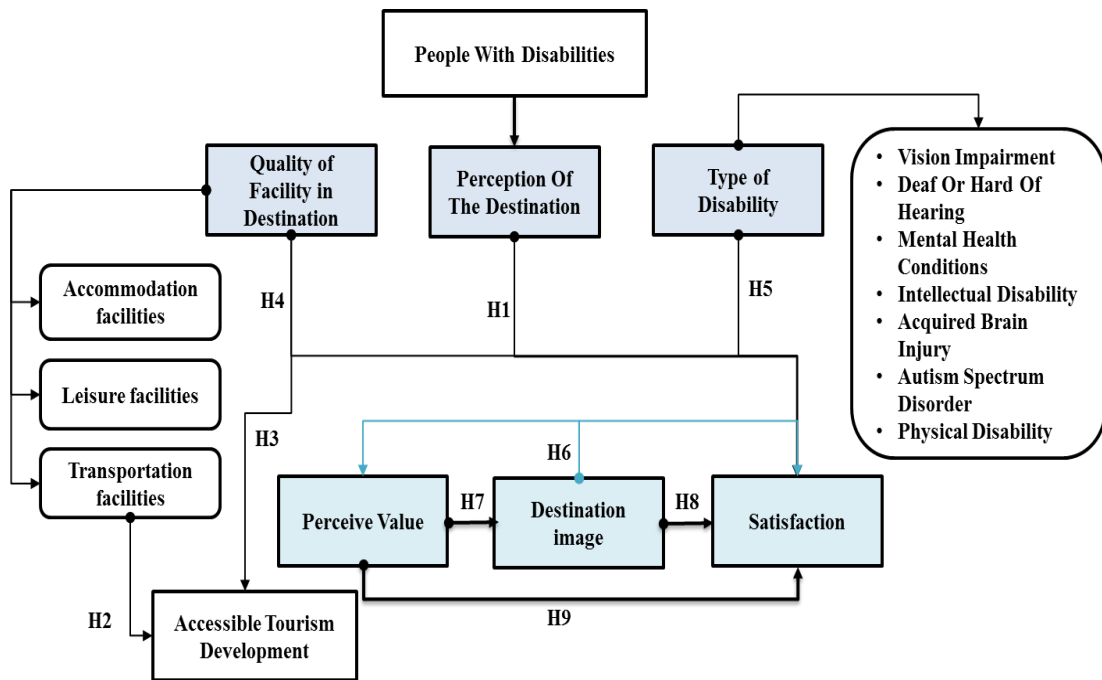


Figure 3: Research conceptual framework

### 3.3 Research Method

This study employs a quantitative approach to investigate the perception of the local population with disabilities in terms of the needs, limitations, concerns, and challenges they experience in daily life. We assume that the local disabled population's reflections on the challenges they face are intertwined (Degener, 2017) with the challenges disabled travelers may face at the destination. Respondents (the local disabled population) can provide insightful reflections with knowledge about barriers, limitations, facilities, and accessibility (Degener, 2017; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020). As mentioned earlier, it is significant to focus on one type of disability at a time in order to study people with disabilities, their concerns, and their limitations in depth. In this study, we examine deaf people and people with physical disabilities. This means that the sample limitation excludes other types of disabilities; by considering the difficulty of the topic and its assessment tools, to do otherwise could impede trustworthy data and info collection (if they answered the questions

themselves) or affect the comparability of the data (if their caregivers answered) (Buhalis & Darcy, 2010; Moura et al., 2018). This study also attempted to minimize potential errors by knowing which populations were targeted and making sure to target only those that are relevant to this study.

### **3.4 Pilot Study**

The questionnaire was reviewed by thesis committee members and individuals who are experts in accessible tourism and knowledgeable about accessibility requirements were invited to review the questionnaire and provide feedback. After revising the questionnaire based on the experts' suggestions, the questionnaire was sent to the Ethics Committee of Eastern Mediterranean University for approval. After approval (EMUE/125.), the questionnaire was translated into Turkish by the researcher. To compare any differences between the Turkish and English versions of the questionnaire, a hospitality student who is proficient in both English and Turkish translated the Turkish questionnaire back into English. After the translations, the committee chair evaluated the content of both versions of the questionnaire. After the committee chair approved the questionnaire, it was mailed to the pilot study participants. The pilot study questionnaire was developed based on two previous studies: Hotel Customer desires, satisfaction, and trustworthiness: investigation of tourists with disabilities in the Taiwan (Chan, 2010). A model to study the influence of tourism frame on destination image for effective tourism marketing (Haneef, 2017). The questions are divided into three parts and one general question: demographic variable, Destination image of North Cyprus from PWDs perspective, quality/adequacy of accessible transportation, accommodation, leisure and recreation facilities for PWDs, and evaluation of the perceived value of tourists with disabilities. A pilot study was conducted to determine if the questionnaire was easy



to understand and able to capture the needs and satisfaction of disabled tourists. Fifteen completed questionnaires were collected for the pilot study. Based on the results of the pilot study, a modified questionnaire was created and sent to people with disabilities to test and share the needs, satisfaction level, perceived value, and destination image of visitors with disabilities in relation to their experiences as guests.

### **3.5 Survey Instrument and Data Collection Processes**

A survey questionnaire was developed to gather data on local people with disabilities, specifically to investigate their socio-demographic characteristics as well as their perceptions of the barriers and challenges they experience in North Cyprus. The socio-demographic information on the survey based on age, gender, occupation, form of disability, and years of disability. The domestic population of PWD is a legitimate source of local knowledge and information (Ağazade, Tükenmez, & Uzun, 2021; Puh, 2014; Shier et al., 2009) that can provide a reasonable basis to draw conclusions applicable to tourists with disabilities. There are few local places that collect information from people with disabilities, and access to all of them is difficult. We have selected places that people with disabilities usually visit (treatment centers, educational institutions, sports studios, and some events and island tours that they organize themselves). Data were collected between November 2020 and October 2021. Paper and pencil surveys were sent to various social foundations focused on making services to persons with disabilities in North Cyprus. In a short introduction, they were invited to contribute in this research project. In total, 320 survey items were distributed, and 250 were retrieved (78.13% response rate). For this survey, the drop-off/pick-up process for PWD was used, which including delivering the questionnaires by hand to relevant organizations and institutions that

accommodate PWDs in North Cyprus. the first part of questionnaire include demographic information about respondents, and the second part of the questionnaire was planned to conclude the challenges experienced and expectation by the local disabled population were measured based on two categories. First, barriers to accessibility were measured using a Likert five-point scale (1 = “strongly agree”; 5 = “strongly disagree”). Second, the quality of the facilities for disabled people was measured using a Likert five-point scale (1 = “very adequate”; 5 = “very inadequate”). The following table shows the list of organizations where questionnaires were filled in by people with disabilities.

Table 5: The distribution of survey items

<b>Institutions Relevant to the Disabled Population</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Questionnaires Distributed</b>	<b>Questionnaires Retrieved</b>	<b>%</b>
Cyprus Hearing and Speech Impaired Foundation (Kikev)	Non-profit	135	115	46
Cyprus Turkish Orthopaedic Disabled Association (Ktood)	Non-profit	80	62	24.8
TRNC Disabled Sports Federation	Governmental	60	45	18
İrfan Nadir + 18 Disabled Rehabilitation Centre	Governmental	10	5	2
Eastern Mediterranean University Orthopedic Rehabilitation	Private	20	15	6
Eastern Mediterranean University Prosthetic Orthotics And Biomechanics Unit	Private	15	8	3.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>320</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

The scale instruments to measure the local disabled population’s perception consisted of qualitative statements associated with a quantitative measurement unit (Bimonte & Faralla, 2016). The measurement of the population with disabilities for AT analysis is not standardized yet. This is because “disability is a relative term

(restriction of the ability to perform a normal human activity), and its measurement is beset with problems, including the lack of reliability and validity of the instruments, most of which are poorly standardized and produce non-comparable estimates” (Pechlaner, 2000) (p. iii). Scale instruments to measure disabled people’s perceptions of the quality and accessibility of facilities have been developed according to the existing literature (Azevedo et al., 2021; Black et al., 2010; Carneiro & Crompton, 2010; Gillovic & McIntosh, 2020; Kunst & Ivandić, 2021; Zaragozí et al., 2021).

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

During the data collection phase, the researcher interacted with the study population extensively. As a result, ethical issues arise regularly, and ethical concerns must be carefully considered. Ethics is described as "a collection of moral principles and norms of behavior" (Isrif, 2017). Since the researcher in this study was dealing with people with impairments, ethical issues are much more significant. UNWTO (2013) defines vulnerability as the inability of people to secure their own rights and well-being; this category includes children, persons with physical, learning and mentally disabilities. There is growing concern about disadvantaged populations and whether their use as subjects of study is ethical. Some basic ethical standards should be observed in social research. First and foremost, participants should be thoroughly informed about the study in which they are taking part. They should understand the purpose of the study, the basic processes, and the potential uses of the data. Participants in this study have received an information letter. Second, participants must be free to participate in the study (Wiesel et al., 2019). This implies that participants should voluntarily participate in the study willingly, with no compulsion or negative consequences if they do not. Furthermore, participants had the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any moment without having to pay a

penalty. For example, it was not a problem if they did not feel like talking at a certain time. (Isrif, 2017).

### **3.7 Population and Sample**

This study attempts to illustrate the needs and satisfaction of disabled travelers with accessible facilities. The sample size was specified on the following basis: First, the sample size should be neither too small nor too large, it has to be moderate. Second, the sample size should be sufficient to detect the relationship affects (Nazir et al., 2021). The target population was persons over the age of 18 who are living in North Cyprus. Total of 320 respondents were approached and asked to participate in the survey free of charge. A total of 250 questionnaires were completed. The questionnaire was dispersed along with a cover letter explaining the aim of the survey and reassuring respondents of confidentiality (Nazir et al., 2021). In total, nine hypotheses tested in this study. Judgmental (Purposive) sampling was used in this, because it allows the researcher to select a small number of individuals from a population who have the characteristics of the sample being studied or the understanding of the topic being studied to answer the research questions. it is easier to get to the research objectives, no personal identities are needed, and respondents feel free to answer the questions (Cook & Shiness, 2014). Moreover, the researcher tries to analyze destination image as it is, without any intervention or mental conclusion. Since this study aims to solve a problem and its results can be used in practice, it is considered as an applied study. It is an excellent method for gathering information from a specific group of individuals (Mopecha, 2016). It is an excellent method for gathering information from a specific group of individuals. Judgmental sampling enables for in-depth analysis, discovery, and deepening of knowledge about the subject under study through the use of an accurate sample (Sharma, 2017).

Researchers often believe that judgmental sampling will give them a representative sample and save them time and money(Black et al., 2010).

### **3.8 Study Setting**

Some research has been carried out on Mediterranean destinations in the past; however, the fact that this area is a hot spot for tourism and the volatility of the tourism market (Buhalis & Darcy, 2010; Shier et al., 2009) justify an expansion of research to explore new markets (e.g., accessible tourism). Mediterranean tourism has been studied extensively; however, accessible tourism has not received that much attention. Especially for island states, studies on accessible tourism are scant. This is because island states are mainly destinations for 3S (sun, sea, sand) tourism. Thus, accessible tourism can be an alternative tourism market for island states that are under pressure from mass tourism (Ağazade et al., 2021; Katircioglu et al., 2007). North Cyprus is located near the attractive coastal zone that caters to significant numbers of international and domestic tourists who are looking for sun, sea, and sand. On the other hand, numerous historical and archaeological sites attract tourists who are curious about culture and history (Lazar, J., & Stein, 2017). Northern Cyprus is not only is a magnet for sun lovers, but it has also become an international educational hub for tourists from all over the world (Alipour et al., 2011). However, the state of AT has remained unexplored, and there has been no investigation of this form of tourism. Therefore, it is a logical proposition to investigate the challenges as well as the capacity of North Cyprus to capitalize on this niche market and to fulfil the rights of PWD. Furthermore, exploring the capacities and exposing the challenges for AT is a logical endeavor with implications for both policy makers and tourists with disabilities (Darcy, S., & Buhalis, 2010).

### **3.9 Method of Analysis**

The technique by which a researcher gains information or collects data about a particular environment or the world that may be useful in answering his research questions or achieving the goal of his study is called research methodology. This procedure help the researcher in obtain data from numerous sources such as questionnaires, interviews, field studies, etc (Mopecha, 2016). In this dissertation, descriptive statistics were accomplished to analyze the demographic data of the respondents. Responses were analyzed using three statistical methods: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Pearson Correlation Test, and Multiple Regression. For testing the hypothesis 1-5 the needs and satisfaction of travelers with disabilities were analyzed through ANOVA, based on participant demographics: Income level, travel experience, level of disability, and type of disability. A significance level of 0.05 was used to determine statistical significance in this study. In this study, the stepwise approach was used. "The predictor variables were entered individually, but can be dropped if they do not make a significant contribution to the regression when combined with the newly entered predictors" (Chan, 2010). Data analysis for hypothesis 6-9 performed in two stages. First, confirmatory factor analysis was performed and sample adequacy was assessed. In the second stage, the relationships between destination image, perceived value, and satisfaction were empirically tested using structural equation modeling (SEM). Smart PLS 3.2.8 software was used to analyze the developed model, SPSS 22.0 was used to analyze the data collected with the questionnaire and conduct frequency, correlation, and reliability analyzes; and AMOS 22.0 was used to conduct confirmatory factor analyzes and structural equation modeling (Jeong & Kim, 2020).

## Chapter 4

### DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULT

#### 4.1 Introduction

A total of 250 disabled people, the frequency of males (58.8%) is higher than that of females (41.2%), and most of them are between 31-40 and 41-50 years old (27.6%). The least of them are between 18-25 years old (8%). In addition, 14.4% of them are 26-30 years old, 12.4% of them are 51-60 years old, and 10% of them are over 60 years old. Most of the respondents have spinal cord injury (25.2%). The least of them have cerebral palsy (4.8%). In addition, 20.8%, 18%, 5.6%, 15.6% and 10% of them have spina bifida, muscular dystrophy, deafness, amputation and motor neuron disease, respectively. Regarding the year of disability, most of them have been disabled for 10 to 20 years (28.4%). The least of them have been disabled since birth (14%). Moreover, 22%, 14.4% and 21.2% of the respondents have been disabled for less than 10 years, between 20 and 30 years and for more than 30 years, respectively. (37.6%) of them are employees. The least of them are students (9.2%). Besides, 22%, 10.8% and 20.4% of them are self-employed, unemployed and retired, respectively. Most of them earn more than 5000 TL (45.2%). The least of them earn nothing (7.2%). Moreover, 20% of them earn between 1500TL and 3000TL and 27.6% of them earn between 3000TL and 5000TL. Table 6 illustrates the demographic data of the respondents.

Table 6: Frequency of socio-demographic variables

Variable	<i>f</i>	%	Variable	<i>f</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Occupation</b>		
Male	147	58.8	Student	23	9.2
Female	103	41.2	Employee	94	37.6
Total	250	100.0	Self-employed	55	22.0
<b>Age</b>			Unemployed	27	10.8
18–25	20	8.0	Retired	51	20.4
26–30	36	14.4	Total	250	100.0
31–40	69	27.6	<b>Years have been disabled</b>		
41–50	69	27.6	Since birth/birth defect	35	14.0
51–60	31	12.4	Less than 10 years	55	22.0
+60	25	10.0	10–20 years	71	28.4
Total	250	100.0	20–30 years	36	14.4
<b>Type of disability</b>			More than 30 years	53	21.2
Cerebral Palsy	12	4.8	Total	250	100.0
Spina bifida	52	20.8	<b>Income</b>		
Spinal cord injury	63	25.2	None	18	7.2
Muscular Dystrophy	45	18.0	1500 TL- 3000 TL	50	20.0
Deaf	14	5.6	3000 TL- 5000 TL	69	27.6
Amputation	39	15.6	Above 5000 TL	113	45.2
Motor Neuron Disease	25	10.0	Total	250	100.0
Total	250	100.0			

Note: *f*: frequency.

## 4.2 Validity and Reliability of the Data

Data analysis includes descriptive statistics and reliability tests ( $p < 0.05$ ). Descriptive statistics are used to outline respondents' characteristics/demographic composition and also to determine whether a predictor variable has a statistically significant correlation with an outcome variable (see Table 7). Cronbach's alphas are computed to test the internal reliability of the items comprising each category of reflection (satisfaction of disabled tourists, quality of transportation, quality of accommodation, and recreational facilities). As Nunnally & Bernstein, (1994) reports: "For the measure to be reliable, the extract Cronbach's alpha should be more than 0.70" (Alipour & Kilic, 2005; Katircioglu et al., 2007). Approximately 31 corrected item scores are used as the criterion to retain an item within a category



(Weaver, 2001). As shown in Table 7, our distribution indices should be between -1.96 and 1.96; thus, the distributions of the variables are almost normal. Therefore, parametric tests can be used to test the hypothesis.

Table 7: Central, dispersion, and distribution indices of variables

Variables	n	$\mu$	$\bar{x}$	$\sigma$	Cronbach Alpha	Skewness	Kurtosis
Satisfaction	250	3.01	3	0.82	0.86	-1.33	-0.69
Quality of transport	250	2.44	2.45	0.57	0.75	-0.08	0.49
Accommodation	250	2.86	3	0.82	0.76	0.12	-1.27
Recreation Facilities	250	2.62	2.54	0.63	0.72	0.25	-0.59

Notes:  $\mu$ : mean,  $\bar{x}$ : median,  $\sigma$ : Standard deviation.

### 4.3 Hypothesis Tests

- **H1:** North Cyprus has not adapted to the needs of PWDs.

The first hypothesis states that despite the potential for AT and spatial advantages (i.e., proximity to the European market), North Cyprus is not ready for AT. As shown in Table 8, which contains seven measurement items, the result indicates that  $\mu = 3.01$  with an acceptance rate of  $p > 3$ . It also indicates a significance test of 0.79, which is more than 0.05 ( $\alpha$ ); therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted at a 95% confidence level for the variable, and it means that North Cyprus is not ready for AT. Moreover, the frequency of respondents' reflections on their satisfaction with accessible tourism is presented in Table 9.

Table 8: One-Sample Test

Satisfaction	Test Value = 3						
	$\mu$	t	df	Sig. (2-Tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
	3.01	0.264	249	0.79	0.013	-0.088	0.116
Quality of Transport	2.44	-15.18	249	0.00	-0.551	-0.623	-0.480
Accommodation Facilities	2.86	-2.55	249	0.011	-0.133	-0.236	-0.030
Recreation Facilities	2.62	-9.30	249	0.00	-0.371	-0.450	-0.293

Note:  $\mu$ .  $p > 3$ , sig.  $> 0.05$ .

Table 9: Frequency of respondents' reflections on destination image

Survey Instrument on the Disabled Population's Perception on Destination Image			1	2	3	4	5
1	Disabled international tourists have a positive image of North Cyprus.	F %	36 14.4	74 29.6	59 23.6	44 17.6	37 14.8
2	Disabled domestic tourists have a positive image of North Cyprus.	F %	44 17.6	77 30.8	60 24	59 23.6	10 4
3	Disabled tourists have a positive image of the quality of tourism services in North Cyprus.	F %	43 17.2	53 21.2	59 23.6	81 32.4	14 5.6
4	Disabled tourists have a positive image of the landscape value of North Cyprus.	F %	12 4.8	74 29.6	52 20.8	87 34.8	25 10
5	Disabled tourists have a positive image of the cultural heritage value of North Cyprus.	F %	10 4	49 19.6	59 23.6	114 45.6	18 7.2
6	Disabled tourists have a positive image of the tourism offer of North Cyprus.	F %	11 4.4	81 32.4	57 22.8	88 35.2	13 5.2
7	Disabled tourists have a positive image of the tourism facilities of North Cyprus.	F %	13 5.2	59 23.6	63 25.2	108 43.2	7 2.8

Notes: (1) Strongly disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly agree.

- **H2:** PWDs has a positive perception of access to transportation for disabled people.

As shown in the first two questions in Table 10, the survey instrument for these questions consists of two dimensions: the quality of access to transportation for disabled people and the quality of facilities/equipment for the transportation for disabled people. For this hypothesis, findings demonstrate that ( $\mu = 2.44$ ,  $p > 3$ ) as shown in Table 8, the significance of the test is (0.00) for quality of transportation. As the significance is a smaller amount than 0.05 ( $\alpha$ ), the null hypothesis is rejected at a 95% confidence level for both variables. The table also shows that most of the respondents think that the accessibility of airplanes (36.04%) is adequate. The most inadequate is the quality of public transport.

Table 10: Frequency of respondents' reflections on transportation facilities

			Survey Instruments on the Disabled Population's Perceptions on Means of Transportation				
			1	2	3	4	5
01	1	Airplane	F	68	18	91	73
			%	-	27.2	7.2	36.4
	2	Bus	F	97	106	30	17
			%	38.8	42.4	12	6.8
	3	Touring bus	F	89	100	37	24
			%	35.6	40	14.8	9.6
	4	Car	F	26	67	49	89
			%	10.4	26.8	19.6	35.6
	5	Bicycles	F	90	81	54	23
			%	36	32.4	21.6	9.2
	6	Taxi	F	35	73	56	65
			%	14	29.2	22.4	26
02			Survey Instruments on the Disabled Population's Perceptions on Quality of Facilities/Equipment for the Following Modes of Transport				
1	Public transport		F	92	117	13	14
			%	36.8	46.8	5.2	5.6
2	Touring bus		F	62	133	39	16
			%	24.8	53.2	15.6	6.4
3	Rental cars		F	53	66	76	49
			%	21.2	26.4	30.4	19.6
4	Bicycles		F	86	94	52	16
			%	34.4	37.6	20.8	6.4
5	Taxi		F	43	53	63	73
			%	17.2	21.2	25.2	29.2

Notes: (1) Very inadequate, (2) Inadequate, (3) Neutral, (4) Adequate, and (5) Very adequate.

- **H3:** The development of AT destinations depends on the quality and variety of the facilities for the local disabled population and disabled tourists.

According to the findings presented in Table 7, the mean value of the variables for accommodation facilities is (2.86), and (2.62) for recreational facilities. Both values are less than 3. However, on the same table, the significance levels of the tests for accommodation and recreation facilities are (0.011) and (0.00), respectively. As it is less than 0.05 ( $\alpha$ ), the null hypothesis is rejected at a 95% confidence level for both variables. This means that the accommodation and recreation facilities are not adequate for disabled people. For more clarity, the frequency of respondents'

reflections on accommodation and recreational facilities, with details, are presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Frequency of respondents' reflections on accommodation and recreational facilities

		<b>Survey Instruments on the Disabled Population's Perceptions of Means of Transportation</b>					
<b>01</b>			<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1	Accommodation access facilities	F	12	97	54	76	11
		%	4.8	38.8	21.6	30.4	4.4
2	Accommodation parking facilities	F	18	96	55	79	2
		%	7.2	38.4	22	31.6	0.8
3	Accommodations Equipment	F	13	86	76	66	9
		%	5.2	34.4	30.4	26.4	3.6
<b>02</b>	<b>Survey Instruments on Perceptions of PWD for Leisure and Recreational Facilities</b>						
1	Sport facilities	F	16	117	46	57	14
		%	6.4	46.8	18.4	22.8	5.6
2	Cultural activities	F	17	126	56	56	51
		%	6.8	50.4	22.4	22.4	20.4
3	Outdoor activities	F	14	111	105	18	2
		%	5.6	44.4	42	7.2	0.8
4	Festivals and events	F	27	110	77	34	2
		%	10.8	44	30.8	13.6	0.8
5	Shopping facilities	F	32	100	46	55	17
		%	12.8	40	18.4	22	6.8
6	Restaurants and food outlet facilities	F	4	102	57	80	7
		%	1.6	40.8	22.8	32	2.8
7	Customer satisfaction	F	24	87	57	80	2
		%	9.6	34.8	22.8	32	0.8
8	Leisure opportunities	F	43	128	48	31	-
		%	17.2	51.2	19.2	12.4	-
9	Design for all facilities	F	23	90	82	51	2
		%	9.3	36.3	33.1	20.6	0.8
10	Training of staff to support PWD	F	15	105	62	53	15
		%	6	42	24.8	21.2	6

Note: (1) Very inadequate, (2) Inadequate, (3) Neutral, (4) Adequate, and (5) Very adequate.

- **H4:** The quality of transportation, accommodations, and recreational facilities has a significant influence on the satisfaction of PWDs.

Linear regression is used for this hypothesis. First, the Pearson correlation between these variables and satisfaction is calculated. Then, the regression method is used to

examine the effects. A Pearson correlation among satisfaction and the other three variables (quality of transportation, accommodation, and recreational facilities) is obtained in Table 12 and shows that the correlation between satisfaction and the quality of transportation and accommodation is significant and positive. However, there is no significant correlation between satisfaction and recreational facilities. In the regression results, R2 is 0.115 and Durbin-Watson is 1.73, which is between 1.5 and 2.5. Thus, the independence of the residuals is accepted. It is also found that the quality of transportation and accommodation have a positive, significant effect on satisfaction (their beta values are 0.319 and 0.196, respectively). However, recreational facilities do not have a significant impact on satisfaction.

Table 12: Results of correlation and regression between variables

Variables	Satisfaction						
	Pearson Correlation	B	Beta	t	F	R2	Durbin-Watson
Constant	-	2.796	-	10.63 **	10.64 **	0.115	1.73
Quality of transport	0.235 **	0.457	0.319	4.71 **			
Accommodation	0.181 **	0.195	0.196	2.884 **			
Recreation facilities	-0.044	-0.13	-0.1	-1.32			

Note: \*\* It is significant at the 0.01 level. R2. ( $1.5 \leq p \leq 2.5$ )

➤ **H5:** The type of disability has a significant impact on satisfaction.

For this hypothesis, the one-way method ANOVA is used. From Table 13, it can be seen that Levene's test is not significant, so homogeneity of variance is expected. Then the F-statistic of the ANOVA test is calculated, and it is significant. Thus, we can say that the type of disability has a significant effect on satisfaction. Duncan's test is also performed in Table 14.

Table 13: Descriptive statistics for satisfaction by type of disability and the results of ANOVA

Variables	Satisfaction				
	N	Mean	Std Deviation	Levene Test Statistic	F
Cerebral Palsy	12	3.4	0.84	1.14	5.24 **
Spina bifida	52	3.32	0.54		
Spinal cord injury	63	2.71	0.79		
Muscular dystrophy	45	2.8	0.905		
Deaf	14	3.58	0.42		
Amputation	39	3.04	0.72		
Motor neuron disease	25	2.95	1.08		

Note: \*\* It is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 14: Duncan test results

TYPE	N	Subset for Alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Spinal cord injury	63	2.71		
Muscular Dystrophy	45	2.80		
Motor Neuron Disease	25	2.95	2.95	
Amputation	39	3.04	3.04	
Spina bifida	52		3.32	3.32
Cerebral Palsy	12		3.40	3.40
Deaf	14			3.58
Sig.		0.17	0.06	0.28

Table 14 shows that people who are deaf or who have cerebral palsy or spina bifida are more satisfied than the others. People with spinal cord injuries have the lowest satisfaction. This can also be seen in Figure 2.

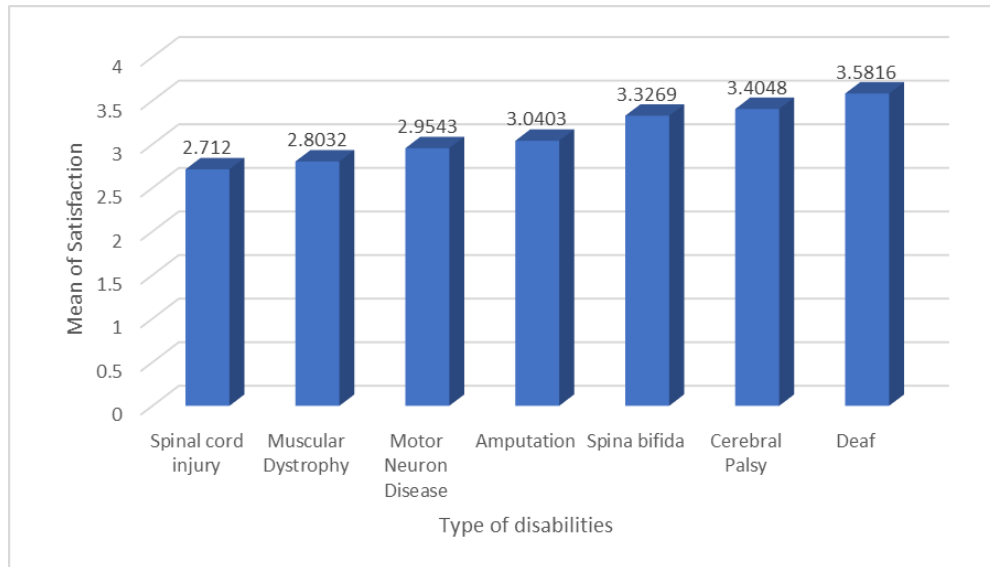


Figure 4: Comparison between satisfaction levels by the type of disability

#### 4.4 General Research Model with Smart PLS Software

A total of 36 items (satisfaction 20 items, perceived value 9 items, and destination image 7 items) entered the round model. First, a first-order factor analysis (items as indicators) and then a structural equation for the components were performed. The model analysis was conducted in three steps: the external model (measurement model) in the first stage, the internal model (structural model) in the second stage, and the overall model in the third stage. After fitting the first model, items with a factor loading of less than 0.5 were removed (in this model, ten items related to satisfaction and two items from esteem were removed) and then the final model was fitted. The final model is shown in Figures 4 and 5. This model assess to analysis four following hypothesis:

- **H6:** The relationship between satisfaction and Perceive value is mediated by PWDs destination image.
- **H7:** PWDs Perceive value has a direct effect on their destination image.
- **H8:** Destination image has a positive effect on PWDs travelers Satisfaction.
- **H9:** PWDs Perceive value has a positive impact on Satisfaction.



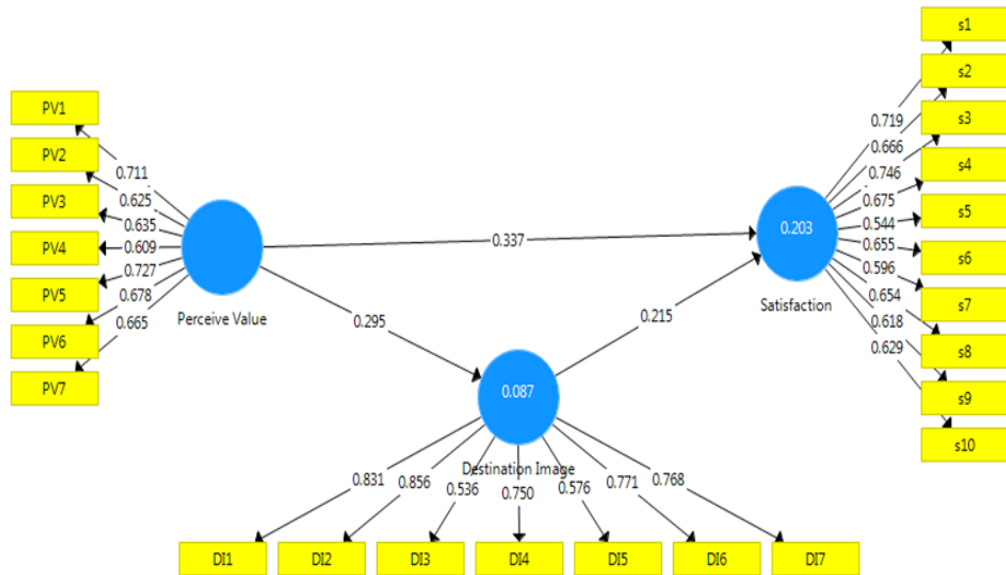


Figure 5: Path diagram with standard coefficients in the final model

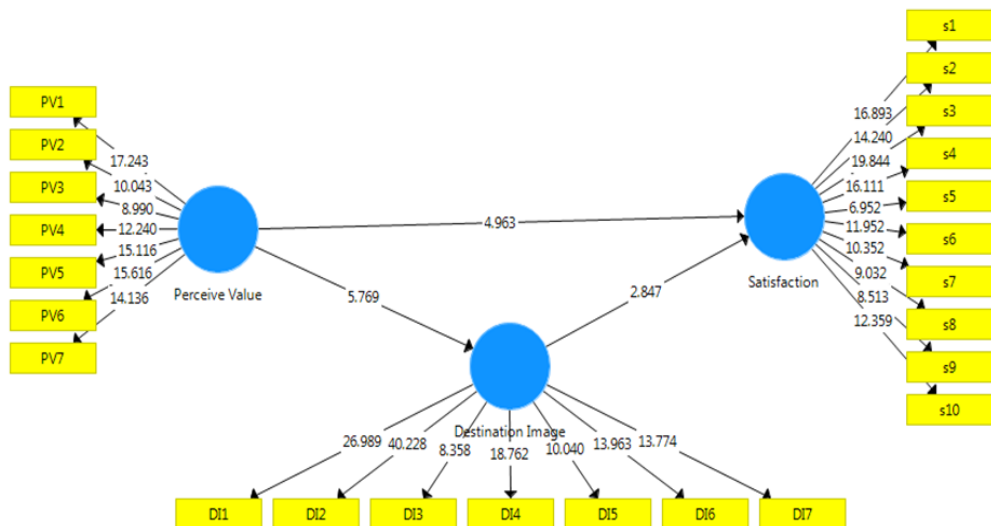


Figure 6: Path diagram with T coefficients in the final model

## 4.5 Measurement Model

In this study, indicator reliability (outer loadings), convergent and discriminant validity, and internal consistency were used to analyze the measurement model. For indicator reliability and convergent validity, factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and for internal consistency reliability, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) were used. Cronbach's alpha value  $\geq 0.70$  and composite

reliability (CR)  $\geq 0.60$  are measured satisfactory. A composite reliability among 0.7 and 0.9 is considered satisfactory values and values below 0.6 are considered undesirable. In this model, all variables have a composite reliability coefficient above 0.7, which shows the adequate reliability of the model. In addition, 0.708 is the suggested value for the factor loading, with the AVE value higher than 0.50. Factor loadings less than 0.708 can be retained if the AVE value is higher than 0.5 (Chew & Jahari, 2014; Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, 1994). Since the indicators in the reflexive variables are associated with a domain and have a high correlation with each other, they can be replaced, and the deletion of one or more items does not have a great impact on the content. In consequence, convergent validities regarding all constructs were satisfactory. Table 15 shows that the values of Cronbach's alpha and CR and AVE are satisfactory.

Table 15: Outer loading and validity for constructs

	<b>OL</b>	<b>Cronbach alpha</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>rho_A</b>	<b>AVE</b>
<b>Satisfaction</b>		<b>0.86</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>0.52</b>
S1	0.719				
S2	0.666				
S3	0.746				
S4	0.675				
S5	0.544				
S6	0.655				
S7	0.596				
S8	0.654				
S9	0.618				
S10	0.629				
<b>Destination Image</b>		<b>0.85</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>0.54</b>
DI1	0.831				
DI2	0.856				
DI3	0.536				
DI4	0.750				
DI5	0.576				
DI6	0.771				
DI7	0.768				
<b>Perceive Value</b>		<b>0.79</b>	<b>0.84</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>0.54</b>
PV1	0.711				
PV2	0.625				
PV3	0.635				
PV4	0.609				
PV5	0.727				
PV6	0.678				
PV7	0.665				

The next stage in the evaluation is to observe convergent validity. The evaluation criterion for convergent validity is the average variance extracted, i.e., the mean of the common variance among the latent variable and its reagents, with the minimum acceptable value is 0.5. In this model, convergent validity of all variables is above 0.5 and all latent variables have good convergent validity.

Table 16: Descriptive statistics, HTMT ratio, and correlations

<b>Latent Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
1. Destination Image	2.69	0.85	<b>0.736</b>		
2. Perceive Value	2.25	0.56	0.362	<b>0.665</b>	
3. Satisfaction	2.64	0.51	0.318	0.450	<b>0.653</b>

Discriminant validity is the third criterion for testing the validity of external models. This is the extent to which a structure is correctly distinguished from other structures based on empirical criteria. For this reason, we evaluate the AVE values for each construct with the squared correlation coefficients among latent variables to confirm that the AVE values were higher than the squared values (Jeong & Kim, 2020). Since it was challenging to check all variables, the pair with the highest correlation was selected and verified. The highest correlation was 0.73 (Destination image). The results in Table 16 show that all latent variables have acceptable divergent validity. Results of reliability represent that, convergent validity and discriminant validity, it can be infer that the external models can optimally measure the latent variables of the study. Therefore, in the continuation of the internal (structural) model, the research is reviewed.

#### **4.6 Structural Path Model**

After validating the measurement model, the next step is to test the structural model. Normal distribution of data is not required for PLS-SEM as it uses nonparametric statistical techniques (Prayag, 2009). The variance inflation factor (VIF) should be less than 5 and, in some cases, even less than 3.3 to avoid multicollinearity (Chew & Jahari, 2014; Kani et al., 2017). There is no multicollinearity among the independent variables (perceived value and satisfaction) and the constructs in the mediation cases (destination image). Table 17 shows that all VIF values are less than 5 or 3.3. Thus, there is no cross-multiplication between destination image, perceived value, and satisfaction.

Table 17: Structured model result

Construct	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Adj	f <sup>2</sup>	Q <sup>2</sup>	VIF
Perceive Value	-	-	0.096-0.130	-	-
Destination Image	0.08	0.08	0.05	0.03	1.09
Satisfaction	0.20	0.19	-	0.06	1.09

Table 18: Direct and Indirect effects

	$\beta$	t-value	95% CI (BCa)	Testing result
Direct effects				
Destination Image → Satisfaction ( <b>H8</b> )(+)	0.21*	2.94	{0.069,0.351}	Supported
Perceive Value → Destination Image ( <b>H7</b> )(+)	0.29*	5.76	{0.202,0.412}	Supported
Perceive Value → Satisfaction ( <b>H9</b> )(+)	0.33*	4.96	{0.211,0.47}	Supported
Indirect effects				
Perceive Value → Destination Image → Satisfaction ( <b>H6</b> )	0.06*	2.54	{0.02,0.113}	Supported
Total indirect effect	0.06*	2.54	{0.02,0.113}	

\*p&lt;0.05

Approximations of structural coefficients formed the basis for testing the recommended hypotheses. In this study, a significant relationship was found between the perceived value and satisfaction of people with disabilities, as well as the effect of these factors on destination image. As shown in Table 18, the results can be summarized as follows: direct effect of destination image on satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.21$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), perceived value on destination image ( $\beta = 0.29$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), perceived value on satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.33$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Also, the indirect influence of destination image on perceived value and satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.063$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) indicates that destination image fully mediates the relationship between perceive value and satisfaction. Travelers intend to visit the destination again when they perceive a positive destination image. The finding are consistent with previous research (Asgarnezhad Nouri et al., 2019; Huber, Milne, & Hyde, 2018; Javier & Bign, 2001; Kani et al., 2017; Khan, Chelliah, Khan, & Amin, 2019; Parrey, Hakim, & Rather, 2019).

## **4.7 Discussion**

Nowadays, inclusive/accessible tourism is on the rise and is becoming a lucrative market (Boyarkina, 2014; Gillovic & McIntosh, 2020). North Cyprus is a small island that is highly dependent on tourism and therefore cannot ignore this market (Alipour, Fatemi, & Malazizi, 2020). However, in order to capitalize on this niche market, policy makers and tour operators need to have a clear view of the conditions required for this form of tourism. In order to study North Cyprus, we reached out to the local disabled population to explore their thoughts/perceptions on local disability resources and facilities and, consequently, the impact on tourists with disabilities. Disability has traditionally been viewed as an interpersonal rather than a structural limitation. However, the social model perspective provides an opportunity to focus on the support needed rather than the limitation (Berkes, 2017; Burby, 2003). For example, PWDs can participate in tourism activities if they have access to the appropriate facilities and if organizations such as hotels and tour operators train their staff to assist PWDs with their needs. In the context of North Cyprus, this finding of our study indicates that this island is not yet ready for AT due to the lack of specific infrastructure and superstructure to facilitate the movement of people with disabilities. One of the main impediments to the establishment of AT as a sustainable option is the lack of awareness of the dynamics of this market and a distorted perception of the disability phenomenon. To overcome this obstacle, a collective approach within a multi-level governance framework is crucial (Burby, 2003; Elwan, 1999). The rights of the disabled population and the facilitation of AT are indeed public issues that are also linked to “social justice”. Tourism destinations stakeholders should aware of all these factors and prioritize the obstacles or minimization of these constraints (Darcy, 2010a; Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein,

1994). From a destination management and planning perspective, the results show that greater collaboration between city/regional planning institutions and the tourism sector is essential to take advantage of the AT market. This type of partnership has been developed as multi-level governance (Darcy, 2010) and as an approach to policy-making and planning at the place, destination, and regional levels for tourism development (Ghaedi, Ozturen, & Safshekan, 2021). There is an inseparable link between urban and rural planning professionals who are responsible for shaping space in the context of people–environment interaction (Ercikan & Roth, 2006). However, as Jahiel & Scherer (2010) stated, “yet, it is also time to deepen and broaden the analysis of human–environment interaction in disability” (Elwan, 1999). Finally, and importantly, this study shows that North Cyprus needs to strategically re-evaluate its approach to PWDs and accessible tourism by taking a strong initiative in favour of people with impairments in the context of inclusive tourism (Priporas et al., 2015). The travel industry in North Cyprus has been unintentionally complacent towards the concerns of the local disabled population, which has also led to a deficit in the development of accessible tourism. This situation, revealed by this study, fails to fulfil the rights of disabled tourists to equal access to facilities. In addition, the lack of attention to this issue leads to the failure of recognition of the rights of PWDs by the inhabitants of the destinations. In this background, developers have also remained complacent when it regards to addressing the needs of disabled people, which impacts accessible tourism. Moreover, not only in the case of North Cyprus, but also on a global level, the tourism industry is moving towards developing “sustainable tourism” (as manifested in the Sustainable Tourism Journal). Since accessible tourism is considered sustainable due to its non-mass nature (Sisto et al.,

2021), investing in this form of tourism is a logical choice, especially in island countries that are highly vulnerable to mass tourism.



## Chapter 5

### CONCLUSION AND FUTURE STUDIES

#### 5.1 Summary

The results of the current study, based on the stated hypotheses, provide three findings concerning the importance and necessity of tourism and the development of accessible tourism. First, we use satisfaction as a scale to assess the quality and adequacy of facilities and infrastructure. As shown in Figure 3, we use satisfaction to evaluate five hypotheses (H1-H4-H5-H8-H9). In Hypothesis 1, we assess the perception of the destination for people with disabilities. As shown in Table 9, we use a 5-point Likert scale to measure the satisfaction level, with point 5 representing the highest satisfaction level and point 1 representing the lowest satisfaction level. This measurement applies to all questions in the questionnaire. Local disabled people believe that visitors with disabilities will have a positive cognitive perception of North Cyprus as an attractive island in terms of landscape, environment, and climate. Second, in Hypothesis 4, we evaluate the quality of facilities for people with disabilities. These facilities include transportation, accommodation, recreation, and leisure facilities for people with disabilities. We use these variables to assess the satisfaction of local people with disabilities. However, they have doubts about the potential for positive impressions regarding the facilities and access to infrastructure. According to the reflections of the local disabled population, “transportation” and related infrastructure for people with disabilities are still underdeveloped (see Tables 10 and 11). They also complain about the lack of public transportation and

transportation facilities, including appropriate spaces to cater to the requirements of PWDs. In addition, some facilities, such as public libraries and public spaces, lack access points for disabled people. These types of facilities need to be considered in the master plan of the cities and communities in advance. Also, the result support our hypothesis (H6-H7) and indicate that perceive value has a direct and significant impact on destination image and also it has indirect effect between satisfactions and perceive value (see Table 18). These findings confirm the study by Borda et al., (2013) that found that “policy makers have remained inattentive to accessible tourism (AT) and have failed to capitalize on this market” (Boyarkina, 2014). Moreover, Ozturk et al. (2008) and Azevedo et al. (2021) found the same problem in their studies in Turkey and Brazil, respectively (Pineda & Corburn, 2020; Zaragozí et al., 2021). This aspect should not be surprising since transportation is fundamental to tourism (Alipour et al., 2020) and requires collaboration among the public and private sectors in the context of urban and destination planning. Finally, Domínguez Vila et al. (2015) categorized destinations in terms of their offerings to tourists with disabilities, which reflect the variation of destinations’ degree of adequacy for PWD. In addition, the findings of that study presented that “there are measurable barriers in terms of trained personnel to deal with people with physical disabilities” (Ozturk et al., 2008). This result is in line with what Angeloni (2013) and Edusei et al., (2015) studied in the case of Italy and Ghana, respectively (Berkes, 2017; Burby, 2003). We evaluate the influence of the type of disability on the overall satisfaction of people with disabilities. As shown in Tables 13 and 14, and in Figure 4, people with hearing disabilities are very satisfied compared to people with other types of disabilities because they do not face the problems that other physically disabled people face, e.g., in terms of the availability of ramps, bridges, and specially fitted transportation.

However, people with hearing impairment experience the burden of lack of communication with staff due to a lack of trained human resources to communicate with this group of people. The needs of the local disabled population are also the concerns of disabled travellers. The finding calls on the tourism sector in North Cyprus to take into account the requirements of PWDs and to develop a strategy for accessible tourism. We assume this is achievable if the needs of local PWDs, as well as travellers, are embedded in the urban and regional master plans that require cooperation between public and private entities (i.e., stakeholders) to implement the guidelines of the master plans. The tourism sector, in collaboration with other sectors, needs to address two distinct but complementary issues. First, it must capitalize on this niche market. Second, tourists with disabilities must be considered a heterogeneous group that requires a variety of services and facilities suitable for each category of disability (Sharifi et al., 2017). As for the commercial aspect, North Cyprus and other similar destinations need to disseminate accurate information about their willingness to cater to the different needs of different types of disabilities. In addition, PWDs are willing to take part in events and festivals to improve their social relationships, self-esteem, and personal growth (Roult et al., 2019) if appropriate facilities are available. This research has also shown that the perception of disability as a one-dimensional phenomenon is a fallacy at best. The study has shown that the tourism segment in general and tourism policy makers in the case of North Cyprus in particular, should acknowledge and understand that disability has multiple characteristics and the disabled population is not a homogeneous community. Knowing that there are different types of disabilities, the tourism sector needs to start working with different public and private sectors to address the challenges of AT. Lastly, the findings of this study contribute to the advancement of AT that transcends

solely the accessibility issue, but rather paves the way for the promotion of “inclusive tourism” with the ethos of access for all.

## **5.2 Theoretical and Practical Implications**

Travel and tourism are an important part of everyone’s life, and all people have an equal right to participate in them (Cook & Shinew, 2014; Sisto et al., 2021). The groundwork offered in this study has the potential to arrange for a guideline for direct tourism stakeholders, including landscape planners, on how to approach the process of the establishment of AT. The foundation that legitimizes and enhances our knowledge of how to develop a marketable AT is the perception of people with disabilities and the challenges they face. This research also begins to shed light on the experiences of PWDs as a formidable framework for focusing clearly on the spatial barriers included in mainstream tourism and has positive psychological and democratic implications. This study underscores the validity of the social model of disability that transcends the medical model; the latter stigmatized and marginalized people with disabilities. “The medical model of disability, which emphasizes a person's physical or mental deficits, and the social model of disability, which emphasizes the barriers and prejudices that prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in society and receiving appropriate health care, have always been at odds” (Darcy, 2010a). The theoretical contribution of this study provides further clarity to ease the above mentioned tension. Tourism destinations specifically for people with disabilities face merciless competition, and the challenges are ever increasing (Bohdanowicz-Godfrey et al., 2019).

Moreover, provide empirical evidence and sign, that destination image fully mediates the relationship among perceived value and satisfaction in accessible tourism for

tourists with disabilities, and to confirm that both small and large-scale accessible tourism should be considered important for sustainable destination success. In addition, this study has strengthened our knowledge of the fact that accessible tourism can be achieved if destination planners and policy makers consider each destination as an “open system” (Darcy et al., 2020) that includes many interdependent governing levels and various organisations. In order to uphold the right to AT and to develop this market, local government plays a crucial role in promoting or hindering accessible tourism. As Ruhanen (2013,p. 93) notes, “local governments are still the best equipped to lead a destination's sustainable development agenda; they are both drivers and obstacles of sustainable tourism growth and development” (Dobre, 2010).Without a partnership between institutions, destinations will not succeed in overcoming the existing deficit of facilities for people with disabilities and accessible tourism. Finally, yet importantly, this study underscores the significance of stakeholders in accessible tourism (AT) development, which has remained under examined (B. Lee et al., 2021; Ruhanen, 2013). From a practical standpoint, our findings have implications for destination marketing. Based on the study's findings, we recommend the following technique to optimize destination image quality for PWDs, since this strategy is predicted to boost visitors' perceived value and pleasure. Previous researchers have shown that destination image, when properly managed, has a significant impact on tourist satisfaction. The present results show that managers should remove infrastructural barriers and improve the destination image for people with disabilities. Destination managers should more consider to the safety and security of facilities in terms of environmental quality. Sometimes, delays in repairs or non-completion of facilities jeopardize the safety of disabled tourists. Consequently, facility security should be a priority when

accommodating disabled tourists. This study demonstrates that destination image is connected to tourists' perceived value and satisfaction. This highlights the important contribution that destination image makes to the development of tourists with disabilities satisfaction and loyalty (Jeong & Kim, 2020).

### **5.3 Limitations and Future Studies**

Notwithstanding the above contributions, this research is also subject to limitations that essential to be taken into consideration. The sample population of this study is limited to official institutions and organizations that deal with PWDs, and may not represent the total number of disabled tourists in North Cyprus. Nevertheless, our sample is appropriate for islands and small countries, but we should be cautious about generalizability (Alipour et al., 2020; Alipour & Kilic, 2005). However, future studies should assess individuals who are disabled but not associated with official institutions. This study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the research atmosphere was an impediment to some extent. Second, future studies should also emphasis on tourists with disabilities to broaden the pool of data; however, due to COVID-19 and the shutdown of the tourism sector, we did not have access to such a group. Third, several studies on accessible tourism have been done in developed countries. Future studies may investigate developing countries and other island states to reveal the challenges and potential for AT that may differ from those in developed nations. Also, based on Jeong & Kim (2020) and Kim et al (2013), few experimental research have been conducted to determine if perceived value is connected to visitor satisfaction. Moreover, despite several research on visitor satisfaction, little is known about the role of destination image in mediating the link between perceived value and satisfaction among persons with disabilities. The present study was limited to investigating the image of destinations for people with disabilities in North Cyprus.

The study only considered the dimensions of perceive value and satisfaction in order to understand accessible tourist's destination image. Cognitive, emotional, generic, and conative destination images, structural, intrapersonal, and interpersonal restrictions should be included in forthcoming research. Finally, the results of our study may not be generalizable to other Asian countries due to differences in tourist characteristics. Similar studies in other destinations are needed to generalize our findings.

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## **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix A: Research Questionnaire**

### **An Analysis of Challenges and Potentials of Destinations for Tourists With Disability: Evidence from North Cyprus**

**Dear Sir/Madam,**

**This study aims to assess the perceptions of persons with disability and challenges they face. The aim is to explore the challenges and identify the potentials in North Cyprus in order to contribute to the improvement of quality of life for the disabled people and tourists with disability. Please take a few moments of your time and fill out the following statements. Participation in this survey is voluntary, you can stop whenever you want. Thank you very much for taking the time to help us with our survey.**

**Best regards,**

**PART 1**  
**Demographic Characteristics**  
Please choose the option that suits you.

<b>GENDER</b>	M	
	F	
<b>AGE</b>	18-25	
	26-30	
	31-40	
	41-50	
	51-60	
	+ 60	
<b>TYPE OF DISABILITY</b>	Acquired brain injury	
	Cerebral Palsy	
	Spina bifida	
	Spinal cord injury	
	Muscular Dystrophy	
	Deaf	
	Amputation	
	Motor Neuron Disease	
<b>YEAR HAVE BEEN DISABLED</b>	Since the birth/birth defect	
	Less than 10 years	
	10 - 20 years	
	20 - 30 years	
	More than 30 years	
<b>OCCUPATION</b>	Student	
	Employee	
	Self-employee	
	Unemployed	
	Retired	
<b>INCOME</b>	None	
	Under 1500 TL	
	1500 TL- 3000 TL	
	3000 TL- 5000 TL	
	Above 5000 TL	

## PART 2

The following are statements about economic sustainability perception. Please respond to each one by ticking the number that most represents your agreement with the statement.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) I do not know
- (4) Disagree
- (5) Strongly disagree

		1	2	3	4	5
0 1	Disabled international tourists have a positive image of North Cyprus.					
0 2	Disabled domestic tourists have a positive image of North Cyprus.					
0 3	Disabled tourists have a positive image of the quality of tourism services in North Cyprus.					
0 4	Disabled tourists have a positive image of the landscape value of North Cyprus.					
0 5	Disabled tourists have a positive image of the cultural heritage value of North Cyprus.					
0 6	Disabled tourists have a positive image of the tourism offer of North Cyprus.					
0 7	Disabled tourists have a positive image of the tourism facilities of North Cyprus.					



### PART 3

#### QUALITY LEVEL OF TOURISM TRANSPORT SERVICES

The following statements are about tourism services in Northern Cyprus. Please respond to each one by ticking the number that most represents your agreement with the statement.

- (1) Very adequate
- (2) Adequate
- (3) I do not know
- (4) Inadequate
- (5) Very inadequate

<i>01</i>	<b>How do you rate the quality of access for disabled people by the following means of transportation?</b>	1	2	3	4	5
A	Airplane					
B	Bus					
C	Touring bus					
D	Car					
E	Bicycles					
F	Taxi					
<i>02</i>	<b>How do you rate the quality of facility/equipment of the following mode of transport for disabled people?</b>					
A	Public transport					
B	Touring bus					
C	Rental cars					
D	Bicycles					
E	Taxi					
<i>03</i>	<b>How do you rate the accommodation facilities for disabled people?</b>					
A	Accommodation access facilities					
B	Accommodation parking facilities					
C	Equipment and services of accommodations					
<i>04</i>	<b>How do you rate leisure and recreational facilities for disable people?</b>					
A	Sport facilities					
B	Cultural activities					
C	Outdoor activities					
D	Festivals and events					
E	Shopping facilities					
F	Restaurants and food outlet facilities					
G	Customer satisfaction for disabled (comfort, services...)					
H	Leisure opportunities for disabled					
I	Design for all facilities					
J	Training of staff to support people with disabilities					
K	Accessible transport services and solutions					

**Please respond to questions by ticking the number that most represents your agreement with the statement.**

- (1) Strongly agree**
- (2) Agree**
- (3) I do not know**
- (4) Disagree**
- (5) Strongly disagree**

<i>05</i>	<b>To what extent do the following statements apply to the access situation for disabled people?</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
A	Insufficient transport modes on offer.					
B	Lack of empathy by other drivers towards disabled People and tourists.					
C	High cost of mobility for disabled people.					
D	Unfriendly staff in transport companies.					
E	Insufficient signposts for disabled people and tourists.					
F	Insufficient public transport.					
G	Lack of proper information.					
H	Poor road conditions.					
I	Insufficient parking space					

<i>1</i>	<p><b>In your opinion tourists with disabilities will be satisfied if they visit North Cyprus?</b></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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## Appendix B: Disability Sign and Symbols

### DISABLED ICONS

