Competency Assessment of Employees Towards People with Disabilities in Cairo, Egypt

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ARTICLE INFO	Abstract
	Competency in the tourism supply chain is an important factor in enhancing the performance of the job. However, there is no standard framework for assessing these competences. This study explores the critical role of competency management in advancing inclusive tourism across the tourism supply chain, especially for people with disabilities (PwDs). The goal of these programs is to raise awareness, improve the quality of service and promote inclusive tourism practices. Addressing the lack of a standardized framework for evaluating professional competencies, it introduces a reliable and valid measurement scale to assess the skills of tourism employees, including tour leaders, guides, frontline workers and managers. Focusing on the needs of PwDs, the research highlights the significance of employee attitudes and skill development in delivering inclusive services. Conducted in Cairo, Egypt, in February 2025, the study employed a quantitative approach, surveying 403 tourism employees. The study adopts an analytic descriptive analysis methodology, utilized to analyze the challenges, competencies, skills and attitudes development in delivering inclusive services within the tourism workforce approaches. The results highlight the urgent need for mandatory educational programs to foster awareness and promote inclusive tourism practices. The findings reveal that many factors still prevent efficient operation of the sector and emphasize the need for new strategies. Research highlights significant gaps and intervals in knowledge and negative perceptions among professionals in tourism and emphasizes the immediate requirement for staff training programs for compulsory employees as the main recommendation.

1. Introduction

The inclusion of PwDs in tourism is a multifaceted process affected by many factors, with accessibility being an important component that should be thoroughly investigated for the process to be effective and sustainable. Tourism that prioritizes accessibility serves not only PwDs but also

improves inclusion, a more accessible, equitable and welcome environment for all individuals. This ensures that all individuals can enjoy leisure activities without obstacles. The scholars continue to check and examine how both the tourism sector and related research can help promote a more sustainable future. Historically, tourism has often been considered and experienced as an exclusive activity. By moving in for inclusive tourism, the purpose of this research is to challenge this view by identifying strategies to include individuals who have traditionally been marginalized or have been excluded from tourism. The goal is to ensure that these individuals benefit directly or gain greater control within the industry. Exclusion from development frequently arises due to factors such as ethnicity, disability, age or poverty (Scheyvens and Biddulph, 2020).

Accessible tourism aims to reduce uncertainty about what to expect from a destination or service. It's important to note that it's about creating an environment where everyone feels welcome and inclusive. It creates options, choices, instills confidence and empowers everyone to have new experiences, including the elderly, people with disabilities (PwDs), wheelchair users, , people with limited mobility (PwLM), the hearing-impaired or visually impaired and all people. Darcy and Pegg (2011) emphasized that having accessible premises is not everything, but it is just a starting point for providing services to tourists, but if the workers themselves are not well trained to provide appropriate customer service, then the needs of tourists will not be adequately met.

Pushpanathan (2019) and Iskandar and Nasri (2014) highlighted that competence is described using terms such as "ability," "aptitude," "competence," "capability," "effectiveness" and "skill." Kim, Park and Choi (2017:86) identified competencies as the personal attributes or essential characteristics, combined with technical or professional skills, that enable the performance or delivery of a job / role. The competence of the staff members not only enhances service quality and guest satisfaction but also increases revenue. It is crucial to understand the formation and origins of attitudes, as well as the key constructs related to attitudes toward PwDs. However, the service providers in the tourism industry receive minimal education and training regarding accessibility legislation, provisions and services specifically designed for individuals with disabilities. This emphasizes the importance of competency management in tackling challenges faced by PwDs and its role in promoting accessible tourism (Zsarnoczky and Istvan, 2017).

Inclusivity plays a crucial role in advancing the tourism industry, yet it remains underrepresented in practice. It involves ensuring that every individual who engages in tourism feels respected, comfortable and welcomed. The idea of 'inclusive tourism,' also known as 'accessible tourism' or 'tourism for all,' is a comprehensive approach that upholds the social rights of all people, emphasizing equal access and participation for every citizen (Richter, Arnold and Müller, 2022). Scheyvens and Biddulph (2020) challenged the idea of sameness by highlighting that accessible tourism represents only one aspect of inclusive tourism. While accessible tourism primarily emphasizes tourism consumption by individuals with disabilities, inclusive tourism broadens the scope to include both the production and consumption of tourism by all marginalized groups. Thus, apart from poor and disabled individuals, the term marginalized also encompasses ethnic minorities, PWD or other individuals or groups who are deemed or considered "less powerful" or whose voice is ignored or unheard of (Bidder, Fatt and Mogindol, 2023). Scheyvens and Biddulph (2018) pointed out that accessible tourism is just one aspect of inclusive tourism, which tackles wider concerns related to social and economic exclusion and inequality. However, it could be argued that this expansive scope risks overlooking the specific needs of certain excluded or marginalized groups. Darcy, McKercher and Schweinsberg (2020, p. 141) have praised Scheyvens and Biddulph's (2018) inclusive tourism framework for addressing "all forms of

marginality and intersectionality," yet they criticize it for being overly broad and insufficiently focused on the unique challenges faced by PwLM.

Universal design has become a central concept in the development and understanding of accessible tourism. Universal Design is a paradigm that extends the concepts of continuous pathways, access, mobility and barrier-free environments to incorporate and include intergenerational planning that recognizes the relationship between ageing, disability and the evolving abilities of individuals throughout their lives. The purpose of the universal design concept is to simplify life for everyone by making products, communications and the built environment more usable by more people at little or no additional cost. The concept of universal design targets people of all ages, sizes and abilities (Darcy, Cameron and Pegg, 2010).

Considering all the above, there is a significant gap in the tourism sector regarding inclusive care training for employees. Many workers lack the necessary training and knowledge to serve diverse markets, particularly in inclusive tourism. This gap exists because educational institutions do not adequately prepare students to engage with this market and tourism providers fail to prioritize inclusive tourism training during recruitment or develop relevant training programs. As a result, employees are ill-equipped to meet the needs of clients with diverse abilities, impacting both the quality of service and the industry's ability to serve a broader customer base. Research in tourism and inclusion highlights critical gaps in service provision for socially marginalized groups, such as PwDs, seniors and obese individuals. These groups often face numerous barriers such as limited awareness, stigma, geographical isolation and mobility issues that prevent them from fully accessing tourism services. Furthermore, these barriers are compounded by the lack of adequately trained service providers who are either ill-equipped or unwilling to meet the specific needs of these groups. The tourism industry suffers from a lack of education and training on inclusive practices, legislation and accessibility, resulting in a workforce that lacks the necessary competencies and attitudes to provide effective service to marginalized guests. The success of inclusive tourism heavily depends on improving staff competencies, understanding inclusive requirements and fostering positive attitudes, yet these elements are currently underdeveloped within the industry (Devile et al., 2022; Daruwalla and Darcy, 2005).

The awareness of employee attitudes towards PwDs should result in a set of deeply held beliefs, attitudes and values that help prepare an employee or trainee to respond to and successfully handle situations involving customers with special needs and accessibility requirements (Fortuna et al., 2023). Research highlighted significant intervals in the PwDs service offerings. This group often faces several obstacles such as limited awareness, stigma, geographical isolation and mobility issues that prevent them from fully reaching and accessing tourism services. In addition, these obstacles are complicated by a lack of sufficiently trained service providers, who are either ill or reluctant to meet the specific requirements of these groups. The tourism industry suffers from lack of education and training in law and access, resulting in a workforce that lacks the necessary competencies, attitudes and approaches required to provide effective service to the marginalized guests (Devile et al., 2022). With this background, the research sought to examine the following research questions:

1. Is there a relation between the competency, inclusion and the needs of PwDs in the context of tourism?

2. What is the current level of attitudes, awareness and training programs regarding PwDs among employees in Egypt's travel and tourism sector?
3. Which competencies are considered most important for employees in the tourism and hospitality sector in the context of inclusiveness?

2. Hypotheses of Research

2.1 It is significant that employees in Egypt do not have the necessary skills to work with people who have specific needs like disabilities, since they have lack of knowledge about inclusion and special needs.

2.2 Improving employees' competencies and skills in inclusive tourism will foster a positive attitude towards clients among future employees in tourism services.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to examine key aspects of inclusive tourism, with a particular emphasis on competency management within the tourism supply chain and the needs and expectations of its primary beneficiaries. An analytical descriptive study was carried out depending also on analyzing the challenges, competencies and attitudes within the tourism workforce approaches. The research methodology comprises a literature review and a questionnaire survey.

Literature review serves to establish a theoretical foundation by synthesizing existing knowledge, identifying key challenges and highlighting research gaps in the field of inclusive tourism. The questionnaire survey is employed to collect empirical data, providing valuable insights into the requirements and expectations of stakeholders involved in inclusive tourism. This methodological framework ensures a rigorous and comprehensive analysis of the topic, contributing to a deeper understanding of competency management in the tourism industry.

3.1 The Theoretical Method

The research relied on a diverse range of reliable sources to ensure a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the topic. These sources included textbooks, reports, scientific journals, related websites, articles, academic theses, reports and studies conducted by professional researchers. By incorporating such varied and credible materials, the study was able to build a strong foundation of knowledge and provide well-rounded insights into the issue under investigation. The foundation of this research is built upon the work of several distinguished scholars who have significantly contributed to the understanding of inclusive tourism and competency management. These collective contributions from the theoretical framework for this research underscoring the critical role of competency management and inclusive policies in creating a more accessible tourism industry.

3.2 The Field Study

The research incorporated data collection through Google Forms, engaging a variety of stakeholders, including human resource professionals in the tourism supply chain, such as travel agencies and hotels. This study adopts a quantitative research methodology, utilizing structured surveys distributed via Google Forms to employees within travel agencies in Cairo. The primary

objective is to assess the current state of inclusive tourism, with a particular focus on the inclusion of PwDs. The research seeks to identify existing barriers and evaluate the role of staff training, accessibility and competency management, including knowledge, skills and attitudes in enhancing tourism experiences for all. To achieve this, the study employed: Surveys distributed to key stakeholders in the inclusive tourism supply chain, particularly human resources professionals in travel agencies and A follow-up questionnaire targeting employees across the tourism sector to gain deeper insights into their perspectives and experiences. This research provides a data-driven foundation for understanding the challenges and opportunities within inclusive tourism, offering insights into how competency management and staff training can foster a more accessible and inclusive tourism industry in Egypt.

The fieldwork focused on gathering insights from 403 tourism supply chain employees, including accommodation providers, restaurant staff, transport operators in travel agents in Cairo, Egypt. The structured questionnaire aimed to evaluate the significance and effectiveness of various hospitality and tourism management skills and competencies. Additionally, an important-performance analysis was conducted to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The survey was designed to explore the following key aspects:

1. Assessment of employees' attitudes towards accessibility and inclusion for PwDs.
2. Training needs assessment to determine the mechanisms required for effective inclusive tourism in the Egyptian context.
3. Identification of key improvements in tourism products aimed at enhancing accessibility for PwDs.
4. Optimal strategies for organizing tourism products tailored to the needs of PwDs.

4. Inclusion of PwDs in Tourism Industry

PwDs are a socially marginalized and historically excluded group, lacking power and voice. They have faced and continue to face barriers to their full and effective participation and inclusion in society and cultural life, whether in the arts, sports, recreation or leisure (Darcy et al., 2020). While tourism is an integral part of modern life, it is not always accessible or inclusive to PwDs. PwDs are often excluded from participating in leisure activities due to the numerous barriers and socially exclusionary nature of these experiences. The disabled have been condemned to live isolated from society. They were treated as a "medical problem" and expected to accept their condition and cope with their disabilities in isolation from others, without aspiring the ambition of doing the same things as "abled" people. PwDs include those with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments that may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others when interacting with various barriers (Lichuma and Tatic, 2022).

In general, when people think of PwDs, they typically picture or envision someone in a wheelchair (Liasidou and Mavrou, 2017; Vila, Darcy and González, 2015). It is clear that PwDs, not just wheelchair users, are the ones who demand the most attention in terms of their support needs (Darcy, 2010). For a long period of time in tourism history, PwDs have been completely excluded from travel due to limited opportunities (Cloquet et al., 2018; Dickson, Misener and Darcy, 2017). PwDs have the curiosity, desire and motivation to travel (Cloquet et al., 2018), but they need access to essential information to feel safer while traveling. A lack of knowledge and information can lead to significant disappointment or even severe injuries for PwDs. Due to their limited ability to effectively manage unexpected situations, they often have higher expectations

and demands for improved tourism services (Liasidou, Umbelino and Amorim, 2019; Cloquet et al., 2018).

Buhalis, Darcy and Ambrose (2012) visually represented the disability pyramid, which classifies individuals based on different disabled levels and provides a great understanding of the market, which emphasized the diversity of needs in the travel sector. Figure 1 presents a modified version of the disability pyramid concept, offering a detailed depiction of varying levels of support needs. In practice, the shape of the disability pyramid might be better represented as a collection of irregular building blocks rather than a true pyramid, with each dimension of access acting as a "pillar" that supports the broader efforts toward citizenship and inclusion. The scope of the pillars has been expanded to include the relationship between aging, older people and disabilities, while also acknowledging the presence of invisible disabilities. The term "invisibility" in this case refers to people who have no external indications of their disability. A person with learning disabilities cannot be visually identified, whereas a wheelchair user or a blind person accompanied by a guide dog can be visually identified as having a disability. It is worth noting at this point that while there is a growing focus on the dimensions of accessibility, an important constraint identified across disability studies remains the attitudes of non-disabled people and, in the context of tourism, the industry's general lack of recognition of the rights and needs of PwDs. PwDs tourists seek to escape from their daily routine and achieve independence and enjoy autonomy during their vacations. To accomplish this, they require accessible resources, space and services. PwDs place significant importance on the experience, education and training of tourism service providers in catering to their needs. Studies suggest that these aspects need further development. In addition, co-creation and collaboration are highlighted as precious factors in enhancing tourism experiences (Robles et al., 2020).
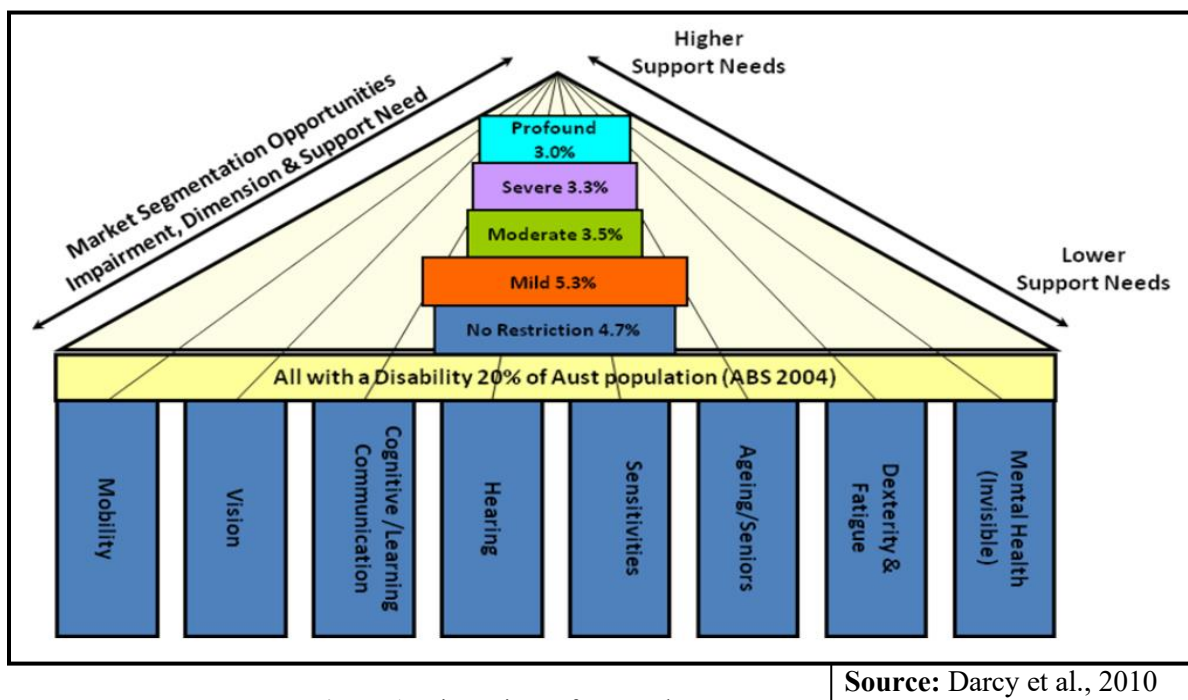

Figure 1: Dimensions of Access by Support

Qualitative research indicates that focusing on these improvements fosters greater inclusion in tourism, which increases customer satisfaction and authority. This, in turn, increases their motivation to travel, resulting in higher demand. Such growth benefits businesses by generating economic and social advantages, enabling them to reinvest in accessibility and refine their offerings. This creates a continuous cycle where improvements in services drive satisfaction, quality, demand and motivation. Moreover, the contributions and interactions among various stakeholders in the tourism sector's development are clear in this process as shown in Figure 2 (Robles et al., 2020).

Source: Robles et al., 2020
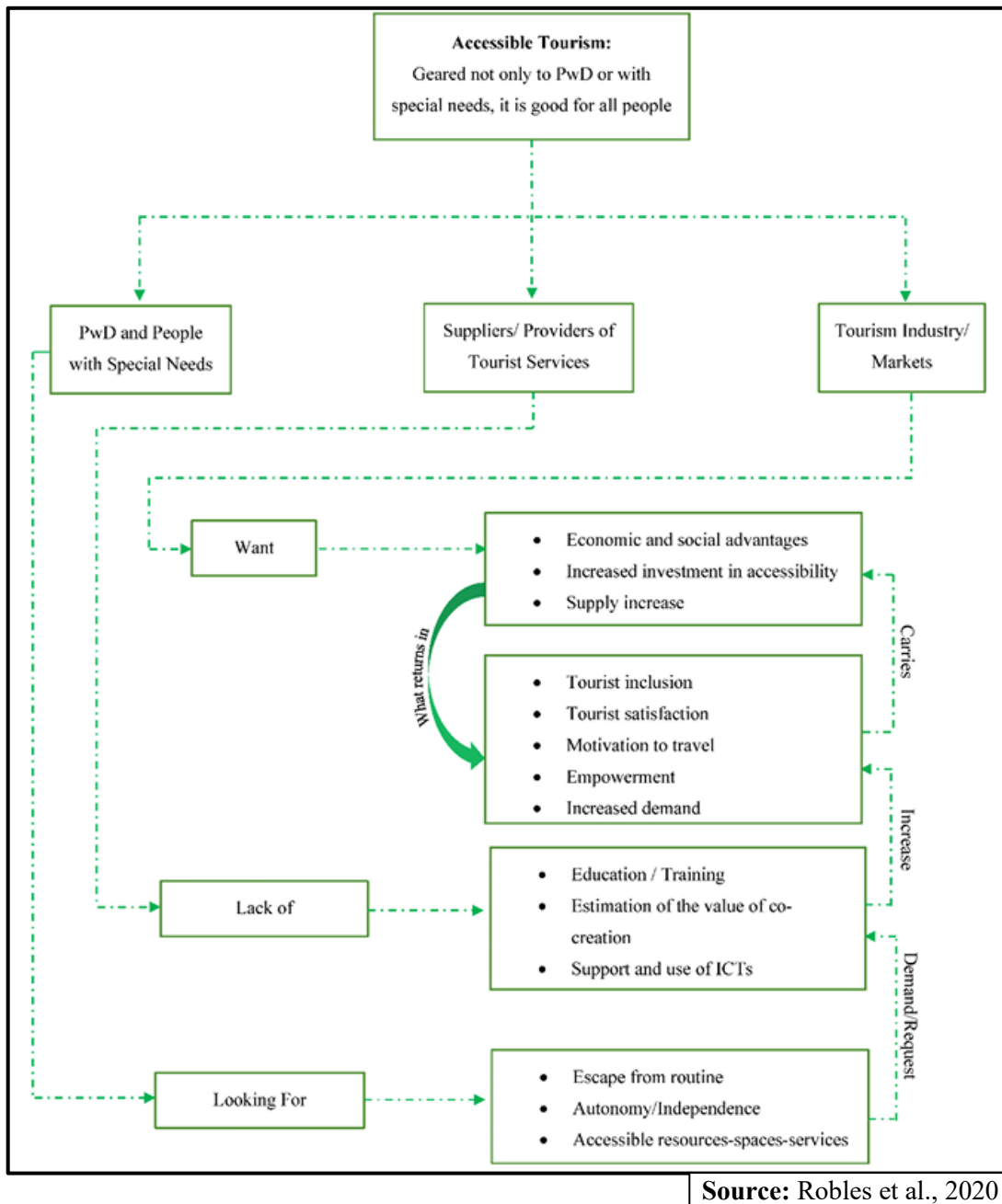
Figure 2: Framework of Key Areas for the Development of Accessible Tourism and Practical Implications

5. Barriers Confronting PwDs

One of the main and core barriers that PwDs face is inadequate accessibility. This obstacle is not limited to physical access, but it also includes a wide concept of access, ensuring that everyone can effectively use and benefit from travel products and services regardless of disability. PwDs have the same desire to travel as anyone else, but the tourism industry is unwell-organized and prepared to meet their needs, which leads to their exclusion from many tourism activities. Accessibility for PwDs is a significant challenge as they often lack the same variety range of options and choices available to people without disabilities, which significantly limits their participation in travel and leisure (Buj, 2010).

Another barrier that PwDs face is the discrimination and prejudice of others, which is a moral and ethical concern within the tourism industry. PwDs often face prejudice throughout their travels and are considered and treated as "different" or subordinate to others. This discriminatory treatment can be seen as an unethical practice, preventing PwDs from fully enjoying their travel experiences. The neglect of necessary regulations and facilities for PwDs is considered a form of discrimination. Furthermore, poor infrastructure discourages PwDs from traveling, which exacerbates the discrimination they face, making it a pervasive issue in the tourism sector. Disabled individuals have been isolated and exposed to discrimination and such isolation remains pervasive in society (Liasidou et al., 2019).

Negative prospects from employees also represent a significant obstacle to inclusive tourism. Many employees in the tourism industry show a negative attitude towards PwDs, often because of the lack of awareness, knowledge and training regarding disability legislation and the specific needs of PwDs which result in misunderstandings. Such negative attitudes prevent PWD's ability to access services and feel welcomed in tourism establishments, contributing to the ongoing exclusion of this group. Tourists with disabilities may encounter obstacles at various stages of their travel experience. Therefore, this emphasizes the importance of providing all human resources in any part of the "visitor journey" with the necessary competency management and must be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to assist and accommodate all tourists with the same level of attention, care, respect and support, as needed (Moris et al., 2019; Kaganek et al., 2017; Zheng et al., 2016; Gillovic and Mcintosh, 2015).

Additionally, insufficient legal structures provide a significant obstacle to including PwD in tourism. Discrimination against individuals with disabilities continues to be a major issue throughout diverse sectors, including tourism, because of insufficient laws and regulations. The existing laws do not adequately address the discrimination PwDs face in critical areas like transportation, public accommodations and employment. Without strong enforcement of rules and regulations, PwDs are often denied equal opportunities to participate in tourism. However, barriers such as insufficient laws, negative social attitudes, lack of financial resources and lack of data combine to significantly limit access for PwDs (Grills et al., 2017).

There are also economic and market barriers that limit accessibility for PwDs. Many tourism operators view PwDs as a minority market that requires significant investments for minimum returns. This notion or perception discourages businesses from enhancing accessibility, as they often prioritize short-term financial gains over long-term inclusiveness. Darcy et al., (2010) explain that tourism operators may be reluctant to invest in accessibility without concrete evidence of market potential, which restricts access for PwDs and their ability to participate in tourism. Indeed, numerous studies have highlighted and confirmed the economic benefits that businesses

and the tourism industry can achieve by ensuring accessibility. Accessibility plays a key function in boosting tourism activity and occupancy, expanding the market share and customer base. It helps mitigate the outcomes and effects of seasonality, leverages competitive advantages, enhances profitability and strengthens the overall competitiveness of a destination. Accessibility isn't just about inclusiveness; it's an effective tool to combat seasonality and expand market reach. Travelers with disabilities represent a growing segment with unique needs and catering to them can create a year-round demand for tourism services (Moris et al., 2019; Buhalis et al., 2012; Darcy et al., 2010).

Finally, a significant barrier is a lack of privatization and sequential services for PwDs. While many businesses comply with basic accessibility regulations, they often fail to go beyond the minimum requirements to offer services that ensure proper comfort and easy access. The problem highlights the need for tourism providers to focus on personalized services that only address the individual preferences and specific PwDs requirements, rather than merely meeting compliance standards. Understanding the PwD's unique preferences, motivations and decision-making behaviors as consumers is necessary to create a more inclusive and engaging tourism experience. There is substantial evidence indicating that PwDs represent a significant and potentially profitable market for the future. This outlines the importance of moving beyond basic accessibility features and focusing on services tailored to individual requirements. Such approaches may include adaptive marketing, which involves promoting accessible facilities and experiences through targeted communication channels; staff training, which equips employees with the knowledge and skills to assist guests with diverse accessibility needs; and infrastructure reforms and improvements that go beyond mere compliance to provide real comfort and convenience (Zajadacz, 2015).

The main aspect of inclusive and accessible tourism development focuses on how various groups, such as PwDs, can be actively engaged and involved in tourism as consumers. This focus on expanding access to and participation in tourism, beyond the primary and mainstream markets, is a key similarity between inclusive tourism and accessible tourism. Indeed, much of the accessible tourism literature has focused on PwDs as consumers of tourism, from both supply and demand perspectives. This literature is oriented toward an economic or market perspective and how accessibility can be considered part of sustainability (Darcy et al., 2010).

It is widely recognized that the tourism industry has largely failed to address issues related to access and participation for PwDs. PwDs are largely misunderstood, underserved and ignored, both as a consumer group and as a viable part of the marketplace (Darcy and Pegg, 2011). There is a common belief that PwDs represent a minority market that requires significant investment to achieve minimal returns and profitability. Operators often seek tangible evidence of the benefits this market can offer before committing to enhancing or providing accessibility (Darcy et al., 2010). Consequently, the economic justification for enhancing or providing accessibility serves as a key motivator for operators and the sector (Buhalis and Michopoulou, 2011; Darcy and Pegg, 2011).

6. The Human Rights of PwDs

Disability is a multidimensional concept and each dimension has its own accessibility requirements that vary from each other. Most disability statistics recognize that this multidimensional concept encompasses mobility, hearing, vision, cognition or learning, mental health and long-term health conditions. The dimensions of accessibility provide a focus for enabling social participation through the provision of accessibility requirements (e.g. ramps, signage, tactile ground surface indicators, etc...). The complexities associated with this concept include the recognition that to facilitate citizenship, an individual with multiple accessibility issues that will require multiple levels of accessibility provision. For example, a person with cerebral palsy may have a mobility dimension requiring the use of a wheelchair or crutches and a communication dimension requiring a communication board due to speech impairment. Depending on the extent of their support needs, they may choose to travel with a companion. Therefore, this person must include an accessible physical environment, as well as support technologies and social policy. However, the issue of accessibility is more complex than it might first appear. For example, the access needs of a person with a disability may be quite different from those of a person with arthritis. The latter may require continuous and connected pathways with handrails for weight-bearing support, seating areas for rest and universal door handles and faucets designed for PwDs (Darcy et al., 2010).

PwDs have long been excluded and barred from many key activities, including travel. Moreover, many PwDs, even in developed countries, live on below-average incomes and rely on public financial assistance. Even when financial means are available, the lack of accessibility significantly limits their ability to travel, effectively restricting opportunities for a substantial portion of the population. The restrictions faced by PwDs have been described as a human rights tragedy of enormous proportions. Depriving PwDs access to vacations can contribute to their marginalization. If a society wants to ensure equal opportunities for all its members, it must share the costs of accessibility among all, not just those who need it. Accessibility is a justice issue that society must confront and resolve. The principle of accessibility is often viewed as an issue only for PwDs. The implementation of most accessibility measures benefits all, not just a specific group of people with special needs (PwSN). An accessible urban environment is a basic and essential requirement for travelers and a necessity for many residents. It should be comfortable for everyone and pose no challenges to anyone (Zajadacz, 2015).

The provision of tourism products and services should focus on inclusiveness, ensuring that all guests have access to all facilities without barriers. Therefore, tourism providers should develop special building facilities and specially designed equipment with technical support to meet the needs of their customers in the disabled market (Vila et al., 2015). Liasidou et al. (2019) argued that accessibility problems are widespread and disabled visitors can face obstacles in all travel stages. These challenges can arise in areas such as access to information, local transportation, accommodation as well as participation in cultural or sporting events, whether as spectators or participants. The core principle is to shift the focus away from "disabilities" and instead address diverse social needs by adapting to the geographic environment, both social and physical, to meet these needs. The disability models discussed relate to the different types of social interactions that individuals with disabilities experience within society (Figure 3), ranging from exclusion to integration and ultimately to inclusion (Zajadacz and Mickiewicz, 2017; Zajadacz, 2015).
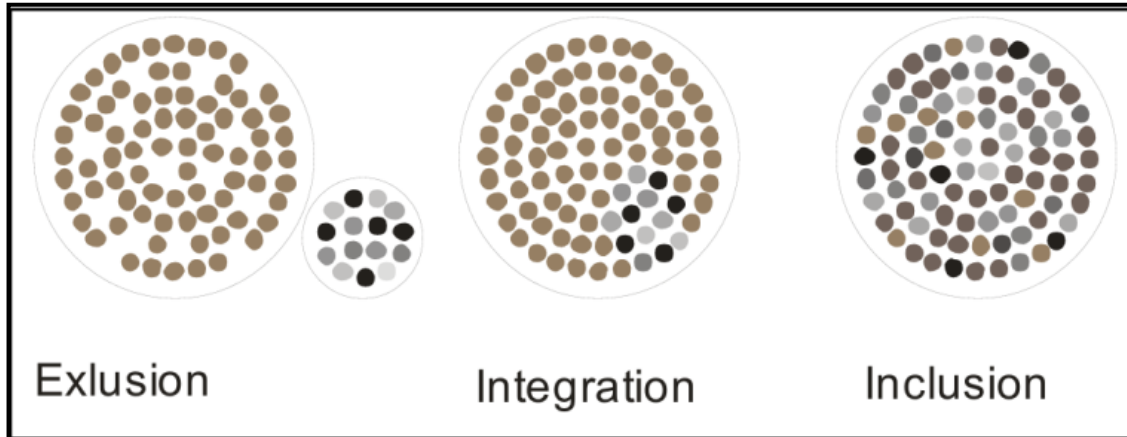
Figure 3: Models of Social Exclusion, Integration and Inclusion of People with Disabilities

7. Role of Competency Management for PwDs

Zimik and Barman (2024: 212) define competencies as "an aggregation of actions of skills and behavior influences toward a predetermined standard benchmark," which helps to clarify the nature of the term. Competence can be described and defined as a set of behavioral characteristics that contribute to enhanced performance. These attributes and traits include the skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary for individuals to perform successfully and effectively in their jobs or roles, leading to improved outcomes and success. The common skills for front-line staff, hotel managers, tour guides, airport staff and travel agency personnel in accessible tourism focused on understanding and adapting to the needs of PwD. Figl (2010) suggests that a well-defined strategy and a collective effort to enhance team competencies through training lead to improved team management, reduced social loafing and better team assessments. Both the significance of competencies at the managerial level and the importance of training and development from different stakeholders' views is well established.

One of the key areas for the tourism industry to advance, enhance its competitiveness and increase its market share is to focus on inclusive and accessible tourism, which particularly serves PwDs. Crucial to this is the service delivery by tourism staff, where the right attitude and skills are essential. Staff training is fundamental to providing empathetic and non-discriminatory service to PwDs (Cloquet et al., 2018). Since every visitor is unique, tourism companies should provide PwDs with the opportunity to express their needs and, in many cases, specify how they would prefer to be served (Dickson et al., 2017; Vila et al., 2015).

Tourism does not take place in a "social vacuum," meaning that the social barriers experienced by PwDs in everyday life often persist during travel (Sedgley et al., 2017; Eichhorn, Miller and Tribe, 2013). PwDs frequently face disapproving, invalidating and judgmental attitudes from others, including industry personnel, fellow host communities and tourists, which can manifest as negative perceptions and social stigma. These negative attitudes often result in behaviors such as avoiding PwDs or showing apathy by acting as if they do not exist. Negative attitudes focus on negative behaviors, such as avoidance of PwDs and apathetic behavior in which people behave as if individuals with disabilities do not exist (Eichhorn and Buhalis, 2011).

The key competencies include the knowledge of appropriate language by using respectful and correct terminology when interacting with guests with disabilities, awareness of disabilities and services by understanding various disabilities and knowing the services, facilities and accessible amenities available, customer service and sensitivity by providing high-quality service tailored to the specific needs of guests, ensuring respectful and inclusive treatment., adaptation techniques by using tools like tactile maps, incorporating multiple senses in communication and adapting interpretive methods to assist tourists with visual or learning impairments, communication and collaboration skills by effectively engaging with disability organizations and working with industry partners to enhance accessibility and improve service, training and continuous learning by completing specialized accessibility training and continuously updating skills to ensure a comprehensive understanding of inclusive tourism (PUA, 2024; IATA, 2020; Moris et al., 2019; ENAT, 2015). Also, practical experience and problem solving is essential by having hands-on experience with travelers who have disabilities and being able to apply this knowledge in real-world situations. These skills are essential for providing an inclusive and supportive experience for all travelers, ensuring they have access to a safe, comfortable and welcoming environment across various sectors of tourism (Moris et al., 2019).

The fundamental aspect of inclusive and accessible tourism development lies in promoting mutual understanding and respect by overcoming negative stereotypes and removing obstacles between individuals (Scheyvens and Biddulph, 2020). Research has shown that tourism promotional materials often reinforce an ableist perspective (Benjamin, Bottone and Lee, 2021). To address this issue, previous studies have highlighted the importance of increasing awareness and knowledge about PwDs and disabilities (Innes, Page and Cutler, 2016). These studies emphasize breaking down negative attitudes and prejudices faced by PwDs.

Examples of such efforts consist of normalizing PwDs via higher illustration in advertising and media (McIntosh and Harris, 2018), using more inclusive and empowering language (Gillovic and McIntosh, 2020), developing accessible web designs and assistive technologies and enforcing sensitivity training and PwDs awareness programs (Puhretmair and Nussbaum, 2011). In order to realize the transformative ability of inclusive and accessible tourism, it is essential to continuously challenge stereotypes and promote consciousness, acceptance and inclusion. Inclusive practices and attitudes are fundamental to providing accessibility, ensuring that PwDs are treated fairly, with dignity and respect (Darcy and Pegg, 2011).

8. Analysis and Interpretation of Field Data

8.1 Assessing Formal Training in Inclusive Tourism among Travel Agencies

Formal training in inclusive tourism is essential to ensure that tourism employees, especially those in front-line roles, develop professional and respectful attitudes toward marginalized travelers, including individuals with disabilities. Such training helps enhance sensitivity, awareness and service quality. Educational institutions should offer specialized courses in inclusive tourism that address the needs of all types of marginalized travelers. By incorporating these courses into tourism and hospitality programs, institutions can prepare future industry professionals to embrace diversity and provide accessible, inclusive services. This type of formal education equips the workforce with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to support a more welcoming and equitable tourism experience for all (Bidder et al., 2023).

Table 1: Formal Training in Inclusive and Accessible Tourism

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, comprehensive training	74	18.4
Yes, but only basic training	116	28.8
No, but I have informal experience	21	5.2
No, I have no training	192	47.6
Total	**403**	**100**

The results indicate that formal training in inclusive tourism is insufficiently addressed across the tourism sector. Only 18.4% of respondents reported having received comprehensive training, highlighting a significant lack of in-depth preparation for providing accessible services to all guests, particularly marginalized groups such as individuals with disabilities. A larger proportion, 28.8%, indicated that they had received basic training in inclusive tourism. While this suggests some exposure to the concept, basic training may not be adequate for developing the competencies needed to manage the diverse requirements of inclusive delivery service. Alarmingly, 47.6% of respondents reported having no training at all, which reinforces the concern that inclusive tourism is not sufficiently integrated into staff development programs or educational curricula. An additional 5.2% had informal experience but lacked structured or certified training, which may lead to inconsistent knowledge and application.

These findings are consistent with previous research that emphasizes the lack of long-term, systematic training initiatives in inclusive tourism. According to ENAT (2018), most existing training is short-term, often delivered through temporary projects or funded programs and rarely embedded within professional qualification frameworks. This contributes to limited awareness and capability among tourism personnel to cater effectively to travelers with access needs. Furthermore, the findings support Bidder et al. (2023), who argue for the integration of inclusive tourism into formal education programs, suggesting that academic institutions play a pivotal role in shaping future professionals' attitudes and competencies. Comprehensive and formal training is vital not only for improving service quality but also for reducing attitudinal barriers and ensuring all travelers feel respected and supported.

8.2 Types of Training Provided in Travel Agencies

Table 2: Overview of Training Provided in Travel Agencies

Item	Frequency
Improving staff attitudes and awareness in inclusive tourism	91
Communication techniques and empathy for diverse needs like PwDs	50
Accessibility standards and regulations	76
Personalized service skills for PwDs	30
I have not received any specific training	237
Other	13
Total	***497**

*Availability of choosing more than one choice

Table 2 presents data on the types of training currently provided in travel agencies. A significant majority of respondents—237 in total (58.8 %) reported that they had not received any specific training related to inclusive tourism. This result highlights a major gap in the professional development of tourism staff and aligns with findings from ENAT (2018), which point to the lack of structured and sustainable training initiatives in the sector. The absence of training not only limits staff competence but also contributes to the persistence of attitudinal barriers toward travelers with specific access needs.

Although some efforts toward training were reported, they appear to be scattered and limited in scope. A total of 91 respondents (22.6 %) indicated that they had received training aimed at improving staff attitudes and awareness in inclusive tourism. While this is the most reported type of training, it remains relatively low in comparison to the overall sample, suggesting that many agencies may not prioritize attitudinal development despite its importance in fostering empathy and professionalism. Furthermore, only 76 respondents (18.9 %) were trained in accessibility standards and regulations, an area that is crucial for ensuring compliance with legal frameworks and for creating barrier-free environments for travelers.

Communication techniques and empathy training, which are essential for appropriate interacting with diverse groups such as PwDs, were reported by just 50 participants (12.4 %). This indicates a lack of focus on soft skills, which are necessary for delivering person-centered service. Even fewer respondents—only 30 (7.4 %) received training in personalized service skills, reflecting a limited emphasis on tailoring services to meet individual needs. Lastly, 13 respondents (3.2 %) stated they were receiving other forms of training. Their answers mainly referred to general training in tourism operations rather than inclusive tourism. These included learning how to book airline tickets, use systems like Amadeus, basic training in hotel operations and travel program planning, as well as some exposure to tourism marketing. However, several responses indicated that the training was either partial, unrelated to inclusivity or not beneficial at all. This suggests that even when training opportunities exist, they often lack a specific focus on inclusive service for the diverse needs of all travelers.

Overall, the results of this field study indicate that formal training in inclusive tourism is underdeveloped in travel agencies. The majority of staff have not received any relevant training and where training exists, it is often piecemeal and lacks depth. These findings confirm previous research that calls for integrating inclusive tourism education into tourism and hospitality programs at both vocational and academic levels. To ensure long-term impact, it is essential that training moves beyond short-term awareness campaigns and becomes embedded in professional development pathways through recognized qualifications and consistent learning opportunities. Doing so will not only improve service quality but also contribute to a more inclusive and equitable tourism experience for all.

8.3 Confidence in Assisting Customers with Specific Needs

Confidence in serving customers with specific needs comes from gaining essential soft skills such as empathy, self-awareness, service orientation and effective communication. By addressing stereotypes and misconceptions about disability, employees become more comfortable and better prepared to assist visitors in a welcoming and professional manner (Scheyvens and Biddulph, 2020).

Table 3: Confidence of Travel Agency Employees in Assisting Customers with Specific Needs

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, I feel fully confident	80	19.9
Somewhat confident, but I need more training	113	28
No, I need further guidance and support	68	16.9
I am unsure due to lack of experience.	142	35.2
Total	**403**	**100**

The findings indicate that over 50% of employees are either unsure or feel they need more guidance and training to confidently assist customers with specific needs. The majority (35.2%) are unsure due to a lack of experience, which points to the importance of practical exposure and hands-on training to build confidence in handling real-world situations. Employees who feel confident (19.9%) likely have some degree of experience or prior training, indicating that when staff are well-prepared, they can provide high-quality, inclusive services. However, the 28% who are somewhat confident but seek more training show that there is still room for improvement, particularly in terms of enhancing employees' readiness to handle diverse customer needs. The 16.9% who need further guidance and support and the 35.2% who are unsure demonstrate a substantial gap in the preparedness of travel agency employees to serve PwSN, such as those with disabilities or mobility challenges. This is concerning, as it suggests that a significant portion of staff may inadvertently fail to provide the level of service required for inclusive tourism. The study's results align with the theoretical framework provided by Scheyvens and Biddulph (2020), which emphasizes that soft skills such as empathy, communication and service orientation are vital for effectively serving customers with specific needs. Without these skills and the opportunity for practical application, employees may struggle to provide the level of service expected in inclusive tourism.

The fact that 28% of employees are somewhat confident but still require more training suggests that some travel agencies may have implemented basic training programs, but there is room for further development. Additional training could include exposure to case studies, best practices and management tools, as suggested by Scheyvens and Biddulph (2020), to provide employees with clear, actionable strategies. Additionally, the high percentage of employees who feel unsure due to lack of experience or need further guidance underscores the importance of real-world exposure and practical guidance. Agencies must incorporate on-the-job training that allows employees to experience the challenges that customers with specific needs face, thereby reducing uncertainty and fostering greater confidence in assisting them.

8.4 Staff Competency in Assisting Individuals with Specific Needs

Negative attitudes from staff also represent a significant barrier to inclusive tourism. Many staff members in the tourism industry exhibit negative attitudes towards PwSN, often due to a lack of awareness, knowledge and training regarding disability legislation and the specific needs of PwLM which results in misunderstanding (Moris et al., 2019; Kaganek et al., 2017; Zheng et al., 2016; Gillovic and Mcintosh, 2015). Such negative attitudes hinder the ability of PwSN to access services and feel welcomed in tourism establishments, contributing to the ongoing exclusion of this group. Tourists with specific needs may encounter obstacles at various stages of their travel experience. Therefore, all human resources at any part of the "visitor journey" must be equipped

with knowledge and skills to assist and accommodate all tourists with equal attention, care, respect and support, as and when needed (Moris et al., 2019).

Table 4: Staff Training in Assisting PwSN in Travel agencies

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, all staff are trained	96	23.8
Only specific staff members are trained	71	17.6
No, staff are not trained	236	58.6
Total	**403**	**100**

According to Table 4, which outlines the extent of staff training in travel agencies, only 23.8% of agencies reported that all their staff are trained to assist PwSN. Another 17.6% indicated that only specific staff members receive such training. However, the most concerning figure is that 58.6% of agencies admitted their staff have not received any training in this area. This shows a significant shortfall in human resource development, particularly in preparing staff to deliver inclusive services. These results highlight a serious deficiency in the industry's commitment to inclusive service. These findings reflect the need for a proactive and organization-wide approach to staff development, where inclusivity becomes embedded in the culture and operations of tourism providers. Training must go beyond technical instructions and incorporate empathy, respect and communication skills, especially considering that each guest is unique and may require personalized support.

Such a lack of training has direct implications for service quality and guest satisfaction. Without proper training, staff may unintentionally reinforce negative stereotypes or exclude individuals with specific needs, making tourism experiences inaccessible or uncomfortable. This not only affects the guests themselves but also damages the reputation and inclusiveness of the tourism organization. To improve inclusive tourism outcomes, there must be a systemic shift toward proactive competency management, where inclusive service delivery becomes a standard part of staff development and organizational culture.

8.5 Attitude Management in Assisting PwSN

Table 5: Agency Response to Negative Staff Attitudes Toward Individuals with Specific Needs

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Through additional training and workshops	88	21.8
By addressing it through HR policies	66	16.4
We do not address this issue	249	61.8
Other	0	0
Total	**403**	**100**

From Table 5, there is a large proportion of tourism agencies (61.8%) who do not address the issue of negative staff attitudes toward individuals with specific needs. This is a critical finding, as it indicates a lack of initiative or awareness in addressing these negative attitudes. On the other hand, only 21.8% of agencies are tackling the issue through additional training and workshops, which is a positive step toward improving staff competency. Furthermore, 16.4% of agencies address the issue through HR policies, though this is a relatively smaller proportion.

The lack of proactive measures taken by the majority of agencies (61.8%) points to a significant gap in the tourism sector's approach to inclusivity. This gap may contribute to the ongoing exclusion of PwSN from fully enjoying tourism services. Given the importance of staff attitudes and competency in delivering inclusive tourism, more comprehensive training and awareness programs should be implemented. This would not only improve the overall experience for PwSN but also enhance the competitiveness of tourism agencies by catering to an underserved market segment. Overall, while some agencies have made efforts to address negative staff attitudes, the majority have not yet fully embraced the necessity of staff training and attitude management in fostering an inclusive tourism environment. There is a clear need for improvement, both in terms of staff competency and agency commitment to inclusive practices.

8.6 Services Offered for PwDs

The inclusion of PwDs in tourism is a complex process that depends on various factors, with accessibility being a critical element that needs thorough examination to ensure the process is effective. Inclusive tourism benefits not only PwDs but also the wider public, creating a more equitable, accessible and welcoming environment for everyone. It provides the opportunity for all individuals to engage in leisure activities without facing obstacles. Accessibility plays a pivotal role in inclusive tourism development, as it is primarily concerned with ensuring that PwDs are included in both tourism and society. Despite progress, several barriers remain that hinder the sector's proper functioning, necessitating new strategies for improvement (Gillovic and McIntosh, 2020).

The concept of "accessibility" to PwDs refers to the ease with which individuals can independently access buildings, spaces and outdoor areas without needing special assistance. Additionally, to ensure compliance with universal design standards, the tourism sector must train its staff with the necessary expertise to serve PwD customers effectively. This includes equipping staff with essential skills, knowledge and personal traits such as creativity, flexibility and openness in finding the best solutions. These qualities are shaped by personal experiences and varying perceptions of disability, which influence the actions taken (Zajadacz and Mickiewicz, 2017). Overcoming barriers to participation and improving accessibility is a broad challenge that involves legal, political, social and economic frameworks that need to be reevaluated and adjusted to promote inclusivity (Lehto et al., 2018).

Table 6: Inclusive Services for Individuals with Disabilities at Travel Agencies

Item	Frequency
Accessible accommodation services for PwDs	104
Accessible transportation services	101
Assistance with special equipment	74
Trained support staff	66
None of the above	226
Other	3
Total	***574**

*Availability of choosing more than one choice

The table clearly reveals that a significant portion of travel agencies are not offering essential services for PwDs, as evidenced by the 226 responses (56.1%) indicating that these agencies do not provide any of the services listed. This is a critical gap, as it highlights the widespread lack of

inclusivity in key areas of tourism, such as accommodation, transportation and special assistance. This suggests that many tourism agencies either do not recognize the importance of accessibility or fail to allocate resources to address these issues. Only 104 employees in travel agencies (25.8 %) provide accessible accommodation services for PwDs and a similar proportion (101 employees in travel agencies 25.1 %) offer accessible transportation services. These two services are fundamental for PwDs to travel and enjoy their experiences, yet they remain underprovided across the tourism sector. Assistance with special equipment and trained support staff are available in fewer agencies, with 74 responses (18.4 %), respectively. This suggests that even though some agencies recognize the importance of providing specialized services, these offerings are still limited.

The data underscores a critical gap in staff training and preparedness to support PwDs. Notably, only 66 employees in travel agencies (16.4 %) reported having trained support staff, which is alarmingly low. This highlights a severe deficiency in staff competency, which is a major barrier to providing effective services to PwDs. Without properly trained staff, even if other services like accessible accommodation or transportation are available, the overall experience for PwDs is likely to be compromised. Additionally, the 3 employees in travel agencies that fall under the "Other" category—stating that they don't address the issue—further reinforce the neglect of this crucial aspect of service delivery.

The absence of trained staff indicates that many agencies fail to understand that effective service provision for PwDs requires specialized knowledge and skills. Simply offering accessible infrastructure is not enough; staff must be equipped with the proper tools and mindset to create a welcoming environment for all guests, regardless of their specific needs.

8.7 Main Barriers to Providing Inclusive Tourism for PwDs

One of the main barriers to tourism for PwDs is inadequate accessibility. This barrier is not limited to physical access but also includes the broader concept of availability, which ensures that everyone, regardless of their disability, can effectively use and benefit from tourism products and services. PwDs have the same desire to travel as anyone else, yet the tourism industry is ill-prepared to meet their needs, which results in their exclusion from many tourism activities. Accessibility for PwDs is a significant challenge as they often lack the same range of options and choices available to people without disabilities, which severely limits their participation in travel and leisure (Buj, 2010).

Another barrier faced by PwDs is prejudice and discrimination, which is an ethical concern within the tourism industry. PwDs frequently encounter prejudice during their travels and are treated as "different" or inferior to others. This discriminatory treatment can be seen as an unethical practice, preventing PwDs from fully enjoying their travel experiences. The neglect of necessary regulations and facilities for PwDs is considered a form of discrimination. Furthermore, poor infrastructure discourages PwDs from traveling, which exacerbates the discrimination they face, making it a pervasive issue in the tourism sector. Individuals with disabilities have been isolated and subjected to discrimination and such isolation remains pervasive in society (Liasidou et al., 2019).

Negative attitudes from staff also represent a significant barrier to inclusive tourism. Many staff members in the tourism industry exhibit negative attitudes towards PwDs, often due to a lack of awareness, knowledge and training regarding disability legislation and the specific needs of PwDs which results in misunderstanding (Moris et al., 2019; Kaganek et al., 2017; Zheng et al.,

2016; Gillovic and Mcintosh, 2015). Such negative attitudes hinder the ability of PwDs to access services and feel welcomed in tourism establishments, contributing to the ongoing exclusion of this group. Tourists with disabilities may encounter obstacles at various stages of their travel experience. Therefore, all human resources at any part of the "visitor journey" must be equipped with knowledge and skills to assist and accommodate all tourists with equal attention, care, respect and support, as and when needed (Moris et al., 2019).

Additionally, inadequate legal frameworks present a significant barrier to the inclusion of PwDs in tourism. Discrimination against PwDs continues to be a major issue across various sectors, including tourism, because of insufficient laws and regulations. According to Ross (1994), existing laws do not adequately address the discrimination PwDs face in essential areas like transportation, public accommodations and employment. Without strong enforcement of regulations, PwDs are often denied equal opportunities to participate in tourism. However, barriers such as inadequate laws, negative social attitudes, lack of financial resources and a lack of data combine to significantly limit accessibility for PwDs (Grills et al., 2017). There is a significant barrier is the lack of personalization and tailored services for PwDs. While many businesses comply with basic accessibility regulations, they often fail to go beyond the minimum requirements and offer services that provide true comfort and ease of access. This issue highlights the need for tourism providers to focus on personalized services that cater to the individual preferences and needs of PwDs, rather than just meeting compliance standards (Zajadacz, 2015).

Table 7: Challenges Faced by Travel Agencies in Offering Inclusive Tourism for PwDs

Item	Frequency
Lack of accessible infrastructure (e.g., ramps, elevators)	118
Inadequate staff training	260
Prejudice or negative attitudes from staff	222
Financial limitations for improving accessibility	70
Lack of demand from people with disabilities tourists	66
Lack of government regulation or support	58
Other	2
Total	***796**

*Availability of choosing more than one choice

The most significant finding from the data is that inadequate staff training was identified by 260 respondents (64.5 %), representing the most reported barrier. This overwhelming response clearly indicates a serious lack of preparedness and professional competence among employees in travel agencies when it comes to serving PwDs. This represents a critical weakness in service delivery and significantly impacts on the accessibility and quality of tourism experiences for this group.

Closely following this issue is prejudice or negative attitudes from staff, reported by 222 respondents (55.1 %). These two barriers are interlinked—without proper training and awareness, negative attitudes are likely to persist due to ignorance or misunderstanding. This reveals a fundamental weakness in how employees in travel agencies are currently equipped to handle diversity, especially regarding disabilities. This result reinforces the notion that training and awareness are interconnected—when employees are not trained, they are more likely to hold

misconceptions or treat PwDs differently, often unintentionally. These negative experiences can discourage PwDs from participating in tourism activities altogether.

Lack of accessible infrastructure (118 responses 29.3 %) remains a persistent issue but is less frequently mentioned than human-related barriers like training and attitude. This suggests that soft barriers (behavioral and attitudinal) may now be more limiting than physical barriers in many cases, which shows that while physical barriers are still present, the more pressing and widespread issue lies in human interaction and service delivery. Accessibility is not only about buildings but also about the behavior and competence of those delivering the service. Other challenges such as financial limitations (70) 17.4 %, lack of demand from PwD tourists (66) 16.4 % and inadequate government regulation or support (58) 14.4 %, were reported to a lesser extent, indicating that while important, these are not seen as primary obstacles by most respondents, it was mentioned but appeared far less frequently than issues related to staff training and attitudes. This suggests that although structural and policy-related challenges exist, the most immediate and impactful area for improvement lies in staff capability. The "Other" category (2 responses) mentioned (*"I don't know due to lack of experience"*), which further emphasizes the general lack of awareness and exposure to inclusive tourism practices among many employees in travel agencies. This indicates that some employees are not even aware of what the barriers are, which suggests a deeper issue of disconnection or limited engagement with inclusive tourism altogether. This lack of experience is, in itself, a barrier, because if staff are unaware, they cannot advocate for or implement improvements.

The field study strongly suggests that the greatest barrier to inclusive tourism is not infrastructure, regulation or cost—but the human factor, specifically the lack of staff training and negative attitudes. This finding highlights an urgent need to invest in competency development, continuous staff training programs and awareness campaigns that reshape the mindset of tourism professionals. This analysis reveals that inadequate staff training and negative staff attitudes are the two most critical barriers limiting the participation of PwDs in tourism. While structural accessibility and policy challenges still exist, the core issue lies in human behavior and competence. To achieve inclusive tourism, employees in travel agencies must be properly trained, sensitized and committed to delivering equal and dignified service to all tourists, regardless of their abilities.

8.8 Familiarity with Accessibility Regulations in Cairo, Egypt

A significant barrier is the lack of personalization and tailored services for PwLM. While many businesses comply with basic accessibility regulations, they often fail to go beyond the minimum requirements and offer services that provide true comfort and ease of access. This issue highlights the need for tourism providers to focus on personalized services that cater to the individual preferences and needs of PwDs, rather than just meeting compliance standards (Zajadacz, 2015). Understanding the unique preferences and decision-making behaviors of PwDs as consumers is crucial to creating a more inclusive and engaging tourism experience. There is substantial evidence indicating that this represents a significant and potentially profitable market for the future which means businesses need to go beyond basic accessibility features and focus on tailored services based on individual preferences and requirements. This can include: 1. Adaptive Marketing: Promoting accessible facilities and experiences through targeted communication channels. 2. Staff Training: Educating employees on how to assist guests with various accessibility needs. 3. Infrastructure Improvements: Ensuring facilities go beyond compliance and provide true comfort

and ease of access, although the fact that there are limited industry-based case studies to demonstrate and showcase such benefits. PwDs are participating in independent travel and there is a greater need to know their needs and experiences as consumers. Regarding accessibility, there is a future need to consider the personalization of tourism supply (Zajadacz, 2015), which requires a greater understanding of the motives, decision-making behaviors, needs and experiences of PwDs as tourism consumers (Gillovic and McIntosh, 2020).

Law No. 10 of 2018 on the Rights of PwDs serves as the foundation for accessibility regulations in Egypt, ensuring inclusive policies and measures to eliminate barriers in public spaces, education, employment and transportation. Enacted on February 20, 2018, after approval by parliament, this law establishes several governmental commitments to protecting the rights of PwDs. It prohibits discrimination based on disability and ensures equal access to human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. The law ensures real equality in the enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in all fields, respect their choices and how they express them by their own independent will, the right of PwDs and their families to obtain all the information that concerns them from all sectors. This law also emphasizes protecting the rights of PwDs, to ensure their full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with others and to promote their inherent dignity, inclusion in society and secure a decent life for them (NCW, 2020).

Article 3 of Egypt's 2018 constitution outlines key provisions related to accessibility and inclusion for PwDs and PwLM. Accessibility refers to the necessary tools, procedures and adaptations, whether physiological, social, informational or physical that enable PwLM to access an inclusive environment and fully exercise their rights and freedoms on an equal basis with others. Comprehensive Inclusion ensures that PwLM can participate equally in all aspects of society, including services, activities, public facilities and education, without discrimination. This is achieved through policies, plans, programs, awareness initiatives and active participation. The Card of Disability Proof and Integrated Services for PwDs, as stated in Article 5, serves as the official document verifying a person's disability, including its type and severity. This card grants access to various services, facilities and benefits provided under applicable legislation, making it a legally binding tool for both government and non-government institutions. Additionally, the law sets quality standards to ensure that services and accessibility measures align with the specific needs of PwLM, depending on their type and degree of disability. The Construction and Accessibility Code establishes the principles, criteria and requirements that public buildings and facilities must meet to ensure accessibility for PwLM (NCW, 2020).

Article 4 of Law No. 10 of 2018 on the Rights of PwDs emphasizes the importance of building and enhancing the skills of individuals working with PwDs, including those in both governmental and non-governmental organizations. The law aims to equip them with the necessary skills to effectively communicate and interact with PwDs across various fields. It also encourages training for specialists and staff involved in implementing the rights outlined in the Convention, ensuring they can provide the necessary support and services. Additionally, the law seeks to raise public awareness about the rights of PwDs, foster respect for these rights and highlight the abilities and contributions of individuals with disabilities within society (NCW, 2020).

Article 13 of Law No. 10 of 2018 on the Rights of PwDs mandates that the Ministry of Education and Technical Education adhere to modern scientific quality standards and the Construction/Accessibility Code when establishing or upgrading special education schools.

Additionally, the Ministry must ensure the availability of appropriate courses, curricula, trained teachers, specialists and qualified staff tailored to different types of disabilities. The law's Executive Regulation outlines the specific rules and standards for the establishment, development and management of these schools, as well as the responsible governing bodies and agencies in charge (NCW, 2020).

Table 8: Familiarity of Travel Agency Employees in Cairo with Accessibility Regulations

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Very familiar – I have in-depth knowledge of accessibility regulations and how to implement accommodations	44	10.9
Somewhat familiar – I understand the basics of accessibility regulations and accommodations	61	15.1
Familiar with general guidelines – I know the key regulations but lack detailed knowledge	54	13.4
Not very familiar – I'm aware of accessibility but don't have in-depth knowledge of the regulations	118	29.3
Not familiar at all – I have little to no knowledge of accessibility regulations or accommodations	126	31.3
Total	**403**	**100**

The results highlight a critical challenge in inclusive tourism: a lack of comprehensive understanding of accessibility regulations among travel agency employees. More than 60% of respondents fall into the "Not Very Familiar" or "Not Familiar at All" categories, indicating a widespread gap in knowledge and training. This gap suggests that while accessibility laws exist, their implementation remains weak due to insufficient awareness and competency among professionals. The survey results presented in Table 8 demonstrate a significant gap in the knowledge and understanding of accessibility regulations among travel agency employees in Cairo. The responses indicate varying levels of familiarity: Very Familiar (10.9%): Only a small fraction of respondents reported having an in-depth knowledge of accessibility regulations and how to implement accommodations. Somewhat Familiar (15.1%): A moderate proportion of respondents have a basic understanding of accessibility regulations and accommodations but may lack expertise in implementing them. Familiar with General Guidelines (13.4%): These employees know the key regulations but do not have detailed knowledge. Not Very Familiar (29.3%): A substantial number of respondents are aware of accessibility issues but lack specific knowledge of the regulations. Not Familiar at All (31.3%): The largest proportion of respondents reported having little to no knowledge of accessibility regulations or accommodations.

9. Results and Discussion

The results obtained clearly show that human resources do not have the necessary skills to work with tourists with special needs, since they lack knowledge about disability and special needs; they cannot communicate with PwLM, have no training in inclusive care and do not know the type of information that should be given to this market. These gaps exist not only because educational institutions do not prepare employees to work with this market, but also because tourism supply agents do not value training in accessible and inclusive tourism at the recruitment stage and do not develop training actions in this subject. The paper ends with some strategies to increase human resources skills on accessible tourism, as a strategy to provide more accessible and inclusive tourism products (Devile et al., 2022).

The results indicate that formal, structured training in inclusive tourism is largely absent in many travel agencies. Where training does exist, it is often fragmented, short-term or limited to specific areas such as awareness or regulations. This correlates with previous research (Bidder et al., 2023; ENAT, 2018) that emphasizes the need for integrated, long-term training embedded in educational curricula and continuous professional development programs. The findings of this study reveal a significant gap in formal training related to inclusive tourism among travel agency employees. As shown in Table 1, only 18.4% of respondents reported receiving comprehensive training in inclusive and accessible tourism. A slightly higher percentage (28.8%) had undergone only basic training, which, while providing some level of exposure, is likely insufficient for developing the full range of competencies needed to serve guests with diverse access needs effectively. Alarmingly, nearly half of the respondents (47.6%) stated they had received no training at all and an additional 5.2% indicated they had only informal experience. These results clearly demonstrate that inclusive tourism training is not adequately integrated into staff development practices or tourism education programs. This lack of structured training is consistent with previous research by ENAT (2018), which highlights that much of the training available in the tourism sector is short-term, sporadic and often delivered through temporary initiatives with limited long-term impact. Without sustained and systematic training programs, tourism professionals remain ill-prepared to meet the needs of travelers with disabilities. Moreover, Bidder et al. (2023) stress the critical role of formal education in shaping professional attitudes toward marginalized travelers, noting that inclusive tourism should be a fundamental component of academic and vocational curricula. Without such integration, the tourism workforce will continue to lack the essential skills and values needed to ensure equitable and respectful service delivery.

Further insights are offered by Table 2, which provides an overview of the specific types of training currently provided within travel agencies. The data shows that the majority of respondents, 237 out of 403, did not receive any form of specific training related to inclusive tourism. This finding reinforces the concern that travel agencies often overlook the importance of staff preparedness in catering to the needs of travelers requiring accessibility. Among those who received training, the most common focus was on improving staff attitudes and awareness (reported by 91 respondents), a number that is relatively low. While positive attitudes are foundational for inclusive service, this alone is insufficient without accompanying practical and regulatory knowledge. Training on accessibility standards and regulations was received by 76 employees, a number that is relatively low given the legal and operational importance of such knowledge. Even fewer respondents—only 50—had been trained in communication techniques and empathy, skills that are vital when interacting with individuals with specific needs, such as PwDs. Personalized service skills, which enable employees to adapt their service delivery to meet individual guest needs, were reported by just 30 participants. This limited emphasis on person-centered approaches suggests that most agencies are not yet fully committed to fostering inclusive service environments.

Notably, a small group of 13 respondents mentioned receiving other forms of training; however, most of these were unrelated to inclusive tourism. Their responses referred instead to general tourism operations training, such as booking systems, hotel operations and marketing strategies. This suggests a misalignment between current training content and the specific needs of inclusive tourism development.

In conclusion, the results of this field study underscore a critical need for more comprehensive and formalized training in inclusive tourism across the travel industry. Current efforts are fragmented and inadequate, leaving many employees without the necessary tools to deliver inclusive, high-quality services. The data strongly supports calls for the integration of inclusive tourism into professional development and educational programs, as advocated by ENAT (2018) and Bidder et al. (2023). To address the growing demand for accessible tourism and ensure all travelers feel welcomed and supported, training initiatives must be embedded within long-term, structured learning pathways. Recognized qualifications and consistent training will not only enhance employee competence but also contribute to a more inclusive and equitable tourism industry.

The confidence of travel agency employees in assisting customers with specific needs plays a crucial role in delivering inclusive tourism experiences. According to the survey results presented in Table 3, only 19.9% of respondents reported feeling fully confident in serving customers with specific needs, while a substantial 35.2% expressed uncertainty due to lack of experience. An additional 28% indicated that they were somewhat confident but still required more training and 16.9% stated that they needed further guidance and support. These findings reveal that over half of the respondents lack the necessary confidence to adequately assist PwDs, seniors or others with mobility challenges.

This lack of confidence is directly tied to insufficient practical exposure and training, as highlighted in previous literature. Scheyvens and Biddulph (2020) stress the importance of developing soft skills such as empathy, service orientation and effective communication in boosting staff preparedness. When these skills are supported by real-world experiences and practical tools, employees are more likely to feel capable of offering inclusive, respectful service. The fact that 28% of respondents felt somewhat confident but required additional training suggests that basic awareness programs may be in place at some agencies, but these are not yet comprehensive or deeply impactful. The data underscores a clear need for investment in staff development programs that target the core skills and competencies required for inclusive tourism. The majority of employees either lack experience or require additional support, indicating that travel agencies must prioritize structured, experience-based training that empowers their workforce. Doing so will not only improve service quality but also foster a tourism environment where all customers regardless of their specific needs feel welcome, respected and supported.

Moreover, the high percentage (35.2%) of employees who feel unsure due to a lack of experience points to a significant gap in practical training opportunities. This supports the argument made by Darcy and Pegg (2011), who emphasize that while accessible infrastructure is important, it is not sufficient on its own. Staff training is essential to bridge the gap between physical accessibility and true inclusiveness. Without such training, employees may feel hesitant or uncertain in their interactions with customers who have specific needs, which could negatively impact on the overall tourism experience for these individuals. In line with the findings of Hausemer et al. (2014), fostering confidence in staff requires more than just theoretical knowledge. It involves hands-on training; mindset shifts and exposure to real-life scenarios that can reduce anxiety and boost employee readiness. Case studies, best practice guides and management tools such as accessibility checklists or scenario-based training are valuable resources that can make learning both accessible and applicable. These tools help simplify complex information and allow employees to internalize and apply inclusive service strategies in their daily work.

The study reveals a significant gap in staff competency and attitude management in the tourism industry regarding individuals with specific needs. Negative attitudes from staff, often due to lack of awareness and training on disability legislation and the specific needs of PwDs, are a major barrier to inclusive tourism. This leads to misunderstandings and exclusion of individuals with specific needs, further hindering their ability to fully enjoy tourism services. Properly trained staff, who are equipped with the right skills and attitudes, are crucial to fostering an inclusive tourism environment. Tourism businesses need to focus on competency management throughout the entire "visitor journey" to ensure that all guests are treated with equal care, respect and support (Moris et al., 2019).

The results from Table 4 show that only 23.8% of travel agencies reported that all their staff are trained to assist PwSN, while 17.6% reported that only specific staff members receive training. The concerning figure is that 58.6% of employees in travel agencies admitted that their staff have not received any training in this area. This highlights a significant shortfall in human resource development, with many agencies failing to prioritize staff training in inclusive tourism. The lack of comprehensive staff training directly impacts service quality and guest satisfaction, as untrained staff may inadvertently reinforce negative stereotypes or exclude PwSN, creating barriers to accessibility.

Table 5 further highlights that a large proportion (61.8%) of employees in travel agencies do not address negative staff attitudes toward individuals with specific needs. This is a critical finding, as it suggests a lack of proactive initiatives to tackle negative attitudes within the workforce. Only 21.8% of employees in travel agencies are addressing this issue through additional training and workshops, while 16.4% are using HR policies to manage staff attitudes. The lack of action by the majority of agencies points to a significant gap in the industry's approach to inclusivity and underscores the need for more comprehensive and organization-wide training programs focused on changing attitudes and improving service delivery for PwSN.

In conclusion, these findings demonstrate a clear need for a systemic shift toward proactive competency management in the tourism industry. By embedding inclusiveness in staff development and organizational culture, tourism businesses can improve the quality of service and enhance their competitiveness by better catering to the needs of marginalized groups, including PwSN. More training and awareness programs are necessary to address negative staff attitudes, improve the overall tourism experience and create a truly inclusive environment.

The findings highlight significant gaps in the tourism sector's ability to provide essential services for PwDs, which are critical to ensuring inclusiveness in tourism. The data from Table 6 shows that more than half of the employees in the travel agencies surveyed (56.1%) do not offer any of the inclusive services listed, such as accessible accommodation, transportation or assistance with special equipment. This reflects a widespread lack of accessibility within the sector, suggesting that many agencies either do not recognize the importance of offering these services or lack the resources to implement them effectively. Among the services that were provided, accessible accommodation (104 responses) and accessible transportation (101 responses) were the most commonly offered, but they remain underprovided overall. These services are foundational for enabling PwDs to travel and enjoy their experiences, yet their limited availability points to a significant gap in accessibility across the tourism industry. Additionally, assistance with special equipment and trained support staff were available in even fewer agencies (74 and 66 responses,

respectively). This indicates that while some agencies are making efforts to cater to PwDs, these efforts are insufficient to meet the full range of needs.

The data also emphasizes the critical issue of staff competency. Only 66 responses indicated that trained support staff are available, which suggests that a large proportion of agencies lack the specialized knowledge and skills necessary to support PwDs effectively. This shortage of trained staff is a major barrier to providing high-quality, inclusive services. Even if agencies offer accessible infrastructure, without adequately trained staff, the overall experience for PwDs will likely be compromised. The low number of responses in the "Other" category (3 responses) further highlights that many agencies are neglecting this important aspect of service provision. Overall, the results underline the need for the tourism industry to invest in both infrastructure and staff training to better serve PwDs. While accessibility remains a key concern, providing the appropriate training and support for staff is equally essential to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment. Addressing these gaps will help the sector move toward more effective inclusion, allowing PwDs to fully participate in and enjoy tourism experiences.

The findings from Table 7 underscore the significant challenges facing the tourism industry in its journey toward full inclusivity for PwDs. Among the identified barriers, inadequate staff training emerged as the most critical, cited by 260 respondents. This result clearly points to a major shortfall in employee preparedness across travel agencies. Staff who are not properly trained lack the skills, knowledge and sensitivity needed to accommodate PwDs effectively, resulting in exclusionary service experience. The impact of this barrier profoundly affects not only the quality-of-service delivery but also the overall accessibility and enjoyment of tourism for PwDs. Closely related is the issue of prejudice or negative attitudes from staff, reported by 222 respondents. These attitudes often stem from a lack of training and awareness, which reinforces stereotypes and contributes to the discomfort and exclusion of PwDs. This finding confirms that attitudinal barriers—often invisible—can be more damaging than physical ones. Together, these human-related barriers represent the most pressing area for intervention. Without changing attitudes and increasing staff competency, other efforts toward inclusivity will remain ineffective.

The barrier of inaccessible infrastructure, such as the absence of ramps or elevators, was reported by 118 respondents. While still significant, this physical aspect was less frequently cited than the human factors. This suggests that while infrastructure is crucial, the biggest current limitation lies in how services are delivered. The focus must therefore shift not only toward improving physical space but also toward enhancing interpersonal interactions and staff engagement. Other barriers, such as financial limitations for improving accessibility (70), perceived lack of demand from PwD tourists (66) and inadequate government regulation or support (58), were cited less often. Although these are valid concerns, their lower frequency suggests they are not seen as the most immediate challenges by respondents. In particular, the mention of "lack of demand" reflects a common misconception—demand from PwDs is often underestimated because of the very barriers that deter them from traveling. This circular reasoning can lead to further neglect of accessibility measures.

Notably, the "Other" category (2 responses) indicated a lack of awareness stemming from inexperience, further highlighting the deep-rooted issue of disconnection between some employees in travel agencies and the principles of inclusive tourism. This ignorance not only hinders progress but also points to the absence of exposure, education and organizational emphasis on accessibility and inclusion. Overall, the results demonstrate that the core challenges to inclusive tourism are

behavioral and knowledge-based rather than purely structural. While the built environment still needs improvement, it is the human element—the mindset, skills and training of employees in travel agencies—that represents the most immediate and impactful area for change. These findings call for a comprehensive and ongoing approach to staff development, emphasizing empathy, awareness and inclusive service delivery. Only through targeted training and cultural change within organizations can the tourism sector move closer to becoming truly inclusive for all.

The key findings from Table 8 highlight a significant gap in knowledge regarding accessibility regulations among travel agency employees in Cairo, Egypt. Despite the existence of Law No. 10 of 2018, which mandates accessibility measures and inclusive policies, the results indicate that a considerable portion of employees lack in-depth familiarity with these regulations. Only 10.9% (44 respondents) reported having in-depth knowledge of accessibility regulations and how to implement accommodations. This suggests that a small percentage of travel agency employees are well-equipped to ensure inclusive experience for PwDs. 15.1% (61 respondents) indicated they have a basic understanding of accessibility regulations and accommodations. While they possess some knowledge, it may not be sufficient for effective implementation. 13.4% (54 respondents) reported familiarity with general accessibility guidelines but lacked detailed knowledge. This means that although they are aware of key regulations, they may struggle with their practical application. 29.3% (118 respondents) stated they are "not very familiar" with accessibility regulations. This large proportion suggests that nearly a third of travel agency employees may not be adequately prepared to accommodate PwDs. 31.3% (126 respondents) admitted having little to no knowledge of accessibility regulations. This is the most concerning finding, as it indicates that a substantial number of employees do not understand even the basic principles of accessibility, leading to potential service gaps.

10. Research Limitations and Constraints

This study specifically examines the attitudes of employees within the travel agencies towards inclusive tourism. While the sample size of employees surveyed was sufficient for conducting statistical analysis and deriving meaningful insights. First, the sample was relatively homogeneous in terms of education and occupation. This homogeneity may influence the generalizability of the findings to a broader range of employers with diverse educational backgrounds and professional experiences. Second, although inclusive tourism encompasses multiple marginalized groups, including ethnic minorities, women and girls and individuals experiencing poverty (Bidder et al., 2023), this research focuses exclusively on one specific segment which are PwDs. Consequently, the findings may not fully capture the broader spectrum of inclusive tourism challenges faced by other marginalized groups. Third, the study is geographically limited to Cairo, with the sample drawn exclusively from the Greater Cairo Region. While this focus allows for an in-depth understanding of local perspectives, it limits the applicability of the results to other regions with different socio-economic and cultural contexts. Fourth, the study surveyed 403 employers from travel agencies, specifically assessing their competency awareness and evaluation regarding inclusive tourism for PwDs. This focus provides valuable insights into the readiness and preparedness of travel agencies to cater to these groups but may not fully reflect the perspectives of other tourism-related sectors. Despite these constraints, the study offers critical insights into the competency management and attitudes of tourism industry employers towards inclusive tourism.

11. Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should focus on expanding the scope of the study to include additional marginalized groups and exploring the long-term impact of competency-based training programs on inclusivity in the tourism sector. Additionally, collaboration between academic institutions, tourism providers and policymakers are crucial in driving meaningful change and fostering an inclusive tourism ecosystem that benefits all stakeholders.

Future research should prioritize evaluating the impact of inclusive tourism training, developing and testing competency frameworks and addressing attitudinal and infrastructural barriers. There is a strong need to investigate under-represented groups, particularly PwDs and assess the practical implementation of inclusive policies. Studies should also explore the role of universal design, stakeholder collaboration and emerging technologies in enhancing tourism accessibility and equity. There are well-structured academic recommendations for future research:

11.1 Investigate the Long-Term Impact of Inclusive Tourism Training Programs: Tourism suppliers should examine the long-term effects of structured training programs on the competencies and attitudes of tourism employees, particularly in relation to service delivery for PwDs. Longitudinal studies could evaluate whether such training leads to sustained behavioral change and service improvements.

11.2 Comprehensive Staff Training: Implement structured, ongoing training on disability awareness, inclusive communication and accessibility standards tailored to various roles.

11.3 Explore the Effectiveness of Competency Frameworks in Inclusive Tourism: There is a need for empirical studies that assess the implementation and efficacy of competency frameworks specifically designed for inclusive tourism roles. Research should explore how these frameworks influence service quality, employee performance and customer satisfaction across different organizational contexts.

11.4 Examine Attitudinal Barriers and their Mitigation Strategies: Further investigation is required into the psychological and cultural factors that shape tourism employees' attitudes toward marginalized travelers. Tourism suppliers should also test interventions—such as empathy-based training or inclusive communication modules—to evaluate their success in transforming workplace culture.

12. Conclusion

The study highlights the critical importance of fostering inclusivity within the tourism sector, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach that integrates competency management to address the unique needs of marginalized groups, such as PwDs. The research underscores that while infrastructure improvements are essential, the attitudes and competencies of tourism employees play a pivotal role in creating genuinely inclusive experiences. The findings reveal that lack of awareness and training on inclusive practices contributes to service gaps, resulting in exclusion and limited access for individuals with specific needs. Employees' attitudes towards inclusion, influenced by their experience and knowledge, significantly impact on the overall quality of service delivery. Therefore, effective training programs focused on enhancing employees' competencies can foster a more inclusive tourism environment, aligning with global efforts to reduce inequality in the industry. Moreover, competency management emerges as a strategic tool that not only improves service quality but also enhances organizational efficiency by equipping staff with the necessary skills to address diverse traveler needs. The study affirms that

inclusive tourism is not merely about physical accessibility but about fostering a welcoming and accommodating environment that empowers all individuals to participate and benefit equally.

Inclusive tourism, especially for PwDs, has evolved from a largely overlooked area to one that is gaining increasing attention within both academic and industry circles. This research has discovered obstacles of PwDs from reaching tourism, including physical, social and economic obstacles. It emphasized the importance of addressing these obstacles through increased access, better legal structures, better staff training and more personalized services. Despite the fact that PwDs have significant challenges, PwDs demonstrate a strong desire to participate in tourism, which may benefit the broader tourist market not only, but also through economic and social benefits. As illustrated by the disability pyramid model, the diverse needs of PwDs require tailored solutions that go beyond the adherence of minimum access standards. It is evident and clear that an accessible and inclusive tourism approach should be multi-dimensional, to integrate physical infrastructure, that an accessible and inclusive tourism approach must be multifaceted, to integrate physical infrastructure, attitudinal shifts and comprehensive training to foster a more equitable and welcoming tourism environment for all people, regardless of disability. Finally, accessible and inclusive tourism should be recognized not only as a moral imperative, but also as a commercial opportunity, where increasing access can lead to more market access, customers' satisfaction and long-term sustainability. In order to achieve full inclusion, society should prioritize access to justice and human rights and ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to enjoy the social, cultural and leisure benefits that tourism provides all individuals.

13. Recommendations

Recommendations Regarding Training and Capacity Building

13.1.1 Comprehensive Staff Training: Implement structured, ongoing training on disability awareness, inclusive communication and accessibility standards tailored to various roles.

13.1.2 Practical, Hands-on Training: Incorporate case studies, real-life simulations and role-playing exercises to bridge theory and practice.

13.1.3 Soft Skills and Confidence Building: Develop training that fosters empathy, problem-solving and respectful engagement with diverse travelers.

13.1.4 Integration in Academic Curricula: Embed inclusive tourism into tourism and hospitality education, including formal certification and long-term professional development pathways.

13.1.5 Flexible Training Delivery: Offer microlearning, mobile-friendly content and online courses to suit busy schedules and broaden reach.

13.1.6 Develop Competency Frameworks: Define inclusive skills and qualifications for various tourism roles to ensure consistent service quality.

13.2 Recommendations Regarding Policy, Regulation and Government Role

13.2.1 Enforce and Strengthen Accessibility Laws: Implement and monitor policies like Law No. 10 of 2018, ensuring businesses comply with accessibility standards.

13.2.2 Incentivize Inclusion: Offer financial incentives, grants or tax relief to businesses investing in accessible infrastructure and staff training (Poria, Reichel and Beal, 2023).

13.2.3 Stakeholder Collaboration on Policy: Foster collaboration among government, NGOs, educational institutions and businesses to align inclusive tourism goals.

13.3 Recommendations Regarding Attitude, Awareness and Inclusion Culture
13.3.1 Promote Attitudinal Change: Target unconscious bias through experiential training, customer stories and diversity education to challenge stereotypes.
13.3.2 Foster Inclusive Workplace Culture: Embed inclusivity in HR practices (e.g., hiring, performance reviews, internal training mandates).
13.3.3 Public Awareness Campaigns: Launch campaigns to highlight the social and economic value of accessible tourism and reduce stigma.

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تـقييم جدارات الموظفين تجاه الأشخاص ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في القاهرة، مصر

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الملخص

تُعد الكفاءة المهنية ضمن سلسلة التوريد السياحية عاملاً جوهرياً في تعزيز أداء العاملين في القطاع، إلا أن غياب إطار موحّد لتقييم هذه الكفاءات يظل تحدياً قائماً. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف الدور المحوري لإدارة الكفاءات والجدارات في دعم السياحة الشاملة، مع تركيز خاص على الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة. وتسعى من خلال ذلك إلى رفع مستوى الوعي، وتحسين جودة الخدمات، وتعزيز ممارسات السياحة الشاملة داخل القطاع السياحي. في ظل غياب مقياس موحَّد لتقييم الكفاءات، تقدم الدراسة أداة موثوقة وصالحة تقيس مهارات العاملين في القطاع، بما يشمل موظفي شركات السياحة، المرشدين السياحيين، الإداريين، وقادة الرحلات. وتُبرز الدراسة أهمية تطوير المهارات والمواقف الإيجابية لدى الموظفين لضمان تقديم خدمات متكاملة وشاملة لذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة.

أُجريت الدراسة في مدينة القاهرة بجمهورية مصر العربية في فبراير 2025، واعتمدت على المنهج الكمي من خلال توزيع استبيان على عينة مكوّنة من 403 موظفين في قطاع السياحة. واستخدمت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي لتحليل التحديات، وتحديد الكفاءات، ورصد المهارات والمواقف المتعلقة بتقديم خدمات شاملة ضمن بيئة العمل السياحية. كشفت النتائج عن وجود فجوات معرفية واضحة وتصوّرات سلبية لدى بعض العاملين تجاه السياحة الشاملة، مما يبرز الحاجة الماسة إلى اعتماد برامج تدريبية إلزامية تركز على بناء الوعي وتغيير السلوكيات، كأحد أبرز التوصيات التي توصلت إليها الدراسة. كما سلطت النتائج الضوء على وجود تحديات متعددة ما تزال تُعيق التشغيل الفعّال للسياحة الشاملة، مما يستدعي اعتماد استراتيجيات جديدة ومبتكرة في إدارة الكفاءات.

وتؤكد الدراسة على أن رفع كفاءة العاملين في قطاع السياحة تجاه ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة يتطلب تقييماً دقيقاً لمستويات الوعي والسلوك والجدارة لديهم. كما توضح أن كلًا من التدريب والوعي يمثلان عنصرين أساسيين في تعزيز السلوكيات الإيجابية، وتطوير المهارات والجدارات اللازمة لتحقيق بيئة سياحية شاملة وعادلة للجميع. وتسهم هذه الدراسة، في المجمل، في تحسين جودة التجربة السياحية لكل من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة والسياح بوجه عام في مصر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الجدارات، الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة، إمكانية الوصول،سلوك و مواقف موظفي السياحة، مهارات الموظفين.