

# Chapter 10

## Digital Accessibility at the Nexus of Barriers of Accessible Tourism


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### ABSTRACT

*Accessible tourism aims to provide inclusive travel experiences for individuals with disabilities by offering accommodations, transportation, and attractions that cater to their needs. Imrie et al. (1998) and Escudero's et al. (2021) conducted studies on disabled people's experiences with access in the built environment and the decision-making process when organizing a tourist experience. They found that disabled people's needs are poorly met in the design and development of the built environment, and regulatory controls overseeing disabled people's access are weak. The study also found that tourist experiences significantly impact the perspective of disabled people in their daily lives, with independence being a crucial aspect. Kim et al. (2011) investigated service failures experienced by disabled tourists,*

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*identifying three dimensions of service failures: service delivery failure, unfulfilled special requests, and unsolicited employee conduct.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism is inherently complex and multifaceted, influencing the economy and requiring input from economic, social, cultural, and environmental resources, which contributes to its intricate and multi-dimensional nature (Lickorish et al., 2007; Cabral & Dhar., 2019; Cabral, C & Jabbour., 2020). It depends on natural settings as part of its attractions, leading to a considerable environmental impact; however, it can also aid in conservation efforts (Buckley., 2011). The tourism sector is a significant, multi-trillion-dollar industry that facilitates and enhances a unique form of human engagement (Buckley., 2011; Suban et al., 2021). Closely linked with industries such as transportation, lodging, entertainment, and food and beverage services, tourism is embedded in global economic systems through the consumption behaviours of travellers (Lafferty et al., 2001). Despite its beneficial economic influence and vital role in bolstering global economies, tourism can also lead to economic, social, and ecological challenges (Erol et al., 2022; Suban et al., 2021). In the context of economic globalization, tourism presents a natural environment for corporate consolidation (Lafferty et al., 2001).

In 2019, tourism contributed 5.5 percent of global GDP and supported 272 million jobs, marking it as one of the world's most crucial industries. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism sector was responsible for creating one out of every four new jobs within a five-year span (Erol et al., 2022). The primary advantage of tourism for a region or nation lies in its economic benefits, providing opportunities for job creation and generating income at various levels—international, national, regional, and local. Being a labour-intensive service industry, tourism serves as a key source of employment (Zaei & Zaei., 2013). It employs a diverse workforce and offers a broad array of jobs, ranging from unskilled labour to highly specialized roles (Zaei & Zaei., 2013). Revenue from tourism flows into both urban and rural communities, stimulating the emergence of new businesses and enhancing the public image of those areas. Consequently, the economic effects of tourism are significant factors in state, regional, and community planning and economic growth. There is a growing interest among businesses and public entities in understanding these economic effects at national, state, and local levels. Acknowledging the economic importance of tourism grants the industry increased recognition among business leaders, government officials, and the general population (Stynes., 1997).

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