4

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Certainly, travel is more than the seeing of sights; it is a change that goes on, deep and permanent, in the ideas of living.

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4.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Snyman (2000), people with disabilities do not experience the type of holiday they would like to because of the following reasons:

- Touring: The majority of tourists with disabilities cited the logistics of “on the road“ arrangements as a major obstacle. Modes of transportation are generally inaccessible, especially to people using wheelchairs.
- Overseas trips, hiking, cruises and ecotourism: Tourists with disabilities indicated that these holidays tend to be expensive and that very little information is available on possible holiday packages for people with disabilities and that the usual difficulties with transport and access to leisure areas as well as buildings are also experienced.

Transport seems to be the major difficulty. Accessibility, toilet facilities, seating arrangements, for example the space needed and the area of movement, as well as communication are the main obstacles that tourists with disabilities have to contend with as far as road, air and sea travel is concerned.

As far as entertainment areas and attractions are concerned, people with disabilities experience accessibility as the major obstacle. Issues such as stairways, lack of ramps for wheelchairs, seating arrangements (especially for people using wheelchairs) and non-user friendly toilet facilities represent the major obstacles. In general, people using wheelchairs seem to be experiencing the most difficulties, for example bus doors that are too narrow, ramps that are either not available or too steep to use safely, tables in restaurants that are too low and counters in shops and banks that are
too high. Space in hotel rooms and bathrooms is at a premium, which complicates its use for people with physical disabilities.

The above-mentioned information was obtained from the point of view of tourists with disabilities. The following methods of research and results are from the tourism product owners’ view with regard to tourists with disabilities. This chapter aims to determine what the tourism products owners’ views are with regard to tourists with disabilities as a potential market, facility accessibility as well as their attitudes towards people with disabilities.

As mentioned in chapter 1, one hundred questionnaires were handed out and received from various tourism product owners, when research was done through a convenience sampling method. The purpose of the questionnaire was to create an awareness within the tourism industry of the obstacles that deny tourists with disabilities access to benefits and facilities enjoyed by non-disabled tourists. The scale of the questionnaire will be calculated together to form a 3 point scale, for example strongly agree, agree and strongly disagree and disagree will be calculated together. The results of the questionnaire will now be discussed accordingly.

4.2 RESULTS

The results of this study are organised in the following fashion:

- General information
- Market potential (tourists with disabilities)
- Barriers and constraints
- Accessibility
- Marketing and information
- Universal design.

4.2.1 General information

The following graphs provide information on the following:

- The different types of tourism businesses
- Where the tourism businesses are situated
- The years of experience in the tourism industry
• The primary markets of the tourism businesses.

According to Figure 4.1, 23% of the respondents are tour operators, and 20% other tourism products, for example guest houses owners (According to the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa, (2002) a guest house is either a converted house, manor, etc adapted to accommodate overnight guests or it may be a purpose built facility. A guest house is run as a commercial operation and is often owner-managed. A guest house has public areas which are for the exclusive use of the guest. The owner/manager either lives off-site, or in a separate area within the property), tour brokers, botanical gardens, commuters, crocodile farms, resorts, taverns, shebeens and tourism information centres, 19% are in the hotel industry, 10% owners of lodges, 16% are Bed & Breakfast owners (According to the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa, (2002) a Bed and Breakfast accommodation is usually provided in a family (private) home and the owner/manager lives in the house or on the property. Breakfast is usually served. Bathroom facilities may or may not be en-suite and/or private. In general, the guest shares the public areas with the host family) and travel agencies are in the minority (2%).
Most of the respondents’ businesses, according to Figure 4.2, are situated in the North West province at 26%, 20% in the Limpopo Province, Gauteng (17%), and 16% in Mpumalanga. The minority of the respondents’ businesses are in KwaZulu-Natal (9%), 8% in the Western Cape, 3% in the Eastern Cape and 1% in the Free State.

According to Figure 4.3, 64% of the tourism product owners have had 10 years or fewer experience in the tourism industry, 13% each have 11-15 years and 16-20 years of experience. The minority, (10%), have had 21+ years of experience in the tourism industry. A reason for this can be the fact that the tourism industry in South Africa is a young industry.
The purpose of this question was to determine what the primary markets are that the respondents cater for. In Figure 4.4, 24% cater for tourists with disabilities, adventure tourism (40%), business travellers (59%), and conference tourism (46%). The majority of the respondents cater for pleasure seekers at 66%. 26% cater for other primary markets for functions, for example weddings, overseas tourists interested in South African history and culture, leisure and sport tourists (European athletes), wildlife-safaris, health spa tourists, government officials, schools and religious groups, commuters, mining tourism and tourism information dissemination.

4.2.2 Market potential (tourists with disabilities)

The following information with regard to tourists with disabilities was obtained:

- The market for tourists with disabilities
- Tourists with disabilities as a potential market
- Tourists with disabilities as an economically viable market
- Whether tourists with disabilities are a growing market for travel, sport and leisure oriented products
- If tourism product owners will cater in the future for tourists with disabilities.
Agree• Neither agree nor disagree• Disagree

Figure 4.5: Market for tourists with disabilities

The market for tourists with disabilities is one that is undervalued and misunderstood. According to Figure 4.5, 88% of the respondents agree with the fact that the market for tourists with disabilities is one that is undervalued and misunderstood. 7% neither agree nor disagree, and the minority of the respondents (5%) disagree that the market for tourists with disabilities is one that is undervalued and misunderstood. Figure 4.5 represents the demand side, the supply side was not tested in this study.

Figure 4.6: Tourists with disabilities as a potential market

According to Figure 4.6, 75% of the respondents agree that tourists with disabilities are a potential market. 19% do not agree or disagree. 6% of the respondents disagree that tourists with disabilities are a potential market. From the above-mentioned statistics, the tourism industry sees tourists with disabilities as a potential market. During a pilot study done, 70% of tourists with disabilities go on holiday once a year (Snyman, 2000). According to Van Horn, (2001), Director of SATH, 9% of people with disabilities in the USA travel to foreign destinations and 5% are frequent travellers overseas. The majority of the respondents chose the option “agree” and it indicates that tourism

The needs of tourists with disabilities
products owners are positive with regard to the tourists with disabilities market. Based on an assumed 1% profoundly Deaf and 3% "extremely hard of hearing", the Deaf population internationally is estimated at 240 Million people, 4% of the UN’s estimate of a 6 billion world population.

If one makes the assumption that the same ratio is applicable to the total world population, the following statistics are available on people with hearing impairments:

- An international potential of 25 million Deaf tourists exist (4% of 613m world wide tourism arrivals in 1997); the African potential is 4 million international tourist arrivals (4% of 100m)
- In South Africa, the calculated potential for Deaf international visitors was more than a quarter of a million (4% of 7m)
- In 1997 the potential for Deaf overseas visitors was 62,400 per year (4% of 1.56m in 1997)
- 1.66 million bed nights can be booked each year if each second Deaf visitor brings one hearing guest along
- A potential annual spending of approximately R1 billion, therefore, exists from Deaf tourists to Southern Africa (Smal, 2000).

From the above-mentioned statistics, the market for people with disabilities does exist, both internationally and nationally. The statistics clearly show the economical viability of this market. This also indicates that people with disabilities do travel, in this case people with hearing impairments.

![Figure 4.7: Tourists with disabilities as an economically viable market](image)

76% of the respondents in Figure 4.7 agreed that tourists with disabilities can be regarded as an
economically viable market. 17%, however, neither agreed nor disagreed that tourists with disabilities are an economically viable market. 7% disagreed that tourists with disabilities can be regarded as a viable market. During a pilot study done 30.4% of tourists with disabilities indicated that a holiday budget of R5000+ is available to them (Snyman, 2000).

![Figure 4.8: Tourists with disabilities: a growing market](image)

In Figure 4.8 the majority of the respondents (85%) agree that tourists with disabilities are a growing market for travel, sport and leisure oriented products, whilst 13% neither agree nor disagree. The minority of the respondents (2%) disagree that tourists with disabilities are a growing market for travel, sport and leisure oriented products.

![Figure 4.9: Cater for tourists with disabilities in the future](image)

From the majority of the responses obtained in Figure 4.9, 81% agree that they will in future cater for tourists with disabilities. 13% neither agree nor disagree and the minority of 6% disagree that
they will in future cater for tourists with disabilities. In Figure 4.4 the majority of the respondents do not cater for people with disabilities. From the information obtained in Figures 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8, the tourism product owners clearly feel that people with disabilities are a potential market and in Figure 4.9, there is a positive notion in catering for people with disabilities in the future.

4.2.3 Barriers and constraints

People with disabilities experience various barriers and constraints with regard to travel. The following information was obtained with regard to tourism product owners’ view on the following issues/subject:

- Whether tourists with disabilities will create problems for them
- The cost factor with regard to prices of tour packages and making facilities and transport more accessible
- Tourism product owners’ attitudes towards people with disabilities
- Tour operators and travel agents feeling uncomfortable in dealing with people with disabilities
- The lack of trained personnel
- Lack of availability of accessible transport.

![Figure 4.10: Tourists with disabilities: The problem factor](image)

In Figure 4.10, 11% of the respondents agree that tourists with disabilities will create problems for them. 17% neither agree nor disagree that tourists with disabilities will create problems for them. 72% disagree that tourists with disabilities will create problems for them. The result here is that tourism product owners are positive with regard to people with disabilities.
According to Figure 4.11, the minority (9%), agree that tourists with disabilities have to pay more when staying at a facility or making use of the respondents' services. 7% neither agree nor disagree. 84% disagree that tourists with disabilities have to pay more when staying at a facility or making use of the respondents' services.

From the responses obtained in Figure 4.12, 15% agree that they will experience difficulties with regard to tourists with disabilities. 21% neither agree nor disagree on this matter. The majority disagree (64%) that they will experience any difficulties with regard to tourists with disabilities. In correlation with Figure 4.10, the majority of the respondents have indicated that they don't assume...
that tourists with disabilities will create problems or experience difficulties with regard to tourists with disabilities.

Figure 4.13: Attitude towards people with disabilities

According to Figure 4.13, the majority of the respondents have an excellent attitude towards people with disabilities as 45% and 40% of the respondents have a good attitude towards people with disabilities. 13% say that their attitude is fair, whilst 2% say that their attitude is very poor towards people with disabilities.

Figure 4.14: Losing business as a result of attitudes

According to Figure 4.14, the minority (6%) agree that the respondents are losing business as a result of their attitudes, 20% neither agree nor disagree, and the majority of the respondents (74%) disagree that their attitudes towards people with disabilities are causing them to lose business.
One of the problems that tourists with disabilities face is that tour operators feel uncomfortable in dealing with tourists with disabilities. However, Figure 4.15 indicates that 32% of the respondents agree that tour operators feel uncomfortable in dealing with tourists with disabilities. 30% neither agree nor disagree, whilst 38% disagree that tour operators feel uncomfortable with tourists with disabilities.

The cost factor in making facilities/transport accessible is high. In Figure 4.16, 35% of the respondents agree that the costs will be too high. 29% neither agree nor disagree. 35% disagree that it will cost too much in making a facility/transport accessible.
Figure 4.17: Lack of trained personnel

In Figure 4.17, the respondents indicate that they agree (63%) that a lack of trained personnel with regard to tourists with disabilities is one of the obstacles that South Africa needs to improve on. 20% neither agree nor disagree, 17% disagree that the lack of trained personnel is one of the obstacles South Africa face with regard to tourists with disabilities.

Figure 4.18: Lack of and availability of accessible transport

To provide an effective service to people with disabilities, accessibility and availability of transport is necessary. In Figure 4.18, 69% of the respondents agree that the lack and availability of accessible transport is a major obstacle in providing an effective service to people with disabilities. 16%, however, neither agree nor disagree, whilst 15% disagree that the lack of and availability of accessible transport is major obstacle in providing an effective service to people with disabilities.
According to Figure 4.19, the majority of the respondents (53%) agree that travel agents feel uncomfortable with tourists with disabilities. 28% neither agree nor disagree and the minority of the respondents (19%) indicated that they disagree that travel agents feel uncomfortable with tourists with disabilities. During a pilot study done, 70% of tourists with disabilities were unaware that certain travel agencies cater for tourists with disabilities (Snyman, 2000). According to Van Horn (2001), Director of SATH, 86% of the 27 000 travel agencies affiliated with ASTA receive at least one travel request per month from a person with a disability.

4.2.4 Accessibility

Accessibility is one aspect that needs to be looked at from the point of view of people with disabilities. Tourism product owners feel that their facilities are accessible, for example for people with visual impairments, but no information in Braille (Figure 4.33) or assistive technology for people with hearing impairments is provided.

The following aspects will be looked at from the respondents' point of view:

- The testing of a facility with a person with a disability and the necessity of doing so
- The accessibility of the facility or transport for a person with a physical disability as well as people with visual and hearing impairments
- South Africa’s accessibility for people with disabilities
- Making vehicles and facilities accessible.
Figure 4.20: Testing accessibility with a person with a disability

The purpose of this question was to determine if the tourism product owners will determine if the facility/attraction is accessible before taking a group of tourists with disabilities to the facility/attraction. In Figure 4.20, the majority (84%) of the respondents agree that it is necessary to test a facility's accessibility with a person with a disability. 11% neither agree nor disagree, the minority (5%) disagree in taking a person with a disability to a facility.

Figure 4.21: Accessibility of facility/transport: people with physical disabilities

According to Figure 4.21, 15% of the respondents say that their facility/transport with regard to accessibility is excellent. 36% indicate that the accessibility of the transport/facility for a person with a physical disability is good. 31% say it is fair, whilst 13% say it is poor. 5% indicate that is very poor with regard to the accessibility of the facility/transport for a person with a physical disability.
According to Figure 4.22, 4% of the respondents say that their facility/transport is excellent. 31% indicate that the accessibility for a person with a visual impairment is good. 28% say it is fair, whilst 29% say it is poor. 8% indicate that the accessibility of the facility/transport for a person with a visual impairment is very poor.

According Figure 4.23 the respondents (22%) say that their facility/transport is excellent. 36% indicate that its accessibility for a person with a hearing impairment is good. 28% say it is fair,
whilst 9% said it is poor. 5% indicate that the accessibility of the facility/transport for a person with a hearing impairment is very poor.

![Figure 4.24: South Africa’s accessibility with regard to tourists with disabilities](image)

From the responses obtained, Figure 4.24 indicates that 3% of the tourism product owners think that South Africa’s accessibility with regard to tourists with disabilities is excellent, 11% say it is good, 32% fair, the majority of the respondents (42%) indicate that South Africa’s accessibility is poor and 12% consider it very poor. The above-mentioned statistics clearly show that there is still a lot to be done to improve the accessibility of South Africa with regard to tourist with disabilities.

![Figure 4.25: Make facilities accessible to people with physical disabilities](image)

According to Figure 4.25, the majority of the respondents (84%) indicate that they agree in making their facility accessible to a person with a physical disability, 12% neither agree nor disagree. The minority of the respondents (4%) disagree on making their facility accessible to a person with a physical disability.
Since accessibility of facilities is important to travellers with disabilities, it is necessary for tourism owners to test their facility with regard to its accessibility. On the positive side, 87% of the respondents in Figure 4.26 indicate that they agree on testing their facility in the future with regard to its accessibility. 10% neither agree nor disagree. The minority of the respondents disagree (3%) on testing their facility in the future for its accessibility.

Transport is one of the major barriers that people with disabilities face. According to Figure 4.27, 73% agree on making their transport vehicles accessible to tourists with disabilities. 20% neither agree nor disagree and 7% of the respondents indicate that they would not make their vehicles accessible to tourists with disabilities.
Figure 4.28: South Africa: physically accessibility and barrier-free

According to Figure 4.28, the respondents strongly agree (22%) that SA is accessible and barrier-free to tourists with disabilities. 22% neither agree nor disagree, 56% of the respondents indicate that SA is not physically accessible and barrier-free.

Figure 4.29: Necessity of looking at the accessibility of facilities

To overcome barriers and constraints when taking tourists with disabilities to a facility or attraction, it is necessary to look at the accessibility before taking tourists with disabilities there. In Figure 4.29, the respondents (90%) agree that it is necessary to look at the accessibility of a facility. The minority of the respondents (2%) neither agree nor disagree and the remaining respondents (8%) feel that it is not necessary to look at the accessibility of the facility before taking tourists with disabilities there. In correlation with Figures 4.20 and 4.26, the respondents indicate that looking at
the accessibility of the facilities plays an important role in order to provide a quality service to tourists with disabilities.

4.2.5 Marketing and information

People with disabilities do not travel often due to the lack of information available to them. The following information was obtained with regard to marketing and information:

- Marketing includes information for people with disabilities
- Test market products or services in the disabled community
- Information on people with disabilities
- Providing information in Braille
- Attending conferences on people with disabilities.

![Figure 4.30: Marketing include information for tourists with disabilities](image)

According to Figure 4.30, 48% of the respondents indicate that they include information for tourists with disabilities. 16% neither agree nor disagree, 36% disagree on including information for tourists with disabilities when the respondents do marketing.
Figure 4.31: Test market products or services in the disabled community

Accessibility of facilities, services and other tourism products are important when tourism products owners want to serve people with disabilities. In order to provide quality service, test market the tourism products or services in the disabled community to avoid any misunderstandings, barriers and constraints. Test market means to test the tourism product within the disabled community in order to determine whether the tourism product meets the needs of people with disabilities. In Figure 4.31, 83% agree that it is necessary to test market tourism products or services in the disabled community. 12% neither agree nor disagree and 5% disagree that it is necessary to test market tourism products or services in the disabled community.

Figure 4.32: Information on tourists with disabilities

According to Figure 4.32, 84% of the respondents agree that there is not enough information available on tourists with disabilities for tourism product owners to provide a service to them. 8%
neither agree nor disagree. 8% disagree; they indicate that there is enough information on tourists with disabilities.

![Figure 4.33: Providing information in Braille](image)

In providing quality service and to make the facility accessible to people with disabilities, information should be available in Braille. According to Figure 4.33, the minority of the respondents (5%) provide information in Braille. 9% neither agree nor disagree to providing information in Braille, and the majority of the respondents (86%) don't provide information in Braille.

![Figure 4.34: Conferences with regard to tourists with disabilities](image)

In order to obtain information with regard to tourists with disabilities and their preferences, it is necessary to attend conferences with regard to tourists with disabilities. In Figure 4.34, the respondents (76%) agree that it is necessary to attend conferences on tourists with disabilities to obtain information. 14% neither agree nor disagree, whilst the minority of the respondents (10%)
disagree and find that it is not necessary to attend conferences with regard to tourists with disabilities.

### 4.2.6 Personnel

**Figure 4.35: Training programmes for personnel**

The majority (66%) of respondents (Figure 4.35) are of the opinion that their personnel have to go on training programmes when tourists with disabilities are staying at the facility or make use of their services, to provide quality services to tourists with disabilities. 13% neither agree nor disagree, 21% disagree that their personnel have to go on training programmes.

### 4.2.7 Universal design

As mentioned several times during the study, a universal design means products and buildings that are accessible to and usable by everyone, including people with disabilities. The following information was obtained:

- Universal design in tourism products and services
- Facilities, devices, services and programmes for a diverse clientele.
Universal design is a very important aspect in tourism products and services. Universal design refers to a product designed for the widest number of people. In Figure 4.36, 47% agree that universal design should be included in tourism products and services. 35% neither agree nor disagree, whilst 18% disagree that universal design should be included in tourism products and services.

According to Figure 4.37, the respondents (92%) agree that facilities should be designed to serve an increasingly diverse clientele. 4% neither agree nor disagree, whilst 4% disagree that facilities should be designed to serve an increasingly diverse clientele.
According to Figure 4.40 the respondents (91%) agree that programmes should be designed to serve an increasingly diverse clientele. 6% neither agree nor disagree, whilst 3% disagree that programmes should be designed to serve an increasingly diverse clientele. In Figure 4.36, only 47% of the respondents indicate that a universal design is necessary in tourism products and services. However, Figures 4.37 (92%), 4.38 (92%), 4.39 (92%) and 4.40 (91%) indicate that it is necessary that programmes, facilities, devices and services should serve a diverse clientele. The concept of a universal design was explained, but the respondents did not fully understand the concept and the result that in Figure 4.36 the percentage is so low.

4.3 CONCLUSION

The following main conclusions can be deduced from this study:

Many tourism product owners have limited experience in the tourism industry. People with disabilities are regarded as a potential market as well as an economically viable market, but a lack of trained personnel is a major obstacle and therefore it is going to have an impact on the quality of service. There is a misunderstanding with regard to the meaning of accessibility. The tourism product owners believe their facilities are accessible to people with visual and hearing impairments, but no information is provided in Braille and there is no assistive technology for people with hearing impairments. The feeling is that people with hearing impairments can “see”, so nothing else is needed and people with visual impairments have a family member or assistance from someone and...
do not need information in Braille. Quality information dissemination must take place and marketing should include information to people with disabilities. The tourism product owners deem it necessary that programmes, facilities, devices and services be able to serve a diverse clientele.
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