



ENABLING ACCESSIBLE TOURISM: THE CASE OF KONYA

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Abstract

Accessible tourism is a specific field of tourism focused on the rights of persons with disabilities, those over the age of 65 and families with children to have a satisfactory and quality holiday. According to the records, the rate of individuals who need accessibility or who have become disabled in various classes is 15% of the world's population and 12.6% of Turkey's population. This ratio shows that there are 10 million 500 thousand disabled individuals in Turkey and approximately 1 billion disabled people worldwide. These figures show that this market is of a size that cannot be ignored, in the bottleneck that the tourism industry has entered due to COVID-19. For this reason, it is important for everyone to make basic arrangements in tourism establishments, to provide correct information and to understand the needs of the disabled, to increase tourism revenues and the number of visitors within the framework of tourism understanding for everyone. Within the scope of this study, Konya province, where many tourism development projects are carried out with the launch of "My City" to evaluate its tourism potential, has been examined in terms of accessible tourism opportunities. This study is meaningful and important in terms of including the requirements and limitations for the sustainability of accessible tourism in Konya, attracting the attention of the sector to the subject and guiding future research.

Keywords: Accessible Tourism, Disabilities, Disabled Tourism, Tourism for All, Urban Tourism, Konya

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Introduction

The tourism and accommodation industry has reached a state of maturity where saturated and destructive competition conditions are dominant because of mass tourism activities (Çiçekdağı & İnan, 2018). Considering the travel restrictions, social distances and security problems caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, these serious damages in the global economy have dealt another blow to the sustainability of the tourism industry. Under these conditions, tourism businesses were compelled to identify new markets that were overlooked by their competitors.

In this context, accessible tourism can be considered as one of the niche tourism types that will provide competitive priority. According to the World Report on Disability prepared by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank in 2011, it has been determined that there are more than one billion people living in the world, which constitutes approximately 15% of the world population with various disabilities (WHO; The World Bank, 2011, p. 7). Therefore, it is clear that disabled people, the world's largest minority, have a huge tourism market potential. In this context, facilitating the life of disabled people and planning for disabled people in all areas can be considered as a way of activating this new potential for tourism businesses, as well as being a necessity of being a modern society. Participation in touristic activities, which is an indicator of the inclusion of disabled people in social life, is a basic requirement (Darcy & Dickson, 2009, pp. 32-33).

The provision of tourism-related transport and other infrastructure services is a key factor for the success of accessible tourism. Infrastructure services that do not adequately meet the needs of families with children, the elderly and the disabled leave many destinations out of the accessible tourism market, which is considered a niche market segment (Huh & Singh, 2007). However, due to the way destinations' transportation systems, accommodation and other touristic services are designed, those considered within the accessible tourism market often do not enjoy the same freedom of travel as healthy individuals. Due to accessibility problems, visitors may face different problems at every stage of their travel in terms of access to information, local transportation, accommodation, visits and/or participation in cultural or sports activities (Domínguez, Darcy, & González, 2015).

Accessible tourism for all is a type of tourism where people with disabilities have equal rights to tourism services and opportunities, supported by independent travel, accessible facilities, trained staff, reliable information, and inclusive marketing. In this context, accessible tourism for all not only provides access to people with disabilities, but also creates universally designed environments that can support people with temporary disabilities, families with young children, an increasingly aging population, and the creation of safe and comfortable work environments for workers. (Ambrose, Darcy, & Buhalis, 2012). For the efficiency and sustainability of the tourism industry, accessible tourism for all, which benefits society, should support and develop. As the number of individuals taking advantage of the opportunity to travel increases, new revenues will be generated with more visitors benefiting from mass tourism and the tourism industry recovering from the negative effects of COVID-19, and the tourism season will spread throughout the year. Society will benefit from new job opportunities, greater tax revenue, and an accessible environment without barriers for residents and visitors alike (Neumann, 2012). However, with the right policies and investments, the tourism industry can seize an opportunity to appeal to the important and growing accessible tourism market, gain new customers and increase revenues in times of crisis when bottlenecks are experienced. To this end, the research highlights the importance of eliminating all community access problems in line with the tourism for all approach. In the research, first, the concepts of disability and accessibility were examined, then, within the framework of the legislation that shapes the accessible tourism environment, the level of development of accessible tourism in Konya; accessible environments were examined in terms of destination management and accessible destination experiences.

Literature Review

Definitions

According to the World Health Organization (1980) impairment, disability and handicap are concepts that are close to each other but cannot be easily distinguished. Accordingly, impairment is a permanent or temporary anatomical, or psychological loss of function; disability means any restriction or inhibition of an individual's performance within normal limits resulting from a deterioration; Handicap, on the other hand, is a disadvantage for the individual that limits the performance of a normal activity depending on demographic, social and cultural factors. In this context, disability is defined as a medical or biological dysfunction that is persistent and can be improved with treatment or rehabilitation, significantly limiting one or more vital activities (Burnett

& Baker, 2001). Considering the social aspects of disability, society needs to eliminate physical and communicative problems so that people with disabilities can lead a standard life. Disability arises from environmental and attitudinal social barriers that prevent individuals from participating effectively in social activities.

In terms of tourism, disabled person means a person whose full and effective participation in travel, accommodation, and other tourism services on an equal basis with others is hindered by barriers in their environment. Persons with disabilities include persons with long-term physical, mental or sensory impairments, as well as other persons who may be included in this group due to problems in accessing tourism services, the temporarily disabled, the elderly, luggage carriers, families with small children, or persons of abnormally tall or short stature (United Nations, 2007).

Tourism for All approach is a form of tourism that requires cooperation with all tourism stakeholders to ensure that people with various physical and communicative access needs benefit from tourism and travel services in an independent, equitable and respectable manner. Making necessary and appropriate changes when needed, to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy or enjoy all human rights and freedoms on an equal basis with others, forms the basis of the tourism approach for all. According to this approach, the design of products and services of touristic destinations should be made in accordance with all potential users without the need for adaptation. However, it also includes the use of assistive devices for certain groups of people with disabilities (Tourism for ALL, 2014).

Infrastructure and Service Requirements for Accessible Tourism for All

In tourism destinations, the necessary practices to ensure that the disabled have access to communication technologies, physical environment, transportation services, accommodation facilities and other services on an equal basis with everyone can be examined under six headings. These are listed as follows (World Health Organization, 2007);

- **Local governments of Touristic Destinations** should evaluate the infrastructure services offered and identify any changes that may be needed. For a city or region to create a visitable environment, it must have the necessary accessible facilities, infrastructure, and transportation. It will not be possible to evaluate potential market opportunities for a destination that has limited local transport facilities or does not have transport links with other tourist destinations.
- International symbols should be used in tourism **promotion and advertisements**, and accessible services and facilities should be clearly stated. General tourist information should include explanations for disabled tourists. Accessible contact information of the relevant business must be included in the promotional brochures. A list of all support services for tourists with disabilities in tourist destinations should be shared on public social media networks. The list of these services should, generally, include businesses providing the repair and replacement of prostheses and equipment, veterinary clinics for guide dogs for the visually impaired, and specialized medical care centers. Tourists with disabilities should be informed about the accessibility levels of advertised facilities and services, reservation systems and reservation procedures.
- **Urban and Architectural Infrastructure** opportunities are among the most important criteria determining accessibility. These (Akıncı, Çelik, & Elinç, 2021):
 - **Parking Areas:** vehicle parking areas and passenger drop off/unload areas should be specially designed for the use of disabled individuals in accommodation facilities, the closest places to museums and archaeological sites, and this should be emphasized with signs.
 - **Communication:** It is necessary to be able to use sign language in the target destinations, to have entrance cards or documents prepared in alphabets for the visually impaired, and to have personnel trained in all these procedures.
 - **Signs:** There should be functional signage warning signs designed to be easily used by disabled people, and sign roads should be placed on walking paths so that visually impaired people can follow their paths.
 - **Horizontal Movements:** There should be paths or corridors that are wide enough for disabled people to use, such as corridors, walking paths, visiting areas.
 - **Vertical Movements:** The use of elevators should be widespread in places with vertical walking distances. If it is impossible to use an elevator, there must be disabled ramps or support bars on the stairs. Thus, disabled individuals will be able to move easily in areas where up-down or down-up displacements are obligatory to participate in tourism activities.

- **Local Transportation:** For disabled people to travel comfortably in tourism destinations, public transportation vehicles should be designed ergonomically for the use of these individuals. In addition, there should be parking spaces suitable for the use of disabled individuals in accommodation facilities, museums, and historical sites. Ferries, buses, taxis, trams, and similar passenger vehicles should be designed in a way that allows people with disabilities or reduced mobility to travel safely and comfortably. Disabled people should be considered in visual or auditory announcements made to passengers. Emergency procedures should be communicated in alternative formats, including sign language and writing. All terminals and stations should have ramps or lifts where necessary for easy access. Traffic lights with audible and visual signals should be provided at pedestrian crossings so that the visually or hearing impaired can pass safely.
- There should be **rest stops** at regular intervals on main streets and especially on toll roads. These stops should have toilets and emergency phones accessible to everyone, especially disabled passengers. In toilets, the dimensional dimensions required for the transition between the wheelchair and the toilet should be considered. Access to faucets and other mechanisms should be provided. Additional costs of implementing physical accessibility measures should not be charged to customers with disabilities as different fees.
- The sleeping areas, bathrooms, and terraces in the rooms of **accommodation establishments**, which are fully accessible without the need for assistance, should be designed in such a way that the guest can move freely and independently. In the case of any maneuvers, the spatial requirements and technical assistance required for the safety and comfort of the person must be considered. All areas of use of accommodation facilities should have alarm systems suitable for hearing-impaired guests and communication systems with authorities. Guide dogs for the visually impaired should be admitted to the establishment and should provide the necessary materials to facilitate their stay. Restaurants, cafes, and bars should have outside access, furniture designed for wheelchair users, counters of different heights, easy-to-use menus, and accessible toilets. Menus should include additional options for people with different types of food intolerance. Conference facilities should have special seats or reserved areas for wheelchair users.
- **Museums, theatres, cinemas, shopping malls and similar touristic places** should solve horizontal or vertical access problems by providing ramps or elevators as appropriate, and there should be special seats and areas for the use of the disabled. All announcements must be made visually and audibly. Specialized customer service personnel should be available to welcome and serve disabled visitors. Wheelchairs or other devices should be available for visitors with limited mobility.
- Wagons used for **excursions in recreation, leisure and sports activities** should be arranged in a way suitable for the physically handicapped. Announcements should be made audible and visual; sign language interpreters and printed brochures should be available in all places visited.

Participation in mainstream sports activities at all levels should be encouraged by providing easy and comfortable access for the disabled to stadiums, racetracks, and similar facilities.

There should be accessible paths connecting toilets and other services and facilities in green areas and natural environments. Paths should have convenient access for wheelchair and executive vehicle users and should be equipped with adapted fountains and benches. Drain covers and grates around trees should be flush with the pavement and firmly fixed to the ground.

Accessible routes should be in place to access beaches, information points, facilities, or services. Beaches should have walkways and ramps, covered sun and shade areas, adapted changing stations and services, amphibious chairs for bathing in, and similar equipment.

Training and Importance of Personnel in Accessible Tourism

Tourism is a labor-intensive industry. As a general feature of service industries, production and consumption are carried out simultaneously. In this context, destinations and touristic places must be supported by professional and expert personnel. Staff at tourist attractions play a key role in reducing potential shortages in access or solving the problem in unforeseen emergencies. Therefore, professional employees trained in disability awareness and customer service will increase the level of satisfaction by minimizing the problems faced by disabled people (Hausemer, Ambrose, Ito, & Auzinger, 2012).

The personnel of tourism enterprises and related services should have the necessary equipment to identify the wishes and needs of disabled customers and to produce solutions. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons

with Disabilities (UN, 2007) also states that staff must receive appropriate training on disability rights to treat people with disabilities in a courteous and effective manner, to provide services that are universally guaranteed, and to fully explain the functioning of facilities.

Staff should provide accessible information about mobility aids, technical devices, and assistive technologies to persons with disabilities, including new technologies and other forms of assistance, support services, and facilities available in the organization. Any needed facilitating services should be provided, including guides, readers, and professional sign language interpreters, to facilitate access to buildings and other facilities for persons with disabilities.

A list of rooms or seat numbers for disabled persons should be available in the security department or authorities in vehicles that accommodate and transport persons with disabilities, as a precaution in the event of an emergency. All personnel should be trained to evacuate disabled people in an emergency. Emergency drills should be conducted routinely in accordance with laws and regulations.

Methodology

Research Objective

The aim of the study is to emphasize the strengths and weaknesses of Konya, which has cultural and historical tourist attractions, in terms of accessible tourism potential. In terms of accessible tourism standards in Konya, touristic values and services will be examined and Konya's compliance with accessible tourism standards will be evaluated by document analysis method. Konya is in a rising trend in the process of activating its sustainable tourism potential, with the effect of both the projects and promotion campaigns carried out by local governments and the social responsibility activities of non-governmental organizations. In this context, as a result of the study, various suggestions will be made that can contribute to the development of accessible tourism in the city. The study is meaningful and important as it contributes to future scientific research and the development of the tourism sector.

Material and Method

Konya is located in the middle of the Central Anatolian region, which is the largest province of Turkey in terms of the area. Its city code is 42, its population is 2,108,808 and its area is 40,451 square kilometers. Konya, the capital of the Seljuk State, is a city with a high cultural interaction with its thousands of years of history. Konya, Turkey's largest city in terms of area, offers many touristic opportunities to its visitors, as well as many projects are being developed in cooperation with the public-private sector and many touristic investments are realized to increase the tourist potential (Vikipedi, 2022).

This research is qualitative research. In the first part of the research, accessible tourism is conceptually discussed, and accessible tourism definitions are made and information about the infrastructure and service needs of accessible tourism standards for everyone is provided. Secondary data sources were used in the research, besides the tourism literature, Konya Governorship, Konya Province Culture and Tourism Directorate, Konya Provincial Special from the booklets, reports and publications of the Administration has been used.

In the last part, document analysis was made in terms of accessible tourism potential of Konya Province and the strengths and weaknesses of the city were determined. In the study, the accessible environment and accessible building evaluation of the touristic indoor and outdoor places of Konya; United Nations (2003-04) related literature and T.C. The Ministry of Family and Social Services General Directorate of Services for the Disabled and Elderly (2022) was carried out in line with its study titled "2030 Unhindered Vision".

According to Miles and Huberman (2016), techniques such as discourse analysis and document analysis are used in addition to descriptive and content analysis in qualitative data analysis, which consists of data collection, extraction, and conclusion stages. Document analysis is qualitative research that meticulously and systematically analyses the content of written documents. In qualitative research like other methods used, document analysis requires the examination and interpretation of data to make sense of it, to form an understanding about the subject, and to develop empirical knowledge. Document analysis provides advantages to its users in terms of time usage, sample size, usability, low cost, individuality, and originality (Kıral, 2020).

This study has been prepared in accordance with scientific rules, ethics, and citation rules; no falsification has been made on the collected data and this study has not been sent to any other academic publication medium for evaluation. Since this study is based on document analysis, there is no obligation for an ethics committee

decision. From the drafting of the research article to the final version, the author contributed to all processes with his knowledge and equipment and evaluated and approved the final version. This study did not lead to any individual or institutional/organizational conflict of interest.

Investigation of Konya Province in terms of Accessible Tourism

Touristic Attractions of Konya Province

Konya is among the cities that stand out in terms of Faith Tourism, especially with the Mevlana Museum and Aya Elena Church. According to the visitor data of the Central Directorate of Revolving Fund Management (DÖSİMM), regarding museums and ruins affiliated to the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, with 1 million 507 thousand 264 visitors, the Mevlana Museum is the most visited museum of Turkey (DHA, 2022; T.C. Konya İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü, 2022).

Figure 1. Mevlana Museum



(Nemati, 2018)

Hagia Elena Church is in Sille village. In 372 A.J., Helena, the mother of Byzantine Emperor Constantine, stopped by Konya on her way to Jerusalem for pilgrimage and decided to build a temple in Sille. This church, which shows that different cultures lived together in history, has a special meaning for Anatolian civilizations. Sille Village, which has a history of 5000 years; It bears traces of Roman, Byzantine, Seljuk, and Ottoman times. When we look at the history of the village, there are data dating back to the Neolithic Age. The village, which was a center on trade routes in the past, has kept different cultures alive (T.C. Konya Valiliği İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü, 2015).

Figure 2. Aya Elena Church



(Sisi, 2013)

Konya, which was the capital of the Seljuk State, therefore stands out with its cultural values such as İnce Minaret, Sırçalı Madrasa, Alaeddin Mosque, Şerafeddin Mosque, Aziziye Mosque, Sultan Selim Mosque and Seljuk Palace. At the same time, Çatalhöyük, one of the oldest settlements in Anatolia, contributes significantly to Konya's tourism.

Çatalhöyük is approximately 35 km far from Konya. It is one of the most important archaeological sites in the world. History BC Çatalhöyük, which dates to 7000-8000 years, provides important information about the

social life of the period with the original finds of the first settlement, first house architecture and first sacred structures in the history of humanity (Figure 3). Çatalhöyük took its place in the UNESCO World Tangible Cultural Heritage Inventory in 2012 (UNESCO, 2012). From this point of view, Konya is a remarkable destination with its cultural tourism.

Figure 3. Çatal Höyük Excavations



(Béla, 2005)

Beyşehir Lake, located in Konya, ranks first in Turkey in terms of the number of islands in the lake. There are also Roman and Byzantine ruins on the islands. A temple was found on Kirse and Hacıarif islands, a tomb and bath in Kızılada, and a Roman tomb on Kuşkondu island. Ancient ruins on the island of Mindıras, and the ruins of the baths on the Chechen and Akburun islands will also attract the attention of the over 65 age group, which is called the third age group in terms of different cultural attractions. When the waters receded, a cemetery can be seen in the southwest of Höyük Island and an ancient settlement on Manarga Island. After the Turkish domination, in 1277, around the Gölyaka village, the citadel of the Kubadabad palace was built on Kızkalesi Island (Vikipedi, 2022). At the same time, Beyşehir Lake beach has been put into service in the town where the Mediterranean climate is dominant, with the necessary conditions in terms of accessible tourism. Yakamanastır Nature Park (T.C. Tarım ve Orman Bakanlığı, 2016), stands out with its camping area, mountain, and landscape viewing point. Beyşehir and its surroundings appeal to both culture and nature tourism.

The Anatolian Wild Sheep, which is one of the endemic species of Turkey, living on the slopes of the Taurus Mountains in Konya, and known as "Ceren" among the people because of its large and beautiful eyes, is the most important animal species (Güler, 2022). The relatively uninhabited surroundings of Tuz Lake allow various birds to live, as they can swim in the unfrozen lake waters even in the coldest days of winter, with the opportunity to feed comfortably in the surrounding puddles, pastures, and cultivated areas. For this reason, Konya comes to the fore in terms of Bird Watching Tourism. Salt Lake is on the World Heritage Tentative List (Vikipedi, 2022). At the same time, mountain walks in the Taurus Mountains bring Konya to the forefront in terms of Nature Tourism.

Figure 4. Lake Tuz



(Tor, 2016)

Congress tourism is growing and developing rapidly. In addition to the promotional contribution, they make to the countries and cities where they are held, the positive effects they provide in economic terms cannot be denied. Congress assets of Konya the 2016 Islamic Tourism Capital are Mevlana Cultural Centre, Metropolitan Municipality Sports and Congress Centre, Konya Chamber of Commerce (Congress and Exhibition Centre) and Selcuklu Congress Centre. It is seen that Konya has a high infrastructure and potential for congress tourism, but there are deficiencies in the necessary promotion and organization. In addition, the lack of direct international flights is the biggest obstacle for international organizations. Creating Congress Tourism activity in Konya, which is geographically the center, by making the necessary promotions and organizations, will make an important contribution in terms of increasing tourism revenues (Garda, Kurnaz, & Avcı, 2016).

Evaluation of Konya in terms of Accessible Tourism Standards for All

Local Government of Konya Tourism Promotion Activities

Konya local government is constantly carrying out projects to ensure that Konya, which is an agricultural and industrial city, gets the share it deserves from tourism, by establishing the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for tourism stakeholders. The Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan, financed by Konya Metropolitan Municipality, the Republic of Turkey, the European Union, and the World Bank, is one such example (Global Survey, 2022). In the post-COVID-19 normalization process, Konya local government organizes regular consultation meetings with tourism operators, tourism associations and travel agencies. Revised as a result of these meetings, it is aimed to increase the brand value and promote the city with the Akyokuş Pavilion and Palette Arrangement, the Capsule Technology Platform, Turkey's Largest Library project and the launch of "My City" (Konya Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2020; Konya Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2021).

Youth Council, established by Konya Metropolitan Municipality, regularly develops projects for the promotion of the city. The first of the activities, which started with the slogan "Another Look at My City", is the excursion program realized in Sille. In the program for university students, the photos and short videos taken were shared on social media accounts with the hashtag "#SilleyeBaşkaBirBakış". The Metropolitan Municipality Youth Assembly awarded the owners of one photograph and one short video to be selected among these posts, through the Young Culture Card (Konya Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2022).

In addition, 3 December Day of Persons with Disabilities is actively celebrated by local government authorities. "Accessible City" studies are carried out intensively, with the support of disabled associations, to include disabled people more in social and social life. For example, AFAD Technical Sign Language Program was implemented with the "KOMEK ATİD Project system", which is carried out jointly with AFAD Provincial Directorate to ensure communication between officials and hearing impaired in case of possible disasters (Konya Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2021).

Similarly, with the "Great Larende Transformation Project" implemented with the cooperation of Konya Metropolitan Municipality and Meram Municipality, it is expected that the region will gain a great deal in terms of history, culture, and tourism (Konya Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2022). In the meantime, Konya Gastronomy development is also given importance by Konya Metropolitan Municipality. Organized "Konya GastroFest", more than 250 thousand taste buffs were hosted for 3 days. In the festival, where Konya Palace Cuisine and delicious local delicacies were introduced, a special event area for children, concerts, music concerts and interviews were held (Konya Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2021).

Urban and Architectural Infrastructure Opportunities

- **Parking Areas:** Parking lots in the city center of Konya have suitable features for the use of disabled tourists. There are lots of parking lots in places where tourist attractions are located. There is a landing and boarding area for the disabled, especially in front of the entrance to the Mevlana Museum and Seljuk Palace, and Ince Minaret, and the disabled parking lot is marked with the disabled symbol. In Konya districts, the capacity of the park areas is not sufficient during periods of high visitor density. Special areas and landing and boarding areas for the disabled are in certain centers. The distance between some museums and disabled parking areas can exceed 25 meters.
- **Communication:** There are no personnel who can use sign language for hearing impaired individuals in accommodation facilities, shopping malls, restaurants, and other areas. This problem can be resolved in group visits to touristic places, if prior information is given, by requesting a specialist in the Education of the Hearing and Visually Impaired from the Konya Sign Language Education Association and the Konya Directorate of National Education. There are no specialist personnel in the tourism information office who can use sign language.

- **Signs:** The Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (Global Survey, 2022), financed by the Republic of Turkey, the European Union and the World Bank; It is aimed to increase sustainable transportation (pedestrian, bicycle and public transportation) in transportation, to provide an accessible transportation system for everyone, and to increase safety in transportation. In this context, opinions and suggestions are taken from the local people through questionnaires to determine the projects. Therefore, accessibility in urban transportation is an important subject for the local government. There are signs and signs that will increase the mobility of the visually, hearing and walking disabled people, both on the walking paths and in museums and similar places. Guidance boards are placed at 140 cm and 160 cm heights in accordance with the standards. There is also an audible warning system at traffic lights.
- **Horizontal Movements:** The width of the walking paths in the center and other touristic areas are in appropriate sizes to facilitate the comfortable use and inclusion of disabled people. Concrete slab stone, lean concrete and cube stone were used as covering material on the floor. Pedestrian crossings, pavement, warning surface and ramp arrangements; The surface of the pedestrian crossings and the two-way ramp at the tram stops comply with the standards. In the city center, there are guidelines and tactile surface application for the visually impaired on the roads. However, trees on the sidewalks in some areas have been narrow the width for crossings with prams. Museum entrances are generally zero ground, and if there is a threshold, they are supported by ramps with a slope of less than 5% in popular centers. Main streets and public transport stops are equipped with resting benches suitable for the elderly and disabled.
- **Vertical Movements:** In the historical museums in the city, there is no infrastructure such as elevators and escalators to provide vertical movements, due to the unsuitable historical features of the buildings. However, the crowded points of the city were supported by overpasses. The elevators on the overpasses are designed for the use of the disabled, the elderly and families with children. However, the step widths on the stairs have the effect of making movement difficult for individuals with physical disabilities.
- **Local Transportation:** The province of Konya provides travel opportunities for people with disabilities by public transportation. Public transport services to areas with high tourist attractions are provided by city buses and trams. There are special areas for disabled passengers in the vehicles. With the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (Global Survey, 2022) ; It is aimed to increase sustainable transportation in transportation in terms of pedestrian ways, bicycle paths and public transportation. In addition, the stops are arranged in accordance with the standards for the use of disabled people.

Accommodation Businesses

As seen in Table 1, according to the data of Konya Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism for 2022, there are 164 accommodation facilities in Konya with tourism operation certificate, municipality certificate, investment certificate and public institution guesthouses. Among these facilities, the architecture of the 4- and 5-star hotels with tourism certificates and their applications for the disabled are suitable for the disabled. When the number of rooms for the disabled in Konya hotel establishments is examined, it is seen that 53.3% have 2 rooms for the disabled, 26.7% have 1 room for the disabled, and 6.7% have 3 rooms for the disabled. None of the hotel establishments have disabled rooms on the ground floor (Büyüksalvarcı, Şapçılar, & Tuncel, 2017).

Chart 1. Number of Konya Accommodation Establishments in 2022

Hotel with Tourism Operation Certificate	Number of Hotels	Bed Capacity
5-Star	8	3542
4-Star	8	1715
3-Star	16	1546
2-Star	2	54
Special Certificated	4	96
Municipality Certified Hotel	94	5255
Investment Certificate Hotel	3	410
Public Institution Guesthouse	29	1300
TOTAL	164	13918

Source: (Konya İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü, 2022).

Disabled parking spaces at the hotel's parking areas and main entrances are visibly marked with the disabled symbol, but the width is not sufficient in most hotels. There is no "call reception number: xxx" text in disabled

parking areas. The width of the main entrance door and other doors is appropriate. The width of the indoor and outdoor access roads is sufficient, and the slopes of the ramps are suitable, but the stairs are not slip-proof. In addition, the first and last steps of the stairs are not colored with a different color than the floor color. Reception height does not have an 80 cm height section suitable for wheelchair users in most hotels. However, there are tables and chairs near the reception desk and the area is well lit. Many hotel establishments have relief writings for the visually impaired where necessary. There are accessible desks in the lobby. No clearly marked sockets were found for power wheelchairs. Elevators are wide enough for the use of the walking disabled in most hotels, but it has been determined that some hotels have an audio warning system for the visually impaired, while others do not. Visual signs for the hearing impaired were found to be sufficient in most hotels. The doors of the general area toilets are designed to open outwards, and the heights of the handwashing areas are at appropriate heights. It is seen that the toilets and bathrooms in the hotel rooms are suitable for disabled use. It has been observed that some of the special systems are available for orthopedically disabled people to enter the pool and some are not available. Most hotel businesses have special arrangements for the disabled in their restaurants. It is possible to say that most of the hotels have specially trained personnel to serve the disabled, and they have personnel who have sufficient knowledge to serve.

Convention Centers, Shopping Centers, and Sports Activity Centers

In their research, Aslan & Acar (2020) determined that in the evaluation of the open spaces and interior spaces of Konya Mevlana Congress Centre, accessibility of the physically handicapped users had difficulties in transportation and access to the cultural center. However, It would be true to say that congress centers can be brought into compliance with the standards with minor adjustments and maintenance. Congress and fair events are places that should be given importance as they increase the occupancy rates in Konya. If congress tourism is directed in a healthy way, it will make a great contribution to the economy of Konya.

In Konya, many competitions are held in different branches such as football, handball, basketball, volleyball and so on. For example, many guests from abroad came to Konya in the International Rumi Children's Sports Games. In these organizations, not only the athletes, but also the technical team and the families of the players come. There are also disabled guests among the guests.

For Konya to become a center of attraction, the expectations of each guest must be met in accordance with the standards. Seating areas reserved for the use of the disabled, parking lot applications, markings, horizontal and vertical mobility standards have been applied in the places where sports competitions are held and in shopping centers. With the necessary maintenance and repair work, it will become more suitable for people with disabilities. In the areas where food and beverage services are provided, facilities suitable for the disabled individuals to receive comfortable and quality service are provided. In the walking areas and parks, areas where the walking disabled can move freely are provided. In addition, audio guides for the use of visually impaired individuals are provided in popular venues. There are warning and warning systems in touristic sightseeing areas to guide disabled guests.

With these findings, it has been determined that the necessary projects are carried out by the local government to design an accessible tourism destination of Konya province, and the promotion and marketing activities are carried out effectively. It has been determined that especially the city center of Konya is suitable in terms of accessible tourism opportunities and infrastructure because of the maintenance and repair works.

Conclusion

As stated in the 2011 report of the World Health Organization, 15% of the world consists of adult disabled people. Considering that disabled people, the world's largest heterogeneous minority, do not travel alone, their participation in tourism activities will revive the tourism activities of countries. In addition, to increase the quality of life of people with disabilities around the world, their participation in social activities is supported, and their participation in travel and tourism activities is encouraged.

Countries that make significant investments and studies in accessible tourism, which is an important niche tourism type in the context of combating the effects of COVID-19, primarily contribute to the improvement of their citizens' quality of life and happiness by supporting their touristic travels. In addition, these countries increase in the income of the tourism sector with the participation of both their own citizens and foreign citizens in travel and tourism activities. It is possible with the cooperation and coordination of the government, relevant public institutions, and the private sector to implement the accessible tourism type and to ensure sustainability.

Considering the needs of the elderly who prefer the spring and autumn months to be protected from extreme heat or cold, the idle capacity rates will decrease with the increase in occupancy rates in the low season and tourism activities will be spread throughout the year. Thus, by ensuring the continuity and sustainability of employment, there will be a positive increase in gross national product and national income at the country level.

As stated in the list published by the United Nations World Tourism Organization in 2015, 7 cities with accessible touristic infrastructure elements in the European continent are specified as Accessible Cultural Heritage Cities (Diker & Çetinkaya, 2016). These; In Switzerland, these are the cities of Lausanne, Geneva, Lucerne, Bern, Basel and Zurich, and Bordeaux in France. The cities in question offer the participants opportunities that will enable individuals with all disability types to travel comfortably and participate in tourism activities. Taking these cities as an example, carrying out similar infrastructure and superstructure activities in Konya and all other touristic destinations will ensure that the tourism potential of the relevant regions is fully utilized. Development and sustainability of accessible tourism in the world and in our country; It depends on the provision of the services provided in accordance with adequate and acceptable standards. In this context, in this study, reports on accessible designs that will facilitate the lives of people with disabilities, academic studies and standards published by international and national institutions on standards were examined at the international level. If the practices in exemplary cities are implemented as a standard in Konya and other tourism destinations, both the disabled people will be able to gain their natural right to travel and accommodation freedom, and all businesses in the region will increase their income levels. Therefore, a total social benefit will be achieved.

As a result, the original aspect of this research, which differentiates it from previous studies and makes it important, is the examination of the accessible tourism potential of Konya in terms of its touristic values. It is thought that the research will make important contributions to both the academic literature and the public and private sectors in terms of effective evaluation of the touristic values Konya has. Most importantly, if Turkey's Konya and other provinces that will consider the overlooked accessible tourism market, it will be able to contribute significantly to our country's increase in its share in world tourism and to have a positive image and promotion advantage in world tourism.

Ethical Statement

The study named "Enabling Accessible Tourism: The Case of Konya" has been prepared in accordance with scientific rules, ethics, and citation rules; no falsification has been made on the collected data and this study has not been sent to any other academic publication medium for evaluation. Since this study is based on document analysis, there is no obligation for an ethics committee decision.

Contribution Rate Statement

From the drafting of the research article to the final version, the author contributed to all processes with his knowledge and equipment and evaluated and approved the final version.

Conflict Statement

This study did not lead to any individual or institutional/organizational conflict of interest.

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