

## Research Article

Oliver Chikuta\*, Forbes Kabote, Nyasha Chikanya

# Tour guides experiences with tourists with disabilities

<https://doi.org/10.1515/ejthr-2017-0012>

received June 19, 2017; accepted December 10, 2017

**Keywords:** Tour guiding; Disabled tourists; Guiding experience; Developing countries

**Abstract:** The market of tourists with disabilities consists of a sizeable percentage of total tourism and is rapidly growing globally but little is known about tour guides experiences with them. These tourists with disabilities seem to have less holiday offers thereby reducing the frequency of tour guide encounters with them. While most tourism literature supports tour guides and their contribution to tourist experience, very little research is done in developing countries to show experiences of tour guides with tourists with disabilities. There is a knowledge gap of how the interactions between the guide and tourists with disabilities participating in the guided tours influence the tour guides' experience. Using face to face interviews and focus group discussions with tour guides the study sought to establish people with disabilities types of holidays, concerns they raise during tours and challenges encountered by tour guides when touring with PwD. Non-probability, namely convenience and judgemental sampling methods were followed to pick tour guides from museums and national parks. Study results revealed the activities that tour guides are offering people with disabilities, guides' own choice of activities for tourists with disabilities and the challenges faced by tour guides in the provision of those activities. The study concludes that the guiding industry has inadequate information about tourists with disabilities and thus is failing to fully serve the market. Lastly the study provides a set of recommendations that can be used by the tour guiding industry in order to effectively serve the market of tourists with disabilities.

## 1 Introduction

A tour guide is described as a leader who directs people through attractions, showing them what to see and do, where to position themselves in order to view the attractions and does so in entertaining interpretive ways (Zillinger *et al.*, 2012). At the centre of experience, the guide is required to be at once a performer, entertainer and an interpreter (Overend, 2012). The Professional Tour Guide Association of San Antonio believes that the secret for a tour guide to deliver a successful tour is if the tour guide loves and enjoys the subject that they will be presenting to the tourists (Professional Tour Guide Association of San Antonio, 1997). Professional Tour Guide Association of San Antonio (1997) define a tour guide as a person with an effective combination of enthusiasm, knowledge, personality qualities and high standards of conduct and ethics who leads groups to the important sites, while providing interpretation and commentary.

Tour guiding has been an area of research activity for the past years. Robotic (2010) asserts that Cohen (1985) was the pioneer of making tourists guiding a matter of scientific research and gave the origins and evolution of the role of tour guides. Cohen (1985), identified that tour guides serve four major functions which are: instrumental, social, interactionary, and communicative and he recognises four types of guides which are: Originals, Animators, Tour Leaders, and Professionals. Cohen (1985) claims Professionals are similar to mentors, but while the original role of the mentor was spiritual and intellectual guidance, the communicative function of the professional/mentor tour guide has four components which are; itinerary selection, correct and precise information dissemination, interpretation of what is seen and experienced and lastly fabrication, which is, presenting fake information as though it were genuine/true.

---

\*Corresponding author: Oliver Chikuta, Chinhoyi University of Technology, P Bag 7724, Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe, Email: chikutao@gmail.com

Forbes Kabote, Chinhoyi University of Technology, P Bag 7724, Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe

Nyasha Chikanya, Midlands State University, P Bag 9055, Gweru, Zimbabwe

In agreement with Cohen (1985), Weiler and Ham (2000) believed that the interpretive skills of tour guides can enhance the quality of tourists' experiences as they see that the interpretation skills are dependent on the tour guides ability to know what can and should be done. The findings of these authors overlooked that tourists interests can differ, and that functions and components that make up tour guiding are applicable to tourists with disabilities also.

## 1.1 Disability and tourism

Disability can be described as any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability that one encounters which hinders them from performing an activity in the manner or within the range considered as normal for a human being (United Nations, 2008). The UK Disability Discrimination Act describes a 'disabled person' as someone who "has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities" (Office of Public Sector Information, 1995). Disability means that a person may have physical, cognitive/mental, sensory, emotional, developmental impairment or some combination of these. Disability can be categorized into four different types: hearing disability, sight disability, physical disability and intelligence deficiency (Daniels, Rodgers, & Wiggins, 2005).

There are a number of important legislative declarations on the issue of people with disabilities (PwD) and tourism. The first is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948. It states that all human beings are born free and are equal in dignity and rights. Moreover, everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in that declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status (article 2). It is also declared that everyone has the right to freedom of movement (article 13) and the right to rest and leisure (article 24) (United Nations, 1948).

The second is the Manila Declaration on World Tourism in 1980. It declares that the ultimate aim of tourism is to improve the quality of life and the creation of better living conditions for all peoples (World Tourism Organization, 1980). Despite having all these legal support for PwDs in the tourism industry the market still fails to fully supply or cater for their needs and concerns with regard to tour guiding.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) of 2006 is the third. The UNCRPD

has 25 preamble paragraphs and 50 articles that form a framework for the realisation of the rights of the disabled (UNCRPD, 2006). Of particular interest to the tourism and hospitality sector are articles 3, 9 and 30. Articles 3 and 9 emphasise that there should be non-discrimination in opportunities and access to facilities. Tourism and hospitality service providers are mandated to ensure that anyone, regardless of their abilities, is given an equal opportunity to enjoy life and access must be guaranteed. Article 9 obliges state parties to take appropriate measures to ensure PwDs' access, on an equal basis to the non-disabled, to the physical environment, and transport and other utilities. To this effect, buildings, roads, vehicles and other indoor and outdoor facilities must be made accessible to PwDs (UNCRPD, 2006). From a tourism point of view, outdoor facilities may include recreational parks and adventure tourism facilities, among others. Furthermore, state parties are mandated to ensure that private entities that offer facilities and services open to the public must adhere to principles of universal accessibility so that people with a variety of disabilities can use them. This is applicable to most tourist facilities since they are open to the public.

The title of article 30 is "Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport". This suggests that tourism and recreation are important elements in the lives of PwDs. In this sense, recreational facilities such as theatres, cinemas, museums, libraries and tourism services must be made accessible and enjoyable to PwDs (UNCRPD) as well as other stakeholders. State parties are also mandated to ensure that PwDs have access to services from those involved in the organisation of recreational, tourism and sporting activities.

Research on the needs and experiences of PwD in the hospitality sector has grown rapidly in recent years (Chikuta, 2015; Darcy, 2010; McKercher *et al.*, 2003; Poria, Reichel, & Brandt, 2010). The need for promoting accessible tourism has been realised because of the rising number of PwD, recognition of the potential market for profits and civil right to holidays (Poria, Reichel, & Brandt, 2009). According to the World Health Organization (2011), approximately 650 million people worldwide now have some form of disability, which gives an average of 10% of the population throughout the world. The average rate of disability varies from 10% to 20% of the population in Western developed countries, while in China around 6% of the population have disabilities, representing roughly 83 million people. By 2030, this figure is expected to rise to between 85 million and 87 million (China Disabled Persons' Federation, 2013). The number of PwD is increasing because medical technolog-

ical advancements now support more of them to survive and live an active life (Saito, 2006). Due to these medical advancements PwD are now capable of travelling even more but the tour guiding industry is failing to have any advancements in order for them to cater for the tourists with disabilities as well.

Studies show that persons with disabilities spend a significant amount of their earning during their trips which indicates their active participation in tourism activities. The EU forum (2001), estimates that 70% of PwD are capable of and desire to participate in tourism activities. Yet, one third of them have never travelled abroad on day trips because of accessibility problems (European Disability Forum, 2001). Another study shows that travellers with disabilities took 31.7 million trips per year in the United States and spent \$13.6 billion annually. These travellers would double their travel spending if enhancements to accessibility such as service and amenities were made (Open Doors Organization, 2005). Westcott (2004) and Burnett and Bender-Baker (2001) are of the view that customers with disabilities are loyal customers. They often return to places that provide good accessibility and services. All of these studies find that PwD represent a significant yet untapped market. These findings gave reason for the researchers to investigate what tour guiding as an industry is doing to become accessible to tourists with disabilities.

Daniels *et al.*, (2005), McKercher *et al.*, (2003) and Shaw and Coles, (2004) increasingly call for research that explores the experiences of tourists with disabilities— research that goes beyond the study of accessibility. Unfortunately, at present, not much research emphasises travel motivations, experiences and vacation decision-making of disabled tourists. For example, Yau *et al.*, (2004) note that there is need for the examination of an individual's own tourism career. As such, it seems that more research that focuses on the tourist with disabilities is needed if there are wishes to move research on tourists with disabilities beyond its current state and hence, make it a research topic in its own right. Furthermore, research is very inadequate in when it comes to tour guiding people with disabilities.

Museums represent specific sector in terms of the experiences of travellers with disabilities. Poria *et al.*, (2009) investigated barriers that Israelis with disabilities face while visiting art museums. Their research results indicated that the staff attitude and the interaction with tourists with disabilities was an important non-physical element to the tour. Those elements were reported as major barriers to achieving a full museum experience. Another study was done on the experiences of tourists

with disabilities in remote natural settings (Lovelock, 2010). The study was done through comparing attitudes regarding the development of further motorized access to natural and wilderness areas between individuals with mobility disabilities and able-bodied individuals. It was noted that while all respondents experienced access-related problems, the mobility-disability group encountered significantly more challenges when traveling in wilderness areas. Richards *et al.*, (2010) presented a critical analysis of the tourism encounters of individuals with vision impairments and identified a general lack of awareness with regard to the psychological impact of sight loss as a major issue for the hospitality service providers.

Poria *et al.*, (2009) conducted in-depth interviews in Israel with experts including doctors and managers of museums, along with residents with disabilities, and discovered that PwD faced difficulties before, during, and after their visit to museums. This study further supported the previous studies in that PwD faced difficulties related to physical and human environments of museums, which covered staff attitudes and services, information and communication. Examples of specific areas were routes to and from the museums and interpretations of the museum exhibits, and the chances to socialize with other visitors. These studies were able to show the interaction that lies between tour guides and PwD however, it is based on the demand side whereas this study focuses on the supply side of tour guiding.

A number of scholars have also investigated leisure constraints by demographic features such as age and types of disabilities. One example is the study by Sparrow and Mayne (1990), which explored the recreation patterns of 18-35 year-olds with intellectual disabilities. The study took note of various constraining factors, including limited access to facilities and transportation services, financial constraints, distances to recreation locations, and attitudinal barriers. Wilhite and Keller (1992) studied the leisure involvement of older adults with developmental disabilities, and the most predominant leisure constraints reported in the study were limited access to transportation services, financial constraints, limited physical accessibility, and concerns about their behaviour and discomfort in large public groups. The study did not however look at the experiences of tour guides with tourists with disabilities.

Accessibility barriers are considered as one of the major determinant that can affect the travel incentive and experience of PwD, thus the term “accessible tourism” has been advocated in many tourism studies. Accessible tourism can be implemented if more details are allowed

for understanding of the needs of PwD (Darcy, 2010). Yau *et al.*, (2004) asserts that tourism for PwD do not only look at removing the physical barriers but ensure quality through the provision of meaningful experiences. Social perceptions about PwD have changed rapidly around the world cause of the contribution that has been given to ensuring that change by researchers. The studies indicated that PwD are also concerned with tourism facilities knowing their needs representing a knowledge gap that the tour guiding industry as tourism has that this research seeks to fill. Literature highlights lack of knowledge by tourism facilities as presenting challenges to tour guides as they deal with PwD.

## 1.2 Tour guiding and tourists with disabilities

Chowdhary and Prakash (2010) undertook a study of the challenges that were faced by tour guides in India. They identified five broad categories of challenges that the tour guides presumably faced. These included general tourism environment; working conditions of tour guides; their relationships with local authorities; their relationship with trade intermediaries; and problems in handling tourists/ customers. Their study did not include PwD as part of the sample and whether these broad categories of challenges also applied in the case of PwD. Unethical industry practices posed some risks to the profession of tour guiding as well (Chowdhary & Prakash, 2010).

Tour guides have the responsibility of addressing multiple stake holders simultaneously. An enjoyable visit, rewarding experience and health and safety issues are the concerns of the visitors which they require the tour guides to make a priority. Some of the visitors may have special needs and expectations associated with their particular cultural background, their physical and intellectual capabilities, and their passions and interests in particular subject matters (Weiler and Ham, 2002). At the same time employers expect the guide to provide high-quality service to visitors in order to meet these expectations, as well as to manage the group, the itinerary and other logistical aspects of the experience to maximise not only visitor satisfaction but also profit margins (Cohen, 1985; Pond, 1993). These become a challenge to the tour guides to satisfy all stakeholders especially in the case where the visitors have special requirements as mentioned.

Summarising their study on tour guiding in Hong Kong, Ap and Wong (2001), identified that levels of professionalism in terms of recognition image build-

ing were affected there was no training course for new entrants and there was a lack of training opportunities for existing tour guides. Other challenges that they discovered included potential problems which resulted from unhealthy industry practices; need for certification, registration or licensing system; absence of any monitoring of tour guide performance; and more active and visible role to be taken by the local tour guiding association. They also identified that professionalism was deducting because of lack of knowledge and communication skills. Their study did not relate any of these challenges to guiding tourists with disabilities.

Another challenge that tour guides face is the management of tourist experience due to shortage or unavailability of required facilities to support tourist experience (Robotic, 2010). Most of the tour guiding facilities face equipment challenges especially for PwD in their service provision. Tour guides then face challenges in service delivery because of this barrier.

Disability accesses have been the subject of a great deal of government regulations and coordination through building codes, awareness training and state-based tourism marketing authorities and policy engagement. Yet the supply-side perspective of industry responses to this consumer group has been under researched (Darcy & Pegg, 2011). One study done in Northern Australia aimed to redress this omission through examining the attitudes and experiences of tourism operators towards PwD the results of which showed that, while the macro policy environment is conducive to having an accessible built environment, transport and service sector, the level of engagement by the tourism industry still involves an ad hoc process of trial and error on the part of individual operators. The experiences of the majority of participating tourism operators testified that there were still weak demand from the accessible tourism market and a lack of awareness of existing product offerings. There was the challenge of accordingly defining target groups so as to embrace various segments with similar needs, such as PwD, seniors and families with push chairs and prams.

While most tourism literature supports tour guides and their contribution to tourist experience, very little in the developing countries has been researched to show experiences of tour guides with tourists with disabilities. There is a knowledge gap of how the interactions between the guide and tourists with disabilities participating in the guided tours influence the tour guides experience (Holloway, 1981; Overend, 2012). However little research has been done on the experiences of tour guides with tourists with disabilities which therefore has an effect on service delivery. The market of tourists with disabili-

ties is rapidly growing globally but little is known about tour guides experiences with PwD. The group consists of a sizeable and escalating percentage of the market share, implying that there is need for the tour guiding industry to have the capability to cater for them. The market of tourists with disabilities seem to have less holiday offers or alternative activities offered in the tour guiding industry and thus reduces the level of experience encountered with them through tour guiding.

As such the study sought to establish the types of holidays that tour guides have had with PwD; explore the concerns that PwD have reported during tours; establish the challenges that tour guides have encountered when taking PwD on a tour; and provide a set of recommendations on measures that can be taken by the tour guiding industry to better accommodate the disabled tourists market.

## 2 Research methodology

### 2.1 Study sites

The study was carried out at three different sites. Two of these are located in Gweru while one is in Harare. The researchers saw it befitting to have three sites as not many tour guides are available at each site. Thus the more sites involved the more guides to be interviewed the more varied and detailed the data obtained.

The first site is the Bally Vaughan Bird and Game Sanctuary located in Highlands, Harare. It started operating in the early 1980's providing a safe haven for all kinds of wildlife. Tour guides takes visitors through a wildlife orphanage that houses a wide variety of animals including lions and leopards among others. Other activities include but not limited to bird watching, elephant rides, canoeing and game drives.

The second site is the Zimbabwe Military Museum located along Lobengula Avenue in Gweru. It was opened in January 1974 and it displays history of the Zimbabwean Army, Airforce and Police, aero engines, uniforms, war equipment and graphic details of the wars for independence that Zimbabwe fought in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The third site is Antelope Park located just outside Gweru off the Harare – Bulawayo highway. It is home to the world renowned African Lion and Environmental Research Trust (ALERT) which is a multi-phase lion rehabilitation programme to ethically and responsibly reintroduce the offspring of captive-bred lions into the wild. Guides at this park primarily take customers on

lion walks, wilderness safari on elephant or horseback, canoeing, night encounters with wild animals, bird watching and fishing.

### 2.2 Research design

The research employed descriptive research design guided by the qualitative research paradigm which offered an in-depth representation of the tour guides experiences and afforded the researchers with an insight of exploration of the experiences faced when serving tourists with disabilities.

The study population for this study was made up of 40 tour guides from Bally Vaughn Bird and Game Sanctuary, Zimbabwe Military Museum and Antelope Park as they reflected an in-depth understanding of the experiences that were faced in guiding tourists with disabilities in the tour guiding industry. Using convenient and judgemental sampling technique a sample of 30 was targeted.

Out of the targeted 30 tour guides, 20 were able to participate in the study giving a 67% response rate. Thirty three percentage of the tour guides could not participate due to work commitments during the research period as they had tourists to attend to and scheduled guides for them to undertake. The participants intensely highlighted on their experiences guiding tourists with disabilities.

Data was collected using face to face interviews guided by probes to avoid soliciting unnecessary data from the interviewees.

## 3 Results

Using Creswell's (2003) six steps of qualitative data analysis, data was presented and analysed. Codes identified were presented as themes with quotes transcribed verbatim for emphasis.

### 3.1 Demographic profiling of respondents

The researchers focused on two demographic elements they considered essential in delivering tour guiding services. First was the age distribution which shows that the majority of the guides were between ages 18 and 33 years (90%). The other 10% were older than 33 years. The researchers were convinced that tour guiding was dominated by active age group with varied experience

highlighting the maturity and quality of information. The young gave current experiences whilst the older and more experienced gave knowledge acquired over longer periods of time showing established trends.

The second was the type of guides available. A thematic analysis of data reveals that heritage and culture tour guides were dominant at 35% followed by wilderness at 30%, then nature at 25% and lastly 10% for adventure. These findings are consistent with Poria *et al.*, (2009) observations that museums have more tour guides. Thus nature-based sites has fewer guides putting pressure on them to deliver and end up sacrificing persons with disabilities as they demand more time and attention which these generally do not have. Adventure tourism offers limited tour guiding activities despite having a range of adventure activities that can be adopted by persons with disabilities. Examples of such activities include canoeing, jet skiing, elephant riding, horse riding and swimming.

### 3.2 Holidays that guides had with people with disabilities.

In an effort to establish the types of holidays that guides had with PwD a number of questions were asked. Firstly were the types of disabilities that tourists had. 55% had encountered tourists with physical disability, 15% visual, 15% hearing, 10% mental and 5% intellectual.

Those with physical disability took part in most of the tour guiding activities as they had less restriction compared to others. Their main disabilities were mobility related since most of them use wheel chairs, crutches, limping legs.. Both the game parks and the museum tour guides had more tours with tourists with mobility disabilities as compared to the rest of the classes of disability. This can be attributed to the fact that these tourists usually have a wider range of activities to take part in at the facilities as compared to people with other disabilities. This disability confirmed the findings that were made by Daniels *et al.*, (2005) that indicated the types of disabilities that were found in today's society.

The study also revealed that tourists with visual disabilities had never visited the museum. Further enquiries reveals that the services offered at the museum did not cater for this market segment. This further supported Richards *et al.*, (2010) findings of lack of awareness with regards to the needs of tourists that have visual impairment in tourism establishments hence segregating against some customers in service delivery at sites.

The deaf and dumb tourists are another market that the museum did not cater for because of the communica-

tion barrier that the tour guides experience thus reducing the number of tourists with these disabilities to the facility. This again highlights the importance of communication competency that Goh, (2008) and Carbone (2006) highlighted. This also indicated the failure of tour guides in performing their function of culture broking which expects them to be good communicators and interpreters across various cultures (Gentemann & Whitehead, 1983).

Tour guides at the game parks encountered tourists with physical, visual, hearing, mental and intellectual disabilities. However, with high chances of animal encounters in game parks safety and security is key when conducting guided tours. Limited activities are offered to PwD's to take part in. Tour guides main concern are balancing the provision of real tourism experience for PwD's and also ensuring their safety whilst on the tour. This is in tandem with Weiler and Ham, (2002) who stated that safety is a concern that tour guides will have towards their guests and will restrict the activities that they can offer to PwDs.

As people with different impairments have different information requirements, customer-oriented services and tailor-made information represent a crucial part for the fulfilment of individual needs, which the museums and game parks at present fail to provide. Currently, there is a clear bias towards considering the needs of mobility impaired people. The game parks and museums provide information for persons using wheelchairs or mobility aids about their facility and what activity they can take part in. Visually impaired persons and the deaf or hard of hearing citizens are barely covered by the tour guiding facilities visited. Information for people with hidden disabilities such as asthma, allergies or intellectually impaired individuals is missing and does not have any of the facilities catering for the needs of these tourists during tours. As asserted by Burns *et al.*, (2009) PwDs are quite a diverse group in terms of experiences, views and needs and the findings of this study confirmed the conclusions of their study.

### 3.3 Concerns of people with disabilities

The findings from the research indicated that the major concern of the tourist with disabilities was lack of activities (35%) to take part in at the facilities. The tour guiding facilities had high restrictions in terms of what they offered to the tourists with disabilities. The study by Sparrow and Mayne (1990) also highlighted that PwD were concerned with lack of activities in the tourism industry for them. As such there is always a mismatch

between tourists expectations and what tour guides can deliver. The wow element of the tour would be completely eluded due to lack of activities on offer and the guide is deemed a failure in delivering tourism services to PwD's.

Another major concern that the research obtained was that of non-user friendly equipment. These facilities had equipment that was easily accessible to the so-called able bodied only thereby giving accessibility concern for PwDs. The vehicles used for the game drives had side ladders that would require one to climb on their own. The research conducted by Sparrow and Mayne (1990) also highlighted that transportation was a concern that tourists with disabilities had. The vehicle design then required the tour guide at the game parks to give assistance whether through a shove, push or carrying the tourist with disabilities into the vehicle. This was one of the major dislikes of the tourists with disabilities, being seen as if they were helpless in even the simple things. The nature guide at Bally Vaughn Game Park stated that:

'People with disabilities do not enjoy being regarded as helpless and being assisted with every little thing even those which they could have been capable of doing on their own, they want to be independent self-reliant people'.

The vehicles also had cramped space such that those with wheelchairs and crutches could not bring their aids along with them for the game drives such that when the other tourists left the vehicle for walks or for a closer look at the animals the tourists with disabilities were left to sit in the vehicle and not take part in what the other tourists would be doing. Lovelock (2010) also highlighted the issue of mobility problems in transportation for the tourists with disabilities.

The other concern raised by PwD was inaccessibility of resources found at tour guiding facilities. It was noted that game parks and museums had activities or resources that can wow tourists however, they are not accessible to tourists with disabilities. The museums were filled with artefacts and exhibits but because they did not have any other means of information dissemination except through the interpretation of the tour guide those with visual or hearing impairment could not use their senses so as to better understand what they were experiencing during the tour. Regardless of all the activities and resources that the game parks had, tourists with disabilities could not access them all. This finding support work of Darcy (2010) and Yau *et al.*, (2004) which stated that accessibility barriers were concerns of the tourists with disabilities and were considered as one of the major determinant that affects the travel of the tourists.

### 3.4 Challenges faced by tour guides when guiding tourists with disabilities

The challenges that tour guides faced when guiding tourists with disabilities were mainly about time management, language selection, equipment barrier and environment barrier. Robotic, (2010) asserted that equipment barrier was a challenge that tour guides experienced when guiding tourists with disabilities. Equipment barrier had the highest respond rate of 45%, which indicates that the equipment used in the industry is either inadequate or inappropriate if one is to effectively guide tourists with disabilities. This had the highest percentage as the equipment that the tour guiding facilities had were not tailor made for use by tourists with disabilities. Twenty-five per cent of tour guides mentioned environmental barriers as another challenge faced when guiding tourists with disabilities. The tour guiding industry had environment barriers to tourists with disabilities as they could not have free movement around the facilities but required special pavements or pathways around the facility which ruined the authenticity of the environment making it too artificial and not being the natural nature it was. Chowdhary and Prakash (2010) undertook a study that concluded that some environment settings were a barrier to guiding tourists with disabilities.

The guides were forced to only resort to activities they saw to be safe for the tourists. This put pressure on the tour guide as the tour would be heavily reliant on what they chose for the tourists with disabilities risking not complying with what the tourists want. Game parks guided tours were not done in one confined area but would require long walks or drives to the sites that the tourists would be able to see the game.

Language selection was the least challenge that tour guides had from their experiences with the tourists with disabilities. They gained a better understanding of how to communicate, interpret and disseminate information better throughout the experiences they had.

## 4 Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn after careful and systematic consideration of the research findings.

The main category of tourists that travelled were those with physical disabilities, which meant the tour guiding industry failed to cater for a wider range of tourist with disabilities that occupy the world. Physical disability is seen as an impairment that is easier to handle and

give options to many of the activities that the tour guiding facilities offer. However that is not so, tourists with other disabilities are more than capable of taking part in tour guiding activities as long as the tour guides know how best to serve them.

The main challenge that the tour guides experienced when touring with tourists with disability was inadequacy in the equipment that they used to fully cater for the tourists with disabilities during their guided tours. Most of the equipment was user friendly for those that were able bodied only.

The tour guiding industry had a limited number of facilities that could cater for the tourists with disabilities as they all considered it to be a very expensive market to cater for due to the fact that they had lots of special requirements. The equipment and environmental changes that the facilities would have to change would cost a lot for the tour guiding facilities in order to fully cater for the tourists with disabilities.

The concerns of the tourists with disabilities were the same throughout all facilities yet very little had been done to see that a change had been implemented on the feedback that they gave. For both the museum and the game parks the tourists with disabilities always reported having lack of activities to take part in. Non-user friendly equipment and environmental barriers were concerns at both of the tour guiding sites.

Finally, all tour guides did not enjoy their experiences with people with disabilities mainly due to the issues discussed above. In the majority of cases, tour guides had to improvise in order to serve tourists with disabilities and in some cases they could not help but just leave the tourists with disabilities while guiding others due to inaccessibility of the facilities. It can therefore be concluded that encounters with tourists with disabilities have resulted in more sorrow than joy for tour guides in the game parks and museum.

## 5 Recommendations

Tour guides still required training in the industry so as to be able to attend adequately to tourists with disabilities during a tour. The training would enable them to still deliver authentic services during their guides. Lack of knowledge would then be removed if the tour guides were trained and equipped with information that was relevant to serving tourists with disabilities. Tour guides should have training programmes that equip them with the necessary knowledge on how to treat tourists with disabili-

ties during a tour. These training sessions can incorporate basic sign language, handle and care procedures of different disabilities, appropriate communication skills and health concerns of the tourists with disabilities. This recommendation was also stated as a requirement by Ap and Wong (2001), were they asserted training was required to attain professionalism.

Owners of facilities should adopt the principles of universal design when designing equipment and facilities to be used by tour guides as they undertake their duties. For example the facilities can have brails that will cater as information sources for tourists that have visual impairments. Sound booths, textile exhibits and interpretations centres for the museums. The vehicles that the tour guides use need to be accessible to the tourists with disabilities allowing them to board as easily as the able bodied tourist can. Extra equipment should also be kept at the tour guiding facilities, this includes wheelchairs, crutches, walking stick and portable ramps. The equipment for the tourists with disabilities should just be as important to have as the medical kit that the facility is required to have. Canoeing boats can be tailor made so as to allow for space, safety and use by the tourists with disabilities (Robotic, 2010). The cinema area for the museums where tourists watch all historical films can be reconstructed to have more space so as to allow everyone to fit and those with wheelchairs to have access into the room as advocated by Darcy (2010) and Yau *et al.*, (2004). Other essential places such as restrooms, pavements, entrance and exits and rooms should be accessible to tourists with disabilities as much as they are to the able bodied.

This study was carried out in Zimbabwe, a developing country at three sites. Comparative studies in other countries and broader studies at more sites will verify the findings and accelerate adoption for tourism benefits for PwD among us.

## References

- [1] Ap, J., and Wong, K.F.K. (2001). Case study on tour guiding: professionalism, issues and problems. *Tourism Management*, 22, 551-563
- [2] Carbone, G. (2006). "Perspectives of the tourism industry on the elements affecting visitor satisfaction in protected areas". *The International of Protected Area Managers*, 16 (2), 53- 57
- [3] Chikuta, O. (2015). Is There Room in the Inn? Towards Incorporating People with Disability in Tourism Planning. *Review of Disability Studies: An International Journal*, 11(3)

- [4] China Disabled Persons' Federation. (2013). Facts on people with disabilities in China. Retrieved from <http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-asia/-robangkok/-ilo->. [Accessed 15 September 2015]
- [5] Chowdhary, N. and Prakash, M. (2010). Tour Guiding in India: A Case Study. *European Journal of Tourism and Research*, 3(1), 67-84
- [6] Cohen, E. (1985). "The tourist guide: the origins, structure and dynamics of a role". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 12 (1), 5-29
- [7] Creswell, J. W., Plano Clark, V. L., Gutmann, M. L., & Hanson, W. E. (2003). Advanced mixed methods research designs. *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research*, 209-240
- [8] Daniels, M.J., Rodgers, E.B.D., and Wiggins, B. (2005). „Travel tales“: An interpretive analysis of constraints and negotiations to pleasure travel as experienced by persons with physical disabilities. *Tourism Management*, 26(6), 919-930
- [9] Darcy, S. (2004). Disabling journeys: The social relations of tourism for people with impairments in Australia an analysis of government tourism authorities and accommodation sector practices and discourses (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Sydney. Faculty of Business, University of Technology
- [10] Darcy, S. (2006). Setting a research agenda for accessible tourism. Queensland. Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre
- [11] Darcy, S. (2010). Inherent complexity: Disability, accessible tourism and accommodation information preferences. *Tourism Management*
- [12] Darcy, S., and Harris, R. (2003). Inclusive and accessible special event planning: An Australian perspective. *Event Management*, 8(1), 39-47. doi: 10.3727/152599503108751685
- [13] Darcy, S., and Pegg, S. (2011). Towards strategic intent: Perceptions of disability service provision amongst hotel accommodation managers. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 30(2), 468-476. doi: 10.1016/j.ijhm.2010.09.009
- [14] European Commission (1996). Making Europe accessible for tourists with disabilities: Handbook for the tourism industry. Luxembourg. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Directorate
- [15] European Disability Forum. (2001). EDF position paper on tourism: Framing the future of European tourism. Retrieved from <http://ebookbrowse.com>. [Accessed 15 September 2015]
- [16] Gentemann, K. and Whitehead, T. (1983). The cultural broker concept in bicultural education. *Journal of Negro Education*, 52 (2), 118-129
- [17] Goh, H.C. (2008). "Sustainable tourism and the influence of privatisation in protected area management: A case study of Kinabalu Park". *Ecology and Development Series*, 55 (5), 115-120
- [18] Ham, S. and Weiler, B. (2005). Toward a theory of quality in cruise-based interpretive guiding. *Journal of Interpretation Research* 7 (2), 29-49
- [19] Ham, S.H. and Weiler, B. (2005). "Six principles for tour guide training and sustainable development in developing countries". Denmark. Presented at 9th Nordic Tourism Research Conference. Research Centre for Bornholm
- [20] Holloway, C.J. (1981). The guided tour: a sociological approach. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 8, 377-402
- [21] Lovelock, B.A. (2010). "Planes, trains and wheelchairs in the bush: attitudes of people with mobility-disabilities to enhanced motorised access in remote natural settings". *Tourism Management*, 31 (3), 357-366
- [22] McKercher, B., Packer, T., Yau, M.K., and Lam, P. (2003). Travel agents as facilitators or inhibitors of travel: Perceptions of people with disabilities. *Tourism Management*, 24(4), 465-474
- [23] Open Doors Organization. (2005). Research among adults with disabilities: Travel and hospitality. Chicago, IL: Author
- [24] Oschell, C. M. (2009). Communication competencies in a guided nature-based tourism context. Unpublished Doctoral dissertation. USA. University of Montana
- [25] Overend, D. (2012). Performing Sites: Illusion and Authenticity in the Spatial Stories of the Guided Tour. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 12:1, 44-54
- [26] Packer, T.L., Small, J., and Darcy, S. (2008). Tourist experiences of individuals with vision impairment. Queensland. Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre
- [27] Pond, K.L. (1993). The professional guide: Dynamics of tour guiding. New York. Van Nostrand Reinhold
- [28] Poria, Y., Reichel, A., and Brandt, Y. (2009). People with disabilities visit art museums: An exploratory study of obstacles and difficulties. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 4(2), 117-129. doi:10.1080/17438730802366508
- [29] Poria, Y., Reichel, A., and Brandt, Y. (2010). The flight experiences of people with disabilities: An exploratory study. *Journal of Travel Research*, 49(2), 216-227. doi:10.1177/0047287509336477
- [30] Robotic, B. (2010). Tourist Guides in Contemporary Tourism. International Conference on Tourism and Environment, Sarajevo, March 4-5
- [31] Saito, Y. (2006). Awareness of universal design among facility managers in Japan and the United States. *Automation in Construction*, 15(4), 462-478. doi:10.1016/j.autcon.2005.06.013
- [32] Schmidt C. (1979). The guided tour – insulated adventure. *Urban Life*, 4, 441-467
- [33] Shaw, G., and Coles, T. (2004). Disability, holiday making and the tourism industry in the UK: A preliminary survey. *Tourism Management*, 25(3), 397-403. doi:10.1016/S0261-5177(03)00139-0
- [34] Sparrow, W.A. and Mayne, S.C. (1990). "Recreation patterns of adults with intellectual disabilities". *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, 24(3), 45-49
- [35] United Nations. (2008). Definition of Disability in Selected National Legislations. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/>. [Accessed 18 September 2015]
- [36] UN Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). (2006). Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities. Available at <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml> [Date last accessed 27 April 2016]
- [37] Weiler, B., and Ham, S. (2001). Tour guides and interpretation. In D. Weaver (Ed.). *The encyclopedia of ecotourism*, 549-563. Wallingford: CABI Publishing
- [38] Wilhite, B. and Keller, M.J. (1992). "The role of therapeutic recreation in community involvement: patterns and

perceptions of older adults with developmental disabilities”.  
*Annual in Therapeutic Recreation*, 3, 18-32

- [39] Wong, K. et al., (1998). Professional tour guiding: An exploratory investigation of current practices. In: Tanyan, Korea. Conference Proceedings. The Fourth Asia Pacific Tourism Association Conference, 256 –260, August 18–21
- [40] World Health Organization. (2011). World report on disability. Retrieved from [http://www.who.int/disabilities/world\\_report/2011/report/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report/en/index.html). [Accessed 15 September 2015]
- [41] Yau, M.K., McKercher, B. and Packer, T.L. (2004). “Traveling with a disability more than an access issue”. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31 (4), 946-960
- [42] Zillinger, M., Jonass, M., and Adolf, P. (2012). Guided Tours and Tourism. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 12 (1), 1-7