

Chapter 41

A Systematic Literature Review on Accessible Tourism and Marketing Strategies: Where Do We Stand



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Abstract We are facing times when the accessible tourism topic and market segment are increasing and facing challenges within the tourism industry due to the lack of interest in developing this market. It is also known that people with disabilities are entitled to be able to travel with accessibilities and being considered as an equal part of the market. This study aims to understand how the literature and academic community is scoping these fields of the accessible tourism and accessible tourism marketing and strategic marketing. Through a sample of 109 indexed articles, a descriptive analysis was carried out and the results presented in this study.

Keywords Accessible Tourism · Tourism Marketing · Marketing Strategy

41.1 Introduction

Since we are facing times when the People with Disabilities (PWDs) community is becoming increasingly represented and outspoken in society, and the number of PWDs traveling around the world is increasing every year [1, 2], it became necessary to conduct a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), scoping the subjects of accessible tourism and tourism marketing strategies, to understand how the literature is scoping the promotion of traveling among PWDs.

In terms of numbers and statistics, there are over a billion people who live or experience some form of disability, and the World Health Organization (WHO) expects this number to rise due to the increasing average age of the world population [3]. The American Disability Association defines a disability as “any condition of the body

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or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities and interact with the world around them” [4].

Looking into Eurostat [5] data, it is not possible to state yet the exact number of people with disabilities in the European Union (EU) and specifically in Portugal, but it is possible to estimate that in 2015, about 42 million people had at least one disability, which represents 12.6% of the overall population in Europe. In Portugal, this number was estimated in 597 thousand having some form of disability, which represented 8.7% of the Portuguese population.

Statistically, within the EU, accessible tourism represented 783 million trips in 2012, and, according to GFK Belgium [6], the numbers were expected to grow to about 862 million trips per year by 2020.

In 2006, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, recognized the same and equal rights between non-disabled and PWDs within leisure, recreation, and tourism [7]. However, it must be contingent upon the priorities of governments and states to provide services and resources to PWDs, and to ensure that the private entities offering facilities and services open to the public, must comply with the accessibility requirements. The UN is then pushing destination promotion organizations managers to ensure that “all persons, regardless of their physical or cognitive needs, are able to use and enjoy the available amenities in an equitable and sustainable manner” [8].

With the high and recent interest in studying the topic of the accessible [1, 2, 7, 9, 10], the academic community is turning toward the topic, scoping the accessible tourism and related topics, attempting to explore, and addressing the issues in the accessible tourism. However, accessibility it is know that the accessible tourism market is still neglected, despite this being highly loyal and with a high market value target group [1, 2, 11]. PWDs are already recognized in the tourism industry and their access to the venues and services are becoming topic of discussion, but this industry lacks the perspective and role of PWDs getting recognized and involved in the process of decision and promotion [7, 12]. There is also mention of barriers when trying to promote products for PWDs [13].

Promoting and advertising is essential and crucial when it is needed to empower the interests of PWDs when they want to plan and visit tourist destinations [2, 7, 9]. Though, there are recent studies scoping the inclusion of PWDs in tourism promotional materials and the accessibility of tourism information to PWDs and those studies are covering different areas of the world, such as Europe, United States, and Australia.

According to Gondos and Nárai [1], the accessibility concept may be defined as a group of policies adopted in accordance with the law of each country, to ensure the people with disabilities the free and total access to all public access places. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [8] also recognizes that it is essential to the consumer with disabilities, the total access and participation in the society, and the complete access to the private market. That is explicit in Article 9, which states that it is the role of the states to ensure that the private entities offering facilities and services open to the public, must comply with the accessibility requirements.

The European Union (EU), the state members and the brands based in their territories are failing when they do not recognize the people with disabilities and equal participants of the market [14]. However, it is already proved the western denial to accessible tourism, despite the growing critical tourism literature [2].

Since the literature shows that the accessible tourism is becoming a topic of high interest in society [1, 2, 13, 15], this study aims to understand how the academic community is approaching the existing literature relating tourism marketing strategies and the accessible tourism concepts. Also, to date, as far as it is known, any studies have been carried out in the past few years, focusing on these two specific topics.

This research is performed based on a SLR, on a conceptual basis and with a collection of academic articles indexed in the Web of Science, following the PRISMA Protocol to ensure the integrity of the data and structure, and then analyzed using the NVivo Software.

The study is divided into five major sections, namely abstract, introduction, materials and methods, results, and discussion and conclusion, where the research limitations and suggestions for future research are also mentioned.

41.2 Materials and Methods

The methodology selected for this research was the SLR [16]. This methodology allows researchers to develop a perspective on the existing literature and knowledge and aims to state what is already explored and is missing in studies [17–19]. This type of review was selected due to some authors mentioning the lack of accuracy associated with the traditional literature review, the subjectivity of the authors, but also develops the existing perspective on the existing knowledge and aims to show what is already explored and is lacking on the existing studies [17–19]. Another advantage of the SLR is how effective it is in the process, extracting relevant research articles to the final report and mentioning descriptive analysis on important metrics [18–21].

41.2.1 Research Design

To conduct this study, a relevant literature research design and data collection strategy were outlined. The keywords selected were “Marketing Strategies”, “Marketing”, “Hospitality”, “Accessible Tourism”, “Accessibilities”, and “Customers with disabilities”. These keywords reflect the main topics of this study and the most important words defining the research. The criteria included peer reviewed journal articles published in English and Portuguese only. To assist with the process of a SLR, the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) flowchart [22] and the three steps (Planning the review, Conducting the review;

Reporting and dissemination) associated to the basic SLR [21] were both adopted as the basis of selection criteria and research development [23]. The focus was the existing literature on Marketing Strategies in the Hospitality Industry, with scope on people with disabilities. There was no considered time span, considering all the articles published up to the date of the articles collection. To ensure quality assessment and selection of papers, this search was conducted based on peer reviewed journal articles. Duplicate records were screened, and the relevance of the remaining articles for the study was also screened to maintain the constant quality.

The database selected was ISI Web of Science—Current Contents Connect, with scope on Social & Behavioral Sciences, one of the largest indexed impact factor journals databases.

Only the Marketing Strategies, Marketing, Customers with Disabilities, Accessibilities, Tourism, Hospitality terms should be used while searching for articles. Only Tourism and Hospitality Management, Management and Marketing related articles must be considered. All the studies will be exported to Endnote 20 sorted by main topic. After a title and keywords analysis, only those containing the terms mentioned above, are topic related and containing the keywords (that were defined as search terms as well) were considered for NVivo 12 content analysis and coding. This analysis and coding are based on patterns of words, keywords in abstracts and the creation of node categories to develop further analysis.

Every step of the research, selection and eligibility criteria were recorded to ensure the replicability of this study in future research, as it was also recorded on the PRISMA flowchart and checklist. These documents confirm that all the items are present on the final report and the number of articles collected, screened, and finally considered for analysis are always noted and no data is missing.

After collecting all the articles using the steps described previously, 1624 articles were found. After screening the presence of the previously described search topics in the title and keywords sections, 1479 articles were sought for retrieval, but only 467 were found assessed for eligibility after abstract and main topic screening.

After excluding not related articles and those that were not possible to find the full text documents, only 109 were sought for retrieval and accepted for further coding and analysis.

After importing the final articles to Nvivo 12, queries and graphic analysis were performed.

41.3 Results

Analyzing the distribution of papers per year, with respect to the tourism marketing, accessible tourism, and marketing strategy related papers, it is possible to see an increasing tendency in the last decade. It is possible to notice a substantial increase in the number of papers published, mainly since 2017 (see Fig. 41.1).

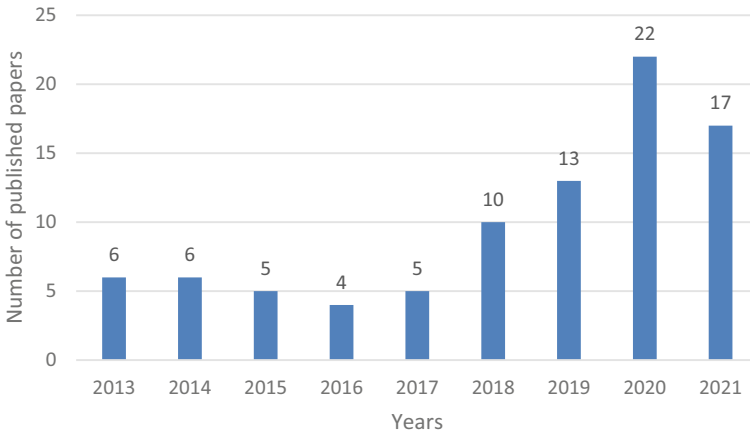


Fig. 41.1 Number of published papers per publication year

Due to the lack of relevant numbers and data from 2002 to 2012, in some analysis, only data from 2013 to 2021 was presented in the figures. Although, we can highlight a drop in the number of papers published in 2021, going back to numbers near 2019.

Regarding the journals per year, it comes with a similar tendency as Fig. 41.1. There is a clear tendency of journals publishing in these fields. In 2020 and 2021, the total number of journals that published papers in the accessible tourism and tourism marketing was 24 (see Fig. 41.2).

Looking in detail at the distribution of papers per year shown in Fig. 41.1 and to the journals per publication year in Fig. 41.2, it shows that the fields of accessible tourism and tourism marketing are yet to be explored and there is a specialization related to those topics. With most impact on these numbers, there are journals of high relevance, such as the Sustainability, Tourism Management, International Journal of

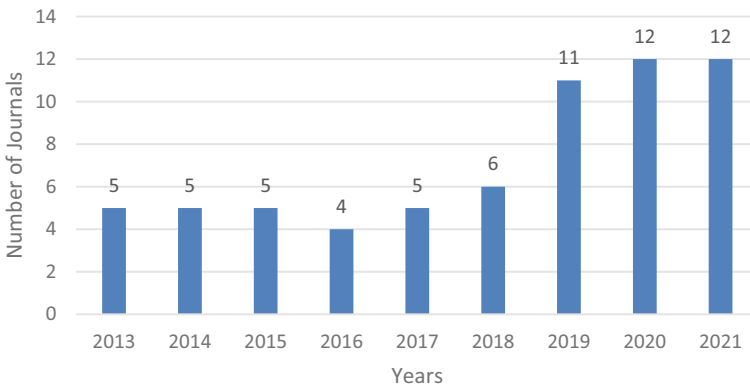


Fig. 41.2 Number of published journals per year

Table 41.1 Top 5 published journals

Journal	Percentage of publications (%)
Sustainability	11
Tourism Management	8
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	6
International Journal of Hospitality Management	5
Current Issues in Tourism	4

Hospitality Management, Current Issues in Tourism, and the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, as shown in Table 41.1.

Considering the top 5 journals with most publications, it is possible to understand the numbers on Fig. 41.2, with those journals representing 35% of the overall work sample.

It is possible to identify the interest of exploring the main topics of this study. Figure 41.3 shows an increasing number of single authors publishing in Accessible Tourism and Tourism Strategic Marketing. Since 2010 there is a variation until 2017, but since 2018, the number of single authors publishing in these areas is increasing, with a maximum of 68 registered authors publishing in 2020.

Regarding the main topics approached by the authors, we did a classification by main topic and scope. The final topics were tourism marketing, tourism and hospitality management, literature review, strategic marketing, and accessible tourism. The tourism marketing and strategic marketing topics were distinguished to understand how many papers approached the strategic marketing topic, since this is one of the main topics of this study.

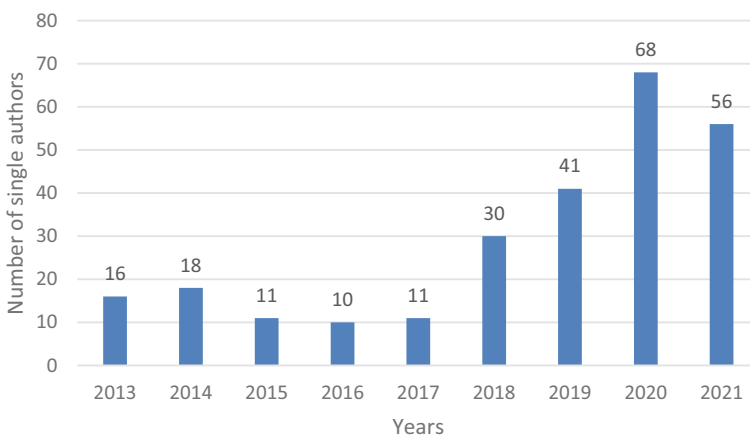


Fig. 41.3 Number of single authors per year

Looking into Fig. 41.4, it is possible to conclude that the two main topics of these work samples were accessible tourism and tourism marketing. Accessible tourism was identified as the main scope in 59 papers, and tourism marketing in 26 papers. However, the strategic marketing (most of the papers were related with tourism strategic marketing) only was approached in 4 papers in our sample, becoming the topic with the lowest number of papers.

Accessible tourism has been a topic with increasing interest, as it has been more important, and a topic of discussion in society. The big wave of publications started in 2017 and its peak was in 2020, with 14 papers published (Fig. 41.5).

Regarding the tourism marketing papers, it is possible to conclude that there has been an even distribution of publications through the years, despite that the regular publication of papers has only started in 2013, and the years with the most publications were just in 2020 and 2021 (Fig. 41.6).

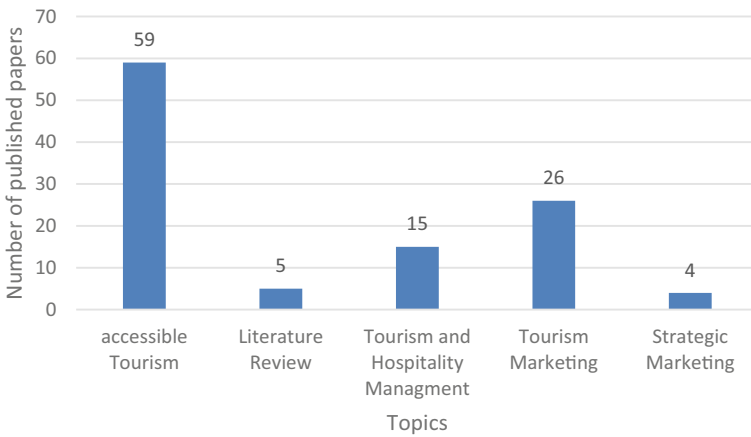


Fig. 41.4 Number of published papers by topic

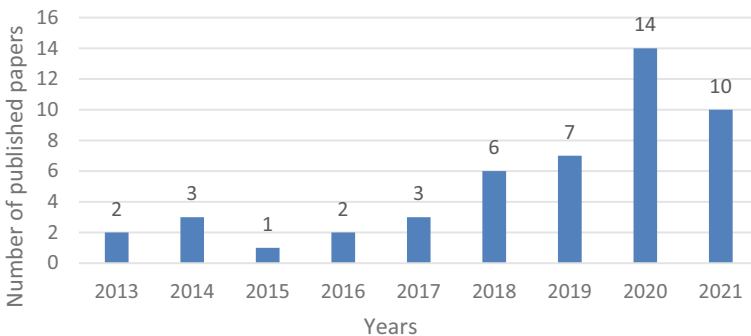


Fig. 41.5 Number of published papers in Accessible Tourism

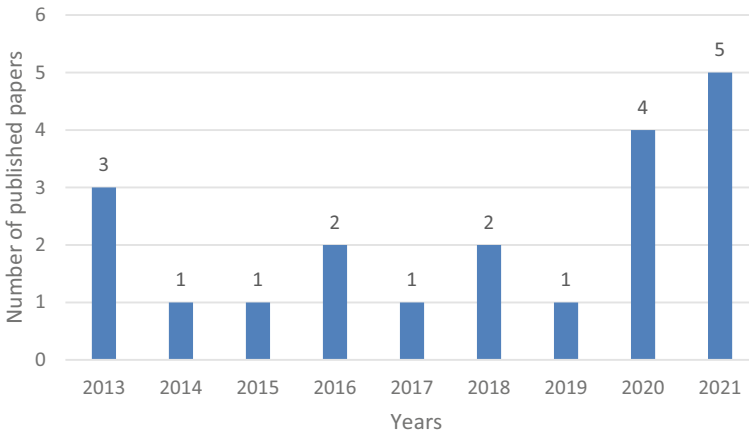


Fig. 41.6 Number of published papers in tourism marketing

The purpose of this study is to review literature in the accessible tourism and tourism strategic marketing, but few papers scoping the tourism and hospitality management field were also identified, with references to the accessible tourism and the behavior toward people with disabilities. It is a field yet to be explored, as it lacks studies in several years, but it has increased its publications in 2019 and 2020 (see Fig. 41.7).

The last topic identified as the main scope of our study papers samples, and one of the main topics of this study, is the strategic marketing, which includes strategic marketing literature and tourism strategic marketing studies. However, as it is possible to observe on Fig. 41.8, only four studies in our sample were identified as relevant

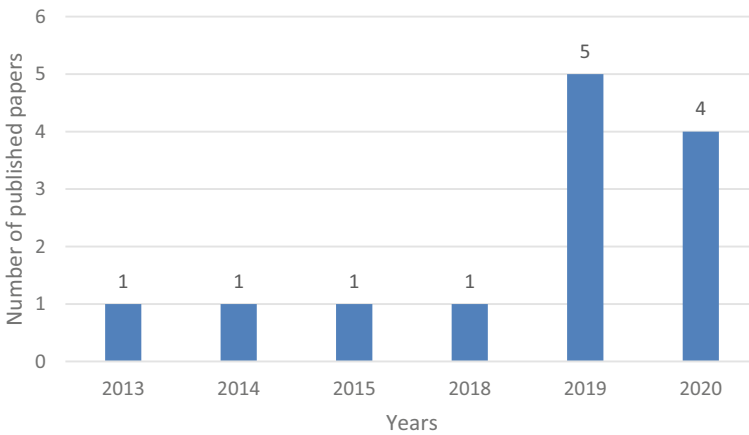


Fig. 41.7 Number of published papers in hospitality and tourism management

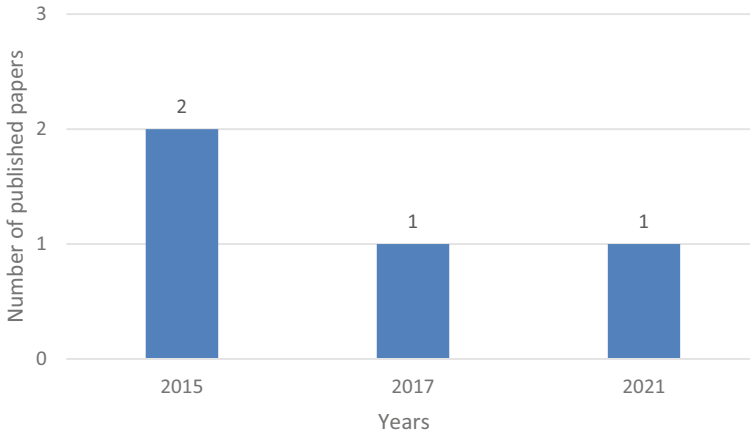


Fig. 41.8 Number of published papers in strategic marketing

in the strategic marketing field. There were two publications in 2015 and only one in 2017 and 2021.

It was found that many papers in our sample related to marketing, including digital marketing toward people with disabilities, didn't have any relation to the strategic marketing field, and were experimental studies.

Finally, a word cloud was generated (Fig. 41.9) from the keywords and abstracts present on the analyzed papers. It was found that the marketing and the strategic marketing words are not the most important words in this cloud, however, there are mentions to people with disabilities and the accessible tourism. It is interesting to point that the most emergent themes are related to the main topics of this study, but there is a lack of mention to the marketing fields in the main words group, which confirms the predicted gap that originated this SLR that the accessible tourism marketing and the accessible tourism strategic marketing are fields yet to be explored.

41.4 Discussion and Conclusion

This paper contributes significantly to understand how the academic community is scoping the topics of marketing strategy, accessible tourism, and tourism marketing. Results demonstrate and confirm that the fields of accessible tourism and tourism marketing are becoming more explored over the years and confirm and support previous studies [7, 10]. By narrowing the scope of our topic to only articles related to marketing strategies, accessible tourism, and tourism marketing, but also to PWDs, it was possible to verify a limited number of published papers and it is important to mention that the inclusion of PWDs within the tourism industry should start when the process of offering services and opportunities also starts.



Fig. 41.9 Most emergent topics word cloud

One of the limitations of this study, besides the nature of the study itself, was the very specific subject and the fields of the topics. Also, several studies were excluded due to the lack of relation with the scope of this research, although there are studies approaching the topics of this study.

This study also welcomes future literature reviews and research, with special focus on meta-analysis, to analyze the development of the research in these fields, suggesting the need for development and studies in the tourism strategic marketing field, focusing on PWDs.

Future studies conducting empirical research, relating Tourism and Hospitality Marketing Strategies and the Accessible Tourism are welcome. There is also space and opportunity to conduct consumer behavior experimental and relational studies relating these two major topics.

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