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[Nader Ghotbi](#)* and Karina Dyliaeva

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Article

Inclusive Tourism: Bridging the Gap Between Education and Accessible Services

Nader Ghotbi ^{1,*} and Karina Dyliaeva ²

¹ Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Beppu City, Japan

² Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland

* Correspondence: nader@apu.ac.jp

Abstract

This paper examines the connection between the principles of inclusive education and accessible tourism services within the larger context of inclusive tourism and universal design. Through a systematic review of current research, this study first synthesizes findings from various fields, including hospitality, disability studies, and educational research, to show how inclusive educational practices can improve accessible tourism, and conversely, how tourism experiences can serve as an effective platform for teaching inclusion. The empirical section concentrates on the challenges faced by students with disabilities in a tourism program at an international university in Japan. The research identifies significant opportunities for collaboration between different sectors but also highlights persistent barriers that require new, innovative solutions to create truly inclusive tourism experiences.

Keywords: accessible tourism; disability studies; inclusive education; inclusive tourism; transformative tourism; universal design

1. Introduction

The concept of inclusive tourism has evolved considerably in the last twenty years, transforming from simply meeting accessibility standards to more holistic strategies that ensure all travelers can participate meaningfully, regardless of their physical, cognitive, sensory, or social differences (Darcy & Dickson, 2009; Eichhorn & Buhalis, 2011). Similarly, the field of inclusive education has developed advanced frameworks to create supportive learning environments that promote equality and social integration (UNESCO, 2017; Ainscow, 2020). The convergence of these two fields offers both opportunities and intricate challenges for researchers and practitioners who strive for more just and transformative experiences. The importance of this convergence may be understood by recognizing that tourism, as a social and economic activity, can challenge stereotypes, foster understanding, and facilitate cross-cultural interactions (Burns et al., 2009). When combined with inclusive education's focus on participation, collaboration, and shared learning, tourism can thus become a catalyst for broader social change and community development.

This paper examines how principles and practices from inclusive education can inform and enhance accessible tourism services and explores how tourism experiences can serve as powerful platforms for inclusive learning and social transformation. The review of literature is structured to provide a comprehensive analysis of current research, identify gaps in knowledge, and propose directions for future investigation and practice. The empirical data comes from an international university in Japan with a big department of tourism and exemplifies the educational needs of students with learning difficulties and disabilities. But let's start with an overview of the theoretical foundations related to inclusive education and tourism.

Inclusive education, as conceptualized by UNESCO (2017) and further developed by Ainscow (2020), rests on a few foundational principles that are directly relevant to tourism service delivery as its framework emphasizes the importance of recognizing and valuing diversity, removing barriers to

participation, and creating environments where all individuals can contribute meaningfully to collective experiences. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) identify three core elements of inclusive education that translate effectively to tourism contexts. They include the extension of what is ordinarily available to all learners/participants rather than providing something different for some, a focus on what is possible rather than what is lacking and viewing differences as opportunities for learning rather than problems to solve. These principles challenge traditional deficit-based models in both education and tourism, and support approaches which recognize the contributions and perspectives that diverse participants bring to shared experiences. An important concept in this regard is the notion of funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005) which recognizes the cultural and experiential resources that individuals bring to learning situations and thus is particularly relevant to inclusive tourism. This approach suggests that tourists with disabilities, different cultural backgrounds, or varying abilities possess valuable knowledge and perspectives that can enrich the travel experience for all participants when properly recognized and integrated.

Another important development is that the theoretical foundation of accessible tourism has evolved from a medical model focused on accommodation and compliance to a social model emphasizing participation and integration (Darcy et al., 2010; Oliver, 2013). This evolution parallels developments in inclusive education, where the focus has shifted from special provisions to universal approaches that benefit all learners. Michopoulou et al. (2015) propose a comprehensive framework for accessible tourism that includes four dimensions: accessibility of information, physical accessibility, accessibility of services, and accessibility of experiences. This multidimensional approach aligns with inclusive education's emphasis on addressing barriers at multiple levels of the learning environment, from physical infrastructure to pedagogical practices and social interactions. The concept of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), developed by Rose and Meyer (2002) and later adapted for tourism contexts by Darcy and Pegg (2011), forms a bridge between educational and tourism applications. UDL principles emphasize multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression, which translate directly to tourism service design that accommodates diverse needs and preferences without stigmatization.

Furthermore, the transformative learning theory, as developed by Mezirow (1991) and further elaborated by Taylor and Cranton (2012), offers a valuable means to help understand how tourism experiences can promote personal and social transformation. The theory emphasizes critical reflection, dialogue, and action as key components of meaningful learning that challenges the existing assumptions and promotes new perspectives. In the context of inclusive tourism, transformative learning occurs when travelers encounter differences in ways that challenge their preconceptions and promote empathy and understanding (Stone & Petrick, 2013). This process is enhanced when tourism experiences are designed based on inclusive education principles that promote meaningful interaction, collaborative problem-solving, and mutual learning among participants with diverse backgrounds and abilities.

2. Materials and Methods

The current study first employs a comprehensive review of literature to identify, analyze, and synthesize relevant research from multiple disciplines. The search strategy included peer-reviewed articles, books, conference proceedings, and policy documents published between 2000 and 2025. The primary databases consulted were the Web of Science, Scopus, ERIC, and EBSCO's Hospitality & Tourism Complete which is a specialized tourism and hospitality database. The search terms included variations of 'inclusive tourism', 'accessible tourism', 'inclusive education', 'universal design', 'disability tourism', and 'transformative tourism'. The selection criteria prioritized empirical studies, theoretical frameworks, and case studies that explicitly addressed the intersection of educational inclusivity and tourism accessibility, or provided insights applicable to both domains. A total of 76 sources were initially identified, with 39 meeting the inclusion criteria after screening of the abstract. The selected literature was analyzed thematically to identify key strategies, challenges,

and transformative approaches, with particular attention to cross-sector applications and innovative practices.

The empirical part of the study was based on an anonymous survey of university students in an international university in Japan. The university includes three colleges in the fields of social studies, management, and tourism with about 6,000 students who often receive lectures in large halls filled with up to 245 students. The survey included three questions related to the issue of disability and inclusive education to inquire about the need for inclusive education practices among students of tourism related subjects (Table 1).

Table 1. Survey questions to seek the frequency of various types of learning disabilities among the students, whether they received disability accommodations and the impact on their assessment.

Q1	Do you have a difficulty in learning because of a health condition that you have? a. No b. Yes
Q2	If you answered yes to Q1, has your difficulty in learning been fairly considered in assessment, or unfairly ignored? a. Yes, it was fairly considered. b. No, I was unfairly treated in assessment.
Q3	If you answered yes to Q1, can you say, if you don't mind, what kind of difficulty it is? a . hearing b. visual c. mood problems (anxiety, depression, etc.) d. attention deficit disorder e. Asperger ~ autism f. dyslexia g. other forms

3. Results

3.1. Key Strategies

The literature reveals several key strategies for integrating inclusive education principles with accessible tourism services. These strategies cluster around four main themes: implementation of universal design, collaborative service delivery, capacity building and training, and community engagement approaches.

Universal Design (UD) principles, originally developed for architecture and product design, have been successfully adapted for both educational and tourism applications (Steinfeld & Maisel, 2012). In the tourism context, UD goes beyond physical accessibility to encompass information access design, service delivery, and creation of experiences applicable to the widest range of users possible. Research by Darcy and Pegg (2011) demonstrates how tourism operators can apply UD principles to create services that are inherently accessible rather than requiring special accommodations. Their case study analysis reveals that tourism businesses implementing UD could improve service quality for all customers, not just those with specific access needs. This finding parallels research in inclusive education showing that Universal Design for Learning benefits all students while specifically supporting those with learning differences (Meyer et al., 2014). The concept of curb cut effects, where accommodations designed for specific needs benefit everyone, appears frequently in both tourism and education literature (Hamraie, 2017; Reid, 2024). The term originates from the physical example of curb cuts, which are ramps built into sidewalks to help wheelchair users navigate streets. While intended for accessibility, curb cuts also make sidewalks easier to use for parents with strollers, travelers with luggage, cyclists, and others. The concept is now used in situations where design changes or accommodations made to improve accessibility for people with disabilities end up benefiting a much wider population. In the tourism area, examples include audio descriptions at tourist attractions that enhance understanding for all visitors, not just those with visual impairments, and simplified wayfinding systems that benefit travelers with cognitive differences while also assisting international visitors and families with young children.

Collaborative approaches that bring together diverse stakeholders have been cited as a critical strategy in the literature. Research highlights successful models where tourism operators partner with disability organizations, educational institutions, and community groups to develop and deliver inclusive services (Burns et al. 2009; Buhalis, et al., 2012). These collaborative models often

incorporate peer-to-peer learning and mentoring approaches borrowed from inclusive education. For example, some tour operators have developed programs where experienced travelers with disabilities serve as mentors and guides for newcomers, creating supportive learning communities that extend beyond individual tourism experiences (Jones et al., 2020). Similar mentoring programs had been implemented in colleges to help students with disabilities (Jones et al., 2011). The literature also reveals innovative partnerships between tourism businesses and educational institutions. Burgstahler & Moore (2009) describe case studies where hospitality students work directly with disability advocacy organizations to develop accessible service protocols, creating authentic learning experiences while improving industry practices.

Professional development and training are crucial elements for successful integration of inclusive practices in tourism. However, the literature reveals significant variations in training quality and approach, with many programs focusing on compliance rather than transformation. Research by McKercher and Darcy (2018) indicates that the most effective training programs draw heavily on inclusive education principles, and emphasize on experiential learning, critical reflection, and ongoing professional development rather than one-time awareness sessions. These programs often include direct interaction with people with disabilities as trainers and consultants, which challenge the traditional expert-student relationships. The literature also highlights the importance of training to address both technical skills (such as assistive technology use) and social competencies (such as communication and interaction skills). This dual focus reflects inclusive education's emphasis on both academic and social learning outcomes (Florian, 2019).

Community-based tourism development that incorporates inclusive principles represents another significant strategy in the literature. Research by Timothy and Nyaupane (2009) demonstrates how communities can develop tourism offerings that celebrate diversity and promote inclusion while generating economic benefits. These approaches often employ participatory action research methodologies borrowed from community-based education, where community members become co-researchers and co-developers of tourism products and services. The literature reveals several successful examples where communities with high populations of people with disabilities have developed unique tourism offerings through the contributions and sharing of perspectives of their residents (Pathumporn & Nakapaksin, 2015; Sisto et al., 2022).

3.2. Challenges

Despite identified strategies and growing awareness, the literature reveals several persisting challenges that continue to limit the integration of inclusive education principles with accessible tourism services. Retrofitting historic buildings and infrastructure in developing regions to be more accessible is still a significant hurdle due to the technical and financial complexities involved. (Yau et al., 2004). Moreover, the literature suggests that physical obstacles are often made worse by systemic problems such as a lack of coordination between different services, outdated policies, and limited cooperation between various sectors. Research by Darcy et al. (2010) identified 'archipelagos of accessibility' where individual businesses or attractions might be accessible, but the broader destination lacked the connected infrastructure and services necessary for inclusive tourism experiences. Such fragmentation reflects similar challenges in education systems where inclusive practices may exist in individual classrooms or schools but lack system-wide support and coordination.

Prejudiced beliefs, including unconscious bias, patronizing attitudes, and stereotypes about people with disabilities, are still common in both the tourism and education industries. (Deal, 2007). The literature reveals that these barriers are often more limiting than physical or policy barriers, as they affect the quality of interactions and the overall experience of inclusion. Research by Daruwalla & Darcy (2005) indicates that attitude change is not an immediate process, but requires sustained effort and a variety of interventions. These can include opportunities for direct contact, activities that encourage taking on another person's perspective, and ongoing dialogue and self-reflection. However, many tourism businesses and educational institutions continue to rely on brief awareness

training that may actually reinforce stereotypes rather than challenging them. Cultural factors also play a significant role, and research has demonstrated substantial variations in attitudes toward disability and inclusion across different cultural contexts (Darcy & Daruwalla, 1999). This cultural variation creates particular challenges for international tourism, where visitors and service providers may have different expectations and understandings of appropriate inclusive practices.

Financial constraints and limited human resources continue to challenge both sectors, particularly smaller tourism operators and educational institutions with limited budgets (McKercher & Darcy, 2018). The literature reveals a common perception that inclusive practices require significant additional investment, despite evidence that well-designed universal approaches can be cost-effective in the long term. Capacity constraints include limited expertise in inclusive design and service delivery, as well as insufficient training opportunities for tourism and education professionals. Research by Shaw and Coles (2004) indicates that many professionals want to implement inclusive practices but lack the knowledge and skills necessary to do so effectively.

Policy fragmentation and inconsistent regulatory frameworks create additional challenges for integration efforts. The literature reveals significant variations in accessibility standards and inclusive education requirements across jurisdictions, making it difficult for tourism operators to develop consistent approaches (Darcy & Dickson, 2009). Research also indicates that existing policies often focus on minimum compliance rather than promoting excellence in inclusive practice. This compliance orientation can create defensive rather than innovative approaches, limiting the transformative potential of tourism experiences.

3.3. *transformative Approaches*

Despite the above mentioned persisting challenges, the literature presents several promising transformative approaches that can successfully integrate inclusive education principles with accessible tourism services. Technological innovations present significant opportunities for enhancing both the accessibility and educational value of tourism experiences. Research by Buhalis and Leung (2018) demonstrates how mobile applications, augmented reality, and artificial intelligence can create personalized, accessible tourism experiences that may be adapted to individual needs and preferences. Examples include audio description systems that provide rich narrative content for visitors with visual impairments, haptic feedback systems that enhance experiences for visitors with hearing impairments, and adaptive navigation systems that provide customized wayfinding support. These technologies incorporate the principles of inclusive education by offering multiple ways to present information and encourage engagement, while also fostering independent learning and exploration. The literature also reveals innovative uses of social media and online platforms to create virtual learning communities around inclusive tourism. These platforms enable travelers to share experiences, provide peer support, and collectively advocate for improved accessibility and inclusion (Darcy & Pegg, 2011).

Asset-based approaches that recognize and build on community strengths represent another transformative innovation identified in the literature. Rather than focusing on deficits or needs, these approaches identify and use existing community assets, including the knowledge and perspectives of residents with disabilities. Research by Kretzmann (1995), while not specifically focused on tourism, provided a framework that has been successfully adapted for inclusive tourism development. Case studies demonstrate how communities can develop tourism offerings that showcase the contributions and creativity of residents with disabilities, challenging stereotypes while generating economic opportunities (Wu & Pearce, 2014). These approaches often incorporate storytelling and narrative methods that enable community members to share their experiences and perspectives with visitors, creating opportunities for meaningful cross-cultural and cross-ability learning.

The development of collaborative learning networks that connect tourism operators, educational institutions, disability organizations, and community groups represents another significant innovation. These networks facilitate knowledge sharing, joint problem-solving, and collaborative

innovation in ways that individual organizations could not achieve alone. Research by Graci (2020) describes several successful networks that have developed shared resources, training programs, and advocacy initiatives. These networks often employ inclusive education principles such as distributed leadership, participatory decision-making, and mutual learning relationships. The literature reveals that the most successful networks are those that recognize and value the expertise that all participants carry, including people with disabilities who in traditional approaches are often positioned as service users rather than knowledge contributors (Buhalis et al., 2012).

Some tourism operators have developed specific programs designed to promote transformative learning and social change. These programs explicitly combine tourism activities with educational components designed to challenge preconceived assumptions, to promote empathy, and to inspire action. Research by Stone and Petrick (2013) describes empathy tourism programs where participants engage in simulated disability experiences while learning about accessibility challenges and solutions. While these programs have generated some controversy, if designed using inclusive education principles that emphasize authentic interaction and critical reflection, they can promote meaningful learning and may lead to attitude change. Other transformative approaches include volunteer tourism programs that combine service learning with accessible travel, cultural exchange programs that bring together travelers with and without disabilities, and advocacy tourism that combines travel experiences with disability rights awareness and activism (Jamal et al., 2011). The text continues here.

4. Results of the Empirical Study

Out of 721 students enrolled in three classes of a common subject open to the tourism college, 623 (86%) students participated in the anonymous online survey, with an average age of 21 years old. They included 401 (64%) female and 222 (36%) male students. As for nationality, 177 were from Japan, 104 from Indonesia, 89 from Myanmar, 73 from Thailand, 58 from Vietnam, 30 from Korea, 21 from China, 15 from Bangladesh, 9 from India, 8 from Malaysia and Sri Lanka each, 7 from Taiwan, 6 from Mongolia and the Philippines each, 4 from Cambodia, 3 from Hong Kong and Nepal each, and 2 from Singapore. An important finding in our empirical part of the study was the relatively impressive number of students ($n=290$, 46%) who reported suffering from various learning difficulties including attention deficit disorder, hearing and visual difficulties, dyslexia, and other forms, but had not applied for receiving teaching accommodations. Among 290 students who said they had learning difficulties, 157 students (54%) cited emotional problems (anxiety, depression, etc.), 65 students (22%) reported attention deficit disorder, 35 students (12%) referred to problems in hearing, 22 students (7%) in vision, 6 students (2%) reported dyslexia, and 5 (2%) students referred to Asperger. From a total of 290 students who had some difficulty, 95 (33%) students said it was not fairly considered in their assessment. However, none of the students has requested to receive formal accommodation support and services that are part of the school administrative services with designated staff. We have identified this issue as an important matter that needs to be studied further.

These results reveal several concerning patterns that deserve attention. The most striking finding is the complete disconnect between need for inclusive teaching practices and inclusive service utilization; 46% of students reported learning difficulties, yet none sought formal accommodations. This suggests multiple potential barriers including awareness barriers, stigma and identity concerns, and the complexity of the accommodative process. Students may not know accommodations exist or understand their rights. Educational institutions often fail to adequately communicate available support services, particularly to incoming students who may be navigating independence for the first time.

Moreover, many students, especially those transitioning from high school where they may have received support, resist seeking accommodations in higher education due to fears of being perceived as different or incapable. This is particularly relevant for students with less visible disabilities like ADHD or mental health conditions. The formal accommodation process can be bureaucratic,

requiring documentation, meetings, and ongoing advocacy that students find overwhelming, especially when already struggling academically.

The other observed issue is the predominance of mental health and attention issues. The finding that anxiety/depression (54%) and ADHD (22%) comprise the majority of reported difficulties reflects broader trends in student mental health. The high prevalence of mood disorders may indicate that academic stress is exacerbating pre-existing conditions, or that the institutional environment itself contributes to psychological distress. The intersection between mental health and academic performance can create a cyclical pattern where poor academic outcomes worsen mental health, which further impairs academic functioning. Furthermore, the fact that nearly one-third of students with difficulties feel their assessments don't fairly consider their challenges points to potential institutional shortcomings in universal design for learning. This suggests that even without formal accommodations, assessment methods need to be made more inclusive.

5. Discussion

The review of the literature revealed a significant potential for cross-sectoral learning and collaboration between inclusive education and accessible tourism. Both sectors face common challenges around changing attitudes, capacity building and creating systemic change, while offering unique strengths and resources that can also benefit the other sector. Both inclusive education and accessible tourism have embraced social model approaches that emphasize removing barriers rather than fixing individuals. This shared perspective creates opportunities for joint advocacy, resource development, and professional development initiatives (Bizjak et al., 2011). The review of literature revealed successful examples of shared frameworks such as Universal Design principles, which have been adapted for both educational and tourism applications. These shared frameworks facilitate communication and collaboration across sectors while promoting consistent approaches to inclusion.

The results of the empirical study have several implications for further research. Qualitative follow-up through in-depth interviews could explore why students don't seek accommodations despite clear need. An institutional analysis can help examine how effectively schools communicate and deliver accommodation services. Longitudinal tracking allows following academic outcomes for students with unaddressed learning difficulties. Finally, intervention studies can test whether simplified accommodation processes or proactive outreach increases utilization. These findings have significant policy implications, suggesting tourism education institutions need more proactive identification and support systems rather than relying solely on student self-advocacy.

Inclusive education can enhance tourism by providing a deeper understanding of learning theories, teaching methods, and individual accommodation strategies. In return, tourism provides practical, real-world opportunities and economic incentives that can support the goals of inclusive education. Research by Jennings et al. (2009) demonstrates how hospitality management programs can incorporate inclusive education principles while providing authentic learning experiences for students. These programs create win-win situations where students develop inclusive competencies while tourism businesses improve their practices.

The intersection of inclusive education and accessible tourism creates unique opportunities for innovation that neither sector could achieve alone. These opportunities include the development of experiential learning programs, the creation of inclusive training curricula, and the design of tourism experiences that serve as powerful platforms for social learning and transformation (Jamin et al., 2024). The most innovative approaches happen when organizations treat educational and tourism goals as equally important instead of prioritizing one over the other. This requires new types of partnerships that go beyond traditional service provider and client roles.

The literature review also revealed several important implications for practitioners in both tourism and education sectors who seek to implement more inclusive approaches. Successful integration of inclusive education principles with accessible tourism services requires strategic planning to address multiple organizational levels and the broader system (Buhalis et al., 2012). The literature suggests that piecemeal approaches are less effective than comprehensive strategies that

address infrastructure, training, policy, and culture simultaneously. Organizations should consider developing inclusion action plans that draw on both best practices in tourism and education, establish clear goals and metrics, and include mechanisms for ongoing evaluation and improvement (Buhalis et al., 2012). These plans should involve stakeholders with diverse perspectives, including people with disabilities, in meaningful roles throughout the planning and implementation process.

The literature emphasized on the importance of ongoing professional development that goes beyond basic awareness training to include skill building, critical reflection, and system change competencies (Florian, 2019). Training programs should incorporate inclusive education principles such as experiential learning, peer collaboration, and authentic assessment. Organizations should consider developing partnerships with educational institutions and disability organizations to create comprehensive training programs that combine theoretical knowledge with practical application. These partnerships can provide ongoing support and resources while creating opportunities for continuous learning and improvement.

The literature strongly supported collaborative approaches that bring together diverse stakeholders in meaningful partnerships. However, these partnerships must be based on principles of equality and mutual respect rather than traditional charity or service provider models (Meacham et al., 2019). Effective partnerships require careful attention to power dynamics, resource sharing, and shared decision-making. Organizations should consider how to ensure that people with disabilities and other marginalized groups are included as partners and leaders rather than simply as beneficiaries of services.

The literature also revealed the importance of ongoing evaluation that addresses both process and outcome measures. Evaluation should include perspectives from all stakeholders and should focus on meaningful participation and satisfaction rather than simply compliance or service delivery metrics (Rubio-Escuderos et al., 2025). Organizations should consider developing evaluation approaches that incorporate inclusive education principles such as participatory evaluation, peer review, and action research. These approaches can provide valuable feedback for continuous improvement while also building capacity and promoting learning among all stakeholders.

6. Future Research Directions

The literature review identified several important areas for future research that could advance understanding and practice at the intersection of inclusive education and accessible tourism. While the literature includes many case studies and program descriptions, there is limited longitudinal research examining the long-term impacts of inclusive tourism experiences on participants, communities, and organizations. Future research should investigate how these experiences influence attitudes, behaviors, and life outcomes over time. Particular attention should be paid to examining whether tourism experiences designed using inclusive education principles produce different outcomes than traditional accessible tourism approaches. This research could provide important evidence for the value of cross-sector integration.

The literature revealed significant cultural variations in approaches to inclusion and accessibility, but there is limited comparative research examining how these variations affect tourism experiences and outcomes (Lim, 2020). Future research should investigate how cultural factors influence the integration of inclusive education and accessible tourism approaches. This research could provide valuable insights for international tourism operators and could contribute to the development of culturally responsive inclusive practices that respect local values while promoting universal principles of inclusion and accessibility.

While the literature includes some discussion of technological innovations in accessible tourism (Buhalis & Leung, 2018), there is limited research examining how these technologies can be designed and implemented using inclusive education principles. Future research should investigate how technology can support transformative learning and social change through tourism experiences. Particular attention should be paid to examining how technology can facilitate meaningful interaction

and collaboration among diverse participants, rather than simply providing individual accommodations or enhancements.

The literature lacks comprehensive analysis of the economic impacts of integrating inclusive education principles with accessible tourism services. Future research should investigate the costs and benefits of these approaches for tourism businesses, destinations, and communities. This research could provide important evidence for policy development and could help address persistent concerns about the financial feasibility of inclusive approaches. It should examine both direct costs and benefits as well as broader economic impacts such as market expansion and community development. While the literature identifies policy barriers and challenges, there is limited research examining effective strategies for systems change that promotes integration of inclusive education and accessible tourism. Future research should investigate policy innovations, advocacy strategies, and system change approaches that have been successful in promoting inclusive practices. This research should examine both formal policy mechanisms and informal system change strategies, and should investigate how cross-sector collaboration can influence policy development and implementation.

7. Conclusions

This study has some unique contributions as it bridges the research gap by specifically examining the intersection of inclusive education principles and accessible tourism from a student perspective. The results of the study may help inform tourism education curriculum development to better integrate inclusive practices and could guide how tourism programs prepare students for inclusive service delivery.

The literature review revealed significant potential for transformative change when inclusive education principles are integrated with accessible tourism services. The convergence of these two fields offers opportunities to create more meaningful, equitable, and impactful experiences for all participants while promoting broader social change and community development. The literature demonstrated that successful integration requires more than simply adding educational components to tourism experiences or making tourism more accessible. Instead, it requires fundamental reconceptualization of both tourism and education as collaborative, transformative processes that recognize and value the contributions of all participants.

Key strategies identified include universal design implementation, collaborative service delivery, comprehensive capacity building, and community engagement approaches. However, persistent challenges around systemic barriers, attitudes, resources, and policy continue to limit the full potential of these approaches. The most promising innovations identified in the literature are those that explicitly embrace both educational and tourism goals while employing principles of equality, collaboration, and mutual learning. These approaches require new models of partnership and collaboration that go beyond traditional service provider-client relationships to create authentic learning communities.

Future research should focus on longitudinal impact studies, cross-cultural comparative research, technology integration, economic analysis, and systems change strategies. This research should employ participatory approaches that include people with disabilities and other marginalized groups as co-researchers and knowledge contributors. The integration of inclusive education and accessible tourism represents more than an academic exercise or professional development opportunity. It represents a pathway toward more equitable and just societies where diversity is valued, barriers are removed, and all people can participate meaningfully in the economic, social, and cultural life of their communities. Tourism, as a global phenomenon with significant economic and social influence has particular potential to serve as a catalyst for this transformation when guided by inclusive education principles and implemented through collaborative, community-based approaches.

We are at a critical juncture where growing awareness of inclusion and accessibility issues creates opportunities for significant advancement. However, realizing this potential will require

sustained commitment, adequate resources, and continued collaboration across sectors and communities. The stakes are high, but the potential benefits for individuals, communities, and society as a whole make this integration effort both necessary and worthwhile.

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