Constraints Affecting Destination Choice of Disabled Individuals within the Scope of Accessible Tourism, Social Appearance Anxiety, Intention to be a Tourist and Recommendation Relationship

Zührem Yaman[1]*, Onur Köksal[2]

[1] Associate Professor, Selcuk University, Faculty of Tourism, Konya/Türkiye, Orcid:0000 0001-9796-7063

[2] Professor Dr., Selcuk University, Faculty of Letter, Konya/Türkiye, Orcid:0000-0003-0798-3620

*E-mail: zuhremyaman@gmail.com

Abstract: Tourism offers significant benefits to people with disabilities, not only by providing opportunities for rest and recreation but also by improving personal and social well-being. It supports the development of physical, psychological, and emotional health while enhancing social skills, broadening horizons, encouraging intercultural exchange, and facilitating learning. "Accessible tourism" refers to the ability of individuals with disabilities to travel and vacation with the same freedom and equality as everyone else. Accessible infrastructure and services help people with disabilities increase their self-confidence and independence, reduce concerns about their appearance, and have a more enjoyable vacation experience. As a result, individuals with disabilities can engage more freely in society and socialize with others. Ensuring access to accessible tourism is important for promoting equality and inclusivity, advancing efforts in the field, and creating solutions to improve the tourism experiences of people with disabilities. This study aims to examine the relationship between social appearance anxiety, tourist intention, and recommendation intention, focusing on the barriers that individuals with disabilities face in participating in accessible tourism. The research was conducted in Konya, with a sample of 486 individuals with disabilities selected from the districts of Karatay and Selçuklu using purposive sampling. A quantitative research method was used, and participants completed a personal information form. Data collection tools included the Social Appearance Anxiety Scale [15], the Tourism Constraints and Tourist Intention Scale [27] and the Recommendation Intention Scale [1]. The data were analyzed using SPSS, and the results were presented in terms of numbers, percentages, means, and standard deviations. For normally distributed data, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used, while the Mann-Whitney U test, Kruskal-Wallis test, and Spearman Correlation analysis were used for non-normally distributed data. Demographic characteristics were taken into account in each analysis. The results showed a moderate negative relationship between social appearance anxiety and tourist intention (r: -0.536; p<0.05), indicating that as social appearance anxiety increased, tourist intention decreased. Additionally, a weak positive relationship was found between social appearance anxiety and recommendation intention (r: 0.253; p<0.05), meaning that higher levels of social appearance anxiety were associated with a greater likelihood of recommending tourism.

Keywords: Disability Tourism, Destination Selection, Social Appearance Anxiety, Intention to be a Tourist

INTRODUCTION

Free tourism advocates for a travel philosophy where individuals plan their journeys according to their preferences, independently selecting their routes, accommodations, and transportation options, and experiencing their trips at their own pace. Accessible tourism, on the other hand, focuses on providing the necessary infrastructure and services to ensure that individuals with disabilities can also enjoy the freedom of travel and the pleasures of tourism.

Both tourism concepts are grounded in a philosophy that prioritizes the traveler's experience and promotes a participatory approach. In the context of free tourism, accommodations, transportation, and tourist facilities must be accessible to people with disabilities, enabling

them to travel freely. Accessible tourism facilitates this by providing the infrastructure needed for individuals with disabilities to benefit from all the advantages offered by free tourism.

There is a body of literature that explores the integration of free and accessible tourism. These studies offer suggestions on how the principles of free tourism can be applied to improve the travel experiences of individuals with disabilities. For example, recommendations include the development of online resources and mobile applications to assist disabled travelers in planning their trips, increasing the availability of accessible accommodations and tourist facilities, and organizing specialized tours for people with disabilities.

The integration of free and accessible tourism not only enables individuals with disabilities to experience the freedom of travel without concerns related to social appearance or potential restrictions, but it also offers various benefits to the tourism industry. These include tapping into a market segment focused on individuals with disabilities, enhancing the inclusivity of relevant facilities or destinations, and improving their reputations.

Social Appearance Anxiety as a Tourism Constraint, Tourist Motivation in Individuals with Disabilities

Tourism Activity Constraints for Individuals with Disabilities

The participation of individuals with disabilities in tourism plays a significant role in meeting their needs for recreation and relaxation within social life. However, research indicates that individuals with disabilities do not have different motivations or expectations when it comes to participating in tourism activities. These findings highlight the necessity of ensuring that their movements are not restricted and that an accessible environment is provided to increase their participation in tourism activities.

The negative experiences that individuals with disabilities encounter during tourism activities are among the primary factors limiting their participation in such events. The study revealed that factors related to the establishments play the most significant role in influencing the memorable tourism experiences of disabled tourists, while psychological issues caused by negative experiences and their social interaction environment also have a substantial impact on their tourism experiences [9].

McKercher and et al. [29], categorized the factors affecting the tourism activities of individuals with disabilities into two main categories: internal factors and external factors. Internal factors are further divided into individual and economic subcategories. Individual factors include a lack of information, failures in social life, health problems, psychological and social barriers, and a lack of desire to travel. Economic factors encompass insufficient income and the need for a companion, along with the inability to cover these expenses. External factors are categorized into environmental and communicative factors. Environmental factors involve elements such as regulations, safety, and architecture, while communicative factors include a lack of skills, communication difficulties, and the attitudes of employees in establishments [29].

Today, treating individuals with disabilities with sensitivity, ensuring their greater integration into social life, and improving their living standards are recognized as significant indicators of

social development [24]. One of the biggest challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in participating in social activities is accessibility. Accessibility refers to an approach that encompasses all areas of social life and aims to facilitate people's lives [4].

Due to the various challenges they face, individuals with disabilities often struggle to fully participate in social life and find it difficult to integrate. Although certain regulations have been implemented to facilitate tourism activities, many issues still hinder access to these activities [36]. Disabled individuals, who represent a significant segment of the global travel market, have the most natural right to rest, enjoy themselves, and explore new places, just like everyone else. However, it is essential to have establishments with sufficient infrastructure to accommodate their travel needs [26].

The factors that hinder the participation of individuals with disabilities in tourism activities include transportation issues, inadequacies in services provided to them, the lack of reliable information from establishments, insufficient training of personnel, the inability to provide the required comfort, and unsuitable environmental conditions. These factors negatively impact the travel experiences of individuals with disabilities [25].

Within the framework of accessible tourism, the factors influencing the tourism motivations of individuals with disabilities can be examined under four main headings: "vacation planning and reservation," "travel agencies and transportation," "destination," and "accommodation establishments." Inadequate information during the vacation planning and reservation processes has been identified as one of the weaknesses of accessible tourism [39]. Veitch and Shaw [40], citing VisitBritain [41], noted that vacation planning and reservation options pose significant challenges for individuals with disabilities. In this context, the suitability of accommodation establishments' reservation facilities, the accessibility of various resources, and the importance of experiences are emphasized in comprehensive research. In addition to the suitability of accommodation establishments, the accessibility of the destination, the adequacy of vacation facilities at the accommodation establishment, the knowledge of travel agencies regarding planning and reservations, and the sensitivity of call centers to the needs of individuals with disabilities also play a critical role in vacation planning and reservations [40].

Cavinato and Cuckovich, [8] noted that individuals with disabilities organize their travels in three different ways: through travel agencies, tour operators, or individually. Travel agencies can manage various aspects of the travel process, from transportation to accommodation, and some even organize tours tailored to the special needs of individuals with disabilities. However, it has been observed that travel agencies often face challenges in organizing tours that meet all the needs of disabled tourists. This is partly because the accessibility claims of the accommodation establishments and restaurants with which travel agencies work often do not match reality. Additionally, a lack of sufficient knowledge and infrastructure regarding disability within travel agencies poses another problem. Individuals with disabilities may also organize their travels through tour operators. There are tour operators in different countries that specialize in organizing trips for individuals with disabilities, and these operators are often established by disabled individuals themselves, who are noted for their better understanding of

the needs of individuals with disabilities. However, when organizing travel with these tour operators, challenges such as not reaching the required participation number may arise [8].

In destination selection, the presence of infrastructure and accessible tourism establishments is of great importance for individuals with disabilities. Disabled tourists who cannot find suitable establishments, such as accessible accommodation facilities, may change their destination preferences or cancel their trips altogether [13]. Destinations need to provide accessibility suitable for different types of disabilities. Research shows that destinations, where good service is received, are more likely to be revisited by disabled tourists. However, individuals with disabilities report that not all destinations provide the same level of accessibility, that there is insufficient information, and that they have had negative experiences, all of which can negatively affect their participation in tourism activities. The main issues faced by individuals with disabilities at destinations include inadequate physical arrangements, architectural barriers, the lack of necessary equipment, and delays in the provision of services. These issues can prevent individuals with disabilities from becoming potential customers of these destinations [18].

Social Appearance Anxiety

Anxiety is one of the issues faced by many individuals today. It is defined as the emotional distress experienced by a person, including feelings of inadequacy, sadness, worry, unexplained tension, discomfort due to negative thoughts, or fear. The source of anxiety is often unclear, yet it significantly impacts an individual's work and school life, achievements, and communication with others [2].

Human beings are emotional and social creatures. The need to communicate with others is fundamental. During communication, individuals aim to leave a positive impression and make an impact on others [2]. In this context, physical appearance is an important factor in creating a positive effect. Throughout human history, physical appearance has held a significant place in people's lives. Today, it remains a focal point, especially for young people. The meanings and evaluations attributed to appearance have always been prominent in societies [12].

In modern times, people have increasingly strived to make an impression on others. When individuals believe they will not leave a good impression, it can lead to anxiety. This type of anxiety is referred to as social appearance anxiety [12]. This phenomenon can also be viewed as an extension of social anxiety because individuals are not only concerned about their physical appearance but also about how they are perceived by others [2]. A study on the topic suggests that social appearance anxiety encompasses all evaluations related to a person's appearance and is thus more closely related to general social anxiety [42].

Individuals experience social appearance anxiety as a result of making negative evaluations of their appearance [3]. Social appearance anxiety is directly linked to how individuals perceive their bodies, known as body image perception [6]. Body image can be divided into two categories: positive body image and negative body image. Positive body image refers to an individual's satisfaction with their body [7]. In contrast, negative body image is characterized by negative feelings and thoughts about one's body, including perceiving oneself as less

attractive compared to others and not accepting one's body. This negative body image gives rise to social appearance anxiety [15]. However, social appearance anxiety differs in that it represents the emotional component of body image [38]. While the concept of body image refers to an individual's perception of their own body, social appearance anxiety pertains to the concern about how others perceive one's body [22]. The anxiety experienced by an individual regarding how others evaluate them also reflects social appearance anxiety. This anxiety encompasses not only concerns about body shape but also more comprehensive concerns related to facial features, skin texture, height, and weight [3;2].

Social appearance anxiety can be further defined as the tension and anxiety individuals feel when their physical appearance is evaluated by others. This type of anxiety is also regarded as a form of social anxiety [20].

Motivation for Being a Tourist and Recommendations for an Accessible Tourism Experience

When considering that tourists with disabilities often travel with a companion, it becomes evident that their vacation expectations may differ from those of other tourists. Disabled individuals, like other vacationers, may have introverted or extroverted personality traits, but it should be noted that they require more careful planning and motivation when organizing a vacation [32]. In this context, the emotional needs of disabled individuals should be given greater consideration compared to other vacationers.

Research on the tourism motivations of individuals with disabilities generally aims to better understand these individuals. However, to better serve the disabled consumer market, there is a need for more in-depth research to understand the motivations, attitudes, and behaviors of these individuals [35].

A study examining the importance of the disabled market for the tourism and travel sector in the United States focused particularly on tourists with mobility limitations [34]. Data from the general tourist population revealed that 11% of participants were physically disabled. It was found that these individuals showed particular interest in activities such as nature sports during their vacations. The study concluded that tourism operators should offer services specifically designed for tourists who are interested in heritage and nature activities and prefer to remain active despite mobility limitations.

A review of the literature indicates that tourism motivation factors are crucial enough to influence individuals' participation in travel and tourism activities. Technological advancements and increased competition have led to significant changes in the tourism sector. The growing variety of tourism products and destination options has made it imperative for tourism businesses and managers to better understand their target audiences. Considering that disabled individuals constitute a special consumer group requiring different arrangements in the tourism sector, it is of great importance to anticipate the needs and desires of these individuals in advance.

Recommendation behavior can be defined as when a customer, satisfied with a service or product, recommends it to others. This behavior is critical for businesses, as positive

recommendations from customers can create a favorable perception of the brand and services among potential customers [23]. Recommendation behavior is closely linked to customer satisfaction and loyalty. A study by Yoon and Uysal [43] found that as customer satisfaction increases, so does the likelihood of customers recommending the service. It is emphasized that businesses should make efforts to enhance customer satisfaction.

The variety and quality of services provided by hotel businesses directly affect customer satisfaction and, consequently, recommendation behavior. In this context, offering special services for disabled guests, responding quickly to complaints, increasing the variety of products and services, implementing appropriate pricing policies, and establishing direct communication with customers can increase both guest satisfaction and the likelihood of recommendations.

Recommendation behavior is also closely related to customer loyalty. A satisfied customer is likely to choose the same business again and may also recommend it to others. Therefore, customer loyalty is extremely important for businesses and is directly linked to customer satisfaction [31;10;21]. The higher the perceived service quality by tourists, the higher their level of satisfaction, which in turn increases the likelihood that tourists will recommend the destination to others [19].

Determining the levels of social appearance anxiety among disabled individuals and, based on this, assessing their intentions to become tourists, evaluating their experiences, and identifying opportunities to address any tourism constraints will help establish the necessary axioms for supporting the participation of disabled individuals in all types of tourism activities under the framework of accessible tourism.

Research Questions

1. What are the levels of social appearance anxiety among the participants?

2. What are the participants' levels of experience as tourists?

3. What are the participants' perception levels regarding their intentions to become tourists?

4. Is there a relationship between participants' levels of social appearance anxiety, their intentions to become tourists, and their recommendation levels regarding tourism constraints?

5. Are there differences in participants' socio-demographic characteristics regarding tourism constraints in terms of social appearance anxiety levels, tourist experiences, and intention levels to become tourists?

Constraints Influencing Destination Choice, Social Appearance Anxiety, Tourist Intentions, and Recommendation Behavior Among Disabled Individuals in the Context of Accessible Tourism

Methodology and Sample of the Study

This research aimed to investigate the relationship between social appearance anxiety, tourist intentions, experiences, and tourism constraints among individuals with physical disabilities within the context of accessible and inclusive tourism. Conducted with 486 participants, data

collection took place in April and May 2024, predominantly in destination areas, with participants recruited through communication with their acquaintances. The purposive sampling method was employed. To collect data for the study, several instruments were employed: a Personal Information Form developed by the researchers based on a review of the relevant literature, the Social Appearance Anxiety Scale [15], the Tourism Constraint and Tourist Intent Scale [27] and the Recommendation Intention Scale [1].

For the analysis of the research data, SPSS 25 software package was utilized. The data were summarized using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The normality of the data distribution was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. For the analysis of data that did not exhibit normal distribution, the Mann-Whitney U test, Kruskal-Wallis test, and Spearman correlation analysis were employed. In this study Social appearence anxiety which may affect the disabilities' intention to be a tourist was used and also multiple regression analyze was used by choosing the backward methods to evaluate the intention to be tourist variances.The results were evaluated within a 95% confidence interval and at a significance level of $p<0.05$.

Findings

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Variable	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	188	38,7
Male	298	61,3
Age		
18-25 Age	101	20,8
26-35 Age	197	40,5
36 -45 Age	79	16,3
46-55 Age	65	13,4
56 Age and older	44	9
Education Level		
No formal education	12	2,5
Primary school graduate	125	25,7
High school graduate	98	20,2
Two-year degree	153	31,5
Bachelor's degree	95	19,5
Master's degree	3	0,6

Income

No income	5	1,1
1-20000 TL	87	17,9
20001-30000 TL	211	43,4
30001-40000 TL	126	25,9
40001 TL and above	57	11,7

Marital Status

Married	275	56,6
Single	211	43,4

Frequency of Travel

Never travel	241	49,6
Once a year	178	36,6
Twice a year	55	11,3
Three times a year or more	12	2,5

The distribution of socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants is presented in Table 1. Among the participants, 61.3% were male, and 40.5% were in the 26-35 age group. A total of 31.5% of the participants held an associate degree, while only 0.6% had pursued postgraduate education. Additionally, 43.4% of the participants reported an income between 20,001 and 30,000 TL, and 56.6% identified their marital status as married. Regarding travel frequency, 49.6% of the participants indicated that they do not take vacations.

Table 2: Mean Scores and Sub-Dimensions of Participants' Social Appearance Anxiety, Tourist Intention, and Recommendation Intention Scales

Scales	N	Number of Items	Mean±Sd	Min-Max	Cronbach Alpha
Social Appearance Anxiety Scale Total Score	486	16	32,76±7,15	16-43	0,87
Tourist Intention Scale Total Score	486	3	35,65±7,44	5-24	0,85
Recommendation Intention Scale Total Score	486	3	30,54±8,21	5-37	0,91

Table 2 illustrates the mean scores of the Social Appearance Anxiety Scale, Tourist Intention Scale, and Recommendation Intention Scale among the participants. The average total score for the Social Appearance Anxiety Scale was 32.76±7.15, while the Tourist Intention Scale

and Recommendation Intention Scale had mean total scores of 35.65±7.44 and 30.54±8.21, respectively.

Table 3. Distribution of Mean Scores for Social Appearance Anxiety, Intention to be a Tourist, and Recommendation Based on Participants' Socio-demographic Characteristics

Variable	Social Appearance Anxiety Level Mean±SD	Test Value P.	Tourist Intention Level Mean±SD	Test Value P.	Recommendation Intention Level Mean±SD	Test Value P.
Gender						
Female	48,57±6,73	t: 0,161	28,19±6,46	t: 1,541	37,24±11,43	t: 1,489
Male	31,23±4,22	p: 0,014*	33,17±7,51	p: 0,005*	19,28±8,78	p: 0,206
Age						
18-25 Age	47,06±7,43		29,63±7,19		35,49±12,48	
26-35 Age	45,19±7,65	Z: 0,825	27,81±6,45	Z: 1,236	26,51±11,35	Z: 3,417
36 -45 Age	48,32±9,32	p: 0,011*	28,76±7,12	p: 0,008*	29,98±10,72	p: 0,086
46-55 Age	46,71±7,15		28,32±9,08		31,43±11,76	
56 Age and older	47,51±8,19		28,76±8,35		29,91±9,13	
Education Level						
No formal education	46,32±8,76		33,78±7,81		34,12±9,02	
Primary school graduate	48,65±7,12	Z: 2,767	31,41±7,12	Z:2,249	35,94±9,63	Z: 2,598
High school graduate	47,39±8,21	p: 0,004*	34,63±6,65	p: 0,012*	34,07±7,18	p: 0,461
Two-year degree	37,12±7,53		30,87±7,16		35,68±8,71	
Bachelor's degree	33,71±5,68		27,05±6,15		33,21±9,32	
Master's degree	31,65±5,73		28,87±7,98		34,54±8,21	

Income

No income	37,31±8,21		33,46±7,06		35,54±9,21	
1-20000 TL	45,32±6,35	Z: 1,791	33,21±6,23	Z: 3,027	34,19±8,78	Z: 2,135
20001-30000 TL	44,15±8,16	p: 0,014*	31,54±7,36	p: 0,178	31,26±6,31	p: 0,056
30001-40000 TL	35,19±7,33		32,25±6,09		33,57±7,92	
40001 TL and above	34,97±6,57		30,07±6,12		31,92±6,13	

Marital Status

Married	46,78±6,98	t: 0,163	35,84±7,06	t: 0,243	35,27±8,31	t: 1,631
Single	32,65±7,39	p: 0,765	33,17±7,34	p: 0,659	33,12±7,06	p: 0,179

Frequency Travel

Never travel	35,24±8,12		29,67±6,93		37,15±7,65	
Once a year	37,13±7,64	Z: 3,647	31,34±8,59	Z: 3,472	34,67±6,89	Z: 4,436
Twice a year	38,14±9,03	p: 0,191	31,76±7,46	p: 0,153	32,23±8,21	p: 0,007*
Three times a year or more	39,32±7,51		30,18±7,726		25,44±8,53	

KW: Kruskal Wallis test, Z: Mann-Whitney U test, r: Spearman correlation

When the distribution of mean attitude scores towards Social Appearance Anxiety based on the socio-demographic characteristics of the individuals participating in the study is examined, it is found that the difference between marital status and travel frequency and the mean score of the Social Appearance Anxiety Scale is not statistically significant. However, the difference between gender, age, education, and income level variables and the mean score of the Social Appearance Anxiety Scale is found to be statistically significant. It is observed that the difference in the gender variable stems from female participants, and in the age variable from participants aged between 26-35 years. Additionally, the difference in the education variable is determined to arise from participants with primary and undergraduate levels of education. The difference in income level is found to be due to individuals with an income of 40,001 TL and above (p>0.05).

When the distribution of mean scores for the intention to become a tourist based on the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants is examined, the difference between gender, age, and education level variables and the mean score of the intention to become a tourist scale is found to be statistically significant (p>0.05). It is observed that the difference in the gender variable stems from female participants, and in the age variable from participants aged between

26-35 years. Moreover, the difference in the education variable is determined to stem from participants with undergraduate and postgraduate education levels (p>0.05).

When the distribution of mean recommendation scores based on the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants is examined, it is found that the differences between gender, age, education level, income level, and marital status and the mean score of the recommendation scale are not statistically significant (p>0.05). However, the difference between the travel frequency variable and the mean score of the recommendation scale is found to be statistically significant (p<0.05), with the difference being attributable to participants who travel three or more times a year (Table 3).

Table 4. The Relationship Between the Social Appearance Anxiety Scale, the Intention to Become a Tourist Scale, and the Recommendation Scale

		Social Appearance Anxiety Level	Tourist Intention Level	Recommendation Intention Level
Social Appearance Anxiety Level	r	1	-0,536	0,253
	p		0,000	0,000
Tourist Intention Level	r		1	0,059
	p			0,000
Recommendation Intention Level	r			1
	p			

* r: Spearman correlation is significant at p<0.05 level.

As presented in Table 4, an analysis of the mean scores for social appearance anxiety, intention to become a tourist, and recommendation levels reveals a moderate negative correlation between the total mean score of the Social Appearance Anxiety Scale and the total mean score of the Intention to Become a Tourist Scale (r = -0.536; p < 0.05). This indicates that as participants' total scores on the Social Appearance Anxiety Scale rise, their total scores on the Intention to Become a Tourist Scale tend to decline. Furthermore, a weak positive correlation is observed between participants' social appearance anxiety levels and their recommendation levels (r = 0.253; p < 0.05). This suggests that as the total scores on the Social Appearance Anxiety Scale increase, participants' recommendation levels also show a corresponding increase.

Table 5. The Impact of Participants' Mean Scores for Intention to Become a Tourist and Recommendation Levels on the Mean Score of Social Appearance Anxiety Levels

Determinants	β	T	p	Collinearity	
				Tolerance	VIF
Intention to be a Tourist Mean Score	-0,685	-8,713	0,000	0,143	5,371
Recommendation Level Mean Score	0,017	0,073	0,648	0,152	6,419
R=0,814 p<0,000		R^2=0,762		Adjusted R^2= 0,547	F=819,374

In Table 5, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted using the backward method to explain the mean score of social appearance anxiety levels (dependent variable) by employing the mean scores of the intention to become a tourist (independent variable) and recommendation levels (independent variable). The results of the analysis indicated that the independent variables had a significant effect on the dependent variable and explained 54.7% of the variance in the dependent variable (Adjusted R^2 = 0.547) (p<0.001). According to the regression analysis, the mean score of the intention to become a tourist (β = -0.685; p<0.001) was a significant negative predictor of the mean score of social appearance anxiety, while no significant relationship was found between the mean score of recommendation (β = 0.117; p>0.05) and the mean score of social appearance anxiety.

CONCLUSION

Disability is a phenomenon that concerns all segments of society. It is crucial to arrange physical conditions and socialenvironmental factors to accommodate individuals with disabilities so that they can adapt to social environments and meet their own needs without needing assistance. When these conditions are met, it will contribute to enhancing the sense of belonging of individuals with disabilities in society [4]. Historically, individuals with disabilities have faced various challenges due to social, economic, and political conditions, negative attitudes, discrimination, and environmental factors [17]. Today, showing sensitivity toward individuals with disabilities, integrating them into social life, and improving their living standards are important indicators of social development [24]. Therefore, understanding the social appearance anxiety, travel intentions, and recommendation behaviors among individuals with disabilities is important in creating niche destinations that include them, which can help boost tourism revenues and potential. In this context, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between social appearance anxiety, intention to become a tourist, and recommendation behavior among individuals with disabilities in the context of accessible tourism.

In this study, variations in the mean scores for social appearance anxiety, travel intention, and recommendation behavior were examined based on socio-demographic characteristics. A significant association was identified between gender and the mean scores for both social appearance anxiety and travel intention among participants. Furthermore, participants who

travel three or more times annually demonstrated a significant difference in recommendation behavior compared to others.

When analyzing the mean scores for social appearance anxiety, intention to become a tourist, and recommendation levels, a moderate negative correlation was identified between the total mean score of the Social Appearance Anxiety Scale and the Intention to Become a Tourist Scale (r = -0.536; p < 0.05). Additionally, a weak positive correlation was found between participants' social appearance anxiety levels and their recommendation behavior (r = 0.253; p < 0.05).

Disabled tourism presents a significant market potential for tourism businesses, as there are a considerable number of individuals with disabilities globally, and these individuals typically travel with companions [44]. The ability of individuals with disabilities to travel alone or with their companions and participate in tourism activities without difficulties is both an individual and societal need. Although disabled tourism is a growing and developing field, it is still somewhat considered a niche phenomenon [33]. The literature shows a limited number of definitions in this area, with one of the most general being the concept of "accessible tourism." Accessible tourism refers to the provision of tourism products and services designed with universal equality and sensitivity principles, accommodating individuals' mobility, visual, and auditory needs in a collaborative effort among stakeholders [14;28]. Disabled tourism can be defined as a type of tourism that encompasses tourist products, services, and activities provided for individuals with physical, visual, speech, hearing, and intellectual disabilities [37]. This type of tourism aims to ensure that individuals with disabilities can fully benefit from tourism activities and take necessary precautions to prevent obstacles that could negatively affect their vacation experiences [16]. Supporting the independent participation of individuals with disabilities in society, allowing them to vacation with dignity and equal conditions, socialize, and engage in community life is also of great importance in contributing to the increase in tourism revenues and potential [30;5].

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