UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

ACCESSIBILITY OF NATIONAL PARKS TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN GHANA

BY

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: ..... Date: .....

Name: Simon Awintuuma Ndewin

Supervisors' Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature: ..... Date: .....

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ABSTRACT

Despite offering countless tourism services, scanty research has been dedicated to examining how National Parks are accessible to persons with disabilities (PwDs). This study assessed the accessibility of Kakum and Mole National Parks to PwDs. The embedded mixed method approach and an exploratory design were adopted. A total of 81 frontline employees as well as two mangers of the parks were purposively selected for the study. Four instruments namely; Accessibility Audit Checklist, Questionnaire and two In-Depth Interview Guides were used. The Accessibility Audit Checklist explored the physical accessibility conditions of the parks. The questionnaire measured frontline employees' attitude towards PwDs and the in-depth interviews unearthed contextual issues. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics, Chi-square, Kruskal Wallis, Mann-Whitney tests and inductive content techniques. The study observed that both parks' core products are not physically accessible to PwDs. Five main factors emerged as drivers of physical accessibility at the two parks. Further, the study found that frontline employees have favourable attitude towards PwDs as 96.3%, 91.5% and 96% of the employees held positive cognitive, affective and behaviour dispositions respectively towards PwDs. Finally, socio-demographic and work-related factors shape employees' attitude towards PwDs. The study recommends that management re-adjust the designs of the core products to allow for independent use by PwDs. Also, GTA should incorporate the PwDs Act, 2006 (Act 715) requirements and accessible tourism measures into their monitoring and evaluation criteria and mount strict enforcement to ensure the two national parks are made physically accessible to PwDs.

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DEDICATION

To Dr. Foster Frempong and my late father, Mr. Ndewin Awusu.

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ACRONYMS

GFD - Ghana Federation of Disability

KNP - Kakum National Park

MNP - Mole National Park

MOTAC - Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture

PwDs - Persons with Disabilities

UNWTO - United Nations World Tourism Organization

VwDs - Visitors with Disabilities

WHO - World Health Organization

WTO - World Tourism Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Accessible tourism is traced to the Manila Declaration in 1980. Following that, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) took it upon itself to provide the best practical and non-discriminatory access to tourism services for all persons (Bowtell, 2015). Persons with disabilities, due to their growing level of economic and social integration, are now participating more and more in tourism activities (World Tourism Organization, 2016) and this is particularly made possible through the use of technology. Despite being an economic opportunity as well as a tool for social inclusion and integration, accessible tourism is yet to be fully explored in many parts of Africa including Ghana. Against this backdrop, this study seeks to examine how this concept is manifested in selected national parks in Ghana.

Accessible tourism is referred to as any attempt at providing access requirements, including mobility, vision, hearing and speech dimensions of access for all persons to function independently and with equity and dignity (WTO, 2013). Accordingly, the WTO (2016, p6), describes accessible tourism as involving the "adaptation of environments and of tourism products and services so as to enable access, use and enjoyment by all users, under the principles of Universal Design". Accessible tourism is about tourism for all and there are different market segments of tourism demand with each having different access needs (Kasimati & Ioakeimidis, 2019).

The concept of accessible tourism is studied from two perspectives in the literature; the supply and demand side perspectives. While studies on the

supply side look at tourism service providers or establishments and what they must do to make their services/products accessible to the travelling population importantly, persons with disabilities (Gassiot, 2016; Adam, 2019; Zimmermann-Janschitz, Landauer, Drexel & Obermeier, 2021), studies on the demand side focus on tourist with disabilities inflows and how they expect to be treated at destinations (Chikuta, Plessis & Saayman, 2019).

In relation to the latter, visitor arrivals in Ghana have increased over the last decade. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2017), total visitor arrivals increased from 616,500 in 2010 to 722,300 in 2013 with a corresponding increase in tourism revenues of GHC1, 067.9mn in 2010 to GHC1, 451.4mn in 2013. The total contribution of tourism to GDP was GHC7, 668.4mn (6.7% of GDP), employment; including indirect jobs was 5.5% of total employment (298,500 jobs) and visitor exports generated GHC2, 292.2mn (4.2% of total exports) in 2014 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2015). The WTTC (2016) reported US$1,000.3mn as direct tourism contributions to Ghana's GDP in 2015 with direct employment of 287,900 people (or 2.4 percent of total employment). Between 2007 and 2017, international tourism receipts increased from GHC52, 740mn to GHC10, 8000mn (World Bank Group, 2017). Tourist arrivals increased from 225, 000 in 2016 to 325, 000 in 2019 (Bank of Ghana, 2021). These figures paint the progress Ghana is making in terms visitor inflows. However, different segments of visitors form the arrival groups to Ghana. One of such segments is the disability market (McCabe, 2019).

Over 15% of the world's population are persons with disabilities (WTO, 2016). The number of persons with disability (PwDs) in developing

countries is higher than those in developed countries (Mitra & Yap, 2021). Eighty million of the global population of PwDs live in Africa (Seidu, Malau-Aduli, McBain-Rigg, Malau-Aduli & Emeto, 2021) with over 3 million in Ghanaian (Ghana Federation of Disability, 2021). Despite the fact that this number is increasing, PwDs are still faced with series of constraints at attraction sites including national parks (Edusei, Aggrey, Badu & Opoku 2015; Gassiot 2016).

The concept of disability is fluid and dynamic, and evokes different meanings at different jurisdictions (Buhalis, Darcy & Ambrose, 2012). While some view disability as a social construct others attribute it to medical conditions (World Health Organization, 2011). However, disability became a human right imperative following the introduction of Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2007. According to WTO (2013), a person who finds it difficult to participate in a social activity like travelling and other tourism activities on equal basis with others as a result of environmental and attitudinal barriers is said to be disabled. Different forms of disability exist and the Ghana Statistical Service (2013) has identified various types of disabilities: visual, physical, speech, hearing, emotional and intellectual disabilities as existing in Ghana.

Adopting the WTO (2013) definition as a working definition and drawing clues from (Chikuta et al., 2019; GSS, 2013), this study conceptualizes disability to include the following dimensions; mobility, hearing, speech and visual impairments. These groups of people have special needs and require special services from suppliers of tourism products and services at national parks (WTO, 2016; Gassiot, 2016; Chikuta et al., 2019)

including right attitude of employees towards them. According to WTO (2016), positive attitude is a principal requirement in accessible tourism since negative attitude of park employees can serve as a barrier to parks access.

Attitude meanwhile, is referred to as the set of beliefs an individual hold in relation to a referent where the referent could be a person, thing, event or an issue (Eagly & Chaiken, 2007). It is a psychological process that is expressed by evaluating a referent with some degree of favour or disfavour (Albarracin & Shavitt, 2018). Attitude is distinguished from other psychological constructs such as mood which often is not directed towards a referent by three features including evaluation, attitude object and tendency (Eagly & Chaiken, 2007). Thus, attitude is formed by appraising an attitude object based on the individual cognitive and affective dispositions and with an intervening tendency also known as residue past experience. Attitude is manifested overtly at different levels such as action, target, context and time (Albarracin & Shavitt, 2018; Presseau, McCleary, Lorencatto, Patey, Grimshaw & Francis (2019). Meaning that, a given perception, emotion, or action is directed at a specific target, at a given context and within a given time. In other words, attitude can vary based on the referent, context and time. Also, according to Palad et al., (2021), sociocultural, economic and political factors can shape people's attitude. In the context of this study, each of these factors may shape how the individual employee will act towards a referent particularly, persons with disabilities thus, influencing the service delivery at the parks.

Given that the concept of accessibility has multiple dimensions including physical and attitude dimensions (WTO, 2016) and the fact that

barriers to access largely emanate from attitudinal and environmental or physical factors (WTO, 2013), the study assessed whether national parks in Ghana are accessible to persons with disabilities (PwDs) from two dimensions: physical accessibility and attitude of park employees within the principles of universal design and social inclusion. These dimensions directly fall under the remit of park management and as a result, the study takes a supply perspective.

National parks offer numerous services such as bird watching, nature walk, outdoor adventure and fun activities like walking safari or driving safari and these activities contribute to both the health and social wellbeing of PwDs (Stumbo et al., 2011; Li et al., 2021; Chikuta et al., 2019). Ghana, having passed the PwDs Act 2006, (Act 715) and also subscribed to the UNCRPD (2007), all seeking to create equal opportunities and improve the lives of PwDs, there is the need to make national parks like Kakum and Mole accessible so that PwDs can participate and enjoy tourism on equal basis with non-disabled people.

Statement of Problem

Generally, benefits such as increased self-confidence, increased likelihood to pursue new challenges, increased appreciation of diversity, increased self-efficiency, increased leisure skills, self-understanding, and awareness of one's capabilities, increased self-directed activity and spiritual benefits are accrued to visitors with disabilities (VwDs) to protected areas like national parks (Chikuta et al., 2019). Despite these benefits, evidence (Gassiot, 2016; Zimmermann-Janschitz et al., 2021) suggest parks are not accessible and designed to suit the needs of PwDs. Few studies (Wang et al. 2015;

Chikuta 2015; Das & Honiball, 2016; Perry et al. 2018) have been conducted in the context of national parks to ascertain the accessibility needs of PwDs to allow for independent use.

In the context of Ghana, authorities have been criticized for not enforcing the CRPD (2007) and the PwDs Act 2006, Act (715) which all seek to improve the lives of PwDs especially in areas of access to economic goods and services such as tourism (Asante & Sasu, 2015). This raises doubts whether places like national parks which offer services that are essential to the wellbeing of PwDs are accessible. Tourists with disabilities want unique experiences and this is achieved when specific infrastructure and services are put in place to cater for their peculiar needs (WTO, 2016). Gassiot (2016) disclosed that many barriers still hinder normalized access to tourism goods and services for PwDs and accordingly, few studies (Adam 2019; Offei et al. 2017; Mensah et al., 2015; Edusei et al. 2015) have been conducted in Ghana but across different sectors of the tourism industry in relation to access.

Adam (2019) examined drivers of physical access among hotels, Offei et al. (2017) also looked at how accessible the cape coast castle is to PwDs, Mensah et al., (2015) investigated challenges faced with PwDs participating in ecotourism and Edusei et al. (2015) examined the nature of access and participation of PwDs at selected attractions in the Ashanti region. Even though some of these studies (Mensah et al., 2015 and Edusei et al., 2015) relate to wildlife reserves, such studies had different focus from physical accessibility and park employees' attitude towards PwDs. The wilderness nature of national parks makes their accessibility provision unique from other domains of tourism. National parks require special accessibility measures

(WTO, 2016). Yet, scanty research has been dedicated to examining how the few national parks in Ghana are accessible to PwDs.

Kakum and Mole national parks are a home to many endangered species and draw majority of both domestic and international travellers (GSS, 2017), some of whom may have one form of disability or the other and given the dearth of literature about how these parks are accessible to PwDs make the study necessary.

Research Objectives

The study assessed the accessibility of national parks to Visitors with Disabilities in Ghana. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following;

1. Evaluate the level of physical accessibility of national parks in Ghana based on acceptable standards
2. Explore the drivers of physical accessibility at national parks in Ghana
3. Analyse the attitude of park employees toward PwDs in Ghana
4. Examine factors shaping park employees' attitude towards PwDs in Ghana

Research Questions

1. What is the level of physical accessibility at national parks in Ghana?
2. What are the drivers of physical accessibility at national parks in Ghana?
3. How is the attitude of park employees towards PwDs at national parks in Ghana?
4. What are the factors shaping employees' attitude towards PwDs at national parks in Ghana?

Significance of the Study

The study will contribute to both literature and practice. In terms of literature, the outcome of this study will contribute to filling the research gap on parks accessibility in such a way it will contribute to the academic discourse by providing evidence from the Ghanaian context on whether national parks are accessible to PwDs or otherwise. On practice, the outcome of the study will inform management of national parks on what type of facilities, measures and training to put in place to help enhance tourists with disabilities experience. Particularly on factors shaping employees' attitude towards PwDs; considering the inseparability nature of tourism products, the outcome of the study will inform management the kind of service training that need to be given to employees. This will help draw more customers by attracting both domestic and international tourists with disabilities thus; increasing the revenue generation chances of parks and the multiplier effect potentials of the industry at large. The outcome of the study will also inform policy makers and implementers like Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC) and Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) on steps to take regarding enforcing the PwDs Act 2006, Act (715) at various parks in Ghana. Particularly, information on drivers of physical access would disclose the motives behind management actions towards making various parks accessible to PwDs. As such, it will inform policy planning and implementation. For instance, if there is disability market and rather, management are handicapped financially or lacking certain training, MOTAC and GTA can step in with necessary assistance.

Limitation of the Study

The following have been identified as limitations of this study.

First, the study has not been able to capture views of PwDs in terms of what they expect from national parks in relations to accessibility. The study only looked at accessibility from the view point of suppliers of services of national parks. Therefore, future studies can approach the concept from demand (PwDs) perspective.

Secondly, the sample size for the study was small and the non-parametric statistical tools used as well as the inductive content analysis are not stringent enough to warrant generalization. As a result, the conclusions drawn in this study should be interpreted with care and within the operational domains of the two national parks.

Also, the direct method of measuring attitude as used in this study is somewhat marred with issues of social desirability where respondents turn to portray non-existing attitudes just to be seen as nice and this may be wrongly interpreted. As such, findings on attitude may not be a reflection of frontline employee's actual attitude towards PwDs.

Structure of the Thesis

The study is composed of five distinct chapters. Chapter One is the introductory chapter which contained the background of the study, statement of problem, research objectives and questions, significant of the study. Chapter Two consisted of a review of literature on the subject of accessible tourism, physical accessibility, employees' attitude towards PwDs, theoretical underpinnings and the conceptual framework. Chapter Three looked at the methodological issues of the study. These included; the research philosophy,

study design, research design, study setting, target population, sample size and sampling procedure, source of data, research instrument and data analysis. Chapter Four presented detailed discussion of the analysed data. Chapter Five summarized the key findings, conclusion and recommendations from the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter looks at the literature related to accessibility of national parks to persons with disabilities. The major issues covered under this chapter include the concept of accessible tourism, the concept of disability and the concept of universal design. Others include physical accessibility, attitudes of park employees towards persons with disabilities (PwDs), factors influencing park employees' attitude towards PwDs and drivers of physical access at national parks. Finally, the chapter discusses the various theoretical underpinnings and the conceptual framework guiding the study.

Concept of Disability in Ghana

Everyone is potentially a disabled person and depending on the form, a life stage one cannot escape. That notwithstanding, there is no universally agreed definition of disability. Various conceptual models such as the moral, medical and social model are adopted in explaining and measuring the concept (WHO, 2011; Oliver, 2013; Retief & Letsosa, 2018). Each of these models propagates a distinct way of thinking which in turn influence the actions taken towards accessibility of tourism facilities. Additionally, some argue that disability should be viewed as a developmental and human rights imperative (Stein, 2017; Degener, 2017) which will exert different impact on accessibility of tourism facilities.

According to Olusanyav et al. (2019), disability is referred to any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the way or within the range considered normal for a human being. Also, according to Haegele and

Hodge (2016), disability is defined as inability or limitation in performing socially defined roles and tasks expected of an individual within a sociocultural and physical environment. Intersecting these views, WHO (2015) explains disability to include impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Where impairment is a problem in the body structure, activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task whereas participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual involvement in life situations. While the impairment is connected to the individual body, activity limitation and participation restrictions are considered external to the individual and referent to social arrangements (Zajadacz, 2015) implying that, disability chiefly emanates from social barriers. Meanwhile, disability occurs in different dimensions. Accordingly, Ghana Statistical Service (2013) identified the following forms of disability as existing in Ghana: visual, hearing, physical, speech, emotional and intellectual impairments. These groups of people are increasing from both domestic and international scenes (WTO, 2016; GFD, 2021) and they turn to require special services and facilities in order to meet their basic needs. Resultantly, a number of global policies or programs have been designed targeted at making PwDs lives better. Prominent among them is the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD) 2007; a human right instrument with a social development dimension. It upholds that all persons with all forms of disability should enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms (GSS, 2013) including right of access to all socioeconomic goods and services. Relatedly, Ghana passed the PwD Act 2006, (Act 715) and in addition subscribed to the UNCRPD (2007) in a bit to

improving the lives of PwDs especially with access to goods and services such as tourism. Yet, it is reported that PwDs in Ghana are still faced with numerous challenges including inaccessible environments (GSS 2013; Asante & Sasu, 2015) and the tourism environment is one of those environments.

Concept of Accessible Tourism

The concept of accessible tourism has evolved through time particularly beginning from the 1980s after the Manila's Declaration. The UNWTO in support of promoting the rights and freedoms of marginalized groups as espoused under the Manilas Declaration approved series of resolutions underscoring the need to provide tourism for all regardless of one social condition (UNWTO, 2015). Prominent among these resolutions was the 1991 document christened "*Creating Tourism Opportunities for the Handicapped People*" and modified in 2005 to "*Accessible Tourism for All*". In a further broader collaboration with disability organizations, the UNWTO updated the accessible tourism for all principles in 2013 to reflect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (2007) in a quest to guide stakeholders in implementing universal accessibility practice (WTO, 2013; WTO, 2016). The update ushered in a new operational focus with disability issues taking a centre stage in the concept. The overarching aim was now to create equal and dignified opportunities for tourists with specific access needs to participate and enjoy tourism particularly, people with disabilities (Darcy et al., 2010; WTO, 2013; Gassiot, 2016; Chikuta et al., 2019). It also emphasizes the need to create universally designed environments that supports all persons (Buhalis et al., 2012). Therefore, this section examines the definition and operationalization of accessible tourism in

the context of national parks, various dimensions specifically; physical accessibility and employee's attitudes as well as the concept of disability.

According to Buhalis & Darcy (2010), accessible tourism is described as an approach to the development and management of tourism that consciously cater for the access needs of all categories of persons. Everybody needs accessible environments, products and services at some point in time because of varied reasons (WTO, 2016). As such, destinations are being encouraged to make their products accessible. Also, several factors account for reasons why destinations must be made accessible. According to the WTO (2016), accessible tourism is considered a right especially with countries that subscribed onto the United Nation Convention on Rights of Persons with Disability (2007). Additionally, accessible tourism is seen as an investment because it can lead to increased market shares as well as enhancing destination competitiveness and brings customer loyalty (WTO, 2016). These factors suggest that apart from the economic fortunes, accessible tourism is also by law compulsory for countries like Ghana who subscribed to UNCRPD (2007).

Also, to Güngör (2016), accessible tourism creates customer satisfaction through improved quality of service which brings about good experience for tourists. Accordingly, it is imperative for protected areas like Kakum and Mole national parks in Ghana to be made accessible to PwDs. The WTO (2016) came out with guidelines for the creation of accessible tourism.

These include;

1. Provision of information - reliable and timely data on the accessibility conditions of destinations (national parks) must be provided for all users through accessible documents and formats. Information about access must be made available in the form that the user understands.
2. An unbroken chain – the supply of tourism at the destination must be comprehensive where all products and services in the supply chain (reservation systems, accommodation, transport, etc.) are easily accessible.
3. Transportation – there needs to be suitable means of transport to the destination (national parks) and movement within or around them.
4. Safety and security – in making facilities accessible, the safety and security of visitors at the parks should be taking into consideration as well as protective measures to prevent possible harm.
5. Inclusiveness – segregating products do not often help visitors unless otherwise explained. So, services at different segment areas of parks should be provided in an integrated manner.
6. Attitude – attitude is everything and so, training should be given to park employees to attend to persons with access needs such as PwDs as this enhances their experiences

Meanwhile, broad dimensions of accessible tourism exist including physical accessibility, emotional accessibility, transportation accessibility, information accessibility, financial accessibility and positive service attitude all of which contribute to successful implementation of the concept (WTO 2015; Buhalis and Darcy, 2010). However, the concept of accessibility is

viewed as the ease with which environments, facilities and services are used (Park, 2018). To Güngör (2016), accessibility is the condition at which persons are able to reach and utilize both man-made and natural environments through benefiting and contributing to the services provided in those environments. national parks provide numerous services for the travelling public including PwDs (Chikuta, 2015; Das & Honiball, 2016; Xiao et al., 2018). For PwDs to fully experience those services significantly lies with access (Darcy, 2010; Chikuta, 2015) and this study considers two dimensions of access; physical accessibility and employees' attitude towards VwDs. This is because, barriers to access largely emanate from these strands of accessibility (WTO, 2013) and studies about these two dimensions of access are relatively new in the context of national parks in Ghana.

National Parks and Nature-Based Tourism in Ghana

Nature-based tourism includes those activities that rely on experiences directly related to natural attractions such as wildlife and forest reserves (Sisneros-Kidd et al., 2019). It includes ecotourism, adventure tourism and Agricultural tourism. Nature-based tourism is on the rise for varied reasons (Albrecht, 2021). People have increasingly plundered the wilderness for industrial and settlement purposes (Gatambara et al., 2021) which is causing the extinction of endangered species worldwide. Inversely, there is an innate yearning for touch with nature by man (Breiby & Slatten, 2018). This triggers the need for protected areas like national parks which seeks to safeguard endangered species and offer people the opportunity to be with nature (Breiby & Slatten, 2018). Accordingly, Ghana in connection with donor partners like UNESCO established a number of protected areas including Kakum National

Park, Mole National Parks, Atewa Range Forest Reserve, Digya National Park, Bui National Park, Kyabobo National Park, Nini Suhien National Park and Gbele Resource Centre (Ghana Audit Service, 2010). However, the most populous and most visited among these protected areas are the Kakum and Mole National Parks. These parks particularly Mole National Park, are a home to diversity of species including birds, elephants, antelopes, hartebeests, waterbucks, bushbucks, warthogs, buffalos, baboons and green (vervet) monkeys.

National parks provide countless tourism services to the travelling market including the disability market. These services include leisure, sport and outdoor recreational services such as camping, fishing, swimming, wildlife viewing, golfing and walking (Chikuta et al., 2017). Others include aesthetic, nature experience and education or cultural services (Tribot, Deter & Mouquet, 2018). These services substantially vary by the vegetation type of parks (Mexia et al., 2018) and the facilities and training put in place (Chikuta et al.,2019) and have both health and social importance central to the overall wellbeing of PwDs (Stumbo et al., 2011).

In terms of health; leisure and recreational activities enable people with disabilities to stay active and fit. Leisure and recreational activities also enable PwDs to escape boredom and as well manage or cope with stress (Li et al., 2021). Whereas with social; parks provide opportunities for PwDs to meet and socialize with others, create feelings of freedom, autonomy and personal development (Li et al., 2021). Engaging in recreational activities also increase peer acceptance of PwDs (Godtman & Ioannides, 2019).

Just like other tourists' segments, PwDs are interested in exploring nature-based activities (Chikuta, 2015) and their disability does not preclude them from doing so (Chikuta et al., 2017). Nature-based tourism is primarily concerned with the direct enjoyment of some relatively undisturbed phenomenon of nature (Eagles, 2014) and national parks are one of such phenomena. Research has shown that PwDs engage in nature-based tourism for the same reasons as their non-disable counterparts (Kling & Ioannides, 2019; Chikuta, 2019). These reasons include releasing stress, escaping the mundane, relaxation, enhancing family interaction, experiencing nature, taking photographs, education etc. (Shi et al., 2012; Chikuta et al., 2019).

However, according to Chikuta (2015), PwDs have other motivations different from non-disable tourists such as the need to increase self-confidence, for personal challenges, social adjustment, family satisfaction and enhancement of self-understanding. Even though PwDs have interest in nature-based tourism (Chikuta, 2015), the number of disabled persons who visit national parks worldwide has not been satisfactory (Chikuta et al., 2017). This is despite the disability laws and conventions put in place by governments and international bodies to ease access for them. A situation, others (Stumbo et al., 2011; Chikuta, 2015) attribute to the state of inaccessibility of national parks. Nevertheless, several natural parks have been made accessible for PwDs on the basis that accessibility is an ethical must as well as a business opportunity (WTO 2015). According to WTO (2016), accessibility is an ethical must because everyone needs access not only PwDs.

In addition to the above debates, the general concern raised in the literature relative to accessibility at national parks has been how to maintain

the natural state of parks whiles creating accessibility (Bello et al., 2017). For instance, Chikuta et al., (2019) argues that the use of automobiles like cars and the introduction of man-made constructions in enhancing access are a threat to the vegetative cover of national parks. Environmentalists also hold similar views (Bello et al., 2017). Contrarily, proponents of universal accessibility think denying PwDs access to national parks for reasons of maintaining the natural state of parks is an infringement on their rights (Bello et al., 2017; Math et al., 2019). Interestingly, PwDs themselves do not want a completely compromised natural environment neither are they in support of total inaccessibility of natural parks (Chikuta, 2015). The concern therefore should rather be; which areas/parts of national parks can be made accessible for PwDs since the vegetative cover is an integral part of parks attractiveness and since total inaccessibility of parks is an upfront to their rights. Bello et al., (2017) and Lovelock (2015) argue that enhancing accessibility at protected areas will not necessarily turn them to artificial constructions. So, there is nothing wrong with making ecological reserves accessible.

Naturally, national parks have different segment areas. Drawing clues from the WTO (2015) which made references to UNESCO heritage parks which have been made accessible for PwDs, the different segment areas include but not limited to the following; access control areas (containing poster of closing and opening time), parking areas (for private cars and the other automobiles), administrative areas (where visitors are welcomed and given general information and brochures), shopping area (has food court, snack bars and restaurants; commercial services like telephone booths and ATMs), restrooms and toilet facilities. Others include safari and game drive

areas. These segments vary according to parks and that all these areas are expected to have certain physical installation and designs to aid PwDs participation, utilization and enjoyment of parks experience (WTO, 2013, Chikuat et al., 2019).

Physical Accessibility of National Parks

Physical accessibility is concerned with making physical environments easily usable by all persons regardless of their access needs (WTO, 2013; Lid 2014) and it is germane towards the inclusion of PwDs in tourism especially in ecological or nature-based tourism sites. Yet, physical barriers remain a major issue confronting PwDs who wish to participate in tourism (WTO, 2013; Chikuta, 2015; Güngör 2016). Largely, these physical barriers emanate from architectural and design flaws (WTO 2013; Chikuta, 2015) which primarily are born out of improper planning (WTO 2016). According to Güngör (2016), the most important antecedent to the inclusion of PwDs into tourism is to first consider the design of physical environments. This will open up the floodgates for other measures of inclusion to follow. Similarly, the WTO (2015) pointed out physical integration as the first stage of integrating PwDs into mainstream tourism especially in the design of facilities at national parks. Physical integration involves the provision of specific structures, tools, materials and services to enable PwDs to move through any geographical, cultural or natural space (WTO, 2015). Considering the wilderness of national parks, it will be impossible for PwDs to be involved in those tourism activities if certain purpose-built structures are not put in place. Specific physical or environmental structures required at nature-based parks to aid PwDs utilization include adequate parking space, ramps at change of level,

Trails/Paths/Walkways, adapted fountains and benches along long routes traversing the park, restrooms and unimpeded lobbies, and specially designed toilets (WTO 2013; WTO 2015; Chikuta et al., 2019). Only when these facilities or structures are provided can PwDs be properly integrated (Mensah, 2015).

Despite the importance of physical accessibility to PwDs involvement in tourism, there is no literature on the physical accessibility of parks in Ghana. The few that relate to other natural areas revealed lack of accessible environments (Edusei et al., 2015). This perhaps could be attributed to ignorance of the disability market, lack of interest from park management or lack of enforcement of disability laws (Chikuta, 2015; Asante & Sasu, 2015). For instance, Asante and Sasu (2015) revealed authorities in Ghana have not done much in terms of enforcing disability laws such the PwD Act 2006, (Act 715) and UNCRPD (2007). Reinforcing this claim, Adam (2019) unearthed lack of clarity/enforcement of disability legislations as reason why some hotels have failed to comply with physical accessibility requirements in the tourism industry of Ghana. Further, Adam (2019) discovered reputation and commercial reasons as drivers of physical accessibility among hotels. This presupposes that, tourism businesses can decide to provide physical accessibility because they want to wield a certain brand name or image. Similarly, they will do the same if there is demand or economic rewards from PwDs for their goods and services. Parks and Benefit (2007) argues that governments and people are not willing to invest in the accessibility of protected areas because of varied reasons. This further raises doubts about whether necessary physical infrastructure is provided at Natural Parks to

enhance the experiences of PwDs. Within this premises, it is important to explore drivers of physical accessibility as one of the objectives of the study.

Yet still, though universal accessibility has gained worldwide acceptance, there is no universally accessible standard for assessing natural areas and national parks in particular (Parks & Benefits, 2007). The study resorts to practices elsewhere such as AS1428.1 document used by the Australian Tourism Commission for physical accessibility (Darcy, 2017) and Parks and Benefit (2007) Master Guide for accessibility at natural areas in the Baltic Sea region. However, it must be noted that these practices are organization, region or country specific. So, they are refined vis-à-vis the Ghanaian context. They are chosen over other documents because of the synergy they pull and how their contents have some similarities with the context of the study. With regards to the synergy; whiles Parks and Benefits (2007) covers larger areas of attractions, activities and physical accessibility requirements, the AS1428.1 document deal with administrative and customer service areas. Combining these physical accessibility audit documents though refined, the study explores whether physical accessibility features/installations/measures contained in those "practices" are found at the most reputable and most visited national parks in Ghana.

AS1428.1 as used by Australian Tourism Commission

AS1428.1 is a building and facility checklist used by the Australian Tourism commission. The AS1428.1 is chosen because of its direct bearing to facilities at national parks as against the Scandic Accessibility Standards which is more related to hotels. AS1428.1 provides seven general sections and six supplementary sections essential for assessing the accessibility of any

building or facility. The six supplementary sections have no bearing to this study and will not be considered. Meanwhile, each of the seven (7) components has several other items used in measuring the accessibility of facilities. This is found in Table 1.

Table 1: General Access Indicators for Buildings and Facilities

Component	Description
Transport and car parking	Parking bays, appropriate paving surfaces, suitable slope/gradients, a set-down area etc.
External access	Access routes (should be obvious or well signposted, well illuminated), continuous accessible path for PwDs (from car park and/or set-down area. Pathways should have a minimum width of 1000mm. Ramps, a maximum slope/gradient of 1:14 etc.
Entrances	Continuous accessible paths, minimum clear opening of a doorway (850mm), doors should provide good wheelchair circulation, ramp with a maximum slope/gradient of 1:8 and a maximum length of 280mm and rise of 35mm, doors (easy to open with D'-shaped handles).
Interiors – general	Directional signage should be clearly visible from the entrance, lighting that is even, non-glare and sufficient, Signage should be clear and easy to read, Furniture access (e.g. desks, counters, seating) should be considered etc.
Lift	It essential for PwDs to have access to all levels of the facility with consideration of door width, lift size and control button style and height.
Toilet facilities	First toilet in every building should be a unisex accessible facility accessed via a non-gender specific area. Next toilets are to be ambulant accessible

	facilities that are accessed via a gender specific. Accessible toilet cubicles should provide unobstructed circulation space. Toilet pan, basin and handrails should be positioned at correct heights and locations.
Utilities	All utilities (accessible public telephone, vending machines, drinking fountains) should be provided on even ground and in well-lit areas.

Source; Access and Inclusion Resource Kit – ATC (2014)

Master Guide for Accessibility of Protected Areas for All

Parks and Benefit (2007) came out with an initiative of developing a master guide on accessibility for protected areas in the Baltic Sea region between 2007 and 2013. The aim of the initiative was to promote accessible tourism for all in accordance with the principles of universal design. Despite the importance of this master guide to measuring the physical accessibility of protected areas, it must be pointed out that it was developed specifically for the Baltic Sea region whose tourism resources are different from those in Ghana. Also, the guide was not designed for national parks only but for all protected areas. Meaning that its application will be limited (Parks & Benefit, 2007).

Parks and Benefits categorized the infrastructure solution and best practices for accessing natural areas into three; a) how to get to the protected area b) how to move through the park and c) how to make attractions and activities accessible. The latter two categories are considered because they fall directly under the domain of management control and employees of parks which is the focus of the study.

How to Move through the Park

Packing bay/space

Protected areas should have adequate and proper packing space. A recommended 3% of parking lots should be reserved for PwDs. A standard parking lot should measure 3.5m width X 5m length and 7.5m for vans. The surface must also be firm and paved.

Signage

From the car park to the park entrance, reception and boards outside the walking areas, there should be proper signage. Signs should be easily understood, easy to find, illuminated and tactile. The pathway should be barrier free and must have ramps to cater for people using wheelchairs and those with mobility problems. A tactile vertical edge of 2.5 to 3 cm should also be in place.

Trails

There should be designated paths or walkways along which visitors should walk and trails serve this purpose. The following specifications are applied: width - at least 1.5 or more; height - should be 2.3m; surface - must be low-vibration and navigable by wheelchairs. They should be solid nonslip, jointless, even and stepless; should be able to accommodate two wheelchairs with side gradients for protection; the mapping height should be 1km; trail should be able to be lifted a little in case of flooding. Hand rails should also be put on both sides of the stairs and ramps. The hand rails are expected to have a clear width of about 4cm and a thickness of 3 to5 cm to allow for good grip. Trail for people with physical handicaps should have round wooden beams

and tactile. This serves as a guide for visitors who use white sticks. There should be ground indicators that point people who are visually impaired to rest areas, crossings, and information boards.

Bridges

Parks and Benefits (2007) recommend that bridges be accessible for visitors with mobility aids. That is, there should be no steps, stairs and hazards and there should be fall protection. At the end of each bridge, colour contrast markings should be made to command attention. Handrails must also be placed on both sides of the bridge.

Guiding systems

Information about park should be made available to all people regardless of their disabilities. For example, information can be made available in braille, audio, text, etc. The master guide also makes provision for people to make use of personal assistants and guide dogs. Signage and maps should either be illuminated or tactile or both for proper guiding.

Information boards

Here, all information should also be in braille and should be in short text that is easy to understand. Tactile pictures for visitors with visual impairments. The information boards must all have a reading height accessible from a wheelchair (approximately 1.3m). In the case of roofed information stands, the Parks and Benefits guidelines specify the stand height (2.3m) but the information board should still be reachable (at 1.3m).

Resting places

The Master Guide requires there be smooth access to resting places with benches and tables to cater for different dimensions of disabilities. The seats must have both back rests and armrests with heights not exceeding 42cm and the tables should accommodate wheelchairs. In other words, there should be at least 50cm free space under the table. These tables and benches should be on firm and even surfaces. Besides the bench, guests with wheelchairs or baby buggies require free space of at least 1.5x1.5m.

The guide also suggests that resting places be availed every 100m along trails in the park. This may not be advisable for national parks because of the wildlife.

Making Attractions and Activities Accessible

View points

The Master guide prescribes that, trails should be available that lead to all viewing points. In terms of bird-watching hides, or look out towers, there should be a smooth connection between the accessible path and the hide. The hide should have railings or wheel guides and a 1.5x1.5m turning area for wheelchairs. All watching hides must have benches whose seating height should not exceed 45cm and the openings of the hide should be at a height of between 70cm and 1.4m.

Toilets

Parks must have accessible toilets within reach of the outdoor area. The interior and exterior specifications for the toilet should conform to the principles of universal design. These include: smooth access without steps and

stairs; clear width of 0.77m when the door is opened at a 90-degree angle; turning area of 1.5x1.5m; clear area with a width of at least 0.8m on one side of the water closet; height of WC pan 0.48 to 0.5m above floor level; accessible washbasin with a clear space underneath for wheelchairs; grab bar in the inside part of the door together with an inside door handle and grab bars on the toilet seat and wash basin

Even though this Master Guide has received severe criticisms (Chikuta, 2015), it remains the basis for the development of a more comprehensive framework for accessing protected areas. The study therefore relies on this framework together with AS1428.1 used by the Australian Tourism Commission to construct an accessibility audit checklist for the national parks in Ghana. Meanwhile, one of the fundamental guidelines for implementing accessible tourism is attitude of employees. The provision of physical facilities notwithstanding, WTO (2015) recommend the training of employees to be able to attend to all persons with access needs since that will enhance Visitors with Disabilities experience.

Attitude of Park Employees towards VwDs

Attitude is regarded as an inferred psychological process concealed within one's self unless evoked by a specific referent (Antonak & Livneh, 2000). It is largely a product of socialization and tends to explain an individual's relationship with symbols, objects or even world views (Adam, 2019a). Attitude is considered as a tripartite concept consisting of cognitive, affective and behaviour components (Antonak & Livneh, 2000; Findler et al., 2007). The cognitive component relates to the individual beliefs and perceptions about a referent. The affective component explains the feelings or

emotional reactions a person exhibit towards the referent whiles the behaviour component is the explicit conduct one exhibits towards the referent. These three are connected such that the cognitive influences the affective which also influence the behaviour (Jain, 2014). Irrespective of the interconnectedness, an individual could possibly express positive and negative or neutral evaluation of the referent object (Vogel & Wanke, 2016).

Accordingly, interpersonal constraints are reported as some of the challenges confronting PwDs visiting tourists' sites (WTO, 2013; Sy & Chang, 2019) and that these constraints extensively emanate from information and attitudinal barriers (WTO, 2013; Kastenholz et al., 2015; Loi & Kong, 2017). Regardless of the source of these interpersonal constraints, the literature largely associates PwDs to negative attitudes (Mensah, 2015; Ottoboni et al., 2017; Chikuta et al. 2019). These negative attitudes are pervasive and stretch across all sectors includeing tourism and hospitality. The provision of physical access at national parks without positive service attitude from employees may not suffice for use and satisfaction by persons with disabilities. For instance, it has emerged that the negative attitude of nondisabled people at tourist sites is serving as access barrier for visitors with disabilities (Mensah, 2015). Loi and Kong (2017 and Kastenholz et al., (2015) had similar conclusions but from tourism employees. Resultantly, VwDs to nature-based tourism site want to be treated and recognized like their counterparts who are not disabled (Chikuta et al., 2019). This invokes a question about the attitude of park employees towards PwDs. Reinforcing this question is the fact that in Ghana, nondisabled people see people with disability as suffering from some misfortunes and turn to withdraw from any

contact or socialization with them (Adam, 2019a). This further complicates the issue such that, there are different socio-cultural contexts in Ghana with varied understanding and perceptions about the phenomenon of disability (GSS, 2013). This means that, park employees' attitude is likely to vary by one's origin or socio-cultural characteristics.

Irrespective of an employee's socio-cultural origin, they are expected to treat VwDs the same way they treat tourist with no disability. For instance, Chikuta et al., (2019) found that VwDs prefer park workers to treat them like nondisabled people to providing physical access. Though this will mean providing special training for park employees, it has remained a challenge for many parks management worldwide (Bello et al., 2016). This warrants the need to investigate whether or not disability service training is part of employees training at national parks in Ghana since lack of knowledge on how to receive and handle PwDs may reduce the number of VwDs (Garcia-Caro et al., 2012).

Other factors, aside disability service training and socio-cultural factors could influence employees' attitude towards PwDs thus, necessitating the need to explore factors shaping employees' attitude towards PwDs. According to Thapa and Lee (2017), positive staff attitude at wildlife reserves are related to service quality. So, frontline employees particularly; tour guides, cashiers and receptionists who come in contact with tourist on daily basis and whose attitude can be used as a quality assessment are expected to exhibit positive attitudes especially towards PwDs.

To this end, there are two popular methods to measuring attitude namely; direct and indirect method (Findler et al., 2007; Adam, 2019a). With the direct

method, respondents are made aware that their attitude is being measured either overtly or by the nature of the measurement technique (Findler et al., 2007). For instance, they could be asked to rate or indicate the extent of agreement with a number of attitudinal statements or express their attitude on a list of questions about the referent (Adam, 2019a). This method presents some validity threats. First, it is argued that in the process of responding, a hitherto non-exiting attitude can be created or a transient attitude can be created which could be interpreted wrongly by the researcher (Antonak & Livneh, 2000). Secondly, because respondents are aware that their attitude is being measured, they are more likely to modify their attitude by appearing nice to the researcher and creating a good impression of themselves. Associated to these is the occurrence of halo effect; where respondent rates items perceived to be similar same way. In the indirect method, respondents are not made aware that their attitude is being measured. This perhaps is innately characterized with ethical conundrums coupled with the fact that its methodology is expensive (Adam, 2019a). Despite the prevailing weaknesses of either method, the direct method is employed for this study due to the time demanding nature of the indirect method bearing in mind the limited time available for this study.

In consistent with the three dimensions of attitude, attitudinal statements are derived from attitudinal scales and the literature at large where park employees will rate based on whether a particular statement is a reflection of the individual attitude towards PwDs. These statements are found in Table 2.

Table 2: Attitude Statements

Attitude	Statement	Source
Cognitive	I believe park employees must not discriminate against PwDs	Antonak (1982); Darcy and Pegg (2011); Adam (2019a)
	I believe park employees must be nice to PwDs	
	I believe park employees must provide special attention to PwDs	
	I believe park employees must treat PwDs in same manner as the non-disabled visitors	
	I believe frontline employees should not look down on PwDs	
Affective	I feel PwDs are special visitors	Gething & Wheeler (1992); Adam (2019a)
	I feel the need to readily assist PwDs	
	I feel PwDs are just as normal as other non-disabled visitors	
	I feel PwDs need our love	
Behavioural	I am nice to PwDs	Findler et al., (2007); Gething & Wheeler (1992); Adam (2019a)
	I serve PwDs with pride	
	I treat PwDs as normal as nondisabled visitors	
	I pay special attention to VwDs' request	
	I readily assist PwDs with their request	

Source: Ndewin (2021)

Theoretical Underpinnings of the Study

The following models provide theoretical grounding for the study. These include; principles of universal design, moral, medical and social models of disability.

Principles of Universal Design

Universal design encompasses the idea of designing products or services and environments to be usable by all persons to the greatest extent possible (WTO, 2013; Clarkson & Coleman, 2015; Zając 2016). It is a popular approach used in explaining the idea of physical access (Clarkson & Coleman, 2015) and extends beyond issues of physical accessibility of tourism facilities to policies and planning that affect all aspects of society (WTO, 2013) including attitude towards people with disabilities.

There are seven principles of universal design. These includes; the need for equitable use (the design of a park environment should allow for impartial use), flexible use (the park design should accommodate wide range of abilities), simple and intuitive use (relates to the fact that the design of a park environment should easily be understood and used regardless of the limitation of the user), perceptible information (design must communicate the required information to the user regardless of the user's sensory abilities), tolerance for error (the park design should minimize hazards and negative consequences of accidents), low physical effort and size (the park design should allow for easy and effective use with little effort), and size and space for approach and use (appropriate allowance is made for manoeuvring and use by PwDs regardless of their size or mobility inadequacies). Adopting these principles at ecological-based tourism parks will mean adjusting the physical environment

and putting in place necessarily policies or laws to allow for inclusion and participation of people with disability (Bampi, Guilhem & Alves, 2010; Oliver 2013). These principles will therefore serve as a guide in evaluating the accessibility indicators and provide the basis for understanding how the parks under study are easily accessed by PwDs.

Moral Model of Disability

The Moral model frames disability as a sociocultural issue. It sees PwDs as people suffering from punishments for sins against a powerful entity (Retief & Letsosa, 2018), where the said sin(s) could be one's own sin or sins committed by family members. Within the views of this model, a person suffering disability should be avoided since the punishment can be transferred or shared (Rimmerman, 2013). Rimmerman (2013) criticize the model as being destructive and argues that it can lead to the exclusion of an entire family from participation in any social activity. A close ally of this model is the medical model of disability.

Medical Model of Disability

The medical model attributes disability to medical abnormality where an individual with body defects is considered a dysfunctional member of society (Darcy, 2010). It exerts emphasis on the cause of disability rather than inclusive attitude towards PwDs (Zajadacz, 2015). A person may be stigmatized and feel less valued if viewed solely from his/her dysfunction. According to this model, the disabled person needs to change not the environment (WTO, 2013). Contrasting these two models, the Social Model of Disability by Oliver (1983) gives a cross-sectional view of disability.

Social Model of Disability

This model is chosen over the moral and medical models of disability because of its suitability for the study. Unlike the moral and medical models that view disability as an individual affair, the social model sees disability as a societal problem. It gives a cross-sectional view and understanding of disability by propagating the creation of equal opportunities for all, a platform on which accessible tourism hinges (Chikuta, 2015). It also espouses the principles of universal design.

The model was introduced by Oliver (1983). The model had its main ideas traced to the Fundamental Principles of Disability document first published in the 1970s. In this document, union of the physically impaired against segregation argued they were not disabled by their impairments but by the barriers orchestrated by society (UPIAS, 1976). Oliver (1983) expanded and popularized this idea to aim largely at professionals in social work to re-orient their work to be relevant to the needs of disabled people. The model assumes discussion about wellbeing and social justice policies for the disabled. It argues that disability emanates from restrictions imposed by social organizations (Neves, 2010). This means that disability is not tied to the individual body defects rather; it is a consequence of social barriers. It demands the reorganization of social structures and systems to meeting the varied needs of PwDs. The model sees the visually impaired, mobility impaired, speech impaired, hearing impaired and the aged as a form of diversity and requires social, economic and political organizations to accommodate all of them (Neves, 2010; Oliver, 2013) by eliminating all forms of barriers. Mason (2013) identified; physical (exclusion from the built

environment), attitudinal (negative evaluations of disabled people by non-disabled people) and institutional (systematic exclusion or neglect in social, legal, educational, religious, and political institutions) as main barriers confronting PwDs.

What this means for tourism businesses therefore is that they are expected to undertake adjustments of their facilities to enable the participation, usage and enjoyment of tourism goods and services by all. According to the tenets of this model, all tourism businesses, in this case, national parks are expected to eliminate inaccessible environments, inappropriate notions about VwDs abilities and competences, and hostile attitude towards them (Neves, 2010). Management is expected to adjust the physical environment of national parks and provide necessary human support systems to making parks flexible, simple, accommodating and usable by all. Only when this is achieved can national parks be guaranteed as being accessible to PwDs (Perry et al., 2017).

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 is a modification of Park (2017) framework of park accessibility. The original framework explored the concept of accessibility by looking at how physical and psychological aspects of parks influence usage. Physical environments which predicted park usage consisted of park characteristics, neighbourhood urban form and proximity to the park. According to Park (2017), the relationship between physical environments and park use are mediated by the perception of the environment (psychological park accessibility) such as perception of distance, park quality and the neighbourhood environment. It was however modified with ideas from the

social model of disability (Oliver, 1983, 2013) to suit the focus of the current study.

The framework indicated that two main factors; contextual and corporate factors are the main forces that influence the making of national parks accessible to PwDs. The contextual factors are regarded as necessary preconditions that may drive accessible tourism initiatives at national parks and they include sociocultural values, norms and laws on social inclusion such as the PwDs Act, 2006 (Act 715). If the sociocultural values and norms of the country view PwDs as a form of diversity as argued by the social model of disability and values equal opportunity for all, it will reflect in how PwDs are treated including laws and measures put in place to make them part of mainstream social activities. Additionally, if these laws such as the PwDs Act, 2006 (Act 715) are enforced by supervisory bodies, management of national parks will be compelled to make their services and products accessible by adjusting old facilities and designing new structures to conform to the principles of universal design (equitable use, flexible use, simple and intuitive use, perceptible information, tolerance for error, low physical effort and size, and size and spaces for approach and use) suitable for use by Visitors with Disabilities (VwDs). Conversely, if enforcement agencies fail to enforce the law, management of national parks may relax or show no concern to make their products and services accessible to PwDs. When there is enforcement, management will be obliged to design the physical environment such as parking bays, pathways/trails, resting areas, information boards, signage, bridges, viewing towers and their core products to meet universal design principles to allow for independent use or access. Complementarily,

management will also train employees to ensure they approach VwDs with the right attitude since negative attitude of employees have proven to be a barrier to access (Chikuta et al., 2019).

The corporate factors meanwhile are considered organizational level factors that are subject to management discretion. They relate to commercial reasons, competition, image branding and other factors. If there are commercial prospects (demand), management of parks will not hesitate to remove necessary barriers in order to make their services accessible (Adam, 2018a). When there is disability market, management may be enticed to create supply by providing physical access and ensure employees exhibit positive attitude toward PwDs. But where there is no disability market, management may not be bordered to making their facilities accessible to PwDs. Also, competition and good brand image may encourage some parks to institute accessibility measures in the form of universal designed facilities and positive service attitude.

The contextual and corporate factors will influence the design of the physical environment as well as instituting positive service attitude. A combination of universally designed physical environment and positive service attitude of employees will make national parks accessible to PwDs.

However, park employees' attitude is likely to be shaped by individual level factors such as demographic characteristics - age, gender and ethnicity (Borumand & Rezaee, 2014; Cohen & Han, 2016) their training notwithstanding.

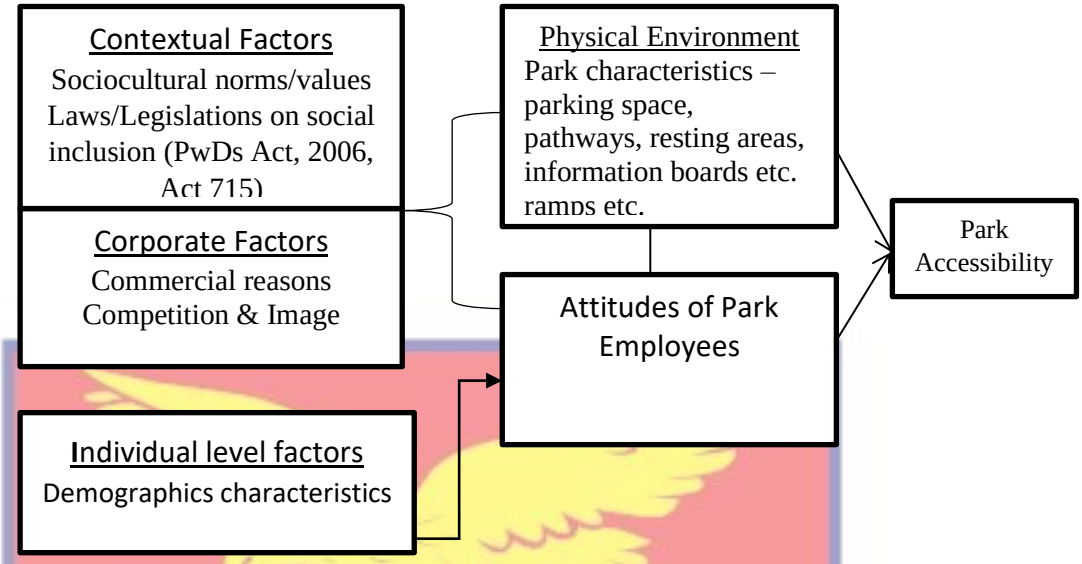

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of park accessibility

Source: Adapted from Park (2018)

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter addresses the research process. It outlined the following; the research philosophy, study design, study setting, target population, sample size and sampling procedure, sources of data, research instrument and data analysis.

Research Philosophy

The study was underpinned by the pragmatism philosophy. This philosophy holds that, reality is the practical effects of ideas and that any way of thinking that will lead to desired solution is useful. It operates on need-based or possibility-based approach. It also operates on the basis that any method that works is good to go with. This philosophy was deemed suitable for the study because its ideals are directly linked to the mixed approach the study adopted (Wang, 2015).

Study Design

The mixed approach was adopted based on two reasons; first, issues of accessibility are complex and involved different viewpoints particularly, having to do with the subject of disability which is understood in many ways at different contexts (Ocran, 2018). Hence, the mixed approach enabled studying the phenomenon from different perspectives. Secondly, a combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches was ideal in offsetting any deficit associated with each of the approaches (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Specifically, the embedded mixed method was used due

to the design of the research objective. While physical accessibility and park employees' attitude towards persons with disabilities were looked at from the quantitative point of view, drivers of physical accessibility and factors that shape park employees' attitude towards PwDs took a qualitative dimension. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously with the quantitative data used to explore patterns of accessibility at parks and the qualitative data explained the patterns.

Research Design

The study adopted an exploratory-descriptive research design. An exploratory-descriptive study usually is a field study in natural settings that provide least control over variables and seeks to explain a phenomenon from the perspectives of the units of study (Hunter, McCallum & Howes, 2019). This design was appropriate for the study because, the study aimed at understanding the current state of accessibility at national parks in Ghana. The descriptive component sought to interpret what exists (Siedlecki, 2020) about physical facilities and attitudes of park employees towards PwDs with explorations of drivers of physical access and factors shaping employees' attitude towards PwDs.

Study Setting

Two national parks including Kakum National Park and Mole National Park were chosen for the study. The Kakum National Park (KNP) is Ghana's first protected area located in the Central region near a small village of Abrafo Odumasi, a three-hour drive from Accra and 30 minutes from Cape Coast Township. The Park covers a rainforest land of about 360 square kilometres.

The Park is named after a river called the Kakum River. The Park has a canopy walk way serving as a significant attraction for visitors. The canopy walkway provides visitors with a panoramic view of the tropical rainforest, elephants, monkeys and other tropical species. There is nature walk at the park which gives tourists an educational tour to learn some botanical, medicinal and socio-cultural values of plant species. Several activities including bird watching are being carried out at the park.

Mole National Park (MNP) on the other hand is Ghana's biggest protected area located in the West Gonja District of the Savannah Region. It is 24 km from Damongo, the regional capital, 430km from Kumasi and 700km from Accra. MNP is 4,577 square kilometres in size. Mole holds viable and interesting populations of large and small mammals, birds, reptiles and insects. About 94 mammal species, over 300 bird species, 9 amphibian species and 33 reptile species have been recorded in Mole. The large and popularly seen mammals include elephant, kob, roan antelope, hartebeest, waterbuck, bushbuck, warthog, buffalo, several duikers, baboon, patas and green (vervet) monkeys. The Park has an average annual rainfall of 1100 mm with more than 90% of the rain falling between April and October, and peaks in July and September. It also has a mean annual temperature of 28°C varies from 26°C in December to 31°C in March. It gets very hot in March and April, with temperatures sometimes nearing the 40°s. Meanwhile, Cold dry Harmattan wind blows between December and February. MNP offers its visitors outdoor adventure as well as fun activities like walking safari or driving safari.

These two parks were selected based on the following reasons; first, they are the two main largest ecological reserves in Ghana. Secondly, they are

the first protected and most visited parks in Ghana; Kakum first, followed by Mole (GSS, 2017). Because they draw majority of both domestic and international travellers (GSS, 2017), some of whom may have one form of disability or the other necessitated their selection.

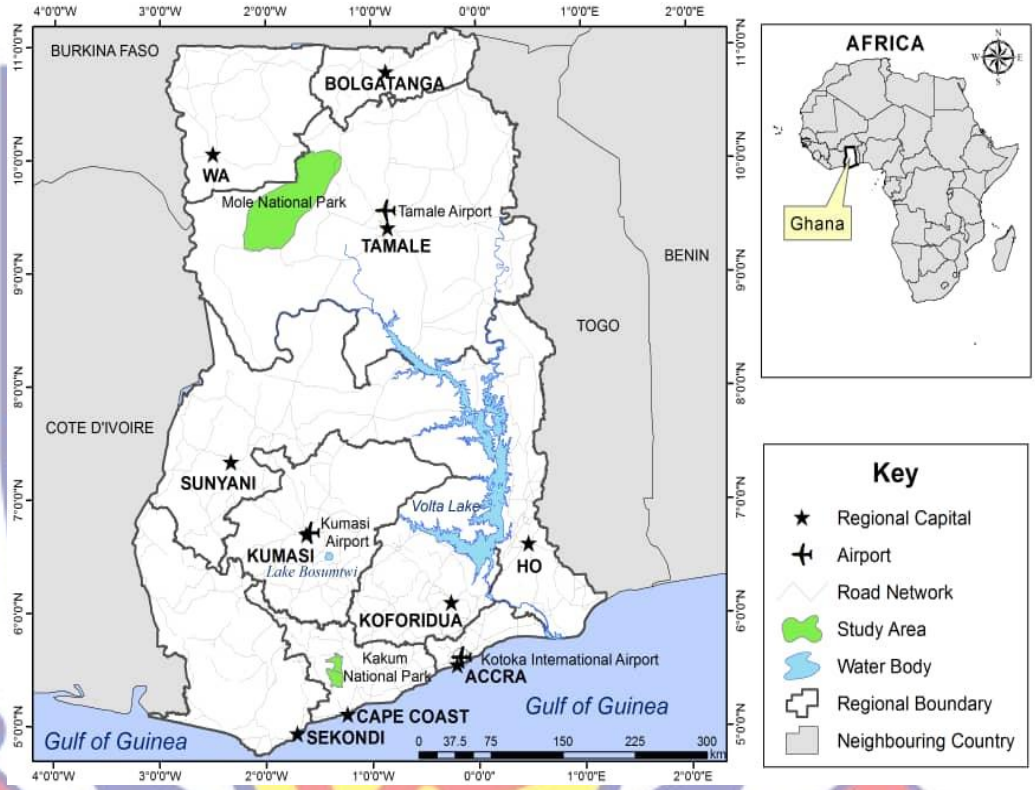

Figure 2: Map of Ghana showing locations of MNP and KNP

Source: GIS Remote Sensing and Cartography Unit, University of Cape Coast (2021)

Target Population

The target population for the study included managers and frontline employees of the parks. Managers were identified as responsible for making and implementing organizational level policies or decisions in relation to accessible tourism thus, making them suitable targets particularly with regards to exploring the drivers of physical accessibility. Also, employees especially frontline employees were chosen because they interface customers including

visitors with disabilities (VwDs) on daily basis and their attitude can directly or indirectly influence the experiences. Their attitude can also be used as a quality assessment of the services rendered to PwDs. A frontline employee per the study is any employee that interacts with customers as part of his/her mandated daily duties at the park.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

A purposive sampling technique was adopted for the study. This is because, not all frontline employees had experience with visitors with disabilities. As such, the researcher purposively selected frontline employees that have ever served PwDs and administered questionnaires. There was a total of eighty-one (81) frontline employees with this experience; 40 from KNP and 41 from MNP respectively. Out of the wider sample for the two parks, 8 employees from KNP and 6 from MNP were selected for an in-depth interview together with the two (2) managers of the parks. There was a total of 16 in-depth interviews. The 8 and 6 employees from the two parks were arrived at based on data saturation. A point in the data collection process when no new information seems to emerge (Leese, Li, Nimmon, Townsend & Backman, 2021). This point signalled the researcher that data collection may cease. This is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Sample Distribution of Respondents

Park	Questionnaire N = 81		In-depth interview N=16	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
KNP	37	3	7	1
MNP	40	1	6	-
Managers			2	

Source: Ndewin (2021)

Sources of Data

The study used both secondary and primary sources of data. The secondary information comprised all published reports, journals and works related to the phenomenon under study. The primary data (first-hand information) of which the study largely depended on was collected from the field (the parks) through various instruments.

Research Instrument

Four instruments were designed for the study. These included; Accessibility Audit Checklist, Questionnaire and two Interview Guides. The checklist was designed by adapting AS1428.1 used by the Australian Tourism Commission for physical accessibility audit (ATC, 2014) and the Parks & Benefits (2007) initiative that came out with a master guide for accessibility of parks in the Baltic Sea region. These access audit checklists were refined and integrated vis-à-vis the nature of parks in Ghana and used specifically for checking and verifying the physical accessibility at various parks under study. Two constructs namely; lifts and utilities like banks were removed from audit checklist due to two reasons. First, the nature of buildings at the two parks did not require the installation of lift (s). Secondly, the Central Bank of Ghana does not permit putting up a bank at places far away from security posts or deep into countryside as captured in Act 662 of the banking and financial laws of Ghana. This informed the removal of lifts and Banks as part of the audit checklist.

The questionnaire was designed out of the literature reviewed for park employees to respond to issues of attitude. The questionnaire was divided into three (3) parts. Part 1 focused on disability service training. Part 2 dwelt on

employees' attitude towards PwDs and Part 3 captured the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. Socio-demographics were relevant because according to (Park, 2017; Cohen et al., 2020), those are individual level factors that turn to influence a person's attitude towards PwDs. Meanwhile, Part 2 which dwelt on employees' attitude was subdivided into three sections thus, the tripartite components of attitude namely; Cognitive, Affective and Behavioural components. Under each of these components, attitudinal statements were provided based on the literature review for respondents to rate using a five-point likert scale, based on how each statement reflects one's attitude towards PwDs.

Two in-depth interview guides were designed to enable face-to-face interaction with managers of the two parks and some selected employees. One guide engaged managers of the two parks on drivers of physical accessibility and the other engaged park employees about factors that shape their attitude toward PwDs. With respect to the managers, the IDI guide was divided into four main parts namely; Awareness and enforcement of disability laws/policies, Physical accessibility as an investment, Physical accessibility as an enhancer of visitor's satisfaction and Challenges of providing physical access. On the part of employees, the IDI guide was also divided into three main parts; Reception of PwDs, Sociocultural factors and Economic factors.

To ensure the validity of the instruments and trustworthiness of the data, a university lecturer who is into disability studies and retired co-manager of one of the parks reviewed various instruments.

Fieldwork /Data collection

Preceding the fieldwork, a letter of permission was sought from the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission, the supervisory body of the two parks under study on 2nd December, 2020. The actual fieldwork started on 2nd February to 31st March, 2021. With respect to Mole National Park, the park manager designated one employee as a field assistant to help in the process. The field assistant was taken through one-day training on how to administer the questionnaire. The researcher solely handled the in-depth interviews. Appointments were booked with the key informants (manger and employees) at a time convenient to them. The conversations were recorded with the help of a recorder. The researcher together with the field assistant administered the audit checklist. The researcher observed and with the help of the field assistant, measured certain accessibility indicators based on a specimen's requirement. In the case of Kakum National Park, the researcher solely carried out the above activities. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, there were fewer tourists visiting the parks thus, making the respondents less busy. So, the responses were encouraging since many of them were aware of the study. Prior to the administration of each instrument, verbal consent was sought from respondents.

Data Processing and Analysis

The physical accessibility audit results were presented using tables and pictures. In the case of the quantitative data, descriptive statistics and nonparametric statistical tools such as Chi-square, Kruskal Wallis and Mann-Whitney tests were employed. Chi-square test for independence was used to establish relationship amongst the three dimensions of attitude. Whereas, the

Kruskal Wallis and Mann-Whitney tests were used to establish variation in attitude amongst socio-demographic characteristics per the conceptualization of the study. On the other hand, the qualitative data (interviews) was transcribed verbatim. The transcription process of the audio-recorded interviews was repeated once to ensure the validity of the data. Thereafter, the transcripts were printed out and read through a number of times to enable the researcher familiarise himself with the data. Content analysis which offers a family of analytical approaches used for analysing text, verbal or video data was used (Saldana, 2013). It allowed the researcher to reduce the data to smaller content without losing its meaning. Due to the relative newness of the study in the context of national parks, the inductive content technique also known as conventional content analysis was used because it guides the derivation of themes or categories from a data without recourse to theory (Kyngas, 2020). This was necessary in order not to limit the domain of explanation underpinning the provision or non-provision of physical accessibility at national parks. The researcher adopted the processes laid out by (Elo & Kyngas, 2008) to inductive content analysis which involved; open coding (assigning labels), creating categories (sorting), and creating themes (synthesizing and abstraction).

Under open coding; the researcher wrote notes, labels or headings to text, phrase and sentences that were of interest to the anchor variable on the transcript margins. Thereafter, a list of these codes was collected and grouped under higher order headings. This was done to reduce the number of categories by collapsing those that are similar or dissimilar (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). The significance of creating categories was to facilitate the description

of the phenomenon, and to generate understanding and knowledge (Kyngas, 2020). Lastly, the researcher synthesized the various categories and formed main themes or gave names based on content-characteristics of each category. Thus, codes with similar events and incidents were grouped together as categories and categories were grouped into main themes.

The inter-coding technique was used to check the consistency and validity of the theme/codes. With interviews from Park managers, the iterative coding process resulted to forty (40) codes which were further grouped into eight (5) categories. Out of these categories emerged two main themes as drivers of physical accessibility at the parks. The first theme, provision of physical access has three subcategories namely; demand push, raising image of park/enhancing the satisfaction of non-disabled visitors and promoting conservation/ecological value of the parks. The second category has two sub-categories; lack of enforcement of and disregard of PwDs Act, 2006 (Act 715), and lack of understanding of accessible tourism.

Interviews from employees also produced 72 codes which were categorized into 7 categories and out of which birthed 2 themes. The first theme, socio-demographic factors had three categories; age, education and religious beliefs. The second theme, work related factors had four categories; service training, image of park/self, prior experience with PwDs and duty-bound/obligation.

Ethical Consideration

The study took into account respondents informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. In handling these; first, consent of all participants was sought and their expected role in the study was made known to them; subjected to respondents' approval, the instruments were administered.

Anonymity: The instrument was designed such that participants' identities were not required and real names and locations information were consciously omitted from the research report. Codes and bio-data were used to label responses for the sake of analysis.

Confidentiality: All participants were guaranteed that information given as responses to questions asked during the study will be strictly used for the study purpose and nothing else. The information will not be handed over to a third-party either under any condition.

Right to privacy: Overall, participants were not induced to respond to any question or do anything that would cause harm to their self-esteem or physical body.

Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on the research methodology deployed for the study. Issues discussed included the study area in terms of its importance to the study. The target population as well as the sample size for the study and the sampling technique that was used in getting respondents were also discussed. The research instruments namely; Accessibility audit checklist, questionnaire and interview guides were also described. The ending part of the chapter looked at data processing and analysis techniques together with ethical considerations.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussions of the study. Issues covered are the background characteristics of respondents, state of physical accessibility and drivers of physical accessibility at national parks. Others include, attitude of park employees towards persons with disabilities (PwDs) and factors shaping employees' attitude towards PwDs.

Background Characteristics of Respondents

Employee's attitude can be shaped by their background characteristics through their perception formation (Cohen & Han, 2016). As a result, the study measured some socio-demographic characteristics of the park employees namely; gender, level of education, religion, age and work experience. The results are presented in Table 4.

The results showed that majority (95%) of the frontline employees surveyed were males with few (5%) being females implying that, the parks have few female frontline employees. The male to female employee ratio is not known in the literature in the context of national parks. So, the male dominance may be partly attributed to the wilderness nature (exposure to wild animals) of the parks and the associated risks in leading visitors for tours. It might be unsafe for female employees. The reason they form the smaller proportion.

Regarding education, most (45.7%) of the employees had secondary education and a sizable number (39.5%) had tertiary education. Only a few (14.8%) had basic education. This shows that, majority (60.5%) of the parks

frontline employees have low level of education (primary and secondary education).

Also, concerning religion, employee's attitude and behaviour orientation are said to be significantly shaped by their religious beliefs and practices (Yahya et al., 2015). Hence, the study measured the religious affiliations of employees and the results showed that more than half (65.4%) of the employees were Christians and the rest (34.6%) were Muslims.

Furthermore, age has been explored in terms of its influence on the perception and attitude of employees in tourism (Goreczny et al., 2011; Sy & Chang, 2019). As such, there was the need to measure the age distribution of the employees. As seen in Table 1, the age distribution included the following; 21-30 (28%), 31-40 (22%), 41-50 (26%), and 51 and above (24%). The mean age was 38 years suggesting that a good number of the employees were in their mid-age. According to Goreczny et al. (2011), employees around mid-age and above generally tend to have favourable attitude towards PwDs.

Lastly, the number of years worked by the employees was recorded. About two-third (70.4%) of the employees surveyed had 1–10yrs working experience. Employees with 11-20yrs working experience were few (24.7%) but were more than those with 21-30yrs working experience (4.9%). Meanwhile, the average number of years worked was 9 years suggesting that, majority of the employees have spent nearly a decade at the parks as seen in Table 4.

Table 4: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Socio-demographics	Frequency N=81	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	77	95.0
Female	4	5.0
Level of education		
Basic	12	14.8
SHS	37	45.7
Tertiary	32	39.5
Religion		
Christianity	53	65.4
Muslim	28	34.6
Age		
21 - 30	23	28.0
31 – 40	18	22.0
41 – 50	21	26.0
51 +	19	24.0
Mean Age	38yrs	
Work experience		
1 - 10	54	70.4
11 – 20	20	24.7
21 – 30	4	4.9
Mean	9yrs	
Std. deviation	6.4	

Source: Ndewin (2021)

The State of Physical Accessibility at National Parks in Ghana

Physical accessibility is considered the most important antecedent to the inclusion of PwDs in tourism (Güngör, 2016; WTO, 2013). Accordingly, the Parks and Benefits initiative which was designed between 2007 and 2013 in the Baltic Sea region aimed at promoting physical accessibility of protected areas and tourism (Parks & Benefits, 2007). Parks and Benefits outlined two domains that are within the control of management in relation to physical accessibility provision at parks. They are; a) how to move through the park and b) how to make attractions and activities accessible. Under each of these broad areas of park management, the Parks and Benefits initiative as well as the AS1428.1 as used by the Australian Tourism Commission recommended a list of physical infrastructure that ought to be provided within the principles of universal design at various areas to make a park physically accessible to PwDs. In relation to movement through a park, the specific areas under consideration are; car parking space, signage, trails, bridges, guiding systems, information boards, resting places, viewpoints and toilet facilities. Under each of these areas, there are required list of physical infrastructure whose provision or installation must conform to certain measurements and specimens (Parks & Benefits, 2007; ATC, 2014**).** Table 5 presents the physical accessibility conditions of these areas of the two parks under study namely; Kakum National Park (KNP) and Mole National Park (MNP).

Table 5: Results of Physical Accessibility Audit of Parks

Access Indicator	Availability			
	KNP		MNP	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Car parking space				
Availability of parking bay/space	√		√	
Availability of accessible paths from the parking bay to the exit and building entrance	√		√	
Designated bay/s is on level ground with a firm surface and free of loose material		√	√	
There is appropriate number of parking bays designated for persons with disability (3% of parking lots should be reserved for PwDs)		√	√	
Signage				
Signage is located at the following: Car parks	√		√	
Building entrances	√		√	
Change of direction	√		√	
Signage provides information about access for people with disability in the form of tactile/braille/audio		√		√
Signage is sufficient to allow a PwDs to move independently around the buildings and facilities	√		√	
Trails				
Availability of accessible walkways/paths/trails (solid nonslip, joint less, even and steeples	√		√	
Walkways/paths/trails are able to accommodate two wheelchairs		√		√
Availability of ramps at changing of level along walkways/paths/trails		√		√
Availability of landing at the bottom of the ramps		√		√

Availability of Hand rails both sides of stairs	√		√
Availability of ground indicators that point people who are visually impaired to rest areas, crossings, and information boards		√	√
Bridges			
Accessible bridges that link divided parts of the park		√	√
Guiding systems			
Availability of park access guide in tactile/braille/audio		√	√
Availability of sign language interpreter for the deaf/dumb		√	√
Information boards			
Reading boards height accessible from a wheelchair (approximately 1.3m) * (1.2m) ●	√		√
Low information/front desk counter for contact by wheel chair users	√		√
Resting places			
Availability of resting places	√		√
Availability of seats (both back rests and armrests with heights not exceeding 42cm) * (40cm; 37cm) ●	√		√
Viewpoints			
Availability of watch/look out towers or hide		√	√
Towers/Hide have accessible staircase		√	√
Towers/Hide have railings		√	√
Towers/Hide have benches (seating height should not exceed 45cm) * (29cm) ●		√	√
Toilets			
Availability of accessible toilets (grab rails, folding seats)	√		√

Source: Ndewin (2021) *=Indicator measurement ● = Field measurement

Table 5 depicts the physical accessibility conditions of the parks under study. Notably, both parks have car parking bay/s or space with accessible paths from the parking bays to the exit and building entrance. According to Parks and Benefits (2007), there should be a 3% of parking lots reserved for VwDs and this was only met by MNP. Also, it was only at MNP where the designated parking bays were on level ground with a firm surface and free of loose materials compared to KNP as seen in Figure 2 and Figure 3 respectively. This supposes that, car parks at MNP are better designed to enable independent use by PwDs particularly, the mobility and vision impaired than car parks at KNP.

Figure 3: Car Park at KNP
Source: Ndewin (2021)

Figure 4: Car Park at MNP
Source: Ndewin (2021)

In relation to signage, both parks have sign posts designated at various parts of the parks communicating specific information. A sample is seen in Figure 5. This is important for path finding within a park (Calori & Vanden-Eynden, 2015) and as well facilitates ease of use of the parks. The availability of signposts conforms to WTO (2013) recommendation for tourism centres to clearly mark out service areas for easy navigation especially by PwDs.

Nonetheless, these signages information about access for PwDs were not available in the form of tactile/braille/audio as required under the principles of universal design. In terms of change of direction, both parks had signposts showing such directions. Despite the sufficient signage provision in both parks to provide direction, these signage's were not disability specific and could not be described as accessible to PwDs as seen Figure 5.

Figure 5: A Sign Post Showing Direction to Car Park at MNP

Source: Ndewin (2021)

WTO (2013) also recommends that, walkways/paths/trails should be spacious enough to accommodate two wheelchairs at tourist centres. Accordingly, there were accessible walkways/paths/trails (solid nonslip, joint less, even and steeples) in recommended areas of the two parks as seen in Table 5. However, it was observed these walkways/paths/trails could not accommodate two wheelchairs side by side and have no ramps at change of level as well as landing at the bottom of the ramps as depicted in Figure 5 and Figure 6.

Figure 6: Trail at KNP

Source: Ndewin (2021)

Figure 7: Trail at MNP

Source: Ndewin (2021)

The absence of ramps and landings on walkways/paths/trails means, it will be risky for wheelchair users to move on their own. They would have to rely on assistance from family members or park workers which is against the ideals of universal design. This condition of walkways/paths/trails could be attributed to poor planning among the parks (WTO & Fundación ACS, 2015) leading to that poor design.

It was also found that park access guide information is not available in tactile/braille/audio for the visually, speech and hearing impaired at the parks. There were also no sign language interpreters at various parks. These imply that VwDs such as the visually, speech and hearing impaired will not enjoy equitable, simple and intuitive use (environment should easily be understood and used). They will find it difficult to independently use and enjoy the parks like their non-disable counterparts as required by the principles of universal design (WTO, 2013).

Also, there were access information boards with reading boards height accessible from 1.2m across the two parks with low information/front desk counter for contact by wheel chair users. The same was found about resting

places. From Table 5, there were accessible resting places in both parks with seats (both back rests and armrests) with heights not exceeding 42cm: 40cm at KNP and 37cm at MNP, a condition which conforms to Parks and Benefit, (2007) initiative standard requirement. This is depicted in Figure 7 and Figure 8 respectively.

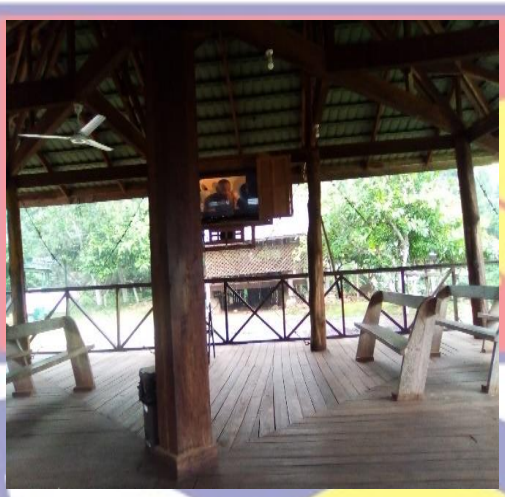

Figure 8: Resting Place at KNP
Source; Ndewin (2021)

Figure 9: Resting Place at MNP
Source; Ndewin (2021)

With regards to viewing points, MNP was found to have watch/lookout tower with accessible staircases as seen in Figure 9 compared to KNP which had no viewpoints. This observation could be explained by the different products offered by the various parks. For instance, MNP main product is safari which dominantly involves watching wild animals in their natural setting from a distance (Manrai et al., 2020). Though KNP offers some bird watching experiences, such an activity may have been overshadowed by the canopy walkway, the reason management have not bothered to provide watch/look out towers. Reinforcing this claim is the fact that, there might also be low patronage for bird watching and other safari activities at KNP and so,

management have seen no need to provide such physical accessibility infrastructure.

Figure 10: Watchout Tower at MNP
Source; Ndewin (2021)

There were toilet facilities at the parks as seen in Table 5 but these facilities were not designed to meet the needs of wheelchair users since they were not equipped with grab rails or folding seats as required by AS1428.1 as used by the Australian Tourism Commission (2014). What that means is, visitors on wheelchair particularly, may not be able to independently use the toilet facilities compared to other groups of disabilities. This is seen in Figure 10.

Figure 11: Toilet Facility at MNP

Source: Ndewin (2021)

Accessibility of Main Products (attractions/activities)

In line with Parks and Benefits (2007) domains of making parks accessible, a product-specific audit checklist was designed to explore how each of the park's main products (attractions) are accessible to PwDs. As seen in Table 6, KNP has its main products (Walking, Hiking and the Canopy walkway) not designed and equipped with the necessary infrastructure to support independent use by persons with visual and mobility impairment. However, other forms of disabilities such as hearing and speech impaired could access independently but that is dependent on one condition; the availability of sign language interpreters. Unfortunately, there were no sign language interpreters which imply that, within the principles of universal design, KNP has its main products not physically designed to allow PwDs to independently access or use. In the case of MNP, there were available safari vehicles that carry visitors, irrespective of the type of disability, around the

park to access and enjoy the product as seen in Figure 11. Nevertheless, these Safari vehicles were not fitted with hydraulic lifts or wheelchair locking systems or trails to allow for independent climbing and descending. Meaning that, visitors with mobility impairment cannot independently board safari vehicles for a tour. They may have to receive assistance from tour guides or drivers to climb and descend a Safari vehicle which is an upfront to the principle of independent use (universal design) as well as a denigration of VwDs dignity. Accordingly, it is concluded that MNP main product is also not in a condition to allow for independent use or access by VwDs hence, not accessible to PwDs.

Figure 12: Safari Vehicles at MNP

Source: Ndewin (2021)

Table 6: Results of Product-Specific Audit for KNP and MNP

Accessible Indicator	KNP Availability		Accessible indicator	MNP Availability	
	Yes	No		Yes	No
Walking			Safari		
Availability of accessible walkways/paths/trails (solid nonslip, joint less, even and steeples)	√		Availability of accessible safari tracks/trails (Hydraulic lift, wheelchair locking system and trail)	√	
Availability of crutches, canes and walking sticks		√	Availability of resting places at every 100m along trails		√
Hiking			Availability of canes (for guiding the visually impaired)		√
Accessible hiking routes		√	Availability of walkers for persons with walking difficulties		√
Availability of signage at vantage points giving direction		√	Availability of powered/manual wheelchairs		√
Signage information is accessible in the form of tactile/braille/audio		√	Availability of safari vehicles	√	√
Availability of adaptive wheelchairs for hiking		√			
Canopy walkway					
Is the canopy designed to accommodate wheelchair users/visually impaired		√			
Availability of accessible staircases for climbing the canopy walkway by wheelchair users		√			

Source: Ndewin (2021)

Overall, the physical accessibility audit results (Table 5) revealed that in terms of movement through the parks (general service areas), both KNP and MNP were somewhat accessible to VwDs within the principles of universal design. Thus, PwDs can somewhat independently access the following areas; car parks, reception, walkways/paths/trials, information boards and resting areas. These areas can be described as favourable to permit independent use by the mobility impaired group of visitors. Further examination of the audit results revealed that MNP had favourable physical accessibility conditions in relation to movement around than KNP. This could be attributed to differences in designs and topographical features of the two parks. In relation to the product-specific (attractions) audit results (Table 6), both parks had their main products not accessible to PwDs. The two parks had their products not designed and equipped to allow for independent use by PwDs given the conditions in overall accessibility indicators (Table 5 and Table 6) at the two parks. On the back of this audit results, the underlined reasons for the provision or no provision of physical accessibility were further explored.

Drivers of physical Accessibility at National Parks in Ghana

Several factors contribute to reasons why tourism businesses either make their facilities physically accessible or not for PwDs. The interviews unearthed deeper and contextual understanding of what drives physical accessibility among the two parks. The analysis was premised on two broad themes borne out of the data namely; provision and non-provision of physical accessibility. Provision explains why parks have provided certain physical facilities or have adhered to certain physical accessibility measures while non-

provision expounded reasons why parks have not provided or adhered to certain physical accessibility measures.

Drivers of Provision of Physical Accessibility

The in-depth interviews adduced reasons behind the provision of the existing physical accessibility. The interactions with the parks managers suggest management are committed to providing and improving upon these facilities which will ensure the parks are physically accessible to PwDs. However, these commitments were not overtly targeted at meeting PwDs needs only but for the benefits of all visitors. Accordingly, three main reasons emerged from the interviews namely; demand push, raising image of the parks/enhancing the satisfaction of non-disabled visitors, and promoting conservation/ecological value of the parks.

Demand push

The needs and wants of customers are considered paramount in the design of products and services (Camilleri, 2018). Similarly, national parks just as they are business entities have different segments of customers including PwDs visiting to experience their services. To situate the parks to meet the needs of PwDs, management first examines VwDs respective needs and provide the corresponding facilities. The in-depth interviews revealed that management considers PwDs demand level in the provision of physical facilities. There were two dimensions to this; the number/types of PwDs that visit the parks and the different needs/access requirements of these visitors. A 37-year-old male Park Manger, who had 10 years working experience has this to say;

We always ask ourselves how many people do we receive who are physically challenged [PwDs]. We have a number of them [PwDs] coming to our park. Like I mentioned, not all PwDs have the same access requirement. People with hearing impairment, speaking and maybe, amputees in terms of the hand, they are able to access virtually all our products. But when it comes to persons who have challenges in walking, that is where we have made some improvement. Let me pick it from facility to facility in terms of what we have done. If you look at our new reception, even though there is a wooden staircase, there are also places where people on wheelchairs can move to access the reception and then, if you look at where the exhibition centre is and where the craft shop is and where the restaurant is and the waiting area; you will realize that we used to have some wooden slaps, now, we have made them concrete slaps where people on wheelchairs can also access those places.

Relatedly, a 36-year-old male Assistant Park Manager, who had 12 years working experience, also has this to say;

If you are talking about the disabled such as the visually, hearing and speech impaired including the aged even those in wheelchairs, we have them visiting our park and some form of assistance is offered differentially based on their needs……. If you really go round the park to observe what we have done, we have ensured that things are not too difficult for various calibres of VwDs to really access the park. So, I think there have been some measures in terms of our physical infrastructure and the different access needs of PwDs. You wouldn't

get here and find very steep staircases for people to climb. We did that possibly to enhance PwDs movement.

These statements imply that the current state of physical accessibility at the parks albeit not up to standards, is based on the demand needs of the segment of PwDs that visit the parks. The statements explain why certain physical facilities are not provided which suggest that, the provision of physical accessibility at the parks is significantly tied to demand. In other words, the existing physical facilities are provided in line with the access needs of the segment of PwDs visiting the parks. This means that those physical facilities that are not provided are somewhat not required by the segment of VwDs to the parks. In line with the revenue generation motive of some of the parks, it may not be economically sound to invest in facilities that are not needed by visitors. So, without demand from PwDs, management is likely not to provide certain physical facilities due to less economic gains. For instance, Adam (2019) revealed that some hotels in Ghana consider the economic value of demand from PwDs in the provision of physical accessibility.

Also, the above statements present the reality that disability emanates from barriers created by social organizations as argued by the social model of disability (Oliver, 2013) and not the body defects of an individual (Darcy, 2010). This is supported by management recognition of the need to provide and readjust physical facilities to suit the needs of PwDs.

Raising image of the parks and enhancing the satisfaction of non-disabled visitors

According to Rasyid et al., (2017), good image leads to good reputation and good reputation draws large customer base for tourism businesses. They further argued that higher image contributes to visitor's satisfaction. Within this context, managers divulged through the in-depth interviews that they have provided certain physical facilities and will continue to provide because they want VwDs to enjoy their services so that when they leave, they can speak well of the parks. A 37-year-old male Park Manger, who had 10 years working experience, has this to say;

> *We invested in those physical facilities because, if we design our packages for them [PwDs], they will be happy. Aside contributing to revenue generation, it will also raise the image of the park because the disable section of society will know that yes, our park is a better place to receive people of their kind. I believe that the image of the park is key…*

Also, a 36-year-old male Assistant Park Manager with 12 years working experience has this to say;

> *We did that possibly for people with such challenges [PwDs] in mind. When they come and are able to enjoy our facilities, they will speak well about the park when they leave and that raises the image of the park.*

Implicit in these statements is the quest by managers to create good image for the parks through the kind of services the parks offer. The statements revealed managers are interested in the positive word of mouth

from visitors which will resultantly paint the parks as disability friendly destinations. So, the provision of the existing physical accessibility is to ensure PwDs enjoy the parks services which could result to positive reports about the parks. The provision of physical accessibility augments the quality of services which could inure to customer loyalty (Güngör, 2016). Hence, making national parks accessible will not only lead to customer satisfaction, it will bring customer loyalty.

Further supporting the above statements, managers disclosed that investing in physical accessibility will not only benefits VwDs but will as well enhance the satisfaction of non-disable visitors as supported by (Rasyid et al., 2017). This will eventually raise the reputation of the parks which has the potential of bringing in more visitors. A 36-year-old male Assistant Park Manager with 12 years working experience has this to say;

> *Investing in these things [physical accessibility] will even enhance the satisfaction of everybody. We've talked about benches and tables, and rails leading to picnic sites to have them [PwDs] relax and enjoy the scenery. These are useful for everybody and not just for PwDs. And to that extent, we've tried to have some of these [physical facilities] around the park since the number of people visiting could increase as a result and that is what brings satisfaction for many of my staff.*

This implies that making national parks physically accessible does not only inure to the benefits of PwDs, but it benefits the entire customer base of the parks. As such, physical accessibility in relations to national parks should not be seen as a PwDs requirement only but that of the larger travelling public.

This corresponds with WTO (2016) position that accessibility is an ethical must because everyone needs access, not only PwDs.

Promoting conservation and the ecological value of parks

Another reason pushing the physical accessibility initiative was the need to promote conservation and preserve the ecological value of parks. The interviews disclosed that managers see people visiting the parks as an opportunity to promote conservation of nature which eventually leads to preserving the ecological value of the parks. Mangers believed that providing physical facilities that inure to the needs of visitors including VwDs will make them feel welcomed and always will want to visit. As they (visitors) keep visiting, they will not only experience the importance of conserving nature, the message of conservation can be preached to them. A 37-year-old male Park Manger, who had 10 years working experience, has this to say;

> *We made provisions for the existing physical facilities because we want visitors including VwDs to always feel welcomed so that we can continually promote ecotourism to let them be in touch with nature, so that they will know the essence of conserving nature.*

Relatedly, A 36-year-old male Assistant Park Manager with 12 years working experience has this to say;

> *If more people are visiting, we can reach out with the message of conservation. Revenue is not the key thing for which this park [MNP] is established but conservation and the ecological value of the park. And how do we better and keep this place [the park]? It is when more people hear about what we do and understand why it is important to do what we do. So, the numbers will give us the opportunity…*

These statements mean that if the parks are physically accessible, it can cause repeat visit thus, through the way visitors enjoy those facilities as well as the entire service delivery, and when visitors keeping coming it will influence the conservation of the parks. Meanwhile, once the parks are conserved, their ecological value is promoted (Sannigrahi et al., 2019), where ecological value literally means, a park serving other natural functions apart from tourism. Such a function is described by one of the managers as quintessential to the existence of the park he manages. He indicated that even if the park is unable to generate revenue, it would still exist because of its ecological value (source of water for the surrounding townships). This was said by a 36-year-old male Assistant Park Manager, who had 12 years working experience.

If the park were not to even generate GHS1, still it would have existed because issues like water for the people, this park preserves and provide water for the whole town.

According to Sannigrahi et al., (2019), when national parks are conserved and managed well, their ecological benefits go a long way to benefit society and this is reflected in the statement above.

Drivers of Non-Provision of Physical Accessibility

The reasons for not providing certain physical accessibility or failing to ensure existing facilities adhere to required standards are presented. Two main issues emerged from the interviews as reasons why management have not provided certain physical facilities. These are: lack of enforcement and disregard for the law (the PwDs Act, 2006, Act 715), and lack of appreciation of accessible tourism.

Lack of enforcement and disregard for the law (PwDs Act, 2006, Act 715)

The Persons with Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715) was meant to facilitate the inclusion of PwDs into mainstream society including fostering their participation in tourism and other social activities (Eleweke, 2013). Briefly, it is mandatory by the law (Act 715) that all public buildings or structures factor the accessibility needs of PwDs by either re-adjusting old structures or designing new ones to be accessible to PwDs (Asante & Sasu, 2015). But it is found that there has not been enforcement from regulatory authorities like Ghana Tourism Authority which is an enforcement body within the industry. A 37-year-old male Park Manger, who had 10 years working experience, has this to say;

> *We have not had such direct instructions or discussion from GTA or any law enforcing agency as to tailoring our services and products towards meeting the needs of PwDs. GTA comes around to inspect our facility and when they see any gap, they draw our attention. But nothing of such has arisen.*

Also, a 36-year-old male Assistant Park Manager with 12 years working experience has this to say;

> *We have had interactions with GTA but there has never been any directive from them asking us to do one thing or the other regarding the Act. I cannot say there is enforcement.*

Closely related to the above statements is a sense of disregard for the law by managers of the parks. It is emerged from the interviews that managers have heard about the law all right, but they do not have full knowledge regarding what should be done per the law. Notwithstanding that, being the

principal initiators of development projects at the parks and considering the foreknowledge held about the law, it is expected that managers would take efforts to familiarize themselves with the law and implement it even without enforcement by regulatory authorities. But that has not been done due to what may be described as disregard for the law. None of the parks managers have taken efforts to discover what the law says about PwDs and accessibility of their facilities. A 36-year-old, male Assistant Park Manager with 12 years working experience has this to say;

> *I have heard about the PwDs Act, 2006 (Act 715) but I know nothing about it. I am not familiar with its content. If I do, I will only be conjecturing.*

Similarly, a 37-year-old male Park Manger who had 10 years working experience has this to say;

> *I am aware that there is such an Act (PwDs Act, 2006, Act715) and I have had a general knowledge about it but not content knowledge in terms of what it required of us. Generally, we are aware that Ghana has passed such an Act.*

Central to the above statements is the lack of alacrity towards searching for information on how to improve products and services. It can be interpreted that; management lack interest as far as improving the parks products and services to meet existing legislations is concern. This is reflected in why they have not bothered to find out what the PwDs Act, 2006 (Act 715) entails. These, together with the lack of enforcement have resulted in why certain essential physical accessibility is not provided even though by the law (Act, 715), such facilities ought to be provided whether demanded or not.

This corresponds with Asante and Sasu (2015) assertion that lack of enforcement of disability laws has made many public places inaccessible to PwDs in Ghana. It is also in consonance with Adam (2019a) findings that some hotels in Ghana have failed to make their facilities physically accessible due to lack of clarity and enforcement of disability legislations. Sly and Chang (2019) contend that if tourism service providers are fully exposed to disability laws, they may feel more obligated to make their facilities accessible to PwDs even though other structural problems may constraint their efforts. This gives further insight of how enforcement of disability legislations and personal insight by managers may have driven the physical accessibility provision at the parks.

Lack of appreciation of accessible tourism

Another reason why some physical accessibility requirements have not been met at the parks is because managers themselves do not have understanding about accessible tourism. For instance, a 37-year-old male Park Manger who had 10 years working experience has this to say;

> *Well, accessible tourism I wouldn't say I know its definition or what it is about.*

Also, a 36-year-old, male Assistant Park Manager with 12 years working experience has this to say;

> *I have heard about accessibility but I haven't dealt with that aspect of tourism before.*

Since mangers lack appreciation of the concept of accessible tourism, they are as well not able to perceive its value and thus, adopt it practices in full. This is manifested in the fact that neither of the parks has a physical

accessibility plan or overall management plan on accessibility. A 36-year-old, male Assistant Park Manager who had 12 years working experience was captured saying;

> *I have been through our management plan and I cannot remember anywhere accessibility in terms of PwDs is mentioned.*

Similarly, a 37-year-old male Park Manger who had 10 years working experience has this to say;

> *There is no overall management plan in terms of accessibility. We don't have a blue print.*

On the whole, there is a general sense of hope relative to the provision of physical accessibility at the parks considering that, the managers seem to concur in the significance of physical accessibility and the need to provide those facilities. Nevertheless, the most common and dominant factor that underlined the above factors is management discretion. The general sense is that, management decides when to provide physical accessibility. Yet still, this discretion is only exercised on short-term basis without long term plan on physical accessibility. Conclusively, the above findings are in consonance with the general assertion that, adopting accessible tourism in developing countries like Ghana is left to the discretion of tourism businesses (Kassah et al., 2012) unlike in the developed countries where there is strict law enforcement and compliance (Edusei et al., 2015).

The two parks' managers alluding to the above factors in the interviews as issues they consider in providing the existing physical accessibility go to confirm the propositions of the framework. Thus, corporate factors including demand, brand (park) image and competition actually drive

physical accessibility provisions at the parks. Also, the lack of enforcement of disability legislations such the PwDs Act, Act 715 implies that contextual factors impact physical provision at the two parks in various ways including lack of strategic plan for accessible tourism and lack of disability service train.

Attitude of Park Employees toward VwDs

Attitude of non-disable persons including service providers toward PwDs is found to be a barrier of access to many tourism products and service (Mensah, 2015; Chikuta et al., 2019). Visitors with disabilities want to be treated like their non-disabled counterparts' in nature-based tourism sites (Chikuta et al., 2019). While employees, particularly frontline employees' attitude can enhance the experience of VwDs, it can also discourage and reduce both the numbers of VwDs and those without disabilities (Kong & Loi, 2017; Kastenholz et al., 2015). This underscores the need to examine the attitude of park employees. Relying on the tripartite conceptualization of attitude, 14 attitudinal items were generated from the literature to assess the cognitive, affective and behaviour dispositions of employees toward visitors with disabilities to national parks. The statements were stated in a positive form in consistent with the literature and employees asked to indicate their extend of agreement or disagreement with each statement in a five-point likert scale. Before the analysis was carried out, the five-point likert scale which was used in capturing the data was collapsed into two namely; agree and disagree. Thus, 'strongly agree' and 'agree' were recorded as 'agree' whereas 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' were recorded as 'disagree'. The data was skewed to these opposite ends. So, this was done to enhance understanding and easy interpretation of the results without tempering with the quality of the data. Adam and Amuquandoh (2013) adopted this approach without losing the quality of the data. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Results of Ratings of Attitudinal Statements

Statement	N	Rating Agree (%)	Mean	Std. Error Mean	Cronbach's Alpha Value
Cognitive					
I believe park employees must not discriminate against PwDs	81	95.1	1.951	.024	
I believe park employees must be nice to PwDs	81	93.8	1.938	.027	
I believe park employees must provide special attention to PwDs	81	96.3	1.963	.021	
I believe park employees must treat PwDs in same manner as non-disabled visitors	81	87.7	1.877	.037	
I believe park employees should not look down on PwDs	81	93.8	1.938	.027	
Overall Score	*81*	*96.3*	*1.933*	*.028*	*.802*
Affective					
I feel PwDs are special visitors	81	81.5	1.815	.043	
I feel the need to readily assist PwDs	81	90.1	1.901	.031	
I feel PwDs are just as normal as other non-disabled visitors	81	60.5	1.605	.054	
I feel PwDs need our love	81	91.4	1.914	.031	
Overall Score	*81*	*91.4*	*1.809*	*.040*	*.700*

Behaviour					
I am nice to PwDs	81	98.8	1.98	.012	
I serve PwDs with pride	81	91.4	1.93	.031	
I treat PwDs as normal as non-disabled visitors	81	71.6	1.716	.050	
I pay special attention to PwDs request	81	92.6	1.926	.029	
I readily assist PwDs with their requests	81	93.8	1.938	.027	
Overall Score	*81*	*96.3*	*1.900*	*.032*	*.700*

Source: Ndewin (2021) Scale: 1–1.49 = Strongly agreed, 1.50–2.49 = Agreed, 2.50–3.49 = Neutral, 3.50–4.49 = Disagreed, 4.50–5.0 = Strongly disagreed

From Table 7, in relation to cognitive dimension of attitude, evidence suggests a greater number of employees (1.963) believed they must provide special attention to PwDs. Similarly, others (1.951) believed they must not discriminate against PwDs which implies that park employees do not discriminate. Meanwhile, more than two-third believed they should not look down (1.938) on PwDs and must also be nice (1.938) to PwDs respectively. Overall, majority (96.3%) of employees were said to have positive cognitive disposition toward PwDs, thus they have positive beliefs, perceptions and views towards PwDs.

On the affective (feelings and emotions) component of attitude, majority of park employees (1.914) said they feel PwDs need their love, others (1.901) said they feel the need to readily assist PwDs and over two-third (1.815) feel PwDs are special visitor. Accordingly, these painted a picture of favourable emotional disposition of park employees toward PwDs with an overall 91.5% positive rating.

Lastly on the behaviour component, almost all employees (1.988) were in agreement that they are nice towards PwDs and similar number (1.938) readily assists PwDs with their requests. Also, greater number (1.928) agreed that they pay special attention to PwDs request. Others agreed (1.716) they treat PwDs as normal as nondisabled visitors. Generally, it was recorded that about 96% of employees agreed their behaviour towards PwDs is positive. From the above, it is established that the parks employees have positive cognitive, affective and behaviour dispositions toward PwDs and therefore can be concluded as having favourable attitude.

Relationship among the three dimensions of attitude

To understand the attitude of employees better, there was the need to statically establish the relationship among the three dimensions of attitude. The individual items under each component were computed into single continuous variables respectively and categorized further into dichotomous variables (positive and negative). Using a Chi-square test of independence, the relationship among the three dimensions of attitude was conducted and the results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Cognitive by Affective and Affective by Behaviour component

Components	Positive (%)	Negative (%)	X^2 value	P. value
	Affective			
Cognitive			9.35	.002**
Agree	92.20	7.80		
Disagree	58.80	41.20		
	Behaviour			
Affective			6.05	.014**
Agree	85.50	14.50		
Disagree	50.00	50.00		

Source: Ndewin (2021)

** =Significant relationship exist at $P \leq 0.05$

It is observed that there is a statistically significant relationship between cognitive and affective dimensions of attitude ($X^2 = 9.35$; $p<0.002$). As a result, favourable cognitive disposition of employees can lead to favourable affective disposition. Also, a statistically significant relationship is established between the affective and behaviour dimensions of attitude ($X^2 = 6.05$; $p<0.014$) implying that the affective disposition of employees can shape their behaviour. This empirically validates the conceptual relationship among

the three components of attitude that the cognitive dimension shapes the affective (emotions) which also shape the behaviour dimension (Katz, 1960; Adam, 2019a). To this end, it can be concluded that park employees have favourable attitude towards PwDs since over 90% of them have favourable cognitive, affective and behaviour dispositions towards PwDs as seen Table 7.

Even though, the literature largely reported negative attitude of tourism service providers in developing countries towards PwDs (Kim & Lehto, 2012; Lyu, 2017; Adam, 2019a), it is acknowledged that attitude does not stay static and may change over time (Buhalis et al., 2012; Adam, 2018a) from negative to positive or favourable. The above findings speak to a different form of attitude of service providers. Positive or favourable attitudes are woven around the social model of disability (Adam, 2018b). The social model of disability propagates for a more progressive society, less judgemental and inclusive views of social actors (Oliver, 2013; Adam, 2018a) through provision of right knowledge and information about PwDs which will invariably shapes the views, perceptions and attitudes of park employees towards PwDs. The impact of right knowledge on attitude is further explained by the information integration theory. According to this theory, an individual's attitude is a product of his knowledge and beliefs about a referent (Daruwalla & Darcy, 2005). As a result, a person's attitude towards a referent is changed when introduced to new information or knowledge about that referent (Daruwalla & Darcy, 2005). Accordingly, the parks employees' attitude towards PwDs which is favourable but contrary to what is reported in the literature may have been occasioned by new knowledge or information acquired about PwDs through various avenues like recruitment training, disability service training,

and work-related training programmes organised by park management. The educational exposure of employees may also contribute. They may have been exposed to different knowledge, views and information about PwDs from school either than those acquired from their social-cultural backgrounds which largely are negative.

Attitude Dimensions by Socio-demographic Characteristics

The study further explores the degree to which employees attitude differ across their socio-demographic characteristics using Kruskal Wallis test and Mann-Whitney test. The Kruskal Wallis test was used where the explanatory variable (independent variable) had more than two categories whereas the Mann-Whitney test was employed on two categorical explanatory variables as seen in Table 9.

It was observed that no significant difference exists in attitude in relation to age of employees across the three dimensions; cognitive (X^2=3.546, p = .315), affective (X^2=2.306, p = .511) and behaviour (X^2=1.838, p= .607). Meaning that, the parks employees' attitude towards PwDs does not significantly differ cross various age groups. Affirming these results, Paez & Arendt (2014) found no statistically significant variation between tourism service provider's attitude and their ages in the U.S. However, a critical examination of the mean ranks for cognitive dimension indicated that age range 31-40 (45.3), 41-50 (43.7) and 50+ (43.2) were more likely to have the same views and beliefs about PwDs as against age range 21-30 (32.2). The same observations were made about affective and behaviour dimensions implying that, these age ranges (31-40), (41-50) and (50+) are more likely to have the same, if possible, positive attitude different from 21–30-year range.

According to Goreczny et al., (2011), employees around 40 years and above generally have positive attitude towards PwDs.

Similarly, no significant difference in attitude was found among employees in terms of their level of education across the various dimensions except that of Affective dimension (X^2= 7.899, p= .019) implying that employee's affection (feelings and emotions) towards PwDs differs by their level education. By extension, employees with basic education (44.54) and secondary education (47.41) were seen to harbour the same feelings and emotions towards PwDs different from employees with tertiary education (31.71).

Gender of employees was also explored in terms of whether their attitude towards VwDs varies across various dimensions. It was observed that significant differences exist between male and female employees' behaviour towards VwDs (Z= -2.031, p=.042) suggesting, male employees' overt conducts towards VwDs vary from their female counterparts. This is in line with Findler et al., (2007) who investigated the link between gender and attitude towards PwDs and found that females have favourable attitude to PwDs than males.

Furthermore, it was observed that employee's attitude does not differ in terms of marital status across cognitive (Z= -1.444, p= .149), affective (Z= -1.366, p= .172) and behaviour (Z= -.936, p= .349) signifying that the attitude of employees who are married towards PwDs do not differ from those who are single as may be perceived. Lastly, it was observed that significant variations exist between Christian and Moslem employees' affection (feelings and emotions) towards PwDs (Z= -3.400, p= .001) as found in Table 9.

Table 9: Socio-demographics by Attitude dimensions

	Cognitive			Affective			Behaviour		
Characteristics	N	Mean	P. value	N	Mean	P value	N	Mean	P value
Age									
21-30	23	33.20		23	35.46		23	36.00	
31-40	18	45.31		18	45.19		18	40.25	
41-50	21	43.71		21	44.31		21	43.64	
51+	19	43.24		19	40.08		19	44.84	
	df =3	X^2=3.546	.315	df = 3	X^2=2.306	.511	df = 3	X^2=1.838	.607
Education									
Basic	12	34.13		12	44.54		12	34.88	
SHS	38	43.25		38	47.41		38	42.59	
Tertiary	31	40.90		31	31.77		31	41.42	
	df=2	X^2=1.385	.500	df=2	X^2=7.899	.019**	df=2	X^2=1.002	.606

Gender								
Male	77	40.63		77	40.40		77	39.96	
Female	4	50.67		4	56.50		4	68.00	
		Z= -.728	.466		Z= -1.166	.244		Z= -2.031	.042**
Marital status									
Single	17	33.71		17	34.09		17	36.26	
Married	64	42.94		64	42.84		64	42.26	
		Z= -1.444	.149		Z= -1.366	.172		Z= -.936	.349
Religion									
Christian	53	37.45		53	34.56		53	39.67	
Muslim	28	47.71		28	53.20		28	43.52	
		Z=1.875	.061		Z= 3.400	.001**		Z= -.702	.483

Source: Ndewin (2021)

** Significant difference exists at $P \leq 0.05$

Disability Service Training and Employee Attitude towards VwDs

Further explorations were made in order to understanding the nuances surrounding the parks employees' attitudes toward PwDs. Employees were asked if they were given disability specific service training during recruitment which could have yielded in the positive attitudes observed. From Table 10, about two-third (71.6%) of the employees said No, they were not given disability service training (DST). Sharply, more than half (69.1%) of the employees said the lack of DST did not affect how they receive and treat VwDs. This notwithstanding, employees may have been taken through other interventions or training on how to treat visitors in general during recruitment. According to Wakelin-Theron, Ukpere & Spowart (2019), employers in the tourism industry always have to train new recruits as many of them often do not possess vital skills to deal with customers or visitors. Recruitment training, personal or religious factors may have contributed to employees' favourable attitude towards PwDs despite the lack of DST training.

Table 10: Disability Service Training at National Parks

Disability service training	N (81)	Percentage (%)
Yes	23	28.4
No	58	71.60
Lack of training affects disability service delivery		
Yes	25	30.90
No	56	69.10

Source: Ndewin (2021)

Factors shaping Employees' Attitude towards VwDs

Attitude of park employees towards visitors with disability under this study has been established to be largely favourable. Nevertheless, individual attitude has been found to be occasioned by several factors emanating from social, biological, economic and spiritual facets of life (Park, 2017; Cohen et al., 2020). Thus, individuals could express different attitude to the same referent partly because of various factors. From the interviews conducted, compelling and contextual reasons were given by employees as underlined modifiers of their attitudes toward PwDs. The analysis was carried out under two broad factors (themes) which emerged from the data namely; socio-demographic factors and work-related factors. While the socio-demographic factors talk about individual personal characteristics, work-related factors relate to the work environment and its associated demands.

Socio-demographic Factors

Socio-demographic characteristics have been found to have varying complexities in relation to their influence on employee's attitude within the work setting (England, 2016). Some of these characteristics are easily formed and changed while others are not. From the in-depth interviews conducted, three main socio-demographic variables were found to be shaping the attitude of park employees towards VwDs. These included; age, education and religious beliefs.

Age

Age is found to have a significant influence on the perception and attitude of employees in tourism (Goreczny et al., 2011). The in-depth interviews uncovered that as employees grow from childhood to adulthood, their perceptions and understanding of disability somewhat changes from that of negative to positive and thus, they turn to have positive attitude towards PwDs. This is embedded in what a 46-year-old male Asst. Supervisor who had 12yrs working experience, has a disabled relative and has ever served a VwDs said;

> *When I was a child, I was seeing them as not part of the society because of the way they look or their makeup. Their appearance made me think they were people I should disassociate myself from. But for now, I have matured, I see them to be humans just like any other person that we need to support.*

Connectedly, a 32-year-old male Senior Resource Guide who had 9yrs working experience, and has ever served a VwDs also has this to say;

> *Going closer to them, when I was a child, I was afraid of them but now because I am grown or developed in brain, I see them to be my colleagues. I see that we are one people.*

The above quotes imply that people's worldview about disability doesn't stay the same as they grow in age. That is, people perceptions, views and behaviour towards PwDs turn to change for good as they grow and this is reflected in why employees' views about disability somewhat changed with their age. This places credence on why the employment age in Ghana is limited to 18yrs and above. Because at this age upwards, the individual is

believed to be able to objectively and independently think and treat issues the way they are with less dependence on hearsay (Adeniran et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, three perspectives emerged from the interviews regarding the role of age/maturity on employees' attitude towards PwDs. These include; sympathy, seeing them as human beings and seeing them as capable of performing activities that are carried out by persons without disabilities. Some employees confessed that because they are now grown (age), they turn to have sympathy towards PwDs. Also, some said they now see them as human beings and others disclosed, they now understand PwDs as capable of undertaking certain activities carried out by persons with no disabilities unlike when they were children. A 49-year-old Female Customer Relation Officer, who had 27yrs working experience and has ever served a VwDs was captured saying this;

> *When I was a child, I used to think they [PwDs] were something different from me. But having grown to a certain level now, I sometimes even feel sympathy and the need to help when I come across them especially those that come to this park.*

Similarly, a 30-year-old Tour Guide who had 2yrs working experience and has ever served a VwDs was quoted saying this;

> *My age has increased and I have matured so I feel they are also like us now. They are also human beings. I now understand that, it is just a matter of time that I can also become like them.*

Yet still, a 30-year-old male Asst. Visitor Relation Manager who had 3yrs working experience, has a disabled relative and has ever served a VwDs has this to say;

When I was a child, I saw them [PwDs] as unable to do anything but now I see that they are forcing and are being able to do many things that non-disable people do and this gives me urge to go closer to them.

These quotes associate young age to the moral and medical models' views about disability. In other words, the quotes suggest that the moral and medical models' views of disability may change with the individual as he/she grows in age or gets matured. Similarly, Hughes et al., (2018) explained that, the cognitive performance of individuals gets improved as they graduate from young age to mid-age. The same views are expressed by Goreczny et al., (2011) thus, explaining why employees have formed favourable views about PwDs in their current age/stage which is reflected in their attitude towards VwDs.

Education

Another socio-demographic feature that was found to be shaping employees' attitude at the parks was education. Almost all the employees ascribed their attitudinal disposition towards VwDs to their educational background. They indicated that through their educational process, they have socialized with PwDs and have also acquired better understanding of some of the causes of disability different from those postulated by their socio-cultural backgrounds, which in many cases are negative and hostile towards the wellbeing of PwDs. For instance, a 30-year-old male Asst. Visitor's Manager, who has a disabled relative, a 3-year working experience and has ever served a VwDs has this to say;

Now I have better education and understanding of some causes of disabilities and other underlining issues. I have seen that suffering from disability has nothing to do with spiritual or moral issues as created by our societies. I have come to understand this through my education and that has changed my behaviour towards them [PwDs].

Also, a 39-year-old Principal Resource Guard who had 11yrs working experience and has ever served a VwDs has this to say;

During my school days, we organized excursions, club meetings and other meetings where some persons with disabilities were part. Through that, I got to know how they are living their lives and so, I have more experience than those who have not gone to school before. As a result, I treat VwDs differently from those who haven't been to school.

The above statements connote that, through the socialization process at school, employees acquired new knowledge and information about PwDs. This new knowledge and information have turned to shape their narrow and conservative views acquired from their socio-cultural backgrounds thus, shaping their behaviour towards VwDs at the parks. According to Najib et al., (2020), education turns to give people ideological focus about life issues different from that which is formed from socio-cultural lenses and in this case, views about disability. De Vroome et al., (2014) summed that education enhances tolerance of divergence which ensures integration of dissenting groups in society. It thus sufficed to conclude that formal education influence positively, the two parks employees' attitude towards VwDs in relation their

inclusion and participation in tourism through eliminating negative evaluations of them.

Religious beliefs

The employees also revealed through the in-depth interviews that their expressed attitude towards VwDs is somewhat inspired by the teachings from their religious inclinations. The general feelings were that disability is from God and failure to treat PwDs well may attract punishment from God. A 29-year-old male Cashier, who had 2yrs working experience, has a disabled relative and has ever served a VwDs has this to say;

> *Yes of course, the church admonishes us to treat them [PwDs] with equal care and that has always been part of me in handling VwDs.*

Relatedly, a 53-year-old male Chief Resource Guard who had 22yrs working experience, has a disabled relative and has ever served a VwDs also has this to say;

> *My religious beliefs do influence me. We are Moslems and we say disability is from God. So, if you discriminate against them, you are challenging God.*

Equally, a 32-year-old male Senior Resource Guide who had 9rs working experience and has ever served a VwDs made the following statement;

> *Religious teachings influence me to treat them positively because; love your neighbour as you love yourself. That is what the Bible says. If you love yourselves, you need to love your neighbour be it a disabled person or not, handle the person the way you will like yourself to be handled.*

The above statements reveal that employees turned to carry their religious beliefs into the working environment of parks, a phenomenon which is expected since Ghana is anecdotally asserted as being a religious nation. Webley (2011) in his concluding remarks in a study of business ethics and religious practices in the USA stated that asking employees to abandon their God at the door step in an organization is like asking them to change their skin colour before entering the office. Carrying one's religious beliefs into the workplace may have ethical implications especially when those beliefs conflict with work ethics. So, management only need to institute measures to limit the extent to which these religious ideals are professed at the parks. This finding conforms to the literature that religious beliefs positively shape employee attitude at the workplace (Yahya et al., 2015; Webley, 2011).

Overall, the above findings give credence to the conceptual framework's claim that despites training, park employees attitude towards visitors with disabilities are likely to vary based on individual level factors which include demographic characteristics like age, education and religious beliefs.

Work-related Factors

Contrarily to the socio-demographic characteristics which are largely socio-cultural orientations and personal to the individual, the work-related factors have their origin from the working environment. These included; service training, image of the park/self, prior experience with PwDs and duty-bound/obligation.

Service training

Service training refers to programmes such as orientations, lectures and other formal meetings intended to educate employees on how to go about delivering services to customers including customer care management (Sy & Chang, 2019). On the bases of this, employees disclosed that part of the reasons they have favourable attitude towards VwDs is due to the training given to them on how to treat visitors to the parks including VwDs. A 53-year-old male Chief Resource Guard who had 22yrs working experience, has a disabled relative and has ever served a VwDs has this to say;

> *Because of the training we have here, we can take all nonsense. They say the customer is always right so we always try to contain all bad feelings so that we make visitors excited…. In terms of how we are trained, whether the person is disabled or not, who manages to come here, we treat all of them the same.*

Also, a 49-year-old male Senior Tourism Manager who had 10yrs working experience, has a disabled relative and has ever served a VwDs said this;

> *All the tour guides here, we have received training on how to receive and treat all visitors including VwDs.*

These statements explain the important role of service training in the service delivery process in tourism. Because of the service training, many of the employees turn to exhibit positive attitude towards VwDs. Even though some of them may have negative thoughts or repulsive feelings about PwDs, through the training, they have learned to act professionally when encountered with VwDs by concealing or controlling their intentions and emotions respectively. Empirically, Palad et al., (2016) had similar finding. After

administering specific disability awareness training, Palad et al., (2016) found that employee's attitudes were significantly better after participating in the training. This underscores the essence of service training in the parks and the tourism industry at large.

Image of park/self

In order to create good image for the parks and for themselves, employees turned to have positive attitude towards VwDs. They believe that their actions and inactions can affect how VwDs perceived the parks and more importantly, the immediate remarks made on their person. A 29-year-old male Cashier who had 2yrs working experience, has a disabled relative and has ever served a VwDs has this to say;

Whatever I do here might affect the image of the park so I always pay maximum attention to those people [VwDs].

On the same issue, a 53-year-old male Chief Resource Guard who had 22yrs working experience, has a disabled relative and has ever served a VwDs also has this to say;

I am always careful with how I handle those people [VwDs]. So that they don't think because they are disabled that is why I am behaving that way towards them and may say bad things about me.

Evident in the above quotes is the fact that employees are much concern about what visitors may say about the parks when they leave. They are concerned in creating good image for the parks as well as protecting this image. According to WTO (2016), good image can lead to enhancing the competitiveness of parks. Meanwhile, considering the inseparability nature of the park products where visitors and employees must interact in the service

delivery process, as well as the intangibility element of park products where visitors only carry memories home, such concerns are germane to ensuring visitors have quality experience. Also, because employees are mindful of what VwDs may say about their person, they are likely to deliver quality service which feeds into the image of the park.

Prior experience with PwDs

Past dealings or encounters with PwDs was also found as an important factor shaping employees' attitude towards VwDs at the parks. There were two dimensions to this; past experience with VwDs and past experience with relatives/friends who are disabled. From the in-depth interviews, employees apply the lessons from these past experiences in subsequent encounters with a VwDs. A 49-year-old male Senior Tourism Manager who had 10yrs working experience, has a disabled relative and has ever served a VwDs was captured saying this;

> *I am having a sister who is disabled….and now that I am even working with visitors every day some of whom are disabled has made me to relate with them far better than I used to.*

In the same vein, a 28-year-old male Receptionist who had 3yrs working experience, has disabled relative and has ever served a VwDs has this to say;

> *Back in school I had a friend who was disabled. She had an accident and was given an artificial leg. No one in the class made her feel less of a human being. Everyone made her feel nice. So, with that she really had good self-confident and do everything with us. So, I learnt that when you don't let them feel less of a human, it really helps them.*

Embodied in the above statements is the important role of past experience in the service delivery process in tourism. Past experience offers employees the opportunity to learn and amend previous negative attitudes in the next encounter. This is manifested in why majority of employees have positive or favourable attitude towards VwDs as observed in Table 4. In confirming these results, Zamkowska & Olzewski (2020) revealed that, people are always willing to accept PwDs as guests if they have ever encountered them.

Duty-bound/obligation

The last factor shaping employees' attitude towards VwDs is the feeling of a sense of obligation/duty bound. Through the in-depth interviews, it was uncovered that, employees turned to have more time, care and patience for VwDs at the working environment (parks) than they do outside the working environment. This was occasioned by the fact that they are obligated or duty-bounded to attend to the needs of VwDs within the working environment unlike outside the working environment, where somewhat, they are not obligated or duty-bounded. A 28-year-old male Receptionist who had 3yrs working experience, has disabled relative and has ever served a VwDs has this to say;

> *At the workplace, VwDs have to have some special treatment like special care or attention to feel comfortable. Because withing the work environment we are paid for the services rendered, we are supposed to. We are expected to help PwDs that come here to feel satisfied. But outside the working environment, we can't do the same thing because no one holds us for anything. You do what you feel comfortable.*

Implicit in this statement is the fact that, employees are mandated to treat PwDs properly irrespective of their individual opinions about them at the workplace (parks). That also suggests that employees are somewhat supervised within the working environment in relation to their attitude towards PwDs. They are supervised to ensure that whatever they do is geared towards meeting visitor's needs. Due to that, employees turn to have much time, care and patience for VwDs thus, the reason behind their positive attitude as observed earlier. The statement also conveys the role of economic factors like pay/salary and how it can condition employees to behave in a certain way.

Chapter Summary

This chapter analysed and discussed the findings of the study. The analysis was done based on the questions and objectives of the study. The chapter commenced with a number of demographic characteristics that were identified as shaping attitude. It proceeded to look the physical accessibility indicators of parks, and drivers of physical accessibility at parks of which five factors emerged. It further looked the attitude of park employees where it is discovered that majority of employees have positive or favourable attitude towards PwDs. Finally, it was realized that seven factors; three socio-personal variables and four job related variables are shaping employees' attitude towards PwDs at the parks. The next chapter outlines the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the entire study. The chapter focused on the summary of the research process, main findings, conclusions drawn and recommendations made towards improving the accessibility of national parks in Ghana.

Summary of Research Process

Despite national parks offering countless tourism services to the travelling market including the disability market, scanty knowledge exists about the accessibility of national parks in Ghana to persons with disabilities (PwDs). Considering that Kakum and Mole National Parks which are a home to many endangered species and draw a good section of both domestic and international travellers, some of whom may have one form of disability or the other and given the dearth of literature about how they are accessible to PwDs make the study necessary.

The main objective of the study was to assess the accessibility of national parks to persons with disabilities in Ghana. The specific objectives were to;

- Evaluate the level of physical accessibility of national parks in Ghana based on acceptable standards
- Explore the drivers of physical accessibility at national parks in Ghana
- Analyse the attitude of park employees toward persons with disabilities in Ghana
- Examine factors shaping park employees' attitudes toward persons with disabilities in Ghana

The conceptual framework was adapted from physical and psychological park accessibility model by Parks (2017). It captures four main issues which underlined the objectives of the study such as; physical access, drivers of physical access, attitude of park employees and factors that shape employees' attitude. The embedded mixed method approach and an exploratory design were adopted for the study. Data was collected from Kakum and Mole national parks through the use of four instruments namely; Accessibility Audit Checklist, Questionnaire and two Interview Guides. Eighty-one (81) frontline employees were purposively selected based on their previous contacts with VwDs and administered questionnaires. Fourteen (14) out of the 81 employees were further interviewed together with managers of the two parks.

Tables and pictures were used in presenting and describing the results of the physical accessibility audit. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics and non-parametric statistical tools such as Chi-square, Kruskal Wallis and Mann-Whitney tests. Whereas, the qualitative data was analysed using the inductive content analytical technique via a three-tier coding format; open coding (assigning labels), creating categories (sorting), and creating themes (synthesizing and abstraction).

Summary of Main Findings

- The study revealed that in terms of movement through the two parks, both Kakum and Mole National Parks were somewhat physically accessible to PwDs with Mole National Park (MNP) having favourable physical accessibility conditions than Kakum National Park (KNP). However, both parks had their core products (attractions) not

physically accessible to PwDs. Thus, the two parks core products were not designed to allow for independent use by PwDs. Information about access were not available in the form of tactile/braille/audio and there were no sign language interpreters either at the two parks.

- Further, the study found a number of factors that drive the provision of physical accessibility at the two parks. These are; demand push, raising image of the parks/enhancing the satisfaction of non-disabled visitors, promoting conservation/ecological value of the parks, lack of enforcement and disregard of the law (PwDs Act, 2006, Act 715), and lack of appreciation of accessible tourism.
- The study also found that frontline employees of the two parks have favourable attitude towards PwDs. Majority of the employees gave favourable responses across the three dimensions; cognitive (96.3%), affective (91.5%) and behaviour (96%). Significant relationship was established between cognitive and affective dimensions of attitude ($p<0.002$), and also between affective and behaviour dimensions of attitude ($p<0.014$). Also, significant variations were established between employees' socio-demographic characteristics and their attitudinal dimensions. These included; affective dimension and level of education ($p= .019$), behaviour dimension and gender ($p=.042$), and affective dimension and religion ($p= .001$).
- Finally, seven factors shaped employees' attitude towards PwDs in the two parks. These included age, education, religious beliefs, service training, image of the park/self, experience with PwDs and duty-bound/obligation.

Conclusions

Based on the above findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn.

- The study concludes that the two parks core products (main attractions) are not physically accessible to PwDs. The physical accessibility conditions of the core products of the two parks do not permit independent use by PwDs. However, PwDs can somewhat independently access significant areas of the parks such as resting areas, reception areas, walkways, car parks and notice boards.
- Five factors drive the provision of physical accessibility at the two parks. Three of these factors namely; demand push, raising image of the parks/enhancing the satisfaction of non-disabled visitors and promoting conservation/ecological value of the parks accounted for the provision of physical accessibility. Whereas, two factors which included; lack of enforcement and disregard of the law (PwDs Act, 2006, Act 715), and lack of appreciation of accessible tourism were the reasons for the non-provision of physical accessibility at the two parks.
- The study also concludes that frontline employee's attitude towards PwDs is favourable. However, their attitude varied among socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, religion and level of education in relation to affective and behaviour dimensions. While their attitude dimensions (cognitive, affective and behaviour) are related to each other, it does empirically validate the tripartite model of attitude (Antonak & Livneh, 2000). Meaning that the two parks frontline employees' cognitive dispositions can influence their

affective dispositions which together influence their behaviour towards PwDs.

- Lastly, socio-demographic factors and work-related factors were found to shape frontline employees' attitude towards PwDs. The socio-demographic factors which were personal and emanated from employees background included age, education and religious beliefs. The work-related factors emanated from the working environment and included service training, image of the park/self, prior experience with PwDs and duty-bound/obligation.
- The results of the study agree with the foundational view of the conceptual framework which contends that contextual and corporal factors have direct influence in making national parks accessible to persons with disabilities. This is seen in the fact that, lack of enforcement of disability legislations, demand, brand (park) image and conservation primarily drive physical accessibility provision at the parks.
- Theoretically, the study has presented empirical backing of the proposition of the social model of disability which sees disability as a consequence of social barriers and therefore, efforts must be taken to eliminate physical, attitudinal and institutional barriers. Also, the accessibility audit results have shown that, the principles of universal design is a reliable tool in measuring physical accessibility at national parks.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made towards improving practice in the two national parks in Ghana.

- Since the two parks core products are not physically accessible to PwDs, management of both parks should re-adjust the existing designs of their core products (attractions) to allow for independent use by PwDs. Specifically, management of MNP should ensure Safari vehicles are fitted with hydraulic lifts and wheelchair locking systems to allow for independent climbing and descending by VwDs. Also, management of KNP can introduce sky rail cairns to augment the canopy walk way to allow for VwDs particularly the mobility impairment to experience the park's core service. On top of this, management of both parks should make information about access available in the form of braille/tactile/audio and as well employ sign language interpreters to ensure the hearing, speech and visually impaired have equitable, simple and intuitive use. When these are done, the two parks will not only draw more visitors (both local and international), but will also have their images raised as envisaged by the managers during the interviews.
- GTA as a regulator of the tourism industry should incorporate the requirements of the PwDs Act, 2006 (Act 715) and accessible tourism measures into its monitoring and evaluation criteria and mount strict enforcement to ensure the two national parks are made physically accessible to PwDs, considering that, lack of enforcement and

disregard of the law (PwDs Act, 2006, Act 715) were major reasons why management of the two parks had not provided some physical accessibility. When the law (PwDs Act, 2006, Act 715) is enforced, management of the two parks will be compelled to make their core products accessible to PwDs. When the two parks are made accessible, it will position them and the country at large as a disability friendly destination in the sub-region. This will mean that, the segment of the travelling market that are disable can switch to Ghana which will boost the country's tourism revenue generation potentials.

- Management can as well leverage on the established favourable attitude of park employees towards VwDs by organizing seminars and workshops to educate employees on disability issues periodically. This will make sure employees continue to have good interpersonal relationship with PwDs which will enhance their experience and satisfaction with the park's services.
- Based on the finding that, socio-demographic factors like religious beliefs shape employees' attitude positively towards VwDs, management should consider designing orientation or training programmes that draw codes/principles from various religious fraternity for new recruits to appeal to their conscience to help elicit empathy towards PwDs.

Suggestions for Further Studies

- Considering the limitations and findings of this study, future studies should look into the accessibility expectations of visitors with disabilities to national parks (demand perspective) and how they are being treated by park employees. A pure qualitative approach will be worthwhile for such studies to help unearth deeper and contextual issues around how park employees and non-disabled visitors interact with them.

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APPENDIX I

PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT CHECKLIST

This is a study on Accessibility of National Parks to Persons with Disabilities. This checklist is designed to audit physical accessibility at the park (facilities that aid Visitors with Disabilities participation, usage and enjoyment of the park). The audit is conducted by an MPhil candidate in Tourism Management at the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management of University of Cape Coast. This research is part of academic requirements for the completion the MPhil Programme. The data sought is strictly going to be used for academic purposes and no part of it will be used against the park.
Thank you!

PARK CHARACTERISTICS
***Park Name*……**
***Year of establishment*……..**
***Number of employees* ……**

Access Indicator	Availability		Remarks
	Yes	No	
Car parking space			
Availability of parking space?			
Availability of accessible paths from the parking bays to the exit and building entrance?			
Designated bay/s is on level ground with a firm surface and free of loose material?			
There is appropriate number of parking bays designated for people with disability? (3% of parking lots should be reserved for PwDs)?			
Signage			
Signage is located at the following: Car parks?			
Building entrances?			
Change of direction?			
Signage provides information about access for people with disability in the form of tactile/braille/audio?			
Signage has adequate illumination for day and night use?			

Signage is sufficient to allow a PwDs to move independently around the buildings and facilities?

Trails

Availability of accessible walkways/paths/trails (solid nonslip, jointless, even and stepless)?

Walkways/paths/trails are able to accommodate two wheelchairs

Availability of ramps at changing of level along walkways/paths/trails?

Availability of landing at the bottom of the ramps?

Availability of Hand rails both sides of stairs and ramps (4cm width and 3-5cm thickness to allow for good grip)?

Availability of ground indicators that point people who are visually impaired to rest areas, crossings, and information boards?

Bridges

Accessible bridges that link divided parts of the park?

Guiding systems

Availability of park access guide in tactile/braille/audio?

Availability of sign language interpreter for the deaf/dumb?

Information boards

Reading boards height accessible from a wheelchair (approximately 1.3m)?

Low information/front desk counter for contact by wheel chair users?

Resting places

Availability of resting places?

Availability of seats (both back rests and armrests with heights not exceeding 42cm)?

Availability of tables (at least 50cm free space under the table)?

View points

Availability of watch/look out towers or hide?

Towers/Hide have accessible staircase?

Towers/Hide have railings or wheel guides (a 1.5x1.5m turning area for wheelchairs)?

Towers/Hide have benches (seating height should not exceed 45cm)?

Toilets

Availability of accessible toilets (grab rails, folding seats)?

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Managers

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. It seeks to find out factors that drive physical accessibility practices at National Parks. I am an MPhil Student in Tourism Management at the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management of University of Cape Coast. This research is part of academic requirements for the completion of the MPhil Programme. You are assured that all responses provided would be strictly confidential and for academic purposes. Your anonymity and confidentiality are also guaranteed.

Name of Park ……

Personal Data

1. How old are you? ……
2. Sex (1) Male [ ] (2) Female [ ]
3. Level of education (1) Basic [ ] (2) SHS [ ] (3) Tertiary [ ] (4) No formal [ ]
4. Marital status (1) Single [ ] (2)Married [ ] (3) Divorced [ ] (4) Separated [ ] (5) Widow [ ]
5. Religion (1) Christian [ ] (2) Muslim [ ] (3) Traditionalist [ ]
6. Number of years worked at the park? ……

Guide

Drivers of Physical accessibility at National Parks

Model 1: Awareness and Enforcement of Disability law/policies such as PwDs Act, Act 715 (2006) and UNCRPD (2007)

- What is your understanding of accessible tourism?
- Are you aware of the PwDs Act, Act 715 (2006) and what is it about?
- What specific strategies/policies have you put in place as a result of the passing of the Act?

- How will you describe the role of enforcement of the Act by authorities in your efforts to making the park accessible to PwDs? (PwDs are able to participate and enjoy tourism services)
- What is management overall plan on accessibility of the park: the provision of physical facilities and training of park employees on how to receive and serve PwDs?

Model 2: Physical accessibility as an investment

- When we talk about the disability market, what comes to your mind?
- Do you see it as an investment opportunity in relation to national Parks? (why)
- Have you currently invested in your park to make it physically accessible? (why)
- Why have you invested or not invested in making your park physically accessible to PwDs?
- What will motivate you to invest in making the park accessible to PwDs?
- Do you think PwDs deserve the same opportunity as non-disabled people to enjoy this park? Why?

Model 3: Physical accessibility as an enhancer of visitor's satisfaction

- Do you think investing in the provision of physical facilities (ramps, Trails/Paths/Walkways, adapted fountains and benches, unimpeded lobbies etc) will enhance VwDs satisfaction?
- What are some advantages the park stands to benefit if it is made accessible PwDs?

Model 4: Challenges of providing physical access

- What challenges do management faced in their quest to making the park accessible to PwDs

APPENDIX III

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey on Accessibility of National Parks to Persons with Disabilities. It is a study conducted by an MPhil Student in Tourism Management at the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management of University of Cape Coast. This research is part of academic requirements for the completion the MPhil Programme. You are assured that all responses provided would be strictly confidential and for academic purposes. Your anonymity is also guaranteed.

Introduction

Name of Park ……

DISABILITY SERVICE TRAINING

1. Were you given some form of training on how to receive and handle Visitors with disability (VwDs)? Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]
2. Does this training or lack of the training affect how you receive Visitors with Disability? (a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]
3. If Yes to Q2, explain

   ……

   ……

4. 4.If No to Q2, explain

   ……

   ……

ATTITUDE OF EMPLOYEES TOWARDS VWDS

This section seeks to understand your attitude towards Visitors with Disabilities (VwDs). Where attitude is divided into three dimensions; **1) Cognitive –** talks about your beliefs and perceptions about PwDs; **2) Affective** – involves your feelings or emotional reaction towards PwDs and **3) Behaviour** – the visible actions shown towards PwDs.
From a scale of 1-5 where 1 = Strongly agreed, 2 = Agreed, 3 = Neutral, 4= Disagreed and 5 = Strongly disagreed, kindly indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement depending on your attitude towards a VwDs.

Attitude statement	score
Cognitive	
I believe park employees must not discriminate against PwDs	…….
I believe park employees must be nice to PwDs	…….
I believe park employees must provide special attention to PwDs	…….
I believe park employees must treat PwDs in same manner as nondisabled visitors	…….
I believe park employees should not look down on PwDs	…….
Affective	…….
I feel PwDs are special visitor	…….
I feel the need to readily assist PwDs	…….
I feel PwDs are just as normal as other non-disabled visitors	…….
I feel PwDs need our love	
Behavioural	……
I am nice to PwDs	……
I serve PwDs with pride	……
I treat PwDs as normal as nondisabled visitors	……
I pay special attention to PwDs request	…….
I readily assist PwDs with their requests	

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. How old are you? ……
2. Sex (1) Male [ ] (2) Female [ ]
3. Level of education (1) Basic [ ] (2) SHS [ ] (3) Tertiary [ ] (4) No formal [ ]
4. Marital status (1) Single [ ] (2)Married [ ] (3) Divorced [ ] (4) Separated [ ] (5) Widow [ ]
5. Religion (1) Christian [ ] (2) Muslim [ ] (3) Traditionalist [ ]
6. Position occupied ……
7. How long have you been working in this park? ……

Thank you

APPENDIX IV

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. It seeks to find out factors that influence your (park employee) attitude towards Visitors with Disabilities. I am an MPhil Student of Tourism Management at the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management of University of Cape Coast. This research is part of academic requirements for the completion of the MPhil Programme. You are assured that all responses provided would be strictly confidential and be used solely for academic purposes. Your anonymity is also guaranteed.

Factors that influence Park employees' attitude towards VwDs

Personal Data

1. Age ……
2. Sex (1) Male [ ] (2) Female [ ]
3. Level of education (1) Basic [ ] (2) SHS [ ] (3) Tertiary [ ] (4) No formal [ ]
4. Marital status (1) Single [ ] (2)Married [ ] (3) Divorced [ ] (4) Separated [ ] (5) Widow [ ]
5. Religion (1) Christian [ ] (2) Muslim [ ] (3) Traditionalist [ ]
6. Position occupied……
7. Number of years worked at the park? ……
8. Do you have a relative who is disabled? (1) Yes [ ] (2) No [ ]
9. Have you ever received or served a Visitor with Disability before? Yes
10. [ ] (2) No [ ]
11. If Yes to Q9, how did you handle that person?
12. I paid special attention to the person [ ] (2) I handled that person the same way I handle others
13. Kindly explain your answer to Q6 ……

……

Factor One: Reception of VwDs

- Do you perceive PwDs differently now compared to when you were a child and why?
- Do you think male employees have different perception of PwDs compared to their female counterparts? If so, which of them has more favourable attitude and behaviour and why?
- Do you think your educational background has influence on your attitude (perception, emotions and behaviour) towards PwDs and how?

Factor Two: Sociocultural factors

- What do people say about persons with disabilities in your cultural/ethnic background?
- Do these views influence your attitude (perception, emotions and behaviour) towards PwDs? If so, in what way has it influenced your relation with VwDs?
- Have there been instances where you changed your behaviour towards a Visitor with Disability because of your religious values/beliefs? (if Yes/No, why)

Factor three: Economic factors

- Do you treat PwDs in same way at work place and outside of workplace? (What kind of treatment and why)
- What is the nature of influence of the following on how you receive and serve VwDs?
  - job security
  - increased pay and
  - promotion

- Are there other issues you may want to share about factors that influence your attitude towards VwDs**?**