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ACADEMIC WEEKLY DIGEST

YOUR WEEKLY DIGEST OF KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS



CAN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND SUPPORTIVE TECHNOLOGIES ENABLE THE DISABLED?

Using qualitative in-depth interviews with visually impaired customers, this study done by Emily Ma and Tracy Xu identified visually impaired customers' technology assistance needs and the perceptions of existing technologies' performance in the contexts of hospitality and tourism. Actionable implications and future directions to technicians and managers to make hospitality and travel experiences more inclusive were also discussed.

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AI AND SUPPORTIVE TECHNOLOGY EXPERIENCES OF CUSTOMERS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS IN HOTEL, RESTAURANT, AND TRAVEL CONTEXTS

Prof Emily Ma & Dr Tracy Xu

According to the WHO (2021), vision impairment affects at least 2.2 billion people globally. Visual impairment significantly limits one's ability to participate in major life, leisure, and work activities. Although accommodations, including using AI and supportive technologies, are available in most countries to support the needs of people with disabilities, gaps still exist between vision-impaired people's needs and the current accommodations provided.

Leaders of the tourism and hospitality industry also call for stakeholders to implement accessibility initiatives and agendas to ensure everyone feels welcomed.

Using qualitative in-depth interviews with 19 visually impaired customers from China, this study identified visually impaired customers' technology assistance needs and the perceptions of existing technologies' performance in the contexts of hospitality and tourism. Actionable implications and future directions to technicians and managers to make hospitality and travel experiences more inclusive were also discussed. This study is a timely reflection that addresses a critical situation by offering original ideas and calling for more discussion of under-represented groups with visual disabilities.

For people without disabilities, technology makes things easier. For people with disabilities, technology makes things possible.

Liu, A., Ma, E., Wang, Y.-C., Xu, S.(T). and Grillo, T. (2023). AI and supportive technology experiences of customers with visual impairments in hotel, restaurant, and travel contexts. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*
Link: bit.ly/3nIcC3J