Perceived Accessibility at Urban Tourism Sites in Kuala Lumpur: Evidence on Physical, Informational and Social Conditions

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ABSTRACT

Accessible tourism depends on connections among pre-visit information, navigable routes and respectful assistance. This article assesses perceived physical, informational and social access conditions at selected urban tourism settings in Kuala Lumpur. A cross-sectional intercept survey yielded 386 responses from adult domestic visitors: 290 parents travelling with children, 55 older visitors and 40 pregnant visitors, with one respondent selecting all three categories. Respondents rated 17 accessibility statements on five-point agreement scales. Main-survey Cronbach's alpha was .784 for six physical items, .796 for five informational items and .849 for six social items. Item means ranged from 3.75 to 4.15. Resting benches along walkways received the lowest rating (M = 3.75, SD = .784), whereas readable signage at attractions and transit stations received the highest (M = 4.15, SD = .734). The relative ordering identifies attributes for closer assessment, without establishing statistically significant differences among items. The findings motivate an access-continuity approach that follows the visitor from planning through movement and on-site participation. They support coordinated reviews of routes, seating, current access information and staff preparedness. The survey reports perceived access conditions; it did not measure overall visitor satisfaction or represent the experiences of disabled travellers.

Keywords: accessible tourism, urban tourism, perceived accessibility, mobility-related needs, Kuala Lumpur

INTRODUCTION

A journey through a city is rarely confined to one attraction. Visitors seek information, reach a destination, move between entrances and facilities, interact with staff and return home. An accessible entrance offers little help if the approach route is unusable or the lift cannot be found. Accessible tourism therefore concerns continuity across places, information channels and service encounters (Cassia et al., 2020; Domínguez Vila & Darcy, 2025). The whole-of-life perspective recognises that access needs change across circumstances and stages of life (Darcy & Dickson, 2009), while later work places equivalent destination experiences at the centre of accessible tourism (Darcy et al., 2020). This study applies that perspective to urban sites in Kuala Lumpur.

The distinction between an accessible feature and an accessible visit matters in a large city. Transport nodes, landscaped parks and commercial districts require different forms of movement and wayfinding. A level change on a station approach, a poorly indicated lift or a long stretch without seating can disrupt an otherwise manageable itinerary. Research on urban destinations identifies physical and attitudinal provision as related priorities (Borges et al., 2025), while studies of transport and cultural attractions show why connections among services and routes require attention (Kruczek et al., 2024; Rodríguez Guillén et al., 2025). Destination-wide assessment is especially relevant where responsibilities for transport, public space and individual attractions are divided among organisations (Rubio-Escuderos et al., 2025). Recent research brings the ordinary urban route into sharper focus. Wheelchair users in Macao described how physical and social street features shaped leisure participation (Wan et al., 2025), while a Citywalk study examined the conditions for wheelchair users' engagement in urban exploration (Qiao et al., 2026). The populations differ from the present sample, but both studies show why the connections between attractions deserve attention alongside facilities at the destination.

Urban tourism also makes access a problem of timing and coordination. A visitor may discover an obstacle before departing, while buying a ticket, after leaving a train, or only on entering an attraction. The opportunity

to change plans declines as the journey progresses. This makes information about a working lift, a suitable entrance or an alternative route valuable before a visitor reaches the point of difficulty. Digital coordination across destination organisations has been proposed as a means of sharing such information (Cassia et al., 2020) , but the information must still accurately describe what visitors will encounter (Domínguez Vila & Darcy, 2025). Framing the visit as a sequence of linked decisions makes it possible to interpret apparently small service details, such as a seat or a clear sign, as part of a wider condition for participation.

Kuala Lumpur offers a useful setting because visitors may move through pedestrian networks, rail stations, shopping environments and recreational space during the same outing. The Kuala Lumpur City Centre area, Bukit Bintang, Taman Tasik Titiwangsa and the Perdana Botanical Gardens were identified as survey settings. Earlier local research with disabled travellers raised concerns about public facilities, transport and staff preparedness (Hua, 2019); a Malaysia-wide study found that senior tourists placed importance on safety and barrier-free public transport (Liew et al., 2021). More recent interviews with mobility-impaired travellers in Malaysia underscore the practical significance of transport, independence and provider support (Saad et al., 2025). These different populations and methods provide context for assessing the present visitors' ratings of specified urban attributes.

Respondents were classified as pregnant visitors, older visitors or parents travelling with children. These categories describe different circumstances and should not be equated with disability. They can nevertheless make rest, space, step-free movement and predictable routes relevant to a visit. Research with families at a heritage site identifies child-friendly amenities as a distinct destination priority (Song et al., 2020); work with disabled tourists shows that perceived barriers vary even within a single disability category (Tao et al., 2025). An inclusive account should recognise overlapping requirements while respecting differences in agency and the consequences of inaccessible provision (Kim & Adu-Ampong, 2025; Leiras et al., 2025). The present analysis concerns visitors in the three recorded circumstances.

The research asks how these visitors evaluated physical, informational and social access conditions, which specific attributes received comparatively lower ratings, and how the recorded provision can inform assessment across the stages of an urban visit. The three original item groups organise this descriptive analysis. The study does not test whether these groups predict satisfaction. It compares 17 specified attributes rather than collapsing access into one judgement. It adds item-level survey evidence from Kuala Lumpur to research that has also examined accessible destination perceptions through online reviews (Leiras & Eusébio, 2024). Its contribution is to use the transitions between planning, movement and on-site support to turn separate item ratings into practical questions for destination management, while keeping the circumstances of these respondents distinct from disability-specific experience.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Accessible tourism as a connected experience

Accessible tourism encompasses the conditions under which people with different access requirements can plan, reach and enjoy tourism experiences with dignity. The whole-of-life perspective recognises that needs change over time and across situations (Darcy & Dickson, 2009). A parent using a stroller and a wheelchair user may both benefit from a step-free route, although its absence may have very different consequences for each. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities identifies accessibility and participation in cultural and recreational life as rights (United Nations, 2006). Recent scholarship calls for attention to both the opportunity to travel and people's actual ability to turn that opportunity into a chosen experience (Kim & Adu-Ampong, 2025). Universal provision and responses tailored to specific access needs can therefore work together.

The social model of disability focuses attention on barriers in environments and practices rather than treating exclusion as an inevitable consequence of an individual's body. A review of accessible-tourism scholarship shows how changing understandings of disability have broadened the field beyond isolated physical facilities (Rubio-Escuderos et al., 2021). In Indonesia, travellers with disabilities described unaccommodated needs and difficulties travelling independently (Reindrawati et al., 2022); a study of tourism in Seoul documents discrimination in service encounters (Lim, 2020). Event-led accessibility developments in Tokyo likewise

show that physical changes and shifts in attitudes require attention together (Duignan et al., 2023). These findings motivate a multidimensional appraisal of urban provision.

The accessibility chain provides a second interpretive lens: travellers obtain information, choose a feasible journey, arrive, navigate and use facilities, requesting assistance when needed. Failure at one transition may constrain participation at later stages (Domínguez Vila & Darcy, 2025). In a destination, those stages span transport, public space and private services, whose providers may share no common management structure (Cassia et al., 2020; Rubio-Escuderos et al., 2025). The availability of a facility is therefore inseparable from a usable approach, reliable knowledge that the facility exists and a workable alternative when circumstances change.

The chain also helps explain why awareness of one accessible asset cannot stand in for an appraisal of a destination. A traveller may know that a museum has an elevator but still be uncertain about the pavement from the station or the location of the entrance. Conversely, a clear route can fail to support participation when the required facility is closed and no update reaches the visitor. Research on stakeholder barriers in Spain identifies coordination problems among the actors responsible for accessible tourism (Rubio-Escuderos et al., 2025). An urban destination must therefore connect information flows with physical maintenance and service protocols. This is a management argument about interdependence, rather than an assertion that every component is equally important to every traveller. The priorities of visitors with physical disabilities differ within that group, as the barrier-based segmentation reported by Tao et al. (2025) demonstrates.

Moreover, accessibility continuity is more precise than a list of accessible assets: information must support a feasible choice, the route must remain usable when the visitor arrives, and staff must be able to explain alternatives when a link changes. A destination-choice study found that accessible environments, reliable information and staff preparedness jointly mattered to visitors, with staff training especially salient (López-del-Pino et al., 2026). This evidence motivates the sequence in Figure 1 without implying that the present item means measure a causal chain.

Physical conditions and independent movement

Physical accessibility begins with a continuous, navigable route. Footpath surfaces, crossings, gradients, alternatives to stairs, parking, public transport interfaces, toilets and resting places address different obstacles. A lift at an attraction is of limited use if the route from the transport stop cannot be negotiated. A bench may determine whether a visitor who needs to pace walking can complete an itinerary. Research on transport and disability in Europe emphasises the role of transport connections in destination access (Rodríguez Guillén et al., 2025), while an assessment of Krakow museums shows the value of examining the usability of individual attractions in their urban setting (Kruczek et al., 2024). These observations support assessment of routes across organisational boundaries.

Empirical studies also support attention to visitors' own appraisals. Fan et al. (2024) associated pedestrian pathways and public space with access satisfaction in older Chinese residential communities. Borges et al. (2025) explored physical and attitudinal accessibility awareness among visitors and residents of two connected Portuguese urban destinations. Their samples differ from the Kuala Lumpur survey, yet together they show why perceived usability and on-site facilities deserve attention. Perception measures can identify priorities for a subsequent route audit, whose observations answer a different question about the condition of specific assets.

More infrastructure does not automatically make provision usable: a ramp may be too steep, a lift unavailable or designated parking disconnected from the route into an attraction. Visitors judge those conditions in relation to their own abilities and the itinerary they intend to complete (Kim & Adu-Ampong, 2025; Tao et al., 2025). The questionnaire addresses benches, stair alternatives, walking-path safety, nearby parking and public transport suitable for older visitors and families. It also includes a signboard statement in its original physical group, reflecting the close operational relationship between a physical route and the information that guides its use.

Resting provision deserves separate attention because travel is experienced over distance and time. A site can provide accessible entrances and still ask visitors to stand through a queue, walk between widely spaced

facilities or finish a long park circuit without a place to sit. A bench may be most useful before a slope, at a transfer point or beside a route with little shade; merely counting benches would miss that spatial relationship. Family travel introduces further considerations about pace, comfort and the ability to manage children in public space (Song et al., 2020). For older tourists in Malaysia, the importance attached to safety, leisure facilities and barrier-free transport similarly points to an itinerary rather than a single building feature (Liew et al., 2021). These studies give the relatively lower bench rating in Kuala Lumpur a plausible operational interpretation while leaving its exact site-level cause for a local audit.

Information before and during the visit

Access information allows visitors to assess feasibility before committing time and money. Information about entrances, lifts, toilets, gradients or closures needs to be specific, current and easy to find. Pre-visit websites and maps support planning; signs and operational updates guide decisions on arrival. An audit of 198 national tourism organisation websites found shortcomings in the visibility, detail, correctness and completeness of accessibility information (Domínguez Vila & Darcy, 2025). A general label such as “accessible” offers less practical guidance than a description of the step-free entrance and its connection to transport.

An accessible information system serves people with different digital preferences and capabilities. A review of tourism websites documents uneven technical accessibility across types of tourism provider (Teixeira et al., 2021). A subsequent information-system roadmap emphasises understanding user requirements and maintaining relevant content (Teixeira et al., 2024). Analyses of official destination websites distinguish two related requirements: the digital interface itself must be usable and its content must convey meaningful accessibility conditions (Domínguez Vila et al., 2025; Domínguez Vila & Darcy, 2025). A technically navigable site with incomplete information still leaves visitors uncertain about a feasible route.

Information quality has several practical dimensions. Visibility determines whether visitors can find an access page; specificity determines whether they can judge the suitability of a particular entrance or path; currency determines whether that guidance still applies; and consistency determines whether a website, map, sign and staff explanation describe the same option. Domínguez Vila and Darcy (2025) examined these types of content problem across national tourism websites, while Domínguez Vila et al. (2025) assessed technical accessibility and accessibility-related content among leading city destination websites. Their findings make the provision of information a continuing operational responsibility. For a visitor who needs to know whether a step-free route is available, a generic statement of commitment to inclusion cannot replace an accurate description of the route's location, surface, distance and operating status. The informational items in the present survey address several points in this sequence, from finding details online to reading signs on arrival.

The distinction is relevant to urban itineraries. Kuala Lumpur visitors may use a digital map to connect attractions, parks and stations, then rely on a sign at a junction to find the correct lift. Online and on-site guidance should describe the same route. The survey addresses the ease of finding access information online, the currency of tourism websites, digital route guidance, signage and information-desk assistance. These channels link information with the physical and interpersonal conditions encountered on site (Cassia et al., 2020). Visitor-generated information provides another perspective on perceived accessibility. An analysis of Google Maps reviews identified accessible-destination image attributes from visitors' own accounts (Leiras & Eusébio, 2024). Such material complements a questionnaire that asks all respondents about the same specified facilities and channels, while neither approach alone substitutes for checking whether published access details match conditions on the ground.

Social conditions and respectful assistance

The social dimension concerns how people respond when an access need arises. Staff can explain routes, allow time, ask whether assistance is wanted and respect the visitor's own knowledge. Impatience, intrusive assumptions or unfamiliarity with facilities can instead add barriers. A relational account of accessibility emphasises the role of interactions and the agency of disabled travellers in negotiating tourism experiences (Tomej & Duedahl, 2023). Respectful assistance helps when an entrance changes, but repeated reliance on staff to overcome avoidable physical barriers does not provide equivalent independent access.

Travellers with disabilities in Indonesia have described both material and interpersonal barriers (Reindrawati et al., 2022). A review of stakeholder studies connects inclusive development to better information, collaboration and awareness (De la Fuente-Robles et al., 2020); more recent provider research in Indonesia identifies service knowledge and commitment alongside infrastructure (Reindrawati et al., 2025). Studies in Seoul and Tokyo likewise document the significance of respectful treatment and the gap between physical and attitudinal change (Duignan et al., 2023; Lim, 2020). Jamin et al. (2024) highlight how disability awareness training can strengthen service providers' preparedness, while supportive interactions between employees and tourists with disabilities can help reduce travel concerns. These findings justify assessing friendliness, willingness to assist, patience and awareness besides facilities and signs.

Social provision is partly about the accuracy and manner of an encounter. When a route changes, a prepared employee can identify a workable alternative and allow the visitor to decide whether to use it. An unprepared employee may be courteous but unable to answer the question; an intrusive offer can reduce a visitor's sense of control. The relational perspective developed by Tomej and Duedahl (2023) draws attention to cooperation without overlooking the traveller's agency. Kim and Adu-Ampong (2025) likewise argue for understanding what enables people to convert an opportunity to travel into an experience they value. This suggests a practical distinction between general friendliness and the combination of accurate knowledge, respectful communication and real options. The social survey statements provide a useful view of perceived interpersonal conditions within that larger service task. Recent studies help specify what useful support entails. Hua et al. (2025) examine needed support as part of travel motivation among people with mobility impairments, and Devis-Rozental et al. (2026) describe how uncertainty, accurate information and staff attitudes shape dignified experiences for disabled travellers. These studies support staff preparedness and visitor choice as connected service priorities, without treating the present respondents as the same population.

The social group includes feeling welcomed at attractions. Welcome captures an important part of a service encounter, while satisfaction with an entire trip also depends on movement, information and opportunities to participate. Keeping these judgements distinct clarifies the role assigned to social accessibility in the conceptual framework (Kim & Adu-Ampong, 2025; Tomej & Duedahl, 2023).

Conceptual relationships and scope of the evidence

Figure 1 depicts accessibility continuity across three stages of a possible urban visit: planning before departure, arrival and movement, and participation on site. At each transition, a visitor needs the description of a route to match its physical condition and the assistance available when conditions change. The diagram organises management questions; it is not a statistical model estimated with the present survey.



Figure 1: Conceptual continuity of physical, informational and social access conditions across an urban visitor journey.

The stages overlap in practice. A sign is a physical object that provides information; an information-desk employee provides route guidance through a social encounter. Continuity therefore means that a visitor can move from one decision to the next without finding that an advertised facility is unreachable, a route is no longer usable or an alternative cannot be explained. The survey items capture perceptions of examples within these functions, including pre-visit details, paths and seating, signs and staff responses.

Recent destination-choice research found that accessible environments, reliable information and staff preparedness all mattered to visitors in Gran Canaria, reinforcing the practical case for a connected assessment (López-del-Pino et al., 2026). The present data answer a narrower question: how respondents rated particular conditions at selected Kuala Lumpur settings. Future studies can follow complete itineraries and independently measure participation or satisfaction to test how continuity affects those outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

Design and study setting

This article reports a cross-sectional descriptive survey of visitors at selected urban tourism settings in Kuala Lumpur. The project identifies the Kuala Lumpur City Centre area, Bukit Bintang, Taman Tasik Titiwangsa and the Perdana Botanical Gardens as locations. The former two bring together commercial space, landmarks, pedestrian links and transport; the latter two are recreational landscapes in which paths, resting places and on-site orientation are particularly salient. The analysis describes visitor perceptions of provision.

Prospective participants were approached on site after experiencing a setting and offered a paper questionnaire or a digital survey link. Recruitment followed a convenience-based intercept approach. The study reports responses in aggregate across the selected locations.

Participants and scope

The main survey included 386 adult domestic visitors reporting access-relevant circumstances. The SPSS profile records 290 parents travelling with children (75.1%), 55 older visitors (14.2%) and 40 pregnant visitors (10.4%); one additional respondent selected all three options (0.3%). Thus, 385 responses have a single recorded category. These circumstances may make mobility, rest, space or wayfinding salient, but they do not constitute disability diagnoses or imply identical access requirements. Fieldwork obtained 386 completed questionnaires against a planning target of approximately 384. Recruitment was a convenience-based on-site intercept, with paper and digital response options. The sample is described by its recorded categories and the findings concern participating visitors at the selected settings.

Questionnaire and measurement

A structured instrument recorded characteristics of respondents and their agreement with statements about tourism accessibility. Demographic items covered gender, age, access-relevant circumstance, travel companions, frequency of Kuala Lumpur visits, reason for visiting and household income. The accessible-environment section used a five-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Six statements were originally coded as physical infrastructure, five as informational infrastructure and six as social infrastructure. The physical statements concerned benches, alternatives to stairs, path condition, signboards, parking and public transport. The informational statements concerned online facility details, tourism websites, mobile route guidance, readable signage and the assistance provided at information desks. The social statements concerned staff friendliness, willingness to assist, local attitudes, welcome, patience and awareness.

The item content addresses provision at several stages of a visit. Questions about online details and digital maps concern preparation and route choice; statements about transport, paths, seating and signs concern travel and navigation; and the staff statements concern encounters during the visit. Retaining each individual response statement in Table 2 makes those distinct functions visible. It also allows the interpretation to focus on tangible decisions within the reach of site operators, transport providers and destination organisations rather than relying exclusively on a single domain label.

Statements were informed by accessible-tourism research on mobility, information and support (Darcy et al., 2020; Domínguez Vila & Darcy, 2025; Reindrawati et al., 2022). Their wording was adapted to the urban setting and reviewed for clarity and relevance by academic reviewers. The original physical, informational and social coding is retained for reporting. Because some statements bridge functions, such as signboards conveying information and information-desk staff providing assistance, these groups are treated as operational categories rather than empirically established, distinct latent constructs.

A pilot involving 30 respondents preceded the main study. The supplied main-survey SPSS output permits internal-consistency assessment for the 386-person sample: Cronbach's alpha was .784 for the six physical items, .796 for the five informational items and .849 for the six social items. Table 3 reports these coefficients for the original item groups.

Analytic strategy and reporting boundaries

Counts and percentages describe the respondent profile; item means and standard deviations summarise ratings on the five-point scale. Cronbach's alpha from the main survey describes internal consistency for each original item group. The available output provides aggregate statistics for the 17 items and demographic frequencies, but no respondent-level cross-tabulation of item ratings by visitor category or complete 17-item covariance matrix. Accordingly, the analysis does not report subgroup tests or factor-based evidence of domain distinctiveness.

Relative item means are used to identify attributes for further local investigation. Their ordering is descriptive: no paired comparison was available to establish a statistically significant difference between two items. Overall trip satisfaction was not measured, so the analysis neither estimates predictors of satisfaction nor equates an item about feeling welcomed with a whole-trip outcome.

Ethics and data availability

This analysis uses aggregated, de-identified results. The available project record does not contain an institutional ethics approval reference or consent documentation. Respondent-level data were not available for this analysis.

RESULTS

Respondent characteristics

Table 1 presents the respondent profile using a denominator of 386. Women accounted for 240 responses (62.2%) and men for 146 (37.8%). The largest age category was 25–34 years (159; 41.2%), followed by 35–44 years (87; 22.5%). Parents travelling with children formed most of the sample (290; 75.1%); 55 respondents (14.2%) selected older visitor and 40 (10.4%) selected pregnant visitor. One respondent (0.3%) selected all three circumstances, so the categories are not wholly exclusive in the recorded data.

Table 1: Characteristics of respondents (N = 386).

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	146	37.8
	Female	240	62.2
Age	18–24	73	18.9
	25–34	159	41.2
	35–44	87	22.5
	45–54	27	7
	55 and over	40	10.4
Access-relevant circumstance	Pregnant visitor	40	10.4
	Parent with children	290	75.1
	Senior visitor	55	14.2
	Selected all three categories	1	0.3
Travel companions	Alone	39	10.1
	With family	280	72.5
	With friends	41	10.6
	Group or tour	25	6.5

	Combined companion selection	1	0.3
Kuala Lumpur visits	First time	19	4.9
	1–2 per year	102	26.4
	3–5 per year	138	35.8
	More than 5 per year	127	32.9
Purpose of visit	Leisure or holiday	207	53.6
	Health-related	34	8.8
	Business	25	6.5
	Visiting family or friends	109	28.2
	Other	6	1.6
	Multiple purposes selected	5	1.3
Monthly household income	Below RM2,500	72	18.7
	RM2,501–RM5,000	178	46.1
	RM5,001–RM7,500	46	11.9
	RM7,501–RM10,000	12	3.1
	Above RM10,000	6	1.6
	Prefer not to say	72	18.7

Note. Percentages use 386 as the denominator and may differ from 100.0% because of rounding. The combined-response rows retain selections that cannot be assigned to one listed category.

Family travel was common: 280 respondents (72.5%) selected travelling with family. Of all respondents, 138 (35.8%) visited Kuala Lumpur three to five times a year and 127 (32.9%) more than five times. Leisure or holiday was the most frequent single recorded purpose (207; 53.6%), followed by visiting family or friends (109; 28.2%). Monthly household income was most frequently RM2,501–RM5,000 (178; 46.1%); 72 respondents selected "Prefer not to say." The predominance of parents and repeat visitors is relevant when interpreting the pooled accessibility ratings.

Ratings of physical accessibility

Table 2 lists the 17 statements with means and standard deviations under their original groupings. All six physical-group means exceeded the scale midpoint of 3.00, ranging from 3.75 to 4.10. Clarity and ease of understanding of tourist-area signboards received the highest rating in this coded group (M = 4.10, SD = .728). Public transport suitability for older visitors and families scored M = 4.03 (SD = .770), and safe, well-maintained walking paths M = 3.97 (SD = .769). Alternatives to stairs, such as ramps and elevators, received M = 3.92 (SD = .726), and parking close to attractions M = 3.91 (SD = .813).

Table 2: Respondent ratings of original accessibility items (N = 386 for each item).

Group	Code	Statement, shortened for display	M	SD
Physical	PI1	Resting benches along tourist-area walkways	3.75	0.784
	PI2	Alternatives to stairs, such as ramps and elevators	3.92	0.726
	PI3	Safe and well-maintained walking paths	3.97	0.769
	PI4	Clear and understandable signboards	4.1	0.728
	PI5	Parking near tourist attractions	3.91	0.813
	PI6	Public transport suitable for older visitors and families	4.03	0.77
Informational	II1	Online pre-visit information about lifts, ramps and toilets	3.91	0.746
	II2	Current website information on attraction accessibility	3.99	0.724
	II3	Mobile maps and applications for barrier-free routes	4.03	0.794
	II4	Readable signage at attractions and transit stations	4.15	0.734

	II5	Helpful, specific assistance at information desks	4.08	0.691
Social	SI1	Friendliness of tourism staff	3.98	0.719
	SI2	Staff willingness to assist	4.05	0.702
	SI3	Positive local attitudes	4.05	0.716
	SI4	Feeling welcomed at attractions	4.05	0.683
	SI5	Service providers' understanding and patience	4.03	0.709
	SI6	Tourism workers' awareness of accessibility needs	4.1	0.686

Note. Response scale: 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Statements are abbreviated for display and retain their original questionnaire groupings.

Resting benches along walkways received the lowest physical rating, M = 3.75 (SD = .784), and the lowest mean among all 17 statements. Rest opportunities may be relevant to pregnant visitors, older visitors, adults accompanying children and people who need to pace walking. Their placement, shade and spacing along actual routes provide concrete questions for a site assessment. Thus, generally positive evaluations coexist with a clear relative priority for examining rest provision.

The other physical ratings help place that priority in context. Responses were most favourable to clarity of signboards in the original physical group and to the suitability of public transport for older people and families. Walking-path safety, step-free alternatives and nearby parking occupied a narrower middle range. These statements address different stages of a journey, so the ordering does not form a technical ranking of infrastructure. It does suggest a practical sequence for checking the visitor route: establish how people arrive, trace the path they use, identify the alternative to stairs and locate points at which a visitor can pause. Such a sequence reflects the links among transport, public space and attraction access discussed by Rodríguez Guillén et al. (2025) and Kruczek et al. (2024).

Ratings of informational accessibility

The five informational-group statements ranged from M = 3.91 to M = 4.15. The highest rating in the entire questionnaire was for signage at attractions and transit stations using large fonts, high contrast and understandable symbols (M = 4.15, SD = .734). Information-desk staff providing helpful, specific assistance received M = 4.08 (SD = .691); this reflects a service encounter as well as an information channel. Mobile applications or digital maps for navigating barrier-free routes were rated M = 4.03 (SD = .794). Tourism websites giving current accessibility details scored M = 3.99 (SD = .724).

Ease of finding online information about lifts, ramps and toilets before travel was the lowest informational statement (M = 3.91, SD = .746). This relative position points to a planning task: visitors need to discover relevant facilities early enough to choose a suitable route and site. The item concerns the experience of finding information, which complements the ratings for on-site signage and digital route guidance. Published audits reinforce the value of checking both the content and usability of tourism information (Domínguez Vila & Darcy, 2025; Teixeira et al., 2021).

The two signage statements occupy different original item groups but both received favourable ratings: clarity of tourist-area signboards was M = 4.10, and the legibility of signs at attractions and transit stations was M = 4.15. These responses converge on the importance of readable guidance during a visit. They sit beside a slightly lower mean for finding facility details before travel, showing why provision should be assessed across channels and stages. For instance, a legible station sign helps a visitor already there, while an accurate online description helps that visitor decide which station exit to use. This distinction is consistent with research separating website interface accessibility from the adequacy of access-related content (Domínguez Vila et al., 2025; Domínguez Vila & Darcy, 2025).

Ratings of social accessibility

The six social-group means were tightly clustered between 3.98 and 4.10. Perceived awareness among tourism workers of accessibility needs received M = 4.10 (SD = .686), the highest social-group mean. Willingness of

staff to assist, local people's attitudes and feeling welcomed at attractions each received M = 4.05, with standard deviations of .702, .716 and .683, respectively. Understanding and patience among service providers received M = 4.03 (SD = .709). The lowest social-group statement was staff friendliness toward visitors with physical limitations, at M = 3.98 (SD = .719).

The narrow spread of the social means suggests broadly similar evaluations of the six recorded attributes. Frontline awareness and willingness to assist were rated positively, supporting attention to service knowledge as part of a coordinated visitor experience. Social interactions remain consequential even where paths and signs function well, as research on disabled travellers' experiences and providers' service practices indicates (Lim, 2020; Reindrawati et al., 2025).

Internal consistency in the main survey

Table 3 reports internal consistency in the main survey. Cronbach's alpha was .784 across the six items originally coded physical, .796 across the five informational items and .849 across the six social items (N = 386 for each analysis). These coefficients provide evidence that responses within each original group are related; they do not test whether the groups form three distinct factors.

Table 3: Main-survey internal consistency of the original accessibility item groups.

Original item group	Items	Valid N	Main-survey α
Physical	6	386	.784
Informational	5	386	.796
Social	6	386	.849

Note. Cronbach's alpha is calculated for each original questionnaire group using the 386 valid main-survey cases.

The main-sample values supplement the item-level ratings in Table 2. The three labels remain helpful for assigning practical responsibility for routes, information and interpersonal service, but internal consistency alone does not validate a three-factor measurement model. Signboards and information-desk assistance also illustrate why a rigid separation would conceal interactions in the visitor journey.

DISCUSSION

What the pattern shows about urban access

The survey depicts generally favourable perceptions across the selected Kuala Lumpur settings: every item mean was at least 3.75 on a five-point scale. The lowest observed mean concerned resting benches, while finding pre-visit information about basic facilities was lowest within the informational group. These are descriptive differences, useful for choosing what to inspect next rather than for claiming statistically established gaps. Together, the items draw attention to whether a visitor can plan a route, continue moving with manageable effort and obtain guidance when needed (López-del-Pino et al., 2026).

The physical results illustrate why continuity matters. A visitor may reach a park along a safe path yet need a seat before completing the circuit. A field audit could map distances between benches, shade and step-free access to seating. Research with wheelchair users in Macao connects street design and social features with leisure participation, while a recent Citywalk study centres inclusion in urban movement (Wan et al., 2025; Qiao et al., 2026). Those disability-specific findings cannot be attributed to this sample, but they reinforce the value of examining the ordinary streets and transitions that connect attractions. Engaging visitors with different requirements would translate the bench rating into context-specific design decisions.

The information pattern reveals a useful management contrast. On-site signs received the highest mean across the instrument, whereas ease of finding facility information online before travel received a lower rating. Visitors need to know which entrance is step-free, whether lifts operate, where toilets and seats are located, and how public transport connects to the site. Current, date-stamped descriptions would make existing

infrastructure easier to use. Teixeira et al. (2024) emphasise designing information around user needs; Domínguez Vila and Darcy (2025) document gaps in accessibility-specific content on official tourism websites. A local review of both online content and on-site wayfinding would establish whether the same access route is described consistently in each channel.

Social interactions round out this interpretation. Respondents generally agreed with statements about staff awareness, helpfulness and welcome. In research with travellers with mobility impairments, needed support is related to travel motivation (Hua et al., 2025); qualitative work further links accurate information and staff attitudes with dignified tourism experiences (Devis-Rozental et al., 2026). For an urban route, prepared staff can disclose an unavailable lift, explain alternatives and let the visitor choose the assistance wanted. Information desks are therefore a practical connection between on-site guidance and respectful service.

The Kuala Lumpur results sit alongside studies that have examined different populations and destinations. Fan et al. (2024) estimated links with satisfaction in older residential communities; Liew et al. (2021) explored senior-friendly tourism attributes in Malaysia; Borges et al. (2025) investigated physical and attitudinal access in Portuguese urban destinations. The present study adds an item-level profile from Kuala Lumpur across recreational and commercial tourism settings. Its substantial parent-with-children group also widens the discussion of shared amenities while leaving disability-specific experience to research centred on disabled travellers (Saad et al., 2025; Tao et al., 2025).

There is a useful distinction between a positive average and an absence of barriers. The respondents' means show that the recorded attributes were, on average, viewed favourably by this sample. A destination manager still needs to know where a route breaks for a visitor with a particular requirement, especially because encounters may differ across settings and times. The literature's growing attention to heterogeneity supplies a reason to combine survey patterns with targeted observation. Leiras et al. (2025) found that destination-image attributes vary in priority across access-related segments, and Tao et al. (2025) identified different perceived barrier profiles among travellers with physical disabilities. The Kuala Lumpur item results can thus guide which locations, access functions and groups should be involved in a more detailed assessment.

Accessibility dimensions as operational categories

The three original item groups are useful operational categories, although a visitor encounters them together. A signboard is a physical object conveying information; an information-desk employee provides guidance through a social interaction. Main-survey alpha values of .784, .796 and .849 indicate within-group consistency under the questionnaire coding. They do not establish a validated, distinct three-factor structure. Preserving the item detail gives managers a clearer route to action than treating every statement as interchangeable.

The pattern also suggests how to interpret apparent strengths without taking them for granted. Favourable scores for readable signs and staff willingness may reflect real strengths of surveyed settings and provide practices that managers can sustain. Yet a sign at the attraction and guidance offered by an employee become most useful when the visitor can reach them by a workable route. In that sense, the three dimensions are complementary conditions of access, not interchangeable substitutes. This point follows from the accessibility-chain account of destination information (Domínguez Vila & Darcy, 2025) and the relational account of assistance (Tomej & Duedahl, 2023). It has a practical consequence: when an access problem is reported, managers should trace the path from the visitor's starting point and identify whether the difficulty concerned the route, the description of it, the service response or their interaction. The domain structure supports assigning responsibility, while the itinerary reveals how those responsibilities meet.

This distinction has implications for destination measurement. An overall index may conceal the different responsibilities behind a broken path, an inaccurate website, an inaccessible digital interface or an uninformed employee. Isolated item reports may, in turn, miss the continuity of a journey. The three-domain framework combines detail with context: site operators, transport providers and destination organisations can coordinate at the points where a visitor changes mode, enters a site or requests information (Cassia et al., 2020; Rubio-Escuderos et al., 2025).

Different visitors may evaluate the same route differently. A repeat visitor may know an alternative entrance

that a first-time visitor cannot locate. Parents travelling with children may focus on stroller space and family amenities, while mobility-aid users may need transfer space, manageable gradients and uninterrupted step-free access. Research on accessible destination image and the segmentation of disabled travellers shows variation in the priority attached to particular attributes (Leiras et al., 2025; Tao et al., 2025). Managers can therefore pair broad visitor feedback with assessments involving people whose specific access requirements are affected by each route or service.

Implications for destinations and service providers

Three coordinated activities follow from the item pattern. First, site managers and local authorities can examine routes linking arrival points, attractions and essential facilities. An audit should follow realistic itineraries, checking paths, step-free alternatives, seating, crossings, transport connections and maintenance. The passage from a station to a pedestrian bridge and then into a landmark or park crosses ownership boundaries and deserves particular attention. The bench rating provides a starting point for inspection, while urban studies of wheelchair users underscore the role of continuous street access in participation (Wan et al., 2025; Qiao et al., 2026).

Second, destination organisations can publish specific access information through channels visitors use. Each attraction's record could describe entrances, step-free transport connections, lift status, toilets, seating, path surfaces, distances and points where assistance is available. It should be maintained as conditions change and let visitors judge suitability for their own needs. Maps and signs should use consistent labels for the same route. The survey's comparatively lower rating for finding facility information online makes this a sensible review priority (Domínguez Vila & Darcy, 2025; Teixeira et al., 2024).

The quality of such a record depends on maintenance as much as its initial design. A local organisation could assign each entry to a named operational team, record when its facilities were last checked and update changes that affect route choice. An unavailable lift, moved entrance or temporary obstruction should be reflected in public guidance and in the information available to staff. Visitors should also be able to identify which details apply to their own circumstances, rather than receiving an undifferentiated accessibility label. Research on national and leading city destination websites identifies gaps in accessibility-specific content (Domínguez Vila & Darcy, 2025; Domínguez Vila et al., 2025), while Teixeira et al. (2021) show that the accessibility of the website itself remains a separate consideration. Together these studies support a cycle of checking the physical condition, describing it accurately, publishing it in usable form and reviewing visitor feedback.

Third, attraction and transport operators can prepare frontline staff to respond with accurate knowledge and respect. Training should cover the location and operating status of facilities, alternative routes, communication that lets visitors choose assistance, and referral when a question cannot be answered. Staff feedback can reveal recurring infrastructure problems: repeated requests for lift directions may indicate that signs or digital maps need improvement. Research on support and humanising service reinforces the combination of practical knowledge and visitor agency (Hua et al., 2025; Devis-Rozental et al., 2026).

These activities need an owner and a feedback route. A destination organisation can maintain a common format for access descriptions, while site operators verify facility details and transport providers report disruptions at connections. Frontline teams can record recurring questions and unresolved route issues, and managers can review those records with people who use the affected facilities. The stakeholder study by Rubio-Escuderos et al. (2025) highlights coordination as a central barrier to accessible destination development; a digital ecosystem account similarly stresses information exchange among actors who jointly create the visit (Cassia et al., 2020). For Kuala Lumpur, the three groups of survey statements offer a simple agenda for such coordination: physical continuity, information that matches real conditions and a service response that preserves visitor choice.

Managers can evaluate changes through before-and-after route audits and interviews with visitors who have different access requirements. Co-design research argues for involving people with disabilities in the questions, methods and decisions that shape accessible tourism, not merely inviting them to comment on finished

facilities (McIntosh & Flemmer, 2026). A follow-up evaluation could independently measure participation and

satisfaction and assess whether changes to routes, information and staff responses improved the experience.

Contribution and future research

The article contributes a connected account of perceived urban accessibility. Its distinctiveness lies in organising 17 item ratings around handovers in a visitor journey: information that enables route choice, physical conditions that allow movement and rest, and human support when conditions change. The relative item pattern makes particular management questions visible, while the continuity map explains why an on-site strength may not resolve a difficulty encountered earlier. The study does not claim an estimated effect on satisfaction.

For destination research, the case illustrates why accessibility should be examined at more than one spatial and organisational scale. An attraction can improve its entrance, but the visitor's route also depends on transport, street design and timely guidance. Conversely, a citywide appraisal can overlook a small but consequential obstacle at a transfer point. The conceptual sequence in Figure 1 turns the whole-of-life perspective on varied access needs (Darcy & Dickson, 2009) into a practical set of handover questions. Recent accessibility-chain and urban street research gives additional grounds for investigating those transitions (López-del-Pino et al., 2026; Wan et al., 2025).

The descriptive results reflect a convenience-based intercept sample at selected settings and primarily the perspectives of parents travelling with children. They should not be read as a citywide estimate or as a disability-specific assessment. Because the available output does not link item ratings to the three respondent categories, this article makes no claim that the groups perceived conditions differently. Satisfaction and factor distinctiveness were also not tested.

Future research could involve disabled visitors, people deterred from a site, older visitors, pregnant visitors and families in accompanied route assessments. Participant-led or co-designed studies would reveal where a route, description or service response fails for particular requirements (McIntosh & Flemmer, 2026). With access to respondent-level data, subsequent quantitative work could test category differences, examine dimensionality across all 17 items and separately measure participation and overall satisfaction. These are complementary questions to the present item-level descriptive analysis.

CONCLUSION

The survey of 386 visitors presents a generally favourable appraisal of 17 physical, informational and social access attributes at selected urban tourism settings in Kuala Lumpur. Respondents were least positive about resting benches along walkways, while readable signage at attractions and transit stations received the highest mean. Main-sample alpha values were .784, .796 and .849 for the three original item groups. The prominence of parents travelling with children and the one combined category response are made explicit in the sample profile. The results point to practical matters for visitor-route audits, clearer pre-visit information and knowledgeable frontline support.

Accessibility continuity offers the central organising idea: people need information that lets them plan, a workable connection between arrival and site use, and respectful, accurate support when circumstances change. The reported item ratings can guide a local review of these handovers. Whether such continuity improves participation or overall satisfaction remains a question for future research with those outcomes measured separately.

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