

Senior and junior supervisor research topic application for the IPhD Programme in Regional Development, 2023-24

Name/position of the senior supervisor: PhD habil. Raffay, Zoltán
Highest academic degree: Habilitated associate professor

Title of the suggested research topic:

Development of the tourism sector by the improvement of the access of people with disabilities to touristic services

The international relevance, importance, and timely of the research topic:

It is estimated that around 10% of the European population is affected by some form of disability (musculoskeletal, sensory/organoleptic, mental). This should include those who, due to their living situation, are members of the target group for a shorter or longer period of time: for example, pregnant women, people with temporary disabilities recovering from surgery, and the elderly. The proportion of the latter in the overall population is steadily increasing and for them many forms of accessibility are an essential need. Many of us therefore live with a permanent or temporary disability which can be a barrier to their lives and a barrier to their journeys. In fact, accessible tourism is an ongoing effort to ensure that all destinations, tourism products and services are accessible to all people, regardless of their physical limitations, disability or age, and whether they are private or public tourist sites.

In developed countries, accessibility is also receiving increasing attention in the organization of tourism offerings, partly out of humanity and partly in recognition of the significant business potential. As accessible tourism is tourism that is equally accessible to all, the main areas of equal accessibility analysis are the same as the main areas of the supply side of tourism, namely: accommodation; hospitality; tourist attractions; transport; communication. At the level of declarations, accessibility is no longer an issue, but the reality is different. When we want to explore the relationship between people with disabilities and tourism, we must always bear in mind that different disabled visitors have different specific needs. For them, however, accessibility is vital, as in many cases ignoring their specific needs can make it impossible for them to participate actively in tourism. In our country, the tourism opportunities, habits and needs of people with disabilities show significant differences in some aspects compared to the general population.

Which UP-FBE research could the PhD candidate join?

A two-year international ERASMUS+ project called “The development of the innovative educational method of accessible tourism in Central Europe”, involving four countries (Croatia, Poland, Hungary, Romania), will start in early June 2023, led by the Department of Marketing and Tourism, Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Pécs.

Travelers with disabilities face more challenges in this region than in Western Europe. The aim of the project is to create an innovative, novel learning material to fill existing knowledge gaps for learners. Currently, there is no curriculum that aims to develop learners' social skills. The students, who are of an age to be easily sensitized to this issue, will later be employed in businesses, NGOs, destination management companies, governmental sector, etc., where they can actively promote the cause of tourism for people with disabilities.

The project results (textbook, short modules, learning methodology) will be produced as niche materials with the involvement of people with disabilities. Training of many more university students than at present would be of great help to businesses that intend to welcome disabled guests but lack the knowledge to offer them truly accessible service. This means not only technical specifications and building or remodeling facilities, but also changing the mindset of service providers and access to information that can be gathered from people with disabilities.

Possible research directions:

Compilation of databases, literature research and processing, participation in primary research (assessment of the needs and problems of stakeholders in the field of accessible tourism, assessment of the supply side's receptiveness and willingness and readiness to adapt, assessment of the development of relevant legislation in the applicant's country and its compatibility with international standards, collection and analysis of international and domestic good practices, assessment of domestic adaptation possibilities).

The supervisor's expertise and experience in the research field

The supervisor was instrumental in the preparation of the ERASMUS+ project proposal called "The development of the innovative educational method of accessible tourism in Central Europe". Previous similar international project work with the participation of the supervisor was the Peer-AcT project – peer expert assistance in accessibility, involving five countries (besides the lead country, Germany it was Croatia, Hungary, Italy and Spain). As a result of this international project, which ran for three years (2018-2021) with the participation of five countries, Hungary has also become more involved in accessible tourism. The main finding was that the target group is very broad, as almost the whole society, from elderly people, families with young children to people with disabilities, requires special attention from tourist destinations from time to time. Equally important was the recognition that tourism should always involve stakeholders in the design of services.

Studies on the subject published in recent years in prestigious national and international journals have provided an excellent opportunity to broaden the supervisor's theoretical and practical knowledge of the subject. At least one three-authored study on the topic is currently in progress for a Q1 or Q2 journal (one of the co-authors is a member of the Department of Marketing and Tourism of the Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Pécs).

The most important publications in the research field over the last five years

In English language:

- Farkas Jácint – Raffay Zoltán – Pallás Edit Ilona – Fekete-Frojimovics Zsófia – Zsarnóczky Martin Balázs – Dávid Lóránt Dénes: Contexts of networking and travelling in the light of Buddhist "wisdom" and life philosophy - management of accessibility and barrier generation in tourism. *Sustainability* (2071-1050): 14 18 Paper 11123. 15 p. (2022)
- Farkas Jácint – Raffay Zoltán – Petykó Csilla: A new approach to accessibility, disability and sustainability in tourism – multidisciplinary and philosophical pimensions. *Geojournal of Tourism and Geosites* (2065-0817 2065-1198): 40 1 pp 319-326 (2022)

- Farkas Jácint – Raffay Zoltán – Kárpáti József – Fekete-Frojimovics Zsófia – Dávid Lóránt Dénes: The Dialectics of (Deep) Accessible Tourism and Reality—Hermeneutics of a Journey to Madrid. Sustainability (2071-1050): 15 4 Paper 3257. 18 p. (2023)
- Farkas Jácint – Raffay Zoltán – Dávid Lóránt Dénes: Fundamental accessibility and technical accessibility in travels — the encounter of two worlds which leads to a paradigm shift. Sustainability (2071-1050): 14 7 Paper 3765. 24 p. (2022)

In Hungarian language:

- Farkas Jácint – Raffay Zoltán: Az utazás, a hálózatosodás és az akadálymentesség kontextusai az életfilozófia, illetve a buddhista bölcsélet tükrében. Turisztikai és Vidékfejlesztési Tanulmányok (2677-0431 2498-6984): 7 2 pp 83-99 (2022)
- Farkas Jácint – Raffay Zoltán – Dávid Lóránt Dénes: Az akadálymentesítés és az akadálymentesség az utazói létezés dimenzióiban – két világ paradigmaváltó találkozása. Turizmus Bulletin (1416-9967 1587-0928): 22 4 pp 46-54 (2022)
- Raffay Zoltán – Gonda Tibor: Az akadálymentes turizmus innovatív jó gyakorlata. Modern Geográfia (2062-1655): 2020 4 pp 1-14 (2020)