Improvement of accessibility for the disabled in university restaurants

José M. Soriano, J. C. Moltó, J. Mañes

Dans Le travail humain 2003/4 (Vol. 66), pages 391 à 396
Éditions Presses Universitaires de France

ISSN 0041-1868
ISBN 2130536042
DOI 10.3917/th.664.0391

Article disponible en ligne à l’adresse

Découvrir le sommaire de ce numéro, suivre la revue par email, s’abonner...
Flashez ce QR Code pour accéder à la page de ce numéro sur Cairn.info.

Distribution électronique Cairn.info pour Presses Universitaires de France.
La reproduction ou représentation de cet article, notamment par photocopie, n’est autorisée que dans les limites des conditions générales d’utilisation du site ou, le cas échéant, des conditions générales de la licence souscrite par votre établissement. Toute autre reproduction ou représentation, en tout ou partie, sous quelque forme et de quelque manière que ce soit, est interdite sauf accord préalable et écrit de l’éditeur, en dehors des cas prévus par la législation en vigueur en France. Il est précisé que son stockage dans une base de données est également interdit.
PRACTICE AND EXPERIENCE
RÉALISATIONS ET PRATIQUES

IMPROVEMENT OF ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED IN UNIVERSITY RESTAURANTS

by J. M. Soriano*, J. C. Moltó and J. Mañes

Résumé

Amélioration de l’accessibilité de restaurants universitaires à des handicapés

Une étude a été réalisée en vue d’améliorer l’accès des handicapés aux 19 restaurants universitaires de Valence en Espagne, puisque le taux des étudiants handicapés, ces trois dernières années universitaires, est de l’ordre de 0,12 à 0,13 %.

Au début de cette étude, 16 établissements disposaient d’un accès correct avec un pourcentage de 87,5, 25 et 6,3 concernant respectivement les rampes, les ascenseurs et les balustrades. En outre, toutes les portes d’accès de ces établissements étaient équipées des poignées à leviers, ou étaient conçues de sorte qu’une prise serrée et qu’une torsion du poignet ne soient pas nécessaires. En revanche, la conception architecturale des autres établissements n’était pas adaptée à recevoir un public de personnes handicapées.

À la suite de notre étude préliminaire, ces derniers ont installé des élévateurs pour rendre l’accès possible. L’amélioration d’accessibilité par des rampes, des ascenseurs, des balustrades et des élévateurs a permis d’éliminer les obstacles discriminatoires dans les infrastructures des restaurants, tout en assurant la sécurité des étudiants handicapés.

En outre, des entretiens ont été réalisés pour connaître l’opinion des handicapés. Ces derniers, dans leur totalité, considèrent que l’accessibilité des restaurants universitaires est meilleure qu’au début de cette étude.

Mots-clés : Handicapés, Accessibilité, Restaurants universitaires.

I. INTRODUCTION

On March 12, 2000, a declaration was made to develop, during this century, a new strategy for the full participation and equality of people with disabilities. It was drafted in Beijing (China) thanks to leaders of the Disabled Peoples’ International Women’s Committee, Inclusion International, Rehabilitation International, the World Blind Union and the World Federation of the Deaf, as well as national non-governmental...
organizations (NGOs) and for people with disabilities from all continents.
The eighth paragraph asserted the need to improve the overall quality of
life of people with disabilities and eliminate discriminatory attitudes and
practices, as well as information, legal and infrastructure barriers
(Disabled Peoples’ International Women’s Committee, 2000).

On the other hand, efforts to improve the accessibility of the disabled
to public buildings have been reported by several authors and orga-
nizations (National Committee for the Disabled of the ministry of Social
Affairs et al., 1998; Groce, 1999; Jones & Tamari, 1999). Full access for
these people can be achieved through “barrier-free design” which
eliminates barriers to access for all potential users (Jones & Tamari, 1997;
Acheson, Cohen, & Hasselkus, 1991). The improvement of accessibility
of disabled people in restaurants has been studied by several authors
(Bowman & Marzouk, 1992; Fernie, Griggs, Holliday, & Topper, 1994).
In fact, Olkin (2002) adopted a physiological viewpoint including three
core concepts of disability such as the framing of disability from three
models (moral, medical and social models), the ways in which disability is
similar and dissimilar other groups issues, and the language that is used to
describe disability. Owens, Hoffman and Kumar (1996) proposed an
ergonomic perspective based on several components such as exclusivity,
safety and reasonableness of accommodation in terms of accessibility for
people with disability.

Our group began to work with the quality concept in University
restaurants in the 1990s (Soriano, Ricó, Moltó, & Mañes, 2000a;
Soriano, Moltó, & Mañes, 2000b). To date, the accessibility for the
disabled in university restaurants has not been studied because the
University of Valencia Service for the Disabled had worked with the
disabled people in our University. For this reason, our group applied this
definition to the accessibility of the disabled in University establishments
as a searching for total quality. The objective of the present study was the
elimination of discriminatory infrastructural barriers to access of the
disabled to University restaurants.

2. METHODS

This study was carried out in all University restaurants (n=19). Their
locations are in two areas: Burjassot (n=3) and Valencia (n=16). Data
were collected from several meetings with disabled people, university
restaurant workers and restaurateurs. Furthermore, architectural design
studies were carried out in order to make suggestions to the university
architect for the improvement of the accessibility in these establishments.
Architectural access design was subdivided into the categories of ramps,
elevators, handrails and platform lifts, according to classification of The
National Committee for the Disabled of the ministry of Social Affairs
et al. (1998). The census of the disabled was supplied by the University of
Valencia Service for the Disabled (2000) (Table 1).
3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The incidence of the disabled (Service of Disabled of University of Valencia, 2000) at our University is presented in Table 1. In the last academic year (1999-2000), the percentage was 0.12% (80/65777), and this value was approximately the same during the three academic years studied. Data concerning the accessibility of the establishments for the disabled at the beginning of the study are given in Table 2.

Three of the evaluated University restaurants had no appropriate aids for the disabled, while the remaining sixteen had some aids. In the latter establishments, access problems for the disabled were alleviated as follows:

1 / Ramps in fourteen establishments (87.5% (14/16)): all of them were designed to improve routes that were inaccessible due to differences in level. The minimum width of the ramps is 0.90 m. and the maximum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architectural design for accessibility</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ramps</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elevators</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramps and elevators</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elevator and handrails</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
slope is 1:20 and their surfaces are hard and non-slip and there is a protective handrail along the full length of the ramps. Travers (1991) suggested that the gradient of ramps should be 1:20 and should not exceed 1:12 (for short ramps). Furthermore, the ramp width should be sufficient to accommodate all wheelchairs (at least 870 mm between handrails).

2 / Elevators in four establishments (25% (4/16)): all of them were designed to provide the correct dimensions for disabled people. The elevators should measure 1.00 m.×1.30 m. as the minimum internal dimensions, allowing for one wheelchair passenger alone and the panel control must be located from 0.90 m. to 1.20 m. from the floor with control buttons in an accessible location, operable with one hand, arranged horizontally and well-illuminated according to National Committee for the Disabled of the ministry of Social Affairs et al. (1998).

3 / Handrails in one establishment (6.25% (1/16)): These were installed for the safety of all people, especially those with mobility problems and were mounted between 0.85 m. and 0.95 m. above the finished floor level.

These architectural elements were installed to make University restaurants accessible to the disabled, and these characteristics are recommended by the National Committee for the disabled of ministry of Social Affairs et al. (1998). Some establishments had more than one architectural element for this purpose. Two establishments had ramps and elevators, whilst another had elevators and handrails. Furthermore, all access doors to University restaurants are equipped with lever handles or are designed so that tight grasping and twisting of the wrist are unnecessary. On the other hand, three establishments had no accessibility for disabled persons. A study was carried out and the nature of access problems was identified; all three had inaccessible building entrances and routes that involved differences between levels and insufficient space for ramps or an elevator. These problems were solved with platform lifts (also known as stairway lifts or wheelchair lifts) with a lateral kind of operating system because a minimum stair width of 0.90 m is needed for the installation of a platform lift consisting of a railing, an electric generator and a moving platform. Moreover, the platform can be folded when not in use.

During the second year of our study, one of these three establishments improved its accessibility and the remaining two establishments alleviated the problems of accessibility in the last year of the study.

Furthermore, to complete this study interviews were carried out with the disabled people to find out their opinions about the new accessibility to these establishments. All the disabled persons agreed that the university restaurants had improved their access. Furthermore, they suggested that other improvements could be carried out, for example, in the bathroom and the table that could be lowered to wheelchair level. As a consequence further improvements are being implemented.
4. CONCLUSION

Two important conclusions of interest to public health workers concerned about the safety of the disabled can be drawn from this study. First, a preliminary study of the accessibility conditions is important to identify the situation of the buildings and second, the unsolved problems help to determine the nature of the possible solutions. Second, the use of ramps, elevator, handrails and platform lifts has improved the accessibility of the disabled to University restaurants and has eliminated discriminatory infrastructure barriers, thus improving the safety and quality of access in these establishments.

REFERENCES


Service of Disabled of University of Valencia (2000). Disabled students in the University of Valencia. Internal inform of the University of Valencia, Spain.


SUMMARY

A study was carried out to improve accessibility of the disabled at the nineteen University restaurants in Valencia (Spain) due to that the incidence of the disabled during three studied academic years is ranged from 0.12 to 0.13% of all studied University student. At the beginning of this study, sixteen of these establishments had good accessibility with a percentage of 87.5, 25 and 6.3 of ramps, elevators and handrails, respectively. Furthermore, all access doors of these establishments are equipped with lever handles or are designed in a way that makes tight grasping and twisting of the wrist to open them unnecessary. On the one hand the architectural design of the other establishments did not take into account the access of the disabled. Subsequent to the preliminary study, the other restaurants installed platform lifts to make access possible. The improvement in accessibility through ramps, elevators, handrails and platform lifts has made it possible to eliminate discriminatory infrastructural barriers in restaurants and has helped to ensure safe access for the disabled. On the other hand, interviews were carried out to know their opinions and one hundred percentage think that the accessibility at University restaurants is better that to the beginning of this study.

Key words: Disabled, Accessibility, University restaurants.

Paper received: april 2002.
Accepted by J. Patrick in revised form: december 2002.