

An Evaluative Case Study of City Center Muscat Accessibility Provisions

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Shopping malls are the corner stone of shopping tourism and at the same time a controlled entertainment hub. Persons with disabilities could socialize and enjoy the different entertainment activities provided within the mall environment, but are the malls ready to adequately provide their services and products to this customer segment? The current study seeks to answer this question in The Sultanate of Oman, through the case study of “City Center Muscat”, the number one mall in the country located in the capital city “Muscat”. The study aims to assess the accessibility provisions of City Center Muscat and the on-premises food and beverage outlets, as well as some of the challenges that individuals with disabilities face when interacting with these establishments. To achieve the study aim, content analysis was applied on the mall website and mobile application contents, then, a checklist was used to evaluate both the mall website and the mobile application accessibility features. In order to assess the mall and the on-premises food and beverage outlets accessibility provisions two checklists were formulated and used. The paper highlights some of the positive initiatives that have been put in place to increase accessibility and proposes some recommendations for how accessibility can be further improved.

Keywords: Accessibility, City Center Muscat, Disabled, Food, Oman, Tourism, Shopping

Introduction

Worldwide the number of persons with disabilities is increasing due to many reasons, among them is aging, accidents, disasters, wars, and other environment/habitat related factors (World Tourism Organization and Fundación ACS, 2015).

People with disabilities depend on caregivers, friends or family members in their daily activities. This segment of customers is an opportunity to increase tourism revenues when their needs and preferences are met (Atef 2011, Burnett & Bender-Baker 2001, Chen 2004, Darcy 2003, Lach 1999, Lehto et al. 2018).

Tourism activities are various, one of these activities is shopping, which has become for many tourists a decisive factor in choosing a destination. It represents a significant portion of what tourists spend their money on (Choi et al. 2016, Rifai 2014). Malls and shopping centers serve as a hub for leisure, entertainment, and

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commerce across the world, and Oman is no exception. With the spread of shopping malls across the country, malls have become increasingly popular over the years. Despite their popularity, however, malls often pose significant accessibility challenges for individuals with disabilities, including the elderly, people with mobility impairments or vision loss, amongst others. For example, some malls have wider parking spots, ramps and spacious elevators designed for individuals with mobility limitations, while others do not. Similar differences exist when it comes to accessible washrooms and other facilities as well as the availability of wheelchairs or mobility scooters for rent.

For persons with disabilities the shopping mall is an opportunity for socialization and entertainment when services and products that match their needs are available in a convenient barrier free environment (Darcy 2019, Porto et al. 2020, Swaine et al. 2014).

The availability of accurate information pertaining to accessible tourism/hospitality services and products is so important and greatly affects choices of customers with disabilities (Gladwell & Bedini 2004). The websites of tourism/hospitality establishments and destinations must be accessible. Accessible information is essential in order for products and services to reach persons with permanent or temporary disabilities (Leidner 2006, World Wide Web Consortium 2022).

In the Sultanate of Oman there are many shopping centers/malls. City Centre Muscat is the first and largest lifestyle shopping destination in the country, attracting more than 11 million visitors annually. It was opened in 2001 and is located in Muscat the capital city of the Sultanate of Oman. City Centre Muscat is known for its diverse dining options and world-class shopping experience. However, the accessibility of the mall and its food and beverage outlets is an important aspect to consider for those who are differently abled or have special needs. The study aims to assess the accessibility provisions of City Center Muscat and the on-premises food and beverage outlets, as well as some of the challenges that individuals with disabilities face when interacting with these establishments.

Literature Review

Persons with Disabilities Worldwide and in The Sultanate of Oman

The World Health Organization (WHO) world report on disability issued in 2011, estimates that nearly one billion people worldwide live with some degree of disability, which is about 15% of the global population (World Tourism Organization and Fundación ACS 2015).

The Sultanate of Oman is divided into eleven Governorates. The total population in 2021 was 4,527,446 of which 2,804,177 (62%) are Omanis and 1,723,329 (38%) are Non-Omanis (National Center for Statistics and Information, 2022a). The number of Omanis registered in the “Disabled Person Card System” during 2021 was 42,613 persons, of which males accounted for 61%. Approximately RO 34 million was allocated by the government to support the

21,406 cases of disability registered in the social security system in 2021, this category nearly represents 50% of the total system beneficiaries (National Center for Statistics and Information 2022b).

Article 1 of Oman's Promulgating The Disabled Care and Rehabilitation Law, decree No. 63/2008, defines The Disabled as: "Persons who suffer from a shortage of some sensory or physical or mental abilities congenitally or as a result of a genetic factor, or illness, or an accident, thus limiting their ability to perform their natural role in life compared to those at their age, with the need for care and rehabilitation to play their role in life" (Royal Decree No. 63/2008 2008). Furthermore Articles (10) and (11) of the law explain the engineering and structural standards that should be adopted to ensure that the disabled benefit from public services and the means of their involvement and participation in social, sports, and cultural activities (Royal Decree No. 63/2008 2008).

Accessibility Provisions

Persons with disabilities have special needs, which require the development, adaption and alteration of building and structural elements, means of communication, transportation, accommodation, food and beverage outlets, parking spaces, and several other environmental and man-made facilities to adhere to accessibility rules and procedures (Linderová 2015).

Accessibility refers to allowing persons of varying disabilities to use places, spaces, products or services, whether physical or virtual easily and independently, without the need for special arrangements. Furthermore, accessibility is a means of ensuring that persons with disabilities are able to practice all rights with freedom on the basis of equality with all other human beings (United Nations 2015).

Accessibility varies depending on the type and degree of disability (Darcy 1998):

- Physical: which requires the provision of handrails, ramps, lifts and lowered counters
- Sensory: which requires the provision of signs, hearing augmentation systems, and audio cues for lifts
- Communication: which require the provision of access to information through a variety of media

Persons with disabilities face a number of barriers that hinder them from getting involved in tourism activities (McKercher et al. 2003, Smith, 1987):

- Intrinsic (knowledge, health)
- Environmental (accessibility and design)
- Interactive (industry affiliates attitude)
- Economic (affordability)

Accessible tourism involves the collaboration of all concerned stakeholders, through the delivery of accessible tourism products, services and environments

which persons with disabilities are able to enjoy independently (Darcy 2006, Darcy & Dickson 2009).

The General Assembly of the United Nations World Tourism Organization invited its member states and all tourism stakeholders to take all possible measures to facilitate the travel by persons with disabilities and recommended the following paths (World Tourism Organization and Fundación ACS 2015):

- To adopt tourism sites and establishments accessibility, posing no extra charges
- To train tourism affiliates on how to deal with persons with disabilities
- To publish updated accurate information to support and assist persons with disabilities

The persons with disabilities segment potentiality to the tourism industry is based on the following facts (Burnett & Bender-Baker 2001, Darcy 1998, World Tourism Organization and Fundación ACS 2015):

- It is constantly increasing
- Persons with disability do not travel alone, an average of 1.5 people travel as well
- It is good for a destination's image
- Higher revenue than other conventional tourism forms

In order to attract this market segment the tourism industry must address the issues of accessibility. Customers with disabilities' selections depend on previous experiences and on accessibility provisions availability. Their loyalty is directed towards establishments that are keen to accommodate their needs and requirements allowing them to feel free and independent (Burnett and Bender-Baker 2001, Chen 2004). Suitable tourism and hospitality services/products should be provided, personnel should be trained on how to deal with this segment, and the structural and environmental conditions should be developed according to international accessibility standards (Donoghue 2003, Germ & Schleien 1997, Ozturk et al. 2008, Yau et al. 2004).

Shopping Centers and Persons with Disabilities

Shopping is considered as one of the biggest revenue generators for tourism destinations (Albayrak et al. 2016). Shopping in some cases is the main reason for visiting a destination (Murphy et al. 2010). Shopping centers stand out as the main attraction point of shopping activity (LeHew & Wesley, 2007).

According to the International Council of Shopping Centers (1999) a shopping center is defined as, "A group of retail and other commercial establishments that is planned, developed, owned and managed as a single property. On-site parking is provided. The two main configurations of shopping centers are malls and open-air strip centers. Malls typically are enclosed, with a climate-controlled walkway between two facing strips of stores. A strip center is an attached row of stores or

service outlets managed as a coherent retail entity, without the enclosed walkways linking the stores” (p.1-2).

Shopping centers/malls are public places, which are intended to provide their services and products to various customer segments with different needs and requirements (Bashiti & Rahim 2015, Levine 2003). To provide a successful experience to their patrons, especially those with special needs and disabilities, malls are required to adopt accessibility standards and keep improving them (Lestari & Wiastuti 2019).

The main purpose of shopping centers provision of services and products is revenue generation, despite the fact that adopting accessibility standards is costly, alterations and developments within the physical environment is a must to achieve accessibility for all and for business continuity (Afacan 2012, Chikuta et al. 2019, Lestari & Wiastuti 2019). Barrier free structural and architectural designs consider the needs of persons with disabilities based on four major disability categories (ADA National Network 2015):

- Mobility disabilities
- Visual disabilities
- Hearing disabilities
- Cognitive disabilities

Persons with Disabilities and Information

Information management is the starting point of accessibility enhancement. Accessibility information would encourage several persons to travel with confidence that their needs are going to be met (Shaw and Coles 2004). The tourism cycle begins with reliable information about destinations, facilities, products and services, in addition to procedures and required documentations (Leidner 2006).

The top sources of information used by travelers with disabilities are word-of-mouth, websites, and travel guides/books (Ray & Ryder 2003). The most convenient and accessible source of information for persons with disabilities are websites (McKercher et al. 2003). Accessible information means that the websites of tourism and hospitality establishments and destinations must be user-friendly for all categories of persons with disabilities, accurate, recent, and constantly updated (Eichhorn et al. 2007, Leidner 2006).

Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications

The internet and websites are the major information seeking tools for lots of people nowadays. Online trading is huge, governments reach out to citizens through web-based services. Despite the fact that web accessibility is imperative to serve all types of web users, not all web sites have adopted the accessibility requirements basics (Pelzetter 2021).

International accessibility standards refer to a set of guidelines developed to ensure equal access to online content by individuals with disabilities. The primary

objective of international accessibility standards is to provide a set of guidelines that can be universally implemented to ensure that online content is accessible to all, regardless of their disabilities. International accessibility standards are developed and published by organizations such as the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). Some of the guidelines provided by the World Wide Web Consortium include (World Wide Web Consortium 2008, 2018):

- Perceivable: content availability in different forms (providing captions and audio descriptions for videos - providing text alternatives for non-text content)
- Operable: ensuring that content is easily navigable enhancing users' ability to interact with the content (use of keyboard vs. mouse)
- Understandable: users' ability to process the content (ease of making changes)
- Robust: continuous development and update of the content

Accessibility will not only serve people with permanent disabilities but also those under unfavorable circumstances/situations (Lazar et al. 2015, World Wide Web Consortium 2022):

- People using devices with small screens
- Seniors with diminishing abilities
- People with temporary disabilities
- People in crowded places and cannot hear properly, or in dark environments that hinder proper vision

Besides websites, mobile devices are gaining importance and momentum due to the easiness of usage and the enormous possibilities to perform several activities through the mobile applications "Apps" (Acosta-Vargas et al. 2021). Accessibility in mobile applications should be the aim of software creators and developers. Making these "Apps" as accessible as possible to the various user segments with different physical and mental capabilities is imperative to cope with the ever-changing customer demands (World Wide Web Consortium 2015, 2018).

Methodology

An evaluative case study approach was adopted which seeks to evaluate the study subject related phenomena. In evaluative case studies, the researcher captures all the complexities and aspects of a case and goes further by putting interpretations and evaluations based on the collected data analysis (McDonough & McDonough, 1997; Yin, 1994; Yin, 2014). There are many advantages to using case studies (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1994):

- Data interpretation and analysis is based on the study scope and functionality

- Quantitative and qualitative data analyses are applicable
- Data collection methods choice and usage depend on the researcher(s) discretion

Data Collection and Analysis

Content analysis was applied on the mall website and mobile application contents, then, a checklist was used to evaluate both the mall website and the mobile application accessibility features. Finally, two checklists were formulated and used to assess the mall and the on-premises food and beverage outlets accessibility provisions. Data collected by means of the study checklists were tabulated, analyzed, then interpreted.

Content analysis is widely used in social sciences. Its usage in the field of tourism and hospitality research has been escalating, especially in studying texts, advertisements, promotional material, brochures, and images (Berg, 2009; Hall & Valentin, 2005).

Checklists allow researchers to consistently check the availability of attributes among studied entities/subjects, its application enhances the accuracy and reliability of the results and consequently the study conducted (Miller, Hudson, & Turner, 2005; Morrison, Colman, & Preston, 1997; Oppenheim, 1998).

The study phases were conducted and applied based on City Center Muscat status/information on 12-26 August 2022:

Phase One

The study started with content analysis of the mall website (<https://www.citycentremuscat.com/>) and mobile application (<https://www.citycentremuscat.com/download-app>) contents to indicate how City Center Muscat publicizes its accessibility provisions, if any.

Phase Two

A checklist was used to evaluate both the mall website and the mobile application accessibility features and whether they were developed and adapted to be used by people with different disabilities. The checklist was formulated from the reviewed literature.

Phase Three

Two checklists were formulated and used to assess the mall and the food and beverage outlets accessibility provisions. The items of the checklists were based on and adapted from the literature reviewed. The checklists consisted of checkpoints covering different accessibility aspects:

- A. Mall accessibility provisions: In order to access the mall accessibility provisions a checklist evaluation of the following areas was conducted:
 - Parking
 - Route (Access to the premises)
 - Mall Entrance

- Floor(s) Accessibility
- Restrooms

B. Food and beverage outlets accessibility provisions: The list of food and beverage outlets under investigation was formulated from the City Center Muscat website and verified by personal visits within the study stated time frame. The website included four categories under “Dining” (37 Outlets) (City Center Muscat, 2022):

- Chocolates / Confectionery / Ice Cream (8 Brands)
- Dining - Cafes (9 Brands)
- Dining - Fast Food (11 Brands)
- Dining - Restaurants (9 Brands)

The Chocolates / Confectionery / Ice Cream category was excluded from the study as they do not provide a dining space, they are shops that sell items without any table or seated in-unit service. The Dining - Fast Food category constitutes the mall food court, it is formed of similar service counters for all the included brands facing a large seating area with tables and seats, so an overall evaluation of the food court was conducted. The study was conducted on the following food and beverage outlets:

- Dining - Cafes
- Dining - Food Court (Fast Food)
- Dining - Restaurants

Results and Discussion

Website and Mobile Application Accessibility Information Availability

City Center Muscat website provides useful information for patrons and shoppers, but mentions nothing about the center accessibility provisions, the only mentioned piece of information about facilities for persons with disabilities is in the “Services & Facilities” of the “Tourist Information” section found under “Guest Services” menu of the website (<https://www.citycentremuscat.com/guest-services/tourist-information>) and is about courtesy wheelchairs and disabled restrooms availability (City Center Muscat, 2022). The mobile application mentions nothing about the availability of accessibility provisions, it does not even provide the limited disabled facilities information (Wheelchairs, Disabled Restrooms) found on the center website.

Website and Mobile Application Accessibility Features

A seven-point checklist was used to evaluate both the mall website and the mobile application accessibility features and easiness of use by people with different disabilities (see Table 1). The website had available four points out of

seven which is 57%, while the mobile application had available only 3 points out of seven which is 43%. These results indicate the necessity of adopting websites/mobile application accessibility standards of being perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust (World Wide Web Consortium, 2008, 2018).

Table 1. *Website and Mobile Application Accessibility Features*

Checkpoint	Website	Mobile Application
Images are supported with explanatory text	No	No
Allow interaction through means other than keyboard/mouse/touch	No (limited keyboard navigation)	No (Touch Only)
Provide page titles	Yes	Yes
Allow content to zoom/enlarge smoothly	Yes	No
Create captions for video and audio content	No	No
Information does not depend on colour	Yes	Yes
Does not time out unexpectedly	Yes	Yes
Total/7	4/7 - 57%	3/7 - 43%

While Muscat City Center has made significant improvements in the accessibility of their website and mobile application, there are still areas that need improvement. One area of improvement is in the means of navigation, keyboard/mouse/touch navigation can be improved to make it easier for users with mobility impairments to navigate the website and mobile application. Content zooming is a must, and the availability of captions for video and audio contents would help users with visual and hearing impairments. Finally, alternative text for website images is missing, making it difficult for users with visual impairments to understand the content.

Mall and Food and Beverage Outlets Accessibly Provisions

Two checklists were used to assess accessibility provisions of the mall, and the food and beverage outlets on premises.

Mall Accessibility Provisions

This part comprises five areas:

- Parking
- Route (Access to the premises)
- Mall Entrance
- Floor(s) Accessibility
- Restrooms

According to the literature reviewed it is important to adopt accessibility standards in order to attract customers with special needs (Lestari & Wiastuti, 2019). Their loyalty is for the establishments that consider their needs and adapt their services and products accordingly (Burnett & Bender-Baker, 2001; Chen, 2004).

City Centre Muscat has a large parking area located just few meters of the entrance gates, three entrance gates are available (see Table 2). The parking areas are well lit and easy to access. The parking areas also have designated parking spots for disabled individuals. The parking facilities are located at strategic locations around the commercial centre for easy accessibility.

Table 2. Parking Accessibility

	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Accessible parking spaces are provided	√		
Accessible parking close by outdoor/indoor areas	√		

Additionally, there are barrier-free routes with slopes that facilitate the movement of wheelchairs leading directly to the entrances. The movement from the outdoor to the indoor areas is smooth, safe and hurdle free, centre personnel are available to facilitate the circulation of cars and centre customers. Guiding/directional signs are provided at clear visible locations that are easily recognizable. The signage provides clear directions to different areas of the centre. There is a small station at the parking area that provides courtesy wheelchairs and strollers to be used by the centre customers (see Table 3).

Table 3. Route Accessibility (Access to the premises)

	Yes	No	Not Applicable
The route from the parking lot to the mall entrance is accessible	√		
Clear paths from outdoor to indoor areas	√		
Clear directional signage including symbols	√		

All entrances have wide self-opening doors after which there are security gates that are also wide and can allow wheelchairs access. One entrance does not lead to the ground floor but leads to the first-floor parking area through a ramp like escalator. The center policy does not allow pets on premises and so assistance dogs are not allowed to the center (see Table 4).

The circulation inside the center is smooth, pathways are wide, floors are not slippery, with consistent even lighting throughout the center areas and floors. Guiding signs are present all over the center that indicate levels, areas, and facilities available. Movement between floors could be done by elevators and/or escalators, elevators are provided with audio information indicators that mark opening/closing of doors and level reached (see Table 5).

All floors are provided with disabled restrooms (the restrooms have grab bars and low sinks for the convenience of disabled individuals), with signs all over the center indicating directions to the nearest ones (see Table 6).

Table 4. Mall Entrance Accessibility

	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Are all of the entrance doors accessible?	√		
There are signs indicating the location of the nearest accessible entrance			√
Wide self-opening doors	√		
Wide easy to open doors			√
The door is always open		√	
There is no door			√
Appropriate safety markings on glass doors and adjacent panels	√		
Assistance dogs are accepted		√	

Table 5. Floor(s) Accessibility

	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Wide and clear internal pathways	√		
Ramp access to all levels			√
Lift/Escalators access to all levels	√		
Slip resistant floor	√		
Consistent and even lighting throughout	√		
Clear directional signage including symbols	√		

Table 6. Restrooms Accessibility

	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Are accessible restrooms provided?	√		
Is there an accessible route to the restrooms?	√		
Clear directional signage including symbols	√		

Food Court

The food court is formed out of eleven fast food brands that provide counter service facing a large seating area with tables and seats. Some areas have fixed seats, while others have light movable seats and tables. The area is large enough to allow wheelchairs maneuvers. Seats and table are easily moved to allow any seating alterations required by customers with disabilities or with special needs. Center staff are available to help and give assistance whenever needed (see Table 7). The customer cycle starts with order placement and payment at the cashier, then waiting for the order to be prepared, the order is collected when the order number is shown on a screen or called out, then the food tray is taken by the customer to the seating area for consumption.

Table 7. Food Court Accessibility

	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Is the entrance/door accessible?	√		
There is no door	√		
Is the service counter accessible?	√		
Is there an accessible seating location(s)?	√		
Is there an accessible route(s) to accessible seating location(s)?	√		
Furniture (tables and seats) range in height to accommodate disabled persons	√		
Clear space (between furniture) for a person to manoeuvre a mobility aid	√		

Restaurants and Cafes

All Restaurants and Cafes under investigation have shown that they are ready to accommodate the needs of disabled customers or those with special needs. The units designs and furnishings were found to be suitable and conform to the accessibility requirements/points of the checklist (see Table 8). There are no doors as is the case in most centers/malls designs. In restaurants and cafes that offer items on display for take away or offer counter service as well as table service, the display/counter was found to be accessible and easily approached with clear access and hurdle free routes.

Food and beverage outlets, and mall facilities were found to adhere to accessibility rules and procedures as suggested by the literature reviewed, this segment requires the development, adaption and alteration of building and structural elements, and other facilities to adhere to accessibility rules and procedures of the different type and degree of disability (Darcy 1998, Linderová 2015).

City Center Muscat accessibility is the responsibility of the mall administration and the food and beverage outlets brands (management), at different levels:

- The flow of movement and circulation in the various mall sections is the responsibility of the mall management as per the designs and construction schematics.
- The food court was designed by the mall management and consequently assume the full responsibility of the seating area accessibility while the food and beverage brands (management) are responsible for how they make their products and services accessible (customer friendly)
- The within food and beverage units accessibility is the full responsibility of the brands (management)

Table 8. Restaurants and Cafes Accessibility

Checkpoint	RESTAURANTS									CAFES								
	Buffalo Wild Wings	Chili's	Habib Beirut	KoseBasi	Nando's	Paul	Tender	TUK TUK	Zen Asian Bistro	Azura	Cinnabon	Clara's authentic coffee	Dose Café	Le Petit Café	Mikel Coffee	PappaRoti	Starbucks	Tim Hortons
Is the entrance/door accessible?	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
There is no door	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Is the service counter accessible?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	√	N/A	N/A	N/A	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Is there an accessible seating location(s)?	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Is there an accessible route(s) to accessible seating location(s)?	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Furniture (tables and seats) range in height to accommodate disabled persons	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Clear space (between furniture) for a person to manoeuvre a mobility aid	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

√=Yes, X=No, N/A=Not Applicable

Conclusions

Disability access provisions are critical for creating a barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities. Worldwide, there have been increased efforts to ensure that public spaces, including malls, are accessible to everyone, regardless of their physical abilities. Persons with disabilities often face challenges in accessing malls due to physical barriers such as uneven surfaces, narrow passageways, inadequate signage, and the absence of facilities like elevators and wheelchair ramps. Through legislation and policy, governments have put in place measures to make malls accessible by providing provisions that cater to persons with disabilities. Nevertheless, mall developers and operators need to remain vigilant in addressing the challenges that people with disabilities face to ensure that malls remain accessible to everyone.

As more people rely on technology for accessing information, and as more businesses shift to online presence, it is important to ensure that websites and mobile applications are accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities. It's important for businesses to prioritize accessibility to ensure that everyone can access their digital platforms. International accessibility standards adoption are crucial to ensure equal access to online content for individuals with disabilities. Compliance with these standards not only benefits individuals with disabilities but also improves user experience for all users. Organizations should strive to follow these guidelines to ensure equal access to online content and avoid legal challenges.

Overall, accessibility provisions of City Center Muscat are commendable. The commercial center has taken significant steps to ensure that disabled individuals have easy access to all areas of the center. The parking facilities, ramps, elevators, restrooms, and signage are all designed with the needs of disabled individuals in mind. The center entrances have self-opening doors. Circulation within/between floors is smooth and easy, escalators and elevators are available with audio assistance in elevators. Food and beverage outlets are accessible and suite customers in wheelchairs, the accessibility of these outlets is crucial to ensure that all mall visitors can enjoy them with ease and convenience. Accessibility provisions do not only benefit disabled individuals its benefits extend to all customer categories and improves the overall customer experience of the center.

Special attention should be given to City Center Muscat website and mobile application. Developments to enhance accessibility levels to better serve users with different disabilities are needed. The contents and information provided about the center accessibility provisions should reflect the fact that the center is accessible and ready to accommodate the needs of customers with disabilities.

Despite the numerous disability access provisions in place at City Center Muscat, the mall still faces several challenges. One challenge is the upkeep and maintenance of the facilities. The mall's management must ensure that the facilities remain operational, clean, and in good repair (hurdles free). Another challenge is the need for greater awareness and inclusivity on disability issues among businesses and customers in the mall. The mall's management can achieve this by organizing awareness events, establishing a feedback mechanism, and dynamic communication channels.

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