

Yolanda van der Westhuizen

Student No: 3602756



UNIVERSITY *of the*  
WESTERN CAPE

Faculty of Community and Health Sciences

Occupational Therapy Department

**Exploring the lived experience of leisure travelling for people with disabilities**

Yolanda van der Westhuizen

3602756

A full research thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master  
of Science in Occupational Therapy.

Supervisors: Professor Lisa Wegner and Dr Lucia Hess-April

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Occupation, Occupational Identity, Occupational Justice, Occupational Performance, Travelling

## ABSTRACT

Historically travelling was an option only for the affluent; however, with the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, travelling shifted to an important form of free-choice learning by means of discovery. Travelogues of able-bodied travellers state that travelling offers them an opportunity for constructing new identities as it broadens their perspectives of self. This caused the researcher to question if the same experiences could be prompted amongst people with disabilities. Various disciplines recognise that travelling is a valuable opportunity for growth, but no literature could be found within Occupational Therapy. This led to the research question explored in this study: what is the shared, lived experience of travelling for people with disabilities? The objectives of this study are to describe and explore the purpose and overall experiences of travelling for people with disabilities, explore how people with disabilities perceive, understand and make sense of their experiences of travelling, and lastly to explore the meaning that travelling has for people with disabilities. The theoretical framework underpinning this study is the Peron-Environment-Occupation Model and the Model of Human Occupation, with specific reference to the philosophy of occupational science. Embedded in a philosophical worldview of social constructivism, a Hermeneutical Phenomenological design was chosen using a qualitative approach. Through purposive sampling, six participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide. Interpretative phenomenological analysis was applied to analyse data subsequent to cross analysis, thereby developing a composite understanding of the meaning of travelling to the participants. The findings present three themes, namely: a *Double edged sword* which highlights the contradictory effects that travelling can have, followed by *People are part of the package*, which emphasises the participants' interpretations of the immense role that society plays in disability, and lastly the most prominent theme *Pilgrimage to self-discovery*. Additionally, an Integrated Model was developed which integrates two prominent models within Occupational Therapy. Conclusively this study provides insight into how travelling facilitated the participants to develop a new identity.

## DECLARATION

I declare that the research: “Exploring the lived experience of leisure travelling for people with disabilities” has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University. All the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Yolanda van der Westhuizen

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yolanda van der Westhuizen', with a small horizontal line at the end.

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*"A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions*

*"Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.*

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>ADL</b>	Activities of daily living
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>ICD</b>	International Classification of Disability
<b>MOHO</b>	Model of Human Occupation
<b>NPO</b>	Non-Profit Organisation
<b>ODO</b>	Open Doors Organisation
<b>OPD</b>	Organisation for Persons with Disabilities
<b>OTASA</b>	The Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa
<b>PEO</b>	Person Environment Occupation Model
<b>PEPUDA</b>	Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act
<b>UNCRPWD</b>	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>UPIAS</b>	Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation
<b>WPRPD</b>	White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

## **Definition of Terms**

### **Disability**

Disability is a multidimensional problem which is not just limited to health. “Disability is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations and participation restriction” (World Health Organisation, 2016, para. 1).

### **Disablism**

A term used to characterise discrimination against people with disability. This form of discrimination influences their lives traumatically “via multiple exclusions and deprivations” as it seems “virtually invisible to most, but it is woven deeply into the groundwork of everyday practices and assumptions” (Watermeyer, 2009, p. 130 & 148).

### **Hermeneutic Phenomenology**

Hermeneutic phenomenology is a qualitative research method which originated from a phenomenological approach. Heidegger, the father of hermeneutical phenomenology, concluded that the essence of something can only be discovered when it is consciously encountered and reflected upon by the individual (Heidegger, 1992). Applicable to this study, hermeneutic phenomenological was used to reveal and reflect on the lived meaning of their travel experience.

### **Leisure**

Leisure is conceptualised as a self-enhancement role that is under the control of, and chosen by, the individual. The “purposeful and intentional use of free time to engage in self-selected and self-directed activities and experiences that are meaningful and intrinsically motivating to the individual in that they are enjoyable, fun, refreshing and pleasurable” (Wegner, 2008, p. 109).



## **Leisure travelling**

Leisure travelling integrates the essence of travelling and leisure. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, this term is defined as going on an expedition in one's free time that is freely chosen by the traveller, who experiences intrinsic satisfaction, stimulation, fun and enjoyment, but also requires commitment.

## **Occupation**

“Occupations refer to the everyday activities that people do as individuals, in families, and with communities to occupy time and bring meaning and purpose to life” (World Federation of Occupational Therapy, 2016).

## **Occupational Identity**

“A composite sense of who one is and wishes to become as an occupational being, generated from one's history of occupational participation” (Keilhofner, 2008, p. 106).

## **Occupational Justice**

“Is a term that emphasises rights, responsibilities, and liberties that enable the individual to experience health and quality of life through engagement in occupations” (Wolf, Ripat, Davis, Becker, & MacSwiggan, 2010, p. 15).

## **Occupational Performance**

Occupational performance is the accomplishment of the selected occupation, as a result of a dynamic transaction between the client, the context and environment and the activity (Roley et al., 2008, p. 650).

## **Travelling**

Applicable to this study, the concept of travelling is defined as an expedition or vacation involving a prearranged journey from one place to another, with the minimum of one-night stay-overs, with the purpose of taking a break from routine and the exploration of new activities (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016).

# Chapter 1 - Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

Joe Gebbia, the co-founder of a company called Air B&B, alluded that travelling “is one of the most powerful forms of growth and learning that somebody can experience” (Visi, 2016). Travel records dating back to the Roman Emperors’ leisure travel expeditions highlight the significance of travelling, as travellers would return with “riches of unfathomable value” (Byttebier, 2017, para. 7). Travellers from all over the world affirm that travelling enriches the soul in many spheres (Drifters, 2016). Drawing on the empirical research from travelogues of non-disabled travellers, it is reported that they attest to becoming “physically open and emotionally responsive to new experiences” and that they view their bodies not only as adaptable, but also as “flexible and contingent” (Molz, 2006, p. 7). The characteristics of mobility, tolerance and a keenness to take chances are some of the qualities represented by the travellers (Molz, 2006). It is exactly these characteristics that caused the researcher to question if the same experiences could be simulated when people with disabilities travel. However, studies pertaining to people with disabilities show that they are aware of the notion that they often withdraw from society as a result of experiencing internalised oppression, due to blunt social interactions and structural inaccessibility (Disability arts online, 2017). For people with disabilities, going out into public spaces often entails overcoming barriers of daily living; consequently, this continuous challenge lessens their occupational and community participation (Disability and Health, 2016). The researcher questioned whether travelling could improve people with disabilities’ wellbeing and influence their occupational identity, taking into account that it is such a powerful form of growth and learning for non-disabled people.

People with disabilities have recently shown an increased interest in travelling, proving that they have the same desire to travel and explore as non-disabled people (Yau, McKercher, & Packer,

2004). This calls for a more concerted analysis of the essence of travelling, specifically for people with disabilities. According to a quantitative market study conducted on 'disability travel', Open Doors Organisation (2015) reports that between 2013 to 2015 adults with disabilities took 73 million day and night trips. This is an increase from 21 million people with disabilities travelling in 2005, to 26 million people with disabilities travelling in 2015 in America alone (Open Doors Organisation [ODO], 2015). The European Commission states that people with disabilities in total took 17.6 million trips in 2012, of which 7.2 million were taken specifically by people with disabilities and 10.4 million by the elderly population (European Commission, 2012). Expenditure on 'disability travel' has also increased from \$13.6 billion annually in 2002 to \$17.3 billion in 2015 (ODO, 2015). Travelling in totality constitutes 10% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is about US\$7.6 trillion of the world's economy; nevertheless people with disabilities are underrepresented in this industry (World Travel, 2015). This is partially due to barriers of inaccessibility and the inadequate perception of disability. As society grows in disability awareness and people with disabilities proceed to assert positive identities, they are proving to be a growing, profitable target market for the tourism industry (Shi, Cole, & Chancellor, 2012). This emphasises the necessity to investigate the effect of travelling for people with disabilities, who currently comprise 15% of the global population (Vila, Darcy, & González, 2015).

## **1.2 Background**

Humans experience and make sense of their world through their bodies as they carry out their daily occupations (Early, 2013). By engaging in activities with our bodies, a dynamic interchange coexists between receiving and responding to sensory and motor signals. This subsequently forms a pattern of familiarity whereby one gets to know and trust one's body (Dunbar, 2007). By way of explanation, the individual builds a reference of his/her body and fundamentally becomes

acquainted with his/her strengths, weaknesses and customary responses. The in vivo familiarity with their own bodies enables them to effectively engage in everyday occupations, thereby gaining an understanding of, and interpreting, the world around them (Early, 2013). Occupational Therapists consider human beings to be “occupational beings”, who are entirely affected by what human beings do, thus occupation is key to defining identity (Magnus, 2001, p. 122). Recognising that various activities are considered to be an occupation defined as everyday activities that people do to fill their time, it is regarded as highly personal and unique to the individual (Hammell, 2004). Occupation refers to any form of meaningful activity that people engage in and which brings purpose to life (World Federation of Occupational Therapy, 2016). Occupational Therapists conceptualise occupation into three categories, namely: productivity, self-care and leisure (Specht, King, Brown, & Foris, 2002, p. 436) and utilise occupations as the primary treatment modality. However, leisure as a form of occupation provides opportunities for people to discover individual strengths and confers significance to everyday life (Chun & Lee 2010, p. 393). Taking into consideration the benefits and requirements of engaging in leisure, it can be argued that travelling provides an attractive option as a leisure occupation for people with disabilities. Therefore, the relevance of travelling is linked to a leisure occupation.

Prior to the current study, travelling has not been considered within the realms of health but more commonly regarded as a concept embedded within the tourism industry. As a result of limited literature available on travelling within the health context for people with disabilities, the researcher had to draw on studies within various fields such as Tourism, Sociology and Psychology in order to find a means of relating travelling to the health context. Primarily the current study depicts travelling as a leisure occupation, a first in the field of Occupational Therapy. With the intent to provide a comprehensive background to this study, relevant concepts are outlined in order to draw attention to the linkage between travelling within Occupational

Therapy as a leisure occupation. In the quest to explore the essence of travelling for people with disabilities, the researcher made theoretical connections between travelling and people with disabilities, why travelling can be considered as a leisure occupation and if it can influence one's occupational identity, which is discussed in depth in chapter 2.

How one defines disability, which in itself can be viewed from various perspectives, determines the applicability of travelling as a leisure occupation within a health context. Perspectives of disability include the Medical Model, the Social Model, and the Social-Relational Model (Swain, French, Barnes, & Thomas, 2013). According to the Medical Model, travelling would not be recognised as an applied leisure occupation as it cannot cure people of their impairments, whereas, the Social Model argues that it is the responsibility of society to make societal structures more accessible in order to promote travelling as people with disabilities have a right to partake in mainstream activities. These constructs will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2, section 2.3 when the researcher elaborates on disability as a human rights and social justice issue. In addition to the latter, the Social-Relational Model is an extension of the Social Model and recognises that disability is influenced by societal as well as personal factors. This suggests that for a person with a disability, travelling is a multidimensional phenomenon where one has to consider accessibility of societal structures and social interactions, as well as personal interests and meaning attributed to travelling. It is within the latter two models of disability, from a social approach to health, that the researcher considered travelling as a leisure occupation and a form of therapeutic intervention. The Socio-Relational model in conjunction with the Occupational Therapy Models (Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law, Cooper, Strong, Stewart, Rigby, & Letts., 1996) and the Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002) were used as a theoretical framework in the current study to discover the true essence of travelling for people with disabilities, as experienced by them.

Although there is a growing interest in travelling for people with disabilities, a more complicated and contingent account emerges when we consider the limited accessible accommodation, stringent flying terms and conditions, and inadequate accessibility at public attraction sites - indicative of occupational injustice- that refer to the inequality of opportunities for occupational engagement. Despite the fact that people with disabilities have the right to partake in an array of cultural and entertainment services, South Africa has only succeeded in improving accessibility for a few tourist attraction sites such as the Kruger National Park and various Botanical Gardens. Developing countries are battling to meet the basic needs of their citizens, let alone focus on fulfilling their right to travel (Loi & Kong, 2012). Thus, in the words of Engelhardt (1979) “people are healthy or diseased in terms of the activities open to them or denied them” (as cited in Singh, 2016, p. 281).

As will be seen from the literature review in chapter 2, there is a dearth of research available with only a scant few qualitative studies that explore travelling for people with disabilities. Venkatesh (2006) examined the impact of travel behaviour for marketing purposes; Yau et al. (2004) identified barriers to travelling for people with disabilities. Pagán (2012) highlighted the amount of time that people with disabilities allocate to leisure activities and found that this is significantly less than their non-disabled counterparts. No literature could be found pertaining to the meaning or essence of travelling for people with disabilities and how they interpret their lived experiences.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Previous studies have shown that engaging in leisure activities contributes to a healthy occupational identity, relieves stress and enables the individual to discover personal strengths (Chun & Lee, 2010, p. 393). Despite documenting the benefits of engaging in leisure activities, the benefits of travelling as leisure occupation for non-disabled individuals have not been well

documented. Annals from tourism research show that people with disabilities have the same desire to travel and explore as non-disabled people (Yau et al., 2004). However, no previous studies have researched the phenomenon of the lived experience of travelling for people with disabilities.

Currently, challenging barriers pertaining to lack of relevant assistive technology, inaccessibility and negative attitudes towards people with disabilities, points to occupational injustice emphasising discrimination and inaccessibility, making them feel socially excluded. In exploring the phenomenon of travelling for people with disabilities, the researcher hopes to alert attention to the recognition of the autonomy of people with disabilities in society through travelling and to contribute to the affirmation of their positive identities. Therefore, this study addresses the following research question: what is the common or shared lived experience of leisure travelling for people with disabilities?

#### **1.4 Aim and Objectives of the study**

The aim of the study was to explore the lived experiences of leisure travelling for people with disabilities.

The objectives of the study were to:

- (1) Explore the purpose of travelling for people with disabilities;
- (2) Describe and explore the overall experience of travelling as experienced by people with disabilities;
- (3) Explore how people with disabilities perceive, understand, and make sense of their experiences of travelling;
- (4) Explore the meaning that travelling has for people with disabilities.



To attain the aim and objectives as mentioned above the researcher decided to apply a hermeneutical phenomenology study design. A reflexive journal was kept throughout the study in order to reflect on the dialogue between the participants and the researcher as well as the relation between her self-interpretation and the participants' interpretation of their experience. This will be discussed in detail in chapter 5.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The present study provides insight into travelling as a leisure occupation for people with disabilities and contributes to an understanding of how travelling has facilitated them in developing a new identity. It further provides new insights into how travelling assists in the discovery of individual strengths and the generation of positive emotions. Lastly, it encourages Occupational Therapists to promote appropriate leisure programmes as a means of therapeutic intervention to enhance occupational identity and promote optimal occupational performance.

Additionally, the findings of the study could be utilised to promote occupational justice by taking a stance against discrimination and advocating for the rights of people with disabilities to participate in travel and tourism services.

### **1.6 Thesis structure**

The thesis comprises the following chapters:

**Chapter 1** – Introduction: Provides the background and problem statement of the study. This is followed by the aim, objectives and significance of discovering the essence of travelling for people with disabilities.

**Chapter 2 – Literature Review:** In this chapter, the theoretical framework underpinning the study, together with a comprehensive review of the literature, are presented. Hitherto travelling has not been considered as an intervention within Occupational Therapy so it is imperative that a clear sense of “occupation” is established and defined. In addition, it presents existing literature that is available, with specific reference to travelling and people with disabilities. It also encompasses similar studies carried out, irrespective of the field of study in which these were conducted.

**Chapter 3 – Methodology:** Encompasses the research approach, how participants were recruited and selected, data collection methods, the process of analysis and concludes with rigour, trustworthiness and ethics.

**Chapter 4 – Findings:** Depict the participants’ interpretation of their lived experience of travelling, as a person with a disability, as well as the researcher’s endeavours to understand their interpretations.

**Chapter 5 – Discussion:** The findings are interpreted as per the objectives within the context of literature as well as the philosophy of occupational science, the Person-Environment-Occupation Model and the Model of Human Occupation to elicit the interrelations of travelling as a leisure activity and how it contributes to occupational identity. The chapter concludes by indicating the limitations of the study.

**Chapter 6 – Conclusion and Recommendations:** In this chapter, the researcher summarises the findings and provides an answer to the research question, followed by recommendations. In closing, the researcher specifies the significant contributions of this study.

## **Chapter 2 - Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the researcher's approach to the current study, the first part of the literature review chapter deals with literature pertaining to disability studies and the theoretical framework that underpins this study. This chapter commences with an examination of the latest statistics on disability globally and in South Africa, that provide insight on how this group of people is situated in society. Following this, literature pertaining to the Social Model, together with the Socio-Relational Model of disability, is reviewed. The researcher defines disability and emphasises that it is a human rights and social justice issue. In addition, the theoretical framework within Occupational Therapy underpinning this study, namely the Person-Environment-Occupation (PEO) Model (Law et al., 1996), the Model of Human Occupation (MOHO) (Kielhofner, 2002) and Occupational Science, is presented. These theoretical constructs illustrate the effect of disability on occupation and occupational identity. Since travelling has not previously been considered as a probable intervention within Occupational Therapy, the researcher explores literature that addresses the benefits of leisure as occupation, followed by key considerations of travelling as leisure occupation.

The second part of the literature review concentrates on research conducted on the key issues pertaining to travelling for people with disabilities. There is scant literature available on travelling for people with disabilities, which emphasises the lack of economic and political attention this minority group experiences. The only studies that could be found pertaining to the experience of travelling are from a tourism perspective in order to establish the reasons why people with disabilities travel. In addition, no studies could be found within the field of Occupational Therapy regarding travelling.

The third part of the literature review chapter deals with studies regarding travelling conducted amongst non-disabled people. Due to the unique nature of the current study, there is a lack of research available on the specific topic. For this reason the researcher had to appraise articles pertaining to the travelogues of non-disabled travellers.

A list of keywords such as leisure travelling, occupational identity, well-being, travelling as a treatment and benefits of travelling, were used to search databases for relevant articles. By so doing, the researcher contextualised the relationship between travelling and learning, travelling and reconstruction of identities and travelling as a health motive. Various Occupational Therapy databases such as Scencedirect and Credo, were used in addition, but not limited to, ERIC, SAGE Journals Online, Pubmed and EbscoHost to search significant and relevant literature. To conclude this chapter, the researcher identified the gaps found in the literature.

## **2.2 Disability globally and in South Africa**

Globally, there are 785 million people with disabilities, which accounts for 15% of the world's population (Vila et al., 2015, p. 262). In South Africa 7.5% of the population, about 2.8 million people, have been diagnosed with a disability (Statistics, S. A., 2014, p.v). Subjectively, people with disabilities have to overcome an impairment and the anatomical and/or physiological changes that have occurred in their once familiar body (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2016, p. 10) which often results in many challenges such as depression, anxiety and a loss of autonomy (Chun & Lee, 2010). Impairment can affect individuals and their family members significantly, but it should not prohibit them from engaging in society or in any environment of their choosing. However, disability is caused by physical inaccessibility as well as social injustice which prohibit people with disabilities from conducting the activities of their daily living (WHO, 2016, p. 10). In line with the World Health Organisation (WHO), Occupational Therapists explicitly distinguish

between impairment and disability. Disability is a state that occurs as a result of society restricting people with impairment from engaging in their full rights, due to limitations in accessibility, discrimination and social exclusion. It represents the debilitating aspects of an individual (with an impairment) interacting within his/her contextual factors, such as environmental, personal and cultural aspects (WHO, 2016, p. 10).

Recognising this, South Africa ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2009 in an attempt to overcome these challenges and improve equality for all (UNCRPD, 2016). In doing so, South Africa recognises that disability is not solely the individual's problem but, in effect, is a limitation in equal participation, due to physical, economic, environmental and social barriers. The adoption of the UNCRPD raises awareness, advocates for accessibility in South Africa and enforces the country's constitution while ultimately contributing to the well-being of people with disabilities.

### **2.3 Disability as a human rights and social justice issue**

How disability is defined is crucial when formulating ideologies and philosophies about life, particularly on aspects of impairment and disablism – a term used to characterise discrimination against people with disabilities (Nishida, 2013). Disability can be interpreted according to various perspectives or models such as Medical, Charity, Social or Social-Relational. From the medical perspective, professionals view a person with a disability as having a physical problem that must be cured or fixed in order to be “normal” (Swartz, 2014). Together with the Medical Model the Charity Model sees disability as a deficit, and views people with disabilities as victims who are dependent on society's help, requiring special schools and special services, consequently, reflecting a low self-esteem (Making PRSP inclusive, 2017). Regarded as the traditional approach to disability, most professionals define disability from a medical perspective as

something that is broken that requires fixing (McCormack & Collins, 2012). As important as the Medical Model of disability is for progression and development of novel means of stimulating and re-growing the nervous system, it completely neglects the human component of having a disability. The individualistic approach to disability, from a Medical Model perspective, views the individual as overcome by limitations and confinement of movement, whereas, the Social-relational Model considers the individual in context with a multitude of possibilities and alternatives to gaining quality of life. For the purpose of this study the researcher focuses on the Social Model and the Social-relational Model of disability, as identity and ideology are interlinked with socialisation (Nishida, 2013). These two models affirm the societal as well as the personal impact of disability.

### **2.3.1 Social Model**

For many years people with disabilities had to face oppression and social exclusion (Shakespeare, 2016). Working for the Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS), Paul Hunt together with Vic Finkelstein from South Africa, formulated the Social Model in the mid 1970's. Through many intellectual and political arguments they contended that the root of social exclusion was in fact economic, but sustained by societal psychological beliefs of “superiority or inferiority” (Shakespeare, 2016, p. 196) which means that the biggest distinction between the Medical Model and the Social Model is the differentiation made between impairment and disability. The Social Model defines disability (UPIAS, 1975, as cited in Shakespeare, 2006) as “the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organisation which takes little or no account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities” (UPIAS, 1975, as cited in Shakespeare, 2006, p. 14). The Social Model's tactical approach to liberation involves networking with other people

with disabilities, creating positive selfhood and developing an inclusive disability community whilst focusing on a just economic policy (Shakespeare, 2016).

As argued by Shakespeare (2016), the Social Model is a “practical tool, not a theory, an idea or a concept” (Shakespeare, 2016, p. 199) which shifts the responsibility from the individual to society to remove the barriers and create equal access for all. This shift allows for people with a disability to look beyond the self and identify barriers other than their impairment, as stated by Shakespeare (2016), “... rather than feeling self-pity, she can feel anger and pride” (Shakespeare, 2016, p. 199). Unfortunately an essential flaw within the Social Model is that it fails to recognise the experience of the individual living with a disability, suggestive of a society that disables people, rather than an impairment (Making PRSP Inclusive, 2017). The impairment impinges on every aspect of their lives. Disability is more than just a civil rights issue; despite providing a barrier-free environment there remains an intrinsic challenge to living with an impairment, “which no amount of environmental change is able to entirely eliminate” (Shakespeare, 2016, p. 202).

The Social Model succeeds as a political activist tool (Owens, 2015) in identifying the harmful and negative design of inaccessibility within societal structures as well as social rejection as a result of prejudice within society. With society as the main cause of disability, the Social Model separates living with an impairment from being disabled, subsequently focusing on oppression and minimising the individual’s experience of impairment. Consequently, the Social Model falls short of replacing negative thinking with healthy productive thought patterns. In this manner the Social Model resists transformation, as little association has been made between impairment and age, traditions, culture and language and failing to theorise the experiences of people with disabilities’ (Owens, 2015). The Social-Relational Model extends the Social Model as it provides an alternative by recognising “psycho-emotional dimensions to disability” (Reeve, 2004, p. 85) which will be discussed in detail in the following section 2.3.2. The Social-Relational Model

argues for an amalgamation of accepting that society is more often than not inaccessible, and that living with an impairment, in itself, is personally challenging for the individual.

### ***2.3.2 Social Relational Model***

The Social-Relational Model extends the Social Model of disability in that it acknowledges the structural as well as the psycho-emotional dimensions of disability that regularly prohibit people with disabilities from “participating within mainstream society” (Reeve, 2004, p. 85). It affirms the emotional impact disablism has on people with disabilities, particularly when these impacts emerge from interpersonal interactions (Nishida, 2013).

The psycho-emotional dimensions of disability can be experienced in various ways which vary in intensity depending on spatiotemporal factors, and are not always experienced by all people who have a disability. The psycho-emotional dimensions of disability can be described in the following three examples of disablism: (i) responses to experiences of structural disability, (ii) social interaction and (iii) internal or internalised oppression (Reeve, 2004, p. 86). The response to experiences of structural disabilities refers to people with disabilities experiencing inaccessibility causing them to feel like a “second-class citizen who is being tolerated” (Reeve, 2004, p. 86). Social interaction refers to the “frank curiosity of other people” as people with disabilities physically appear different and bear the brunt of being confronted with personal questions and inappropriate stares, all contributing to psycho-emotional disablism (Reeve, 2004, p. 86). The last example of disablism is internalised oppression, and this refers to society’s archetypes where people with disabilities, being a minority group, internalise the ideas held by the dominant group. As stated by Morris (1991), internalised oppression occurs when people with disabilities accept society’s values about their lives (Morris, 1991, as cited in Reeve, 2004). Interestingly, a study conducted amongst people with impairments revealed that 50% of the



participants did not identify themselves as being disabled (Grewal et al., 2002). Therefore, the Social-Relational Model insists on the importance of people with disabilities owning their inner struggles in order to heal; in other words Nishida (2013) suggests that the psychological difficulties of living in a disablist society are not solely due to social barriers, but also to impairments and layered internalisations of others' insecurities that are tossed at people with disabilities. It is advised that having a safe space where one can talk about all aspects of one's experiences with disability without judgment or projection, is one way to heal from the traumatising experiences of disablism (Nishida, 2013).

Conforming to the Social-Relational Model, the Affirmative Model of disability builds on the existing Social Model as it has a non-tragic approach to disability and aims to promote positive identities (Disability arts online, 2017). Cameron (2008) defines disability as a “human difference” rather than a deficit from “normal” (Cameron, 2008, p. 31). With this approach, the Affirmative Model creates space not only for society to develop a barrier free environment but also for the individual to accept his/her impairment and allows for agency to develop.

For the purpose of this study, the Social Model as well as the Social-Relational Model of disability was used in order to identify inaccessibility as a human rights issue and to highlight the impact of society when people with disabilities travel, although not neglecting to emphasise the responsibility that people with disabilities have to develop agency.

### ***2.3.3 Legislation pertaining to people with disabilities***

Article 30 of the UNCRPWD, states that people with disabilities have the right to partake in cultural performances, theatres, museums, libraries and tourism services (UN, 2006). In attempts to create a barrier-free environment, the South African Department of Tourism paved the way by

increasing accessibility to the main attraction sites such as the Kruger National Park, various Botanical Gardens and airports (Getaway, 2016). However, to a great extent, structural adjustments are still required to create a barrier-free community for people with disabilities (Integrated National Disability Strategy, 2006). Adhering to this group's requirements is non-negotiable and a matter of immense importance.

Additional legislation and policies were developed to ensure fair conduct towards people with disabilities, such as the White Paper on the Rights of Person with Disabilities (WPRPD), which was amended and approved by Cabinet in December 2015. In this White Paper, Government pledges to remove “discriminatory barriers that perpetuate the exclusion and segregation of persons with disabilities” by specifying norms and standards and identifying key role players (Department of Social Development, WPRPD, 2015, p. 4). The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act of 2000 (PEPUDA), amended in 2008, promises to “prevent, prohibit and eliminate unfair discrimination, hate speech and harassment” (Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, PEPUDA, 2017). In spite of this, more focus and emphasis have been placed on the prohibition of unfair discrimination on the grounds of race in South Africa. The democracy of South Africa does recognise the rights of people with disabilities through amending and developing strategies; however, little course of action is evident in daily life.

Researching literature about disability enlightened the researcher about the constraints and level of inaccessibility people with disabilities have to face on a daily basis. In reality, South Africa is a far cry from the expectations stipulated in the UNCRPWD, WPRPD and PEPUDA. There still remains a lack of appropriate intervention for people with disabilities. With immense accessibility

restrictions and a lack of support for people with disabilities to travel, there is a breach between what is promised and actuality.

## **2.4 Disability and occupation**

In Occupational Therapy, occupation is defined as the meaningful activities such as leisure, work and self-care, which individuals, families and communities engage in, in order to occupy their time and bring purpose to their lives (World Federation of Occupational Therapy, 2016). Occupational Therapists believe that occupations are unique to the individual and pivotal to their interests and needs, hence using occupation as the primary intervention modality. Participation in occupation, specifically regarding access to activities as well as occupational engagement, is greatly influenced by disability (Hammell, 2004). Occupational engagement pertains to the purposeful engagement in activities like work, leisure and self-care. This was used to delineate the influence of engagement in the leisure travel activities on the physical as well as the mental well-being (Reid, 2011). Therefore, the researcher makes use of the philosophy of occupational science and the Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996) along with the Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002). This will be discussed in the section on disability and occupational identity as the study's theoretical framework to view the challenges that people with disabilities face in terms of occupational engagement and to elaborate on the essence of occupation.

### ***2.4.1 Occupational Science***

The underlying philosophy for this study is occupational science, which focuses on the study of the human need for, and participation in, occupation, generally referred to as everyday life activities within the discipline of Occupational Therapy. Occupational science is the study of

human occupations, and is dedicated to providing Occupational Therapy with the scientific evidence to clinically apply occupation in practice (University of Southern California, 2016).

It is a continuous challenge to define Occupational Therapy as there is still great confusion regarding what exactly the profession does, and often inter-professional role-confusion exists between Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy (Segsworth, Sittler, & Wilson, 2006, p. 24). For this reason it is imperative that a clear understanding of ‘occupation’ is established and defined, since this is the primary modality utilised in Occupational Therapy practise (Hammell, 2014, p. 39). Occupational science assists not only in delineating occupation but can also assist with exploring the concept of leisure travelling as an occupation. Occupational science is interdisciplinary (Plymouth, 2016) because it “demystifies concepts of occupation” and informs various disciplines about the value and meaning of occupation (Segsworth et al., 2006, p. 24). Occupational scientists’ focus on occupation assists Occupational Therapists in defining occupation, and provides the core philosophy of Occupational Therapy in appraising the relation and impact of occupation on the person within the environment, thus enlightening clinical practice. Analysing and adapting activities to purposely apply these within the environment in order to optimise occupational performance, is the one trait that distinguishes Occupational Therapists from occupational scientists and other professionals. The Person-Environment-Occupation (PEO) Model assists Occupational Therapists to do this.

#### ***2.4.2 The Person-Environment-Occupation Model***

As Occupational Therapists view human beings as “occupational beings” (Kielhofner, 2008, p. 28), they use occupation to assist the individual to define his/her identity (Taylor, 2008, p. 39). In the Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996), the authors describe the interaction between person, occupation and environment as an “enabling-disabling” process that

assists one to adapt and change. This affirms that information received from the environment can greatly influence one's occupational performance (Law et al., 1996, p. 10). The conceptual Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996) looks at the means by which occupation is performed and this is called occupational performance. Ideally one wants to achieve a harmonious transactional relationship between the person, the environment and occupation (Law et al., 1996). The harmonious interaction between these three components endorses a balanced lifestyle and optimal occupational performance.

Grounded in this Occupational Performance Model, Occupational Therapists understand the impact that disability has on a person's occupational identity. When one acquires a disability it causes an interruption in one's everyday life activities, this change in activities of daily living (ADLs) induces an imbalance between the person, *how he/she views him/herself*; environment – *accessibility of the space and societal response* and occupation – *what the individual does, the method in which it is performed and the meaning attributed to it*. When an individual's life is altered following an injury, occupation will be redefined, altered, adapted and rearranged (Taylor, 2008, p. 22). Questions such as: *"How do I go on after this? What am I going to do?"* are indicative that being and doing is inevitably linked (Blair, 2000, p. 271). It is evident that, interpreted from a Person-Environment-Occupation Model perspective, disability radically influences one's occupational identity. With the use of the Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996), Occupational Therapists can articulate to patients the interaction between person-environment-occupation and, in conjunction with this, elaborate on the specific influences that lead to an enabling or disabling outcome (Maclean, Carin-Levy, Hunter, Malcolmson, & Locke, 2012).

The Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996) approaches the patient holistically in terms of spirit, soul and body, thus the person who acquires a disability can be affected in a variety of internal performance components, such as cognitive, physical, psychological or neurological components (see Figure 2.1– Model of Person-Environment-Occupation). Changes in any of these components directly influence the environment, including the individual’s cultural beliefs about disability, the physical

accessibility of the environment and the social support and values of one’s community. The person (internal factors) together with the environment (external factors), has a transactional relationship with occupation (activities

the individual engages in) which comprises the meaning the individual attributes to it. If a person with

impairments experiences disorder in performing his occupation, it will lead to an imbalance in the fit or congruence between all three components, thus affecting his occupational performance and ultimately his occupational identity. It is the philosophy of Occupational Therapy through occupational engagement, that many challenges can be conquered (Blacker, Broadhurst, & Teixeira, 2008).

By using the Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996), the researcher views the individual from a transactional approach recognising the interdependence between the person, occupation and environment. In the current study it has been applied to emphasise the role of the



**Figure 2.1– Model of Person-Environment-Occupation**

Source from [cjp.sagepub.com](http://cjp.sagepub.com)

environment, as well as occupation in influencing behaviour and how to apply it to direct intervention (Law et al., 1996).

## **2.5 Disability and occupational identity**

Together with the Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996) the researcher also makes use of the Model of Human Occupation (MOHO) (Kielhofner, 2002) to explain the impact of disability on one's identity. The Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002) explains "how and why" people participate in chosen occupations, thus providing Occupational Therapists with valuable tools to assess and optimise occupational performance and identity (Kielhofner, 2008, p. 5). The Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002) provides a slightly different perspective than the Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996) in that it focuses more on the person and his/her occupational identity. Emphasising the person-specific approach within Occupational Therapy, the researcher used the Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002) to consider the environment, roles and routines, performance skill and personal interests from the participants' perspectives.

### ***2.5.1 Model of Human Occupation***

With the intent to fully comprehend occupational identity it is imperative to understand that occupational identity is not the same as self-concept or self-esteem. The latter refers to how the individual views the self, and the cognisant awareness of how they perceive and understand their own character (Christiansen, 1999). Occupational identity refers to "a sense of who one is and wishes to become and is generated from one's history of occupational participation" (Kielhofner, 2008, p. 106); thus emphasis is placed on the individual's interaction with the world through engaging in occupations. Kielhofner (2008, p. 124) defines individuals as "occupational beings"

who create meaning and construct identity through engaging in occupation. For this reason, occupations give meaning to one's life (Hammell, 2014, p. 40) and prove to be fundamental in the reconstruction of identity (Doroud, Fossey, & Fortune, 2015). As one's identity changes following a life-changing event, the MOHO assists one to "reorganise the system (individual)" (Reed and Sanderson, 1999, p. 245) in readjusting to the environment as well as reviving normal occupational development. Kielhofner suggests that individuals should be viewed as open systems which interact with the environment by means of input, throughput, output and feedback. Through this interactive system the person experiences "change by the environment and can cause change in the environment" (Reed and Sanderson, 1999, p. 244). This dynamic open system interacts with the environment based on three interrelated components, namely: "volition, habituation and performance capacity" (Ramafikeng, 2011, p. 1). Volition refers to the process of selecting what one wants to engage in based on the amount of value attributable to the activity. It is also determined by what one finds interesting and whether one has a personal connection to such an activity. Therefore, one's beliefs and its significance attached to an occupation greatly influence performance capacity. Applying this concept to the current study, the amount of interest attributed to leisure travelling, the anticipated enjoyment, together with how capable the individual feels in order to engage in leisure travelling, predicts whether he/she will engage in it or not. However, volition continuously changes as new experiences challenge one to step out of one's comfort zone and allow for "elaboration of existing self-knowledge" (Ramafikeng, 2011, p. 2). By engaging in occupations that were freely chosen, based on the individual's volition, habituation will form. Habituation is described as actions that have developed into routines (Ramafikeng, 2011, p. 2). Hence, roles and habits subconsciously develop as actions are repeated, greatly influencing one's behavioural patterns (Ramafikeng, 2011). That is why the onset of disability seriously disrupts one's daily habits and requires relearning of new habits and a reconstruction of identity (Ramafikeng, 2011).



The Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002) further states that an individual's environment, i.e. structural, cultural, economical, political and social, influence how one performs and manages occupations, in that different environments have differing effects on personally as well as on that person's occupation. The three components, volition, habituation and personal causation, together with one's environment, have to be seen as a whole as they holistically impact occupational performance. Consequently, occupational performance is "dynamic in nature" (Ramafikeng, 2011, p. 2) and must be perceived within the context of one's environment and actions. As the environment changes, in this case through leisure travelling, an individual participates in new occupations and develops new behaviours, and through this process occupational identity is reshaped by means of consistently practising the occupation. Eventually this repeated pattern will progress to mastery and the attainment of occupational competence. In constantly readdressing and modifying occupational identity and as occupational competence progresses, one becomes more occupationally adaptive (Ramafikeng, 2011). This is referred to as the "function – dysfunction continuum" (Ramafikeng, 2011, p. 1).

Through engaging in activities and actions an *interweaving* occurs that extends people's being in the world and similarly brings the world into their being. Occupation can be understood as "seizing and being seized by the world" (Sutton 2010, p. 196). Occupation is inescapably linked with engaging in the world, signifying that people are occupational beings (Taylor, 2008). Several studies (Blacker et al., 2008; Hammell, 2014; Hitch, Pépin, & Stagnitti, 2014; Persson, Erlandsson, Eklund, & Iwarsson, 2001) that have explored occupational identity highlight evidence that occupations are a means through which individuals can "express self and create identity" (Taylor, 2008, p. 39). Hitch (2014) supports this by saying that occupation is essential in characterising specifically who one's self is, thus occupation defines one's identity (Hitch, 2014,

p. 3). In addition, apart from creating an identity, a sense of achievement due to occupational engagement leads to stronger agency (Polkinghorne, 1996, p. 366) as it creates meaning.

The Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002) was of value for the current study as initially the model describes how the occupational identity of a person is affected by impairment, because individuals explore their world through the familiarity of their bodies and impairment significantly changes the way they are able to engage in occupation. Secondly, the Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002) guides insight into the influences of the environment; in this case travelling in a particular environment or setting, which could offer or restrict opportunities for occupational performance. Lastly the Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002) considers the individual's motivation, skill and capacity for engaging in specific occupations – more specifically travelling - and thus guides insight into the participants' "thinking, feeling and doing" (Ramafikeng, 2011, p. 1).

### ***2.5.2 Reconstruction of occupational identity***

Acquiring a disability is synonymous with distress; it causes disruption of relationships, identity roles and preferred occupations (Kleiber, Hutchinson, & Williams, 2002). It poses a direct threat to self, causing people to lose sight of who they are, which leads to a significant interruption in occupational identity (Neimeyer, 2004). Lawson, in an auto-ethnography, elaborates on this phenomenon when she explains the process following a traumatic brain injury by stating: "*I had to adapt to my diminished self. I could not grasp the reality of the present nor envision anything for the future*" (Lawson, Delamere, & Hutchinson, 2008, p. 241). This may explain why people with disabilities often experience depression, and struggle to reintegrate into the community having to transition to major changes in body, occupation and environment, can be an overwhelming task (Lawson et al., 2008). Through the theoretical lens of the Model of Human

Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002), the researcher was guided to interpret how disability affects the individual's occupational identity. Given that individuals engage in various forms of occupation every day, it is the very thing by which individuals create identity, as it connects them to the world. As Taylor (2008) states "people create who they are through occupations which connect them to their world and culture" (Taylor, 2008, p. 23). Through occupation people create, define and reconstruct identity. In light of this, Occupational Therapists lay emphasis on meaningful occupations. Adapting to life-altering circumstances is fundamental to an individual's well-being and engaging in meaningful occupations, such as leisure, can assist with transitioning through these life changes (Taylor, 2008).

In the third edition of Kielhofner's book (2002) on the Model of Human Occupation, he further engages with the concept of human occupation and the application thereof in Occupational Therapy practice. The book investigates the motivation for, and the selection of, occupations along with how individuals establish their routines. In this publication Kielhofner emphasises the importance of maintaining a healthy occupational identity and explores narratives of various participants in order to highlight how occupational identity is influenced by the disruption caused by disability. He uses narratives from various participants with the purpose of illustrating how occupational identity is shaped by competence and adaptation; for example, participants with an occupational identity as a ballerina and a journalist respectively, were severely threatened by disability (Kielhofner, 2002, as cited in Unruh, 2004). They could not comprehend or imagine themselves as anyone other than their previously defined identities, which were based on the prime occupation they performed e.g. ballet or discovering stories for a newspaper. Kielhofner describes how the specific occupation, with which they identified, ballet or journaling, was their 'past self' and it was now in need of reconstruction following a disability, requiring a considerable amount of adaptation. They had to grapple with the adaptation from the familiar or develop

completely new occupations in order to redefine their occupational identities. It is for this reason that Fenech (2008, p. 296) asserts that occupation is key in defining occupational identity and can be used as a means of linking the “past self to the present self”. Based on the arguments made by Kielhofner it is evident that disability does influence one’s identity and reconstruction of identity is needed.

## **2.6 Leisure as occupation**

People travel in anticipation of discovering a valuable experience; for example, excitement, relaxation, to escape, to explore, for self-reflection or any other motive for travelling (Shi et al., 2012), but all of these experiences are identical to the motives for engaging in leisure (Venkatesh 2006, p. 92 & 95). The researcher briefly looked at leisure as a meaningful occupation which is followed by literature available on travelling as a pleasurable leisure activity that could provide distraction from challenges and be used as a means to free oneself from daily stressors.

### ***2.6.1 Advantages of leisure participation***

There are studies that highlight that leisure influences one’s quality of life, promotes social engagement and contributes to the individual’s ability to flourish (Wise, 2014, p. 20) as well as to improve self-worth and self-efficacy (Fenech, 2008, p. 295). Other studies emphasise that leisure also serves as a distraction from life’s stressors and, most importantly, aids in reconstructing an individual’s identity (Fenech, 2008; Kleiber, 2002; Kleiber, Reel, & Hutchinson, 2008). In a guest editorial written on “the benefits and barriers to leisure occupations” Fenech (2008) reflects that engagement in leisure activities is reduced by 80% following a stroke (Fenech, 2008, p. 296). This reduction in leisure participation is attributed to the participants’ perceptions of constraint and lack of facilities/support (Fenech, 2008). This concurs with Kleiber’s view that perception

plays a compelling role in defining negative life events such as acquiring a disability (Kleiber et al., 2002). Within the Medical Model, leisure is often neglected in client intervention, consequently, neglecting personal transformation and identity restoration (Kleiber et al., 2002). This explains why professionals often underestimate the significance and utility of leisure activities in coping with loss and adjusting to life after a disability – which is seen as one of life’s “greatest challenges” (Kleiber et al., 2008, p. 321). According to James Wise (2015, p. 22) “disability doesn’t preclude flourishing” and throughout history leisure activities specifically designed for people using wheelchairs have conveyed transformation and empowerment. Leisure can undeniably be regarded as a means of linking the “past self with the present self” (Fenech, 2008, p. 295) as leisure sufficiently “buffers the impact of disability and provides a form of distraction through generating optimism for the future, thus helping in reconstructing one’s life story which is continuous with the past” (Taylor, 2008, p. 23).

An interesting quantitative study was done by Zawadzki, Smyth, & Costigan (2015) in Northeast United States,-to measure the physiological and psychological effect of leisure. A total of 115 participants had to complete a self-report survey pertaining to their moods, level of interest versus boredom as well as level of stress on a daily basis, whether or not they had engaged in leisure activities on that specific day (Zawadzki et al., 2015). Through measuring the participants’ heart rates and cortisol levels the researchers could monitor the above-mentioned outcomes. The findings showed that when participants engaged in leisure activities they had a decreased heart rate, appeared less sad, less stressed and presented with lower levels of boredom (Zawadzki et al., 2015). The quantitative measure of the participants’ heart rates demonstrated that leisure has a contemporaneous effect on an individual’s physiological system during the period of leisure participation (Zawadzki et al., 2015). Equally, resuming previous leisure activities’ following a traumatic event often serves as a reminder of what one has lost and may bring great difficulty and

feelings of bereavement, as in these cases leisure serves as a “context for change rather than continuity” (Kleiber et al., 2008, p. 324).

## **2.7 Travelling as leisure occupation**

Occupation, to the Occupational Therapist, is seen as a multifaceted phenomenon. In order to comprehend the therapeutic value of occupation one must consider occupation within its ethnographic context, considering its spatiotemporal dimensions as well as its significance to the client (Taylor, 2008). The intricate detail of how a client engages in occupation, what meaning s/he attributes to that occupation and the level of participation in the occupation, is tenuously observed by the therapist, thus even the simplest task like making tea is a “complex phenomenon” (Taylor, 2008, p. 16). It is exactly this skill that sets Occupational Therapy apart from any other medical discipline. Occupational Therapists take the science of occupation and accurately apply it within context to optimise the individual’s performance and enhance his identity. In the following section the researcher highlights why and how travelling can be seen as a leisure occupation. Despite a growing interest in travelling for people with disabilities, no literature could be found linking travelling as a leisure occupation to the meaningful attributes it holds for travellers. Venkatesh (2006, p. 89), after conducting a study which identified travel behaviour, states that “travel is an expression of what leisure means to people”. For this reason, the researcher reviewed the benefits of leisure in order to relate it to travelling.

For an activity such as travelling to be classified as a leisure activity it should allow the individual to have freedom of choice. To be able to choose freely one’s leisure activities greatly contribute to a sense of control and identity (Fenech, 2008). Moreover, some leisure activities are more beneficial than others, so it is imperative to match personal interests with preference (Zawadzki et al., 2015) which promotes autonomy. James Wise states that “if there is no chance for selection

there is no freedom” (Wise, 2014, p. 21). Travelling, similar to leisure, must be intrinsically satisfying, according to Strauss-Blasche, Reithofer, Schobersberger, Ekmekcioglu, and Wolfgang (2005); taking a vacation leads to better sleep, positive mood improvements and greater well-being and Iwasaki, Mactavish, & MacKay (2005) confirmed this by stating that it promotes character rejuvenation. Lastly, leisure travelling should endorse resilience –taking a break through leisure. For example going on vacation, allows one to regroup and better handle problems (Iwasaki & Mannell, 2000, p. 168). In agreement with Iwasaki (2000), Pagán (2012) states that taking a vacation is important for people with disabilities to become self-reliant, independent and confident. Solitary leisure provides an opportunity for self-reflection which in turn contributes to identity development and aids in transcending negative life events (Fenech, 2008).

Literature on leisure, which is congruent with travelling, specifies that travelling encourages social interactions (Yau et al., 2004) and promotes autonomy and self-assurance (Pagán, 2012). As leisure travel has a similar pattern to engaging in leisure activities, it meets the requirements to be regarded as a leisure occupation.

## **2.8 Travelling and people with a disability or illness**

This section of the literature review focuses on studies regarding travelling for people with disabilities. There is a dearth of literature available on travelling for people with disabilities, with existing literature predominantly focussing on travel-related illnesses like cholera, malaria and diarrhoea (Hunter-Jones, 2003). In effect no literature could be found within the field of Occupational Therapy pertaining to any form of leisure travelling. It became clear that travelling as a medium for therapy has been greatly overlooked.

People with disabilities are showing an increased awareness of travelling to the extent that tourism industries have identified the need to develop an additional mainstream channel for people travelling with a disability, called Accessible Tourism. Despite legislation promoting accessibility and the growing interest in travelling, only three studies could be found addressing travelling and people with disabilities. The researcher reviewed Yau et al., (2004), who focus on travelling with a disability in addition to accessibility; Shi et al., (2012) who study the motivations for travelling for people with disabilities and Hunter-Jones (2003) who assessed the outcome of taking a holiday on the wellbeing of patients diagnosed with cancer.

### ***2.8.1 Key issues pertaining to travelling for people with disabilities***

In a qualitative study done by Yau et al., (2004) in China, accessibility was not the key issue pertaining to travelling for people with disabilities. Participants were interviewed for the purpose of generating a basic understanding of key issues pertaining to travelling in order to provide a barrier-free service tailored to their specific needs. Yau et al. proposed that when deciding to travel as a person with disability, there are more things to take into consideration besides the physical access issue. The decisions of people with disabilities are influenced by their desire to explore new interests, willingness to take risks, how they manage daily living tasks and their network of support (Yau et al., 2004). Yau et al. identify the following five travel active stages, explaining all the phases one experiences before and during travelling: Stage 1 relates to the participants' understanding, and the acceptance of themselves as individuals or families with a disability. Stage 2 entails mastery of daily routines such as community mobility and paid employment. Stage 3 is characterised by the internal debate regarding the risk and reward of travel which entails analysing and searching for information regarding travelling and others' related travel stories. Stage 4 involves planning and the actual journey of the planned trip. Finally Stage 5 pertains to reflection and exploration of people's experiences and determines whether a



second or subsequent trip will be undertaken. Travellers with disabilities face the challenge of finding accessible options, and the authors noted that a negative experience in public spaces often meant that subsequent travel would be rejected. In contrast, a positive trip experience builds confidence and motivates the person to travel more frequently.

Yau et al.'s (2004) study highlights the complex interplay between tourism, disability and societal structures but overall the researchers examined the tourist experiences of people with disabilities in order to develop a time frame for travel agencies dealing in these tours. It did not explore the essence or meaning of travelling for this group of people, thus emphasising the uniqueness of the current study. Similar to the study done by Shi, Cole and Chancellor (2012), Yau et al. (2004) found that some of the participants remarked that travelling provided them with the opportunity to discover, reintegrate and create supporting connections. One of Yau's participants stated that:

*“being able to travel is a meaningful task through which a person with a disability can demonstrate to others that they have recovered or started to regain their control over destiny and to assert their future quality of life”* (Yau et al., 2004, p. 958).

Exploration and evaluation of self together with independence were two of the nine socio-psychological motives for travelling found by Shi et al. (2012). In their qualitative study done in 2012 in the USA, they identify the barriers and motivating factors for participating in leisure travelling, specifically for people with mobility impairments. Twelve participants were interviewed in two focus groups; all participants were keen travellers each with their own travel-related career, such as directors of travel agencies. The interviews were based on Crompton's (1979) nine socio-psychological motives, namely: *“(a) escape from a perceived mundane environment; (b) exploration and evaluation of self; (c) relaxation; (d) prestige; (e) regression”* – an opportunity to engage in things that were considered immature and irrational within the context

of their customary lifestyle (Crompton, 1979); “(f) *enhancement of kinship relationships*; (g) *facilitation of social interaction*; *cultural motivations* (h) *novelty* and (i) *education*” (Crompton, 1979, as cited in Shi et al., 2012, p. 22). This study was conducted with the intent to better relate to, and satisfy the needs people with disabilities have when travelling. The nine motives proved that people tend to travel because they are pushed by intrinsic forces like a desire for escape, relaxation, prestige and social interaction, as well as pulled by extrinsic forces like attractive destinations, novelty and traveller’s expectations (Shi et al., 2012). However, a discrepancy occurs when Crompton’s nine motives are applied to people travelling with disabilities. Two motivating factors namely “*prestige* and *regression*” are not identified as a motivation for people with disabilities to travel (Shi et al., 2012, p. 36). Shi et al. (2012) added new themes uniquely relevant to people with disabilities; namely: “*independence, the desire of being in a natural environment, adventure, the idea of “do it today”, and lastly accessibility*” (Shi et al., 2012, p. 36). Shi’s study assisted with identifying the reasons that people with disabilities travel. It brings to the fore the intrinsic forces for travelling and specifically indicated that all participants viewed travelling constraints in a positive manner and as an opportunity for growth. However, it does not denote why the identified intrinsic factors, such as relaxation, independence and adventure, are an impelling force. Shi et al., (2012) study neglects to state the essence of travelling for people with disabilities. It does not explore the nexus between travelling and the individual’s wellbeing and whether travelling can be applied as an acceptable intervention within Occupational Therapy. Limitations of the study were that all participants recruited had travel-related careers and were thus possibly inclined to be biased towards travelling. The participants finally discussed only three questions pertaining to their motivations for travelling. As questions revolved around the constraints in the tourism industry, the aim was to provide sufficient input to align tourism products and services to satisfy the needs of persons with disability. Thus the current study is

unique as it focuses on the inherent changes and affects that travelling have on the individual's wellbeing.

In agreement with Shi et al (2012), Hunter-Jones (2003) found that participants experienced positive and beneficial effects from travelling, such as regaining independence and personal identity, health and social effectiveness (Hunter-Jones, 2003). In the UK, Hunter-Jones (2003) conducted a qualitative study on the perceived effects of going on a holiday on the wellbeing of patients diagnosed with cancer. She interviewed eight male and eight female participants of various ages and from different socio-economic backgrounds who had been diagnosed with cancer (Hunter-Jones, 2003). Cancer is seen as a life threatening disease which often conjures negative feelings and fear of death (Hunter-Jones, 2003). However, Hunter-Jones emphasised that individuals involved in the planning phase of travelling, including seeing tourism adverts or listening to travel stories from family and friends, may experience a “deeper release from boredom” as well as an enhanced experience when travelling (Hunter-Jones, 2003, p.186). The planning phase forms part and parcel of the actual travelling trip as it is linked to excitement and expectation. The researcher was intrigued with Hunter-Jones' report concerning travelling to warm and sunny places. Many of the participants engaged in sunbathing and likened it to a “feel-good factor” and stated that “sunbathing itself may represent a complex activity” analogous with leisure, sophistication and vigour (Hunter-Jones, 2003, p. 191). Moreover, social effectiveness, also one of the socio-psychological motives listed in the study done by Shi et al. (2012), was described in terms of how travelling provides opportunities to meet and interact with people as opposed to spending time alone at home. One participant mentioned that being sick at the holiday destination and battling with severe side-effects from the treatment was still better than battling with this alone at home (Hunter-Jones, 2003). She found that travelling provided an opportunity for the participants to rebuild confidence and inner strength, and that going on a holiday instilled

new hope and new ideas of how to go forward (Hunter-Jones, 2003). For these participants battling with cancer, travelling was used as a vehicle to gain a sense of control and aided in reconstructing identity and discovery of self in everyday life (Hunter-Jones, 2003). This study showed that a new environment presents new opportunities and taking a holiday assists the participants in establishing their identity.

Based on the abovementioned studies, it is evident that leisure travelling assists people with disabilities or illness to reflect on, and redefine, their identities whilst promoting independence. Acknowledging this, the tourism industry has developed the concept of Accessible Tourism.

### ***2.8.2 Accessible Tourism***

The tourism industry has grown immensely, and of late has become more heedful of the needs of tourists with disabilities (Pagán, 2012). As a result an additional segment within the tourism industry was created. In Australia, Simon Darcy first coined this segment “accessible tourism”, a phrase used to ensure that people with disabilities can travel independently through using universally designed products and services (Darcy& Dickson, 2009, p. 33). The definition was recently expanded to:

*“Accessible Tourism enables people with access requirements, including mobility, vision, hearing and cognitive dimensions of access, to function independently and with equity and dignity through the delivery of universally designed tourism products, services and environments. This definition is inclusive of all people including those travelling with children in prams, people with disabilities and seniors”* (Darcy and Dickson, 2009, p. 34).

It is important to note that Accessible Tourism allows a person with any form of disability to function independently and with dignity. However, in reality only a fraction of people with

disabilities engage in public entertainment and travel due to accessibility constraints (Pagán, 2012) and the few courageous enough to travel often do so at the cost of losing their dignity. This indicates that people with disabilities may experience a repressed and restricted life, with little opportunity for new experiences and interactions (Darcy, 2009; Yau et al., 2004). Irrespective of the challenges people with disabilities face when travelling, participating in mainstream activities will not only promote occupational justice but also improve autonomy and wellbeing (Pagán, 2012). Additionally, companies like Access Earth, who developed an app for people to rate the accessibility requirements of accommodation, restaurants and theatres, greatly contribute to accessible tourism and social change. Their mission is to make travelling easy and accessible for people with disabilities, geriatrics and parents with prams (Access Earth, 2016). The app asks a variety of questions such as, is the door wide enough for wheelchairs to pass, do they have wheelchair accessible toilets, does the shower have railings and so forth. This information is made available to people with disabilities akin to the app of Google Earth, allowing one to assess whether the specific location in question is accessible, prior to visiting it. A short list of available tourism companies is available online if assistance is required when planning a trip (Brand South Africa, 2016). However, it was Martin Heng from Lonely Planet together with Simon Darcy who took iconic steps to making travelling more accessible through developing an online travel resource guide specifically for people with disabilities (Lonely Planet, 2016). This Guide entails country-to-country resources, useful websites pertaining to travel agents and tour operators as well as personal travel blogs, to provide some useful insight into travelling in a specific country. With regard to South Africa, sparse attempts have been made to make tourism accessible for people with disabilities. This disenfranchises the largest minority group in the world from experiencing cultural diversity, denying them their human right to travel with independence, dignity and integrity.

## 2.9 Travelling and non-disabled people

A great number of studies have been conducted on non-disabled people who travel in comparison to that of people with disabilities. This section outlines the travelogues of non-disabled people, specifically pertaining to their travel experiences thus excluding tourism studies which demarcate the tourism market. These studies reveal that health is listed as a motivational factor for travelling; that travelling can reconstruct identities and that there is a correlation between travelling and learning, as it leads to experience-dependent learning when travelling to a new environment.

### 2.9.1 Benefits of travelling for non-disabled people

The tourism industries have long recognised the benefits of travelling as a means of advancing wellbeing (Panchal & Pearce, 2012). The researcher divided this segment into the following three subsections, namely: enhancement of health within a leisure setting, endorsement of identity reformation and constructing learning and growth.

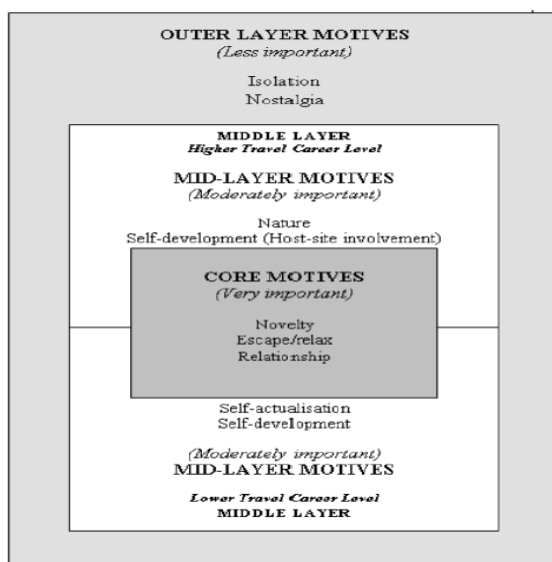


Figure 2.2 – Travel career pattern

Source: Panchal, J., & Pearce, P. (2011).

Health motives and the travel career pattern (TCP) model. *Asian Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 5(1), 1-1.

#### 2.9.1.1 Enhancement of health within a leisure setting

Panchal and Pearce (2012) argue that every individual has a travel career throughout his/her lifespan, some have a more extensive travelling career in comparison to others but all are subject to travelling whether it is for work or leisure. Everyone experiences travelling at some point, but the motive for travelling might differ.

Panchal and Pearce established the TCP model (see Figure 2.2 – Travel Career Pattern) and listed various

motivations for travelling, categorising these into less important to most important motivations for travelling. These listings illustrate that the core reason for travelling is for relaxation, relationships and novelty, which is also in accordance with the nine socio-psychological motives people with disabilities have for travelling (Shi et al., 2012, p. 22). Falk, Ballantyne, Packer, and Benckendorff (2012) conducted a quantitative study with 336 non-disabled participants, in order to investigate whether health can be seen as an independent travel motive. The study was performed at selected health spas in Thailand, Philippines and India. Panchal and Pearce (2012) created a division between “medical tourism” – the surgical procedures relating to dentistry, infertility and cosmetic surgery, and “spa tourism” – health related therapies to heal the body involving water treatments such as saunas, pools and steam rooms which promote relaxation and beauty (Panchal & Pearce 2012, p. 3). They proved that spa tourism is linked to “mind, body and spirit renewal” and that it can be defined as an “advancement of health in a leisure setting” (Panchal & Pearce 2012, p. 3). This motive for travelling primarily focuses on advancing one’s current state of wellbeing which correlates with the Social and the Socio-Relational approach to disability. These models of disability also concentrate on creating a positive selfhood and endorsing one’s wellbeing rather than wanting to fix a physical impairment (Panchal & Pearce, 2012). Their study revealed that health could be seen as an independent motive to travel.

### **2.9.1.2 Endorsement of identity formation**

Apart from health being a motive for travelling, other studies found that it is often used by non-disabled travellers to narrate their identity. Elsrud’s (2001) study proved that travelling greatly contributes to identity construction, whether it is about mastering a new skill or experiencing new adventures. Elsrud in 2001, in support of the Department of Humanities and Social Science in Sweden, conducted a qualitative study interviewing 35 long-term travellers, aged between 35 – 71 years within back-packing communities. With predominantly female participants the study aimed

to understand the phenomenon of how these travellers narrate their identities whilst travelling (Elsrud, 2001). Those who have travelled to India during a high risk period, in about 2001, were perceived as more audacious and valiant. Especially for female travellers who independently travelled to India, enduring the adversity enabled them to attain a higher sense of achievement (Elsrud, 2001). This is because some travellers want to experience hardships in order to stretch their limits and to gain awareness of “their own unique ability” (Elsrud, 2001, p. 607). Non-disabled travellers shared stories of their adversities along their journeys and described these as “fabulous” (Elsrud, 2001, p. 609). This is indicative that there is an inclination similar to why travellers in historic times wanted to travel, as they, too, wanted to explore, to be brave and journey on roads less travelled in order to discover (Elsrud, 2001). Travelling is therefore, synonymous with discovery, enduring adversities and taking risks with the aim of progressing and growth. It became apparent in Elsrud’s (2001) study that the quest to explore as travellers historically did and the purpose of travelling in the 20<sup>th</sup> century are closely related. Returning home after their travel expeditions, their stories were filled with narrations of adversities and risks, conveying their courageous identities, presenting themselves as interesting, brave and independent individuals (Elsrud, 2001). Apart from freely choosing to travel in order to stretch their limits and construct their identity, travelling brought about various experiences requiring the travellers to take risks, experience adventure, to be patient or act promptly, to explore novel and unfamiliar places and to endure physical hardships, which all influenced their identity. Narratives about risk influenced their identity by means of showing how they transcended their own limits and established their position in a hierarchical structure of risk (Elsrud, 2001). Adventure by means of having no pre-bookings for accommodation and time – how long in time they travelled as well as place – how novel and how different their journeys were, greatly contributed to their perspective of self (Elsrud, 2001). Additionally, their body – enduring hardships, sustaining injuries and overcoming illnesses - greatly contributed to formation of their identity. It is important to note



that Elsrud (2001) mentions that the travellers were engaged in a “self-reflection project”, as they describe how travelling contributed to constructing their identities (Elsrud, 2001, p. 599). In agreement with the “self-reflection project” mentioned by Elsrud (2001, p. 599), Falk et al. (2012) contend that the epitome of learning exists within combining past happenings with the present moment, which involves reflective contemplation whereby one can reflect cognitively as well as emotionally on the experience in order to process it. This in turn aids the individual in narrating their identity.

### **2.9.1.3 Travelling constructs learning and growth**

The tourism industry acknowledges that growth and learning transpires when travelling (Falk et al., 2012). Historically, travelling was reserved only for the affluent who mainly visited resorts and parks with the major motivation of escaping stressors. However, at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century travel patterns drastically shifted to travellers actively seeking intellectual experiences and wanting to explore new activities and cultures (Falk et al., 2012). The Western culture now predominantly views travelling as an opportunity for self-development, which expands their understanding of the self and their world (Falk et al., 2012). Tacitly interwoven with the philosophy of hermeneutical phenomenology in that it fundamentally recognises the formation of “multiple realities” (Creswell, 2013, p. 255), people create opportunities to mould and evolve their reality, thus “learning is a uniquely personal, contextual experience” (Falk et al., 2012, p. 915).

Individuals continuously seek new information and knowledge so the benefits of travelling “long outlive the temporal boundaries of the experience itself” (Falk et al., 2012, p. 925). Travelling is more than just the fleeting excitement and sensuous experience of the present event; it signifies something larger than the incident itself. The cognitive and emotional reflection of these experiences embeds growth for the individual. The tourism industry consequently, conducts

studies to better understand the “nature of learning in tourism and leisure” (Falk et al., 2012, p. 909) to primarily investigate “how, why and what people learn through free-choice learning” whilst travelling (Falk et al., 2012, p. 908). Falk et al. (2012) elucidate on this concept called “serious leisure” that is described as: “leisure activities that are actively pursued to support the accumulation of experience and development of skills and knowledge” (Falk et al., 2012, p. 912). This concept is not foreign to the field of Occupational Therapy, as leisure is conceptualised as offering a self-enhancement role under the control of the individual (Taylor, 2008).

In agreement with Falk et al.’s “serious leisure” (2012, p. 912), experiential learning is often used as a theoretical base for Occupational Therapists to apply Adventure therapy as an intervention for mental health. Experiential learning agrees “that people learn best from experience and that there are multiple senses involved in the activity” (Jeffrey & Wilson, 2017, p. 33). In a study done by Jeffrey & Wilson (2017) to explore the similarities and differences between Adventure therapy and Occupational Therapy in New Zealand, they found that:

*“Adventure therapy and Occupational Therapy share philosophical beliefs regarding the therapeutic power of activity in working towards planned outcomes. These include increased insight into strengths and abilities, changing behaviours or thoughts, learning skills, motivation for change and building capacity for change” (Jeffrey & Wilson, 2017, p. 34).*

Thus adventure has favourable outcomes when applied as a medium for therapeutic change (Jeffrey & Wilson, 2017).

In order to effectively learn something new, one must take the “mechanisms of synaptic and neuronal processes” into consideration (Levin, 2011, p. 154). Considering the basic principles of neural plasticity that govern learning in both the intact and damaged brain (Kleim & Jones, 2008) greatly contribute to evidence-based therapy with travelling as a means of intervention.

Neuroplasticity is the ability of the brain to rewire itself in response to “new situations or to changes in its environment” (Medicinenet, 2017, para. 1). Kleim and Jones (2008) explain neuroplasticity as “the mechanism by which the brain encodes experience and learns new behaviours” (Kleim & Jones, 2008, p. 225). Thus changes in neuroplasticity occurred as a result of “intensive training or learning” (Keller & Just, 2015, p. 256). A number of authors hypothesise that social interaction, as well as the sensory and motor stimulation from an “enriched environment”, has an effect on brain neuronal circuitry (Marmeleira, 2013, p. 83 & 87). It is not within the scope of this study to elaborate on the basic principles of neuroplasticity but it is important to note that Kleim (2011) contends that therapists should use neural plasticity as measure for marking functional improvement and that measuring neural plasticity, which is indicative of growth and learning, can be used to optimise performance in ADL’s (Kleim, 2011, p. 526). Thus in an attempt to promote neuroplasticity, travelling inevitably presents and significantly contributes to providing a new and enriched environment, which offers an opportunity to “learn from experience and adapt” (Keller & Just, 2015, p. 256). By this means, travelling and learning are unequivocally linked.

Learning as a result of travelling is personal and strongly tied to individual interests and motivations and the nature of learning from a tourist experience only emerges over space and time as an interpretation that these experiences transpire (Falk et al., 2012). The tourism industry emphasises that it is their responsibility to “engage travellers in transformative learning experiences” (Falk et al., 2012, p. 920). With the client-centred approach of Occupational Therapy, Occupational Therapists are proficient in aptly aligning occupation to optimise growth and influence not just occupational performance, but occupational identity of the individual. For that reason, the researcher challenges Falk’s statement as it is rather the responsibility of Occupational Therapists to engage clients in transformative learning experiences, such as

travelling, as they are more credible and proficient in adapting occupation and the environment for amelioration.

## **2.10 Chapter Summary**

The literature review revealed that the majority of people living with a disability continue to face social and human rights injustice as mainstream activities such as travelling are not equally accessible. Apart from the health system predominantly viewing disability from a Medical Model perspective, the Social-Relational Models highlight the importance of facilitating agency in people with disabilities and promote a positive selfhood and contest society's stereotypes. Considering the science of occupation, leisure travel can be seen as a leisure occupation; a multifaceted phenomenon applied as a pleasurable distraction from negative life events that can facilitate reconstruction of occupational identity. Therefore, the 21<sup>st</sup> century traveller seeks new learning experiences which are unequivocally linked to travelling and adventure. Studies show that growth and learning occur in response to changes in one's environment. Travelling predominantly provides an enriched environment that can serve as a platform for learning. However, despite the various benefits mentioned of leisure, there has still been no study conducted to explore the phenomenon of leisure travelling for people with disabilities. The relationship between travelling and how it is experienced by people with disabilities has not been identified. A lack of understanding regarding the phenomenon of travelling for this group of people remains, as it has not previously been explored within Occupational Therapy.

## **Chapter 3 - Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the methodology used in this study is described. The chapter commences with the research approach that elaborates on the philosophical worldview of social constructivism. Choosing Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology design, the researcher collected data through a series of in-depth interviews combined with photo-elicitation, whereby the participants' stories were enmeshed with their experiences, happenings and experiences of travelling. Following this process, the researcher applied the principals of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to analyse the raw data. To conclude the chapter the researcher explains how rigour and trustworthiness are upheld and draws attention to the ethical standards upheld in the study.

### **3.2 Research Approach**

In line with the philosophical worldview of social constructivism, the researcher believes that individuals seek understanding of the world they live in (Creswell, 2013) and that subjective meanings are developed from the occupations in which they choose to engage. Therefore, a qualitative research approach with an interpretivism orientation was chosen for the study as this approach revolves around how people experience and make sense of their realities (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). This approach allows the researcher primarily to explore how people with disabilities regard travelling and the manner in which they experience it, along with the meaning they attribute to travelling. The researcher did not want to reduce the phenomenon of travelling to a mere numerical value but rather sought to uncover the profound meaning people with disabilities derive from travelling. A hermeneutical phenomenological design allowed the researcher to gain an understanding and revelation of the travelling experience of people with disabilities by making use of structures of consciousness as informed by Creswell, who states that the "reality of an

object is inextricably related to one's consciousness of it" (Creswell, 2013, p. 77). As the participants reflect on travelling and converse about the deeper meanings they attribute to it, their reality of the experience transpires. However, the researcher does acknowledge that one can merely attempt to interpret the participants' lived experience and endeavour to linguistically present it, as the true phenomenon can only be experienced by the participants themselves (Laverty, 2003). In Occupational Therapy, occupation is regarded as the primary intervention medium (Cronin-Davis, Butler, & Mayers, 2009); hitherto travelling has not been utilised as a leisure occupation within practise. An extensive exploration of travelling as an occupation, in the form of leisure, was undertaken in the present study, and the selected approach allowed for theory generation and created an agenda for reform within Occupational Therapy.

### **3.2.1 Research Design**

A hermeneutical phenomenological design was selected to discover the meaning or essence of travelling for people with disabilities. This design, innate to a qualitative research approach, allows for the researcher to become infused with the participants' discourse of their lived experience of travelling, while concurrently constructing their interpretations that engender a deeper understanding of the occupation of travelling. Originally phenomenology, as one of the qualitative research designs, was developed by Husserl (1970) in order to "interpret the way things appear to the individual" (Husserl, 1970, as cited in Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014, p. 7). As people are unique individuals and experience the world in unique ways, they create their own realities, consequently, resulting in 'multiple realities' (Creswell, 2013, p. 255). These realities are produced by the individual's interpretation of the world in which he/she is subjectively immersed and entwined (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006). The concept of phenomenology was further developed by Heidegger (1992) who concluded that the essence of something, in this instance travelling, can only be discovered when it is consciously encountered and reflected upon by the

individual (Heidegger, 1992). It is imperative to note that this study does not focus on travelling or the life of the individual but rather on the interpretation of their lived experiences of travelling (Creswell, 2013). Describing the participants' happenings and events that occurred in different spatio-temporal locations is linked to a deeper interpretation of what travelling means to them. Thus, through the use of language and contemplative verbal interaction, the participants together with the researcher sought to interpret a deeper understanding and revelation of the essence of travelling for people with disabilities (Lavery, 2003). In keeping with the purpose of this study, the researcher attempted to uncover the true "nature of the essence as realised by the individual" (Kafle, 2013, p. 186). Given this argument and as the purpose of this study is to prompt participants to share and reflect on their travel experiences, a hermeneutical phenomenological research design is used rather than the phenomenology of Husserl.

Husserl, the father of phenomenology, applied bracketing of researcher's reflective thoughts in a pursuit for certainty, imperceptibly changing his philosophy into a rigorous science whereas, Heidegger and Gadamer (Hermeneutics) see bracketing as unfeasible since the individual and his experience correspond with each other and cannot be separated (Lavery, 2003). Although homogenous, the key distinction between hermeneutical phenomenology and phenomenology is the position of the researcher. In both philosophies the researcher is said to carry a reflexive journal, but for dichotomous reasons. Phenomenology uses the journal for the purpose of accentuating the researcher's biases in order to set them aside to avoid distracting from the study. In contrast, hermeneutical phenomenology is the "self-interpreted construction between the researcher and the participant, thus reflecting multiple realities" (Lavery, 2003, p. 21). The researcher's positionality greatly affects the process of data analysis. Rooted in hermeneutical phenomenology the researcher analyses the raw data by applying interpretative phenomenological

analysis (IPA) which perceives the person as part of a meaningful world or context and, in return, the world as essentially part of the person (Larkin, 2006).

### **3.2.2 Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis**

IPA is concerned with the ontological question of existence in itself (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014) and in the current study, not primarily concerned with travelling as such but rather the experience and understanding of travelling (Larkin, 2006). It looks at the person who travels as the principal subject as opposed to travelling as the subject. The researcher applies the principals of IPA in an attempt to stand in the shoes of the participants (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014) and conversely to give a “third-person view of a first-person account” (Larkin, 2006, p. 110). This culminates in a dual interpretation process of, firstly, the participants’ interpretation of the meaning they attribute to travelling, followed by the researcher’s understanding of the participants’ connotation of travelling (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). IPA is becoming increasingly popular, especially in researching health psychology (Cronin-Davis et al., 2009). Within the field of Occupational Therapy, Cronin-Davis et al. (2009) contend for the use of IPA to establish the essence of occupation and the inextricable link with human beings. This contextualist approach of IPA, which considers the person in context creating his or her own reality, is congruent with the person-centred approach in Occupational Therapy. Occupational Therapists fundamentally consider the temporal, spatial and socio-cultural context of occupation (Taylor, 2008) and believe that one cannot remove the individual from contextual influences.

### **3.2.3 Research Setting**

This study was conducted with participants who have travelled for leisure in South Africa. South Africa’s international standards and global recognition provide numerous opportunities for



travelling and experiencing new cultures and activities. In a quantitative study, Ray and Ryder (2003) rank the special interests that people with disabilities would want to pursue when travelling, of which nature and parks are ranked first. Other areas of interest entail activities relating to sport, such as canoeing or scuba diving, taking scenic drives and visiting galleries and museums (Ray & Ryder, 2003). Bearing this in mind, a country like South Africa provides a variety of travelling options with different travel genres; for example adventure activities, cultural and culinary experiences, significant nature/wildlife options and geological uniqueness. Arguably tourism in South Africa is not optimally accommodating to travellers with disabilities. South Africa still faces many challenges pertaining to inaccessible accommodation and lack of universal design. Nonetheless, apart from financial constraints and the researcher being based in South Africa, the country provides an array of leisure travelling options whereby the individuals can freely choose leisure activities according to their interests.

### **3.2.4 Participant recruitment and selection**

The study sample consisted of six participants who met the following inclusion criteria: 18 years or older, have a disability which does not affect cognition, have travelled within South Africa to a new environment for a minimum of one night, and explored new activities while on holiday. The study requires participants to reflect on, and articulate their past experience of travelling; hence people with mental and/or cognitive impairments were excluded from the study for the reason that impairment in memory, abstract thinking and reasoning may prevent detailed recall of their lived experience.

Recruitment commenced by the researcher contacting online travel organisations such as Epic Enable and Accomable.com. These companies specialise in travelling for people with disabilities by providing accessible accommodation and catering to their specific needs. They were contacted

telephonically and via email whereby the researcher explained the purpose of this study in order to request eligible referrals. The referrals were contacted and asked if they would be interested in partaking in this study. By means of purposive sampling, the researcher could purposely select participants with “relevance and personal significance” (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014, p. 10). A total of four eligible participants who were willing to take part in the study and who were available during the timeframe for data collection, were identified from the companies’ referrals. In order to obtain more participants, the researcher additionally made use of snowball sampling, also known as chain referral sampling (Davis, 2007), whereby the participants further referred the researcher to two other participants. This small sample of six participants was carefully selected as per the abovementioned inclusion criteria, with the main focus being on extracting rich data from each participant during in-depth interviews (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Having a small group of participants facilitated use of the interpretive phenomenological approach (IPA) as the researcher wanted to discover the essence of the participants’ lived experience when travelling. In line with an IPA approach the researcher succeeded in selecting a homogeneous sample on the basis that all participants had a physical form of disability, and had all travelled for leisure in South Africa and experienced a new environment and activities. It is interesting to note that, despite using referrals from two different streams- namely the travel agencies and referral from other participants, four of the six participants were professional athletes. This supported homogeneity for the group of participants but might be indicative of a more active and energetic sample group (discussed further in chapter 5 under Limitations).

### **3.3 Data collection methods**

Semi-structured interviews are a frequently used method of data collection in hermeneutical phenomenology (Creswell, 2013) and were used to collect data in the study. Semi-structured interviews permitted “considerable flexibility with regards to the available routes” through the interview process (Larkin, 2006, p. 104) as the researcher could converse with the participants in depth regarding their lived experiences. This allowed the researcher to enquire and ask questions in a convenient and appropriate fashion.

#### **3.3.1 Semi-structured interviews**

In order to extract rich data from the selected participants, individual semi-structured interviews were performed in a quiet setting to limit distractions and optimise participant observation. Recognising that this method is an internal process as it entails ‘intentional human consciousness’ (Larkin, 2006, p. 102), the researcher wanted to collect data within a natural setting: one that represents the participants as their narratives can be observed but not measured. Three out of the six participants were interviewed in their own homes, another two were interviewed at their places of work and the last participant was interviewed on neutral grounds in a guesthouse. This induced a comfortable space whereby the researcher and the participant could converse with ease and comfort. Interviews were conducted over a period of three weeks with each participant having one interview which lasted for about two hours.

Prior to commencing the interviews, demographic information was gathered in order to provide the researcher with a comprehensive perspective of each participant’s view on travelling, which inevitably is intertwined within his/her culture and religion. When the interviews commenced, the researcher took time to get to know each participant in order to understand their interpretive

influences (Lavery, 2003) and to effectively interpret their lived experience. Dialoguing with the participants enables a dynamic interpretive process whereby the researcher plays an active role in unlocking an “insider’s view” of the participants’ lived experience (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014, p. 8). Preceding the interviews, participants were requested to bring five photographs from their travels to the interview. Each participant signed a consent form requesting permission for their photos to be used in this study. The photographs were used to elicit further meanings that the participants associated with the images, using this as an interview prompt, the photographs proved to liberate deeper thinking and self-reflection (Hatten, Forin, & Adams, 2013). Letting the participants converse about their photos established a sense of control and authority for the participants as they solely possess the experience, creating a power balance between the researcher and the participant (Hatten et al., 2013). In doing this, tension is reduced, which is vitally important for cultivating a comfortable atmosphere for conversation to flow (Hatten et al., 2013). Five out of the six participants had selected photographs prior to the interview which the researcher could utilise to elicit their reflections. One participant misinterpreted the reason for selecting photographs and presented photos of inaccessibility i.e. stairs and narrow doorways, instead of selecting photographs of personal meaning.

The researcher commenced the interviews by asking questions pertaining to the broader topics (see Appendix 1 – Interview Guide) such as: *Tell me about yourself?* whereby prompts would be utilised; for example: What do you enjoy doing? How do you occupy your time? After listening to what they enjoy doing and what their interests are, the researcher turned her attention to discovering how they view travelling, with questions such as *why do you travel?*, *what is your motivation for travelling and what do you want to experience from travelling?*

The researcher enquired about logistics regarding their travel journals by means of asking if they travelled alone or with a companion and why they preferred this. To encourage the participants to delve deeper into the meaning they attribute to travelling, the researcher made use of photo elicitation by prompting with questions such as *How do you capture memories of your trip, Do you take photos and/or write about your experiences?, Could you please describe the photo you have selected?* This encourages self-reflexivity leading the participant to a greater interpretation of their travel experiences (Hatten et al., 2013). This was followed by more sensitive topics later in the interview such as: *In your opinion how is travelling different for people with disabilities than for able-bodied people; How would you describe travelling to someone who has not experienced travelling before; What do you think are the effects of travelling for you as a person with a disability?* Doing the interview according to the described outline the researcher had time to build rapport with the participants, making them feel comfortable in conversing in depth about the more significant aspects. All questions were open-ended and the participants were given sufficient time to narrate their stories as the focus was on discovering the depth of their experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

During the interview, the researcher made reflective notes and made use of active listening techniques such as paraphrasing, clarifying, reflecting and summarising. Interviews were audio taped and transcribed soon afterwards so as to retain information regarding participants' non-verbal behaviour during the interviews.

### **3.4 Data analysis**

Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) described three stages in IPA namely: (1) "Multiple reading and making notes" (2) Identifying emerging themes and (3) "Seeking relationships and clustering themes" (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014, p. 12). In the first stage (1) "Multiple reading and making

notes” – analysis commenced with the researcher immersing herself in the data through transcribing, reading and listening to the audio-taped interviews a number of times, while noting anything of interest in the data, and specific thoughts and reflections by the participants about certain issues to gain a complete sense of each interview (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014, p. 12). During this time, distinctive phrases and insights, for example, “*the world awaits (Flight, p.10)*”, “*it is a continuous journey of discovery (Dali, p.6)*” or “*think it is a form of rehabilitation. It is a form of rewiring your brain (Letz, p. 17)*” were noted in the left-hand margin (Cronin-Davis et al., 2009). With stage (2) Identifying emerging themes, focus shifts to transform the researcher’s notes into emerging themes (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). This stage is repeated until the researcher is able to make a theoretical link with detailed and dynamic themes (Cronin-Davis et al., 2009). The researcher experienced this procedure to be more a cyclical rather than a linear process, as pointed out by Laverly (2003), with themes changing and interchanging from preliminary names such as *freedom, change, inaccessibility and independence*. Despite the fact that ‘*inaccessibility*’ as a topic was raised by all the participants it does not pertain to the essence of travelling for the participants. ‘*Independence*’ was also an important aspect of travelling as most participants wish to travel with dignity and autonomy, but it was not depicted as a phenomenon of travelling. In stage (3) “Seeking relationships and clustering themes”: the connections between the themes were identified, clustered together and labelled with descriptive titles to form the final themes (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014, p. 12).

In conducting IPA, analysing and interpreting the participants’ lived experiences involves a two-part interpretation process known as “double-hermeneutics” which refers to the endeavours of the participants, as well as the endeavours of the researcher, to make sense of their world (Cronin-Davis et al., 2009, p. 334).

The first account of interpretation is when the researcher associates with the participants, bearing in mind their contextual factors, and makes the first steps by “stepping into the participants’ shoes” (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014, p. 10). As part of gaining insight into each participant’s approach to life, the researcher highlights the manner in which they experience occurrences such as “*when I feel very low I’m at my downfall I just like to explore things*” (Thabo, p. 1) or when Phoenix said “*I’m quite an active person. I was active before my accident and I wanted to stay that way*” (Phoenix, p. 3). After reading and re-reading each interview while bearing in mind participants’ non-verbal cues which were noted in field notes, the researcher developed a word cloud for each participant. The word cloud highlighted the words regularly used by the participants, placing emphasis on how they chose to present linguistically their experience throughout the interview. This helped to subjectively understand the participants’ sense of the phenomenon of travelling, or in other words, the meaning and interpretation of their lived experience.

The second account of interpretation occurred when the researcher used a theoretical lens for further analysis. The Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996) and the Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002) was used to interpret and highlight concepts and theories in order to develop a deeper understanding of the participants’ interpretations of their travelling experiences (Creswell, 2013).

After completing the above-mentioned stages one to three for each interview transcript, a cross analysis of all the transcripts was conducted to identify patterns across all the interviews. Upon further investigation it became apparent that the themes displayed in the first stage of analysis could be more effectively interlinked and this requires the researcher to look for patterns not just across, but also between concurrent themes, and the researcher was compelled to do a second

stage analysis. An example of this is where two unrefined themes, namely “*navigating inappropriate responses from people*” and “*people place you in a box*”, collectively speak about the challenges the participants experience involving society. Conclusively a comprehensive description of travelling for people with disabilities was written as the researcher interpreted “what” and “how” they experienced travelling (Creswell, 2013, p. 79).

### **3.5 Rigour and Trustworthiness**

To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, the researcher adhered to the following criteria: dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability (Krefting, 1991). Dependability, defined as the reliability of the data if it had to be applied in comparable conditions (Cope, 2014), was upheld by vigilantly adhering to the rigorous guidelines of conducting hermeneutical phenomenological research and the steps of IPA. The researcher ensured dependability by documenting an audit trail containing transcriptions, audiotapes, meticulous field notes and journaling, with copies to the supervisors to verify consistency in the abovementioned procedures. Credibility pertains to how accurate the participants’ description is of their lived experience (Laverty, 2003). For this study credibility was preserved by means of member checking where the participants confirmed the transcribed data and the analysis telephonically, to ensure that the results from the participants’ perspectives were trustworthy. The transcribed data were emailed to each participant and throughout the study they were contacted to confirm relevant information. Additional peer examinations were conducted with academic supervisors. Transferability, which refers to how transferable the findings are to other settings (Cope, 2014), was achieved by providing detailed descriptions of the participants and the methodology in order to outline a descriptive context of the current study for the further use of findings and their practical application to other contexts. To ensure that data accurately represents the participants’ views, which is a research quality concerning confirmability (Cope, 2014), the researcher included rich



quotes directly derived from the data collected. Together with the latter, an audit trail (described above) as well as reference to other literature was used for confirmability to ensure the interpretations are supported by literature.

In addition to the above mentioned strategies to uphold the trustworthiness of the study, van Manen (2016) makes mention of the four quality claims specifically pertaining to hermeneutical phenomenology. He records “orientation, strength, richness and depth” as the major characteristics pertaining to the quality of a hermeneutical phenomenological study (van Manen, 2016, as cited in Kafle, 2011, p. 195). Orientation speaks about how involved the researcher is in the world of the participants and their stories. In the current study, the researcher met with participants in their homes or places of work, where they are familiar with the spatial environment, to be at ease to recollect their experiences together with showing memorable photos of their journeys. Similar to confirmability, van Manen (2016) mentions strength as a characteristic of trustworthiness which pertains to how effectively the text represents the inherent meanings of participants’ lived experience. With the richness of the study pertaining to the creative manner in which the participants’ text is described, the researcher made use of their specifically chosen photographs, together with rich quoted texts, to represent their experiences. Lastly, the depth characteristic of the study relates to the profundity of the text and the ability to best express the participants’ intentions (Kafle, 2011). In order to explore the phenomenon of travelling for the participants, the researcher proceeded to read through many experiences to discover, together with the participants, the deeper meaning travelling holds for them.

### **3.6 Ethics**

A research proposal was submitted to the University of the Western Cape Research Committee for ethics clearance and approval - *HS/16/6/17* (See Appendix 2). Verbal and written consent

(Appendix 3) was obtained after informing participants of the purpose of the study and stipulating the procedures involved during data collection (Appendix 4). Consent was given with acknowledgement that the study was described to the participants and that their questions were answered. The participants had the right to voluntarily withdraw at any time without being penalised and were aware that their anonymity would be maintained by keeping their identities confidential by means of assigning pseudonyms. The participants were conscious of being audio taped whilst the interviews were being conducted. In addition, consent was requested regarding the use of participants' photos, and, to protect their identities, faces were blocked or blurred out. Some of the risks involved in this study pertain to the participants experiencing discomfort with issues raised during the interview and the topics discussed. One of the participants was uncomfortable during the interview as he felt that he did not give the right answers or deep enough answers. The researcher reassured him that there are no right or wrong answers but just an elaboration on his own experience. None of the other participants experienced distress during the interviews. Nonetheless the researcher was prepared to stop the interview process immediately, if necessary, and provide the necessary support through counselling from a psychologist. All the data was stored in a password-protected folder on the researcher's computer, and will be kept for five years after completion of the study and destroyed thereafter.

### **3.7 Chapter summary**

To discover the profound meaning people with disabilities attribute to travelling an approach revolving around how people experience and make sense of their realities was needed. A hermeneutical phenomenological approach was chosen as it allows the researcher to reflect on multiple realities and to give an objective perspective of the participants' lived experiences. In this chapter the research approach, design setting, the criteria for selecting the participants as well

as the process of collecting the raw data are delineated. Acknowledging that the positionality of the researcher greatly affects the process of data analysis, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to perceive the participants within context as well as that of the researcher, hence the use of double hermeneutics. Data analyses were a cyclical rather than a linear process of changing and interchanging of themes. Lastly, strategies for achieving trustworthiness are presented along with the ethical considerations involved in conducting this study.

## **Chapter 4 – Findings**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the keyfindings of the study are presented through the process of interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) as explained in chapter 3. Ingrained in the nature of hermeneutical phenomenology, the data portrays multiple realities of the participants' experiences of travelling, as each experience is interwoven with their past and current circumstances as well as their culture. The participants' interpretation of their meaning of travelling is evidently interlinked with their personal journey and life experiences; gaining insight into their worlds is imperative in order to gain a deeper understanding of their interpretation of the meaning of travelling. This chapter commences with a detailed description of each participant accompanied by a word cloud as this allows one to get a composite sense of their lived experience of travelling. Following this, the chapter concludes with a description of the three main themes, together with related subthemes and categories.

### **4.2 Participant Profiles**

Of the six participants, two are females and four are males, with ages ranging from 21 to 65 years. Three of the participants are professional athletes and also maintain their daily jobs of being an entrepreneur, director and student respectively. A fourth participant is a professional surfer and has qualified to represent South Africa in the International Surfing Championships held in California. A further participant is a final year student, set to graduate from B.Com Management Accounting, and the last participant is a pensioner living with her husband. The participants' profiles, including demographic information and forms of disability, years living with a disability and current work occupations, are presented below (Table 4.1)

**Table 4.1: Demographic summary of participants**

Participant	Pseudonym	Gender	Race	Age	Type of Disability	Acquired or Congenital disability	Years living with a disability	Current Work
P1	Guusje	Female	White	65 years	Polio	Acquired	64 years	Pensioner
<p><b>Guusje’s leisure travel pattern :</b></p> <p>Guusje has always been an avid traveller and has therefore, enjoyed many trips nationally as well as abroad. Countries she has visited include The Netherlands, Italy, France, Great Britain and Norway. Following her second diagnosis as post-polio, she needs more motivation to travel as it remains a battle to find wheelchair accessible accommodation; extensive planning and often frustration accompany such endeavours. More recently Guusje and her husband travelled to George, Cape Town and Johannesburg for approximately 5-8 days with their preferred mode of transport being their car.</p>								
P2	Letz	Male	Black	23 years	Above Knee Amputation Motorbike accident	Acquired in 2011	Five years	Paralympian Entrepreneur
<p><b>Letz’s leisure travel pattern:</b></p> <p>Initially Letz used to view travelling as an activity only for the affluent. However, following his growing career in sports and his own business in producing various leather products, he is required to travel more regularly, especially to European and African countries. Competing in events abroad presents an opportunity for leisure travel and further exploration. When his schedule allows him to do so, he visits places around Cape Town such as Robertson but more recently he took a vacation to visit Namibia, where he hiked the Great Canyon.</p>								
P3	Phoenix	Male	White	21 years	Spinal cord Injury C6-C7 Gymnastic accident	Acquired in 2012	Four years	Paralympian
<p><b>Phoenix’s leisure travel pattern:</b></p> <p>Being only 16 years old when he acquired his impairment, Phoenix did not have an extensive travel pattern prior to his injury. He has visited many provinces in South Africa and European countries with specific mention of Prague, Czech Republic.</p>								

He prefers to travel with someone who understands his needs so his father or biokineticist often accompany him on his journeys.								
P4	Grey	Male	White	26 years	Spinal cord Injury T6 Car accident	Acquired in 2014	Three years	Paralympian Student
<p><b>Grey's leisure travel pattern:</b></p> <p>Travelling for sport, business and leisure, Grey has visited Australia, Europe and most of South Africa's provinces. For Grey to pack up alone and visit friends or family in another province is no challenge. He is well adapted and equipped to travel independently whether it is by car, train or a plane.</p>								
P5	Flight	Female	White	23 years	Cerebral Palsy	Congenital	23 years	Student
<p><b>Flight's leisure travel pattern:</b></p> <p>Flight is used to travelling, via motor transport, to rustic and remote places in Africa, often reaching out to the locals. Always travelling with her family who understands her specific requirements, they enjoy the local activities. Without a doubt she will volunteer for any available activity, as she wants to explore everything she can.</p>								
P6	Dali	Male	White	26 years	Spinal Cord Injury - 2008 Level T8 Car accident	Acquired in 2008	Eight years	Professional Surfer Entrepreneur
<p><b>Dali's leisure travel pattern:</b></p> <p>Dali's favourite trip aboard was when he visited the USA – California. As surfing is one of his greatest passions he recently made a road trip around South Africa to raise awareness of adaptive surfing and to enjoy the Atlantic ocean seaboard to the Indian ocean seaboard. Being fully equipped to travel independently in his own vehicle, he regularly goes away for weekends to nearby coastal towns in the Western Cape.</p>								

Making sense of, and interpreting, the participants' experiences of leisure travel as people with disabilities is intertwined with who they are and what they do, hence a wordcloud was developed for each participant (Figures 4.1 – 4.6) in order to capture their understanding of the meaning of travelling. The wordclouds assist with visualising frequently occurring words from the interviews

and highlights some important textual data. This enables the researcher to identify similarities and differences between each participants' lived experience of leisure travel.

### **Participant Guusje**

Guusje is a 65year old Dutch female currently living with her husband in a little coastal town in the Eastern Cape. She and her husband emigrated to South Africa in 2005. Having been diagnosed with post-polio in Holland, she receives a disability grant from that Government which allows her to spend time travelling and live her passion which is advocating for the rights of people with disabilities to have access to public spaces such as theatres, malls and restaurants. She is able to mobilise with a walking stick but only for short distances as she does not always have sufficient energy to maintain this form of ambulation, and then has to make use of her wheelchair. She frequently experiences barriers pertaining to accessibility that leave her feeling limited and annoyed, especially when using her wheelchair. Lack of accessibility deeply frustrates her and this motivated her to start her own Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) called OPD (Organisation for Persons with Disabilities), which focuses on conducting accessibility surveys. Guusje experiences good and bad days with her disability. Due to her diagnosis, her energy is restricted on a daily basis. This forces her to choose between practical daily activities, which are a necessity, versus engaging in her desired activities. However, despite having limited muscle power and endurance, Guusje and her husband are fervent travellers and plan leisure travelling trips on a regular basis. Following her diagnosis of post-polio they moved to South Africa from Holland. She and her husband regularly travel to Cape Town for leisure and in the past two years they have visited Kidds Beach, George, Gauteng, Sabie and the Kruger National Park. She loves to experience nature i.e. the sea and other natural environments.

Guusje expresses that she wants to travel continually as it gives her a feeling of freedom. It reinforces the fact that she has freedom of choice to choose where she wants to go and do what she wants to do instead of complying with the limitations her disability so often demands, like not having sufficient energy to go to the beach. She highlighted that travelling gives her time to think and sets her mind at ease from certain stressors but it also reassures her that she is able to move and be mobile as being bedridden is one of her greatest fears. She describes one of her motives to travel as follows:

*“...look what I can do, look I can go out, I can go travelling and in the meantime I enjoy all the mountains, the nature I enjoy to drive my own car”*{Guusje, p. 6}.

In summary, the meaning of travelling to Guusje is that it *“gives you the feeling that you are free. Unfortunately I can’t fly in the sky. But if I could...”* {Guusje, p. 10}.



As one can clearly see from the wordcloud, (Figure 4.1) Guusje lives to travel:

*“Researcher: So, what does it mean to you to be able to travel?”*

*Guusje: Everything, everything. It is my whole*

**Figure 4.1 – Participant Guusje Word cloud**

*life. If I now hear okay, you can’t travel*

*anymore, for me that is almost dying. Sitting here and I like this house, really I’m happy with my dog, I’m happy with my husband and this house is perfect for me and I’m enjoying it. But if the Doctor is telling me now, okay stop with travelling you can’t travel anymore. No, no, no, I’ll rather die”* {Guusje, p. 5}.

She loves travelling and relives her travelling trips regularly. But in essence, travelling gives Guusje a sense of freedom:



*“There is one picture, but I lost that picture... The picture was in Spain and that was a view on the top of a mountain and you can oversee the whole land. And always when I saw that picture I had the feeling I was flying over that areas there. And also when I was staying there, taking that picture, I had that feeling... I have always had the dream I am an Eagle what is flying free in the air, where he can go, what he want, if he want to sit on the floor...Yes, yes freedom or fly around”*{Gusje, p. 11}.

### **Participant Letz**

Letz is a 23 year old Zulu man who was raised by his grandparents and, because they were pensioners, he was forced to start working from a young age as a part-time waiter, having to manage his time effectively between matriculating at school and temporary work. In his final year of school he underwent an above knee amputation following a motorbike accident. On his way home from work as a waiter another motorbike came from the front and it appeared as if he wanted to have a race. It was at this point that the driver of the other motorbike lost control and collided with Letz, causing him to be propelled into the air and land on the same broken knee injured from the first impact. Below Letz explains what happened:

*“So he was trying to take off but at the same time turning and then he lost control and he hit my knee. And then with the speeding and all that I think I landed on the same broken knee and then my leg snapped off”* {Letz, p. 13}.

Currently Letz lives in Cape Town and divides his time between training for the Paralympics and being an entrepreneur and marketing his own brand of shoes and accessories. His company specialises in making leather products such as handbags, purses, travelling gear and shoes. He was chosen as an ambassador by Tanzania and its neighbouring countries to represent people with disabilities to advocate for their rights to equal access. He also battles against the harmful practices of voodoo targeting the group of people who have albinism.

Letz has lived with an impairment for five years and is completely independent in all his daily activities. In addition, he performs on a professional level as an athlete competing in the F57 field events in the Paralympics. F57 field events range from shot put, javelin and discus. He describes the impact of his disability as follows:

*“...to me I just say wow, I was a waiter before, and when I was able-bodied I did not really see where my future was going. Now that I am disabled I’ve started a brand which is getting successful which can give me a few coins to go on holiday to go wherever I want to go. Uuumh, so it’s all about the pride it’s just like enjoying the fruits of my labour in a way and all this comes from my disability”{Letz, p. 17}.*

He enjoys going on holiday but sees travelling as a luxury despite having to travel on a regular basis for sports. He believes that travelling for a person with a disability is challenging due to inaccessibility as well as the inappropriate responses from the public. Nevertheless it provides opportunity to overcome and to master the activity. His first travelling trip for leisure, following his injury, was when he joined friends for the weekend at Robertson. Here he had to face challenges especially when his kayak tipped over. Having to swim back to shore independently forced him out of his comfort zone, causing him to realise his actual abilities. Below is a quote from the interview that the researcher feels needs no additional explanation as he describes what travelling means to him:

*“I think it is a form of rehabilitation. It is a form of rewiring your brain, from what society*



*has told you what disability is. Re-writing what you, I mean the norms, what people say is normal, you are re-writing it according to your story. You can just travel. You can travel to Spain*

**Figure 4.2 – Participant Letz Word cloud**



completed in-patient rehabilitation in ten weeks and went to Atlanta, USA, to receive advanced rehabilitation for six weeks, three hours a day. Currently he lives independently in a separate apartment at his parents' home. Phoenix sees travelling as fun and exciting. His father often accompanies him on journeys and they have recently travelled to Prague, Bloemfontein, Port Elizabeth and Gauteng. When travelling Phoenix loves to experience the diverse cultures, food and traditions but also acknowledges that it is very stressful and that it has forced him to streamline his means of travelling:

*“I want to enjoy everything as everyone else would want to enjoy, you want to enjoy the different cultures, you want to see the lifestyle there, you want to be exposed to another land, want to feel a sense of independence and you want to feel like the fact that this has not hindered me from going over there and experiencing what everyone else experiences”*  
{Phoenix, p. 8}.

Furthermore travelling goes hand in hand with change for Phoenix (see Wordcloud Figure 4.3). It changed his perspective on life and assisted him in finding the “new you” {Phoenix, p. 22}.

*“To find your, to find your new you. To develop. To not feel limited. Coz all of those things that I've said you know psychologically or physically, your lifestyle everything, it all comes down to change. Changing your perspective of life, the way you view life, changing the way you handle situations, you handle with changing the type of people you surround yourself with, changing how you handle the situation, changing all of those things, to find out....Uuuhm who you kind of are and what you enjoy and what your ideal and best life is in a wheelchair”* {Phoenix, p. 22}.

## Participant Grey



**Figure 4.4 – Participant Grey  
Word cloud**

Being a Paralympian, a business man in the fruit export industry and doing an honours degree in B.Com Finance, Grey has to juggle a very busy schedule. He is currently competing in hand cycling and preparing for the Paralympics in 2020. He lives in Cape Town where he does most of his training and studying. He also has to manage exports of fruits for the company he works for and frequently travels for business as well as

pleasure. Grey was in a car accident in 2014 when he lost control of his car and one of the wheels touched the gravel causing the car to roll. Grey was thrown out of the car and injured his neck leaving him with a spinal cord injury on level T6. He received intense rehabilitation and is now able to travel independently, locally as well as abroad. Being independent in everyday activities he often travels alone to the Eastern Cape where he has to manage some business interests. But it was when he travelled to Australia for advanced rehabilitation that he experienced travelling on his own for the first time. This was when he had his first long flight following his accident. He had to learn to navigate independently public transport, stay in a place that was not optimally accessible and do basic activities like transferring and getting dressed independently. Apart from travelling regularly for work he enjoys going on getaways in order to take a break from his busy routine. Consistent with travelling regularly prior to the accident, Grey continues to travel extensively to Europe, including countries like Belgium, Holland, Italy and Spain. He feels that being in a new space allows him to recharge, as it leaves him feeling energised and motivated to get back to his busy schedule. To Grey travelling brings about a “*change of scenery*” which allows for a *change of routine*” {Grey, p. 11}. For him this creates an environment to be “*carefree and shutdown from the normal*” {Grey, p. 14}. As evident in his wordcloud Grey is

motivated to travel in order to experience a sense of being without routine and to relax as he stated *“the whole thing of being carefree, to shut down from the normal”* {Grey, p. 14}.

## Participant Flight

Flight is a final year student in B.Com Management Accounting. She loves adventure and appreciates God’s creation in nature. She believes that:

*“everybody in this life has their own package they must carry and that is right, because if everyone’s package had to spread out in front of you and you have to choose which package you will carry, you will ten to one choose your own package again. You won’t necessarily choose someone else’s package”* {Flight, p. 6}.

Primarily focusing on her studies as she is a final year student, she also took part in the Comrades and the Old Mutual Two Oceans Marathons. For recreation she enjoys poetry and travelling. At



**Figure 4.5 – Participant Flight Word cloud**

birth Flight was in need of oxygen in order to breathe but unfortunately the machine malfunctioned for a few minutes and failed to supply her with sufficient oxygen and the medical staff did not notice it, resulting in Anoxia (a condition harmful to the brain due to oxygen deficiency). She was then diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy leaving her dependent on a wheelchair. Growing up in a family that regularly

travels for outreaches to preach the gospel, she considers travelling as an opportunity to:

*“...experience God’s creation and see what it looks like. To reach more rural areas like Zambia and to reach out to the people there. To just be in the moment, to see what life has to offer, to enjoy and to experience adventure” {Flight, p. 2}.*

She enjoys travelling in order to experience adventure, but it is also about the journey of transformation while drawing on other people’s stories for inspiration and hope. She likes to challenge people’s mindsets and will show that she can do everything she sets her mind to, especially if she is told that she cannot.

The true meaning of travelling for her is that *“the world awaits”* {Flight, p. 10}. As seen in her Word cloud (see Figure 4.5) travelling helps her to grow, as it enables her to view life from a different perspective, especially pertaining to human diversity.

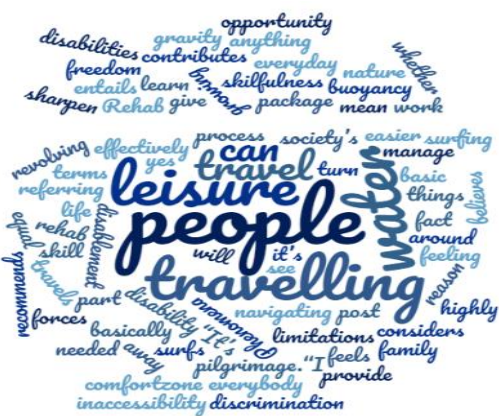
*“To go and explore, to broaden your ‘self’ {Flight, p. 19}...travelling actually gives you a bigger perspective, a bigger picture of what life really is about” {Flight, p. 21}.*

## **Participant Dali**

Dali is a professional surfer and a representative of the International Surfing Association (ISA). He dedicates his days to surfing and motivating others by raising awareness pertaining to social consciousness and universal design which promote accessibility at schools. As an advocate and mediator for accessibility he does accessibility surveys and previously owned a travel business.

He was diagnosed with paraplegia in 2008 when he was involved in a car accident, leaving him with a spinal cord injury at level T8, at the age of sixteen. For Dali there is a fine line between travelling for business and leisure, as he regularly has to travel for surfing which is part of his

work but also his passion. His idea of leisure travel is to get away from people and engage in anything that involves water. He feels that nature considers everybody as equal; there is no discrimination or inaccessibility when surfing. He plans his leisure travels around locations where he can engage in water activities because the buoyancy of the water contributes to a feeling of freedom, to not being defined by gravity. In the past few years he has travelled to California and around the coast of South Africa. He believes that travelling is needed and highly recommends that people with disabilities should travel, whether it is for work, leisure or family as travelling allows them to apply practically what is taught in Rehabilitation and it forces them out of their comfort zone:



**Figure 4.6 – Participant Dali Word cloud**

“I mean it is what you do in Rehab. You learn how to do basic everyday things so that you can manage life easier. So yes, it’s basically post rehab. You can see travelling as post rehab” {Dali, p. 18}.

Dali believes that overcoming the challenges pertaining to travelling equips people with disabilities to navigate their limitations in terms of society’s disablement.

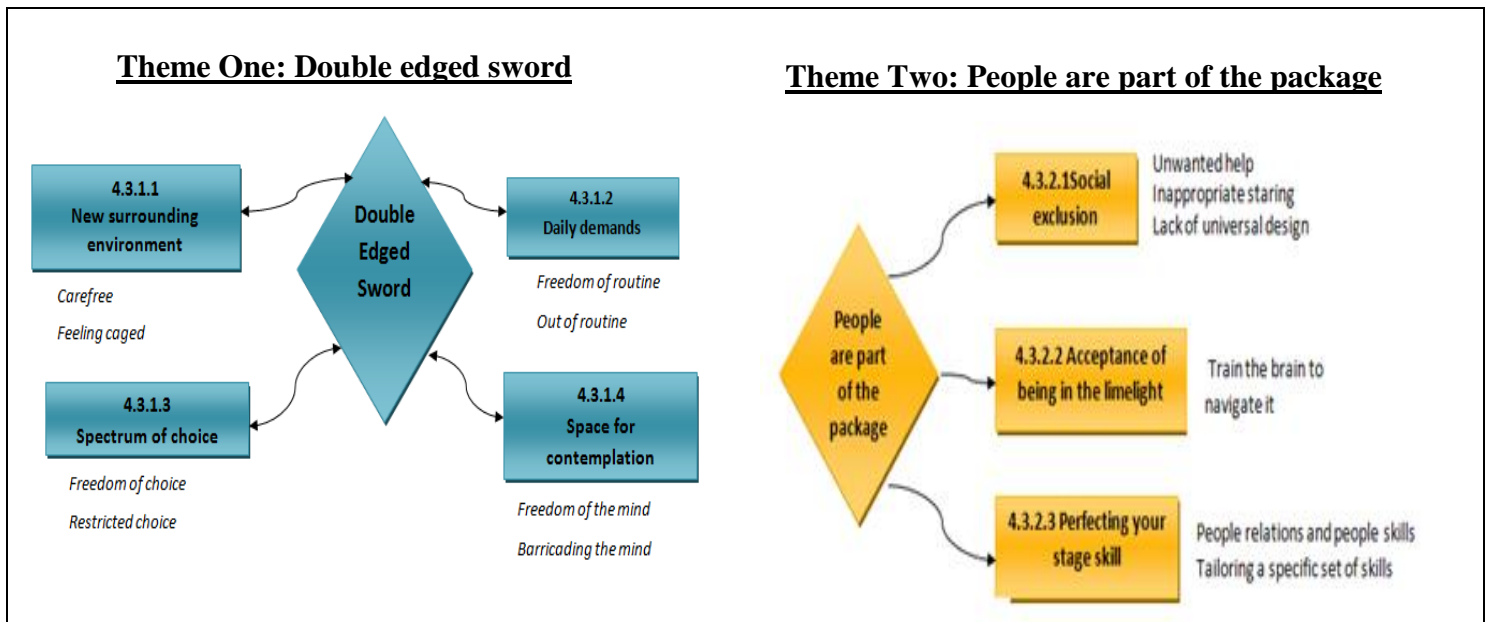
In essence, travelling, as with many other things in life, revolves around people and learning how to manage their negative responses, as this greatly contributes to accepting their disability. As seen in Figure 4.6, the word ‘people’ is very prominent in his wordcloud. Dali feels that travelling entails *“the process of growing”*. He also refers to the fact that travelling is a journey, a pilgrimage of self-discovery:

*“It is a pilgrimage, it’s a journey of discovery”* {Dali, p. 6}.

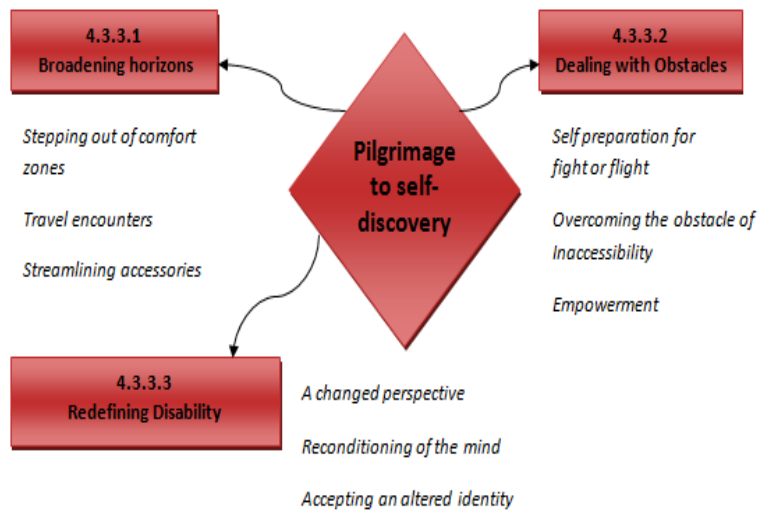


### 4.3 Introduction to identified themes

Three themes emerged from data analysis. These three identified themes represent the unique lived experiences of travelling for the participants. Each theme, together with its related subthemes and categories (see Figure 4.7) illustrates the meaning the participants ascribe to the phenomenon of travelling. The first theme *Double-edged sword* highlights the contradictory effects that travelling can have. This is followed by theme 2 *People are part of the package*, which emphasises the participants' interpretations of the immense role that society plays in disability. The last and most prominent theme *Pilgrimage to self-discovery* captures each participant's own motives for travelling, and how they all experienced various situations of self-discovery.

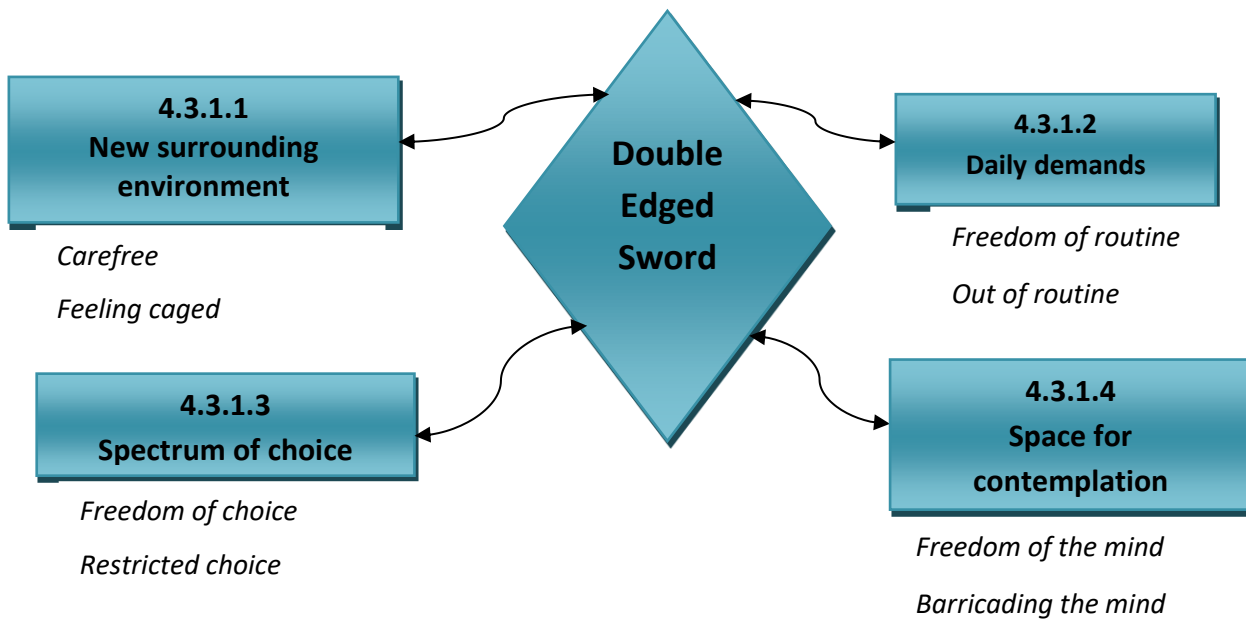


### Theme Three: Pilgrimage to self-discovery



**Figure 4.7 - Themes, subthemes and categories viewpoint**

## Theme One: Double-edged sword



**Figure 4.8 - Theme One**

### **4.3.1 Theme One: Double-edged sword**

The theme “double-edged sword” deals with the participants’ mixed feelings and ambivalence about travelling. The participants motivated for people with disabilities to travel but at the same time they pointed out the risks involved. It soon became evident that akin to the two sides of a doubled edged sword, travelling can cut both ways. It can be an exhilarating experience that grants the participants much delight and excitement but it can also lead to despair and feelings of inadequacy. The participants felt a sense of freedom ranging from freedom from routine to freedom from stressors but, on the other side of the sword, travelling also highlighted the participants’ limitations and reminded them of their differences. Flight substantiated this by saying:

*“Travelling has two extremes. It can make you feel free, like free from things that bind you and boundaries, or on the other side it can constrict you more and make you feel out of place in circumstances where it is not accessible” {Flight, p. 21}.*

Guusje also stressed the importance of recognising that travelling can build or break one's perception of 'self' by making one feel more disabled, and she therefore conveyed a warning to therapists:

*“Guusje: If it is to realise that although you got that limitations, that you can do what other people are doing, then you must let them travel, but you must make sure what my husband is saying that they don't experience actually that there are still things they can't do. Because then you miss your therapy. Then you need actually someone near you, nearby and know exactly how you are and can talk about it.*

*Researcher: So what you are saying is that travelling has the possibility to make you feel free*

*Guusje: Yes*

*Researcher: And do a lot of things...*

*Guusje: Yes*

*Researcher: Like what else? Free and explore...*

*Guusje: That you are a human being, like everyone.*

*Researcher: So it has the possibility of giving you that, but it can also make you feel very handicapped, impaired?*

*Guusje: Yes, yes! And that as therapist you must realise that it (travelling) can go both sides. So if you don't want that they have the feeling that actually they are special persons... don't let them go on holiday on their own. And make sure that they go to a place where they can be a normal being” {Guusje, p. 11}.*

It is essential that the researcher highlights the potential drawbacks but also recognises the advantages leisure travel holds for people with disabilities. The following section highlights the paradox of being in a new environment when travelling, as the surroundings are unfamiliar and can either instil a relaxing, carefree experience or increased anxiety due to inaccessibility, as well as being out of routine with their daily demands that may leave people feeling restricted and

caged. Participants also experience a spectrum of choice on these journeys as some days they are able to experience more freedom of choice than on other days, which could be more restricted as regards to the available options. Lastly travelling provides people with disabilities with space to contemplate, which in turn barricades or frees their minds.

#### **4.3.1.1 New surrounding environment**

The most prominent element of travelling is that it positions one in a new surrounding environment. The new environment has an unfamiliar layout with new surroundings bringing different challenges and opportunities. For the participants their experience of travelling evokes feelings of freedom and being carefree, especially since they are then not surrounded by their familiar stressors. On the contrary some participants expressed that they feel more confined in a new environment as they are then often not familiar with the new surroundings and people respond to them in unfamiliar ways, opposed to their familiar community where they are known.

#### **Carefree**



**Picture 4.1 - Bloemfontein road trip**

Phoenix referred to being “careless and free”, or in other words, carefree. Below (Picture 4.1 – Bloemfontein road trip) is one of the photos Phoenix selected as a memorable experience from one of his travel trips. He travelled together with his father and a friend to Bloemfontein for a sports event. They were driving through the night and stopped at a petrol station to refuel when his father

took this photo. When asked to explain the feeling in this picture Phoenix replied:

*“Careless and free! I didn’t think of anything other than that moment and that spontaneous moment right there...everything felt like there was no care in the world, there were no worries...and ja all we could think about right there is he saw my lap and I saw a pillow”* {Phoenix, p. 15}.

Phoenix continued to tell the story of how this picture reminds him of his younger days when he and his friends would want to buy ice-cream but did not have enough money. They would all have to put together whatever cash they had in their pockets to buy the ice-cream. This reminds him of a time when he felt carefree. Phoenix elaborates:

*“When I travel I feel like I’m basically pressing a restart button or starting a new chapter. It’s total escapism. Uuumm you forget about your....you know in one way you are concerned about your disability adapting and stuff but on the other hand you forget about it and you forget about your lifestyle at home...Your limitations, people that have put things in place, things that hinder you. Uuumm the stressors of day to day life, you forget about all that stuff...in the end when you have gotten yourself calm and comfortable and sorted yourself out, stabilised. All the stressors in the world are totally gone”* {Phoenix, p. 18}.

The new environment brought new thoughts; it did not constantly remind him of the stressors back home. This is very similar to what Flight explained when she experiences freedom from stressors and unpleasant memories when travelling to an unfamiliar environment:

*“To go to a new environment and to make new memories and leave behind the other memories that I don’t want to remember...to go to a place where, for a moment, you can make new memories, recall nothing, it is just a place”* {Flight, p. 10}.

### *Feeling caged*

Contrary to experiencing freedom and a sense of feeling careless and free, travelling brought about feelings of confinement. As Letz explains:

*“...when you are disabled, to be frank with you, you always think you are confined to a setting, almost like you are in a cage, your life is in a small cage”* {Letz, p. 5}.

As mentioned in Letz’s statement, having a disability can make one feel caged and confined; in addition to that, travelling can draw attention to this emotion. Letz felt caged for a moment while he was on his travelling trip to Namibia. Once they arrived in Namibia Letz went for a walkabout in town. This was when people came from out of their shops and walked into the streets to blatantly stare at his prosthetic leg. Their staring made him feel like he was a *“baboon crossing the road, everybody would look at it coz it is not normal for a baboon to enter into a restaurant”* {Letz, p. 8}. He narrated his experience as follows:

*“...then when I get there everybody is looking at me, then that takes you back to seeing yourself as disabled. When you are trying to overcome that mountain of accepting your disability, then they take you back and would you want to travel again to another place if people are, if this was happening? You wouldn’t want to; you would want to stay where you are, where people are used to you”* {Letz, p. 8}.

The feedback that he received from the community dramatically affected him and this supports his feelings of confinement, thus feeling caged. Such an experience can potentially invalidate the progress he has made in accepting the fact that he is different. If not dealt with effectively he could be left feeling caged and motivated to move only within his recognisable boundaries where he feels in control of his daily demands.

#### 4.3.1.2 Daily demands

Another component of the theme double-edged sword that was raised by the participants was to escape from routine. Each person has daily activities they choose to engage in and by doing this on a regular basis forms a daily routine. When travelling to a new environment the familiar space changes to an unfamiliar space and so do one's daily demands and routines. Travelling provides the participants with some freedom from routine which allows for relaxation, as Letz explains when he travelled to Johannesburg, that despite it being a busy city, he could still unwind:

*"I felt at ease, I felt relaxed, for the first time I just felt like.... wow what an experience it was nice for me."* {Letz, p. 2}

#### Freedom of routine

Travelling also provided the right means for Grey to escape from his busy schedule and daily demands, as adhering to these demands is stressful and relates to the strain of performing them. Grey was asked to elaborate on what the essence of travelling is to him and said:

*"To break away from my routine because what I do is routine"* {Grey, p. 6}. *The essence of it (travelling)...is to be without routine, that's what it is for me*" {Grey, p. 21}.

He explained that after a holiday and being away from his routine he would feel refreshed and ready to start his busy schedule again.

*"...it motivates me to get back into everything... You recharge a little"* {Grey, p. 12}.

The researcher enquired why he needs to leave the house and have a change of scenery in order to relax. Why does a different routine in a different environment bring about relaxation for him?

*"I associate certain things that I see with what I do. I know when I'm at home I have to do certain things, I know that"* {Grey, p. 16}.



He explained that when he is at home he is reminded of certain daily demands and things that need to be done and this prohibits him from relaxing. When leisure travelling to a different environment, it holds no responsibilities, schedules or reminders of things to do; this encourages total escapism and relaxation. The new environment momentarily does not carry that heaviness because as yet there are no associations formed. Flight agrees and states:

*“...to travel is to break the routine of what you normally do at home or from where you are from. Because for a moment you can forget about everything and just lock the house, to leave everything and just go travel, it can be refreshing”* {Flight, p. 3}.

Many participants felt recharged and relaxed while on holiday, Flight confirmed this by saying:

*“...for a moment you can forget about everything and lock up everything at home and just leave everything and go travel, it can be refreshing...as it is relaxing in a way. Ja, the ideal thing to do...your soul... to fill your tank for the year that is lying ahead. However, it comes about, somewhere you have to take the opportunity to firstly, be yourself and secondly to live fully”* {Flight, p. 3}.

### **Out of routine**

On the other hand, when the participants travel to a destination that prohibits them from carrying out their basic routines due to inaccessibility, it prevents relaxation. This was the case with Grey when he went away for leisure and had to constantly be innovative and think of alternative means of doing basic everyday activities (ADL's):

*“...you must constantly figure out (methods of doing ADL's) ...and that completely takes away from the travelling experience, through and through”* {Grey, p. 14}.

Once again accessibility plays a major role in whether the participants experience freedom and relaxation or exhaustion and frustration from what is meant to be a leisure breakaway.

Another example of this is when Phoenix mentioned that if the environment does not allow him to maintain his daily demands he would not travel because it would have the opposite effect of relaxation, as illustrated in the following dialogic exchange:

*“Researcher: Do you think it would’ve been different if you went alone? (travel alone overseas)*

*Phoenix: I don’t think I would’ve coped... unless you’ve got lots of experience, a couple years on you of being independent, it will be very difficult. Because it’s much easier, more convenient to sort out a situation when there is an abled person with you.*

*Researcher: So it assists you to fight (adapt) better, because like you said, there is a lot of challenges you constantly have to think of...but just having that one person there just to navigate it a bit better makes it easier?*

*Phoenix: Exactly, so like I’m in a situation... like say you need a towel, you can’t get to the phone now. I’m not saying to dry yourself off. Let’s say maybe I had an accident, okay. Uuum I wet myself now. Something as simple as that. If I was at home it would be easiest. I’d go home sort it out, or now, change of clothes...but overseas it’s like instant panic, if not in my comfortable environment I have got no change of clothes with me, everything is out of reach, I can’t...nothings in its place, I don’t know what to do. Where I can just sit there okay; let’s figure this out. I need a towel, some tissues, I need this, I need that, can you get a spare pair of pants for me so from here. Let’s get onto the floor. Say for example and then let’s move the cushions take it off and clean it out. Coz it’s much easier if someone helps you with that” {Phoenix, p. 6}.*

Here Phoenix not only expresses the anxiety involved when out of his daily routine but also highlights his pattern of thoughts in how to overcome this state of panic. He emphasises that it can be very helpful to have someone there that can help steer these challenges.

As stated by the participants when they elaborated on their daily routines, travelling truly presents as a double-edged sword, in that breaking away from their daily routines either brings about freedom or endorses anxiety and frustration.

#### **4.3.1.3 Spectrum of Choice**

During the interviews and consequent analysis the researcher grew aware of the limitations and liberty in the spectrum of choices which people with disabilities have. Akin to a pendulum swing, they move in a range of freedom to restrictions when making choices, often faced with a “*trade-off between where you want to be and where you ‘can’ be*” {Flight, p. 23}.

##### **Freedom of choice**

When making daily decisions, freedom of choice appears to be incredibly important to Guusje; this is especially relevant when she travels for leisure:

*“I need to go where I want to go. Not where you are telling me to go”* {Guusje, p. 6} *“It is just that you want freedom of choice to go and see what you want to see and not on terms and conditions...Not because you are telling me to go, no, because my own mind is telling me to go”* {Guusje, p. 7}.

Flight shares the same sentiment and stressed the importance of having freedom of choice when deciding to travel for leisure. An example of this is when she went on a travelling trip with her family to Namibia and stayed at a place which was optimally accessible and therefore allowed her to be independent, but it was not her destination of choice:

*“Many people are afraid of travelling, point number 1, point number 2 they go to places that are accessible, but it is not necessarily where they want to be. So it is a trade-off between where you want to be and where you ‘can’ be. Yes sometimes it happens that I am where I*

*want to be and then it is nice that I 'can' be there as well, that is very nice. My parents and I ... went to Namibia together with our neighbours...The first night in Namibia, I cannot even remember where it was, but it was the most accessible place I have ever come across in my life. And it was really nice to be in a place that is accessible, because it is difficult to shower if you need someone in a place where it is inaccessible...So the accommodation was nice for the moment, but it was only en route to where I wanted to be...where it is not necessarily accessible, but it is okay because then you work on it and assess how you can make it better”* {Flight, p. 23}.

Here Flight reiterates the importance of the freedom to choose where she wants to travel, and not just freedom of choice to where she would be able to and where it is accessible enough. Although the accommodation in Namibia was more accessible, making it a more obvious choice for having a holiday, it is not where she wanted to be. She needed to go where she wanted to go and the freedom of choice is part of the liberating experience obtained when travelling.

### **Restricted choice**

Opposed to having freedom of choice, participants experienced restrictions in choice options. Guusje felt restricted when she went on holiday with her husband because the tourist attraction site was not accessible. She had to stay behind and wait for her husband to finish exploring the scenery:

*“I had to walk on stairs and now I was in a big fight with myself because I also want to see over the sea and over the land but then I had to walk (up) the steps and I knew if I was coming up (the steps) and I was not feeling well, he will say ‘okay sit down I am going. And I will be back if I am finished with enjoying myself, because you make your own decisions to come up and that was stupid’. So actually because of him I learned a lot. That if he (husband) is going to enjoy and I can’t because I made that own decision and he is taking pictures or*

*when he is coming back and telling me exactly what he saw and what he found and all that kind of things. So I can realise (rely) on him on the moments I can't do it by myself” {Guusje, p. 11}.*

In the quote above Guusje explains how she has to find the middle ground between having freedom of choice to be able to go where she wants to go but possibly face the outcome of it not being accessible. Alternatively, she has to rely on descriptions and interpretations from her husband in order to experience the view, specific scenery or tourist attraction.

#### **4.3.1.4 Space for contemplation**

Some of the participants consider travelling as a gateway for dealing with a deeper level of thinking or contemplation and healing. This is demonstrated in the words of Guusje below:

*“...and I need another surrounding and a feeling of safety that I can go deep in myself and look what is, what do I think is necessary for myself” {Guusje, p.8}.*

Through travelling the participants are faced with a new space to contemplate deeper matters which either liberates their minds or barricades them all the more.

#### **Freedom of the mind**

Having sufficient space and time to think, allowing the mind to explore, fundamentally frees the mind. Travelling does this for Guusje; it gives her freedom to think and time for reflection in order to put certain things in place; for instance when she was hospitalised and had to make difficult decisions pertaining to her health when a specialist told her she needed an operation. The operation had to be done that following Monday but she refused to go for the operation and demanded to be discharged immediately. Very disgruntled, she went to her general practitioner in town to enquire if she could go on holiday instead. The dialogue went as follows:

*“Guusje: We are going on holiday...out!*

*Dr: For what?*

*Guusje: To put my mind right. I need to talk with myself to make myself ready for that operation” {Guusje, p. 8}.*

Guusje, together with her husband, went on holiday for a week in a quiet little town. When the researcher asked Guusje what this particular travelling trip did for her, she replied by saying:

*“I can put my mind straight. Here (at home) I have to think what are we going to eat and I have to look after the dog. He (husband) is doing it but in my mind I’m doing it. And I have to clean my house I have to go to my neighbours I’ve got all these things to do. If I’m on holiday I can be relaxed I can read a book and in the meantime I’m thinking” {Guusje, p. 8}.*

This leisure trip provided the right environment for her to consider various alternatives and to contemplate the consequences. In essence, travelling on the trip prepared her for the operation. After being on holiday for four days, they decided to pack up and go back home as she was ready to have the operation the following week.

### **Barricading the mind**

To the contrary of experiencing freedom of the mind due to travelling, it can also bring about obstruction of thoughts or barricade the mind, as Dali says:

*“This is what most people do not realise about travelling, specifically travelling for people with disabilities. If you don’t have someone you can talk to prior to going on holiday, someone that was in a similar situation or someone who has done what you want to do with the same type of disability as you, you will come second, you will come second. Somewhere you are going to hit an emotional wall, face first. And it will be too much for you, the exposure will be too much for you...is leisure travel really leisure travel or is it a pilgrimage*

*where you discover yourself...because you don't know what lies ahead...it will be new for all of you (traveller and the family). That is what one must bear in mind" {Dali, p. 6}.*

Yet another concern arose from one of the participants warning about the risk of barricading the mind, as travelling opens up many uncertainties. When travelling to a new destination, the individual has never occupied time or space in that specific destination; therefore, this unknown terrain causes new levels of unfamiliar outcomes. Having to face these new levels of unknown and unwanted emotions is needed to grow and live the best life possible, as Phoenix says:

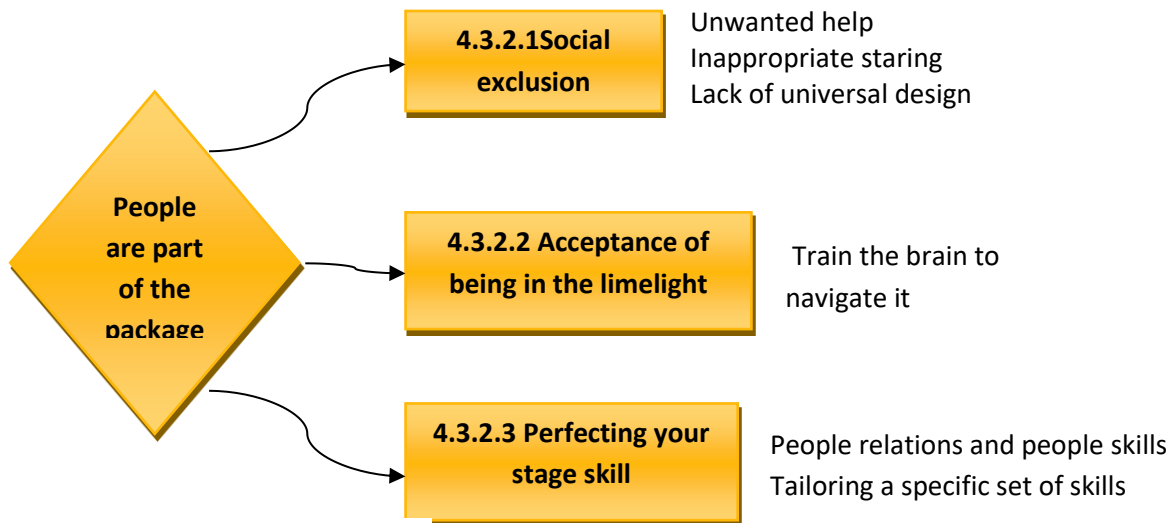
*"It makes me nervous as hell, but I learn a lot from it and it is something that is a big necessity for any disabled person" (Phoenix, p. 5).*

In conclusion the comparison of a bird spreading its wings and flying is perhaps the most prominent association one can make with freedom. This comparison was made by Guusje when she was asked to explain why travelling is so important to her, especially when comparing it to other recreational activities such as painting, or helping other people with disabilities, for both of which she has great passion. She conveyed that it gives her a sense of freedom:

*"...because travelling gives you the feeling that you are free. Unfortunately I can't fly in the sky. But if I could...That would be nice, isn't it?" {Guusje, p. 10}.*

Prior to a bird taking flight and experiencing freedom, it has to face the challenge by stepping out of the safety of its nest and taking a chance by spreading its wings and learning how to fly, similar to the participants having to face new environments of inaccessibility which restrict their choice and cause other stressors. Travelling is without a doubt a double-edged sword; it entails some sacrifices to be made and risks to take but there is also the possibility of experiencing freedom.

## Theme Two: People are part of the package



**Figure 4.9 - Theme Two**

### **4.3.2 Theme 2: People are part of the package**

Being human inevitably links us to society. In the lived experiences of the participants, travelling emphasizes the fact that people are unavoidably part of one's life. Dali strengthens this point further by saying that we are all interconnected "you can't be human if you don't have other humans around you" (Dali, p.16). Here Dali refers to the concept of Ubuntu, which is rooted in the South African White Paper of 1997 for social welfare and means "humanity or humanness" toward others and the existence of a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity (Barnes 2012, p. 16). Dali perceives it in this way:

*"Dali: Ubuntu, are you familiar with it?"*

*Researcher: Yes*

*Dali: A person is a person through other persons. You can't exist if you don't have other people around you. You can't be human if you don't have other humans around you. Because who are you if it is just you, who are you then? That is why people function in two different basic principles. You function as an individual and you function as a group" {Dali, p. 16}.*



This concept was raised by Dali when he depicted some of his challenges in travelling as a person with a disability. Throughout their journeys the participants discovered that people can make them feel more accepted and included, but people can also ostracise one another.

*“I think in the beginning....Look there are different phases a person with a sudden disability goes through, depending on what it is; whether it is a spinal cord injury, amputee or whatever, there are different phases. After going through all those phases, from discovering how it is, then having to accept it and then adapting yeh, yeh, yeh and many more things. The long-term thing at the end of the day is that it is about the people around you. It isn't that you are struggling to adapt or anything like that... it is a constant mentality that you must learn to maintain” {Dali, p. 5}.*

Dali explains that, by living through all the phases, he discovered that people are inevitably part of the package; it is about the people, as people are part and parcel of what makes him feel more disabled in comparison to just having an impairment:

*“...your chair might be the thing that holds you back, but people around you limit you more”*  
{Dali, p. 4}.

He feels that it is people that actually disable him and that without people there would be no disability. For this reason people are always part of the package and that is how this theme emerged. Consideration was given to interlacing it into the other subthemes and categories, but it was raised by the participants so repeatedly that the researcher felt it deserved particular attention as a theme on its own. This theme is discussed in detail under the following subthemes:

#### 4.3.2.1 Social exclusion

Despite people with disabilities having to accept their own impairment and fighting daily battles regarding inaccessibility, it is people that often cause them to feel more disabled. Dali feels that it is society and people that uphold disability:

*“As I say, disability is not a disability; it is the people around you that are the disability. And you must learn how to handle those people. At the end of the day rehabilitation isn’t a personal thing; it is a freaking general thing. You must learn how to handle people. So firstly, accept yourself and then learn how to manage yourself and then be able to maintain it consistently, maintenance around other people” {Dali, p. 15}.*

He became conscious of the fact that people with their inappropriate responses can make him feel more disabled. Since people are a part of life and a part of society it is difficult to avoid them wholly. For this reason he had to learn to deal with people, manage their responses and maintain a constant mentality pertaining to social discrimination. In general, societies discriminate and socially exclude people with disabilities. This continues to manifest whilst travelling to different environments with various societies, often rendering the participants feeling more different. This subtheme therefore, describes some circumstances the participants experienced involving discrimination and incidents of social exclusion, specifically in terms of unwanted help, inappropriate staring and lack of universal designing.

#### **Unwanted help**

One instance of unwanted help is when Letz was about to enter a hotel which had a steeper than usual ramp. Letz was busy steering his way up the ramp taking some time to get to the top but nonetheless getting there, when another man decided to ‘help’ push him up the ramp:

*"You get there you just met the guys outside, you need to go inside. There is a very huge ramp. The first thing that person wants to put maybe his file in his briefcase and try to help and push you. You know deep down this (the ramp) is nothing compared to what you are used to, but the fact that they want to push you. Now you see that as a sign of feeling inferior... but as a guy, we guys have got a problem of we don't really want to feel inferior to each other you know. You always want to be either equal or better. So if a guy who you've just met now pushes you up the ramp. Automatically I just feel inferior, and then my mood is changed" {Letz, p. 10}.*

Frequently able-bodied people want to assist people with disabilities in an activity, such as transferring or pushing them up a ramp. As the participants themselves are able to do these activities on a regular basis, unwanted help makes them feel inferior. In these incidents the non-disabled person is left with a sense of self-fulfilment and kind-heartedness as they have done their good deed for the day, not aware of the impact it has on the disabled person concerned, as with Letz, who felt disempowered and inferior. Another example is when Dali explained how people regularly want to help him transfer out of or into, his car. Frequently an -able bodied stranger would grab onto his wheelchair wanting to assist:

*"...then the more I tell people, leave my wheelchair, LEAVE my wheelchair. I can do this on my own I wouldn't have been here if I couldn't do it, just leave my chair alone. Then they're in my personal space, forcing them self literally onto me just to soothe their own conscience to know that they have done their good deed for the day. And that is basically what it boils down to, it's extremely selfish, but people don't perceive it like that" {Dali, p. 5}.*

Individuals in society are perhaps oblivious of the effect their unwanted help has on people with disabilities and that it is seen as a form of social exclusion. This poses a real psychological risk and is one of the challenges to travelling as a person with a disability.

### *Inappropriate staring*

Letz, who has a prosthetic leg, explains how people came out of the shops when he went for his morning walk whilst on holiday. The staring might have been without motive on the part of non-disabled persons, but their response and their body language left Letz feeling uncomfortable:

*“Letz: So here I was driving, probably 400kms from Cape Town, going to Namibia with my friend and we stopped at some garage and all that. But because I would wear short pants so everywhere we would stop just for refreshment you know people come and gather around just to look at me. I don’t think it is very normal in those areas, you know X (town’s name)side, those small towns. I just realised, even in Namibia. In Namibia I just stood; when I came out of the place or town I wanted to take a walk and just stood outside, in a moment I realised that everybody came out of shops just to be on the streets.*

*Researcher: Just to look at you?*

*Letz: Coz I was putting on short pants, but I never put on long pants. I just said they’ll get used to it; it’s not my problem, maybe or something fascinating” {Letz, p. 7}.*

He continues:

*“...I was still thinking if I’m going to take this road and this route maybe I’ll come back this way and that. And then I realised people in the shops, through windows, through doors, the street, a car actually stopped in the middle of the road, they were just looking. I said oooh just walk, even up to now, here in X (his home town) all the time when I walk people stop, or I’ll pass a group of people and then when I look back all of them would be looking at my leg” {Letz, p. 7}.*

Letz used to be offended by such reactions from society. Bearing in mind that such offences can occur in one’s local as well as a foreign community, but especially when travelling, this behaviour can cause a person with a disability to feel less normal and eventually could deter them from travelling. Letz explains:

*“...but if I think of travelling let’s just say in X (name of a city) maybe they are not use to that(referring to people with disabilities), and then when I get there everybody is looking at me, then that takes you back to seeing yourself as disabled. When you are trying to overcome that mountain of accepting your disability, then they take you back. Would you want to travel again to another place if people are, if this was happening? You wouldn’t want to; you would want to stay where you are, where people are used to you” {Letz, p. 8}.*

Inappropriate responses and social exclusion can discourage people with disabilities from travelling. For this reason travelling is a risk in the quest of accepting disability and fully engaging in life, because people want to be viewed as normal and be seen as part of society. Inappropriate staring makes the participants feel more different and not part of society. As stated by Grey, people with disability actively search to be part of society, to be seen as normal. He states that society wants the general public to be distinctive, not to be a carbon copy of each other but to embrace one’s uniqueness. However, the biggest thing for people with disabilities is to be normal:

*“I think the biggest thing following any accident is that people actively seek normality, how things were beforehand. I think people chase normality...Society teaches you to not be normal, you know everybody focuses on it but in this case you just want to be normal” {Grey, p. 13}.*

### **Lack of universal design**

The lack of universal design is when people design structures which exclude the disabled minority due to inaccessibility. When travelling, even going to the toilet is sometimes a daunting task, as is the case in point when Flight went camping with her family. On their leisure holiday she battled to use the public toilet as well as the shower. She also battled to engage in the desired adventure

activities due to lack of universally designed products and services rendered by the broader society. Here she depicts her experience:

*“Yes, it sometimes feels as if campsites are built with the idea that only typical conventional people will use it. I don’t like using the word ‘normal’ because everyone’s “normal” is different, this is my “normal”, but ja typically referring to people whom can walk and do everything for themselves. To me it feels like people create and built stuff, organise the environment with that picture in mind. They think in a box” {Flight, p. 17}.*

Inaccessibility is a big problem and ultimately it stems from the designer or architect not designing it for all to use. Another example of a lack of universal design was when Flight visited various super-tubes across South Africa, as she enjoys the activity:

*“Mmm a stupid example of this is at X’s super-tubes, they have 10 million stairs, Y’s super-tubes has 10 million stairs. So I really enjoy going down the tubes but I can only do it once or twice because someone has to carry you...When I asked X’s super-tubes they explained to me that I’m the only person [with a disability]to have ever visited them!{Flight, p. 17}.*

Here Flight gives an explanation of how society designs structures and activities considering only the non-disabled majority, assuming that everybody is able to access narrow passages or stairs; this lack of universal design comes at the expense of persons with disabilities, as they have to navigate obstacles which non-disabled people never have to consider. The lack of universal design is often an error made out of ignorance due to inadequate knowledge and insight, but it has demoralising effects. Dali gives an example of this and how it influences one’s interactions with people:

*“The moment you’re away from friends and family, no one understands your personal needs. Then you have to explain to people why you need the bathroom and bedroom in a certain way. Things like that, the personal detail about your stomach and bladder. These are things*

*you won't normally say to any person. Because they don't understand that the info is relevant because you can't control these things. They don't know, they don't understand the story behind the story. And by telling someone you don't know all the personal information breaks something in you. It chisels the chip from your shoulder.....it humbles you against your will" {Dali, p. 7}.*

As society's structures and infrastructure predominantly consider the non-disabled community, what is considered to be subtle discrimination has disheartening consequences when travelling to unfamiliar places for people with disabilities.

In summary, places that are not accessible, people wanting to help when it is not needed, inappropriate staring and pre-judging, are only a few of the social injustices the participants experienced while travelling. This level of discrimination not only requires but demands that stronger mindsets be developed and brains be trained to nullify these offences. People are inevitably part of the package and a person with a disability should accept the fact that society will probably continue to make inappropriate responses and continue to consciously and subconsciously socially exclude one. To recognise that as a person with a disability one will stand out from the crowd and yet be able to overcome being different, is of assistance in this difficult predicament.

#### **4.3.2.2. Acceptance of being in the limelight**

After the participants shared some of their travel encounters in various places with diverse communities, it became apparent that the bulk of society acts in ways which are not always conducive to social inclusion. Some examples mentioned by the participants include that people have fallen on their laps and started praying and telling them they just have to believe enough and then they will be healed; people staring at them inappropriately; and regularly being bombarded with acts of assistance which mainly rendered the participants feeling helpless and inadequate.

Accepting that being a person with a disability consequentially places one in the limelight purely due to appearing different, is pivotal in dealing with the inappropriate responses from society. When the researcher asked Letz about his response when he experienced that people inappropriately stared at him whilst on holiday, he replied:

*“I use to take it (as an) offence but now I’ve taken it as a blessing, maybe I’m a celebrity so you can look now. But I use to be very shy... Now, I don’t feel anything- maybe my leg is so awesome that they want to look at it. I don’t mind whatever ....As long as I’m walking...*

*Researcher: But you had to travel, you had to go through quite a journey to get to that point?*

*Letz: Ja it was difficult at first. Ja, it was difficult. I just felt, initially I use to feel like I’m being looked at as less of a man, less of a human being. Coz everybody is looking at you. I mean you wouldn’t look at just a normal person walking by. When they look like that like it’s a weird thing you know” {Letz, p. 8}.*

Initially he was offended but he has trained himself to accept that people unavoidably are going to form part of his life and he has to accept having attention focused on him and to accept being in the limelight. It was very difficult at first but he has learned how to effectively manage these offences by telling himself that they are staring at him because he is awesome, *“I don’t mind whatever”*. People with disabilities have a different appearance which puts them in the public eye. Contrary to being in their familiar environment –where people are used to them- travelling emphasises the fact that their appearance is different. As Letz highlights: although travelling puts emphasis on his appearance, it is also through this journey that he has trained his mind not to let society’s offences break him down.



### *Train the brain to navigate it*

Letz had to actively develop a pattern of thinking to accept that the broader society can easily and continuously offend and that he had to gain stamina in dealing with this. Being aware that society will continue to stare at people who are differently abled, he realised that the onus was on him to not let it affect him emotionally nor disable him. Letz elaborates:

*“You know I just realised I think we judge or we value ourselves according to social acceptance. If people...show you that you are disabled you feel disabled and you act disabled. But if people do not look at you as a disabled people and don't do to you like a disabled person you are not going to act disabled and do disabled. I think it is a natural thing, it comes natural”* {Letz, p. 19}

He states that the more people he meets, the more he can train his brain as this allows him to recognise and identify if their interaction will be uplifting to him or not. By meeting new people through travelling has allowed him to accept this and navigate these inappropriate responses:

*“Yes it will be very difficult initially, but I will motivate, the more you travel, the more you get to accept your past. And you realise at the end of the day everybody is going to look at you like this for the first time. Eventually they are going to get used to you, then they are going to accept you”* {Letz, p. 8}.

Accepting that people will offend and discriminate in turn promotes his self-assurance and aids him to be self-assertive and accept his dissimilarity in a society that has a ‘normal’ mould. However, it does take time to train the mind and accept inappropriate responses. Below is an example of how Letz had to train his mind:

*“I've tried to, I've trained my disability to something to praise. I feel I'm super-human now, because that's why I always wear shorts when I'm travelling. Most of the time I will wear my shorts. When they look, they are looking at the mechanism of this leg, how this leg is walking,*

*because it walks normal like the other one. I just tell myself that they are probably looking at my prosthetic leg. I'll just cruise, I'll just move. And I'm not travelling for them I'm not here for them I'm here to accept my challenges that I have. I'm here to expand boundaries" {Letz, p. 11}.*

Following his travel experience Letz has told himself that they are just staring at his leg, and maybe they want to know about the mechanics of the leg. Alternatively, he tells himself that they stare possibly because *"my leg is so awesome that they want to look at it. I don't mind whatever they....as long as I'm walking and I'm walking like them"* {Letz, p. 8}. This mindset enables him to prevent people's inappropriate responses from restraining his ability to explore. Undoubtedly people are part of the package and they regularly offend persons with disabilities, whether unintentionally or with intent. But it is through travelling that he has gained more exposure to social scenarios enabling him to improve his people skills. Dali similarly explains that he has to maintain a consistent mindset in navigating offensive responses as it still shocks him to experience how discriminating people can be:

*"Researcher: Why is people skill important?"*

*Dali: Because there is an infinite . . . (participant stops in midway) Okay, Einstein always said...there is two things in this life that is infinite. The one is time and other one is human stupidity and the more scenarios you can collect of human stupidity, the more prepared and the less shocked you'll be when someone does something stupid around you. So yes, you get poise...It's a learning process, I mean I still see things that still shock me" {Dali, p. 14}.*

For this reason he advises that the onus is on the person with the disability to train their brain and navigate these offences to develop people skills. Dali implies that it is the responsibility of the person with the disability to learn to navigate people and their reactions:

*"People differ, not everybody is the same. At the end of the day you are in a wheelchair, you are a cripple and you have to accept it, because if you don't accept it people will make you*

*fully aware of it (being disabled) on a regular basis. And you won't be able to stop it. So you have to learn to accept it in your own head, so that when other people do it to you it won't shock you every time they see you like that (as disabled)" {Dali, p. 15}.*

This leads to the last subtheme whereby participants had greater exposure to more social scenarios through travelling to perfect their people or stage skills.

#### **4.3.2.3 Perfecting your stage skills**

This subtheme marks the words of Dali when he mentioned that through travelling he can:

*"...perfect his stage skills with strangers" {Dali, p. 15}.*

As mentioned previously, able-bodied people tend to have inappropriate reactions to people with disabilities. The participants feel that it is the responsibility of people with disabilities to acquire self-assertiveness in dealing with these inappropriate responses from society. Once people with disabilities accept that able-bodied people will continue to offend them due to lack of insight, and have trained themselves not to let it offend them, the focus can be shifted to developing a specific set of skills to manage these responses.

Travelling poses as a method through which one can develop such skilfulness in order to effectively manage inappropriate responses from people. Through travelling and being exposed to a variety of people and their responses, it helps people who have disabilities to build not only a reference of inappropriate actions by non-disabled people, but also in assisting to develop a repertoire of responses.

### *People relations and people skills*

Travelling allows the participants to meet different people and to build a reference on how to handle people and their different responses within a variety of situations; this enables them to develop people skill and perfect it. Flight said that it is through travelling she grew in:

*“...my people relations and my people skill in general broadened”* {Flight, p. 7}.

Additionally, Dali describes his encounters with the public while travelling as follow:

*“You see, what happens is at the beginning you try to convince people that you are actually okay. But then, eventually you reach a point where you realise that you don’t have to convince people anymore, but that you have so many different stories you can use instead. So you already have a solution to every scenario, for every response from people”* {Dali, p. 15}.

It is evident that participants were exposed to various types of people during their travelling trips and were made aware of peoples’ different responses. For Phoenix this exposure to society’s different responses expanded his reference in dealing with people.

*“You get a very good idea of the different ways that people will treat you and what you prefer how they should and how they shouldn’t treat you, what you like and what you don’t like”*{Phoenix, p. 9}.

As Dali puts it: *“You have to be willing to expect the most dim-witted things from people and have the grace to not lose yourself when they annoy you in trying to help”* {Dali, p.5}. It is a journey and takes time to learn how to navigate these types of offences and perfect one’s skill in dealing with people.

### Tailor a specific set of skills

To develop people skills and to expand one's skill in managing inappropriate responses is a process. It is only through travelling that one has the opportunity "to perfect your stage skill". Dali elaborates that learning to be self-assertive and efficiently manage these types of response is a skill which can only be acquired through travelling:

*"You know what to say to get this guy off of your back...At the end of the day that is what you want to do. You want to discredit his objective, which is harmful to you. You want to change his opinion of you and the only way this can be done is to change what he currently believes about you into something that you want him to believe about you. And the more you do it, the better you get at it.*

*Researcher: That is a skill*

*Dali: That is a skill and you can only get trained in it when you travel. You are not going to become skilled in it around your friends and family as they handle you in the same way. They are biased towards you" {Dali, p. 15}.*

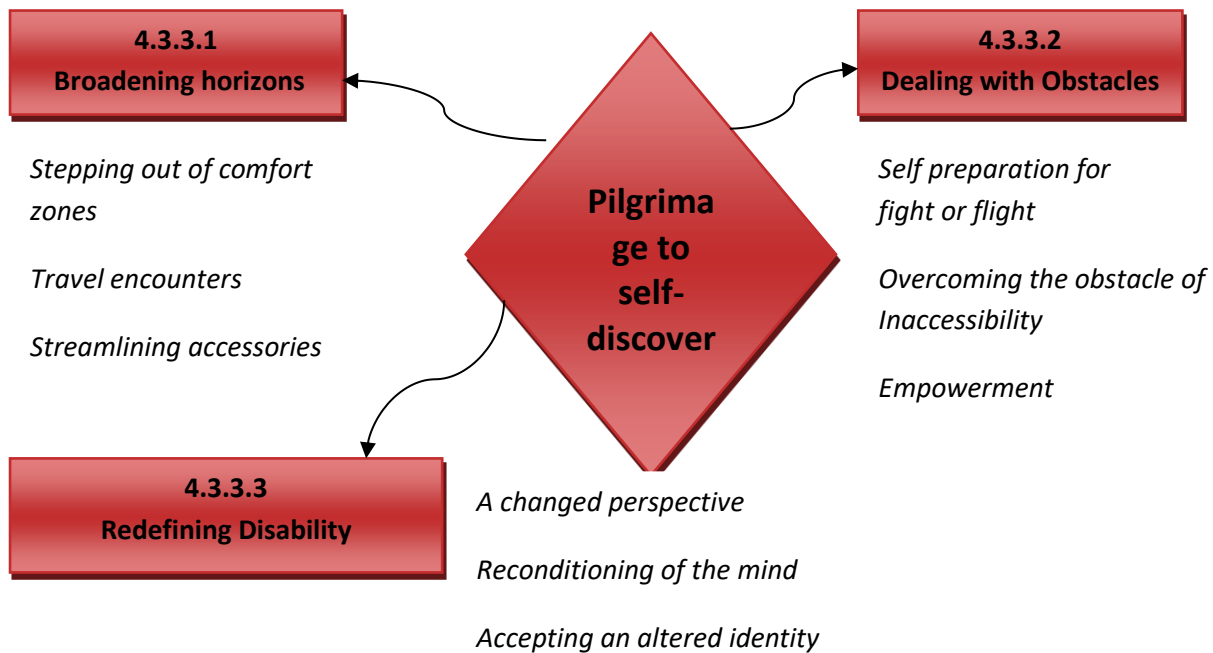
Dali continues to use travelling as an opportunity to improve his skill in dealing with social discrimination and exclusion:

*"I can perfect my stage skill with strangers. Like the things I say I'll observe how they respond...okay maybe I should state it differently next time and watch how they respond then. To the next person I will say the same thing just in a different way. Okay I think this way works better. So, when you travel you can do more of this type of thing" {Dali, p. 13}.*

Dali sums up the focus of this theme in his belief that when a person with a disability travels, "something that you must know how to manage, is the people around you" {Dali, p. 5}. People are part of the package and, because the participants appear different due to having a disability, they are placed in the limelight. Thus they have to grow into accepting being in the limelight and

that their disability positions them in circumstances whereby they require a specific set of skills to navigate people. It is through travelling that they develop the skill to navigate social exclusion and discrimination and travelling proves to be very beneficial in learning and accepting their disability.

### Theme Three: Pilgrimage to self-discovery



**Figure 4.10 – Theme Three**

#### **4.3.3 Theme three: Pilgrimage to self-discovery**

The participants described a number of significant factors that travelling holds for them. They elaborated that travelling prompts them to take chances and to step out of their place of safety, where they had to learn how to deal with incidents, and it is travelling that endorses exploration of new activities and growth. As described previously, each participant has their unique interpretation of what travelling means to them, but the participants agree that travelling is a journey of self-discovery where one can discover a “*piece of yourself*” {Flight, p. 21}. Dali reinforced that travelling can be seen as a journey of self-discovery when he was asked to explain what leisure travel means to him:

*“Is leisure travel leisure travel? Or is it a pilgrimage where you discover yourself, because that is pretty much what you are going to do every time you travel. It is a pilgrimage; it’s a journey of discovery”* {Dali, p. 6}.

Other than the physical journey of voyaging from one place to another while relaxing and exploring new things, for the participants travelling is significant in discovering oneself. They

elaborated on how travelling provides opportunity to discover new strengths through facing unpredictable challenges and how it assists with redefining their own perception of disability.

In this theme, the first subtheme - broadening horizons highlights the challenges of stepping out of comfort zones and drawing attention to travelling encounters whilst experiencing new activities and adventures. Furthermore, travelling provides the participants with opportunities to ‘steal with their eyes’ as they see other alternatives to managing their daily activities. This in turn gives them insight into streamlining their accessories when travelling. This is followed by the next subtheme where the participants had to make a decision about dealing with obstacles after they have exposed themselves to the unknown and being in a new environment. With inaccessibility as the main obstacle, they need self-preparation to flight or fight for their challenges because these cannot be avoided. In facing the obstacle of inaccessibility and other incidents, they are left with a feeling of empowerment. This leads the participants to a changed perspective of how they view their disability and therefore, the third subtheme, redefining disability, emerged. Travelling gave them a changed perspective which promotes reconditioning of the mind and encourages acceptance of their altered identity and finding the new self.

#### **4.3.3.1 Broadening Horizons**

Many participants said that travelling requires them to enlarge their place of safety and explore through broadening their horizons. For Flight, travelling broadened her horizons and that is an experience that “*no one can take away*” from her {Flight, p. 4}:

*“Researcher: What does that experience mean to you?”*

*Flight: It gives me a wealth that no money in this world can buy, I mean nothing comes close to it, to be able to say I was there, I have experienced that...you see if you travel you experience certain situations that can change you as a person. I want to say that there is a*



*100% chance that you'll come back as a different person. That you as a person will grow in who you are and how you handle things. Mmm yes I think that's what it is about...*

*Researcher: You made a bold statement by saying: "when one travels you'll come back a changed person" Why?*

*Flight: "I think you broaden your horizons and the manner in which you used to see things gets challenged, just for the pure fact that you experience things that you've never experienced before" {Flight, p. 4}.*

Travelling exposes the participants to something outside of their familiar environment. It prompts them to expand and stretch beyond their realms of safety and once they have stepped out of the familiar environment, away from the familiar responses and the familiar faces they start seeing new things and discovering new things about who they are. The participants are now challenged by their own abilities and skills and have the opportunity to re-examine their own means of doing daily activities after experiencing different manners, methods and lifestyles.

### **Stepping out of comfort zones**

A comfort zone can be described as a familiar place where one feels settled and safe, where one is accustomed to a well-known method and way of doing things. For the participants, following their impairment their familiar environment and space has been adapted in a manner that optimises accessibility for them:

*"...that house was especially furniture for me. So the toilet was on my height, the kitchen was on my height everything was made for me and that I could function with a wheelchair in that house" {Guusje, p. 3}.*

Apart from making alterations in their homes, they acknowledge that people around them and in their community are aware of their challenges and know what they can and cannot do. Therefore, the participants by default are not exposed to new levels of discrimination as family and friends treat them in a specific way:

*“...you won't learn around your friends and family, because they will always treat you in the same way. They are biased towards you”* {Dali, p. 15}.

These factors contribute to them living in a comfortable space where they feel more equipped and safer than what they would in an unfamiliar terrain but on the contrary prohibits them from exploring. Thus moving outside of one's comfort zone holds many challenges. The participants revealed that it is very stressful to travel into the unknown and having to handle the unexpected challenges regarding accessibility instils a fear of the unknown. However, despite one's comfortzone being accessible and safe, all the participants encourage travelling in order to broaden their horizons. Letz said:

*“Aaaah travelling, you are expanding your boundaries first of all. I'll motivate them to do that because at the end of the day if you start travelling you overcome fear of the unknown”* {Letz, p. 8}.

Phoenix mentioned that even though there is stress and anxiety, travelling for him is seen as a rewarding experience:

*“I would like to travel as much as possible. It's stressful as hell but when you're there and you're sorted out.... Ja it's really cool”* {Phoenix, p. 23}.

In agreement with Phoenix, Flight said that she is fully aware of the obstacles to accessibility but realises that it is part of the journey and *“it is important not to stress too much, but to do now and think later”* {Flight, p. 23} because *“magic happens outside of your comfortzone”* {Flight, p. 7}.

This led the researcher to question why it is necessary for the participants to step out of their comfort zone, and what happens outside of their comfort zones? Dali explained it in the following parable:

*“If you are in a cage, you can only run, jog or walk to a certain speed in a circle, the bigger the cage, the faster you can run, jog or walk. Take the cage away, what can be done then? Then you can jump, climb onto stuff etc. So you can’t just stay in your house” {Dali, p. 18}.*

Therefore, stepping out of their comfort zones allows for growth and Grey agrees that this is important because:

*“...it is your comfortzone, nothing happens there. You are not going to become independent by sitting at home... you have to get out of your comfort zone. Out of your house, out of your familiar space, you must see different scenery you have to move about” {Grey, p. 20}.*

During the course of travelling the participants are forced to cope with what they have on hand in the absence of all the comfortable structures and means from home. Additionally, Dali believes that travelling provides him with the opportunity to put his actual abilities to the test:

*“...one should travel for leisure, because if you don’t put yourself outside of your everyday normal activities, you are not going to test your abilities and see what your actual skill is... doing new things, new adaptations. You are familiar with the people around you and close to you, so you are in a comfort zone in your everyday living. Therefore, the more you travel and do not have to concentrate on your responsibilities, but can just relax and look at what is around you; the quicker and easier you’ll adapt to your new situation and sudden disability”{Dali, p. 1}.*

Firstly, he has to place himself outside of his comfort zone; he has to face new situations in order to examine his true abilities. Moving outside of his comfort zone enables him to relax and experience his abilities in a new manner, familiarise himself with new challenges which in the end assist him in adapting to his sudden disability.

The participants consider travelling to be a means of learning how to cope with disability within society as it obligated them to step out of their safe zone of familiarity at home. Leaving their comfort zone places them face to face with obstacles and often some inappropriate responses from strangers. To them, leisure travel is in fact a journey, a 'pilgrimage of self-discovery' whereby they have to be patient and discover solutions to different scenarios and in different settings. Grey experienced that being away from his familiar and safe environment forces him to discover what he is actually capable of:

*"...you're gaining experience. A lot of the things that you engage with build up a reference. Sort of like a profile that you are creating for yourself. You become more aware of what you can do and what you would be able to do" {Grey, p. 19} therefore, "the more you go away, the more you grow" {Grey, p. 20}.*

Letz explains how travelling helps him to step outside of his comfort zone and makes him realise his own abilities and be sure, within himself, that he is capable:

*"But if you travel and then you are doing things out of your area of comfort, doing something where you are very comfortable is different, that is expanding your boundaries out of your comfort zone. Then you are really, really pushing to the limit, you are really doing the opposite of what you are expected to be doing. Then when you come back it gives you that fulfilment, it gives you that happiness then you know within that you are able. Then you get use to it. So I think it is rehabilitative" {Letz, p. 18}.*

Dali states that travelling provides him with the opportunity to explore and experience new encounters -“you can relax and look what is around you...” {Dali, p. 1}. The next section deals with the travel encounters that the participants experienced.

### **Travel Encounters**

Through stepping out of their comfort zones, the participants not only expand their boundaries but experience some memorable encounters. They expanded their knowledge about places, saw beautiful landscapes and learned about other cultures. These encounters cannot be taken away from them and can only be experienced as stated by Flight:

*“It (travelling) gives me knowledge, it gives me wisdom which you...you can’t get in a textbook. You cannot gain this experience in a textbook, or yes if someone gives you a book and say read it and the book for arguments sake revolves around Botswana, you can read it, page through it, but the experience it won’t be the same as if I went there personally to see what it is like. The experience won’t be there, it’s about discovering something new. It’s an*



**Picture 4.2 - Abseiling**

*experience that no one can take away from you, what I think is important”* {Flight, p. 4}.

In picture 4.2-Abseiling, Flight elaborates on one of her travelling trips to Grabouw where she experienced some adventure in an adaptive abseiling activity. She believes that through travelling and engaging in new and different activities “you gain exposure” and “you expand” boundaries {Flight, p. 15}

*“Travelling, I think travelling is the best thing ever. I think it is important to move outside of your boundaries and to step outside of your own comfort zone and to go and live, to go and see and to not get caught up in your own environment .Uuuhm and culture and language and so forth, because you see, the more you travel, the more you get to experience things, the more you learn...” {Flight, p. 1}.*

In order for Flight to be able to abseil, the gear had to be adapted to provide sufficient postural support:

*“...I thought that it would be easy, but it wasn't. Only later on we realised...the guy had to use a normal piece of rope, as there was nothing else, and tie the rope around my back and fasten it to the harness because I was falling out of the harness as my back is not strong enough to support me in an upright position. So then he had to make a plan to keep my back upright and supported. That in itself was challenging, just to keep my back upright so that I*



**Picture 4.3 - Great Canyon**

*don't feel as if I'm going to fall out at any moment. But yes, it was delightful! It is a feeling of freedom, of here you are hanging now, in the air and not even gravity can bring you down” {Flight, p. 14}.*

As mentioned by Flight she encountered some experiences that no one can take away from her. This was the same for Letz on his travelling trips.

In an example, Letz travelled to Namibia to see the Great Fish River Canyon in Namibia. This encounter left him feeling honoured:

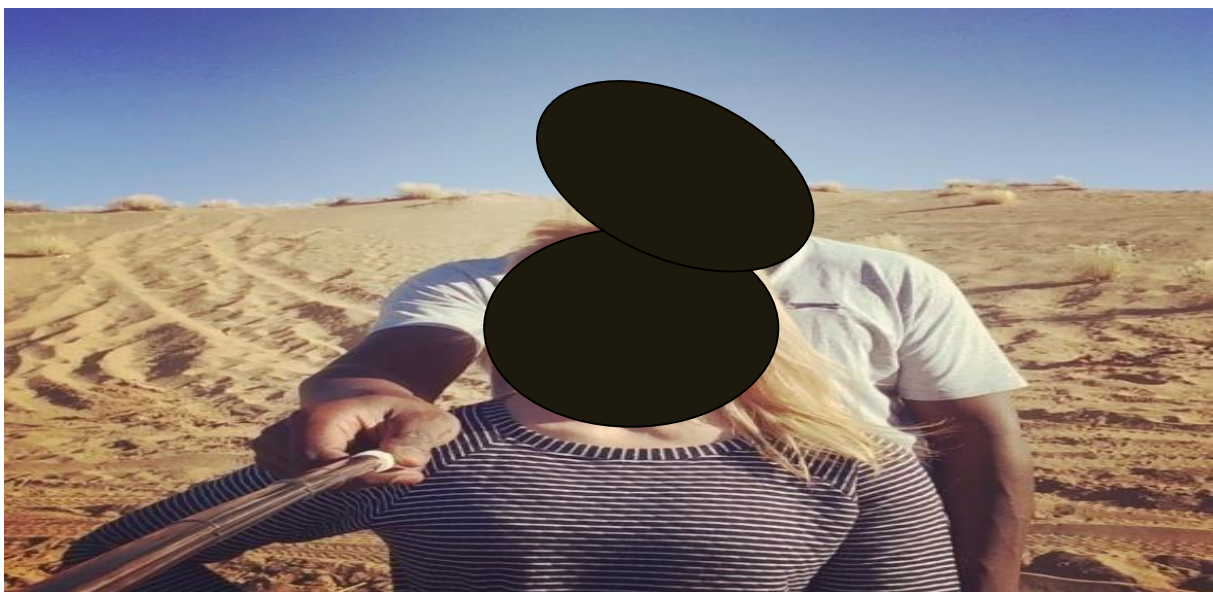
*“I just feel so honoured. I mean this is the second biggest in the world. See regardless of your state, regardless of who you are, to see one of these big things that hardly a lot of people see. There is a lot of Namibians who haven’t even seen it” {Letz, p. 14}.*

Moreover, Letz believes that despite the challenges and discrimination a differently-abled person experiences, there is a lot of beauty out there that one must encounter, see picture 4.3 - Great Canyon:

*“..to stay in X (his resident town) the whole time and not expand, see the beauty of this world, because this world is very beautiful, if you don’t travel you only see it in pictures, and the more you go out the more you experience, you enjoy. It’s just like holiday” {Letz, p. 9}.*

Letz mentioned that travelling not only allows him to experience the beauty of this world (see Picture 4.4 - Canyon selfie), but it also assists him in expanding his boundaries:

*“I’m here to expand boundaries. Travelling is a luxury and there is a lot to learn so it’s just expanding your boundaries and spreading your wings” {Letz, p. 11}.*



**Picture 4.4 - Canyon selfie**



In (picture 4.5 - Aardvark), Letz expanded his boundaries by going on a night hike where he got exposed to the sighting of an aardvark, which is very shy and rarely seen and which he had the opportunity to see. This rare experience left him feeling astounded:

*“R: You were lucky to see it!*

*Letz: Yes, I was so close to it, I took a video, and I took pictures with it, so close like it was digging there. I was so close my host was*

*like; I’m so shocked why this thing is not running. Because it should have been gone, I*

*said to them maybe it is because of my prosthetic that it does smell me. I went so*

*close. Afterwards I just felt, I mean I went through a trail two hours walking a trail*

*she(Letz’s friend) said to me wow it’s so*

*amazing that you can still do what a normal person does, so I don’t see any disability in you”*

{Letz, p. 6}.



**Picture 4.5 - Aardvark**

In all of these pictures, Let experienced some special and very rare encounters, which broadened his horizons.

Phoenix shared some of his travelling encounters. Specifically on his tour to Prague he just wanted to enjoy the trip and not let his impairment hinder him from experiencing everything he wanted to:



**Picture 4.6 - Prague**



*“...you want to enjoy everything as everyone else would want to enjoy. You want to enjoy the different cultures, you want to see the different lifestyle there, you want to be exposed to another land, want to feel a sense of independence and you want to feel like the fact that this hasn't hindered me from going over there and experiencing what everyone else experiences” {Phoenix, p. 8}.*

In picture (4.6 - Prague), Phoenix met a girl from the Czech Republic and she asked him to join her on a day out to explore the old city and gain exposure to their culture:

*“...so you can see here this is an old city, cobblestones everywhere...travelling around sightseeing, seeing the different chapels and statues...she is teaching me her culture and Uuuhm showing me new things around there..I was very happy and satisfied with my whole experience” {Phoenix, p. 11}.*

In addition Phoenix experienced meaningful connections with other people, causing him to feel socially included. It was through travelling that he could make true connections with people from different cultures. These connections led him to discover the different ways people treat him and how he prefers to be treated. Travelling offers Phoenix the opportunity to connect with someone out of his familiar environment and explains it as:

*“I've connected with someone overseas, someone from a different culture, someone who lives a totally different life from me, but yet she's the same as my friends, she's the same as me and Uuuhm you know there is no difference between us, at all” {Phoenix, p. 11}.*

It is not just Phoenix who enjoys the exposure to different cultures and discovering different types of people. Flight mentioned that the more you travel:

*“...the more you get to know other people. You get into contact with other people, people who think differently from you. People that come from other places as you, people with a*

*different language and culture to you. Sooo.....Uuuhm, it not just about discovering your environment, but about the people you discover along the way and it's the bumpy roads lead to the most beautiful destinations” {Flight, p. 1}.*

In conclusion Phoenix states that:

*“I wouldn't have experienced anything what I did there. Or I wouldn't be the person I am now or experience the things I did if I didn't travel” {Phoenix, p. 23}.*

In addition to encountering meaningful activities and viewing beautiful landscapes the participants gained insights into identifying alternative adaptations of how to streamline their accessories in order to make their daily demands trouble-free and effortless.

### **Streamlining accessories**

Participants drew attention to the fact that an essential part of travelling is that it provides them with the opportunity to experiment with alternative adapted methods through ‘stealing with their eyes’. The participants point out that it is in fact through travelling that they expand their boundaries and learn how to streamline their accessories. Flight feels that this is the perfect opportunity whereby:

*“...you can steal with your eyes. (when travelling) you can view how other people do it”*  
{Flight, p. 14}.



**Picture 4.7 - Wheelchair rim**

She gained exposure to other differently-abled people and observe how they navigate through their everyday activities. This forms part of the self-discovery journey whereby she determines what can work and what cannot

work in her own circumstances. Phoenix gives the same motive for travelling. He too observes how other people engage in their everyday activities and assesses whether he would be able to do things in the same manner. In essence it is rehabilitation given by the people for the people. Phoenix asks himself:

*“Can I not? And then you investigate stuff and see if you can do that or not. And that kind of makes you grow as a person.”* {Phoenix, p. 5}

Phoenix continues by talking about his trip to Atlanta in America where he received further rehabilitation. One of the friends he made there has specific push rims on his wheelchair, (see picture 4.7 - Wheelchair rim), and he explained:

*“...the difference with that is (the push rim of the wheelchair) that because it has a broader surface to grab onto it is easier for someone with a weaker hand. I never knew about anything like that until I saw someone use it in America and he has full hand function, he just uses it for comfort”* {Phoenix, p. 5} .

Therefore, he feels that he learned a lot from being exposed to other differently-abled people:

*“...you learn a lot from the people overseas, equipment, how you manage your daily life and things.... So I learned from everyone overseas. I could say each person whom I’ve met there has taught me something small. Something as small as going to fetch paper towels before you wash your hands in the bathroom instead of washing your hands and then pushing and dirtying your hands to get paper towels”*{Phoenix, p. 6}.

It is evident that the participants feel that travelling opens up alternative accessories and methods they can use in performing their everyday activities. Travelling allows them to observe these alternatives and reassess their own ways of doing things and eventually to streamlining their lives. Like Phoenix said *“the biggest thing is that you learn to streamline. Simplify your life”*. {Phoenix, p. 8} He had to learn to adapt the most while travelling, as he explains:

*“I’ve had to adapt, toilets not being the right heights or something, or there is no seat for a chair or I have to somehow get into a shower that is not wheelchair friendly. Or problems with the bed maybe, to get into the hotel or at the work place or whatever, lots of things. And if I didn’t travel overseas or road-tripped or anything I wouldn’t have learned. I wouldn’t be the person I am today because I would’ve still been stuck in those old habits”* {Phoenix, p.5}.

It is difficult to travel distances with bulky bags and luggage, so it forced him to review what is really needed, and if he really needs the full commode or can he travel with a fold-up raised toilet seat. The disabled travellers are compelled to prioritise their necessities, and part of this process is learning from other people with disabilities how they get along without certain ‘necessities’.

#### **4.3.3.2 Dealing with Obstacles**

Travelling does not come without challenges. Despite the anxiety and stress paired with stepping outside of their comfort zones, the participants expose themselves to new activities and new places that are mostly inaccessible. The participants have to face obstacles from physical challenges like having to navigate their wheelchairs on uneven terrains and pivot onto curbs as well as emotional challenges such as having to stay calm when an incident occurs. The participants consider dealing with these types of obstacles as helping them to grow and increase their level of independence. For example Dali stated that he sees travelling as the perfect opportunity to apply practically what he was taught during rehabilitation in a clinical environment:

*“apply what I was taught in Rehab...which was how to do ADL’s to make life easier...it can be seen as post rehab, because now you have to practically apply it”* {Dali, p. 18}.

Therefore, this subtheme focuses on the participants’ experiences in applying practically the lessons taught in rehabilitation. It is divided into three categories, which firstly, highlight some

comments made by the participants pertaining to whether one must fight or take flight in the face of these challenges, followed by the obstacles with which the participants are faced, and concluding with the sense of accomplishment they experience once these challenges were conquered.

### **Self-preparation for fight or flight**

The participants are well aware of the challenges of inaccessibility and possible humiliating incidents involving incontinence and forewarned that people with disabilities have to be prepared. Since travelling inevitably exposes them to inaccessible spaces and unpredictable situations, they have to be prepared and willing to adapt, as the alternative of avoiding going out into public spaces is impractical. Phoenix describes how travelling compelled him to decide if he was willing to fight or take flight:

*“...it (travelling) chucks you in the deep end. Straight in the deep end and you can’t do anything about it, the only thing you can do about it is adapt...flight or fight and there is no flight, so you have to fight {Phoenix, p. 5}.*

Taking the risk of exposing themselves to the challenges of inaccessibility, the participants have to prepare themselves to face the obstacles as Dali states:

*“It is not always leisure travel, it is a pilgrimage. You have to be on the lookout for opportunities. You have to be willing to both be shocked and run away or stand and face the thing that jumps out” {Dali, p. 13}.*

Dali continues to reiterate the importance of self-preparation by saying that he had to be willing to face the major obstacle in travelling for people with disabilities, which is inaccessibility.

### *Overcoming the obstacle of inaccessibility*

Apart from the category mentioned earlier -lack of universal design in theme 2 called People are part of the package - this section specifically addresses the fact that inaccessibility is more than just a structural issue such as limited universal design, and this category lays emphasis on overcoming inaccessibility.

*“People are quick to say yes they do have an accessible bathroom or room and then when you get there it is not accessible at all, because it was designed by someone who is not wheelchair bound...Therefore, it is unpractical and that is obviously the challenges there is when travelling”* {Flight, p. 8}.

These are the words of Flight as she explains some of the challenges she encounters when travelling. Often when she pre-books accommodation, specifying her requirements, it is evident that it is not accessible. By exposing themselves to travelling the participants have to face the tedious challenges of inaccessibility. Flight continues to elaborate that when she engages in the available activities when travelling to a new place and it is not accessible, it makes her feel:

*“...more suppressed and out of place if it is not accessible. This makes you feel below par”*  
{Flight, p. 3}.

Inaccessibility is not just a physical obstacle but it affects Flight psychologically as well. If the new environment is not accessible, it is emotionally and physically draining to be on holiday. This happened to Grey when he went on holiday, emphasising the importance of accessibility for relaxation otherwise it is just tiring from all the planning and strategising he had to do just to perform his basic occupations:

*“...this has happened before. Now I go for holiday to X (anonymous) and often they would think that they are accessible for a person in a wheelchair. Don't understand me wrong, I can*

*get around with less (resources) in comparison to other people like I can bath and stuff like that independently...so a lot of people think they are accessible for someone in a wheelchair but actually they are not at all. And say I go away to X (anonymous) for the weekend and they think they are accessible and they think it is pleasant, but for me it is actually not fun at all, because things are not easily accessible...Then you feel like you need a vacation after your vacation. It takes away for the whole experience...you are exhausted after that weekend. Maybe not physically, it's not as if you exercised a lot, I don't know maybe it's emotionally or spiritually, but you feel tired afterwards" {Grey, p. 14}.*

Public spaces such as entrances, stairs, and doors too narrow, toilet cubicles and other inaccessible environments are immense obstacles that people with disabilities have to face. It is frustrating and can prevent one from travelling again. As Dali explains during his interview, inaccessibility truly is discouraging, to the point where he would rather not even want to engage in society anymore:

*"Where when you get to the city and there is a curb, I can jump curbs, I had to learn how to do it, but I mean what about someone in an electrical wheelchair? It's just like access denied, literally. It cracks your brain when you see that you are five meters from your end point and you just cannot get there. It's evil; it's evil that is what it is. So I don't want to expose myself to it" {Dali, p. 5}.*

Indeed, travelling poses as an oxymoron, as described above, because Dali does not want to expose himself to the inaccessibility created by society yet Dali encourages people with disabilities to travel in order to grow and *"because you have to apply what you have learned in rehab"*{Dali, p. 18}.

Activities of daily living improved immensely and drastically for all the participants during their travels. This is because they are forced to adapt and improvise in the moment; especially when an

incident happens and they are forced to face the obstacle. Phoenix explains his pattern of thoughts when he was exposed to an incident while travelling:

*“Let’s say maybe I had an accident, okay. Uuumh I wet myself now something as simple as that. If I was at home it would be easiest... Obviously it’s dramatic to a certain extent and it’s irritating... When you do it when you are out of your comfort zone, it’s kind of like, okay I’ll sort this out, let’s kind of backtrack. Think what I did, how could I have set something in place to prevent that from happening or done something maybe put a bag in the bathroom with some spare things in or you know, you kind of look back and think okay how can I adapt to make a process such as this out of my comfort zone, easier” {Phoenix, p. 7}.*

Obstacles of inaccessibility and incidents do happen and Phoenix has become smarter by backtracking and learning from them. He states that one of his biggest lessons was when he had to learn to adapt and cut down on accessories, but still feel safe in case of an incident, while not *“taking with you your entire house and an entire chemist”* {Phoenix, p. 6}.

Dali believes that travelling allows him to get to know his wheelchair better. He learned how to navigate his wheelchair on different terrains and learned to transfer in different spaces:

*“By doing new things, new adaptations, new toilets, new beds, new doors, new cars, new busses...everything is new that you engage with when you travel... you understand your wheelchair better...”*{Dali, p. 1}.

In summary, travelling exposed the participants to a higher occurrence of incidents in unfamiliar spaces and inaccessibility which could be very discouraging. Travelling brings them face to face with challenges that they either had to confront or steer away from, but unfortunately cannot be avoided. However, if they do decide to fight and adapt to the inaccessibility, they feel that they have mastered the task at hand and are left with a sense of empowerment.



## Empowerment

A number of the participants believed that travelling gives them a feeling of empowerment, especially after mastering obstacles of inaccessibility.

*“...you learn a lot about yourself and how you adapt and how society has adapted to you. You find the unique side of your disability. So psychologically, you know with assistance, it can be very empowering personally”* {Phoenix, p. 21}.

Consistent with this, Grey said his first big travel trip was when he went overseas alone. He had to learn to do a lot of things for himself, and then only did he realise he is more independent than what he thought he was:

*“...for the first time, when I went overseas, I had to do everything by myself...okay, I can also do this now, I can do that, I can do that it's a little bit difficult but I can do it...”* {Grey, p. 19}.

Additionally, Letz explained how empowered he felt from travelling when he talked about his first weekend getaway with his friends where he decided to go kayaking. It was his first trip away from home following his accident. He and a friend decided to go kayaking when they capsized without warning. His friend, who is an able-bodied person, could not swim and grabbed onto Letz for survival. Letz had to pull his friend closer to the kayak to keep his head above water, leaving no space for Letz to hold onto. This forced Letz to swim to shore alone as this was his only option. He described this experience as follows:

*“I swam all the way back. Hectic, it was hectic. But it was very awesome*

*Researcher: How did you feel afterwards?*

*Letz: I felt like a hero”* {Letz, p. 3}.

From this incident, Letz mastered the task at hand by assisting his friend who could not swim, as well as swimming back to safety without help. This showed him that he is capable of saving

himself in a difficult situation and that, despite having an impairment, it did not render him disabled.

*"Yes, so afterwards I really got a lot of confidence. Afterwards I still remembered that weekend"* {Dali, p. 3}.

Finally, most of the participants acknowledge that there are challenges to travelling, but experiencing these challenges does not necessarily deter them from overcoming and conquering them because this leads to mastery. As explained by Phoenix:

*"I know I feel empowered after I experience travelling, because of the things I had to overcome, you know the hurdles and stuff"* {Phoenix, p. 21}.

#### **4.3.3.3 Redefining disability**

To redefine means to state the nature and limits of something yet again; it is to "describe the essential qualities again" (Cambridge dictionaries online). This is what happened to the participants in that, through travelling, they confronted their perspective of disability and how they viewed themselves thus redefining disability for themselves. As the participants travelled they experienced new environments and activities, where they were forced to face challenges such as managing unexpected incidents away from their safe zone. They had to be innovative and adapt on the spot, but when they succeeded it created a feeling of mastery. This was the case with Phoenix, because travelling showed him alternative perspectives to his disability; it showed him the unique side of his disability:

*"...you learn a lot about yourself and the how you adapt and how society has adapted to you. You find the unique side of your disability"* {Phoenix, p. 21}.

Travelling proves to be highly influential in the participants' acceptance of disability. Through the process of gaining new experiences the participants change their perspective of their own disability. With time to think they are able to reflect on how they view themselves and recondition their minds in order to apply the changed perspective of their own disability. It is through this process that they can accept an altered identity. Dali states that he feels it was through travelling that he learned to accept his disability:

*“So sure enough if you don't like the way you look anymore, you will become a negative person. And that is what happens with people. How they view themselves changes with a sudden disability. But through travelling, through getting that exposure you slowly but surely will learn to accept it (disability). Because you are going to learn how to cope without that what you had before and you are not going to learn to cope if you don't expose yourself... So you have to go out, you must go and travel whether it is for leisure or work, you have to get out of your house and expose yourself. It is as simple as that; otherwise you won't accept your disability” {Dali, p. 9}.*

Thus, through travelling, the participants have the opportunity to expose themselves to new perspectives and to apply practically their skills to test their abilities, and through the process of mastering challenges, they feel more enabled which renders a changed perspective and a more positive identity.

### **A changed perspective**

The researcher asked Flight to describe what the essence of travelling is to her and, after explaining the importance of being accessible and that travelling can give her the feeling of being free, she mentioned that:

*“I think travelling actually most of the time gives you a bigger perspective, a bigger picture of what life is about” {Flight, p. 21}.*

Dali shares the same outlook as participant Flight when he mentions that through his travels he has broadened his viewpoint of his own disability:

*“There are many ways of looking at travelling, but just to give you a basic summary, to answer your question (referring to the main research question - the phenomena of travelling)I believe you must do leisure travelling....through doing new things...everything that you do is new when you travel. So your own perspective around your own disability broadens immensely” {Dali, p. 1}.*

This was congruent with Letz’s experience when he travelled to Namibia. To recall his journey when he travelled to go hiking in the Fish River Canyon, his story not only emphasises some of the encounters participants can experience on their journeys, but it also highlights the accomplishment of conquering the Canyon and the feeling of empowerment with which it gave him. The Fish River Canyon is very challenging to hike, as it is the largest Canyon in Africa with a hiking trail of about 90km, and Letz did it with an impairment. For Letz mastering this activity allowed him to review himself (as a person with a disability) against others (non-disabled people) and assess if he is *“equal or better”* {Letz, p. 11}. Completing the Fish River Canyon hike left him feeling able. It proved that regardless of his impairment he experiences things that many able-bodied people do not experience. This changed his perspective of himself and his own abilities; he redefined what it means for him to have an impairment and what it means to be disabled:

*“Letz: I just feel so honoured. I mean this is the second biggest (canyon) in the world see regardless of your state, regardless of who you are, to see one of these big things that hardly a lot of people see.... So I’m still a step ahead. I am a step ahead, as disabled as I am, I can still make it a turning point that I want to go and see it and make it.*

*Researcher: It is still that thing of, “are you equal or better”? (Quoting Letz from earlier) That is the thing that gives you the ability to say you are better, you are a step ahead?*

*Letz: And then at the end of the day you really tell yourself that’s what makes me ....someone that’s what makes me not believe in disability.*

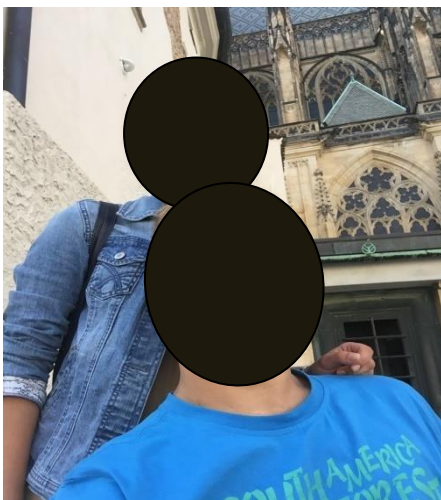
*Researcher: So travelling has the possibility to reaffirm your perspective of you, your identity?*

*Letz: Yes especially from my case where I was able body not so long ago. But to us who got disabled along the way there is challenges.*

*Researcher: In accepting it?*

*Letz: Ja accepting it” {Letz, p. 14}.*

For Letz, this experience reaffirms what he is actually able to do and capable of achieving. Furthermore it reconfirms his belief that disability is nothing more than just an impairment and that he does not believe in disability.



**Picture 4.8 – Prague cobblestones**

Additionally, during Phoenix’s journey in Prague he discovered that his perspective of being in a wheelchair can be seen in a new light. Phoenix pointed out that when travelling to Prague he spent the day with a lady exploring restaurants, sightseeing and overcoming accessibility obstacles like going uphill on cobblestones with a wheelchair, (see picture 4.8 - Prague cobblestones), and being able to do this made him experience the following feelings:

*“But ja, when I look at that (point to the picture) I don’t think about the fact that I’m... that that’s actually a wheelchair that I’m sitting in there and that she is standing. I’m just seeing me and her. I feel like, I feel a lot more included or seen as normal in a sense coz people see disability as not being normal. So ja, it makes us feel equal,*

*it makes me feel equal. Makes me feel loved, makes me feel wanted. Ja, it brings back all the fun memories I had with her and the people I met there. I mean she didn't turn around and say it was gonna be (silent) you know I'll rather not take you to the old city coz it's not wheelchair friendly, no. She was like, let's do it, let's give it a try. I feel like, I feel a lot more included or seen as normal in a sense coz people see disability as not being normal. So ja, it makes us feel equal, it makes me feel equal" {Phoenix, p. 11}.*

Here Phoenix explains how he feels included, how he does not perceive himself as disabled so travelling is a journey that allows him to redefine his perception of disability *"I feel a lot more included or seen as normal...it makes me feel equal"*.

During the interview with Letz the researcher asked him the following:

*"Researcher: Say now this person with a disability asks you, but why Letz? What am I gonna get out of it? Yes I'm going to see the Eiffel tower (when travelling) that is not just in a picture and whatever, but what am I gonna get out of this?"*

*Letz: "First of all some things are psychological, you are breaking chains that... (Quiet).*

*What is disability? Disability is (Quiet). What is disability? You know? What is disability first of all? So you don't want to travel because you think it is difficult. I mean when I went to Robertson they told me it was going to be a stress, a lot of road to travel out of town on a wheelchair, there are no roads, what if something happens. How am I going to manoeuvre on my wheelchair? Am I going to be indoors the whole time, or in the house?"*

*Researcher: (Acknowledges) - There is a lot more no's than yeses*

*Letz: Yes there is a lot of no's and you think of all the no's okay, so yes what am I going to get to go see the Eiffel tower? It is not only the Eiffel tower, it's the experience and the breaking the chains of seeming disabled. Coz there is nothing called disability at the end of the day. Yes I'm missing a limb but that doesn't classify me as disabled. Yes the books will say I'm disabled, and to get free parking wherever. But it's just an illusion, there is nothing*

*called disability. With this technology we have nowadays, you cannot say yes I'm disabled, so what is your disability?*

*I ask this question a lot. What is your disability? I tell them I don't have a disability. I'm just missing a leg, a limb but I don't have, coz everything I can do. I can travel. If you want us to run now back to where I stay I'll get you there. I'll finish it; I'll walk it because I cannot run. So it's just to accept that disability, it's not about going to see the Eiffel tower, it's just to tell your subconscious mind that I can still do it” {Letz, p. 9}.*

Here Letz is explaining that when he travels he receives new information and uses that to reflect on how he currently views his own disability; thus his perspective of his disability changes through travelling. He mentions that the experience of travelling, such as seeing tourist attractions and doing new activities, is good experience but in actual fact it is about redefining disability. In essence his perception of disability changed. He refers to this process as the reconditioning of the mind, as it is about “*telling your subconscious mind that you can still do it*” {Letz, p. 9}.

### **Reconditioning of the mind**

Subsequent to exploring, experiencing adventure and seeing new places, travelling facilitates a psychological process of breaking chains. Gaining a fresh perspective of their own impairment and abilities, the participants are able to redefine the meaning of disability for themselves. As Letz mentions:



*“So what you do when you travel, you are reconditioning your mind” {Letz, p. 18}.*

The participants stated that this process of reconditioning the mind can be attained

through reflection and re-examination about their own beliefs. Flight said that when she travels “*there is time to think, to think deep, and you must reflect...*” {Flight, p. 3}, this brings about new emotional insights, which assist with reconditioning. She continues to elaborate on one of her travel trips to an African country (picture 4.9 - Canoe):

*“...that little boy is a local, the one that is standing. And there is my brother and I. We just decided to go with the little boy and now I see it very different as oppose to what I did that day. Remember we don’t understand each other, however, despite that he was still willing to take us onto the river and in this way we could see a piece of his world. And the reflection in the water is just so WOW, because it reflects...this is what you are. I sit here now and think, you are not the reflection you see in the mirror...you are so much more. That reflection is of three people who one doesn’t look the same, not one does the same thing and the simplicity of sitting in that little boat on the Zambezi which is the locals’ source of water... Needless to say, the locals later informed us that there are hippopotamuses, crocodiles and snakes, but with our childlike innocence, we didn’t think further...This was unbelievable; it was an unforgettable experience for me, now that I think about it. My mom stood on the riverbank and took photos...sometimes it is nice to stand on the riverbank where it is safe, but sometimes it is necessary to get into the boat and experience life. To experience what the people experience every night when they bring food for their families”* {Flight, p. 11}.

In this example Flight reflects on her travel trip and elaborates on the importance of breaking the cycle and reconditioning the mind. She reflected on a past journey and this reinforces her beliefs that “*you are not your reflection*”. Differently put, she is more than what she appears to be, she is more able than what people might assume she is. She continues by saying that the mind often falls into a set pattern of thoughts, which perhaps is no one’s actual reality; it requires one’s self to break the cycle:



*“Sometimes one gets caught in your own thoughts, which is defined by your situation. The human brain is an interesting thing. By repetitively thinking of the same thing over and over again one can influence your actions and decision-making. Where if you are in different environment that spiral of thoughts, coz that is often what it is, and it is not your reality, but you often think it is your reality...so in a different, together with a different environment often comes new thoughts. Mmm I have never thought about it, but it makes sense. The fact that you are on tour can also be treatment, for example horse riding it (travelling) can be a form of treatment on more than one level. I think if you travel, you actually discover a piece of yourself, which you would not have discovered if you just continue here (inside her house) compared to outside of your comfort zone, stepping outside and go” {Flight, p. 21}.*

In this instance for Flight, travelling and being in a different environment brought about a change in her repetitive cycle of thoughts, a change in her reality. This expanded the boundaries of her view of her own disability.

Letz, following his traumatic accident, went to see a psychologist for assistance in accepting this traumatic event. Unfortunately he felt that the sessions were in vain as he determined that despite the fact that the psychologist was trained to assist him, she has never, not even for one day, walked in his shoes so she cannot possibly comprehend the pain and tribulation he has gone through. He terminated the sessions and only later discovered that travelling served as a form of rehabilitation for him. As he explains:

*“...but travelling helps me in a way I was supposed to be helped by that lady psychologist. Travelling I did it myself. I reconditioned myself, nobody sits with me to tell me that I’m still normal and all that. It was travelling that said to me that you are still normal. It was travelling that said to me you, there is nothing wrong with you, you are still like any other*

*person you can do this you can capsize in this dam, you can swim back, what else do you want” {Letz, p. 19}.*

For Letz, travelling reconditioned his mind on what disability is; it provided an opportunity for him to redefine his own limits. During his travelling trips he could discover his current and new qualities; his new limits. This gave him insight into the manner in which he engages with occupation, the environment and others. The weekend that he travelled with friends to Robertson opened up the opportunity for him to redefine his boundaries and what disability actually means to him.

Letz sees travelling as a form of rehabilitation because it allows him to redefine his own limits. To him travelling is a journey of self-discovery, discovering how far and to what extent his impairment disables him, as well as discovering how he wants to be viewed by society:

*“I think it is a form of rehabilitation. It is a form of rewiring your brain, from what society has told you what disability is. Re-writing what you, I mean the norms, what people say is normal, you are re-writing it according to your story. You can just travel. You can travel to Spain and spend the whole day in the hotel or in the car. Or you can travel to Spain and spend 90% of the time in the wild. You know doing, going to Victoria Falls and just watch it, but it is different when you go there and bungee jumping.*

*Researcher: yes, experiencing it*

*Letz: yes, experience. So it is just re-writing your story according to how you want it. At the end of the day if you live according how society has put it, it's just like models. We will say the model must be underweight, look like this, so they can be on the front cover of H&M and all that you know. It is the way society has put things” {Letz, p. 17}.*

Lastly, Letz believes *“it is a form of rehabilitation. It is a form of rewiring... re-writing it according to your story” {Letz, p. 17}.*

### Accepting an altered identity

It became clear that the participants have to discover a new identity, a new self, following a traumatic injury. The physical impairment renders them with an altered means of doing their everyday activities. Despite still having the same interests they now have an altered means of moving around in the house, and the manner in which they get dressed is not the same as before the injury and engaging in everyday activities is not the same as previously. This category emerges as participants continuously revealed that a traumatic incident renders them with an altered identity. The participants made comments such as: “...*re-wiring and re-writing according to your own story*” {Letz, p. 17}.

Letz mentioned:

*“You know sometimes, I mean, if you were born abled-bodied and then you get disabled along the way, you will never be the same”* {Letz, p. 1}.

Dali feels that following his traumatic accident, he has an altered identity and he has to learn to accept it:

*“How they view themselves changes, when one experiences a sudden disability. And through travelling, by getting that exposure, one will slowly but surely learn to accept it”* {Dali, p. 9}.

The participants drew attention to the definite change they experienced following their traumatic injuries. Grey believes that fundamentally he still is the same person as before his accident but the manner in which he does things has changed:

*“...you are still the same person before and after the accident, you still enjoy the same things. Uuuhm unfortunately there are certain things you just can't do at this moment but maybe in the future there will be a way. You learn little by little as you go along”*. {Grey, p. 10}

The participants had to accept that despite having the same interests, they now have an altered body. Subsequent to gaining a fresh perspective on their own disability and reconditioning their minds, they revealed that it is travelling that assisted them in finding their new occupational identity. As Phoenix put it:

*“...to find your new you, to develop...Uuuhm who you kind of are and what you enjoy and what your ideal and best life is in a wheelchair”* {Phoenix, p. 22}.

Travelling allows for discovering an altered identity, according to Dali. Referring to his journey of accepting his disability, he states that travelling can assist people with disabilities in accepting their altered identity:

*“... How they see themselves change when you have a sudden disability. And through travelling, through getting that exposure you will slowly but surely learn to accept it...It is as simple as that, otherwise you are not going to overcome your disability”* {Dali, p. 9}.

When the researcher asked Phoenix about the essence of travelling for a person with a disability, he responded:

*“To not Uuuhm feel limited, coz all of those things that I’ve said you know psychologically or physically, your lifestyle everything, it all comes down to change. Changing your perspective of life, the way you view life, changing the way you handle situations, changing the type of people you surround yourself with, changing how you handle the situation, changing all of those things, to find out....Uuuhm who you kind of are and what you enjoy and what your ideal and best life is in a wheelchair”* {Phoenix, p. 22}.

All the participants experienced big changes in their lives, such as having to adapt and change their way of doing their basic everyday activities. Yet, Phoenix still recommends that people with disabilities should travel so that they can find out who they are and what their ideal life is following these big changes. He further elaborates that travelling helps people become who they are:

*“It (travelling) moulds you as a person coz people don’t become themselves or the new self if they don’t let themselves grow. If they go home and sit in bed or watch TV or just go day to day life and stuff, if you travel, you grow”*{Phoenix, p. 23}.

Flight mentioned that she mainly travels to explore. In response to this the researcher wanted to know what this deposited in her soul; what does it mean to explore when travelling? She replied:

*“When you travel you experience situations that can change you as a person. I almost want to say there is a 100% chance that you will come back as a changed person, that you as a person will grow in who you are and how you handle things”*{Flight, p. 4}

To summarise, travelling facilitated the participants in rewriting their own stories according to their own terms in order to *“slowly but surely accept their disability”* {Dali, p. 9}. Letz says *“...it’s just to accept that disability”* {Letz, p. 10}.

#### **4.4 Chapter Summary**

The identified themes can be traced (and highlighted) in the words of Dali as stated below:

*“...one should travel for leisure, because if you don’t put yourself outside of your everyday normal activities (**stepping out of your comfort zone - Theme 3**), you are not going to test your abilities and see what your actual skill is (**streamlining and dealing with obstacles – Theme 3**)... doing new things, new adaptations. You are familiar with the people around you and close to you (**people are part of the package - Theme 2**), so you are in a comfort zone in your everyday living. Therefore, the more you travel and do not have to concentrate on your responsibilities (**freedom of the mind, routine and stressors – Theme 1**), but can just relax and look at what is around you (**experiencing new encounters which cannot be found in a book – Theme 3**); the quicker and easier you’ll adapt to your new situation and*

*sudden disability (accepting an altered identity – Theme 3)*” {Dali, p. 1}. In one statement Dali emphasised that travelling is a pilgrimage of self-discovery as it allows one to learn and grow from overcoming obstacles which in turn lead to accepting an altered identity. In conclusion all of the participants indubitably suggest and recommend that people with disabilities should travel. Travelling holds many challenges but is an integral part of growing into one’s altered occupational identity. Travelling forces one to find alternative means to overcoming inaccessibility, and the participants agree that the more one travels the quicker and easier one will adapt to a disability.

## **Chapter 5 – Discussion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Commencing with a summarised reflexive journal, the researcher contextualises her interpretation of the findings in the Discussion chapter. The researcher could reflect and express her relationship to the findings as she investigates the participants' interpretations of their lived experience of travelling. The extracts from the researcher's reflexive journal expose her pre-understanding of her perception and impressions of leisure travelling. The researcher decided to place the reflexive journal in chapter 5 rather than chapter 1 – the Introduction chapter. In doing the latter the researcher acknowledges the relation between her self-interpretation and the participants' interpretation of their experience; this could only be done following data analysis and interpretation of the results. The researcher has summarised some self-discourse in an attempt to endorse transparency and to highlight her own beliefs and positionality as part of the strategy to ensure trustworthiness. This is followed by a discussion of the findings with specific reference to the four objectives. With the intent to deliberate the phenomenology of travelling, the researcher presents a novel Integrated Model whereby the Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996) and Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002) are merged. The Integrated Model enables the researcher to delineate leisure travelling as an occupation and highlights what the meaning of travelling is as interpreted by the participants. In closing the chapter, the limitations of this study are presented.

### **5.2 Reflexive Journal**

During the course of the hermeneutical phenomenology study, it was imperative for the researcher to keep a reflexive journal in order to document the dialogue between the researcher's assumptions and the research process. The purpose of the journal was to highlight the

researcher's self-interpreted ideas of the phenomenon of leisure travelling in relation to the interpretations of the participants (Ortlipp, 2008, p. 695). In doing so the researcher exposes her own interests, experiences and impressions which inevitably influence the manner in which the findings are interpreted. Due to the personal nature of the researcher's reflexive journal, this section is presented using a first person account.

### **5.2.1 Questions leading up to the research question**

As an Occupational Therapist I am regularly exposed to people who have experienced a life-altering injury. During the process of therapy, the clients reach a series of goal-orientated objectives and regained independence in everyday activities, but I often notice that the clients still battle with depression, battling to adapt to the severe loss or change in their life. I often wondered if therapy really assists them in readjusting following the traumatic injury and whether their quality of life improves. This is one of the biggest questions I am faced with as an Occupational Therapist: how does one go on following a traumatic event such as acquiring a disability? After disability, people's lives change dramatically. Life as they know it and their identity, how they recognise themselves, has completely changed. As an Occupational Therapist I am faced with it on a daily basis, and even while I'm watching television this is emphasised, for example, during the insurance infomercials. This led me to question how would I cope in a similar situation? Would I be able to pursue my leisure activities in an altered means or rediscover my new identity following an abrupt halt in my life narrative? In an attempt to step into my clients' shoes I had to recall a time in my life when I was faced with a great loss, that of losing my father, which changed my life completely. This allowed me to place myself in a hypothetical position, as to what I would do following a life altering injury such as acquiring a disability? This will not only contribute to being a good therapist but it could give me insight into their perspectives. I discovered that, following the experience of losing my father, I had changed. I was not the same person that I was prior to experiencing the great loss. I was now the girl without a father. My community



knew it, they viewed me in the light of this great loss and I had to rediscover who I was, now that I had lost my father. For me it was by means of travelling that I discovered different manners, routines and occupations and therefore, travelling for me allowed me to rediscover my new self.

*“When I was surrounded with different cultures, different styles of living, different food, and different languages it gives me a sense of freedom. Freedom that no one knows you, no one knows the heartache you have, yet everybody has their own challenges, they too are human - experiencing pain and loss. I experienced freedom in the sense that it gave me an opportunity to start a new lifestyle, one where I will not be stared at as the girl who lost her father, the girl that had to go through life without a father figure”* (Researcher’s Journal, 06/10/2017).

This led me to question whether people who have a disability experience the same emotions if they decide to travel. Would exposure to different ways present an opportunity to rediscover their new identity? If so, can it be indexed with an improved well-being or influence their occupational identity?

As reflected in my reflexive journal:

*“For me, travelling provides an opportunity to broaden my horizons, to look past the loss and old routine of living. To be motivated that life as you know it - your style, what you are experiencing now is not the only way of living it. It gives me a sense of relief and hope that there is more to life than what I know of back home. I can choose another way of living, if I wanted to”* (Researcher’s Journal, 17/09/2016: 01).

I was compelled to discover the answers to questions such as: do people with disabilities experience travelling the same as what I, a non-disabled traveller, do? Is it necessary to distinguish between non-disabled and disabled people who travel or can I assume that travelling will have a positive effect on all, equally, as stated in numerous online blogs of travellers?

### 5.2.2 Commencing with research

To commence with the protocol of this study, I considered how we as humans experience travelling, how we experience life and how that concept changes following a life-altering injury and battling depression as a result. I believe that one ultimately engages with the world through one's senses; this is how we make sense of our environment and whereby we get information from the world around us.

*“...ultimately you do that through your senses, you see something spectacular, you hear a different sound, you feel the wind cutting through your clothes while on the edge of a mountain, you smell foreign food that is appealing...that is how you engage with life again through your senses”*(Researcher's Journal, 08/12/2016).

A psychologist once explained to me that when someone experiences depression, the determining factor for resilience is their identity. Who we are will allow us to stand up again. However, how does one rebuild identity following a traumatic event? Is it by means of engaging in activities, to stimulate our senses in a new or nostalgic way, that we reconstruct identity? For me, travelling promotes a different perspective that greatly influences my identity and how I view life. It is clear from reading my field notes that I consider travelling as an exciting adventure which brings about growth.

*“When I travel I indisputably come back a changed person. Change occurs in the small things like changing a daily routine such as rinsing my mouth with coconut oil prior to brushing teeth to a bigger, innate changed perception of the world. Relating this to someone acquiring a disability, the traumatic event already caused a change in their style of living, it already forces you to leap into the unknown, why not take leap further into exploring new activities, new cultures and new styles of living – a style that you can choose, that you are in control of?”* (Researcher's Journal, 17/09/2016).

### **5.2.3 The Awakening**

It was while collecting data and transcribing it that I discovered that the participants share a different view of travelling, not my optimistic outlook. An awakening occurred when I realised that travelling is not as generously welcomed as I expected it to be, and that travelling can either promote growth or endorse feelings of inadequacy.

*“As a non-disabled traveller it appears to be an uncomplicated decision when I decide to go travel. Other than considering finances and safety, as a female, minimal challenges will deter me from travelling. I might feel anxious about navigating the public transport system in another country and battling with a language barrier but generally I feel secure in my abilities to handle any unpredictable situation life throws at me whilst travelling. In contrast, a person with a disability might easily feel cut off when not being able to access doors, stairways or alleys. With nowhere to go, it can place them in an uncomfortable situation making them feel more exposed than what a non-disabled person perhaps would.”(Researcher’s Journal, 05/01/2017)*

### **5.2.4 The major role of inaccessibility**

Through conducting this research I gained a deeper understanding of how prevalent inaccessibility is in our society and that it unfortunately is intertwined in the daily living of people with disabilities.

*“The interviews were an epiphany for me in understanding the relationship between inaccessibility and people with a disability. How this influences their everyday thinking and decision making. Having to compromise or find a way to do activities that non-disabled people not even give a thought of day to.”(Researcher’s Journal, 22/01/2017)*

Realising that travelling is not to be considered as an uncomplicated decision for all, I had a hypothesis as to why that is.

*“To know that I, as a non-disabled person, would be able to effectively navigate my way out of most of the tricky situations gives me comfort and the foundation to go off into the unknown and explore. In my personal opinion people with disabilities experienced a broken trust relationship with their own bodies, especially following a life changing injury such as a permanent impairment. This makes it more difficult to be able to navigate their way out of a tricky or challenging situation, therefore, fearing the unknown, the vagueness of not knowing if you would be able to go to the toilet when needed, or reach your table at a restaurant, or being confronted with stairs at the hall where the show is hosted, makes travelling a daunting task. Thus the lack of universal design results in travelling having many challenges”* (Researcher’s Journal, 05/01/2017).

Bearing the above mentioned in mind, the research process was a rollercoaster ride of euphoria to rude awakenings. However, as a researcher I wanted to know more about what travelling means to people with a disability.

*“I had to do a second wave analysis in order to discover the true essence, the core and true meaning they attribute to travelling. The four questions/objectives led me to uncover some deeper experiences and exploring some purposes and meanings of travelling for them. This has led me to themes of mastery and freedom...”* (Researcher’s Journal, 10/12/2016)

They mentioned feelings of freedom and mastery but why is it important to them as people with disability? I tried to understand the importance of this by applying it to non-disabled people.

*“Looking objectively at the highlighted sections (highlighted as possible themes) of having to step out of one’s comfort zone, dealing with obstacles, experiencing freedom from stressors*

*and that people are part of the package, can all be applied to able bodied people as well. Able bodied people also experience these challenges to a certain degree. For example, stepping out of your comfort zone is mentally challenging for most people as we get caught up in routine and the comfort of moving amongst people we know and are familiar with. People, society and the community are part and parcel of any individual's life just purely by existing therefore, holding its own limitations in relation to the individual level of self-confidence. Thus, it can be argued that there are minimal differences between able bodied people travelling and people with a disability travelling. Making the predominant difference inaccessibility! It is the stairwell leading to the entrance, the narrow doors to the restroom the cobblestones to the garden” (Researcher's Journal, 28/04/2017).*

In the end:

*“The research process took me on a pilgrimage of my own, longing for more freedom but having to compromise because of the ‘inaccessibility’ of being a mother, wife and employee. The limitations, as well as their discovery, taught me more about myself. The meaning of travelling for the researcher is to broaden her horizons and to see the bigger picture.”(Researcher's Journal, 22/01/2017)*

To conclude my reflexive journal and in confirmation of the participants' description of their travel experience:

*“Travelling gave me a sense of hope, that the pieces that you see are not the only pieces to the puzzle, there is a bigger picture. Through conducting this research, it became evident that for a person with a disability, travelling is a pilgrimage. A journey that often entails hardships but also allows for mastery; all in the quest of finding yourself, your identity and accepting one's disability” (Researcher's Journal, 22/01/2017)*

Placing emphasis on my reflexive journal as well as the participants' in vivo interpretations of their world and of travelling, I found it necessary to merge the Model of Person-Environment-Occupation (Law et al., 1996) and Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002) into an Integrated Model (discussed in detail below). This Integrated Model provided the researcher with a holistic framework for interpreting the participants' experiences of not only their environment, but also in the context of how they individually perceive and interpret their environment.

### **5.3 Study Objectives**

The aim of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experience of travel for people with disabilities. This was achieved through the objectives which were to: explore the purpose of travelling for people with disabilities; describe and explore the overall experience of travelling as experienced by people with disabilities; followed by, exploring how people with disabilities perceive, understand, and make sense of their experiences of travelling and lastly explore the meaning that travelling has for people with disabilities.

In this chapter, the findings are considered in light of these objectives and discussed in relation to the existing literature. The theoretical framework for the study namely, the Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996) and the Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002), were utilised as a theoretical lens to assist with the interpretation of what travelling means to people with disabilities.

During the process of analysis, the researcher constructed a new model named the Integrated Model, through combining the Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996) and the Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002). The Integrated Model facilitated a more complex, comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the meaning that travelling had for the participants, and is presented towards the end of this chapter.

### **5.3.1 The purpose of travelling for people with disabilities**

As unique as humans are, so unique are the purpose, or in other words – the participants’ motives and goals for travelling. Motives varied as expressed in each participant’s word cloud as presented in chapter 4. Guusje travels for the purpose of wanting to feel free. To be able to travel reiterates her ability to be mobile and serves as a reminder that she is not bed bound. Letz makes use of travelling to challenge his capabilities; his travel adventures serve as a measure to validate his equivalence to his counterparts i.e. that being a person with a disability has not rendered him less or disabled. Phoenix is determined to experience adventure. He feels like a VIP when he flies and is excited to meet new people, experience new environments and cultures. Grey predominantly travels for the purpose of relaxation and uses travelling as a means to temporarily break away from stressors and the high demands of his stringent schedule. Flight travels to discover the world as she is of the opinion that “the world awaits for the exploration of its mysteries”. Additionally, she pursues travelling to appreciate nature and God’s creation. Dali’s main reason for travelling is to break away from people, as people often treat him inappropriately by forcing unwanted help on him or placing him unnecessarily in the limelight based on the fact that he uses a wheelchair.

Despite having distinct reasons for travelling, it emerged that the participants’ motives for travelling correlate with those highlighted in Shi et al.’s (2012) study on the socio-psychological travel motives for people with disabilities. Shi (2012) confirmed that, “People travel because they are pushed by internal forces and, at the same time, pulled by external forces such as interest in a destination’s attributes” (Shi et al., 2012, p. 17). The push and pull factors Shi et al. (2012) refer to was developed by Crompton in 1979 in order to quantify potential tourists’ multidimensional motivations for travelling. When the potential traveller has to make a decision about if, when and where they want to travel, it is influenced by internal push or external pull factors. Shi et al.

(2012, p. 39) proved that people with disabilities tend to travel because they are pushed towards travelling by intrinsic forces such as relaxation or for the desire to escape their environment. Alternatively, they are pulled towards travelling by extrinsic forces such as to explore attractive destinations (Shi et al., 2012) (see Table 5.1 - Motives for travelling).

**Table 5.1 – Motives for travelling. Source: Shi, et al. (2012, p. 39).**

<b>Push Factors</b>	<b>Pull Factors</b>
1. Escape from a perceived mundane environment	10. Novelty
2. Exploration and evaluation of self	11. Learning Experience
3. Relaxation	12. Accessibility
4. Enhancement of relationships with family and friends	13. Positive attitudes towards disability
5. Facilitation of social interaction	14. The role of travel in lives
6. Independence	
7. The desire of being in natural environment	
8. Adventure	
9. “Do it today”	

Similar results were found in the current study as the participants mentioned all of the motives listed in Table 5.1. Apart from motives such as “exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation and facilitation of social interaction” (Shi et al., 2012, p. 39) being mutual to that of Shi et al.’s study, it further correlates with elements of leisure. As the participants shared how they travel in anticipation of excitement and relaxation and for a sense of being without routine, their stated purpose for travelling also correlates with elements of leisure namely: having fun, furthering social engagement and serving as a distraction from stressors, as stated by Wegner (2008).



Additionally, motives such as “the desire of being in a natural environment” and “independence” where the participants want to regain control over their destiny (Shi et al., 2012, p. 39) correspond with the participants’ reasons mentioned for travelling in the current study. Travelling for a greater sense of independence is uniquely relevant to people with disabilities and was found to be a strong motivation amongst the participants. Independence is a concept well established in the “collective minds of Occupational Therapists” (Reed & Sanderson, 1990, p. 87), as therapy is predominantly directed towards attaining optimal independence with clients. Independence refers to the ability to take control and be able to perform the tasks necessary in one’s daily activities such as eating, toileting, dressing and ambulation with or without assistance (Hagedorn, 1996). For example Phoenix, amongst others, mentioned that he personally travels in order to feel a sense of independence and to prove that having a disability has not prohibited him from experiencing what everybody else experiences. The latter is confirmed by Yau et al. (2004) when he stated that “travel is a meaningful task through which a person with a disability can demonstrate to others that they have started to regain control over their destiny” (Yau et al., 2004, p. 958).

As mentioned, other motives that matched the participants’ intent to travel were their “desire of being in a natural environment” (Shi et al., 2012, p. 36). Dali pointed out that he wants to be in an environment where everybody and everything treats him equally. He found nature to be such a place, as this is where he does not experience societal separation between being able and not being able when he does adaptive surfing in the sea. Therefore, when Dali does travel he prefers to travel to the coast. He feels that the sea does not discriminate against able or disabled bodies but treats everybody equally. It can thus be argued that Dali does not experience internal oppression when he surfs.

Phoenix desires to meet new people, experience different cultures and broaden his horizons, another motive listed as a pull factor by Shi et al. (2012). As participants wanted to explore different foods, engage in adventure or experience a new level of independence, their motives were unique to the individual. Parallel to leisure being a “self-directed activity which holds meaning and is intrinsically motivating to the individual” (Wegner, 2008, p. 109), travelling was also found to be dependent on the individual’s perspective of meaningful occupation. The participants could self-direct which destinations and what meaningful travel-related activity they wanted to experience. Despite the difference in each participant’s internal motivations for travelling, travelling is a medium in which activities can be shaped or shifted to match their character and requirements. This highlights travelling as a person-orientated activity, chosen and directed by the individual, which is in line with what Wegner (2008) refers to as leisure.

All the participants additionally, considered travelling as a form of rehabilitation, as it provided them with an opportunity to take control over their own destiny. Deciding to travel and being in control of which destination they wanted to explore allowed them to exert freedom of choice - something they felt robbed of when they received post-acute rehabilitation. Travelling provided them with a means of applying what they were taught in rehabilitation, in a non-clinical environment where they were exposed to real elements of society and its inaccessible structures. This explains why they described travelling as real-time therapy. The shared experience by the participants is confirmed by Shi et al.’s (2012) study when she stated that “being able to travel after an injury is a method of rehabilitation” (Shi et al., 2012, p. 37), thus highlighting how travelling, for people with disabilities, promotes autonomy and endorses taking control of one’s own destiny.

### **5.3.2 The overall experiences of travelling**

The participants shared a collection of travel experiences that ranged from seeing beautiful views and engaging in adventure activities to exploring new cultures. They depicted experiences of having to wait for gear and equipment to be specifically adapted to their requirements but found it to be worth the wait and effort as these experiences expanded their sensory, physical and gravitational parameters. Through experiencing travel-related activities such as abseiling, safaris, hiking, kayaking and other diverse activities, they engaged in experiential learning, instead of being confined to their house or being forced to follow a clinical routine led by a therapist.

The participants could effortlessly share the events and happenings they experienced on their journeys but their stories were entangled with tales of inaccessibility. They highlighted many obstacles pertaining to inaccessibility that made it less likely that travelling revolved primarily around having fun. The participants mentioned in Theme Three: Pilgrimage to self-discovery that they had to be prepared to deal with obstacles such as inaccessibility when they travelled. Thus, travelling for participants was not exclusively a pleasurable experience, as stringent flying protocols, having to apply for consent with medical certificates prior to booking a flight, too narrow spaces, inaccessible toilets, high curbs, and airport escorts, amongst other factors, encompass their journeys. They described circumstances of being excited prior to visiting a tourist destination but then finding it to be inaccessible, causing them to wait in the car while their family or friends explored the tourist site. Stories like these emphasise how inaccessibility is a human rights violation.

Reeve (2004) stated that inaccessibility can cause one to feel like a “second-class citizen who is being tolerated” (Reeve, 2004, p.86). Incidences such as the malfunctioning of a participant’s catheter in a public space or having to explain to strangers why they could not use the toilet in

their guest room resulted in feelings of shame for the participants. They shared tales of how people often cause them to feel more disabled with incidents of inappropriate staring and how this made them feel more conscious of being different as shared in Theme One: Double edged sword. When they engaged in activities independently and with ease, strangers would obviously offer unwanted help to the participants. This reinforces a dependence which is considered to be a form of discrimination and social exclusion. Once posed with these challenges the participants had a negative or positive reaction depending on whether they decided to face the challenge with assertiveness or withdraw and avoid the situation. Therefore, the experience of travelling can be likened to a double edged sword, as presented in Theme One. Participants shared their experiences of fun, excitement and broadening of perspectives but also incidences that caused anxiety and other negative feelings.

These findings highlight how people with disabilities are marginalised by disablism. People with disabilities often withdraw from society as a result of feeling burdened due to structural inaccessibility, social discrimination and exclusion, or in other words - disablism (Disability Arts, 2017). In the current study these aspects of disablism were highlighted when the participants related their experiences of travelling to unfamiliar environments. The emotional impact of disablism on the participants surfaced, when activities they encountered during their travels put an emphasis on exclusion and discrimination. While these aspects might seem invisible to the fellow non-disabled traveller, it's generally interwoven into society's assumptions towards people with disabilities (Watermeyer, 2009).

As described in Theme Two: People are part of the package - in order for the participants to deal with these marginalising responses from society, they had to learn not to be limited by society's discrimination and injustice, as people are inevitably part of the package. It was through

travelling that they learned to appreciate being different in a one dimensional society. Travelling empowered them to not only build a repertoire in dealing with these offences but also provided them with the opportunity to perfect their skills in navigating society's conventional thoughts of what it is to be considered 'normal', as explained in Theme Two: People are part of the package. This growing self-assertiveness built their confidence in navigating being different.

Experiencing inaccessibility was entwined with their travelling; nevertheless, the participants narrated that in spite of all the aforementioned challenges, their experiences were nonetheless rewarding. They still experienced a sense of freedom such as when Dali flew in a Cessna plane, Flight eventually abseiled or Letz went kayaking. The participants reported that they felt encouraged as they reflected positively on their accomplishments. By engaging in meaningful travel activities, the participants increased their range of leisure activities and expanded their perception of their own skills. This provided them with the opportunity to "discover individual strengths and confer significance to everyday life" (Chun, 2010, p. 393). They now consider themselves physically able to do more after experiencing new activities, which they initially thought impossible. Taylor (2008, p. 23) confirmed that "the larger the range of experiences one has in terms of occupations, the more readily one will be able to adapt in the face of trauma and life-change". This was found to be true as the participants articulated these significant travel episodes they experienced in their life which brought them closer to accepting their disability.

Travelling primarily presents a change from an accessible and familiar space, which is predominantly an enabling environment, to that of an unfamiliar and inaccessible surrounding, which often brought the participants face to face with a disabling environment. The shift from an enabling environment to a disabling environment is challenging and required the participants to be innovative in adapting to these challenges of inaccessibility and discrimination. As asserted by the United Nations Convention on the rights of people with disabilities, Article 9 (UN, 2006) it is

important to mention that the Department of Tourism, as well as the Department of Social Development, has an immense responsibility to not only remove barriers but also identify key role players to promote universal design and accessibility to main stream tourist activities for people with disabilities who want to travel. However, as the participants themselves overcame these challenges of inaccessibility whilst travelling, they viewed themselves in a new light, which helped them to accept their own disability. The participants considered dealing with these obstacles as an opportunity for growth and an opportunity to increase their level of independence. This strengthened their feelings of empowerment, similar to the audacious travellers as stated in Elsrud's (2001) study that enduring the adversity enabled them to attain a higher sense of achievement.

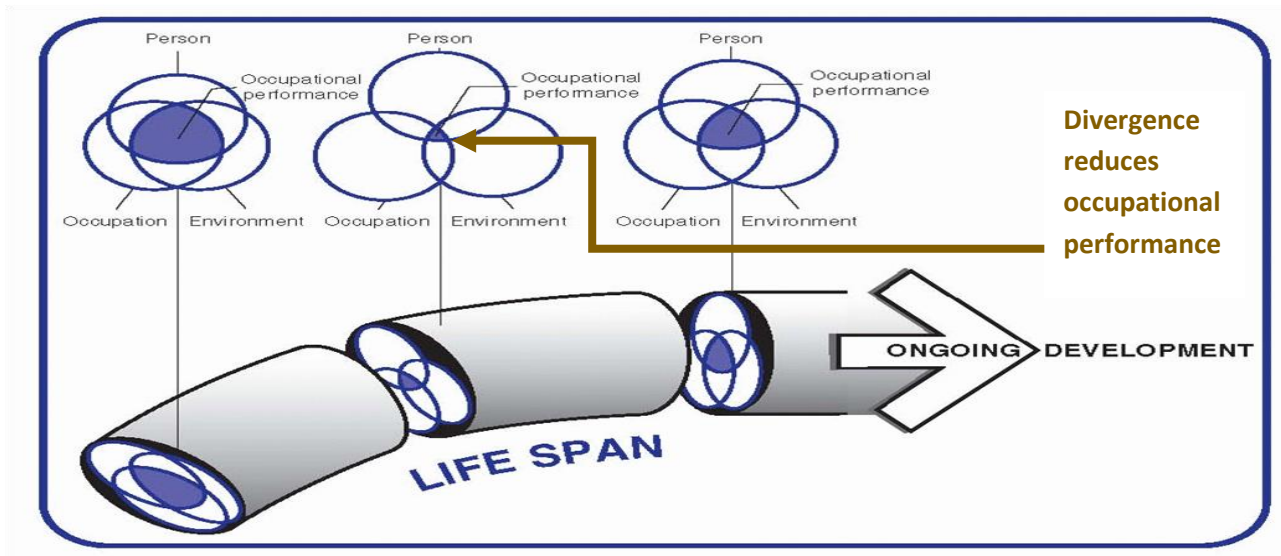
### **5.3.3 Perceiving, understanding and making sense of experiences of travelling**

Through dialogue during the interviews, a greater understanding emerged of the participants' realities and it became evident that the participants' perceptions and making sense of travelling proved to be personal and inextricably linked to the meaning they personally attributed to travelling as a leisure occupation. This finding is supported by Hammell, who stated that by means of engaging in occupation, people experience meaning, define their identity and promote a sense of belonging and wellbeing (Hammell, 2014). Travelling is therefore, influenced by people's interests, culture and motivation. The participants interpreted concepts such as freedom and relaxation differently, based on how they interpreted the world in which they were immersed. As confirmed by Creswell (2013), people's individualistic nature enables them to experience their world in unique ways; therefore, no two individuals perceive or process sensory information, activities or travelling, in the same manner.

The experience of travelling in its totality is more than momentary excitement or just a singular sensuous experience. Travelling signifies something larger than the event itself and embeds growth for the individual. The participants perceive their travel experiences as a medium for breaking barriers, broadening perspectives and gaining a greater sense of mastery. They could break the mould of disablism that society had assigned to them; they gained a new perspective on how to streamline their daily activities; and through mastering some travelling activities their perception of their own abilities changed. Travelling thus created opportunities whereby the participants could mould and evolve their perspective of their realities. Their perspective regarding their own disability as well as their concept of “self” were amended through a process of cognitive reflection, describing it as a journey or rather a pilgrimage of discovery, as described in Theme Three: Pilgrimage to self-discovery, which assisted them to restore their occupational performance.

Participants reported that, following their disability, the manner in which they engaged in activities abruptly changed and participating in occupations was more strenuous. Similarly, Klinger (2005) found that, for people with disabilities, occupation is “often taxed and that they have to make special efforts to adapt to their new situation to maintain their occupational performance” (Klinger, 2005, p. 9). Likewise the change in carrying out their daily occupations altered who the participants were as people. Law et al. (1996) confirms that as one experiences a change in performing one’s daily occupations, it leads to an imbalance in the transactional relationship between the three components – occupation, person, environment, thus affecting one’s occupational performance and ultimately one’s occupational identity (Law et al., 1996). As illustrated in Figure 5.1 (adapted from Jennifer Allison’s OT Book Resources from James Madison University) below – Occupational Performance, the three interconnected circles illustrating ongoing development, diverge more; therefore, the transactional space between the

person, their environment and their occupation is disrupted. The balance between the components of person, their occupations and the environment is disorganised, due to an acquired disability, leaving their occupational performance imbalanced.



**Figure 5.1 - Occupational Performance**

Adapted from Pinterest, n.d., Retrieved June 13, 2018, from <https://za.pinterest.com/jallisonot/ot-booksresources/>

The findings of this study showed that the participants' competence in performing daily occupational tasks such as, fulfilling their expectations of roles and responsibilities with their acquired disability, were challenged. Typically this required adaptation to a new way of living. Numerous leisure studies (Fenech, 2008; Taylor, 2008; Kleiber, 2002) proved that engaging in leisure activities assisted to restore the inter-relationship between the person, occupation and environment and brought the transactional space closer together in alliance, hence improving occupational performance. Literature found in Occupational Therapy confirmed that leisure occupations played a significant role in "transitioning negative life events" (Kleiber, 2002, p. 219) by means of restoring one's occupational performance. Findings showed that travelling provided the participants with an opportunity to adjust their means of interaction with the environment and explore new occupations. By means of engaging in travel, whereby participants were exposed to various new leisure activities, they could explore new interests and new identities. Therefore,



travelling for leisure served as a “context for change rather than continuity” (Kleiber et al., 2008, p. 324). As the participants were able to navigate inaccessibility and overcome incidents during the course of their leisure journeys; it greatly improved their self-confidence as they experienced feelings of triumph. They could restore their occupational competence by means of engaging in their chosen leisure travel activities. This is in agreement with Hunter-Jones as she found that “going on a holiday installed new hope” and a sense of “new ideas of how to go forward” (Hunter-Jones, 2003, p. 192) for patients diagnosed with cancer. In Hunter-Jones’ (2003) study the participants focussed on planning a travelling trip as this gave them vigour and a release of boredom. Furthermore in the current study, the participants’ travel journeys provided them with the opportunity to realise their strengths and find meaning in everyday life again, akin to Chun’s study (2010) confirming that leisure assists one to “discover individual strengths and confer significance to everyday life” (Chun, 2010, p. 393). Partaking in new activities, which they initially thought impossible, made them realise that they were capable of doing more than what their mind allowed them to. Evidently engaging in leisure activities such as travelling sufficiently buffered the impact of disability and provided a form of distraction through generating optimism for the future, thus helping in restoring occupational performance. Unfortunately leisure is easily neglected within an acute rehabilitation setting.

Acute rehabilitation often focuses on regaining independence but neglects facilitating personal transformation and identity restoration, specifically focussing on the individual’s occupational identity, and as stated by Kleiber (2002) leisure is often neglected which aids in identity restoration. Subsequent to receiving rehabilitation and adapting to new methods of performing their everyday activities the participants were left questioning “who am I now?” In a study done by Lawson, Delamere & Hutchinson (2008) a participant explained that following her traumatic injury she had to become accustomed to her new self, “I could not grasp the reality of the present

nor envision anything for the future” (Lawson, 2008, p. 241). In this present study, the participants found an alternative means to reconstructing their identity through recreation and taking on the adventure of travelling. They were able to explore their identity by taking risks and gaining a fresh perspective of themselves. As viewed through the theoretical lens of the Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996), this shows how optimal performance was achieved as the three circles – person, environment and occupation, converge (see Fig 5.2 - Occupational Performance) as the participants engaged in travelling. Being receptive to a changed environment, as per travelling, evidently altered the transactions between who they are as a person, their environment and the occupation they engage in. The transactional space and balance between the three spheres, as presented in Fig 5.1 – Occupational Performance, shifted due to the environment requiring a different set of social, cultural and physical demands. Alternatively, the participants’ role as leisure traveller changed in comparison to their normal role. Demands regarding self-care activities, productivity and leisure occupations changed, thus altering these three components. As Reed & Sanderson (1990) state “occupational competence is therefore a product of the dynamic interaction between the environment, the individual, and the changes made in response to the other” (Reed & Sanderson, 1990, p. 82).

In Theme Three: Pilgrimage to self-discovery, the participants reflected on their past travel experiences by reviewing how they had grown. The findings show that they had grown by stepping out of their comfort zones, broadening their perspective about disability and becoming more empowered as they overcame their challenges. This gave them new insight regarding their personal transformation, in comparing who they are now versus who they were. This can be summed up as follows: once they embarked on their travel journeys they simultaneously embarked on a journey of self-discovery by means of stepping out of their comfort zones, experiencing new activities and cultures, facing their challenges, mastering their environment and engaging in

contemplative reflection. In chapter 4, a synopsis of the findings was formulated into a logical flow of the participants' travel experiences. These five phases of (1) stepping out of your comfort zone, (2) experiencing new activities, (3) facing challenges, (4) mastery and (5) contemplative reflection are depicted below in Figure 5.2 – Journey of self-discovery.



**Figure 5.2 - Journey of self-discovery**

The researcher found it appropriate to make use of a spiral as it resembles an ongoing process of learning and adjusting to new information, which spans across one's life. In the illustration the participants commence from the bottom at "old self" spiralling up through the five phases to reach their "new self". As the participants gained new information through exploring and discovering new activities and interactions, their perspectives of self gradually broadened. Illustrating a spiral rather than a ladder reaffirms that the process is neither sequential nor dependent on completing one stage prior to moving on to the next. The spiral therefore portrays a flow of reoccurring reflection, mastery and growth, whereby previous phases can be re-visited and re-explored. Thus travelling proved to be a catalyst for the spiral of self-discovery.

The participants' journey of self-discovery commenced prior to that of taking the actual journey itself. After deciding whether they wanted to travel and where to, they were required to step out of their comfort zones (Figure 5.2 – Journey of self-discovery), out of their familiar, predictable and safe environment. The participants' houses were adapted specifically to suit their needs, from raised kitchen tops to having an accessible bathroom. Their familiar environments are set up to promote optimal accessibility within their home environment in order to adhere to their daily requirements in an easy and orderly fashion. Therefore, deciding to travel and stepping into the unknown with very unfamiliar surroundings, was challenging. All the participants acknowledge that they had to cognitively make a decision to actively step out of their comfort zones in order to embrace travelling. Once the decision was made, the participants stated that stepping out of their comfort zones was a thrilling experience and vital for growing in independence. Travelling thus “purposefully incorporates high levels of challenge and perceived risk” as stated by Jeffrey and Wilson (2017, p. 34). As the participants actively stepped out of their comfort zones, their existing boundaries of disability and “self” expanded through gaining new sensory, motor and social input. At this point their concept of their “old self” began to alter. The new environment required them to reassess how they usually performed their occupations and this called for an amendment in their perspective of their old self, as new information had been received from new activities, new spaces and meeting new people.

Overcoming the challenging and daunting task of stepping out of their comfort zones allowed them to experience new activities (Figure 5.2 – Journey of self-discovery). They could sensorily experience new cultures and occupations, which exposed them to a bigger variety of interests. This is a form of occupational exploration. They could explore adventure activities such as adaptive abseiling, to observing how different societies attribute different values to the same concepts, such as being in a wheelchair or being able to skydive in spite of having an impairment.

They were exposed to other people's perspectives which broadened their own horizons. Through gaining new input from their new environment they could expand their knowledge about their own capabilities as well as their disability.

This however, brought them face to face with obstacles and challenges (Figure 5.2 – Journey of self-discovery) as they were inevitably exposed to inaccessible spaces due to lack of universal design, unpredictable situations and inappropriate responses from society. On their journeys they had to learn to navigate these obstacles: from high curbs, inaccessible bathrooms and accommodation to the inappropriate responses from the people around them. For this reason they had to be willing to adapt and be innovative when posed with a problem.

Facing difficult situations are commonly used as a form of growth in Adventure therapy (Jeffrey & Wilson, 2017, p. 34). During Adventure therapy clients are placed in challenging situations which forces them to face challenging circumstances through adventure activities such as kayaking or hiking. The latter is done to facilitate learning and to “develop insight that support changes in their occupational identity and engagement” (Jeffrey & Wilson, 2017, p. 36).

Similar to Adventure therapy, travelling placed the participants in a challenging environment which they considered as an opportunity for growth. They learned a lot about themselves and how to adapt and to find the unique side of their situation. Therefore, they felt empowered. In coming face to face with what they could and could not do, they were able discover their own abilities. Contrary to the usual therapeutic environment, where abilities and risks are carefully managed, travelling spontaneously presented the participants with challenges. Stepping outside of their safe environment, travelling on the contrary exposed them to challenges which forced the participants to expand on alternative ways of doing and exploring new activities. By physically

changing the spatial environment, where one experiences a mentally difficult or challenging situation, allows one to gain perspective.

The participants could discover new ways of dealing with challenges as their minds could now develop an alternative perspective of disability after experiencing a new environmental context through travelling. Thus they could begin to consider obscure possibilities and solutions. This was reinforced by McCaffrey when he alleged that “innovative solutions rely on associations that are distant from the concepts of the problem” (McCaffrey, 2012, p. 1). Through gaining distance from their usual challenges back home regarding disability, they gained a different perspective, because their horizons had broadened in terms of their own skill, volition and habituation. By changing the physical environment the circumstance of the problem had changed.

Through mastering these obstacles (Figure 5.2 – Journey of self-discovery) the participants reflected on their strengths which enabled them to recondition their minds. Mastering their challenges left them feeling empowered as they had overcome the things that previously posed a threat. Occupational Therapists believe that occupational beings have a need to “master their own environment” (Reilly, 1962, p. 12). This occurs as a result of the repeated practicing of an occupation which allows one to gain occupational competence, hence mastering the environment (Ramafikeng, 2011).

As the researcher made sense of the participants’ making sense of travelling, it reaffirmed what Kielhofner stated more than three decades ago: “an environmental change is the surest way to effect permanent organized change in an open system” (Kielhofner, 1980, p. 732). To elucidate, this means that by experiencing a change in the environment and experiencing new occupations, which travelling undoubtedly affects, altered the participants’ way in which they perceived

themselves and responded within their world. As the researcher led with deeper questions in exploring what meaning travelling held for the participants of this study, it became evident that experiencing new activities did not just generate optimism for the future but instilled a sense of mastery in the participants.

Falk et al. (2012) contended that the epitome of learning exists within combining past happenings with the present moment, which involves reflective contemplation. Through reflective contemplation (Figure 5.2 – Journey of self-discovery) the participants confronted their perception of disability. It required them to consciously encounter and reflect on their own interpretations of disability, therefore, redefining their own perception of disability. Drawing on the structural and psycho-emotional dimensions of disability that regularly prohibit people with disabilities from “participating within mainstream society” (Reeve, 2004, p. 85), the Social-Relational Model emphasises the emotional impact disablism has on people with disabilities (Nishida, 2013, p. 2). Morris (1991) stated that internalised oppression occurs when people with disabilities accept how society values their lives (Morris, 1991, as cited in Reeve, 2004). Travelling assisted the participants to face and fight their internal oppression, to restructure and accept their own value and perception about their life rather than that of society. By linking their past self with their present self, the participants’ combined their past happenings with their present moment. Consequently, they ultimately influenced their occupational identity during this process of contemplation and reflection. They discovered their “new” self by linking their former interests and activities with their “present” self. For this reason travelling was a catalyst for the participants to become who they are, thus illustrating what was stated by Wilcock (1999), that through doing, we become who we are.

It can therefore be concluded that a changed environment resulted in convergence of the three circles of the Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996) - the relations between who they are – person, how they do things – occupation and the environment. As they travelled they experienced new occupations which shifted the balance between person, environment and occupation. Gaining new information from different communities and occupations amended their perspective of self and their disability. From stepping out of their comfort zone to mastering a new activity, broadened their horizons and compelled them to do introspection, resulting in a different perspective on disability and disablism. After travelling, the participants could not go back to their old dimensions of doing everyday activities, as they had expanded their perspective about accessibility, explored a greater variety of occupations and experienced different perspectives of disability. The pilgrimage, as elaborated in Theme Three: The pilgrimage to self-discovery, led them to amend their own concept of disability through reconstructing their identity. Therefore, it became evident that as the participants made sense of their travel experiences, it facilitated them to re-discover their new self. Initially they undertook travelling for leisure but in essence they embarked on a pilgrimage of introspection, readjusting internal perceptions and growth in their occupational identity.

### 5.3.4 The meaning that travelling has for people with disabilities

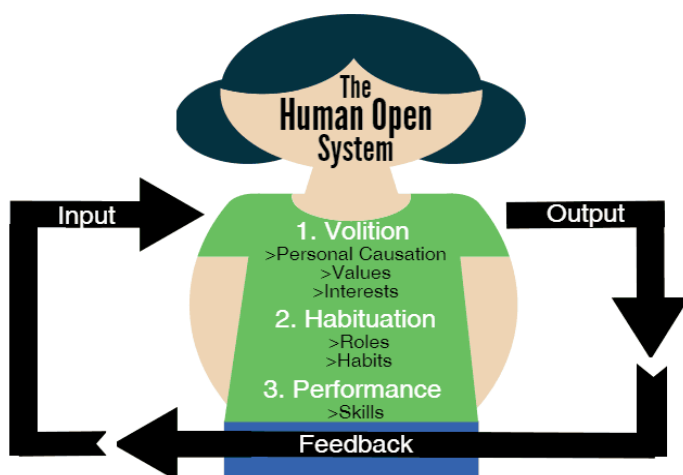


Figure 5.3 – The Human Open System

As the researcher engaged in the process of making sense of the participants' sense-making (double hermeneutics), the researcher could recognise that the participants were re-organising their human open systems during their travel journeys. The human open



system (see Figure 5.3) refers to concepts Kielhofner (2008) commonly used to explain the theoretical framework of the Model of Human Occupation. Kielhofner (2008, p. 124) suggests that individuals should be viewed as open systems which interact with the environment by means of input, throughput, output and feedback. During the interviews the participants narrated experiencing new activities; new challenges and new sensory information that significantly enlarged their boundaries and changed the way they interpreted their own realities, thus influencing their way of interpreting disability and their identity.

Describing how the participants' human open systems were influenced as they engaged in travelling can be illustrated at the hand of one of the participant's weekend getaways with his friends whilst being wheelchair bound. Embarking on this travel journey, Letz was exposed to an unfamiliar environment, whereby he received new information - equating to a changed input. He could explore the new environment and receive new responses from friends - who in this case treated him no different to a non-disabled person. This allowed Letz to reevaluate his own views on the amount of help he required getting in and out of a wheelchair - equating an altered throughput. Altering one's throughput entails viewing one's own interests, values, roles and habits in a new light. Receiving an encouraging response from his friends, rather than a voice a warning from his family and therapists, encouraged him to explore his own boundaries, resulting in him experimenting with kayaking. Partaking in a new action, which he had never attempted following his disability, led to a different action - equating output. It so happened that the kayak capsized, forcing him to swim back to shore alone, one of the challenges he hoped to avoid. However, in facing this obstacle he was able to confidently rescue himself by swimming back to shore unaided, thus establishing an altered feedback. In this instance, stepping out of his comfort zone, exploring anew travel-related activity, such as kayaking, and then being able to master the incident of capsizing, brought about a new confidence which led him to reorganise his human

open system. Perceiving his abilities in a different light assisted him to accept his disability and alter his occupational identity.

Receiving sensory information from the environment and society, the participants could process and re-evaluate their values, habits and personal causation. Subsequent to this re-valuation, known as throughput, they took action as they engaged in new leisure travel activities, known as output, whereby they then received altered feedback. This feedback, not only from the new travel environment but feedback regarding their own performance skill as well, led them to restructure their human open system, confirming that each individual's open system is dynamic (Ramafikeng, 2001). Thus the "system is constantly changing, unfolding and reorganising itself through engagement" (Ramafikeng, 2001, p. 1). Akin to the process described in the MOHO - Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002) travelling initiated a change in the human open system by providing a new environment. The new environment, from travelling, is seen as the prompt which led the participants to readjust their human open system.

As described previously, Occupational Therapists utilise adventure to "enhance their ability" (Jeffrey & Wilson, 2017, p. 35) through engaging in adventure activities and discovering new strengths. This relates to the participants' experiences as they too perceived their own values, skills and roles in a new light following a new environment and new sensory information. Therefore, growth and learning transpire when travelling (Falk et al., 2012) and in the active pursuit of experiences one develops skill and knowledge (Falk et al., 2012, p. 912). For decades travelling has been associated with expeditions, societal development and learning, confirming again that to travel is to embark on a pilgrimage (Drifters, 2016). It can thus be argued that embarking on this pilgrimage serves as a catalyst for growing and a form of learning that the participants could choose themselves. They could discover who they were and who they wanted

to be. In essence through adjusting their human open system on their travel journeys, the participants narrated their life stories and reconstructed their occupational identity.

Through the process of optimising their occupational performance and readjusting their human open system, the participants were able to rewrite the essential qualities of their occupational identity. As the researcher endeavoured to conclude the true meaning of travelling for the participants, she drew heavily on the components of the Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996), as well as the dynamic human open system of the Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002), thereby finding a novel way to merge these two models into one, which she has named the Integrated Model.

#### **5.4 Integration of the Model of Human Occupation and Person-Environment-Occupation Models**

With the Person-Environment-Occupation Model (PEO) (Law et al., 1996), and the Model of Human Occupation (MOHO) (Kielhofner, 2002) forming the theoretical framework for this study, the researcher employed both of these models to delineate the phenomenon of travelling. She found that many characteristics of these two models overlap and interconnect; therefore, an opportunity to merge these models materialised. Preserving the theoretical values of the Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996), and the Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002), merging the two models into one holistic Integrated Model enabled the researcher to apply the constructive components of each, to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' interpretations of the meaning of travelling. In doing the latter, the researcher applied the Integrated Model as a holistic framework for interpreting the participants' experiences of the actual events and happenings within their context.

#### **5.4.1 Rationale for merging the Model of Human Occupation and Person-Environment-Occupation Models**

The rationale behind merging the two models developed as both the models were used concurrently to decipher the participants' views of their own world considering their realities as well as how occupation and environment influenced their occupational performance. The researcher has come to understand the Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002) from a hermeneutical perspective that views the participant within his/her own reality as well as the in vivo experience of the participant as interpreted by him/her, but the Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996) allowed the researcher to view the participant in relation to his/her environment, whilst delineating the phenomenon of travelling.

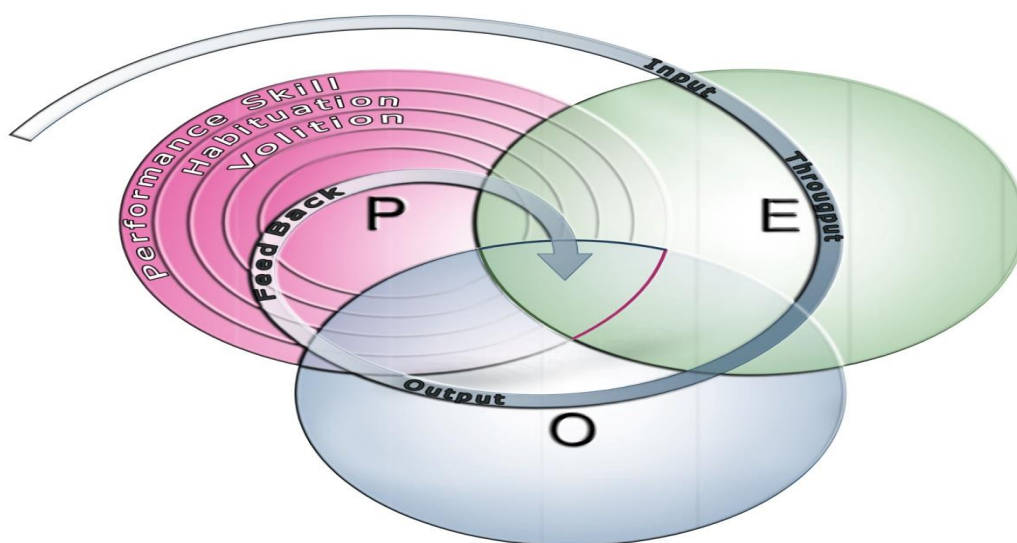
Considering the dynamic interrelations between the components of the person, occupation and his/her environment, as stated in the Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996), the researcher could relate the transactional relationship between these components to an enabling or disabling process. Despite applying the model of Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996) to study the participants' occupations and environment, it did not suffice in revealing how that person made sense of his/her experience of travelling or his/her world, as it was lacking the internal interpretation component referred to as the throughput part of the Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002). The Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002) aided the researcher in revealing how the person was dealing with, adjusting and readjusting to his/her enabling-disabling circumstances.

Consequently, the Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002) was used to view the volition and habits of the person, his/her performance skills and environment, which enabled the researcher to gain an in-depth perspective of his/her contextual factors. The Integrated Model allowed the researcher to engage with the participants and attempt to step into their world. This Model further

enabled the researcher to view occupation from the person's perspective and to interpret the environment from the person's perspective, which is unique to the individual. It provided the researcher with the theory to understand how the participants made sense, within themselves, of travelling as a person with a disability, in order to be able to engage competently. Both of these models served in partial fulfilment in the researcher's quest to uncover the phenomenon of travelling. Taking into consideration the best attributes of both these models, the researcher merged the two models to provide a comprehensive and inclusive framework for this study.

#### 5.4.2 The Integrated Model

As seen in Figure 5.4 - The Integrated Model, the model retains the shape of the Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996) with its three spheres, however, the researcher merged the components of the Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002) into the first circle named the person-sphere. The three concentric circles namely volition, habituation and performance skill, from the Model of Human Occupation, conclusively pertain to the person and how he/she perceives and interprets identity, role and responsibilities.



**Figure 5.4 - The Integrated Model**

Note: P = Person, E= environment, O = Occupation

The Environment-sphere (Figure 5.4 – The Integrated Model) pertains to the level of structural accessibility, one's culture, social relations and whether the environment is accessible, enabling or disabling. The sphere of environment also has a phenomenological perspective, a two dimensional approach to viewing the environment component. This allowed the researcher to firstly, assess the structural, economical and societal aspects of the environment and secondly how the participant viewed the structural, economical and societal environment from his/her perspective. Therefore, the Integrated Model presents environment, which refers to the actual physical architecture of the surroundings as well as how the environment is interpreted from the person's perspective. The latter is constantly and continuously receiving cues from his/her home environment, neighbourhood, work, community and friends. It became evident during this study that spatiotemporal space and environment is interpreted uniquely to the individual. How the participants made sense of high curbs, what it meant to go into a new environment and how they interpreted inappropriate staring from society, differed greatly due to individualistic perception. This highlighted the importance that, Occupational Therapists in practice, should consider the individual within his/her world as well as how the individual perceives their own world.

The Occupation-sphere (Figure 5.4 – The Integrated Model) speaks to any form of activity the participants engaged in. This ranged from their everyday activities such as personal hygiene in self-care, productivity and leisure activities. As the occupation-sphere overlaps with the person and environment-sphere, it resembles engagement in meaningful activities that is intrinsically satisfying to the individual and endorsed within his/her environment. This sphere speaks to the expression of self, that through doing we become (Magnus, 2001).

The person is unique and interwoven with his/her roles, culture, values and interests therefore, cannot be separated from his/her contextual factors. The person contributes a set of skills,

knowledge and physical attributes – owing to his/her autonomy. These aspects of culture, their value system and attributes, continuously develop as it relates to their environment and occupation. In correlation to this the component of the Model of Human Occupation defines the individual in terms of volition, habituation and his/her performance skill. Volition which speaks to personal causation, values and interests pertains to the person's wants and needs, and what he/she personally values as significant or not as each individual is unique with unique interests. Habituation pertains to the person's personal roles and routines that he/she engages in, for example, the person as a mother or the person as a brother. Performance skills relate to physical and mental skills the person has to employ, which varies with each participant. All of the above mentioned components of the Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996) and the Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002), aided the researcher in gaining an insider's view of each participant, and compelled the researcher to listen to the participants' interpretation of their world from their point of view.

The arrow which enters the Integrated Model at the Environment circle (Figure 5.4 – The Integrated Model) symbolises the process of adapting one's human open system. The arrow deliberately enters the sphere at the Environment component as travelling predominantly brings about a changed environment with a new surrounding and sensory information, therefore, named input. As referenced by Model of Human Occupation's (Kielhofner, 2002) input, throughput, output and feedback, this dynamic process can gradually bring the three spheres of Person, Environment and Occupation closer together for an improved occupational fit, or conversely, diverge it. As the environment brings new stimulation, one's own set of values, habituation and performance is re-evaluated. This process is indicated as throughput. Following the re-evaluation process named throughput, there is a call to action hence naming that section of the arrow, output. Within the occupation circle an action is required which corresponds with the call to action of output. How one engages in occupation, following the re-evaluation of values, habituation and

performance, now resembles in one's actions. Consequently, the feedback component of the arrow entails the different feedback one receives following the new input, altered throughput and changed output. As an altered feedback leads to restructuring of identity it is fitting to reference this component in the person part of the model. For Occupational Therapists it is important to recognise this in-vivo process of restructuring one's identity, which happens within the individual. Therefore, an important consideration for Occupational Therapy practice is to place the individual in a new environment to facilitate this altered feedback.

Essentially the Integrated Model truly approaches the individual holistically by vividly taking into consideration the macro aspects of being and doing, while simultaneously considering the in vivo interpretation of the person embedded with a rich history set in a cultural and spiritual scene; by acknowledging the "throughput" that Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002) depicts; but recognising the individual's autonomy in having to take control of their own life and master having an impairment in society. As a Phenomenological researcher, the researcher developed the Integrated Model to suit the hermeneutical perspective and interpreting the environment not only in actuality and in relation to the participant but also from within the participants' perspective.

## **5.5 Limitations**

The study had one main limitation. Four out of the six participants were professional athletes of which three are Paralympians and one a professional surfer. This could be indicative of a higher level of determination and strength in comparison to other people with disabilities. Therefore, this is a possible limitation to this study, as arguably, these participants may have been more willing than others to endure tribulation and difficulties in order to master the task at hand. The reason for the situation is that during the recruitment process of the participants, travel agencies were



contacted to refer people with disabilities who had already travelled. This is indicative of a group of people who had possibly already gained some closure to accepting their disability and who had conquered their fears regarding being in a new environment and travelling. Additionally, with the use of snowball sampling, whereby the participants further referred two other participants, they referred friends with similar traits, resulting in participants with a similar set of characteristics.

## Chapter 6 – Recommendations & Conclusion

### 6.1 Introduction

In the last decade reasons for travelling have changed dramatically and travelling is now regarded as a form of free-choice learning and a means for discovering one's identity. This study showed that broadening perspectives, constructing identities, occupational exploration and gaining closure to disability are only a few benefits experienced by people with disabilities who have decided to travel. This valuable opportunity for development and growth has been largely under researched and under resourced for people with disabilities. This led the researcher to question the shared, lived experience of travelling for people with disabilities. Achieving the objectives of the study enabled the researcher to shed some much needed light on the phenomenon of travelling for people with disabilities. The Peron-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996), the Model of Human Occupation (Kielhofner, 2002) and the philosophy of occupational science formed the theoretical underpinnings of this study. With a Hermeneutical Phenomenological design the researcher attempted to step into the shoes of the participants and view travelling as well as interpret their world from their perspective. This point of view enabled the researcher to develop the Integrated Model. Through purposive sampling six participants took part in semi-structured interviews. Interpretative phenomenological analysis was applied to seek a universal meaning of travelling for the participants and to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences. The qualitative nature of this study resulted in the emergence of three themes namely: Double edged sword, People are part of the package and Pilgrimage to self-discovery. These themes highlighted the contradictory effects that travelling can have, to how travelling facilitated the participants to develop a new identity. But in essence, the shared lived experience of travelling for people with disabilities is to accept their disability and find their new self. From

this study, it became evident that it is of great value for Occupational Therapists to recommend and encourage their clients to engage in travelling as a leisure occupation.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

This section outlines possibilities for future research as well as specific recommendations for Occupational Therapy Practice and Education, the Tourism Industry, Disability Groups and lastly suggestions pertaining to Government Legislation and Policies.

### **6.2.1 Occupational Therapy Practice**

- The importance of recommending client appropriate leisure activities was highlighted during the course of this research. It is of great importance that Occupational Therapists firstly, do not neglect leisure as a valuable part of therapy when focussing on identity restoration as it facilitates personal transformation; and secondly, leisure travelling has proven to be a self-directed activity that aids in buffering the impact of disability and assists in reconstructing occupational identity.
- Travelling is a form of free-choice learning and a means of learning from experience. It provides new information to all senses involved and requires active participation in occupations that hold meaning for the participant. Recommending this type of experiential learning as a therapeutic intervention will promote autonomy and independence.
- To further promote experiential learning, the researcher recommends continued professional development opportunities focussing on travelling as therapeutic intervention.
- Making use of activities when travelling, similar to Occupational Therapy, facilitates insight into one's abilities, promotes behavioural changes and builds capacity for identity

reconstruction. Therefore, Occupational Therapists should encourage clients to experience adventure whilst travelling.

- As part of community integration Occupational Therapists can start planning a leisure travel trip with eligible clients who have recently been disabled.

### **6.2.2 Occupational Therapy Education**

- The results of this study should be utilized to raise awareness amongst Occupational Therapy students, that occupations such as travelling can be used to empower people to acknowledge and cope with their impairment.
- For further advocacy it is recommended that a summary of this study's results be disseminated to the OTASA's Education committee to raise awareness on the benefits of travelling.

### **6.2.3 Tourism Industry**

- People with disabilities have the same desire to travel as non-disabled travellers, yet only a fraction of this group engage in travelling. Despite the growing number of people with disabilities who engage in travel, there are still deterrents such as inaccessibility and limited information regarding accommodation. The Department of Tourism and Recreation has an immense responsibility in promoting accessible tourism in South Africa. This study can be used as motivation for renewed legislation to increase accessibility in the tourism section.
- Additionally, the Department of Tourism and Recreation should develop procedures that will ensure the marketing of tours in an accessible manner through providing sufficient photographs online and in-depth descriptions of the accessibility of accommodation on

tourism sites. This will also encourage people with disabilities to travel to, and within, South Africa.

- It is recommended that Department of Tourism further advocate to airlines in South Africa regarding the stringent flying protocols for people with disabilities. Booking and arranging a flight ticket is seen as a lengthy process and set to exhaust the potential client before the process is completed.

#### **6.2.4 Disability Organisations**

- There are only a scanty few travel bloggers with a disability who would share their experiences of travelling and detail some tips and advice. However, it is recommended that disability groups such as APD – Association for People with Disability, DPSA - Disabled People of South Africa, QASA – QuadPara Association of South Africa and disability support forums venture into online support groups and blogs to further promote the benefits and effects of travelling as a person with disability. This will ensure that many unanswered questions regarding travelling and its accessibility will be answered by people in similar situations.
- Additional support should be given to online sites such as Trip Advisor, Travelstart, Lonely Planet, AirBnB etc. to promote travelling for people with disabilities.

#### **6.2.5 Government Legislation and Policies**

- Accessibility and disability are still broad terms within South Africa. This requires more definitive legislation pertaining to inclusivity and accessible tourism for people with disabilities. Thus a task team should be selected in order to draft a protocol to ensure that accessible tourism becomes a mainstream activity in South Africa.

- The Department of Tourism must take on the responsibility of ensuring that websites meet the requirements of accessibility by adhering to standards such as enlarged font, photos and/or video's displaying a 360 degree view of accommodation in order to provide a conclusive view of accessibility.
- An Executive Summary of this study will be made available to the Department of Labour as well as the Department of Tourism and Recreation highlighting the importance of accessibility and universal design that will allow and promote people with disabilities to travel. This will not only endorse, but also establish, their human right to travel.
- Furthermore the building control department at municipalities should enforce the universal design of public spaces by means of not approving building plans that lack structural accessibility. This will reduce discriminatory barriers and promote inclusion for people with disabilities, as pledged by Government in the White Paper on the Rights of Person with Disabilities (Department of Social Development, *WPRPD*, 2015, p. 4).
- The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (PEPUDA, 2017) should be encouraged to review the flying regulations for people with disabilities, by lessening the strict requirements such as insisting on a doctors' approval prior to booking, and demanding that people with disabilities are pushed in a wheelchairs when boarding a flight, even if they are able to walk.

### **6.2.6 Future research**

- Travelling within Occupational Therapy lacks amplitude in scope; therefore, further research regarding the benefits of travelling for people with disability on an emotional, social and physical level is necessary.

- Travelling proved to be a form of free-choice learning, for that reason further research is needed to analyse how travelling influences neuroplasticity in people with disabilities.
- The Integrated Model is new to the theory of Occupational Therapy; thus, further research is needed regarding the possibility of applying it in practice.
- As hermeneutical phenomenology only allowed the researcher to interpret the participants' interpretations of their experience linguistically, travelling with the person with a disability whilst documenting his/her experiences through participant observation would allow for real-life context. Thus the researcher recommends that an ethnography design involving participant observation be conducted.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study revealed that the shared lived experience of travelling for people with disabilities is that it is a pilgrimage of self-discovery, whether it is discovering one's own boundaries, discovering alternative means of doing daily activities or discovering a fresh perspective on one's disability. In other words, the participants discovered a new perspective of self. Travelling is a personal and unique experience which is shaped and shifted to match the participants' characters and needs. Travelling expanded their sensory, physical and gravitational parameters which enabled them to view themselves and their disability in a new light. The participants in this study did not engage in travelling merely for fun, but more for the self-discovery opportunities that travelling offered them. Facing the obstacles pertaining to inaccessibility, they learned to appreciate being different in a one dimensional society and grew stronger in their autonomy by taking control over their destiny. Therefore, the study highlighted that travelling proves to be one of the most influential forms of growth and is essential to amend one's occupational identity.

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# Appendix 1

## Interview Guide

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### Interview Guide: University of Western Cape

Date:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:
Type of disability:

### Warm up Discussion

Thank you for taking part in this study to explore the phenomenon of travelling for people with disabilities. For this study, travelling is defined as an expedition or vacation involving a prearranged journey from one place to another, with the minimum of one night stay-over, with the purpose of taking a break from the ordinary routine and the exploration of new activities.

### Questions:

1. Tell me about yourself

*Prompt:* How would you describe yourself? What do you enjoy doing?

*Prompt:* How do you occupy your time?

*Prompt:* How would you describe your travelling profile/pattern?

2. What is your motivation for travelling?

*Prompt:* Why do you travel?

*Prompt:* What does being able to travel mean to you?

3. What is your focus for travelling?

*Prompt:* What did you want to experience out of travelling?

4. How do you capture memories of your trip?

*Prompt:* Do you journal / Talk about it / Take photos / Blog?

*Prompt:* What are your thoughts and feelings about this? Why would you say this is so?

5. Tell me about a travelling trip you undertook lately?

*Prompt:* Describe your photo...why did you choose this photo

*Prompt:* What stood out for you in this photo?

6. Can you share some of the activities you enjoy performing when you travel?

*Prompt:* What do you value most about travelling?

*Prompt:* Why do you regard this as important?

*Prompt:* Can you share any examples/associated experiences relevant to this?

7. How would you describe travelling to someone who has not experienced travelling before?

8. What do you think are the effects of travelling for you as a person with a disability?

How do you explain these effects?

*Prompt:* Would you say it is necessary to travel and why?

*Prompt:* How have you changed after you began to travel as a person with a disability?

9. What do you think is the purpose of travelling for people with disabilities?

*Prompt:* Would you travel again, why?

*Prompt:* Can you share some examples of this?

## Appendix 2



### OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR: RESEARCH RESEARCH AND INNOVATION DIVISION

Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535  
South Africa  
T: +27 21 959 2988/2948  
F: +27 21 959 3170  
E: [research-ethics@uwc.ac.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.ac.za)  
[www.uwc.ac.za](http://www.uwc.ac.za)

28 September 2016

Mrs Y van der Westhuizen  
Occupational Therapy  
Faculty of Community and Health Science

**Ethics Reference Number HS16/6/17**


**Project Title:** Lived experience of leisure travelling for people with disabilities.

**Approval Period:** 28 September 2016 – 28 September 2017

I hereby certify that the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the above mentioned research project.

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval. Please remember to submit a progress report in good time for annual renewal.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse event and/or termination of the study.



*Ms Patricia Josias  
Research Ethics Committee Officer  
University of the Western Cape*

**PROVISIONAL REC NUMBER - 130416-049**



## **Appendix 3**

### **CONSENT FORM**

**Title of Research Project:**                    **Exploring the phenomenon of travelling for people  
with disabilities through their lived experiences**

The study has been described to me in language that I understand. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand what my participation will involve and I agree to participate of my own choice and free will. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed to anyone. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without fear of negative consequences or loss of benefits.

I understand that this research project involves making an audiotape whilst conducting the interview as an additional means for the researcher to gain comprehensive insight into my lived experience of travelling as a person with a disability. The recording will be stored in a password protected folder on the researchers' computer and access will be only granted to the researcher and her academic supervisors.

\_\_\_ I agree to be audio taped during my participation in this study.

\_\_\_ I do not agree to be audio taped during my participation in this study.

\_\_\_ I agree that photographs of myself during my travels can be used as part of this study.

\_\_\_ I do not agree that photographs of myself during my travels can be used as part of this study.

Participant's name.....

Participant's signature.....

Date.....



# UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel: +27 21-959 3151E-mail:msoeker@uwc.ac.za

## Appendix 4

### INFORMATION SHEET

**Project Title:** Exploring the phenomenon of travelling for people with disabilities through their lived experiences

#### **What is this study about?**

This is a research project being conducted by Yolanda van der Westhuizen who is a Masters student at the University of the Western Cape. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are older than 18 years, have a disability and have travelled in South Africa to a new environment and explored new activities, with a minimum stay over of one night.

The purpose of this research project is to explore the meaning people with disabilities attribute to the phenomenon of travelling. Knowledge from this study will be used to take a stance against discrimination and advocate for people with disabilities' rights to engage in travel and tourism services and to consider travelling as a possible therapeutic treatment modality.

#### **What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?**

You will be asked to participate in an in-depth one on one interview in a comfortable and quiet setting in your vicinity, about your past experience of travelling. You will have enough time to talk about your experiences about travelling in response to open-ended questions. Additionally, you will be asked to select five meaningful photographs from your travel trip which will be used to bring forth its meaning to you. The point of this interview is to capture your specific lived experience; therefore, I am going to encourage you to use "I" statements. This is your time to speak about your own experiences without having to consider others.

#### **Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?**

The researchers undertake to protect your identity and the nature of your contribution. To ensure your anonymity, profiles will be kept confidential through assigning the following (1) You will be assigned a pseudonym, thus your name will not be included on the interview (2)

Through the use of an identification key, the researcher will be able to link your interview to your identity; and (3) only the researcher will have access to the identification key.

To ensure your confidentiality, transcripts will be saved on password-protected files and the audio recording of your interview will be stored in a password-protected folder on the researcher's computer. If we write a report or article about this research project, or present this research at a conference or workshop, your identity will be protected.

### **What are the risks of this research?**

All human interactions and talking about self or others carry some amount of risks. We will nevertheless minimise such risks and act promptly to assist you if you experience any discomfort, psychological or otherwise during the process of your participation in this study. Where necessary, an appropriate referral will be made to a suitable professional for further assistance or intervention.

### **What are the benefits of this research?**

This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the researchers learn more about the essence of travelling and provide valuable insight to unlocking the benefits of travelling for people with disabilities. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of how travelling influences one's identity and engagement in everyday life activities.

### **Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalised.

### **What if I have questions?**

This research is being conducted by Yolanda van der Westhuizen, a student in the Department of Occupational Therapy at the University of the Western Cape. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Yolanda at: 082 727 7112 or [vdwyolanda@gmail.com](mailto:vdwyolanda@gmail.com)

Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

Prof. Mogammad Shaheed Soeker  
Head of Department: Occupational Therapy  
University of the Western Cape  
Private Bag X17  
Bellville 7535  
[msoeker@uwc.ac.za](mailto:msoeker@uwc.ac.za)

Prof José Frantz  
Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences  
University of the Western Cape  
Private Bag X17  
Bellville 7535  
[chs-deansoffice@uwc.ac.za](mailto:chs-deansoffice@uwc.ac.za)

This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Research Ethics Committee. (HS/16/6/17)