

## Perceived Challenges Facing Tourist Guides in South Africa

Matome G. Kapa\*<sup>ORCID</sup>

*Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law, University of Venda, Thohoyandou, South Africa, Email, [matome.kapa@univen.ac.za](mailto:matome.kapa@univen.ac.za)*

Engela P. de Crom<sup>ORCID</sup>

*Department of Nature Conservation, Faculty of Science, Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria, South Africa Email, [decromep@tut.ac.za](mailto:decromep@tut.ac.za)*

Uwe P. Hermann<sup>ORCID</sup>

*Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria, South Africa, Email, [HermannUP@tut.ac.za](mailto:HermannUP@tut.ac.za)*

*\*Corresponding Author*

**How to cite this article:** Kapa, M.G., de Crom, E.P. & Hermann, U.P. (2023). Perceived Challenges Facing Tourist Guides in South Africa. African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 12(2):491-503. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720.381>

### Abstract

This paper aims to evaluate different opinions to understand what tourist guides of South Africa would like to change about their guiding profession, addresses the challenges they face and what tourist guides should be expected to do. A non-random sample of 320 tourist guides was selected to participate in the study. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used in conjunction for this investigation. An online questionnaire on which open-ended questions were posed to respondents. These responses were then analysed using content analysis which revealed the changes or improvements the respondents would like to see in the guiding industry to solve challenges facing the guiding industry. Key issues emerged from the study include the demand from tourist guides to have their industry licensed and regulated, paid better salaries, have regular training and workshops, lastly policing of unregistered and illegal tourist guides. The findings of this research make a contribution to the discourse in the field of tourist guiding in South Africa and internationally. The results of this research, the first of its kind in South Africa and limited internationally support and extend existing knowledge, as well as contribute to the understanding of tourist guiding. This study may assist in enhancing the discourse around the development and amendment of regulatory frameworks governing the guiding industry.

**Keywords:** Tourist guides; tourism; tourist guiding; South Africa; challenges of tourist guiding

### Introduction

In South Africa, the National Department of Tourism (NDT) regulates the tourist-guiding industry. These individuals must complete a registered qualification and obtain a licence to work legally as tourist guides. Guides registered in South Africa fall into three main types that determine the focus of the guided experience. Nature, Culture and Adventure Guides (Field Guides Association of Southern Africa [FGASA], 2019). Some guides specialise in one category, while others offer guided experiences that incorporate elements of nature, adventure, and culture. The term 'tourist guide' refers to a person who performs part of the guiding experience for tourists, whether a natural, cultural guide or adventure guide, depending on their specialisation in the tourism industry. (FGASA, 2019). Tourist guides play an important role

in satisfying tourists visiting a country or region. A tourist guide, according to Chilembwe and Mweiwa (2014), is a person who guides a group of people on brief sightseeing trips and provides directions. A tourist guide is also a leader who stops at specific locations during guided experiences, engages in a combination of rituals that are predetermined and improvised, leads the way, points out things, instructs visitors on what to look at and how to position themselves to take in the attraction as a whole, among other duties (Zillinger et al., 2012). As a result, a tourist guide simultaneously performs and interprets, and as such, they are central to the visitor experience (Overend, 2012). In addition, the services provided by tourist guides at tourist sites can increase tourist satisfaction. Through quality interpretation, tourist guides can improve visitor satisfaction and contribute to the overall economic benefits of tourism. The performance of tourist guides has a significant impact on repeat and new business in destinations and the reputation of destinations and tour operators by providing quality services to visitors (Leguma, 2013). This paper strives to provide insight into the challenges that tourist guides face in the practice of their profession. The paper begins with a theoretical overview of the role of tourist guides and the status of the tourist-guiding sector in South Africa. A theoretical overview also describes the training environment for tourist guides.

### **Literature review**

Tourist guides provide tourist-guiding services at different tourist destinations or attractions to a variety of different tourists with unique needs. Tourist guides inform visitors what they are seeing, hearing, and experiencing in the place and surrounding area, ensuring that visitors understand and enjoy the environment they are visiting. A tourist guide is someone who leads a group of people and shows the way on sightseeing excursions for a limited duration (Prakash et al., 2011; Association of Southeast Asian Nations [ASEAN], 2014; Chilembwe & Mweiwa, 2014; Hurombo, 2016; Sandaruwani & Gnanapala, 2016; Melia, 2017). Each guided tour varies in its purpose, setting and activities, theme, duration, type of visitor and setting in which the sightseeing tour takes place. Guiding is also about having fun, guiding groups of people, meeting new people, and participating in fun activities. Tourist guiding includes the guiding of individuals or groups of visitors on visits to particular regions, and areas across the whole nation (Field Guides Association of Southern Africa [FGASA], 2019).

Uys (2009) states that tourist guiding is about taking visitors to see, learn and experience local attractions and the encompassing environment. Chilembwe and Mweiwa (2014) agree that guiding means leading a group or individual on a tour. Tourist guiding aims to reveal meanings, to expose an individual to the nearby natural and cultural heritage, history, and fables, and to create instructive mindfulness of the complexities of the natural and cultural environment by sharing truthful information and significant translation of the environment (Uys, 2009). Mossberg (2007) describes the goal of guided tours as an innovative way of designing the best visitor experiences and delivering appropriate services ensuring that the needs, expectations and preferences of visitors to the tourist destination are met. Therefore, all the above-mentioned require effective guiding, which aims to meet individual needs and expectations through providing high standards and quality service with the safety and enjoyment of travellers as a priority (Uys, 2009).

Effective guiding can be transformative in the sense that it may assist in modifying a tourist's attitude towards natural resources from an anthropocentric to an ecocentric view (Ulo & Hallo, 2011). When this happens, people may become more willing to take responsibility for their behaviour towards natural resources. Thus, one of the pivotal success factors of guiding is to establish and maintain relationships with customers. To have a memorable guided experience, the tourist should be motivated to interact with the tourist guide to maintain this relationship (Mossberg, 2007). Furthermore, Mossberg et al. (2014) also pointed out that

personal interaction and involvement of both the tourist and the guide may create meaningful guided experiences.

Guiding is essentially about the desire to achieve a veritable satisfaction of customers and a genuine appreciation of, and commitment to, the numerous features a visit must offer (Thompson, 2012). It is a guide's responsibility to create an educational, fun and safe journey during guided tour experiences. Successful guiding depends on the guide's capacity to evaluate the tourists' desires, wishes and interests to perceive their desires, their common attitudes, and their information about the region or place visited (Cheong & Miller, 2000).

Every year on February 21<sup>st</sup>, there is an International Tourist Guide Day, which shows that the profession of tourist guides is recognized globally. Only 15 nations participated in the first celebrations, which were organized in 1990 by the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (WFTGA), and they commemorated this unique day together. Since this day has become more well-known throughout time, more than 70 nations now observe it internationally. This day is commemorated in South Africa through a variety of events and programs, including presentations, motivational speeches, excursions, and workshops. Some tourist guides not operate in their countries of origin but guiding foreign visitors in a foreign country competing with the tourist guides of the host country and the challenges facing South African guiding industry could be the same challenges facing tourist guides in other countries or globally (NDT, 2023).

### ***Current tourist guiding status in South Africa***

The total number of licensed tourists guides in South Africa is constantly changing. According to industry sources, as of 31 March 2017 there were around 10,000 registered tourist guides active in the industry in South Africa, although not all operating tourist guides are registered (NDT, 2017). South African tourist guides come from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, including languages spoken, ages, work and educational backgrounds. Regarding gender, the majority is male, with more than 60% of them enrolled as guides (Kapa et al., 2022).

The tourist-guiding industry in South Africa operates similarly to that in other countries, while on the other hand, it differs from that in other countries. Tourist guiding is considered professional work in India. In India, to qualify as a legal guide, guides must obtain a license to work as tourist guides. In addition, tourist guide training and licensing in India are the responsibility of the government (the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, for regional-level guides; state tourism departments for state-level guides; and municipal authorities for local-level guides) (Prakash & Chowdhary, 2010). In many states such as Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, tourist guide training and licensing are the responsibility of state tourism development corporations while in Uttar Pradesh licensing tourist guides is the responsibility of state governments. Zhang and Chow, (2004) state that tourist guides in Hong Kong also do not require any formal training. A country such as the United Kingdom has realised the need for providing training to tourist guides. In the United Kingdom, tourist guides are required to complete some guiding courses and take examinations which enable them to wear the highly respected Blue Badges as required by the law. The trend is the same in other countries such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Prakash & Chowdhary, 2010). In Scotland, tourist guides are required to build up units of competence to prove their capability of doing the job. Upon completion of course units, tourist guides are nationally recognised to show that they have practical skills to work in the Scotland guiding industry (Chilembwe & Mweiwa, 2014). Tourist guide training, certification, remuneration and licensing in Indonesia is the responsibility of government and is regulated (Shengnan & Dallen, 2017).

The NDT in South Africa represents the guiding industry from a governance perspective. In South Africa, to work as a qualified and lawfully registered tourist guide, a

qualification is required that is accomplished through a certified tourist guide institution. All licensed tourist guide schools must be registered with the Education and Training Agency for Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sports [CATHSSETA] (FGASA, 2019). As such, CATHSSETA is the agency responsible for the regulation and accreditation of these programs, ensuring that trainees receiving instruction are trained to nationally recognised standards and qualifications (Nyawo, 2020). In South Africa, a qualification obtained through such an accredited tourist guide agency is a prerequisite for registration with the NDT. To qualify as a tourist guide, a student guide must complete training in a specific area of tourist guiding. An evaluation process is mandatory before a guide is declared competent to lead in that particular field. Therefore, to qualify as a tourist guide in South Africa, a student guide must demonstrate both theoretical and particular leadership skills to obtain a Tourism Guiding Certificate in Further Education and Training. Furthermore, once a guide has been confirmed competent, they are required to register with a provincial tourism authority or NDT to work as a legal tourist guide. Registered guides will receive an ID card. The identification will indicate the category of the tour, the site or area where the guide has been determined to be competent to offer the tour, and the guide's area of expertise. Visibility or possession of identification is essential as various police authorities may demand identification during random inspections of tourist guides or when entering various attractions (NDT, 2015).

The guiding certification aims to improve industry performance and influence markets; therefore, it is important to certify all tourist guides ensuring that they conform to the rules and regulations of the tourism industry in South Africa to meet tourists' expectations (Newsome et al., 2013). Guiding qualifications and training standards vary widely around the world and from country to country. According to Melia (2017), some tourist guides have university degrees, especially in countries such as Europe and the United States, while other tourist guides work in the tourism guiding industry without relevant tourist guide qualifications. Therefore, this study focuses on tourist guides with relevant guiding qualifications.

### *Types of guiding services tours*

Tourist guides are expected to guide in their area of expertise and may only work in a trained and licensed category (for state and national guides). Guided tours are categorised by purpose, setting and activities, theme, duration, type of visitor, and setting in which the sightseeing tour takes place (Weiler & Black, 2014; Hansen & Mossberg, 2017). Weiler and Black (2014) outline three general types of guides that are also applicable to the South African guide sector (Table 1).

**Table 1: Categories of tourist guiding in South Africa**

Tourist guiding genres	Description and settings	Tourism genres
Nature guiding	Described as Identifying both animals and plants, demonstrating an understanding of basic animal behaviour patterns and ecological principles, and guiding groups of people in protected areas and other natural settings to interpret the signs and sounds of nature. In the field of nature, guide guidance may specialise in birdwatching, horse guidance, coastal or marine guidance, botanical guidance, trail guidance, and conservation.	Nature-based tourism
Cultural guiding	Lead groups or individuals of visitors to historical and historical sites, historical sights and museums, and indigenous sites and tell stories about the sites. In the area of cultural guides, tour guides may specialize in guiding cultural centres, storytelling, city tours, arts, cultural and natural history tours, and "battlefield" tours.	Heritage/ cultural tourism
Adventure guiding	Leading a group of people in an outdoor recreational activity involves some degree of risk. In the field of adventure guides, a guide can specialize in his 4x4 trails, kayaking, quad biking, rafting, abseiling and other activities.	Adventure tourism

Source: FGASA, (2019); Weiler and Black (2014)



Nature-based tourism refers to travelling to appreciate the common environment and engage in an assortment of open-air exercises that can incorporate birdwatching, horse trails in game reserves, fishing, and hiking (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019). Nature-based tourism takes place outside and requires a level of competence to take part in the adventure activity (Van der Merwe, 2009). Adventure tourism, ecotourism, and wildlife tourism all involve participating in outdoor activities; as a result, they are all types of nature-based tourism (Ryngnga, 2008). Adventure tourism is based on a wide range of activities, from the less energetic activities (soft adventure) such as birdwatching, camping, biking, cruising, snorkelling and hot air swelling, to the ultra-fit looking for activities (hard adventure) such as bungee jumping, diving with incredible white sharks, paragliding and white-water rafting. Participants must be both physically and mentally fit to partake in hard adventures (Swarbrooke et al., 2012). Furthermore, Swarbrooke et al. (2012) state that adventure tourism experiences involve intellectual, physical, or emotional risks and challenges. Cultural tourism refers to travelling to experience the places and activities that truly speak to the stories and individuals of the past, such as commemoration sites, museums, and historical places. Cultural tourists desire to learn about the lifestyle, history, arts, architecture, religion, traditions, and rituals of the place they visit (Kastarlak & Barber, 2012). According to the NDT (2015), cultural tourism includes the movement of persons whose main goal is to visit sites, to travel to festivals and other cultural events, to visit monuments as well as to discover folklore or art or pilgrimages.

Tourist guides are further categorised according to their areas of operation. The NDT (2015) outlined three categories in which tourist guides may operate in the South African guiding sector (Table 2).

**Table 2: Tourist guides areas of operation**

<b>Tourist guides areas of operation</b>	<b>Description and settings</b>
Site guides	A person who usually acts as a leader within a particular site. These leaders are limited in the areas they lead.
Provincial guides	A person who is qualified to guide in one or more states and to guide tourists statewide. I.e., Limpopo or Gauteng.
National guides	A provincial guide who is competent to guide all nine provinces of South Africa and can conduct tours of South Africa and cross all provincial borders.

Source: National Department of Tourism (NDT), (2015)

### ***Challenges facing tourist guides***

The experiences provided by tourist guides are often at the forefront of criticism when tourists are not satisfied with the guided experience. They are often blamed for unforeseen travel problems, such as bad weather and traffic jams (Chowdhary & Prakash, 2010). Being a leader of a group of tourists, they are expected to have problem-solving skills that strive to solve all challenges that may be faced by a guided experience- within or outside of their control. Few studies on the professional status and problems of tourist guides have been reported in the English literature (Ap & Wong, 2001). Chowdhary and Prakash (2010) identified at least five broad categories of challenges faced by Indian tourist guides. These include the general tourism environment, working conditions for tourist guides, relations with local authorities, relations with commercial intermediaries, and issues of dealing with tourists/customers. Furthermore, Chowdhary and Prakash (2010) revealed that high tuition fees and long training periods are major concerns for tourist guides. Tourist guides face challenges both inside and outside the working environment. Internally, guides may have personal limitations in terms of skills, abilities, etc. Externally, the rules and regulations of the field of activity, employers and customers must also be observed. Tourist guides are often pressed for time, caught between their employer and their duty to please tourists, and are subject to government regulation (Dahles, 2002). Many authors have maintained that expert training must be provided to tourist



guides so that they can meet the professional standards and expectations of travel companies and tourists and overcome potential challenges that the sector faces.

According to Kapa et al. (2022), the occupation of tourist guides in South Africa appears to be mostly seasonal or part-time jobs, with 58% of South African tourist guides working between 3 and 15 days a month. Tourist guides recognise the seasonal nature of the tourism industry as another key issue. The seasonality of tourist guide employment was found to limit the bargaining power of tourist guides. The researchers hypothesise that tourist guides who work only a limited number of days per month may be self-employed, work part-time, work in another form of employment, work for multiple tourism companies, or retire. Nyawo (2020) cited Ap and Wong (2001) and Nyahunzvi and Njerekai (2012) to point out the challenges tourist guides face in the workplace. Lack of public, tourism and government recognition of the tourist guide profession, low compensation packages, unethical practices by travel agencies and tour operators, and limited access to training opportunities. In addition to the above, poor working conditions, overwork but lack of benefits such as insurance and health insurance and working without a formal contract are some of the challenges facing the tourist guide profession, especially on the African continent (Mbatha et al., 2021; Nyahunzvi & Njerekai, 2012; De Beer et al., 2014). Seasonality was also identified as a problem for the tourism sector by Melia (2017), and unqualified tour guides are seen as a challenge to the livelihood of registered tour guides. The biggest danger facing the tourist guiding industry is the lack of regulation of the guiding sector. There is a risk of overtraining English-speaking guides, and there is occasionally a shortage of other language guides.

Weiler and Ham (2002) concur with authors such as Ap and Wong (2001), Nyahunzvi and Njerekai (2012) and Nyawo (2020) who state that tourist guiding is a low-status profession, which is characterised by low pay, poor working conditions, casual employment conditions and seasonal employment conditions. Widtfeldt Meged (2010) expands on the point that guides are essentially freelancers and self-employed. ITIC (2008:28) states that "The job is unattractive to many due to its seasonality, unsocial hours, relatively low pay and frequently very demanding working conditions and tourists".

## Methodology

The main objective of this study is to identify the perceived working challenges faced by South African tourist guides. For this study, all registered tourist guides of South Africa were the target population because they are individuals who know how tourist guide conduct guided experience following the code of conduct and work ethics, they are at least 21 years old and have English communication skills. Proficiency in English was necessary to be able to complete the questionnaire. The total number of registered guides in South Africa is more than 10 000 (NDT, 2020). Online survey questionnaire was specifically designed to address the research objectives directly dealt with the tourists' perceptions on the variables under study. A non-probability sampling method, i.e., a convenient sampling method, was used based on the willingness of the guides to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed and hosted on the Survey Monkey website. An open-ended questionnaire was distributed among licensed tourist guides in South Africa with a link (electronic survey) e-mailed to guides listed on provincial databases. This was done to allow ease of convenience for guides to complete the survey in their own time. A total of 138 respondents completed the open-ended questionnaire from a total of 320 distributed questionnaires. This study made use of a primarily quantitative, multi-method, research approach through a survey research design.

Content analysis was used to evaluate open-ended questions in this study because it provides the ability to determine the presence of specific words, themes, or concepts within specific qualitative data (i.e., text) (Jennings, 2010; Remler & Van Ryzin, 2011; Wallimanis,

2011). Researchers counted the occurrences of each concept in a text when coding for a concept's frequency. Additionally, content analysis allows researchers to quantify and inspect the existence, meaning, and relationships of specific words, themes, or concepts to understand the experiences and thoughts of tourist guides concerning the challenges they face. Frankel and Wallen (2006) state that content analysis is a research tool used to determine the occurrence of specific words or concepts in the text.

## Findings

The primary objective of this paper is to evaluate tourist guides opinions with the aim to address the challenges facing their profession of guiding in South Africa. To achieve this, tourist guides were asked to give their opinions on which open-ended questions were posed to them about what they would like to change about the profession of tourist guide. Analysis of the responses to the respective question was analysed for similarity five (5) themes were identified, salary and working conditions, which essentially are the major difficulties faced by tourist guides. These themes are identified in Table 3.

**Table 3: Emergent similar concepts based on analysis of open-ended response.**

Themes	Frequency of concepts in a text
Theme 1: Working conditions and salary	67 times
Theme 2 Regular training and workshops	37 times
Theme 3: Policing unregistered and illegal tourist guides	16 times
Theme 4: Training in foreign languages	13 times
Theme 5: Regulation and legislation	5 times

Source: Compiled by author

Table 3 shows the number of times each concept appears in a text, based on the comments made by the tourist guides. Furthermore, from Table 3, it is evident that working conditions and salary were the main issues faced by tourist guides, while regulation and legislation were of least concern. These aspects are discussed as follows:

### *Theme 1: Working conditions and salary*

The most recurring response was concerns and challenges related to low wages and difficult working conditions in the guiding industry was mentioned sixty-seven times in open-ended questions. This seems to be a pressing issue for respondents. In terms of working conditions, working hours are often seen as a major challenge. The sector has a high employee turnover rate (Kapa et al., 2022) due to low salaries (underpaid) and difficult working conditions described as 'unfriendly' from tourist guides' perspective. This finding confirms the results from Melia (2017), Ap and Wong (2001), and Nyahunzvi and Njerekai (2012) who characterise the tourist-guiding profession as a low-paid job. Respondents suggested that tourist guides should be paid fairly with improved working conditions. Representative comments from respondents concerning this finding are:

“Working conditions are crazy, (the) pay is very low.”

“Negotiate better benefits like insurance and provident funds. With current salary scale guides cannot afford insurance or buy a car through finance.”

These quotes are evident that the salary scale is felt to be inadequate for tourist guides trying to make a living. A person's disposable income plays an important role in purchasing decisions. It seems that for those earning R50 000 or less per annum, it might be difficult when deciding to buy a product, especially when financing is needed, for example, buying a vehicle (Kapa et al., 2022).

### ***Theme 2: Regular training and workshops***

The second most revealed challenge facing tourist guides is lack of ongoing training and workshops was mentioned thirty-seven times in open-ended questions. Training and education are critical to acquiring knowledge and skills such as interpretation and communication to perform a diversity of roles such as mediating between local people and visitors (Weiler & Black, 2014). Representative quotes from respondents emphasising this, are:

“(we need) better organised training, as there is no consistency in training, and (the) levels of training has big gaps, on-going training as a professional body (is required)” and “To have more workshops where tourist guides can come together and share their challenges.”

“(we need) workshops for guides to keep up to date with the latest techniques” and “Ongoing professional training” and “Yes, re-evaluate guides every 5 years and offer refreshing courses.”

The respondents suggested that they should be provided with training and workshops to update their guiding skills as well as knowledge related to the industry on a regular basis. It is clear from the results that the respondents’ training is not evaluated regularly. An assessment of the existing competencies of tourist guides and an assessment of learning needs should be made. Hurombo (2016) suggests that a systematic assessment of tourist guide training should be conducted to test post-training skill changes in terms of post-training behaviour and performance, confirms this.

### ***Theme 3: Policing unregistered and illegal tourist guides***

Unqualified and illegal tourist guides are perceived as a threat to the work of professional tourist guiding (Sandaruwani & Gnanapala, 2016). One of the main negative factors that may prevent the growth of tourism in South Africa includes poor services by insufficiently qualified and unskilled tourist guides. Unqualified tourist guides can have a negative influence on the experience of the tourist visiting South Africa by providing incorrect information. The respondents mentioned policing unregistered and illegal tourist guides sixteen times in open-ended questions and would like to see all unregistered tourist guides being prosecuted. Examples of the respondents’ feelings about this issue are:

“Policing of unqualified tourist guides in unregistered vehicles who take money from me (is needed).” “Tighten up legal controls and prosecute illegal guides and tour operators to protect the integrity of legally compliant guides and their careers.”

“All tourist guides need to be registered and all illegal tourist guide(s) need to be prosecuted.”

Prosecution of illegal guides is also supported by laws and acts of the constitution of South Africa according to Tourism Act No 3 of 2014 (South Africa, 2014). Therefore, the tourist guiding industry in South Africa is regulated and it is illegal to conduct any guided experience without the proper certificates or qualifications. However, implementation of legislation by public authorities seems to be lacking.



#### ***Theme 4: Training in foreign languages***

Kapa et al. (2022) reveal that 60% of tourist guides in South Africa do not speak a foreign language. The respondents mentioned training in foreign languages thirteen times in open-ended questions. The respondents suggested that more training courses should be offered to address the shortages of specific language guides in South Africa to limit the use of more foreign guides. Professional tourist guides guide not only local tourists of their nationality but also tourists coming from different countries across the globe. For this reason, they should be fluent in at least one foreign language. Prakash et al. (2011) added that tourist guide education should include foreign languages in the tourist guide curriculum. Representative comments from respondents illustrating this are as follows:

“Formalise the industry - limit (the use of a high number) heavy use of foreign guides due to (lack of local tourist guides who can guide in foreign language) language shortages in South Africa i.e., German, French and Chinese – teach South Africans the languages.”

“Learning a different foreign language (can help tourist guides to market themselves to their target market) if they want to, and market themselves to that demography. Language is the main barrier to learning and effective communication.”

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations [ASEAN] (2014) also points out that tourist guides should be able to speak many other languages in addition to their native or national language. According to the literature, there are several difficulties that influence the tourist guide industry in South Africa, Jordan, Indian and China, as well as in many other Middle Eastern nations like Egypt, Turkey, and Iran.

#### ***Theme 5: Regulation and legislation***

The respondents suggested that the guiding industry should be more regulated with new laws and acts including working hours, salary paid to the tourist guides and licence to guide. The respondents mentioned regulation and legislation five times in open-ended questions. The respondents proposed that the public authorities and industry stakeholders should meet to establish a minimum rate of remuneration for tourist guides and recommended that the renewal of the licence to guide should be after five years instead of three years. More regulations on the code of conduct for tourist guides were also mentioned. Comments from respondents illustrating this included the following:

“I would like to see more regulation regarding neatness, dress code and conduct of the whole body of the tourist guides.”

“Consistent across-the-board minimum wages for the different qualifications (e.g., Level 1 vs Level 2 and Level 3 vs SKS guide (Professional Special Knowledge and Skills “Dangerous Game” Guide). More regulation of working hours (required working maximum hours per week). Annual meetings between guides, academics, Department of Tourism, Environment, and tour operators.”

“Having to upgrade licence every five years instead of three years (licence to guide needs to be given a period of five years before renewal).”

“The working hours are too long, and a lack of sleep destroys enthusiasm. Working hours need to be enforced by law. The guides often work for 10 to 15 hours a day without even getting paid overtime.”

## Discussion

The results of this study significantly advance knowledge in the field of tourist guiding both domestically and abroad. In terms of the nature of the job of a tourist guide, the main research findings of this study are concurred with a lot of the literature. Nonetheless, there are unlicensed tourist guides operating in the South African guiding sector, which has been noted as a problem for the guiding industry by the licensed tourist guides. Most of the tourist guides claimed that they had concerns about their low income and unsociable working hours. The guiding industry is described in the literature as unattractive due to its seasonality, unsocial working conditions, and low remuneration. The study revealed the need for ongoing training and evaluation of guides. This would ensure that tourist guides remain up-to-date with information and that guiding skills remain sharp, which in turn, would result in an improved product for the visitor. The image of the tourist guide from the literature and findings is of someone who is badly paid, suffers from low status, works unsocial hours, has poor employment conditions, particularly in relation to being self-employed, and whose work is usually part-time and lacks a career path. All of these factors are portrayed as negatives and issues faced by the tourist guides.

## Conclusion

The issues and problems identified have unearthed some unpleasant aspects of the current state and practices of tourist guiding globally. Relating to the importance of tourist guiding in the tourism industry researchers suggest that tourist guides need to be monitored and regularly evaluated. South Africa had about 10 000-registered tourist guides in 2017 operating in the tourism guiding industry, but according to industry partners, not all working tourist guides are enrolled for guiding in South Africa because some are still operating illegally. The researchers suggest that professionals must play their role in advancing the guiding industry by making sure that no individual is permitted to operate as a tourist guide without a substantial permit. The South African NDT cannot control the issue of illegal tourist guides alone. However, the issue of illegal tourist guiding includes all other tourism stakeholders including travel agents and tour operators. Therefore, it is recommended that the NDT should have an appropriate framework in place to take action against unauthorised tourist guides who operate without a proper licence to guide. The researchers also propose that the NDT should have a legitimate procedure to stop the contracting of unlicensed or unregistered tourist guides by travel organisations and tour operators in arrange to cut their package costs. When the NDT authorities discover an illegal tourist guide, a portion of the offence committed by the tourist guide should be allowed to the travel agencies or tour operators who designated them to serve their clients without a substantial permit. Hence, the related travel agency or tour operator should also be charged legitimately.

It seems that working conditions and salaries were the main issues faced by tourist guides. The researchers suggest that a reasonable salary system should be introduced to address the issue of salary paid to tourist guides. The establishment of a basic salary for tourist guides would help to enhance the service quality of tourist guides and develop a remuneration system that provides financial stability and retirement pension rights. The researchers recommend a foreign language module in the guiding training because the results revealed that the majority of the tourist guides in South Africa do not speak a foreign language. This will reduce the extensive use of foreign tourist guides. Based on the perspective of tourist guides' it is clear

that the tourist-guiding profession in South Africa has issues that need to be addressed and resolved by all tourism stakeholders including the guides association.

This study may assist in enhancing the discourse around the development and amendment of regulatory frameworks governing the guiding industry. Furthermore, it contributes to career awareness to assist students studying guiding and those who intended to pursue guiding as a profession, to be aware of challenges facing the tourist-guiding profession in South Africa and globally so that they can be prepared to deal with challenges related to the guiding profession. Lastly, provide a basis to assist tourist guide training institutions to develop a curriculum that addresses some of the challenges that face tourist guides such as foreign language and first aid among others and help higher education institutes to develop and upgrade their curriculum to match the industry requirements. Future research should concentrate on other geographic areas, such as the entire Southern African region, since the study's primary focus was on South Africa. In order to ensure uniformity across the region, such a study would investigate how tourist guiding may also be further improved at that level, for instance by assessing the viability of establishing a shared Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) tourist guide academy.

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