

ABSTRACT

In the existing South African literature on tourism issues little, exploration have been done on the question of employment conditions in the tourism industry. This neglect is remarkable in light of the current emphasis given by national government to the promotion of “decent work” in tourism. This study seeks to contribute to the limited local and international scholarship on employment conditions in the tourism industry. The specific focus of attention is on the working conditions of tourist guides in South Africa.

The main findings of the study are that the majority of tourist guides work as independent contractors (if contracts are used at all), and that they work very long hours with low remuneration and very little legal protection because they do not have permanent positions. The research findings of this investigation point to a number of policy recommendations which, if accepted and implemented, might assist in improving the work conditions of tourist guides and thereby contribute towards creating decent work in this section of the South African tourism industry.