

TOUR GUIDES: ARE THEY TOURISM PROMOTERS AND DEVELOPERS?

CASE STUDY OF MALAWI

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ABSTRACT

The rapid rise in need for travel in tourism industry over the past few years has increased the demand for intermediaries to link up travellers with experience. The study identifies and evaluates roles of tour guides in creating a good destination image, establishes the need for tour guides' training to aid in tourism promotion and development, investigates challenges faced by tour guides and identifies possible solutions to challenges tour guides face in Malawi. Semi-structured open ended questions were employed to bring together data for the study by interviewing both tour guides and tourists who involve tour guides in Malawi. The study revealed that the roles such as leadership, interpretation and education, information giving, mediation and representation were critical in building a destination image. It was again established that tour guides lacked professional training. The study also revealed that challenges such as inadequate training, professionalism, facilitating tourist experience, industry related and other challenges were faced by tour guides. Hence, it was recommended that through establishment of a nationwide tour guides' association, introduction of basic formal training and registration and certification of tour guides could contain such challenges.

KEYWORDS: Tour Guides, Tour Guiding, Destination Image, Tourism and Malawi