

## ***Abstract***

<b>Author:</b> Franziska Thurner	<b>Supervisor:</b> Assoz. Prof. Mmag. Raphaela Stalder, PhD
<b>Title:</b> <b>The Power of Emotions on Social Media: Understanding the Influence on Tourists' Decision-Making During the Pre-Trip Phase</b>	

**Abstract:**

Emotions serve as a fundamental component of marketing endeavours across industries, and thus they also play a significant role tourism nowadays. This thesis aims to explain how potential travellers can be nudged to visit a destination by experiencing emotions on social media. Specifically, emphasis is placed on the pre-trip phase, representing the pivotal stage preceding the actual decision-making process in tourism, where travellers predominantly use social media as an inspiration-finding tool. To gain comprehensive insights into this research domain, an exploratory quantitative approach was adopted. A total of 387 participants, who were divided into two distinct test groups to observe and control the results among them, responded to an online questionnaire. The results of the study indicate that emotions exert no direct influence on the booking behaviour of prospective tourists. However, a significant relationship was observed between emotional attachment and the intention to visit a destination. Notably, the results of the empirical study showed that emotions from the category "Joy", "Trust" and "Anticipation" have a positive impact on the emotional attachment to the destination. These findings provide valuable insights into an unexplored realm of research, contributing to the existing knowledge in the field. Finally, the implications of this study extend beyond academia, offering practical implications and recommendations for tourism marketing managers, guiding them in effectively fostering emotional connections between potential visitors and the destination through emotional communication on social media platforms.

Keywords: Emotions, Social Media, Emotional Marketing, Tourist Decision Making Process, Pre-Trip Phase

**submitted:09/07/2023**