

## ***Abstract***

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<b>Title:</b> The employment of influencer marketing among Tirolean destination management organizations (DMOs)	

### **Abstract:**

Stemming from the increasing significance and popularity of social media, influencer marketing emerged and nowadays classifies as one of the most prominent marketing techniques in the online world. This applies also for the tourism industry, where marketers can make use of social media influencers to promote their brands, products or services in a more authentic and credible way compared to advertisements that they carry out on their own. Nevertheless, despite its clear prominence, the academic research on the topic has been rather scarce. Bearing this in mind, the purpose of this study is to illustrate the current state of influencer marketing in the tourism industry from a DMO's point of view and, consequently, provide generalizable data on the phenomenon. The research adopts a quantitative method in terms of an online self-completion questionnaire and targets the total population of Tirolean DMOs. The survey is designed with the aim of testing hypotheses that are generated by considering the aim of the study and available academic research on the topic.

The descriptive analysis of the collected data shows that the extent of usage regarding influencer marketing is among Tirolean DMOs very high and, furthermore, the organizations possess good knowledge of the phenomenon. Building upon this, in the process of selecting suitable social media influencers for a potential collaboration, qualitative metrics are considered by the DMOs as more important than quantitative ones. Moreover, apart from advantages of employing influencer marketing over traditional social media marketing, various challenges and problems related to the phenomenon are also identified by the organizations. Nevertheless, regarding the perception of the future of the influencer marketing trend, a majority of respondents consider it in the upcoming years to stay as important as it is nowadays, which thereby portrays the near future of the phenomenon as very promising.

Building upon this, by combining the presented study results with other academic literature, numerous recommendations for an effective and efficient employment of influencer marketing in the tourism sector are presented, consequently allowing DMOs to make fact-based and strategic decisions while developing their marketing plans and working with social media influencers.

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