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# ACADEMIC WEEKLY DIGEST

YOUR WEEKLY DIGEST OF KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

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## WHEN THE FUTURE IS NOW

When people make travel decisions, they mentally simulate future events, visualise themselves in these events, and then make predictions about how they would feel. Travel decisions are often based on affective forecasting but the nature and functioning of this process is largely unknown. This research done by [Dr Marion Karl](#) and colleagues investigates how future thinking and affective forecasting influences accommodation choices.

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## WHEN THE FUTURE IS NOW: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY ON THE ROLE OF FUTURE THINKING AND AFFECTIVE FORECASTING IN ACCOMMODATION DECISION-MAKING

**Dr Marion Karl**

Hotels' communication to potential guests often focuses on providing impressions on how a visit to the respective hotel will be. This is done by creating potentially immersive content like appealing pictures of rooms, as well as teasers on the experience that guests can expect when visiting. This content allows the potential guest to "pre-experience" a visit at the respective hotel. Indeed, as tourism products are intangible and unavailable for testing, pre-experiencing is at the heart of the service and tourism industry. However, the nature and functioning of such a process is largely unknown, thus leaving the literature with a "black box"—a lack of visibility of how tourists mentally pre-experience their hotel stays and how this impacts their decision-making.

By conceptually introducing affective forecasting in hospitality research and empirically validating how engaging in future thinking to trigger affective forecasting impacts decision-making in the hospitality context, this study sets out to enhance the current understanding of accommodation decision-making. Executing an experimental design, this study shows that actively engaging in episodic future thinking to trigger affective forecasting influences accommodation choices. This effect is mediated by hotel trust and risk perception, demonstrating that affective forecasting is an effective way for regaining tourists' trust and reducing their perceived risk in high-risk travel situations.

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**Predicting future feelings, an ability unique to humans, helps people make decisions about the future, including decisions about where to travel or what accommodation to book**

Karl, M., Kock, F., Bauer, A., Ritchie, B. W., & Assaf, A. G. (2023). When the Future is Now: An Experimental Study on the Role of Future Thinking and Affective Forecasting in Accommodation Decision-Making. *Journal of Travel Research*

Link: [bit.ly/3LeT7bR](https://bit.ly/3LeT7bR)