

Country branding in post-truth Era: A configural narrative

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of online disinformation and hate speech on a country's image, considering its implications for the destination's image and tourism prospects. Utilizing the theoretical lens of soft power, the study performs a macro-level empirical analysis across 56 countries on the influence of a diverse array of online disinformation variants and hate speech on the nation's brand image. The results from the configurational analysis demonstrate the increasing dominance of state and partisan factions-led disinformation, which collectively impact the nation's image. The findings also shed light on the diminishing role of foreign disinformation, while the ancillary function of online hate emphasizes the significance of disinformation amplified hate speech, which has become increasingly commonplace in global political discourse, with such disinformation campaigns using hate speech as an amplification strategy. The study contributes to contemporary tourism research, which underscores the vitality of the country's image to tourism and offers recommendations to destination marketing organizations towards intensifying efforts to preserve the country's image.

Keywords: Nation branding, Disinformation, Qualitative comparative analysis, Hate speech and Social media

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