

Public Abstract

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Graduation Term:SP 2016

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Title:THE IMPACT OF THE 2015 REFUGEE CRISIS ON THE
INTERNATIONAL PLACE BRAND OF HUNGARY

This quantitative study examines how the 2015 European refugee crisis events affected the international place brand of Hungary on Twitter in both short and long terms. The study supports the application of quantitative methods and dictionary-based sentiment analysis of tweets to the discipline of place branding. There is a significant increase in the amount of negative sentiment in tweets during the crisis (July-October, 2015) due to a high number of tweets about the refugee crisis. However, this effect has not persisted after November 2015. To conduct the sentiment analysis, we apply the lexicon-based polarity dictionary SentiStrength; to divide tweets into specific topics, we use Latent Dirichlet Allocation (Blei et al, 2003). The tweets that are likely published by media organizations are excluded from the analysis. There is no significant increase in the amount of negative sentiment in tweets after the crisis, which suggests no persistent effect of the crisis on the place brand of Hungary in the long term because that negative sentiment about the crisis comes only from the tweets about the refugee crisis. The contribution of this study is the establishment of a research framework for the social media analysis of place brands in a crisis as well as in forming a solid basis for the application of this framework to studying other place brands in a crisis.