

TOURISM AND THE PHENOMENON OF FAKE NEWS

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***Abstract:** Misinformation represents any kind of intervention over the basic principles of a communication process, intervention that seeks to create a false reality that is so convincing that the adversary of it can consider it true. Everyday people become actors, martyrs, and many times volunteers of this phenomenon, as they are misinformed and they spread the misinformation themselves after. Over time the transmitting and printing of news has permitted the broadcasting on a large scale of ideas and services on the internet and social media that offers a convenient and cheap means to spread news globally. Although determining the exact influence of fake news is not possible it is important to verify first if the news real or false.*

***Keywords:** Fake news, misinformation, tourism, communication*

INTRODUCTION

New technology has radically changed the industry of tourism. [12] Over last few years, applications and platforms that offer people services in this domain have become more complex and advanced. [10] These platforms also integrate more and more electronic solutions, from payment systems to car reservation and rental systems, to buying tickets that offer access to museums or various festivals or that allow the reservation of meals in restaurants. [2]

There are a large number of articles and studies on this issue, the emphasis being unfortunately on issues related to the political or strategic spectrum and less on the economic impact and impact on a company's reputation. [5]

Another factor that influences the tourism industry is the content generated by users and posted on social networks. [2] Photos, videos, or comments posted by these users can influence their friends when they decide whether or not to go to a certain place. [1]

In addition to the high speed of online news transmission and the low barrier in creating it, several other factors have contributed to the rapid spread of fake news today:

- social platforms tend to promote controversial articles often ignoring the veracity of the content but at the same time making sure that the fake news fits perfectly with the trustworthy content [13]

- the existence of fake accounts managed by people on social media platforms allows malicious people to hide when they distort truths. [8]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This empirical research is based on the observation of reality and has as main purpose the creation of a complete and real picture of the current situation in which a simple false news spread in tourism can affect not only economic agents operating in that area but also the entire economy. [4]

In order to run this empirical research, we applied a random questionnaire to a number of 100 people. I chose to use the questionnaire because it provides relevant information and is the best option for the research undertaken.

Through the questions asked I wanted to illustrate:

- how easily false news can spread in tourism;
- how difficult it is to differentiate it from real news;
- how much harm it can cause locally and nationally.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The present study begins with the presentation of the sample used, we will take into consideration the number of respondents, sex, age and background. In the study we can see that 50% of the correspondents are male and 50% female.

The sex of the respondents has had a very visible influence on the shaping of a notable number of affirmative answers correlated with the items assimilated to the questionnaire used. Male respondents had a much shorter response time in contrast to female respondents who analyzed the items presented in more detail.

Table 1

Respondents gender

	Masculine	Feminin
Gender	50%	50%

Source: My own research using statistical data

As concerns the background from which the data came, we can see that 69% are from urban areas, while 31% are respondents from rural areas. We must point out that the majority of the respondents from the rural areas have generated a higher number of affirmative answers concerning the problem presented.

As concerns the distributions of respondents based on level on education, we can an even number of respondents, with most of them having an average level of education. The level of education has influenced strongly how much they knew about the questions asked.

Table 2. The background

	Urban	Rural
Background	69%	31%

Source: My own research using statistical data

Table 3. The level of education

	Primary	Secondary	Faculty
Education level	12%	64%	24%

Source: My own research using statistical data

One problem that concerns us all now is that many people don't see fake news in tourism as being that much of a concern, as shown in the first figure.

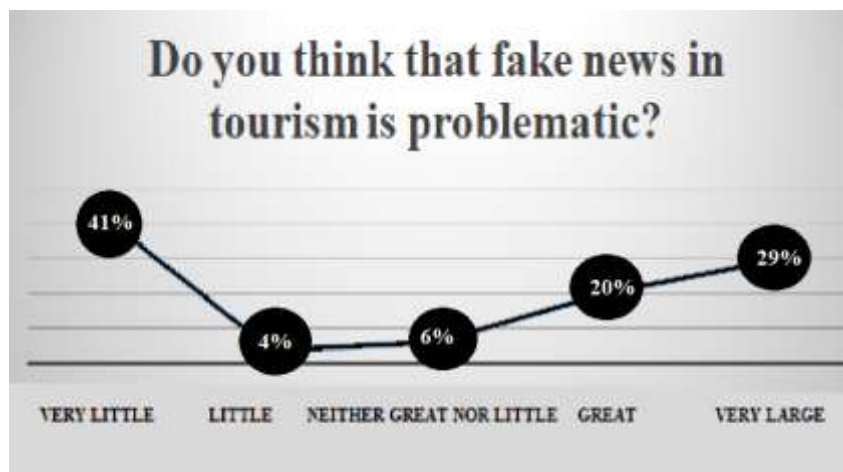


Figure 1. The problem of fake news in tourism

Source: My own research using statistical data

Also, people think that generally fake news is not broadcast for bad intentions but at the same time they are aware that they cannot tell between fake and real news, this being due to the fact that the way in which these are presented is to win trust.

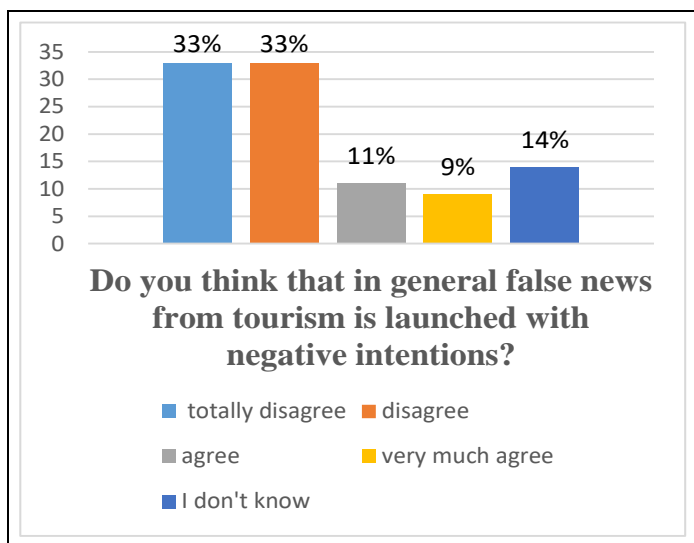


Figure 2. The intentions of fake news broadcasts
Source: My own research using statistical data

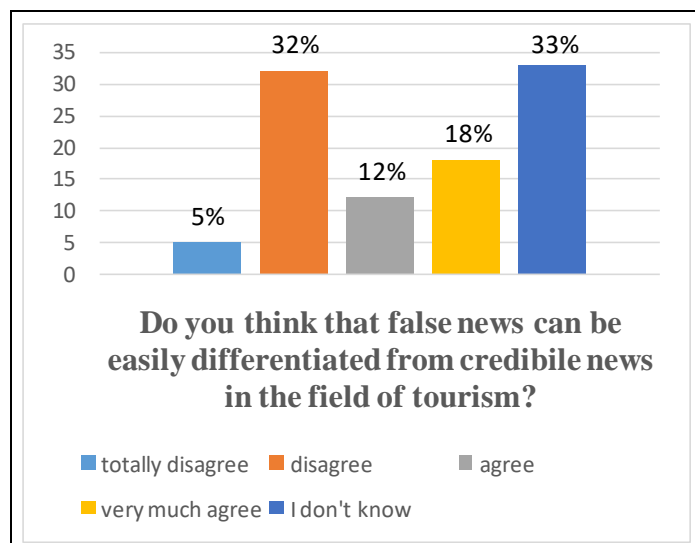


Figure. 3 The difference between fake news
Source: My own research using statistical data

At the question: Do you believe fake news will have a profound effect on the dynamics of tourism in Romania in the following years? 51% of the people asked consider that the impact of fake news will be significant in the following years.

Table 4

Effects of fake news over tourism

	Very little	Little	Neither great nor little	Great	Very large
Do you consider that fake news will have a profound effect on tourism in Romania in the coming years?	11%	9%	26%	3%	51%

Source: My own research using statistical data

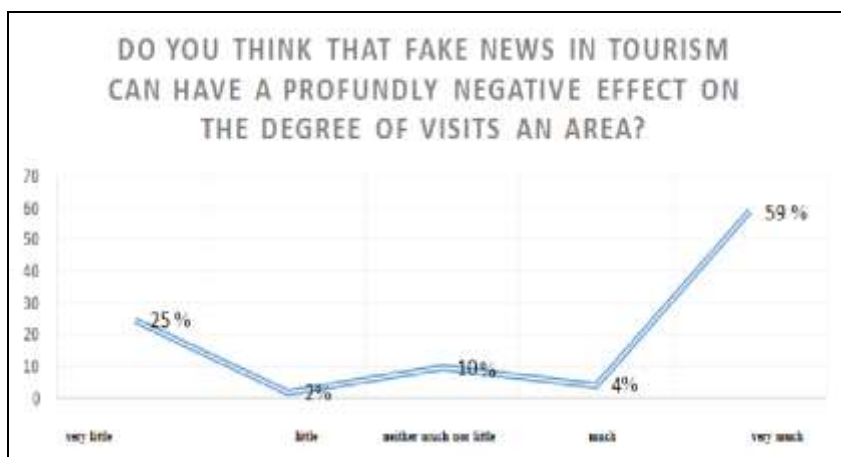


Figure 4. The effect of fake news on visits to an area
Source: my own research using statistical data

Regarding the question: Do you think that fake news in tourism can have a profoundly negative effect on the degree of visits to an area? Most respondents, namely 59%, chose the option very much.

CONCLUSIONS

The internet is the place where fake news spreads the easiest. Any person can hide behind a fake account on a social network and spread news that mislead the reader.

Tourism can also suffer because of misinformation produced and any person can fall in the trap of such fake news.

In conclusion we can affirm that people when they find out about a news must research from verified sources about it. Not everything we read is real, many times the truth is blurred making us have false perceptions.

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