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Brand and Country Image: A Case Study in Romanian Tourism

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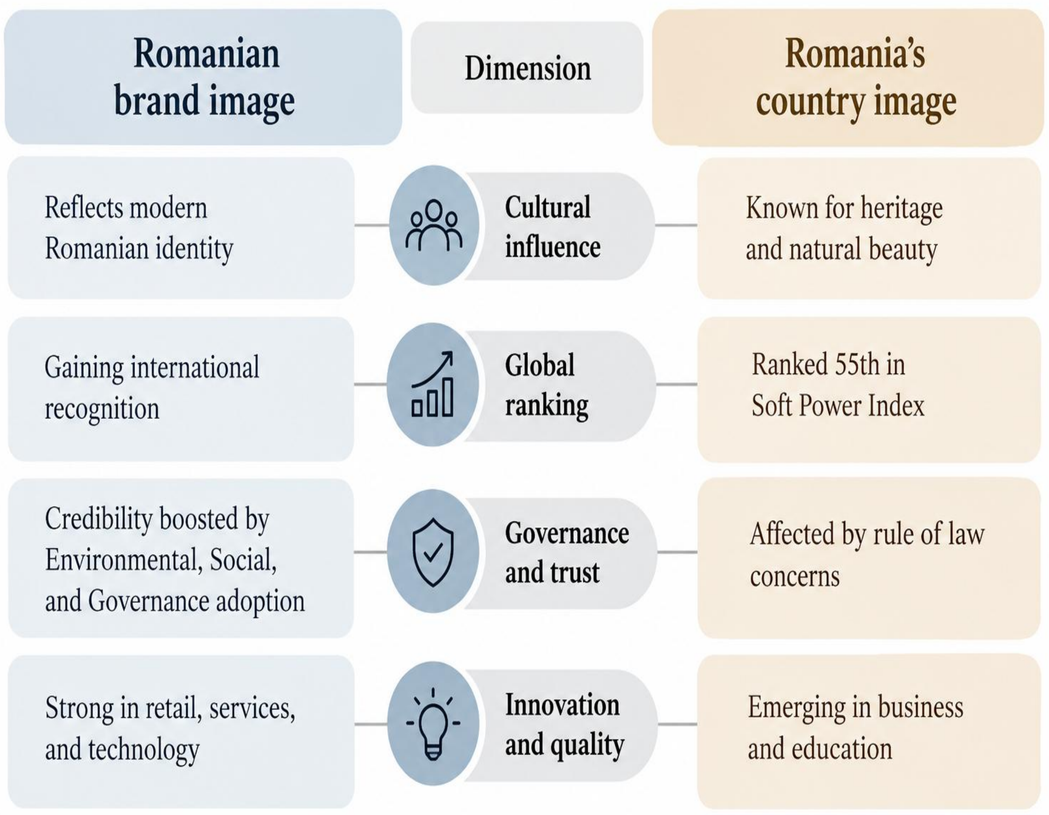
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***Abstract**: This paper investigates Romanian brand images and Romania’s country image in tourism from the perspective of their global perception, analysing their key components, their relevance, their features, and their visual identity. They also compare Romanian brand image with Romania’s country image and reach the conclusions that Romanian commercial brands are leading due to its dynamic and globally competitive face of the nation, while Romania’s country image is steadily improving, and that Romanian businesses might reshape international perceptions faster than institutional or political reforms.*

• Introduction

Brand Image and Country Image are multidimensional constructs shaped by public perceptions, cognitive associations, and emotional responses. Brand Image encompasses visual identity, personality, user experience, and reputation, influencing consumer trust, loyalty, differentiation, and premium pricing. Country Image reflects a nation’s reputation through cognitive, affective, and symbolic dimensions. Together, these constructs influence market competitiveness, international trade, foreign direct investment, diplomacy, and tourism.

Figure 1. Romanian brand image vs. Romania’s country image



• Materials and methods

The material used by the authors of this paper consists in articles and books on Romanian brand images and on Romania’s country image. The bibliographical method has been chosen as research method.

• Research results

This study synthesizes secondary data and national reports (2014–2025) to compare global perceptions of Romanian brand image and country image.

- Romanian Brand Image: Expanding across healthcare, IT, automotive, and services, supported by private-sector entrepreneurship and ESG adoption. Romania ranks 55th globally in the Soft Power Index, while 32% of eligible local commercial brands have earned Superbrand status. Tourism branding combines modern city identity with cultural heritage and natural landscapes.
- Romania’s Country Image: Supported by strategic EU/NATO positioning, digital innovation, and cultural heritage, but constrained by governance and judicial transparency challenges, reflected in its 44th position in the Rule of Law ranking.
- Comparative Synthesis: Figure 1 Illustrates that market-driven brands are advancing faster than institutional reforms, contributing to the reshaping of Romania’s global reputation.

• Conclusions

Romania’s national perception is increasingly shaped by a dynamic business sector, influencing its international image faster than institutional reforms. Sector diversification, a thriving technology ecosystem, and competitive Romanian brands strengthen trade, tourism, and foreign investment. Combined with its strategic EU/NATO position, these factors reinforce Romania’s evolving country image and its role as an emerging economic player in Eastern Europe.