

Citizens' deprecating behaviour: dragging down the nation branding efforts in developing countries—opinions of selected stakeholders in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Developing countries face unique challenges in building and managing their national image due to various socio-political and economic factors. Thus, this study explored the extent of citizens' deprecating behaviour and factors that breed citizens' deprecating behaviour focusing on Zimbabwe as a case study. An interpretivist philosophy based on the exploratory approach was employed where a total of 20 personal interviews were conducted with purposively selected government officials, business leaders/marketing experts, sports personalities, media experts, local university students, and international diplomats. Findings indicated a high prevalence of citizens' deprecating behaviour while national injustices, economic mismanagement, bad governance, foreign government interference, and human rights abuse top the list of factors breeding citizens' deprecating behaviour. The study recommends the government and the nation branding stakeholders to adopt an inclusive approach in implementing strategies that result in the effective development of a compelling nation brand while promoting social cohesion and equity among the citizens.

Keywords: Deprecation, Self-deprecation, Nation branding, Zimbabwe