

THE SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PROMOTIONAL JOURNALISM – A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITH OTHER RELATED CONCEPTS

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Abstract

Purpose statement – This paper’s purpose is to contribute to the development of a specific know-how through the establishment of a theoretical framework of reference. This can facilitate the research steps which follow the identification; analysis; and interpretation of a new marketing instrument – promotional journalism. The objectives, of this study, relate not only to the establishment of theoretical but, also, to the practical characteristics, of promotional journalism. These are based on a comparative analysis with other related concepts and, also, on a qualitative analysis of the contents of the specific materials.

Design – The research problem imposes a methodological interdisciplinary approach; this enables the identification; systematization; analysis; and theoretical interpretation of the fundamental concepts, theories and ideas, from the specialized literature, to be orientated towards studies and articles from separate fields.

From the perspective of the research objectives and this interdisciplinary study of specialized literature, there was added a qualitative analysis of the content of the materials specific to promotional journalism found between 2002 and 2006, in the fashion magazine, Elle Romania.

Overview - The specialized literature presented key-concepts; different terminologies; and meanings apparently for the same studied “reality”. This made the achievement of the process of conceptual delimitations even more difficult to the extent that promotional journalism was situated at the intersection of various sciences and the acknowledgment, of its related terms, were either similar or stated vaguely.

Originality – This paper’s originality stems from the interdisciplinary perspective to the approach to the problematical aspect and the analysis and interpretive complexity of the research results. These might prove useful both to the accomplishment of the studies in the field and for the practitioners and beneficiaries of this new marketing instrument.

Keywords: *promotional journalism, advertorial, advertisements, hybrid messages, advertising*

Introduction

There is a concern to define and analyse promotional journalism – a practice still unknown and unassumed by a particular area - especially since there are countries (Slovenia; Russia; The United Kingdom) where this practice is forbidden. It is specific to marketing research even if it could present, in equal measure, a specialist interest in other lines of work (public relations; journalism communication science; psychology; and sociology).

Therefore, scientific research, as assumed by this thesis proposes a multidisciplinary approach which links the aforementioned fields. However, although used as a new instrument in achieving marketing goals, it remains a tributary to the interests of the actors (public relations and marketing professionals; journalists; representatives of public organizations, and promoted individuals) involved directly in achieving them..

The choice, of such an approach, is justified in relation to the goals; objectives; and research issues, and given that, theoretically, the complexity, of studying this concept, remains groundless.

This study’s purpose is to contribute, through theoretical and empirical approaches, a specific research strategy established to develop a specific expertise in facilitating the identification; description; and analysis of promotional journalism.

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In this thesis, the research objective is to identify the theoretical and practical aspect of promotional journalism. Compared to other related concepts (e.g. advertorials; masked advertising; hybrid message), this is based on both a theoretical analysis and a qualitative analysis, of specific content from 2002 to 2006, in the fashion magazine, *Elle Romania*.

This thesis' originality lies in its interdisciplinary approach towards the problem and the complexity of the analysis and interpretation of research results. These may prove useful both for the studies in the field and practitioners and beneficiaries of this new marketing tool.

Research

Context of research

After studying the specialist literature, there was identified a small number of studies which related strictly to the issue. However, in considering the strong interdisciplinary concept and the multiple implications of specific practice, it is considered necessary to widen the research on the topic in order to link the following: marketing; public relations; mass-media; linguistics; semiotics; and communication science.

Also, the analysed studies presented and proposed key concepts; terminologies; and different meanings, apparently for the same studied "reality". This makes it difficult to achieve conceptual boundaries, especially since promotional journalism lies at the intersection of several sciences and the acceptance, of related terms, are either similar or formulated vaguely.

Therefore, the analysed studies revealed two directions of interest for the assumed research issues. These were: (i) attempting to build a conceptual reference framework for promotional journalism (using various meanings for the name), with reference to related concepts and establishing conceptual boundaries in relation to them; and (ii) proposing theoretical models in identifying and analysing materials specific to promotional journalism.

The people, who conducted these studies, were, in most cases, marketing and public relations specialists. They reflected their own interests in the research which were: (i) the recognition of hybrid messages as commercial texts and (ii) the identification and assessment of the effects, of hybrid messages, on readers.

In relation to the research issues, the most relevant studies, in the field, were those carried out by: (i) Tina Tomazic and Jelena Jurisic¹; (ii) Karmen Erjavec²; and (iii) Karmen Erjavec and Melita Poler Kovacic³.

In the context of the slovenian press, the purpose, of the cited research, is to define and analyse the debut of masked advertising; hybridid messages; and promotional journalism (depending on the terminology used by each study). In addition, it is to demonstrate the existence of this practice; to identify its forms of manifestation; the actors involved; and the means of production through presenting their theoretical influence on the interpretation of text.

The findings K. Erjavec⁴'s study and those, made by researchers (Stular⁵; Tomazic și Jurisic⁶), highlighted partially the apparition and manifestation of these new journalistic practices. These were considered to be an instrument, used by organizations; institutions; and public individuals in reaching marketing and public relations objectives. However, it was, also, had an

¹ Tina Tomazic and Jelena Jurisic, "Covert Advertising in the Context of Media Ethics on the Example of Slovenian Press", *Medijski Dijalozi* 4 (f.a.): 67-82.

² Karmen Erjavec, "Beyond Advertising and Journalism: Hybrid Promotional News Discourse", *Discourse & Society*, 15 (5) (2004): 553-578.

³ Karmen Erjavec and Melita Poler Kovacic, "Relations with the media: Who are the main actors in an advertorial production process in Slovenia?", *Journalism*, 11 (1) (2010): 91-109.

⁴ Karmen Erjavec, *art. cit.*, (2004): 553-578.

⁵ Stular Katarina, "Hybrid messages in magazines: A case study of the lifestyle magazine *Obrazi*", *Medij. Istraž.*, 15 (1) (2009): 61-77.

⁶ Tina Tomazic and Jelena Jurisic, *art. cit.*, (f.a.): 67-82.

important role as an illegal and unethical practice, in using specific promotional texts to influence readers of these exposed publications.

Research Methodology

Therefore, in order to reach the assumed research's objective in creating a theoretical framework to allow the identification; analysis; and interpretation of promotional journalism, there was need for a theoretical analysis for comparison with related concepts or to make reference to the same studied reality (e.g. advertorials; masked advertising; hybrid messages).

Also, in order to identify the theoretical characteristics of promotional journalism there was a qualitative analysis of the fashion magazine, *Elle Romania's* specific content between 2002 and 2006.

Boundaries and Conceptual Clarifications – Promotional Journalism and Related Concepts

In creating the promotional journalism's conceptual framework and taking into account, also, the comparative analyses of the studies, the following concepts were considered to be relevant on a theoretical level. These are: (i) advertorial; (ii) advertisements; (iii) hidden advertising; (iv) communication journalism; (v) hybrid unlabeled message; (vi) advertising; and (vii) stories.

Consequently, this subsection presents the above assessments in order of listing and their theoretical and practical characteristics in relation to particular material as related to promotional journalism.

Advertorial

The most common confusion, which allows these practices to be tolerated, is between an advertorial and materials specific to promotional journalism caused by existent similitudes between the two concepts.

In order to clarify the existing differences amongst these and to highlight each concept's specific characteristics, the following clarifications are made:

- advertorials are defined in speciality literature as "forms of paid commercial messages which simulate the editorial content of a publication in structural terms, design, visual content verbal and/or the context in which it appears", whilst promotional journalism's specific materials (by inserting advertorial/promotional messages) do not simulate but represent editorial content;

- the objectives, used in the case of advertorials, are different depending on the chosen media channel and its type. Each channel influences directly a distinct category of the specific audience⁷, whilst promotional journalism's objectives, aimed at specific objectives of marketing and public relations. are not only different in the context of the chosen media channel but, also, take into consideration other factors (e.g. target audience; message; context; subject);

- from a legal point of view, any content, paid or ordered, to be labeled as such – by a specific mention (e.g. advertorial; promo; infommercial) so that it cannot be recognized easily by the mass-media audience⁸. Consequently, by comparison with the advertorial – for which there are regulations regarding the obligations of its publication labeling requirement – materials specific to promotional journalism are not regulated from a legal point of view and, not being advertorials, are not subjected to the labelling rules.

Therefore, in relation to advertorials (according to the qualitative research based upon the fashion magazine *Elle Romania* from 2002 to 2006), materials, specific to promotional journalism, present the following characteristics:

⁷ Clyde Brown and Herbert Waltzer, "Organized interest advertorials: Responding to the 9/11 terrorist attack and other national traumas", *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 9 (2004): 25.

⁸ Tina Tomazic and Jelena Jurisic, *art. cit.*, (f.a.): 67-82.

- it represents editorial content (non-simulated) in which advertising or promotional messages are inserted;
- in most cases, they bear the signature of a journalist who is either the author or has manipulated the advertisement or promotion received from the representatives of the organizations; institutions; or public individuals and, without departing from the desired interest expressed by those that paid or created them, has used them to create materials specific to promotional journalism;
- sponsors or beneficiaries are not presented explicitly; however, sometimes, they can be identified by the nature of the article (e.g. by reference to a single industry or activity sector; brand; product or person);
- they are labeled by specific brands (referring to labels imposed by law on the publication: advertorial; promo; info-commercial etc.);
- they are assigned different sections of the publications depending on the subject or journalistic genre used in writing (if applicable); apparently, this justifies the title of editorial content;
- they contain the promotion's distinguishing marks (e.g. textual devices: title; the lead; the subject; sources; vocabulary; and so on) which can be found in the article's content;
- they give the message credibility; objectivity; and impartiality by transferring to an, apparently uninvolved, third party (e.g. media channel; journalist - as an author to the article cited sources), , with expertise (specialist in the field to which the article refers); known as such (by the target audience or other specialists, even by means of the function attributed by the publication); or individuals who are famous (e.g. stars; public individuals; brand ambassadors; and brand representatives etc.).

Advertisements

Advertisements represent a form of promotion in terms of language and style used. Promotional journalism (especially news of this type) adopts this style and integrates specific elements in order to stimulate the audience's drive to consume, use or benefit certain products or services.

In speciality literature⁹, through the argumentation structure used to influence consumers buying decisions, they represent a related concept to the one of promotional journalism.

Although, in the case of promotional journalism, this structure is more complex and less noticeable, any advertising approach should be regarded as an argument directed to a precise target, with the purpose of making it act in a certain way.

In this regard, the following characteristics were considered commonplace to promotional journalism materials: (i) the argumentative structure used generic models of argumentation; (ii) rhetorical language; (iii) the dialogic implicit character; (iv) inter-textuality; (v) complex subtlety of gender; and (vi) the arguments offered to the potential client.

However, in order to avoid confusion in understanding the terms, researchers Tomazic and Jurisic¹⁰ clarified the significant terms attributed to the concept of advertisement and which, most of the time is inserted in materials specific to promotional journalism. These were:

- positive remarks and praise (in the case of promotional journalism, this results in an exclusively positive review) regarding a certain product; service; or company;
- an article joined to an advertisement or a themed commercial (or, in some cases, specific to promotional journalism and associated to the person being interviewed; in case, he/she is a representative of a brand or organization);
- messages which promote a certain product; service; or company, published under the form of a journalistic article, without mentioning their advertising or promotion;
- mentioning, through celebrities, certain products; services; and brands and linked to them;

⁹ Christina Slade, "Reasons to buy: The logic of advertisements", *Argumentation* 16 (2004): 157-178.

¹⁰ Tina Tomazic and Jelena Jurisic, art. cit., (f.a.): 67-82.

- under the title of recommendation, announcements (editorials) or journalistic texts (usually, accompanied by photos, with the purpose of boosting sales (in the case of promotional journalism, this practice can take the shape of product placement).

Hidden advertisements and hidden publicity

Regarding the particularities which define and contribute towards identifying “hidden” advertisements, these are assessed as follows¹¹:

- inserting, in the journalistic one, a part of advertising (or promoting) text with the purpose of either creating or maintaining a real or legal person’s interest or determining the sale of a product or service;

- focusing the reader’s attention on a specific brand or producer and on its important qualities so as to create and maintain interest in the offered products or services;

- the text is not based on news value (artificial character of the story);

- positive and emotional arguments in favour of the product; service; organisation; or promoted person; and enthusiastic, artificial and exaggerated means of expression in order to present it in a favourable light;

- the advertisement is a definite sale suggestion („instructions of sale” are presented; brand language);

- the placement of a product in order to sell it; making it have a different character in comparison to similar products:

- particular mentions relating to the sale or purchase of a product or service quickly (its presentation and specific characteristics or attributes); texts contain usually information regarding time¹²; meaning a specified window of a promotional offer’s availability; and the duration of an event etc.

In relation to the particular elements of hidden advertising presented above, promotional journalism endorses them theoretically in their entirety and partially, in terms of specific practice. This states that the term "ad" could be considered to be a kind of promotional journalism. However, it does not cover fully its complexity and variety of specific genres.

The typology, proposed in specialized literature for hidden advertisements and showing the features mentioned below, can be considered to be an example of promotional journalism’s specific practices (as shown in research conducted on publications *Elle Romania* during the period from 2002 to 2006):

- items paid by an organization, which presents products and services, in order to improve their reputation;

- an article on a specific topic to attract attention to the advertised products referred to therein;

- text, written in journalistic style by a PR specialist, which appears unchanged in the media;

- an article containing only information favourable to a company because, otherwise, it would abandon purchasing print space in the publication (obligation or blackmail).

Also, according to the literature¹³, to better underline the hidden advertisements and, therefore, to facilitate the identification of materials specific to promotional journalism, it is considered to be useful to present the following specific elements which cancel their specific character:

- in a text, criticism of a product; service; or company in a text which triggers a critical point of view with the reader thereof (e.g. those tasks which are offered usually to experts or any other independent sources, based on assumption that they do not get any benefit from praising a product);

- presentation, in an article, of a particular product or service without mentioning explicitly its commercial characteristics (e.g. price; location of sale) to people who could benefit from its use;

¹¹ *Ibidem.*

¹² *Ibidem.*

¹³ Tina Tomazic and Jelena Jurisic, *art. cit.*, (f.a.): 67-82.

- informative advertisements which, although they form a journalistic text, are not signed by a journalist and, in fact, are advertisements of products or services; this is a fact confirmed by marking them explicitly (e.g. "promotional message" or "commercial")¹⁴.

Communication Journalism

Researcher, Jean Charron¹⁵, distinguished the following main characteristics of communication journalism:

- the involvement of journalistic bias and use of connotative language and tropes abound along with the axiological adjectives and phrases specific to the expressive function of communication;

- monitoring contact and communion with the audience and the special features of the communication's factual function;

- the manifestation of a report "inter-subjectivity" between journalist and audience; this is visible through mutual design of the two parties (e.g. "I" - "we" and "you" - "I");

- practicing "proximity" journalism by being playful, imaginative, using puns, reflections and impressionistic judgments.

These features of communication journalism (a misnomer for the very meaning of the concept of journalism) can be considered to be common and specific materials to promotional journalism.

Critics of communication journalism, through assessments made against it¹⁶, complete all the specific characteristics and highlight further highlighting its particular characteristics as follows:

- very careful in ensuring "comfortable reception by the public";

- aesthetic journalism, giving an appealing shape to messages in a competitive environment;

- a representation of society as a "mosaic of target audiences and lifestyles";

- a type of journalism which reduces the individual to a consumer.

In relation to these critical acclaims, the second characteristic is most relevant to promotional journalism, in terms of form and strategies practiced and the approach to the target audience. The latter may be the expression of specific features but in a more complex manner as imposed by the studied reality itself.

Hybrid Unlabeled Messages

Hybrid unlabeled messages can be considered to be the first theoretical attempt to identify and define specific elements of promotional journalism. These exceed the already well-established concepts, like hidden advertising and advertorials, with which promotional journalism is confused.

The main feature, of this type of message, is the specific structure of a mixed type, combining editorial content with publicity.

However, the element, which it has in common with promotional journalism, is being published in the publication's editorial. These include regular journalistic elements without sponsors or beneficiaries who paid for the development and/or the publication to be identified easily¹⁷.

Also, the messages' actual content and their similarities with promotional journalism's specific materials occurs especially in the title; semantics; and vocabulary.

As for the title: (i) it is considered to be a "typical characteristic of hybrid genres or promotion"; (ii) contains positive elements about the company; its products; or services; (iii) "directs the reader in a predetermined direction"¹⁸; and the meaning is positive.

Semantic and lexical peculiarities are related to the following aspects: (i) are promotion specific, using words and positive adjectives; (ii) use positive publicity which is achieved through the

¹⁴ Karmen Erjavec and Melita Poler Kovacic, *art.cit.* (2010): 92–105.

¹⁵ Ioan Drăgan, *Comunicarea – paradigme și teorii*, volumul 2, (București: Rao, 2009), 649.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ Karmen Erjavec and Melita Poler Kovacic: *Art. cit.*, (2010): 91–109.

¹⁸ *Idem*: 95

basic function and effect of promotion¹⁹; (iii) ensure, in ubiquitous lexical devices, consistency in promoting a favourable image of the organization; products; services; and (iv) is a direct form of lexical cohesion.

According to researcher, Karmen Erjavec²⁰, these two concepts include, also, the following common features: (i) partial semantics (e.g. reference to a single organization; product; or service); (ii) introducing the topic only through positive characteristics (for the purpose of building a favourable image); and (iii) the predominant use of positive words and literature (invoking expertise).

Advertisement

Some of the main features, of advertising, which may interest this research are²¹: (i) it is more reliable compared to advertising; (ii) it provides diagnostics; (iii) the use of custom communication with potential customers; and (iv) it causes them to evaluate information, even if it presents the same content from advertising.

However, in the case of promotional journalism, although, in terms of reporting to the target audience, these characteristics are given particular importance in achieving specific marketing or public relations targets, , their character remains an apparent one.

Therefore, from analyzing, between 2002 and 2006, the content of specific materials, with a promotional purpose, identified to promotional journalism, in the fashion publication *Elle Romania*, we found that the expression, of these practices, contained commonly the following features: (i) ensuring the source's credibility; (ii) acknowledgement of the lack of citation and the use of a single citation source; (iii) in relation to the subject material, diagnostics based on the signatory's false, apparent or relative expertise (in most cases, based on the position they occupied in the publication's organizational structure of the publication); (iii) custom address manner to the target audience; (iv) assessing conceptual content of information within specific material (most often by its signatories or by citing a single source and/or secondary sources which confirm or reinforce the idea enunciated by source).

In relation to the specific items listed above, promotional journalism has the following features:

(i) With regard to the first element, promotional journalism uses the target source's reliability; objectivity; and reputation to reduce public resistance to the message and to increase its effectiveness according to specific marketing objectives. In this sense, internal experts (e.g. employees or employees of publication heading the signed materials in which the article was published and the quality of "specialists") or external (e.g. representatives of brands; organizations etc.) are used to confirm or reinforce the signatory's findings in relation to the subject of the article.

(ii) The second distinctive feature, shown above, limits the publications' expression of explicit advertising editorial content to terms related to commercial characteristics (e.g. selling price; and location) and potential beneficiaries. However, in the case of promotional journalism, strategies and practices are more "subtle" in the sense that we can talk about product placement (the title of recommendations; examples; proposals) without textual presence of commercial terms. Nevertheless, the choice, for those products and the presentational characteristics and product attributes, accompanied by images of the packaging, are placed in a favourable editorial context (e.g. item advice; recommendations; trends; experiences or personal choices). These are forms of implied promotion and, sometimes, have potentially greater efficacy when compared to explicit trade entries.

(iii) In the case of informative advertisements, the third distinctive element, direct comparison in terms of promoting journalism can be achieved by one of its specific genre - "news promotion". Clearly, from the content analysis conducted for the publications *Elle Romania*, in the period from

¹⁹ Karmen Erjavec and Melita Poler Kovacic: *Art. cit.*, (2010): 92-105.

²⁰ Karmen Erjavec, *art. cit.* (2004): 553-578.

²¹ Martin Eisend and Franziska Kuster, "The effectiveness of publicity versus advertising: a meta-analytic investigation of its moderators", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* (2010)

2002 to 2006 it had the following characteristics: (a) be signed by a journalist (not: one signature for that news item, usually there were more categories, of this kind, and each bore the signature of a magazine journalist); (b) labeled visible (false) "news"; (c) were assigned to specific sections of readers' fields of interest (e.g. fashion; beauty; health); (d) formal assignment to a specific section (given only by title) because these were included in the promotional text and/or advertising which did not target the specific section to which they were assigned; (e) their character was permanent and was published regularly in the observed sections which were framed and sequenced with the rest of the materials) and had, also, a fixed structure in the publication's economy.

Stories

Reports, of studies²², exemplify explicitly promotional journalism practices by describing the ratio of real estate transactions.

A report, of a transaction, can be considered to be a development of an advertorial which, initially, loses its appeal and can be considered to be a type of advertising (e.g. advertisement).

Such an account is a kind of promotion; an advertisement, posing as news, such as embedded inter-textuality.

However, although it appears to be a story, it presents subtle elements to promote the characteristics of a "hybrid genre"²³.

Both specific news items and the specific advertisements are present, in this kind of genre, and the communicative functions, of information and belief, are equal.

Reporting, on real estate transactions, are considered to be "boundary objects", located between promotion and information. This is necessary in order that this genre can be placed in the broader context of the analysis.

Specific characteristics of promotional journalism

Also, following the research, conducted between 2002 and 2006 on the fashion publication *Elle Romania* and after a through analysis of related concepts, the following were considered to be specific characteristics of promotional journalism and complementary to those presented above:

- completion and publication, of materials specific to promotional journalism, are linked strictly to reaching marketing or public relations objectives;
 - strategies and techniques, used in creating and publishing, are similar to those used in advertising and public relations;
 - the selection, of subjects, is based on commercial reasons – boosting sales or promoting a product; service; organization; or person;
 - the approach's perspective is one sided (e.g. one point of view; only one cited source);
 - evaluation and reporting on the subject is strictly positive;
 - the cited source is a representative of the company; a satisfied customer, or an expert in the field. This confirms or reinforces the favourable idea regarding the subject of the article;
 - where no source is cited, the article's author shares his experience or opinion – strictly positive - regarding the subject of the article;
 - the used vocabulary used contains only positive figures of speech (adjectives, superlatives).
- These underline the nature of the genre and the objectives (e.g. building and/or maintaining a favourable image; promoting attributes; and advantages of using the certain product/service);
- these ensure the transfer of particular journalistic genres specific attributes (e.g. objectivity; impartiality neutrality) and reduce resistance to messages which contain or use the specific shape structure and typology.

²² Kenneth C. C. Kong, "Property transaction report: news, advertisement or a new genre?" *Discourse Studies*, 8 (2006): 771-796.

²³ *Ibidem*.

Conclusions

The purpose, of this study, was to contribute by creating a conceptual reference framework, in order to develop a specific know-how which would facilitate the efforts in identifying; analysing; and interpreting promotional journalism. It was difficult to both define and particularise a concept theoretically and practically amid vague boundaries concerning related concepts which existed in speciality literature.

In this context. the objectives, of this research, focused on establishing the theoretical and practical characteristics of promotional journalism. This was based upon a comparative analysis to related concepts, and a qualitative analysis of specific content found in the fashion publication, *Elle Romania*, between 2002 and 2006.

The study's results led both to establishing and clarifying important conceptual boundaries between promotional journalism and other popular concepts in literature. These either related to it or to represent the same studied reality, and to identify specific theoretical and practical based characteristics upon comparative analysis and analysis of the content of fashion publication, *Elle Romania*, between 2002 and 2006.

Therefore, this thesis' originality was in addressing interdisciplinary issues and adopting a research strategy to achieve its objectives - from two points of view - both theoretical and practical. These would help to enrich not only the conceptual framework, of reference, but, also, to provide a better understanding of the studied reality.

In terms of research results, establishing theoretical and practical characteristics, specific to promotional journalism, can be useful to both theoreticians and researchers in the field. This is not only in defining and analysing it but, also, in assisting practitioners and beneficiaries, of this new marketing instrument, in understanding and improving the process of creation and implementation.

Research Limitations

Regarding the limitations of the research, they were assessed as being: (i) the selection of articles and studies reviewed; (ii) analyzing; interpreting; and assessing the fundamental ideas identified in the literature in relation to the issues studied; (iii) lack of unanimity in the conceptual framework's references which were considered in order to achieve comparative analysis; (iv) the limited number of existing studies on the subject of research; (v) the selection and representativeness of the sample and units of analysis; (vi) the construction of research instruments used for content analysis and the lack of validation thereof; (vii) the absence of the quantitative content analysis component; (viii) inability of generalization of research results; and (ix) the subjectivity, of the researchers, in relation to their assessments.

Future Research

In reaching this study's goal and objectives, the following research efforts can be considered to be useful and, in particular, the use of triangulation as a strategy. These are: (i) in the editorial offices, of the analysed publications, scientific observation regarding particular practices in creating and publishing specific materials to promotional journalism; (ii) conducting in-depth interviews with the actors involved in all the steps of this practice; and (iii) creating an adequate toolkit to achieve a content analysis which will respect its predominantly quantitative character and will ensure, also, objectivity and validity of the research results.

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