

MONICA GABOR/ COLUMBEANU – A ROMANIAN MEDIA CONSTRUCT (JULY 2005 - JULY 2011)

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Abstract: *Based on the infotainment as theoretical framework, we have conducted a quantitative study regarding the Monica Gabor/ Columbeanu's image promoted by two newspapers, this subject being not yet present in the attention of the researchers. The research aimed at identifying a set of themes, but also a pattern of the articles that discuss Romania's star system, too. We also noted that this subject was an increasingly larger concern of the two newspapers, if we consider the number of articles published between July 2005 - July 2011, the Monica construct being produced in several pages of the two analyzed newspapers. Through content analysis, we demonstrated that the production of statistical results contributes, substantially, to the understanding of a seemingly disparate information amount. So, the fast development of Monica's notoriety was due, first, to display herself with the most influential man of Romanian showbiz. It reveals, thus, one of the mechanisms by which Monica Gabor/ Columbeanu became a famous star in Romania.*

Key words: *star system, written media, entertainment, content analysis.*

1. Introduction

The present research seeks to answer the following questions:

- a) From what perspective, the two coverage periods of the written media built the image and the reputation of Monica Gabor/ Columbeanu?
- b) How is a star model built? Which are the main mechanisms of production and reproduction of stardom? What was the evolution of Monica Gabor/ Columbeanu to becoming a star-path that was carefully constructed by the two written media?
- c) What are the characteristics of the articles in terms of their size?
- d) What are the themes reflected in these articles on the identity construction of Monica Gabor/ Columbeanu? What attitude do the newspapers assert towards the approached themes?
- e) Which are the content categories of the subject?
- f) What are the relationships among the above mentioned variables?

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2. Methodology

The used research method was the quantitative content analysis, developed by sociologist Bernard Berelson [1]. Within the two newspapers, during the period July 2005 - July 2011, 1533 articles about Monica Gabor/ Columbeanu subject were published.

Firstly, this research is a descriptive research where we try to examine how the celebrity of Monica Columbeanu was built, produced, and continuously reproduced at media level using quantitative content analysis.

3. Research Sample

According to Alexander Thayer et al. [2], "the quantity of text should ideally be 5 to 10 percent of the total amount of content to be coded". So, we coded 10 percent of the total amount of identified articles, restricting, in this way, the analysis.

Therefore, the time allocated for the coding process was long, due to the fact that the material identified in the Romanian written press was very large. In fact, this analysis aimed at covering two distinct periods (July 2005 - July 2006, July 2010 - July 2011) in order to demonstrate that the common woman Monica Gabor has known an amazing evolution in her career, from a less known model to a famous business person.

Out of 1533 articles about Monica, 594 the articles were identified in the above mentioned period. Nevertheless, only 211 articles are selected for coding, 383 articles being excluded from the analysis (see Figure 1).

In order to make the comparisons among the measured variables at the ordinal level, we chose to apply the distribution of media categories, conclusive in the themes. The

five major themes reflect the essence of the 211 articles retained for research.

4. Categories and coding process

In relation to the key themes, we performed a thematic and quantitative analysis of the data.

Therefore, the number of the categories varied from one subject to another by the number of articles in the two studied newspapers.

Although "it is recommended that this operation be done by two researchers (...) or, after case, by a team of human coders" [3], priori coding was done by one person (author), using Microsoft Excel 2003 to record the data of each article.

Regardless of the selected coding method, each research begins, ideally, with an existing coding scheme [4]. The coding scheme was built on a careful analysis of the literature. From the beginning, each article was read and coded according to the following variables: *newspaper title, period, type of article, theme*. Coding process was conducted in four stages:

- a) first, we chose *the expression* (or *group of words*) as a unity of recording and *the theme* as a unity of context. We also used the manifest, inductive analysis that requires the development of specific categories of coding, before the researcher begins the content analysis.
- b) second, the research included the centralization of all media categories of articles selected for analysis, being, then, arranged by themes.
- c) third, we decided to remove duplicates from all media categories.
- d) fourth, this stage implied to be able to arrange chronologically the final categories becoming operational in statistical analysis.

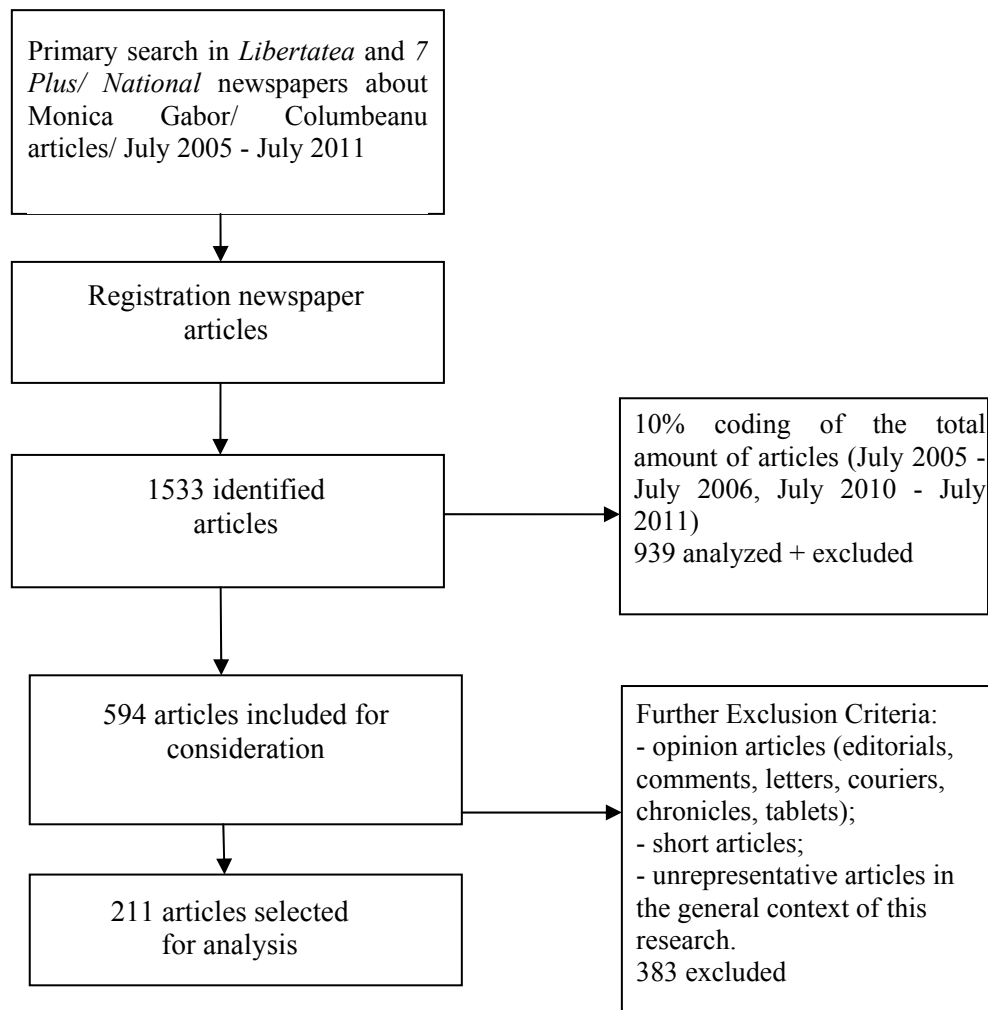


Fig. 1. *Selection criteria for newspaper articles composing the research sample*

After the initial coding process, there were conducted subsequently descriptive (frequency values) and inferential statistical analysis (formulation and validation of research questions) to report the data.

5. Statistical analysis and interpretation of results

In order to see to what extent the information, presented in two newspapers, reports a comprehensive framework of

analysis on Monica Gabor/ Columbeanu model building, SPSS version 17 was used for registration and analysis of data.

In the present research, to test the difference between independent groups, we applied the nonparametric statistical test for ordinal data - Mann-Whitney (U) [5] having, on one hand, the small volume of sample, and having, on the other hand, the asymmetric distribution (the data are heterogeneous).

In our case, there are strongly significant differences at $p < 0.01$ in the media issues

for the period July 2005 - July 2006 and July 2010 - July 2011 on the subject of Privacy exposure. According to the reported statistics, we can see that media issues during the first period are greater.

Statistical data show for the period July 2005 - July 2006, compared to July 2010 - July 2011, a significant increase ($p < 0.05$) of the articles that had the main thematic presentation between television and modeling.

There were reported highly significant differences ($p < 0.01$) on Columbeanu family enhancing for the period July 2005 - July 2006 and July 2010 - July 2011. Thus, we can see that in the period July 2005 - July 2006 there were reported articles with a greater number of elements, included in our theme. There are highly significant differences on Columbeanu family decline size for the above mentioned periods. Thus, in the period July 2010 - July 2011, the number of articles on this subject was much higher than in the period July 2005 - July 2006.

Statistically analyzing the articles according to the performed coding, we can see that the comparison between the two newspapers reflects statistically significant differences at a significance level of $p < 0.05$ for Image and Modeling and Columbeanu family decline themes. In this step of the statistical analysis, we included articles appeared in both periods, July 2005 - July 2006 and July 2010 - July 2011. As it can be seen, also, from media thematic coding, the number of articles was much higher in *Libertatea* newspaper for Image and Modeling theme and the large reportage in *7 Plus/ National* newspaper for Columbeanu family decline theme.

There are highly significant differences at a significance level of $p < 0.01$ at global level, including both studied periods and the reviewed newspapers concerning photo report and large reportage categories.

According to the statistical reported date, as can be seen that the media of the photo reports was higher at thematic level (Between television and modeling, Columbeanu family decline). In the first case, media issues were higher in the *Libertatea* newspaper, and, in the second case, in the *7 Plus/ National* newspaper.

It can be seen in terms of the Privacy exposure and Columbeanu family enhancing themes but at a significance level of $p < 0.05$. Thus, it can be seen that the media of the articles from the *Libertatea* newspaper was higher than the *7 Plus/ National* newspaper.

No significant differences were found on categories of the articles (photo report and interview) for the themes considered in our study.

No significant differences were found on categories of the articles (photo report and analysis) for the themes considered in our study.

No significant differences were found on categories of the articles (photo report and photonews) for the themes considered in our study.

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The statistical analysis referred to the articles as a large reportage and interview highlights a significant difference at a ratio of $p < 0.05$, with a high average of articles such large reportages on Privacy exposure size.

The statistical analysis referred to the articles as a large reportage and analysis emphasizes a significant difference at a $p < 0.05$, with a high average of articles such large reportages on Columbeanu family decline and an increased average for Image and modeling in the case of analysis articles.

Highly significant differences were identified between articles of large

reportage and photonews for between television and modeling theme, with an increased average of photonews articles. But in the case of Columbeanu family decline theme, the articles such as large reportages were classed on the first place.

No significant differences were found on categories of the articles (large reportage and portrait) for the themes considered in our study.

No significant differences were found on categories of the articles (interview and analysis) at thematic level.

No significant differences were found on categories of the articles (interview and photonews) at thematic level.

On the whole, no significant differences were found on categories of the articles (interview and portrait) at thematic level.

Also, on the whole, no significant differences were found on categories of the articles (analysis and photonews) at thematic level.

On the whole, from all analyzed articles, no significant differences were found on categories of the articles (analysis and portrait) at thematic level.

Also, on the whole, from all analyzed articles, no significant differences were found on categories of the articles (photonews and portrait) at thematic level.

6. Conclusions

The main objective of the analysis, the articles about Monica Gabor and Irinel Columbeanu served as a form of entertainment. "Who got married, divorced or became pregnant?" are present subjects that appear almost daily in both publications. Since 2005, some articles of *Libertatea* and *7 Plus/ National* newspapers have referred to Monica's itinerary in the fascinating world of modeling. Towards the end of 2011, other articles were discussing about their divorce.

The *7 Plus/ National* newspaper places Monica in a position of weakness, promoting hegemonic femininity ("sexy image") by certain mechanisms (eroticism, sensuality of the female body, the use of trivialization). By emphasizing the sensuality of the female body of Monica Gabor, the *Libertatea* newspaper creates weakness around her femininity, too. Furthermore, the fashion is the main element that builds a new identity of Monica Gabor, becoming then a legitimate model for young people.

As shown in the presentation and interpretation of data obtained through quantitative content analysis, two newspapers built the stardom of Monica Gabor based on her relationship with Irinel Columbeanu, the final goal is centered on establishing the axis of gravity of the topic through the examination of the written media coverage from Romania.

We consider that such research, based on the analysis of a representative sample of newspapers, produced useful results for understanding the evolution of Romania's star system.

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