

ABSTRACT

NEWSPAPER FRAMING OF A HOSPITAL: THE IMPACT OF HOSPITAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

This thesis addresses the ways a newspaper frames a local hospital and particularly looks at how a story stimulus (whether it was generated by hospital public relations [PR] practitioners or newspaper reporters) correlates with the amount of coverage, thematic focus selection, tone of coverage, and source selection.

The context for this study is a large medical center and daily newspaper in Fresno, California. The content analysis and the interview with PR professionals at the medical center showed that journalists generated more coverage than did the hospital PR. It was found that the media and hospital were different in selecting thematic focus even though the media tended to cover all the topics. Finally, hospital PR stories differed in tone and sources selection; they tended to be more positive and quoted hospital staff, patients, and doctors/nurses, while media stories had a negative tone and quoted government, hospital staff, and business sources.

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