Developing a Gender-Based Media Code for Egyptian Television

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Abstract

The recent political and economic changes in Egypt shed a positive light on the importance of women's contribution to society. While the media reacted by increasing women's presence on television, the issues of negative stereotyped portrayals and traditional roles persist. However, an increase in women's representation does not necessarily convey the right representation. Thus, this paper aims to develop a Gender-based media code for Egyptian television. The study is intended to fulfill the need for a directive media code which uses media as a tool to enhance the portrayal of women, promote gender equality, and combat violence against women in Egypt. Through analyzing previous literature, international reports and currently implemented international gender codes, 74 principles were derived. These principles cover the depictions of women in newscasts, talk shows, coverage of violence against women crimes, drama, movies, and advertisements. Based on the assessment of the principles by a panel of media experts according to relative validity and relative importance, a proposed Gender-based Media Code model of seven sections, tailored to the Egyptian television, was constructed.

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Women seem to be confined within the borderlines of femininity on television. The media create the expectations and either the forbidden or the allowed roles for women through gender stereotyping. Such frames set the guidelines for limiting women's potentials and societal contributions. According to the cultivation theory, the media's repetition of the same messages cultivates values and attitudes in a certain culture (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994). Therefore, it is safe to say that the dissemination of stereotypical portrayal of women cultivates those typecasts, which hinders both cultural change and the acceptance of women's rights.

Several studies concluded that most women's portrayals in various Arab media outlets did not provide a reflection of the reality (UNDP, 2005; Al- Ariqi, 2009).

A content analysis of various television studies has confirmed that the broadcast content is packed with stereotyped portrayals of women (Nathanson, Wilson, McGee, & Sebastian, 2002), and that audiences' attitudes towards gender-roles are influenced by the depictions they view (Nathanson & Cantor, 2000).

These findings underline the mechanism of shaping gender roles through the exposure to the cultural norms and media representations (Malim, Birch, Hayward, & Wadeley, 1998). These gender roles are preserved via the process of gender stereotyping. Such mechanism was noted to hold the highest concern for young people by influencing the formation of their 'gender identities' and thus limiting their educational and career choices, private lives, and the way they judge others. Hence, gender stereotyping is considered one of the integral reasons behind gender inequality (Lorber, 1994).

Stemming from the influential role of media and the lack of either media or gender codes in Egypt, the present study aims to develop a Gender-based media code for Egyptian television in order to combat negative stereotypes.

Television was selected because it is the most used mass medium in Egypt. According to the Egyptian Health Issues Survey (2015), 99% of women aged between 15 and 59 watch television at least once a week, while 98.8% of men in the same age group tune in as well. Unsurprisingly, only 12.6% of women read the newspapers once a week compared to 22% of men due to illiteracy rates and the entertaining factor that television provides (El Zanaty, 2015).

To derive the code, the study seeks to answer these questions:

RQ1: How are women portrayed across various television genres (News, Drama, Movies, and Advertisements)?

RQ2: What are the concerns of the currently implemented international gender media codes?

To answer the first research question, scholarly studies and reports tackling the representation of women in various television genres (News, Drama, Movies, and Advertisements) were reviewed.

Women Representation in Media

News

Across the Middle East, 38% of the women quoted in news stories provide opinions from an individual experience, although only 19% are presented as experts and/or quoted on professional basis. On the occupational level, Egyptian women journalists in print media constitute 29%. For television news, women represented 55% of all TV reporters and 59% of news anchors. However,

news stories that included women –whether as sources, subjects, opinion givers, or experts—represented only 10% as opposed to 90% occupied by men (GMMP, 2015).

Rahbani (2010) found that women are featured more as victims in news stories covering violent accidents and domestic violence than in stories tackling their professional abilities and expertise. The same observation was supported by Abu Youssef et al. (2009) who showed that women are portrayed negatively as criminals at a rate of 40% on Egyptian TV.

Hetsroni and Lowenstein (2014) concluded that women represented less than 2% of the experts hosted in talk shows to discuss 'hard core' sciences such as physics and chemistry. Such figures are disappointing as they reinforce the idea that women exist for decorative purposes, still cornered in soft areas, and thus their potentials and contributions have not yet been utilized.

News coverage of violent crimes against women raises public awareness and challenges cultural tolerance. According to Carll (2003), news can assist in enforcing change only if reports are conducted from an accurate and unbiased angle regardless of the gender of both the victim and perpetrator.

Richards, Gillespie & Smith (2014) agreed that the manner with which news stories frame violence against women can either mobilize the audiences' perspectives towards or away from the issue through highlighting some forms of violent crimes at the expense of others. Such selection implies the prevalence of some forms of violence against women over others (Carll, 1999).

In 2009, a secondary analysis conducted for the National Council for Women (NCW) revealed that Egyptian media did not pay the expected attention to covering issues related to violence against women. Moreover, violence against women crimes represents only 17.4% of the total journalistic space dedicated to women's issues. About 60% of violence against women coverage

on television concentrated on community violence, while domestic violence received only 39.8%

(Abo Youssef et al., 2009).

Drama

Contrary to prevalent beliefs, the portrayals of women in Arabic drama do not significantly

differ from those found in the media worldwide. Women are usually portrayed negatively,

objectified in sexual roles and presented in traditional female stereotypes (Collins, 2011;

Signorielli, 2012; Badaoui, 2016).

Auter, Reda, Sharif, & Roy (2005) noted improvements as women were depicted in distinct

roles other than housewives. However, some television shows portrayed women at a lower

prominence than men.

Despite humungous annual productions, drama still does not convey the reality of Egyptian

women; they have failed to highlight women's contributions and successes. Long et al. (2010)

argued that even with fictional television genres, male scientists and academicians outnumbered

their women counterparts.

According to Al-Mahadin (2011), the 'Transgressive women' format invades the screens,

where the representations of female sexuality sustained without any law breach.

However, Egyptian drama, unlike other types of television content, focused on various

inequality issues. Domestic violence was found to be the focal point when compared to community

violence, where 45% of drama series included violence against women, while 69.5% covered

domestic violence and 30.5% showed community violence. It was also noted that women were

blamed for the violence they were subjected to and justifications were found to follow such acts

(Abu Youssef et al., 2009).

Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that drama shows with female writers and producers present women in a stronger light, in terms of character, roles and lines (Kharroub & Weaver, 2014).

Movies

The 2005 Arab Human Development Report examined women representations in 410 Egyptian films in a chronological order starting in 1962 until 1972. The study found that 80% of female characters disregarded the female identity in terms of career, education, and mindset; a popular theme of that era was the depiction of women as manipulative, devilish, materialistic, and man-hunters. In a similar study that examined 31 Egyptian movies produced in the last decade of the 20th century, the results showed that sex and violence were the dominant themes. There was an embellished and exaggerated portrayal of the violence perpetrated either by or against women (UNDP, 2005).

Since the effects of sexually violent media content had been proven to have a profound link between exposure and the noticeable increase in accepting violence against women (Malamuth & Check, 1981), it is not a surprise as to the amount of violence women are subjected to worldwide. Recent statistics from Egypt indicate that 99.3% of Egyptian women are sexually harassed daily, and 30% of married women are subjected to domestic violence (El Zanaty, 2015).

In a more recent study, Ateya (2014) analyzed the representation of women in Egyptian films over a 10-year span from 2001 to 2011. The study coded 52 female characters and noted improvements in the depictions of Egyptian women's socioeconomic class, professions, education, and humanly traits over the years. While 75% of female characters were portrayed as employed, only 6% were depicted as unemployed. Yet, negative representations were still found in age, relationship status, and experiences. Such representations framed women in a negative light, which

inevitably had its effect on the public's views and attitudes regarding women and their potential contributions to the society.

Advertisements

Much like the rest of the world, Egyptian television advertisements stereotype women and limit their portrayals to traditional roles that no longer fit the reality of the current Egyptian society (Ishak, 2003; Allam, 2008; Arafa, 2013). Although there is a progress where women are shown in advertisements in the work field, they are still portrayed to uphold traditional occupations such as teachers and nurses.

In a review of the gender portrayal in advertisements, Nassif and Gunter (2008) found consistent similarities among western and eastern countries where women were negatively portrayed and limited mostly to domestic roles, as opposed to men, who were shown with professional jobs and in outdoors settings. Women were also portrayed as dependent and unintelligent, whereas men were depicted as experts or intelligent consumers.

In another cross-national comparative study of representations of women in television advertisements in four Arab countries (Lebanon, Egypt, U.A.E., and Saudi Arabia) vs the United States, Kalliny and her colleagues (2008) found that both Egyptian and Saudi Arabian women were shown less in the work field and more within the household. Thus, the marginalization and stereotyping of women had long persisted.

The contradicting women stereotypes portrayed on television had led to various accusations regarding the media's interest in catering to what people want to see to gain profits rather what can stimulate general welfare and help achieve equality (Karam & El Hajal, 2010).

However, the inevitable question remains, does the media reflect the objectification of women in real life or does it promote it?

The Egyptian Center for Women Rights (ECWR) noted that the 2015 Egyptian Parliament has the highest number of women in the history of modern Egypt, with 89 female MPs, 75 of which were elected in addition to 14 female members appointed by the President as per the law, representing 14.7% of the total 596 MPs. Also, 26 women judges were appointed in primary courts A and B in the Administrative Prosecution, giving Egyptian women an entry license to more male-dominated areas. And the Egyptian Ministry Cabinets holds 3 women as ministers of Social Solidarity; International Cooperation; Immigration and Egyptian Expatriates Affairs; and Ministry of Investment, which used to be considered male domains (ECWR, 2016).

Such improvements failed to be reflected in Egyptian media, especially drama and advertisements (Badaoui, 2016). The detachment of media from the current reality of women's roles calls for directive policies and updated regulations. As noted by Obeidat (2002), the development of national media codes could assist in the enhancement of women portrayals, only if they exist and are implemented.

Recently, the Beijing+20 action plan called for ending the projection of the degrading images of women in all forms of media communications through creating and adopting media self-regulatory tools to abolish gender biased programming (UN, 2015).

In order to answer RQ2, national and self-regulatory gender media codes and guidelines are analyzed.

Gender Media Codes

The gender media codes analyzed in this study are adopted by the countries that outranked Egypt on the Global Gender Gap Index of 2016; the Philippines ranked at No. 7; followed by UK

at No. 20; Canada at No. 35; Tanzania at No. 53; Botswana at No. 54; while Egypt was ranked at No. 132 out of 144 countries.

The Ofcom Broadcasting Code: This code directs the implementation of standards in news coverage in terms of fairness, privacy, sponsorship, as well as product placements within program schedules. While it does not incorporate the term "gender," it is considered a gender-neutral code, an adopted trend in the UK, which ensures the rights of women, men, and minors in broadcast media.

The Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (CBSC) Codes: The council administers seven codes covering general ethics, broadcast violence, journalistic ethics, cross-media ownership, equitable portrayal and pay television. The codes included are voluntarily created by the private broadcasting sector. Due to the scope of the study, two codes were reviewed.

- *CAB Violence Code (1993)*

The code dedicates Section Seven to the depictions of violence against women on television. It focuses on refraining broadcasters from telecasting programs which promote, glamorize, or sanction violence against women (Section 7, Article 7.1), in addition to ensuring that women are not portrayed as victims of violence unless it is significant to the story (Section 7, article 7.2).

- *CAB Equitable Portrayal Code*

This code is dedicated to prohibiting and advising against stereotyping; negative and inaccurate portrayal, and the unbalanced depictions of individuals on the basis of race, origin, color, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, and physical or mental disability in broadcast programing.

Advertising Standards: Canada Gender Portrayal Guidelines ensures the equal portrayal of women as authority figures and decision-makers and prohibits against the use of sexuality,

violence, and sexist language. The code also promotes the diversity of women portrayals in different settings and doing varying activities.

The Philippines Guidelines on the Coverage of Crimes against Women (1993): The guidelines focus on the coverage of violent crimes against women through two categories; the right to privacy and dignity either via a written consent, or the willingness of the victim to appear in various media outlets; and the ethical standards of coverage.

The Gender Code of Ethics of the Botswana Press Council: The code provides clear definitions of discrimination, gender stereotyping, negative gender portrayal, and sexist language. It also provides sections covering: Equitable treatment in media coverage; Accountability; Balance, Credibility, and Impartiality; Minimizing the harm (Limiting Gender Stereotyping and guidelines to covering VAW); Advertising; and workplace equality.

The Tanzanian Media Gender Code of Ethics (2009): Tanzania is one of the few countries around the globe which have a Media Gender Code of Ethics. Holding great similarity to the Botswanan code, the Tanzanian code covers: Accuracy and fairness; Balance, Credibility, and Impartiality; Accountability; Gender Stereotyping; Language; Marketing and Advertising; and Gender Sensitivity within Workplaces.

Method

Adopting a qualitative approach in examining the literature, global reports, and international gender-based media codes, 74 principles were identified, reflecting the representation of women in the news, drama, movies, and televised advertisements. The principles provided precise statements exhibiting symmetry in positive and negative findings, all of which reflected the aspirational status of women representations on television.

Twenty experts of Media and gender studies were asked to evaluate those principles according to their relative validity and relative importance using a five-point Likert Scale in order to obtain a quantitative weight for the responses. Afterwards, results were employed to develop the code.

Participants

A panel of media experts was selected based on one or more of the following criteria:

(1) Their experience in the field of mass communication and/or women studies; (2) Consultancy in research, master's or doctoral dissertations regarding media and/or women studies; (3) Having scholarly published work in nationally recognized journals within the scope of the study; and/or (4) holding a recognition through professional positions in education, non-governmental organizations, media entities, or governmental posts.

Accordingly, 20 Mass Communication professors and media experts were contacted, but only 11 of them have agreed to participate.

Procedure and Measures

The study was conducted over six steps:

Step 1: A careful review of the available literature and reports covering the scope of the study.

Step 2: The selection of specified research and reports that have the potential for a successful use.

Step 3: The analysis of previous research findings and cases from other countries to guide the generation of principles directing television content.

Step 4: The validation of derived principles in terms of importance and relativity by a jury of Egyptian experts in media and women studies.

Step 5: The construction of a directive media code for Egyptian television based on these principles.

Step 6: The constructed Gender- based media code was then applied to the Egyptian television genres portraying women and discussing the problems of fit which these codes can involve.

The experts were given directions to assess the principles per their Relative Validity and Relative Importance.

They were also provided a key, where column (A) denoted Relative Validity

Strongly Disagree (SD); Disagree (D); Neutral (N); Agree (A); Strongly Agree (SA)

And column (B) represented Relative Importance

No Importance (NI); Little Importance (LI); Don't Know (DK); Moderate Importance (MI); Great Importance (GI)

To extract the valid and important principles, a weighing system was applied where:

Relative Validity Scale: Strongly Disagree = -2; Disagree = -1; Neutral = 0; Agree = 1; Strongly Agree = 2

Relative Importance Scale: No Importance = -2; Little Importance = -1; Don't Know = 0; Moderate Importance = 1; Great Importance = 2

Accordingly, Neutral was regarded as the midpoint for the calculations. To obtain the average mean score for each principle, the collective responses received were each multiplied by the weighting, and then divided by the total number of responses, which is 11.

Since 'Agree' was denoted a weight of 1 on the Relative Validity scale and the experts had to at least agree with the principles to achieve Relative Validity, it was logical to decide that 1.00 would be the cutoff point. The same procedure was applied on the Relative Importance scale, where the experts had to give the principles at least 'Moderate Importance' to achieve Relative Importance. Therefore, principles which failed to score 1.00 or more, were not considered important or valid.

The principles were then filtered according to their average ratings.

Data gathering

The E-mail Survey method was selected based on the ability to collect data with minimum time consumption in terms of reaching the experts who are located at different areas across Egypt. Due to the long list of principles (74 principles) derived, the interview methodology would have been limiting to the anticipated outcome of the study due to the experts' busy schedules. Emails were sent to the experts along with an abstract of the study to be judged. Due to the fact that the principles were derived from various literature sources and other countries' media codes, the panelists were asked to determine whether, as per their judgements, those principles were sufficiently valid and relevant to be applied to Egyptian television. Recommendations and notes were also welcomed.

Results

Table (1) *Relative Validity and Relative Importance Mean Values According to The Panel's Assessment*

News Principles	Relative V (M)	Relative I (M)
1. Discussion and coverage of women's issues should diversify to include women of all ages, socioeconomic classes, and demographics.	1.45	1.81
2. Increase sports programming and coverage of women athletes that address the achievements of women in sports domain.	1.45	1.54
3. Increase sports programming and coverage of women athletes that address the achievements of women in sports domain.	1.18	1.27
4. Positive examples of women's achievements should be portrayed in the news to serve as role models for Egyptian girls and women.	1.54	1.54
5. Increase the percentage of women in executive positions in media organizations where they are involved in the decision-making process.	1.09	1.09
6. Increase the percentage of women in executive positions in media organizations where they are involved in the decision-making process.	1.81	1.90
7. Broadcasters should refrain from depicting or exploiting women in any way that undermine their contribution and position in society.	1.71	1.90
8. Balanced presence of men and women should be promoted to reflect the society's composition and to include equal human experiences, views, and actions in media coverage of news and current affairs.	1.54	1.63

9. Broadcasters should refrain from broadcasting stories that might incite gender based violence.	1.36	1.45
10. The incorporation and coverage of gender equality and equity issues as an integral part of the news.	1.18	1.36
Talk Show Principles	**Relative V (M)**	**Relative I (M)**
11. Women should be present as experts and not just for story telling / experience sharing purposes.	1.18	1.54
12. Women should be presented more in stories regarding their professional achievements and expertise rather than being victims.	1.45	1.36
13. Talk shows tend to marginalize the representation of women's issues from lower socioeconomic classes, rural and Bedouin women.	1.90	2
14. Women should not be cornered in soft domains related to domestic spheres (Motherhood and family issues), gender issues (violence against women), physical attributes (beauty, health, and figure), ignoring their expertise and contribution to hardcore fields.	1.45	1.72
15. Media entities should present women as political readers and experts rather than just news anchors / talk shows' presenters.	1.63	1.63
16. The quality and quantity of covering girls' and women's issues and news in talk shows continue to convey attitudinal biases, despite various attempts at evidence-based training, requests and protests.	1.18	1.36
17. The media should support violence survivors who choose to appear without disrespecting, victimizing, or questioning their credibility.	1.18	1.36
Covering Violence Against Women Principles	**Relative V (M)**	**Relative I (M)**
18. The proportion and prominence of air time or media space given to stories on gender-based violence in relation to other stories should be increased.	1.18	1.18
19. Newscasts and public affairs programs must not include material whether in individual programs or collective reports which glamorizes VAW.	1.18	1.63
20. Newscasts and public affairs programs should refrain from presenting violence against women in any context that encourage others to copy such behavior.	1.81	2
21. News casts should adhere to news facts and avoid the use of judgmental language (words or phrases).	1.63	1.81
22. Newscasts should refrain from using judgmental context and assumptions including victim blaming, questioning the attacker mental status, the adherence of women to social norms, and turning sexual assault report to pornographic stories using too much details.	1.63	1.90
23. Newscasts should avoid framing violence against women stories through the use of biased sources, contexts, and personal information regarding the survivor.	1.72	1.81

24. Proper definition of acts of violence committed against women should be used to avoid confusion, misinformation, and raise awareness (for instance, separate femicides- suicides from domestic violence; physical sexual harassment from verbal sexual harassment; female genital mutilation from abuse, etc.…).	1.45	1.63
25. Use of the term 'survivor' rather than 'victim' unless the violence-affected woman has not survived	0.18	0.63
26. Balance of stories reported to mirror real-life occurrences in order to avoid misinformation and exaggeration. (Avoid over-reporting rape cases when sexual harassment is more frequent).	1.63	1.72
27. Incorporation of statistics and data available to present gender-based violence as a societal problem rather than individual incidents.	1.36	1.45
28. Fair use of statistics and data available to present gender-based violence as a societal problem rather than individual incidents.	1.36	1.63
29. Announcing all information and contacts regarding support organizations and services available to women affected by gender-based violence (hotlines, Home Shelters, rehabilitation centers, family councilors).	1.54	1.63
30. Caution shall be used in the selection and the repetition of videos and footage which depicts violence against women.	1.36	1.54
31. Shifting public opinion through news framing by giving excuses to attackers should be prohibited.	1.45	1.81
32. Shifting public opinion through news framing by using explicit images of the survivors should be prohibited.	1.45	1.45
33. Shifting public opinion through news framing by hiding influential information regarding the attack and / or the attacker should be prohibited.	1.54	1.72
34. News should highlight the (physical, psychological, and social) damages caused to women affected by violence.	0.90	1.09
35. There must be no identification of women and girls in Gender-based Violence (GBV) cases leading to their identity.	1.72	1.90
36. Cases of violence perpetrated by women should not be over-sensationalized as to appear more frequent than reality.	1.72	1.90
37. Media should not legitimize VAW by concentrating on the survivor's marital status, relationships, and adherence to gender-norms.	1.27	1.45
38. When covering VIP visits to Gender-Based Violence survivors of rape/gang-rape and sexual assault, the confidentiality of their identities should be maintained.	1.54	1.36
39. Coverage of VAW should be used to raise awareness, highlight consequences not incite fear.	1.72	1.72
40. Follow-up and equal coverage of the consequences of VAW is crucial as crimes being overly broadcasted without giving the same attention to the attackers' punishments.	1.63	1.54

41. To avoid desensitization sexual harassment and assaults should not be over-simplified or sensationalized.	1.36	1.72
Drama Principles	**Relative V (M)**	**Relative I (M)**
42. Drama should be used to encourage gender equality and magnify the importance of social fairness towards women rather than enforcing traditional gender stereotypes.	1.63	1.81
43. Drama should focus on presenting the positive achievements and success stories of women in Egypt instead of depicting women as commodities, dependent, gold diggers, lack experience, and weak.	1.45	1.81
44. Terminating male dominance depictions over women and abolishing the negative stereotypical portrayal of women can improve and influence Egyptian women status.	1.54	1.45
45. Balanced portrayal of Egyptian women should be encouraged to include all socioeconomic classes and demographics in drama instead of focusing on middle and upper-class issues while ignoring rural and Bedouin women issues.	1.45	1.63
46. The cornering of married women depictions as just housewives, and single women in traditional gender-neutral professions should be eliminated to meet reality.	1.81	1.81
47. The trending portrayal of Transgressive women where their sexuality is their sole property should be eliminated.	1.72	1.72
48. To promote gender equality women should not be presented at a lower status or as submissive to men in drama.	1.36	1.63
49. Egyptian television drama series should discuss all forms of violence against women as per their real-life occurrences.	1.45	1.63
50. Women should not be blamed for familial failures in drama, where divorce and family malfunctions are depicted to be the woman's fault.	1.36	1.45
51. Women should not be blamed or held responsible for the violence they are subjected to in drama.	1.36	1.45
52. Acts of violence against women portrayed in drama should not be followed by justifications to deviate and reduce the impact of the incident.	1.36	1.63
53. The portrayal of women can be dramatically improved through female writers, directors and producers.	1.36	1.36
Movies Principles	**Relative V (M)**	**Relative I (M)**
54. Expansion of movies' representations to include all women of different socioeconomic classes, educational levels, and demographics of women's issues portrayals.	1.63	1.72
55. Movies over-represent married women in comparison to single women thus enforcing the sexist idea that women's value and aspirations are realized through marriage.	0.54	0.45

56. Movies need to present women through new progressive frames in order to mirror their increased social, political, and cultural contributions.	1.54	1.81
57. Movies should not include an exaggerated representation, with explicit scenes, of the violence perpetrated by, and against, women.	1.45	1.72
58. Verbal abuse and verbal labelling of women in a sexist manner should be eliminated.	1.54	1.81
59. Movies should present real and balanced images of women instead of portraying women negatively	1.72	1.72
60. Non-Distorted portrayal of women should replace the portrayals in Commercial (B) movies which tend to objectify and sexually stereotype women.	1.45	1.63
61. Age-ism in movies should be balanced to include young and old-aged women's issues.	1.36	1.37
62. The underestimation of the role of Egyptian working women in movies should be avoided especially in lower classes.	1.72	1.54
63. The traditional depictions of women should be broken with finding new frontiers regarding women roles in various movie genres.	1.72	1.72
TV Advertisements Principles	**Relative V (M)**	**Relative I (M)**
64. Women should be included in advertisements as experts, advisors, informed and intelligent consumers related to various products and services to neutralize gender stereotyping. (For example: banking, investments, real estates, and sports).	1.45	1.54
65. Advertisements should be used to depict the modern life where the man is a partner not the boss.	1.45	1.54
66. Advertisements should avoid highlighting and exploiting women's sexuality portrayed in attires, poses and misrepresentative language.	1.54	1.36
67. Women voiceovers used in advertisements should be increased to combat the male dominance ideology.	1	1.09
68. Advertisements should introduce creative efforts to challenge and combat gender-based stereotypes and other forms of sexist representations.	1.54	1.72
69. Advertisements should not reinforce traditional feminine characteristics and female roles.	1.63	1.81
70. Women portrayed in advertisements should not be limited to traditional professions such as teachers, and doctors.	1.36	1.45
71. Women should be portrayed in different settings like outdoors or at work rather than being limited to inside the home and/or kitchen.	1.36	1.72
72. Women of different socioeconomic classes and demographics should be presented in advertisements including rural and Bedouin women.	1.54	1.63
73. Rural and suburban women should not be depicted as ignorant, naive, lack health-related information and limited to home-making chores.	1.45	1.72

74. Women should not be portrayed as inexperienced and unintelligent consumers compared to their male counterparts.	1.45		1.81

As a result of the experts' judgements, four principles did not show significance because they failed to achieve Relative Validity. Consequently, those principles were eliminated, leaving out 70 principles in the Code. Table (2) presents the four principles which failed to achieve Relative Validity and Relative Importance.

Table (2) *Principles That Failed to Achieve Relative Validity and Relative Importance*

Genre	Principle	Relative I (M)	Relative V (M)	Experts Notes
Covering VAW	22. News should highlight the (physical, psychological, and social) damages caused to women affected by violence.	1.09	0.9	Perhaps the absence of the word "more" resulted in misunderstanding the principle. As some experts noted that news, especially talk shows whether political or social, do focus on the psychological and social damages affecting battered women as much as the physical damage.
Covering VAW	23. News casts and public affairs programs must not include material whether in individual programs or collective reports which glamorizes violence against women.	1.63	0.72	The experts questioned the idea of "glamorizing violence against women," where some noted that it is not valid and actually against the code of ethics for news coverage and discussions to present violence in a manner that justifies violence against women or make it seem appealing.

Covering VAW	24. Use of the term 'survivor' rather than 'victim' unless the violence-affected woman has not survived.	0.63	0.18	Many experts noted that the term 'survivor' is a western concept that does not match the nature of eastern societies. They were concerned that the term, with its Arabic equivalent, would not signify the magnitude of harm battered women are subjected to, and thus would lose the injustice plea. Moreover, the term 'victim' signifies the extent of their victimization and abuse by their perpetrators.
Movies	10. Movies over-represent married women in comparison to single women, thus enforcing the sexist idea that women's value and aspirations are realized through marriage.	0.45	0.54	The experts argued that this is an old observation, as of recently, movies and drama started focusing on single women's issues. Whether a spinster-related issues, working/ studying abroad, or even their political engagement as shown in some films.

A Proposed Model for the Egyptian Gender-Based Media Code for Egyptian Television

Disclaimer:

After examining the responses, a model for the Egyptian Gender-Based media code was developed. This code is intended for regulating the broadcastings of Egyptian television. The code is constructed from the derived principles, excluding the principles which lacked relative validity and importance. The outline adopted is similar to the Tanzanian and the Botswanan Gender Media Code due to the clear categorization of their Codes' principles.

The code developed in the present study is of a directive nature and it relevant for Media Houses, Broadcasters, and Media Organizations that are responsible for the production and the broadcasting of television content.

The code begins with the definitions of the terms: Media Houses, Broadcasters, Fair coverage, Discrimination, Gender Stereotyping, Negative Gender Portrayal, and Sexist Language.

The code consists of seven sections:

Section one: RIGHT TO MEDIA COVERAGE

Section two: ACCURACY AND FAIRNESS

Section three: PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

Section four: ENSURING THE RIGHT REPRESENTATION

Section five: MAINTAINING ETHICAL STANDARDS

Section six: COVERING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Section seven: ADVERTISING

Definitions:

Media Houses refer to the broadcasting media organizations embodied in owners and directors of television stations who are responsible for the content being broadcast.

Broadcasters refer to individuals who are appointed to speak across different programming on television, including reporters, journalists, presenters, and hosted professionals.

Fair is the unbiased, accurate, truthful, and inclusive depiction and coverage of women's multidimensional characteristics through providing undistorted facts and impartial judgements within the broadcasting media.

Discrimination is any act of omission, exclusion, distinction, or any discrepancy which compromise and confine women based on socioeconomic status, age, education, disability, or area of residency directly or indirectly.[1]

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[1] Adopted from the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and the South African Advertising Standards Authority Code of Conduct

Gender stereotyping is the exploitation, objectification, or demeanor of women in any way which undermine their value and contribution in society by the broadcasting media.[2]

Negative gender portrayal is the use of language, attitudes or portrayals (either explicitly or implicitly) which tend to assign women to particular roles, behavior or characteristics on the basis of socioeconomic status, age, education, disability, or area of residency in a manner which limits their role in society or sections of society[3].

Sexist language is the language that gratuitously excludes women or implies any unequal treatment to women.[4]

Section one: ***RIGHT TO MEDIA COVERAGE***

This section conveys the right to gender equality through the clauses necessary to ensure equal and balanced media space and air time dedicated to women from diverse backgrounds and their issues.

1.1 Media houses should ensure the diversified coverage and discussions of women's issues to include women of all ages, socioeconomic classes, and areas of residency in an equitable and fair manner.

1.2 Media houses should promote the balanced presence of men and women through experiences, views, contributions, and achievements, unless integral to the issue being discussed.

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[2] Adopted from the South African Advertising Standards Authority Code of Conduct
[3] Adopted from the Australian Commercial Radio Codes of Practice and Guidelines and South African Advertising Standards Authority Code of Conduct
4. Adopted from the Australian Commercial Radio Codes of Practice and Guidelines

1.3 Media houses should ensure that the broadcast fictional and non-fictional artistic productions (drama, movies, and advertisements) present balanced portrayal of women to include all socioeconomic classes and demographics.

1.4 Broadcasters shall increase the coverage of women athletes in sports programming and news that addresses the achievements of women in sports domain.

Section two: **ACCURACY AND FAIRNESS**

This section aims to set the guidelines necessary to combat biasness, exclusion, and negative gender stereotypes in televised media.

2.1 Broadcasters should ensure that the voices, views and opinions of women are incorporated fairly on a diversified range of issues.

2.2 Broadcasters should maintain impartiality through adhering to news facts and avoiding the incorporation of biased judgments and language (words or phrases).

2.3 Media houses and broadcasters should ensure the fair and accurate coverage and depictions of cases of violence perpetrated by women.

2.4 Media houses and broadcasters should seek to acquire the updated information and statistics on gender-based violence and equality issues and ensure their fair and accurate use.

2.5 To avoid misinformation and exaggeration, media houses and broadcasters should balance the depictions of violence perpetrated by and against women in fictional and non-fictional programming according to real-life frequencies.

2.6 Media houses should guarantee the absence of justifications following the acts of violence women are subjected to from their broadcasted fictional and non-fictional artistic productions as well as in news coverage.

Section three: **PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY**

This section addresses Media houses and broadcasters. The clauses provide the guidelines to ensure balanced and equal opportunities for women and their issues to be incorporated within media houses' programing and organizations.

3.1 Media houses should strive to include women in executive positions within their organizations to promote their involvement in production and editorial decision-making processes.

3.2 Media houses should increase the number of programs dedicated to gender specific issues, and promote the coverage of gender equality concerns as a fundamental portion of the programming.

3.3 Broadcasters should ensure the presence of women as experts, authoritative figures and commentators on a wide range of issues discussed in the media.

3.4 Media houses should ensure that the broadcasted fictional and non-fictional artistic productions are used to stimulate gender equality and social fairness towards women.

3.5 Media houses should ensure that the broadcasted fictional and non-fictional artistic productions strive to present realistic, balanced, positive depictions of women that aid in the projections of positive gender roles.

Section four: **ENSURING THE RIGHT REPRESENTATION**

This section aims to abolish the negative portrayals, exploitations, and the objectification of women through promoting positive portrayals of women across newscasts, talk shows, dramas, and broadcasted movies.

4.1 Media houses should guarantee the portrayal of women in a fair and equitable manner acknowledging the heterogeneous nature of the female identity.

4.2 Media houses should refrain from portraying women in any way that can compromise, underestimate, and depreciate their contributions to society.

4.3 Broadcasters should ensure the prominence and projection of positive female role models in programming.

4.4 Broadcasters should ensure that women representations are not limited to gender-specific and soft domains ignoring their expertise and contributions to other fields.

4.5 Broadcasters should desist from depicting women negatively as helpless or as victims of violence unless integral to the story.

4.6 Broadcasters should refrain from verbally labelling women and ensure the use of gender-sensitive and non-sexist language.

4.7 Media houses should eliminate the portrayal of Transgressive women from their programming and broadcasted fictional and non-fictional artistic productions.

4.8 Media houses should ensure that the broadcasted fictional and non-fictional artistic productions do not present women in a negative light or reinforce the negative stereotypes unless integral to the story.

4.9 Media houses should attempt to replace the traditional and stereotyped depictions of women with presenting new progressive frames reflecting women's increased social, political, and cultural contributions.

Section five: ***MAINTAINING ETHICAL STANDARDS***

This section aims to ensure the adherence of the televised broadcasting media to the ethical standards while covering, discussing, and representing women and their issues.

5.1 Broadcasters should refrain from depicting or exploiting women in any way that undermines the contribution and position in society.

5.2 Broadcasters should refrain from broadcasting stories that might incite gender based violence.

5.3 Broadcasters should support victims of violence who choose to appear in the media and refrain from disrespecting, demeaning, or questioning their credibility unless provided with evidence.

5.4 Broadcasters should refrain from presenting violence against women in any context which encourages others to copy such behavior.

5.5 Caution shall be used in the selection and the repetition of videos and footage which depicts violence against women.

5.6 The broadcasting of footage of victims depicting them in a compromising position or degrading light should be prohibited.

5.7 Broadcasters should refrain from trivializing violence against women crimes through reinforcing stereotyped judgements and assumptions regarding the victims or the crime conditions.

5.8 Shifting public opinion through news framing by using unauthorized personal objectifying images of the victims, presenting biased sources or withholding integral information to the case should be prohibited.

Section six: ***COVERING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN***

This section aims to regulate the coverage of violence against women in newscasts and talk shows. The clauses in this section are directed to Media Houses and Media Broadcasters.

6.1 Media houses and broadcasters should ensure that the identities of women and girls in gender-based violence cases are not revealed without an informed consent from the victim or an appointed family member.

6.2 Media houses and broadcasters should contribute to raising awareness regarding violence against women through projecting on the matter as a social concern, highlighting the consequences, and emphasizing the cost of violence.

6.3 Broadcasters should not broadcast any material inciting fear.

6.4 Proper definition of acts of violence committed against women should be incorporated in the coverage to avoid misinformation.

6.5 Balancing gender-based violence stories reported to reflect real-life frequencies should be promoted to avoid misinformation and exaggeration.

6.6 Broadcasters should incorporate all information and contacts regarding the support organizations and services available for women affected by gender-based violence within the coverage of the issue.

6.7 It is the responsibility of the broadcasters to provide prominent and equal follow-up coverage on the legal consequences and verdicts of violence against women crimes.

Section seven: **ADVERTISING**

This section aims at regulating the depictions of women in broadcasted advertisements. The clauses in this section are directed towards the Media houses responsible for permitting the broadcasting of advertisements to the public audience and the advertising agencies producing them.

7.1 Media houses should ensure a diverse representation of women to include all ages, socioeconomic classes, and areas of residency in an equitable and fair manner.

7.2 Media houses should ensure the equal representation of women and men in roles of authority through scenarios, inserted voice overs, and experts' depictions in broadcasted advertisements.

7.3 Media houses should ensure the portrayal of women and men as equal partners in the decision –making process of purchases in broadcasted advertisements.

7.4 The sexual objectification and exploitation of women through attires, poses and misrepresentative language should be prohibited in advertising.

7.5 Broadcast advertisements should diversify the portrayals of women to include different settings (outdoor and indoor), gender neutral products, and doing a versatile range of activities.

7.6 The depictions of women in nontraditional roles and professions should be promoted in broadcasted advertisements.

7.7 The limiting depictions of rural women as ignorant in broadcasted advertisements should be prohibited.

Application of the code and its limitations

The *news* genre, whether in its factual form (newscasts) or engaging form (talk shows) is expected to follow the fairness clause dictated in the current Egyptian code of ethics (1983) in terms of avoiding bias and seeking accuracy. Furthermore, through the code developed by the present study, they are requested to adhere to news facts and refrain from using judgmental insinuations, whether through sexist framing or stereotyping.

Editors and produces of newscasts are also encouraged to broaden their coverage and discussions on women's issues to include women of different socioeconomic classes and demographics instead of overlooking rural and Bedouin women. Additionally, through seeking to quote the views and experiences of women as often as they quote men, a balanced presence of men and women can be attained to reflect the society's composition.

TV Talk Shows are encouraged to seek the inclusion of positive examples of women and highlight their achievements and contributions in different domains to serve as role models for girls and women. Moreover, they are encouraged to expand the presence and incorporations of women hosted as experts rather than just storytellers and television presenters.

The code also pays special attention to newscasts and sports-specific programs that need to incorporate the contributions of women athletes in their news coverage and discussions.

When covering violence and crimes against women, news helps to raise awareness and combat such crimes through creating awareness of various acts and reporting recent statistics on those

issues, which will eventually project them as a societal problem. News should incorporate all necessary information about support organizations and services available to battered women, such as hotlines, home shelters, and rehabilitation centers.

Newscasts and TV talk shows can aid in shedding the light on the consequences of violence against women through a mandatory follow up on the perpetrator's verdict and emphasizing the cost of violence on the country's economic, security, health, and developmental progress.

Furthermore, attention should be paid to the way such crimes are reported to avoid shifting public opinion through selection and repetition of footage and videos broadcasted; the use of biased sources, contexts, and victims' personal information; holding influential information of the attack and / attacker; and using explicit personal, unauthorized images of the victims.

Broadcasters are prohibited to question the credibility of assaulted women unless proven otherwise. They are also prohibited to legitimize violence against women by questioning the survivor's marital status, relationships, and adherence to gender-norms.

Broadcasters should avoid the pointless repetitions of images and footage of crimes of violence against women to prevent over-sensationalizing the crime or desensitizing the public towards the case. Broadcasters should also refrain from broadcasting footage and videos showing victims of violence in degrading positions, undressed, and/or brutally injured minors to enrich the coverage even if such material were recorded in public areas.

For *fiction and non-fiction artistic productions*, Media Houses should ensure that the dramas and movies broadcasts provide realistic and balanced portrayals of women instead of focusing on the passive/ negative depictions. Therefore, they are requested to carefully supervise and select the content broadcasted.

Moreover, media houses are encouraged to present new edges for gender roles on television through encouraging the contributions of more women writers, directors and producers. They should seek the elimination of all degrading transgressive depictions of women from their programming and adopt new liberal modern angles that mirror women's increased social, political, and cultural contributions.

However, the extent of the code's applicability to drama and movies genres was questioned by the experts, as the positive or negative portrayal of women depends solely on the issue conveyed and the productions available.

The same concern was noted on the *Advertisements* genre, where the product category dictates the depiction manner of women. Yet, the code addresses the advertising agencies as well and requests the abolition of gender-role stereotyping by avoiding limiting rural women to home-making chores and presenting them as ignorant, naive, and lacking health-related information. In addition, it advocates for avoiding the sexual portrayals of women through poses, language clothes, and the use of female voice as a narrator in gender-neutral advertisements. The code also encourages the depiction of women as experts, advisors, and informed, intelligent users of products and services.

Conclusion

While Egyptian women were considered the forerunners in terms of gaining access to satellite television channels compared to women in neighboring Arab countries (Obeidat, 2002), the culturally embedded stereotypes lurked its way to different media outlets.

Through the images portrayed on television, viewers see and judge their surrounding world. Therefore, it is crucial to evaluate and challenge the way mass media influence the attitudes towards women on an individual, societal, and institutional level.

Egypt has the precedence of presenting the first gender-based media code in the Middle East through this pioneer study. And with the passing of Article no. 211 in 2016 requesting the formation of The Supreme Council for Media Regulation, the Council was established on April 11th, 2017 requesting such codes and deriving more to aid in regulating Egyptian media.

The proposed code is a self-regulatory tool, yet, the effects of such code could be achieved through media houses which select and control what broadcasts on their television channels. Thus, they have the power to create a 'domino effect.' If media houses refuse to purchase and accordingly broadcast content which negatively depicts women, then producers would be forced to enhance their productions to profit.

Through the course of writing this paper, the proposed code has been adopted by the National Council for Women to be reviewed and presented to The Supreme Council for Media Regulation to be considered as the Egyptian Gender-based media code.

Notes

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