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**Women's Portrayal  
in Egyptian TV Channels  
Advertisements and its Impact on Female  
University Students Self-Perception**

**صورة المرأة**

**في إعلانات القنوات التلفزيونية المصرية  
وانعكاسها على صورة الذات لطالبات الجامعة**

**Sherin Moody Hakim Wassif**

**Department of Communication and Media Sciences**

**Faculty of Arts, Ain Sham University**

**الباحثة/ شيرين مودي حكيم واصف**

**باحثة بقسم علوم الاتصال والإعلام**

**كلية الآداب - جامعة عين شمس**

**sherinmoody1970@gmail.com**



**www.mercj.journals.ekb.eg**



**المخلص:**

عمد البحث إلى دراسة صورة النساء التي قدمتها إعلانات التلفزيون المصري التي تم بثها في عامي ٢٠١٨ و ٢٠١٩ بالإستعانة بتحليل المضمون لمئتي إعلان تلفزيوني مصري، بالإضافة إلى تحليل مضمون خمسمائة (٥٠٠) نموذج استبيان أجري عبر الإنترنت؛ لتحليل رؤية طالبات الجامعة لتصوير فتيات الإعلانات في تلك الإعلانات، ومدى تأثيرها على رؤيتهن لذواتهن. استعانت الدراسة بنظام العينة القصدية (العمدية) للقيام بتحليل المضمون والإستبيان الذي جرى توزيعه على طالبات جامعتين حكوميتين هما جامعة عين شمس، وجامعة القاهرة، وطالبات جامعتين خاصتين هما الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة والجامعة البريطانية بالقاهرة وذلك للتعرف على تأثير هذه الإعلانات على الطالبات. وأظهر البحث أن أسلوب تجسيد إعلانات التلفزيون المصري للمرأة يؤثر على رؤية طالبات الجامعة لذواتهن فيما يتعلق بالإعتداد بالنفس وصورة الجسد، الأمر الذي تبين أنه قد يشجعهن على إتيان تصرفات من شأنها إما تحسين أو استبقاء الصورة النموجية التي دائما تظهر عليها المرأة في مثل هذه الإعلانات.

**Abstract:**

The research paper investigated the portrayal of females' in Egyptian television advertisements that were aired during 2018 and 2019, using content analysis on 200 Egyptian television advertisements. In addition, 500 online questionnaires were distributed to analyze how female university students perceived the portrayal of female models in these advertisements and the effect on their self-perception. A purposive sample was used for both the content analysis and the questionnaires that were distributed to female university students in two governmental universities being Ain Shams University and Cairo University and two private universities being The American University in Cairo (AUC) and The British University in Egypt (BUE), in order to discover the effects that these advertisements had on them. It was found that the way female university students perceived the portrayal of females in Egyptian television advertisements had an effect on their self-perception in terms of their self-esteem and body image which evidently would encourage them to carry out certain actions in order to improve or maintain the ideal look that is typically portrayed in these advertisements.

## Introduction

The most influential form of advertising today is via television due to the fact that it is a combination of audio and visual content. Advertisers in Egypt prefer to use television more than any other media to reach customers due to the high illiteracy rates in the country (Mohideen & Saravanan, 2015). Since females have an important economic role as consumers, many of the characters depicted in television advertisements are women. Hence, advertisers are more frequently using female roles which represents physical appeal and beauty in advertising to encourage females to purchase products (Lin & Yeh, 2009). According to Barbara (2005) as cited by Ali & Shahwar (2011) in television advertisements women more and more are being viewed as objects, commodities for men's craving, as well as, a segment of the product rather than humans. Hence, females are depicted the way males prefer to view them, as attractive and passive individuals since these idealistic female models portrayed in television advertisements are even used in advertising male products.

With the continuous bombardment of idealistic images shown through the television screen, it is evident that the most affected by these images are females of younger generations since they seem to be more vulnerable and believing of what they see as a reality because they are still new and not knowledgeable as consumers. Also, young females are still developing their morals, characters and are continuously self-evaluating themselves (Kotwal et al., 2008).

Thus, in this research on "Women's Portrayal in Egyptian TV Channels Advertisements and its Impact on Female University Students Self-Perception," the researcher examined women's portrayal in Egyptian television advertisements by conducting content analysis on free-to-air Egyptian television advertisements, as well as, using an online survey to examine how viewing these portrayals in television advertisements affected female university students self-perception.

## Statement of the Current Problem

Television advertisements serves as a reminder for copious products and services. For decades, Egyptian television advertisements has targeted females, using white, attractive, slim, and younger women who are stereotyped in traditional roles such as, housewives and mothers, as well as, decorative objects and real-life celebrities in order to encourage consumption. The ideal female being white, thin, attractive and even



decorative within Egyptian television advertisements is strengthened by the use of the language and body language that reinforces this ideology. Hence, such portrayal of women in television advertisements negatively affects females' self-perception in terms of decreasing their self-esteem and creating body dissatisfaction, due to the pressures they face since women tend to compare themselves to the female models in the advertisements. This comparison has also meant that females act out certain behaviors to try to achieve social beauty standards, by dieting, by exercising or even by having plastic surgery.

### **The Significance of the Study**

The research was significant since the researcher identified if females in Egyptian television advertisements were still depicted in stereotypical portrayals during an era where women's rights had taken on a forefront in Egyptian society. In addition, the research was important to understand how television advertising exposure is still an important part of today's education, where portrayed images do not necessarily mirror society but rather influence people's perception about their surrounding environment and themselves.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine the portrayal of females in Egyptian television advertisements in terms of their body and appearance. As well as, to explore how female university students, perceived the portrayal of females in Egyptian television advertisements in terms of their body and appearance and how these perceptions effected females' self-esteem, body image and the behavior that they would be encouraged to carry out after watching ideal-image advertisements.

### **Content Analysis Research Questions**

- 1) Who were the main and supporting characters in television advertisements?
- 2) What was the body and appearance of females in Egyptian television advertisements?

### **Content Analysis Hypothesis**

**H1)** There is a significant correlation between the main characters being either female, male, a couple, female crowd or none portrayed in advertisements in Egyptian television channels and the body and

appearance of females portrayed.

### **Survey Research Questions**

- 1) How did female university students perceive the body and appearance of females in Egyptian television advertisements?
- 2) Would female university students be likely to carry out certain actions after viewing ideal images in Egyptian television advertisements?

### **Survey Hypothesis**

**H1)** There is a significant correlation between female university students' perception towards the portrayal of female bodies/appearance in Egyptian television advertisements and the following:

- a) Body appreciation.
- b) Self-esteem.
- c) Body-esteem.
- d) Actions of female university students after viewing ideal-image advertisements.

### **Research Methods**

In this current research on “Women's Portrayal in Egyptian TV Channels Advertisements and its Impact on Female University Students Self-Perception,” the researcher examined women's portrayal in Egyptian television advertisements by conducting content analysis on free-to-air Egyptian television advertisements, as well as, using an online survey to examine how viewing these portrayals in television advertisements affected female university students self-perception in terms of their body appreciation, body-esteem and self-esteem.

During the research two research methods were utilized being content analysis and surveys.

#### **(1) Content Analysis**



## Sampling Plan

In the research, the unit of analysis was Egyptian television channels advertisements which contained at least one female character. A non-probability purposive sample of 200 Egyptian free-to-air satellite television channels advertisements aired from January 2018 till December 2019 (during prime-time from 8pm-11pm being the time with the highest viewership), were obtained from a global media agency and content analysis was conducted on the 200 advertisements. Since this research investigated females' portrayal in television advertisements aired on Egyptian channels, the researcher observed and coded the variables listed in the coding sheet.

## Coding Variables-Designing the Codebook

The researcher created a codebook with operational definitions and a coding sheet where amendments were made after testing the coding procedure. Numerous variables were allocated to several categories.

## Coding

The researcher used quantitative (by counting frequency of variables) content analysis where first the variables were coded, then the researcher analyzed these findings. Once the preliminary coding scheme was developed it was piloted to detect coding procedure problems on Egyptian television channels that contained at least one female character. The researcher coded the content analysis herself using an excel sheet. Once the data was coded, reliability was tested.

## (2) The Survey

A questionnaire was distributed in order to investigate respondents perception about the portrayal of women's body and appearance in Egyptian television channels advertisements and its impact on the self-perception of female university students, in terms of their self-esteem and body image (which was measured by respondents body appreciation and body-esteem), as well as the actions that respondents would be encouraged to carry out after viewing ideal image Egyptian television advertisements.

Data was collected from 500 female respondents. Respondents were only required to fill out the questionnaire if they were females currently attending any one of the following four universities: the American University in Cairo (AUC), the British University in Egypt (BUE), Ain Shams University and Cairo University. The online questionnaires were

automatically terminated if respondents answered no to the question about if they watch advertisements on Egyptian television channels and any males who filled out the questionnaires had their responses deleted.

The researcher entered several lectures with a QR code (Quick Response code) of the English and Arabic online google forms survey that was read by respondents' smartphone cameras. Respondents' were asked to fill out the survey during the first or last 15 minutes of regular class time in both the AUC and BUE. As for Ain Shams University and Cairo University, two links of both the Arabic and English online google forms were sent to respondents to fill.

### **The Sample**

The participants for the survey were female university undergraduates, attending one of four universities being the AUC, BUE, Ain Shams University and Cairo University. The participants of the survey were selected only from female undergraduate students since university-aged females are evolving into adulthood and this age group is when most females start to explore their identity when it comes to appearance and body image.

### **The Sample Size**

The sample size constituted of 500 female university students across the four years since a four-year degree programme is offered at all of the four universities for all majors. Responses were collected in the form of a questionnaire from female undergraduate university students, from all majors in the four selected universities (two of which were private universities and two were governmental) who participated in the research. These universities were selected using a non-probability purposive sample and data was collected through an online survey conducted on google forms. The 500 participants were divided in to 125 responses equally from each of the four mentioned universities.

The Sample's Characteristics and Demographics were as follows:



### **The majority of respondents:**

- Were 21 years old, making up 164 respondents (32.8%).
- Were fourth year students, making up 255 respondents (51%).
- Monthly household income was less than L.E. 10,000 (31.8%). Followed by between L.E. 10,001-L.E. 30,000 (28%).
- Personal monthly expenditure was between L.E.1,001-L.E. 2,000 (23.8%). Followed by personal monthly expenditure less than L.E. 1,000 (23.2%).

### **Questionnaire Design and Measures**

In order to collect primary data, an identical English and Arabic online Google forms survey was created that used both qualitative and quantitative (open and close-ended) questions. The questionnaire also included Likert Scale statements which were divided into categories to gather attitudinal data to measure respondents' self-perception in terms of body image and self-esteem. The questionnaire was comprised of eight sections: Screening Questions; Portrayal of Females in Egyptian Television Advertisements; The Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire 3 (SATAQ-3); Body Appreciation Scale-2 (BAS-2); Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES); Contour Drawing Rating Scale; Stimuli Images and Demographics section.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Construct validity has two main components being Discriminant validity and Convergent validity where the researcher utilized Convergent validity. Hence, Construct Convergent validity indicated the extent of which various measures of the same construct (an issue that the researcher wished to measure) correlated (Taherdoost, 2016). Construct Convergent validity was achieved because several measures correlated.

Intracoder reliability was used since the researcher was the coder who made sure that there was a consistent coding process. The coder coded the variables under investigation at a specific time period and then the same content was coded again at a later time once the first coding content was forgotten (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

## **Stereotyping of Women in Television Advertisements**

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The way women have been stereotyped in different medias has been ongoing for over half a century. These stereotypes have affected both genders in numerous ways however, advertisers have not taken into consideration the effects that these stereotypes have had on mankind and society as a whole. Whether the media is print or television, females have been depicted in certain ways.

Several studies over the years have investigated the way women have been stereotyped in television advertisements. Such a study was by Khalid and Baig (2016) who selected a sample of 6 Pakistani television advertisements between 2012-2015 to examine stereotypical male and female roles. One of the six advertisements portrayed females as wanting to lighten their skin tone so as to be beautiful. Another study conducted in India by Bharadwaj and Mehta (2017), used intensive personal interviews on young females to examine gender portrayals in two Indian television advertisements. Overall the respondents preferred the advertisement that portrayed females balancing both their personal and professional lives. Similarly, Jha Dang and Vohra (2005) as cited by Sharma & Gupta (2015) compared Indian female to male roles in television advertisements. It was found that females were not portrayed in career roles but were rather portrayed using household or beauty products. Likewise, Das (2011) conducted content analysis on 318 television advertisements from 12 Indian television channels in three different languages (English, Hindi, and Tamil). Results found that women portrayed were mainly for food, beauty and domestic products.

Another study by Kalliny et al. (2008) conducted a cross-national comparative study where they compared 721 television advertisements in four Arab countries (Lebanon, Egypt, U.A.E., and Saudi Arabia) to television advertisements in the U.S. The study found that Arab females were more conservative in the way they were dressed than American females. Likewise, Albrahim (2017) conducted content analysis on gender stereotyping in 200 television advertisements aired on three Saudi Arabian channels (MBC, ART, and Al-Arabiya). Results found that females were stereotypically portrayed in all three channels.

Furthermore, Ahmad (2002) conducted content analysis on 306 television advertisements in Egyptian Channel 1, in order to detect stereotypical portrayals of females. Results of the research found that the



advertisements contained stereotypical portrayals. In addition, a research by Ishak (2003) used content analysis on 508 television advertisements in Egyptian Channel 1. The study found that females were stereotyped in Egyptian television advertisements.

Due to the strong impact of television advertisements, stereotypical portrayals of women presented can consequently have an effect on how individuals in a society see themselves and others (Eisend et al., 2014). Females portrayal in television advertisements can affect females' self-perception and body satisfaction.

### **Television Advertisements and its Effect on Females**

#### **Self-Perception**

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Television advertisements have played the most convincing role in persuading consumers to purchase products. Television advertisements is one of the most powerful medias ever created due to the fact that it utilizes two of the fundamental human senses, being hearing and sight in order to convince audiences to consume. Self-perception is actually how a person sees themselves which is very much affected by the way that they think that others see them. A person's self-perception can be measured by assessing their body image and self-esteem. Body image is a key component of self-esteem, which is the way a person thinks about their body.

Hence, self-perception is defined as how individuals see themselves with regards to others and the world. A person's self-perception is explained by their self-knowledge, social self, self-esteem and self-concept (Dur et al., 2014). The information on social comparison is significant since it affects self-perception which in turn affects behavior (Ertac, 2006). According to Festinger (1954) as cited by Antioco et al. (2012) social comparison is an essential trait of people's social life, as humans assess their own qualities by comparing themselves to others. Researches by Bower (2001) and Bower & Landreth, (2001) as cited by Antioco et al. (2012), showed that impulsive social comparison occurs when individuals are exposed to images depicted in the advertisements that can evidently affect their self-esteem. For many young females the self-esteem refers to their physical looks which relates to how a person feels about themselves.

Moreover, self-esteem in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs is one of the top hierarchical human needs which signifies people's sense of importance and worth (Adekeye et al., 2016). According to Michel and

Farrell (1973) as cited by Swart (2016) self-esteem is the critical assessment people make of themselves.

Furthermore, body image is a main concern mostly for youths since both body image and self-perception can be very puzzling for that age group. The body image can be defined as a person's external look that originated from cultural and personal aspects which are influenced by peers, family and media (Hogan & Strasburger, 2008). Exposure to the media by female audiences depicting models with idealistic bodies, has had an influence on the ideal body image, shape and size. Thus, body image is described as an individual's perception, thoughts, feelings and behavior to his/her own body which is usually measured by asking individuals to rate their present and ideal body shapes using a number of representations (McCabe et al., 2007). Hence, body image signifies the equivalence between the existing and superficial idealistic body size and shape where the variation between the two is actually the amount of body dissatisfaction that people feel (Iqbal et al., 2006). Featherstone (2010) claimed that body image is usually comprehended as a psychological image of an individual's body as it is viewed by other people. Therefore, media is the main villain since its continuous exposure has reinforced a certain idealistic body image in young females and adolescents which as a result has affected them since it had built importance into their daily lives (Adekeye et al., 2016).

A study that was concerned with exposure to advertisements and its effect on young females' body satisfaction, was conducted by Yu (2014) on 380 female university students in the U.S. Respondents were exposed to advertisements of slim models with three different dress sizes; size 0-2, size 14-16 and the control condition. Thin-ideal internalization was measured by the SATAQ-3; consciousness of social forces was measured by the Perceived Sociocultural Pressure Scale; the Physical Appearance Comparison Scale (PACS) was used to measure social comparison inclination; two items from the Visual Analogue Scale and one item from Kim and Damhorst's study (2010) measured body dissatisfaction after being exposed to these advertisements. Findings showed respondents who viewed slim models displayed more body dissatisfaction than those respondents exposed to non-slim models.

To identify the correlation between pressure of advertisements and female body dissatisfaction, Rekha & Maran (2012) used a questionnaire that was distributed to 915 females over 12 years of age in India using a body dissatisfaction scale to determine participants body dissatisfaction.



Results showed that 42% of the participants felt that exposure to advertisements pressured them to look beautiful. Around 81% of participants were dissatisfied with their current body size and 76% of participants wished to be slimmer.

Another research in India on self-perception and body satisfaction was conducted by Das & Sharma (2016) who used a questionnaire on 150 Indian female university students, aged between 18 and 24. The questionnaire gained insight about students' internalization of the slim-ideal images portrayed in television advertisements. Results found that 56% of the participants felt that television advertisements encouraged females to believe that attractiveness and body image was a priority. Results also found that viewing thin idealized images was constantly associated with eating disorders, female body dissatisfaction and internalization of the slim ideal.

### **Effects of Television Advertisements on Consumer Buying Behavior of Women**

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The power of television advertising on consumer buying behavior was seen in a research conducted by Shirky (2010) as cited by Sanni (2016). The research found that 83% of the participants stated that television advertising had greater effect on the viewers consumption decisions in comparison to all other media. Furthermore, according to Barletta (2005) females have the greatest consumption power and are the largest consumers today. This was reinforced by Hassan's (2015) study that looked at consumer buying behavior and television advertising, where 302 surveys were distributed in Pakistan to 152 male respondents and 150 female respondents. The research concluded that women more than men were influenced by television advertisements, where their purchasing behavior was manipulated.

Due to the fact that women are the main consumers and decision makers when it comes to consumption, this has led to an increase in television advertising depicting images of women telling viewers how they should look. What is said and how it is said in these advertisements, indicates to the female consumer, who she is in the present and who she should be in the future. This data is then used by consumers in forming perceptions about themselves and their self-image (Dahlen et al., 2014).

Women of all age groups have felt the need to achieve an idealistic standard of beauty. However, since these standards of beauty have become

more widespread, audiences have become younger. This has led younger females to purchase more cosmetic products to enhance the way they look (Davies, 2016) in order to feel and look more attractive. To illustrate this, a study by Meng and Pan (2012) looked at the influence of television advertising on young females buying behavior of beauty products. During the research, questionnaires were distributed to 224 female respondents under the age of 40 in the U.S. The targeted age was below 40 because the researchers found that the target market of cosmetics was rapidly expanding away from the traditional 45+ age group. Results found that the probability of young female customers buying and using cosmetics decreased, as their body-esteem increased.

A study conducted by Ichsani (2016) looked at if Indonesian slim-idealized females in advertisements, increased customer buying intentions more than normal-sized females. An online survey was distributed to 414 Indonesian females between the ages of 17 and 35. Respondents were exposed to beauty product advertisements with Indonesian slim-idealistic females, Indonesian normal-sized females, international slim-idealistic females and international normal-sized females. It was found that respondents were more likely to purchase products if the advertisements showed an Indonesian normal-sized female in comparison to slim Indonesian females.

A further study in India, by Koshy & Manohar (2016) used a convenient sample on 100 males and females between the ages of 15 and 29, who filled out a questionnaire, to identify the influence of television advertisements on the buying behavior of makeup products. Results showed that due to the influence of advertisements, Indian females were more cautious about their looks. Similarly, Gupta & Jain (2017) conducted a research on 100 Indian female makeup consumers between the ages of 18 and 25, to analyze the influence of advertisements on makeup purchasing behavior. Results found audiences who viewed the makeup advertisement often purchased the products. Respondents stated that the motive for buying makeup was to make themselves more attractive to the opposite gender. In disagreement, Davies (2016) found evidence that women strove to conform to the idealistic beauty standards, not to attract the opposite gender, but rather to be more attractive than other females.

Furthermore, many studies have investigated the way females have been used within the advertisements to sell products. Saad (2004) as cited by Buunk and Dijkstra (2011) stated that evidently advertising agencies



think that customers would be more likely to buy a product when it is endorsed or connected with a good-looking woman. In a study by Kahle and Homer (1985) as cited by Trampe et al. (2010) found that models that are beautiful are extensively used in television advertising. In addition, advertisements with attractive celebrities had more of a positive effect on buying behavior than unattractive celebrities (Manickam & Ceasar, 2016).

Furthermore, Geiger & Fennell (2003) examined how female consumers perception of chocolate advertising was influenced by the use of extremely thin and good-looking models. Two focus groups were conducted on females between the ages of 20 to 30 and six in-depth-interviews were conducted on females between the ages of 40 to 50. Results found that respondents for both the focus groups and interviews felt that the very beautiful models portrayed in the chocolate advertisements were too thin and idealistic. So as to gain an understanding if the slim models in television advertising affected respondents need for the product, the researchers circulated a box of chocolate around before the interviews and at the end of the interviews and the remaining chocolates were counted during both times. It was found that the respondents ate four times more chocolate after the interviews were conducted. This showed that watching chocolate television advertisements caused a need for eating chocolates.

## Theoretical Part

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### The Feminist Theory

The feminist theory looked at the oppression and subordination of women for many decades in different settings. Feminists have been fighting for equal rights as well as, equality between races since they felt that women were treated and portrayed unfairly by society. The feminist movements have changed a lot for women, giving them certain rights.

The feminist theory examined the origins of female injustice, subordination and discrimination and it was developed due to the feminist movements (Jones & Budig, 2008). Feminism expresses ideas which concentrated on women's rights and females' stance in society and culture. Feminists have the same ideology, since they perceive that a females' place is not the same as males, since males have more advantage politically, socially and economically than females do (Feminism, 2010). According to Gamble (2001), feminism is a broad definition where females are basically looked upon not equally in a given culture where men's opinions are ranked

higher than women. Within this patriarchal model, females become what males do not want to be seen as, since males want to be seen as tough whereas, females are fragile; males are logical, females are illogical; males are energetic, and females are submissive. Many feminists ignored the biological disparities since many feminists felt that biological sex is a natural outcome obtained when born whereas, all roles carried out by women are created by society (Freedman, 2001).

### **Objectification Theory**

Objectification theory is important to examine since objectification of females was one notion crucial to the feminist theory, that was previously discussed. Feminist campaigners were worried about the objectification of females because they felt that it effected their lives since women seem to identify their self-worth with their appearance.

Similarly, the objectification theory developed by Barbara L. Fredrickson and Tomi-Ann Roberts in 1997, examined the effects of the objectification of females' physiques (Andrist, 2008) and the ways in which females respond emotionally when they try to meet ideal beauty standards set by society. This theory has been recommended as a structure to comprehend the consequences of women living in a society where their bodies are objectified (Mercurio & Landry, 2008).

The objectification theory conveyed the objectification process, which is when men assess women's appearance. Men tend to pay more attention to females' physique, mainly her body parts more than her face. The objectification theory suggested that the male gaze generally appears in the media (Gervais et al., 2013) and television advertisements.

The objectification theory stated that a major concern for women is when they get objectified by the male gaze, it makes them internalize spectator's perception of their bodies (Tiggemann & Lynch, 2001). That means that they get to perceive their bodies the way they think others see them and embody these perceptions inside of them. Frederickson and Roberts said that the exterior gaze happens in three distinctive ways: during interacting with others, inside media that reproduce social associations and the most pervasive being inside mass communications specifically advertising (Klein, 2013). Part of the socialization process that females go through is that they perceive themselves as objects and assess themselves based on their looks. Since sometimes females view themselves as objects, they also evaluate themselves based on their appearance, this is called self-



objectification (Chapman, 2019).

According to the objectification theory, self-objectification occurs when women start to consider themselves as a commodity to be scrutinized and criticized by men (Tiggemann & Lynch, 2001). Self-objectification is the procedure by which females internalize and consent to the views that society endeavors upon them (McKay, 2013). Studies by Kim (2006) and Tiggemann & Boundy (2008) as cited by Oosterhout, (2014) analyzed the effects of self-objectification on females that found that self-objectification led to eating disorders.

### **Gender Schema Theory**

The gender schema theory similar to the feminist theory, looked at how gender roles were created. The gender schema theory stated that gender roles are expected to be carried out by children early on in life. Children receive information about their gender roles that they learn primarily from their parents and society as a whole, which is part of their socialization. Whereas, a schema is a structure that is cognitive which aids in organizing and processing information obtained from the world (Neetu et al., 2017). Schemas effect the data that individuals focus on (Copenhaver, 2002). For example, girls and boys can form a schema where females are expected to clean the house and cook meals by constant exposure to females in their houses and on their television screens. If children see the father conducting these duties, the girl or boy would process the contradicting information with the already stored information making it contrary with his/her schema (Barragan, 2015).

Hence, a gender schema, helps people categorize features and actions as masculinity and femininity. The socialization of gender takes place in children as they start relating to gender schemas where this procedure is a crucial phase in children's gender socialization (Neetu et al., 2017).

It was in 1981, when Sandra Lipsitz Bem who was a second-wave feminist and in the frontline of the development of many thoughts on the psychology of sexuality and gender (Leaper, 2017) that introduced gender schema theory which was developed from the rising impact of both psychology and feminism (Neetu et al., 2017). Bem looked at gender, gender roles and gender developments influence on human conduct (Liben & Bigler, 2017). She disputed traditional gender practices such as certain dress codes, advertisements, discrimination at work and traditional marriage

roles (Golden & McHugh, 2017).

As people implement a gender identity (either feminine or masculine), they frequently exhibit conduct that is gender-stereotyped dictating their opinions and mindsets about their gender (Agosto, 2004). This clarifies what it takes to be a girl or a boy since society divides males and females into specific gender roles that results in "gender schema" (Bankhar, 2015).

Hence, gender schema theory explains how people process gender related information (Davis & Wilson, 2016). Traditional gender roles imply that men rather than women propose marriage and women put more importance on family than their own human rights. People who are against conventional gender-roles are called "gender nonconformists" who stick to "non-traditional gender schemas." Whereas, people who are against conduct that does not fit their gender are called "gender conformists" who use gender schemas that are traditional (Lemons & Parzinger, 2007).

### **Self-Perception Theory**

The self-perception theory was developed by Psychologist Daryl Bem in the late 60's and early 70's. The theory discussed how attitudes developed by people are not due to knowledge or experience but are rather a reflection of an individual's own behavior. People's attitudes are molded from inspecting their own behavior (Crisp & Turner, 2010). The main reason for the self-perception theory prominence is due to its clarity as it explains the development of self-knowledge in which individuals get to understand themselves simply by observing their own behavior (Self-Perception Theory, 2008).

The self-perception theory is centered on two principles. Firstly, that emotions and attitudes are affected by experiences or events. Secondly, it's an internal mirror of people's attitudes and feelings. Actually, Bem proposed the self-perception theory as a substitute for the cognitive dissonance theory (Woosnam et al. 2018).

In Bem's theory the importance is on how individuals' self-perception is molded by their past decisions since individuals' future self-perception relies on their current decisions (Swank, 2006). According to Showry & Manasa (2014) as cited by Moore (2018) individuals' study themselves by analyzing their own behavior in order to understand their feelings and thoughts so as to come to decisions in their lives.



Bem (1972) as cited by Collier, (2014) foresaw that when inner signals are uncertain or unclear, individuals depend greatly on evidential criteria over behavior. Bem had solid evidence for self-perception, where he also indicated that the causes of behavior made by observers and actors differed in four methods. He called these four differences as (1) “insider-outsider”, (2) “intimate-stranger”, (3) “self-other” and (4) “actor-observer.” Bem claimed that these differences can create variations when it came to judgments between those individuals who are undergoing the emotion and those that are observing the emotional response. In accordance, the “insider-outsider” variances are due to the fact that individuals who are emotionally experiencing something have more information than the onlookers who do not.

Bem (1972) as cited by Yee & Bailenson (2007) claimed that individuals viewed their own behaviors to comprehend which kind of attitudes may have initiated them. Bem believed that when people are required to explain their attitudes concerning an event, they originally remember previous behaviors connected to that incident and use these recollections to deduce recent attitudes. Therefore, the theory was important in order for individuals to understand their personal attitudes. This was done by assessing their character and how they got to understand their own attitudes and internal feelings by observing their own conduct (Ary, 2010).

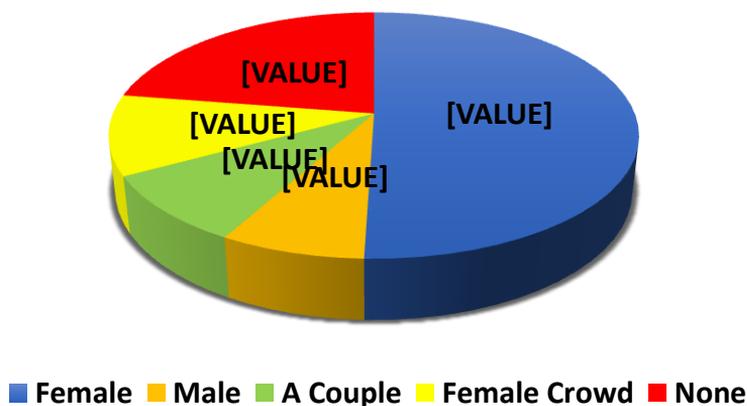
## Research Results

### PORTRAYAL OF FEMALES IN EGYPTIAN TELEVISION ADS (CONTENT ANALYSIS RESULTS)

A content analysis was conducted using a non-probability purposive sampling technique to discover the occurrence of certain visual content. Content analysis was conducted on 200 advertisements that were aired on Egyptian free-to-air television channels during 2018 (100 advertisements) and 2019 (100 advertisements) that contained at least one female character. The following results exhibit findings from 200 television advertisements in order to demonstrate how women in Egyptian television advertisements were portrayed over a two-year period. The researcher found it necessary to conduct content analysis prior to the distribution of the surveys in order to make sure that some content found in the content analysis was included in the survey.

#### THE MAIN AND SUPPORTING CHARACTERS IN TV ADS

Figure 1: Main Characters Either Female, Male, A Couple, Female Crowd or None in Egyptian TV Advertisements



The main characters are the main focused on in television advertisements, who are central advocates of the advertised product or service (Pillay, 2008). The research found that in 101 advertisements (50.5%) the main character was a female. In 45 advertisements (22.5%) there was no main character. In 21 advertisements (10.5%) the main characters were a female crowd. In 18 advertisements (9%) the main characters were couples. In 15 advertisements (7.5%) the main character was a male.



Table 1: Supporting Characters in Egyptian TV Advertisements

<b>SUPPORTING CHARACTERS</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Female	21	10.5
Male	15	7.5
Kid(s)	30	15.0
Family	21	10.5
Female Crowd	33	16.5
Male Crowd	6	3.0
Mixed Crowd	57	28.5
None	41	20.5
Total	200	

Within the research, 57 advertisements (28.5%) had a mixed crowd as supporting characters. 41 advertisements (20.5%) had no supporting characters. 33 advertisements (16.5%) had a female crowd as supporting characters. 30 advertisements (15%) had kid(s) as supporting characters. 21 advertisements (10.5%) had a female as a supporting character. 21 advertisements (10.5%) had a family as supporting characters. 15 advertisements (7.5%) had a male as a supporting character. 6 advertisements (3%) had a male crowd as supporting characters.

### **THE BODY & APPEARANCE OF FEMALES IN TV ADS**

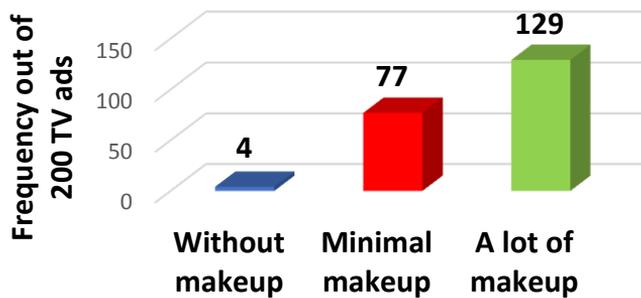
Table 2: Clothing Worn by Females in Egyptian TV Advertisements

<b>CLOTHING OF FEMALES</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Western but non-exposing	139	69.5
Western but exposing	85	42.5
Traditional Egyptian "galabeya"	9	4.5
Uniform	13	6.5
Work/Career/Formal	16	8.0
Veiled	29	14.5
Non identified	1	0.5
Total	200	

It was found that in 139 advertisements (69.5%) females wore

Western but non-exposing clothes. Whereas, in 85 advertisements (42.5%) females wore Western but exposing clothes. In 29 advertisements (14.5%) females were veiled, in 16 advertisements (8%) females wore work/career or formal clothes. In 13 advertisements (6.5%) females wore uniforms and in only 9 advertisements (4.5%) females wore traditional Egyptian “*galabeya*”. In the majority of television advertisement, females wore Western but non-exposing clothes and the minority wore traditional Egyptian “*galabeya*.”

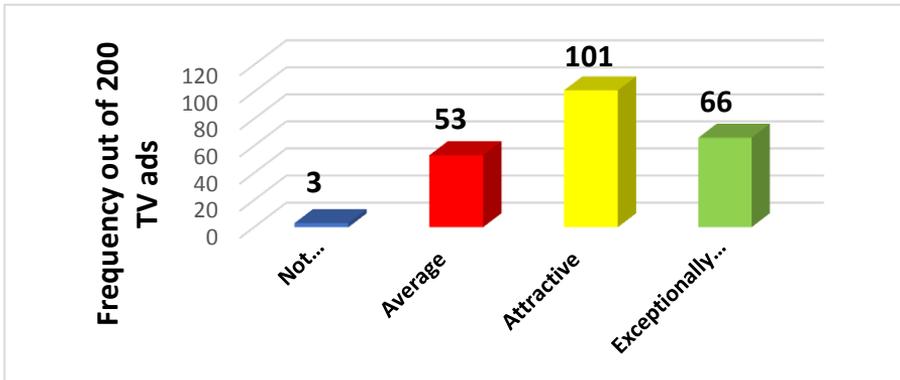
Figure 2: Makeup Worn by Females in Egyptian TV Advertisements



Makeup worn by female models was another important variable to analyse in Egyptian television advertisements since make-up is worn by women in order to look more attractive. It was found that in 129 advertisements (64.5%) females wore a lot of makeup, in 77 advertisements (38.5%) females wore minimal makeup. However, in only 4 advertisements (2%) females wore no makeup.

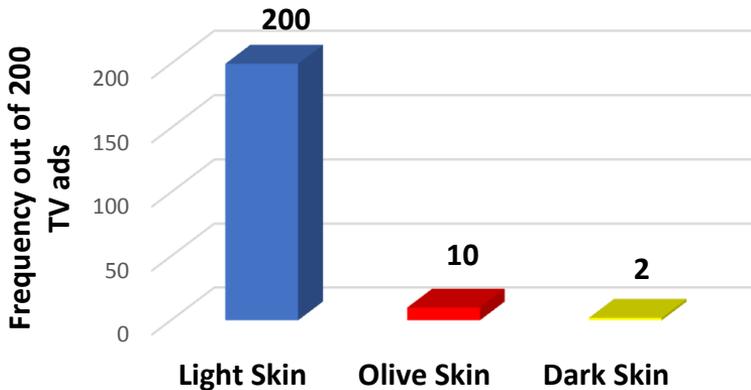


Figure 3: Attractiveness of Females in Egyptian TV Advertisements



It was found that in 101 advertisements (50.5%), females were attractive and in 66 advertisements (33%) females were exceptionally attractive. In 53 advertisements (26.5%) females were average and in only 3 advertisements (1.5%) females were not attractive. Hence, the majority of the Egyptian television advertisements portrayed attractive female models. It is evident that Egyptian television advertisers use attractive or extremely attractive models because they believe that these models can encourage purchase intention and increase sales.

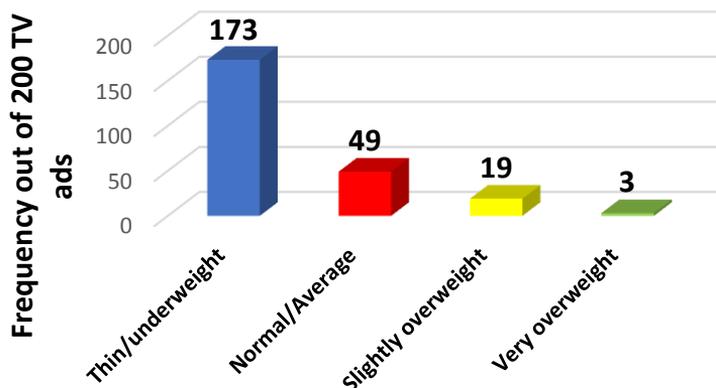
Figure 4: Skin Tone of Females in Egyptian TV Advertisements



Ironically in all 200 advertisements (100%) females portrayed

had light skin, whereas, in only 10 advertisements (5%) females had olive skin and in 2 advertisements (1%) females had dark skin.

Figure 5: Body Type of Females in Egyptian TV Advertisements



After analysing the portrayed body types of females in Egyptian television advertisements, it was found that in the majority of 173 advertisements (86.5%) females were either thin or underweight. In 49 advertisements (24.5%) female bodies were normal or average. In 19 advertisements (9.5%) female bodies were slightly overweight and in 3 advertisements (1.5%) female bodies were very overweight.

Table 3: Hair Colors of Females in Egyptian TV Advertisements

HAIR COLOR OF FEMALES(S)	Frequency	Percent
Blonde	60	30.0
Red	18	9.0
Light brown	111	55.5
Brown	99	49.5
Dark brown	24	12.0
Black	70	35.0
Covered/veiled	29	14.5
Total	200	

When analyzing the hair color of females in television advertisements, it was found that in 111 advertisements (55.5%) females had light brown hair, and in 99 advertisements (49.5%) females had brown hair. In 70 advertisements (35%) females had



black hair and in 60 advertisements (30%) females had blonde hair. In 29 advertisements (14.5%) females were covered/veiled, in 24 advertisements (12%) females had dark brown hair and in 18 advertisements (9%) females had red hair.

## CONTENT ANALYSIS HYPOTHESIS

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After conducting content analysis on 200 Egyptian television advertisements on the portrayal of females, the researcher analyzed significant correlations. The significant correlations that were studied looked at the main characters in advertisements in Egyptian television channels and the body and appearance of females portrayed.

When the researcher investigated the significant correlation between the main characters and the body and appearance of females portrayed, it was in terms of their clothing, makeup, attractiveness, skin tone, body type and hair color.

**The correlation between the main characters (being either female, male, a couple, female crowd or none) and the following:**

### **a) Clothing of females in Egyptian Television Advertisements**

There is a significant correlation between the main characters (being either female, male, a couple, female crowd or none) in Egyptian television advertisements and the clothing of the females being a uniform (chi square=11.739,  $p=0.019$ ) in which the uniform appeared in 20% of the television advertisements that had a male main character.

### **b) Makeup of females in Egyptian Television Advertisements**

There is no significant correlation between the main characters in the television advertisements and the makeup of females. The majority of females portrayed in Egyptian television channels wore a lot of makeup even though, there was no significant correlation between the main characters in the television advertisements and females who wore a lot of makeup.

### **c) Attractiveness of females in Egyptian Television Advertisements**

There is a significant correlation between the main characters in the television advertisements and exceptionally attractive females (chi-square=9.950,  $p=0.041$ ), in which exceptionally attractive females appeared in 46.7% of the television advertisements that had a male main character.

#### **d) Skin Tone of Females in Egyptian Television Advertisements**

There is no significant correlation between the main characters in the advertisements and olive- or dark-skinned females. In all 200 advertisements (100%) television advertisements, the skin tone of females was light.

#### **e) Body Type of Females in Egyptian Television Advertisements**

There is no significant correlation between any of the main characters in the television advertisements and any body type of females.

#### **f) Hair Color of Females in Egyptian Television Advertisements**

There is a significant correlation between the main characters in the television advertisements and brown-haired females (chi-square=23.450,  $p=0.000$ ) who appeared in 73.3% of the television advertisements that had no main character and black-haired females (chi-square=10.867,  $p=0.028$ ) where they appeared in 52.4% of the television advertisements that had a female crowd as the main character.

Even though females were the majority of the main characters in Egyptian television advertisements, males were the majority of main characters when women's body and appearance were portrayed.

### **FEMALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS (SURVEY RESULTS)**

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The following pie charts and tables exhibit findings from 500 questionnaires to determine the perceptions female university students had on the body and appearance portrayal of females in Egyptian Television advertisements and the actions that female university students would be encouraged to carry out after viewing ideal image television advertisements.



## RESPONDENTS PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE BODY & APPEARANCE OF FEMALES IN EGYPTIAN TV ADS

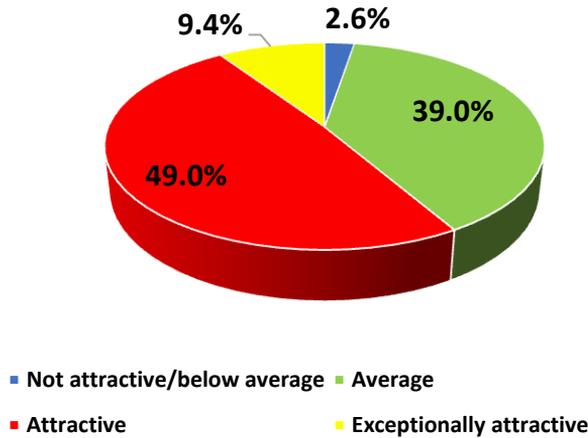
Table 4: Female University Students Perception About the Realistic Portrayal of the Body/Appearance of Females in Egyptian TV Ads

		<b>Females in Egyptian television advertisements portray a realistic body/appearance of Egyptian women</b>
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	Frequency	32
	Percent	6.4
<b>Agree</b>	Frequency	85
	Percent	17
<b>Neutral</b>	Frequency	187
	Percent	37.4
<b>Disagree</b>	Frequency	163
	Percent	32.6
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	Frequency	33
	Percent	6.6

**Mean = 2.84 Std. Deviation= 0.996**

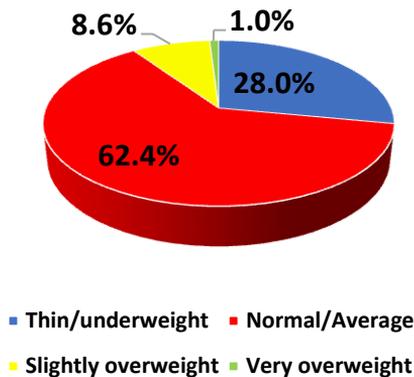
The respondents were asked if they felt that females' bodies and appearance in Egyptian television advertisements were portrayed in a realistic way. 187 respondents (37.4%) answered neutral towards the statement "Females in Egyptian television advertisements portray a realistic body/appearance of Egyptian women." Whereas, 163 respondents (32.6%) perceived that females in Egyptian television advertisements did not portray a realistic body and appearance of Egyptian women. Therefore, a large number believed that females in Egyptian television advertisements portrayed an unrealistic body and appearance.

Figure 6: Female University Students Perception Concerning Female Attractiveness in Egyptian TV Ads



In the content analysis findings 101 advertisements (50.5%) portrayed attractive females which was similar to female university students' perception concerning female attractiveness in television advertisements. A total of 245 respondents (49%) felt that females that appeared in Egyptian television advertisements were attractive and 195 respondents (39%) felt that they were average. Whereas, 47 respondents (9.4%) felt that they were exceptionally attractive and 13 respondents (2.6%) felt that they were not attractive/below average.

Figure 7: Female University Students Perception Concerning the Body Type of Females in Egyptian TV Ads





When it came to female university students' perception about the body type of female models in Egyptian television advertisements, it was found that 312 respondents (62.4%) perceived that female bodies are normal/average. 140 respondents (28%) perceived them as thin/underweight. 43 respondents (8.6%) perceived them as slightly overweight and 5 respondents (1%) perceived them as very overweight. Hence, the majority of respondents perceived that the body type of females portrayed in Egyptian television advertisements are normal/average.

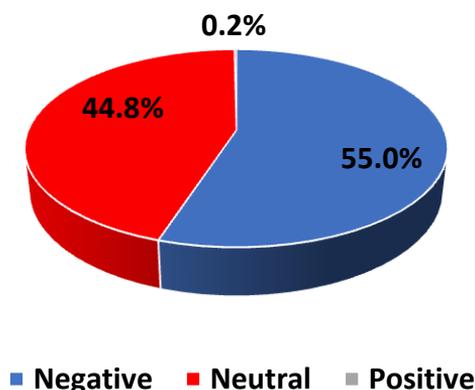
### **Female University Students Perceptions Concerning Females Image Presented in Egyptian TV Ads**

Female university students' perceptions concerning females' image (in terms of their beauty, youth, body, idealism and objectification) presented in Egyptian television advertisements was measured.

The highest mean by respondents was for the statement "Television advertisements should use more realistic looking females" (mean=4.24, std. deviation= 0.781) in which 218 respondents (43.6%) strongly agreed and 195 respondents (39%) agreed with the statement. Followed by "Television advertisements depicting young females propose that beauty and body image are a main issue" (mean=3.9, std. deviation= 0.932) in which 147 respondents (29.4%) strongly agreed and 198 respondents (39.6%) agreed with the statement. Followed by the statement "Most females portrayed in television advertisements are beautiful" (mean=3.88, std. deviation= 0.767) in which 103 respondents (20.6%) strongly agreed and 249 respondents (49.8%) agreed. The statement that had the least mean was "Television advertisements mostly depict females as objects for male products like shaving cream and aftershave etc." (mean=3.64, std. deviation=1.11) in which 132 respondents (26.4%) strongly agreed and 157 respondents (31.4%) agreed.

Hence, most female university students perceived that more realistic looking females should be portrayed in Egyptian television advertisements and that females in television advertisements are beautiful, young, ideal and objectified.

Figure 8: Negative, Neutral or Positive Perceptions Concerning Females Image Presented in Egyptian TV Ads



The majority of 275 respondents (55%) had negative perception about females' image presented in television advertisements. 224 respondents (44.8%) had a neutral perception and only 1 respondent (0.2%) had a positive perception about females' images presented in Egyptian television advertisements. The majority of respondents perceived females' image (in terms of their beauty, youth, body, idealism and objectification) presented in Egyptian television advertisements negatively since television advertisements are unrealistic.

### RESPONDENTS ACTIONS AFTER WATCHING IDEAL IMAGES IN EGYPTIAN TV ADS

The statement "These models would encourage me to exercise" had the highest mean (mean=3.25, std. deviation=1.072) of which 178 respondents (35.6%) agreed and 150 respondents' (30%) answered neutral. Followed by "These models would encourage me to spend money on beauty products" (mean=3.14, std. deviation=1.12) of which 169 respondents (33.8%) agreed and 132 respondents (26.4%) answered neutral to purchase intention. The statement that had the least mean was "These models would encourage me to have plastic surgery at some point in my life" (mean=2.38, std. deviation=1.339) of which 121 respondents (24.2%) disagreed and 179 respondents (35.8%) strongly disagreed. Therefore, these images would encourage



respondents to exercise and buy beauty products, in order to try to achieve the body and appearance of the models.

The survey findings coincide with the ideologies of the feminist theory, gender-schema theory, objectification theory and the self-perception theory. This is because the majority of female university students perceived that females in television advertisements body and appearance portrayal are not realistic to typical Egyptian women since they are portrayed as attractive and thin. In addition, after respondents viewed the idealistic images, some would be encouraged to exercise and spend money on beauty products, however, very few respondents would be encouraged to have plastic surgery.

## **SURVEY HYPOTHESIS**

The following correlations are between respondents perceptions towards the portrayal of female bodies/appearance in Egyptian television advertisements (in terms of realistic portrayal of the body/appearance of Egyptian women, attractiveness of females, body type of females and females image presented in Egyptian television advertisements) and its effect on the following;

- a) Body appreciation
- b) Self-esteem
- c) Body-esteem
- d) Actions of female university students after viewing ideal image advertisements

### **The correlation between respondents' perceptions of females' bodies/appearance portrayal in television advertisements and:**

#### **a) Body appreciation**

There is a positive correlation between the way female university students perceived females' image (in terms of beauty, youth, body, idealism and objectification) presented in Egyptian television advertisements and their body appreciation ( $r=.167$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). The more that female university students perceived females' image in Egyptian television advertisements to be unrealistic/negative image, their body appreciation increased. The less that female

university students perceived females' image in Egyptian television advertisements to be unrealistic/negative image, their body appreciation decreased.

### **b) Self-esteem**

There is a positive correlation between the way female university students perceived females' image (in terms of beauty, youth, body, idealism and objectification) presented in Egyptian television advertisements and their self-esteem ( $r=.115$ ,  $p=0.01$ ). The more that female university students perceived females' image in Egyptian television advertisements to be unrealistic/negative image, their self-esteem increased. The less that female university students perceived females' image in Egyptian television advertisements to be unrealistic/negative image, their self-esteem decreased.

### **c) Body-esteem**

There is a positive correlation between the way female university students perceived the attractiveness of females in Egyptian television advertisements and their body-esteem ( $r=.090$ ,  $p=0.045$ ). The more attractive females are perceived in television advertisements, the more the body-esteem of female university students became which led to body satisfaction. The less attractive the females are perceived in television advertisements, the less the body-esteem of female university students became, which led to body dissatisfaction.

There is a positive correlation between the way female university students perceived females' image (in terms of beauty, youth, body, idealism and objectification) presented in Egyptian television advertisements and their body-esteem ( $r=.091$ ,  $p=0.041$ ). The more that female university students perceived females' image in Egyptian television advertisements to be unrealistic/negative image, their body-esteem increased, which led to body satisfaction. The less that female university students perceived females' image in Egyptian television advertisements to be unrealistic/negative image, their body-esteem decreased, which led to body dissatisfaction.



### e) Actions of female university students after viewing ideal image advertisements

There is a positive correlation between female university students' perception towards the realistic portrayal of the body/appearance of Egyptian women in Egyptian television advertisements and the actions (which are purchasing of advertised products, spending money on beauty products, dieting, exercising and undergoing plastic surgery) that respondents would be encouraged to carry out after viewing ideal image television advertisements ( $r=.169$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). The more that female university students perceived the portrayal of the body/appearance of females in Egyptian television advertisements as realistic, the more they would be encouraged to carry out actions after viewing ideal image television advertisements. Similarly, the less they perceived the portrayal of the body/appearance of Egyptian women in Egyptian television advertisements as realistic, the less they would be encouraged to carry out actions after viewing ideal image television advertisements.

There is a negative correlation between the way female university students perceived females' image (in terms of beauty, youth, body, idealism and objectification) presented in Egyptian television advertisements and the actions (which are purchasing of advertised products, spending money on beauty products, dieting, exercising and undergoing plastic surgery) that respondents would be encouraged to carry out after viewing ideal image television advertisements ( $r=-.204$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). The more that female university students perceived females' image in Egyptian television advertisements to be unrealistic/negative image, the less they would be encouraged to carry out actions after viewing ideal image television advertisements. The less they perceived the portrayal of females in television advertisements to be unrealistic/negative image, the more they would be encouraged to carry out actions after viewing ideal image television advertisements.

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## Conclusion

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Television advertisements have been the most effective means of encouraging consumers to purchase products and services, since it combines both audio and visual images that work together to influence consumers subconscious decision making. Since women are the primary consumers, they are mostly portrayed in television advertisements as the main character, supporting character or both. Furthermore, television advertisers portray women in idealistic and unrealistic decorative roles to encourage female consumption.

The research found that the objectification of females in television advertisements portray women as visually attractive beings for females to compare their own bodies to and for males to gaze at. For many years, feminists have disputed such portrayals of females in all kinds of media. Consequently, an outcome of the objectification of females has created greater internalization of the thin-ideal and body image dissatisfaction, which harmfully effects females' self-perception.

The findings from the content analysis reinforced that visual portrayal of females in Egyptian television advertisements and female university students' perceptions about their portrayal were similar. Most advertisements portrayed females as young, attractive, light skinned and slim. In addition, survey results found that respondents' perception about females idealistic and unrealistic portrayal of their body and appearance in television advertisements effected students body image and self-esteem. Hence, this encouraged them to carry out certain actions to achieve the ideal look.

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## Recommendations

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Advertisers and marketing companies should mirror the changing female role of Egyptians within their advertising and advertising campaigns should portray women in realistic empowering roles. More veiled women should be portrayed in the mass media, since they constitute a large portion of the Egyptian population.

Once advertisements and media productions are ready to be aired on any media channel, a regulatory body should monitor these productions, not just for censoring sexuality but also other images that emphasizes beauty, appearance, body size and imagery that is unrealistic, subordinated and misleading to audiences. Hence, there should be a ban on gender stereotypes and unrealistic portrayals in Egyptian advertisements. Even school curriculums could be developed so that their content plays a positive role in explaining the importance of gender roles in societal development in terms of their diversified roles as well as gender equality, so that children grow up into adults knowing that these values are social norms.



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